‘After the dust settles’: the experiences of local peace and reconciliation organisations in post-Agreement Northern Ireland. A case study of the Corrymeela Community

Kirsty Campbell

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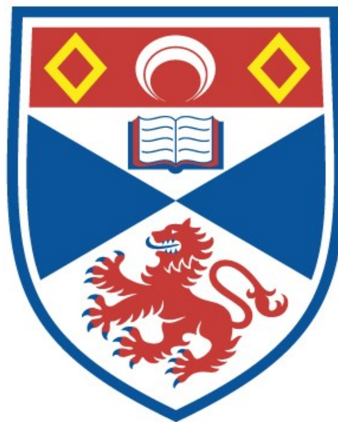

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Ethical Approval Letter

University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee

22 May 2017

Dear Kirsty Campbell

Thank you for submitting your ethical application which was considered at the IR School Ethics Committee. The following documents were reviewed:

1. Ethical Application Form
2. Participant Information Sheet
3. Consent Form
4. Debriefing Form

The IR School Ethics Committee has been delegated to act on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) and has granted this application ethical approval. The particulars relating to the approved project are as follows -

Approval Code:	IR12797	Approved on:	22.05.17	Approval Expiry:	22.05.22
Project Title:	Challenging Discourses of Sectarianism and Social Conflict in Northern Ireland: The Impact of the Corrymeela Community				
Researcher(s):	Kirsty Campbell				
Supervisor(s):	Dr Gurch Sanghera				

Approval is awarded for five years. Projects which have not commenced within two years of approval must be re-submitted for review by your School Ethics Committee. If you are unable to complete your research within the five-year approval period, you are required to write to your School Ethics Committee Convener to request a discretionary extension of no greater than

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Yours sincerely

Convener of the School Ethics Committee

cc Supervisor

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Abstract

Using the case study of the Corrymeela Community (Corrymeela) in Northern Ireland, this thesis examines the experiences of Peace and Reconciliation Organisations (PROs) after peace agreements are implemented and funders begin to withdraw.

A theoretical framework, based on Putnam's (2000) social capital theory, and a qualitative research design are developed for analysis of the Corrymeela Community's experiences in the 'post-Agreement' period between 2009 and 2019. Bonding and bridging social capital are differentiated and it is argued that bridging social capital is of particular value to ongoing peacebuilding in Northern Ireland because it is indicative of productive connections between different identity communities.

The thesis examines the contextual subculture specific to Northern Ireland, which impacts upon Corrymeela's experiences. PROs are operating in a political system of consociationalism that maintains society in silos from above and discourages inter-ethnic associations. The imposition of 'strings attached' funding, an effect of the pervasive Liberal Peace agenda in Northern Ireland has posed the most significant challenge to Corrymeela and the wider peacebuilding sector.

The outcomes of the peace agreement have varied for different actors and the post-Agreement period has been a challenging time for civil society organisations. Despite significant difficulties, Corrymeela has adopted what MacGinty (2011: 85-6) describes as "recalcitrant behaviour" and its approach has created an environment in which the exchange of productive social capital between individuals is encouraged. The physical site at its peace centre provides a space and culture in which different identity groups are given the opportunity to expose sameness, build trust and form relationships.

Overall, it is concluded that although Corrymeela continues to facilitate bridging social capital between different identity groups, its capacity to do so has been compromised by a variety of internal and external factors.

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Following 30 years of violent conflict, the 1998 Good Friday agreement was heralded as a critical juncture in Northern Ireland's transition from conflict to peace. Contributions from the European Union (EU) and British and Irish governments provided the resources for the peace sector in Northern Ireland to expand and begin the process of reconciling divided communities. A power-sharing government was established, there was a drop in conflict-related deaths and casualties, successful police reform, and a decrease in the equality and opportunity gap between the Unionist and Nationalist communities (McGarry and O'Leary 2009a: 387). Northern Ireland was even used by some as a 'lessons learned' model for other territories emerging from conflict (Fitzgerald 2012; White 2013).

Without waiting to let the dust settle, it is difficult to see the landscape of peacebuilding clearly (Baumann 2019; Elliot 2014; Hicks 1996: 154). The initial furore of peacebuilding activity in the period immediately post-conflict has now calmed. In this calm, it is now possible to analyse the current situation of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. A literature review on post-conflict Northern Ireland provides abundant research and analysis describing and evaluating Northern Ireland's social and political challenges in this period. These challenges include: consociationalism and the segregation of society in separate silos (Boal 1996; Dixon 1997; Guelke 2003, 2009; Knox and Quirk 2016: 116; McGarry and O'Leary 2009b; Morrow 2006: 72; Stephenson Jr. and Zanotti 2012: 55-6); the persistence of sectarianism and increase in racism (Barton and McCully 2003; Cash 2009; Buckley 1982; Burton 1978; McGrellis 2010 762-3; Morrow 1997; Muir 2011b: 960; Mussano 2004; Liechty and Clegg 2001; Shirlow and Murtagh 2006; Whyte 1990); the residual dominance of paramilitary groups (Alderdice *et al*. 2016; Campbell *et al*. 2016; Ferguson *et al.* 2015; McVeigh 2015; Whyte 1990: 88); and continued apathy across some sectors of society towards reconciliation (Boyle and Hadden 1994: 113; Dixon 1997: 10; McGrattan and Meehan 2012; Kapur and Campbell 2004: 29; Liechty and Clegg 2001: 9; Morrow *et al*. 2018; Robinson 2015: 148 – 151; Wilson 2008: 185).

There are also attempts within academic and policy literature to provide applied solutions to these ongoing challenges. Proposed peacebuilding approaches include independent capacity-building and economic development within communities (Dixon 1997: 7; Donahoe 2017; Hancock 2012; Jarman and Bell 2009: 9; OFMDFM 2013a: 65 cf. Knox and Quirk 2016: 118); the establishment of storytelling networks and a truth-telling process (Healing Through Remembering Trust cf. Kapur and Campbell 2004: 92; James 2008: 120; Smyth 2008: 74); the inclusion of paramilitary groups into formal political processes (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 157-8); and the need for coordination between the state and civil society in peacebuilding approaches (Byrne 2001; OFDFM 2013a: 83 cf. Knox and Quirk 2016: 118). Many also agree that Northern Ireland lacks shared spaces and essential opportunities for individuals from different communities to interact (see for example Boal 1996; Brewer *et al.* 2011: 5; Hancock 2012; Hughes *et al*. 2011: 982; Jarman and Bell 2009: 13; McGrellis 2010: 765-6; Stephenson Jr. and Zanotti 2012: 55-6; Whyte 1990: 33-9).

The main theoretical argument of this thesis is that the facilitation of inter-community relationship-building or 'bridging' social capital is the most promising strategy for effective and sustainable peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. Social capital approaches to conflict resolution aim to tackle the fear and mistrust that defines inter-community relations and promote positive contact between communities (Cannon 2003: 129-130; McGrellis 2010), and there is an established literature that examines the role of social capital within and between communities in post-conflict Northern Ireland (Cox 2009; Farrington 2008; Hughes 2015; Graham 2016; Morrow 2006; Muir 2011b; OFMDFM 2013a: 78 cf. Knox and Quirk 2016: 118).

This thesis provides a qualitative assessment of the Corrymeela Community's contribution to the peace process in the 'post-Agreement' period using social capital theory as a framework to understand its work. The Corrymeela Community is a locally-based peace and reconciliation Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Northern Ireland. In examining the experience of a local peacebuilding organisation through the lens of social capital, I explore what happens to the local peace sector when the conflict is over. While the dust of the conflict may have settled, the task of peacebuilding in this period has been fraught with challenges for NGOs in Northern Ireland.

This thesis and its findings add to a number of existing empirical studies that examine the everyday experience of locally-based NGOs and highlight the capacity and role of civil society in embedding a sustainable peace. Graham (2016: xviii) analyses "the social capital function" of 26 victim support groups in Northern Ireland. She discusses the levels of bonding and bridging social capital facilitated by these groups and finds that the value of the groups in peacebuilding is overlooked by elite actors and their experience is dependent on their leadership, levels of internal trust and the government-controlled policy and funding environment. I will explore the concepts of bridging and bonding social capital more fully later in this thesis, but in essence bonding capital refers to the level of interconnectedness between groups of the same identity community, while bridging capital refers to the interconnectedness between people from different communities. Potter and Abernethy (2013) examine women's cross-community training projects and argue that the period of transitional justice after conflict highlights the need and provides an opportunity to adjust the balance of gender marginalisation in formal political processes and society more widely. Cochrane and Dunn (2002) examine the range of peace and reconciliation organisations (PROs) in Northern Ireland and argue that, while civil society organisations do not have a direct impact on the peace process, they play a role in elevating "inclusivist" philosophies into political debate. A number of authors use empirical examples to emphasise the need for complementarity between civil society and elite actors in establishing a sustainable peace in Northern Ireland (see Acheson *et al*. 2011; Byrne 2001; White 2012). Acheson *et al*. (2012) argue that civil society has an important role, but that expectations of its capacity to build peace should be scaled back and it must operate in concert with other institutions. Many peacebuilding programmes identified as the most successful have focused on facilitating relationships and building trust between members of different communities (Hughes *et al*. 2008; Graham 2016: 27; Wilson 2010, 2013b, 2016).

There are some key studies that provide examples of community-based initiatives that have contributed to relational peace work. Donahoe (2017) provides examples of so called 'wee women's work', which encompasses many types of gendered inter-community engagement that build associational life 'on the ground' and contribute to "the slow work of peace through the banality of the everyday" (*ibid*.: 2). Hancock (2012) examines the Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group, an initiative between two communities at an interface in West Belfast, which combined community development with community relations. This project was a 'slow-

burner', initiated by members of the community in the late 1970s and cemented slowly into place throughout the following decades with small steps such as the establishment of a thrift shop, and a campaign to introduce traffic lights on the arterial road to the estates (Hall 2007 cf. Hancock 2012: 124). Intercommunity contacts were gradually established and maintained, and a number of projects which combined community development with community relations were set in motion. Stephenson Jnr. and Zanotti (2012: 56) examine the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI), an organisation which has played a "long-term and vital role…in Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland". While the CFNI is more of an umbrella organisation, the authors provide an effective description of the community peacebuilding context. Their analysis is rooted in peacebuilding theory and recognises the nuances involved in delivering programmes that effectively challenge the realities of sectarianism. They conclude that the "CFNI has crafted a postmodernist approach to peacebuilding that focuses on nurturing open-ended political processes based on sustained communication and reflection on accepted truths, instead of predefined outcomes or desired preordained solutions" (*ibid.*: 76).

This thesis uses a similar case study approach to identify and analyse the successes and challenges inherent in delivering effective peacebuilding programmes in post-Agreement Northern Ireland. A civil society understanding of peacebuilding is used that places value on the role of grassroots actors and individual and community relationships. NGOs are understood as platforms that provide the necessary environment to facilitate human interactions and social capital theory is used to understand the conditions that encourage the establishment of these relationships. Social capital is defined based upon a broad analytical consensus within the literature as the social resources available to an individual as a result of their human networks, memberships and relationships, which coalesce around particular shared norms, values and beliefs (Campbell *et al.* 2008:23; Cuesta 2009; Field 2009; Graham 2016: 20; Halpern 2005; Putnam 2000: 22; Morrow 2006: 65; Muir 2011b). Social capital is a result of shared norms of trust and reciprocity between individuals that generates positive outcomes for both parties. An understanding of bridging social capital is of particular importance in this analysis because it refers to the level of interconnectedness between members of different identity communities. This is discussed in greater detail later in Chapters Three and Four.

The case study of the Corrymeela Community

Using the case study of the Corrymeela Community, I will argue that, despite challenging political, social and financial conditions, there are opportunities for PROs to continue facilitating bridging social capital between formally opposed ethnic groups. In the case of Corrymeela, the building of social capital has been facilitated through both its formal and informal peacebuilding work. It is best known for its peace and reconciliation centre based close to Ballycastle, Northern Ireland, which facilitates programmes on community, schools, education, family, youth, and faith and life at its centre and in communities all over Northern Ireland.

Corrymeela was founded in 1965 by Ray Davey, with the support of his wife Kathleen Davey. Davey was a Presbyterian Minister who worked as a chaplain for the British Army and Queens University, Belfast. In 1965, along with a group of student volunteers, Davey bought the land on which Corrymeela now sits and began to establish what is now a six acre residential peace centre. The student volunteers later became Corrymeela's first 'Members', of which there are now a dispersed community of approximately 150 around Northern Ireland.

I became involved in Corrymeela in 2009 when I went to live and volunteer at its Centre in Ballycastle. Over a period of four months, I was involved in supporting group work, housekeeping and kitchen tasks. In August 2009, I was offered a job at Corrymeela as volunteer manager for six months and between 2010 and 2018 I was a Community Member. I was regularly involved with Corrymeela throughout this time, attending the Ballycastle Centre three to four times a year to assist with programme delivery. In 2016, I returned to work at Corrymeela as a centre support worker for a period of six months and lived onsite. The choice of Corrymeela as a case study was motivated by my knowledge of the organisation and my level of access, which allowed an in-depth understanding of the Community, how it operated and the challenges it faced.

Corrymeela has come under some academic scrutiny. Most recently, Robinson (2015) published a comparative analysis of two communities that embody the theology of reconciliation in their practice, rooting her analysis in Lederach's understanding of

reconciliation. She finds that, in a context where there is no shared agreement of what reconciliation means, Corrymeela has "begun a process of reclaiming the concept and trying to define their theology of reconciliation through the actions of their…communit(y)" (*ibid.*: 256). Love (1995) used quantitative survey methods in 1989 and 1990 to analyse Corrymeela's objectives, methodology and approach to peacebuilding and understanding of reconciliation. He highlights a number of the Community's successes, such as its provision of a safe space to individuals terrorised from their homes, and its challenges, such as participants' re-entry into their communities following programme engagement at Corrymeela. Love argued that the barriers to Corrymeela's success ultimately related to limited funding and number of staff. Journalist Alf McCreary published two observations on Corrymeela. *Corrymeela: the Search for Peace* (1975) used a narrative approach to portray a perhaps disproportionately positive picture of Corrymeela's impact. His second book, *In War and Peace* (2007), provides a more nuanced account of the Community, including its operational and internal challenges. In 2010, Community Member David Godfrey wrote a Masters dissertation on Corrymeela, analysing the work of the organisation from the perspective of incarnational theology. Corrymeela is also used as a case study in a number of other academic publications on peacebuilding (see for example Cichon 2008; Wells 1999; Wilson 2008) and faith-based approaches to reconciliation (Geldart 1999). In addition, there are a number of publications originating from serving Members and staff of the organization that use examples of Corrymeela's work to evidence arguments for specific approaches to reconciliation (see for example Davey 1993, 2005, 2012; Dudley 2013, 2015; Hatch 2014a, 2014b; Hutchinson 2019; Lascaris 2013; Morrow 2003; Morrow and Kaptein 1993; Ó Tuama 2013, 2014; Reaves 2014; Stevens 2008, 2014; Tombs 2013; Wilson 2013).

Research Question

The research question of this project was formulated based on what contribution would be practicable and most meaningful. The thesis explores the experiences of Corrymeela in Northern Ireland in the period between 2009 and 2019. Using this case study, the following research question is addressed:

> What are the experiences of locally-based Peace and Reconciliation Organisations (PROs) in post-Agreement Northern Ireland?

Whilst this thesis principally concentrates on the experience of Corrymeela, where possible, generalisable trends that apply to the third sector more widely are identified and discussed. The research question highlights a plurality of experience for individuals and organisations in Northern Ireland, so while there are generalisable trends identified, it is recognised that there is no single, communal experience.

Methodology

A qualitative methodology was developed, that recognised the subjective nature of the research question. This thesis adopts a post-structuralist approach in identifying truth, and rejects any attempt to isolate cause and effect relationships or establish a scientific truth (Dunn and Neumann 2016: 263-4). The objective is not to establish a verifiable truth, but to record and analyse individuals' interpretation of their own experiences and the meanings attached to them (Locke *et al.* 1987 cf. Love 1995: 70). Autesserre (2017: 117) describes this as a "situation-specific approach" that gives value and weight to the perceptions, experiences and lived realities of participants. This approach considers a programme as 'successful' when different actors in the process recognise and agree its effectiveness (*ibid*.).

This thesis requires identification of concepts such as trust and reciprocity within relationships. Extrapolating such complex concepts depends on in-depth discussions on the quality of relationships (Arber 2002: 62; Hughes *et al*. 2011: 979-80; Morrow 2006: 64-5). Quantitative methods to measure levels of inter-community mixing or trust can often miss the reality and impact of social interactions and the extent to which groups remain separate (Amin 2002; Hughes *et al*. 2011: 979-80).

Qualitative methods allow the depth and sustainability of relationships to be examined. To this end, interview questions were devised to allow respondents to define what they considered

important. As Jones (1985: 46) contends: "in order to understand other persons' constructions of reality, we would do well to ask them…and ask them in such a way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and *a priori* by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings". In his research on Corrymeela McCreary (2007: 64) argued that, while a historical analysis of the organisation was important, "the essence of Corrymeela…lies in the personal stories of those who have made a contribution to the life and work of the Community". Analysis of experience therefore relies on the critical interpretation of key stakeholders to Corrymeela and their understanding of impact.

Following a systematic and extensive literature review, field research was carried out at Corrymeela between 2017 and 2018. Primary research with the Corrymeela Community was conducted using a qualitative multi-method data collection approach, which involved recording semi-structured interviews with organisational leaders and stakeholders, documentary analysis, and participant observations. A crucial aspect of the Corrymeela ethos is to give value to narrative approaches and story-telling, and this is demonstrated in much of the evidence gathered. Corrymeela's documentary archives and oral histories provide a source of particularly rich data and vivid insights into the experience of the organisation and its participants. In 2016, I negotiated a data-sharing agreement with Corrymeela on their programme evaluation that allowed access to visiting group participants' programme evaluation forms. I familiarised myself with Corrymeela's history, ethos and strategy by examining the organisation's website, magazines, and other published academic or 'grey' literature (non-academic literature, such as policy papers, organisational reports, evaluations, that are not published or distributed in the same way as academic or commercially published literature, e.g. they may be published solely online or as hard copy pamphlets only).

Field research was conducted over three extended field trips between 2017 and 2018, beginning with pilot interviews in 2017 to establish important themes as a baseline for further investigation. The thesis also includes auto-ethnographic research from the periods between 2009 and 2010 and 2016 when I lived at the Corrymeela Community. During this time I was involved in numerous projects in the areas of cross-community youth work, integrated education, women's empowerment and community development. Living and working onsite

at the Ballycastle Centre meant that I was deeply immersed in the life of Corrymeela for long periods, which provided me a unique insight into its everyday practices.

Interviewees represented a range of demographics, but almost all had extensive experience in grassroots peacebuilding work, mainly at Corrymeela and mainly in Northern Ireland. Altogether, 39 individuals were interviewed, 26 of whom had direct experience in facilitating peacebuilding programmes and all but 3 of whom resided full time in Northern Ireland (or had done while working at Corrymeela). Full interviewee details are provided in Appendix 1. Access to interviewees was gained via a process of snowball sampling beginning with previous leaders and other key stakeholders at Corrymeela. Snowball sampling was additionally useful because it revealed the networks of people within the Community and highlighted internal networks and connections (Arber 2002: 63). Interview recordings were transcribed and thereafter thematic content analysis was used to identify key points made by respondents, which were subsequently separated into theme and sub-theme areas using Microsoft OneNote software. Initially, interviewees were provided the option of being anonymised or attributed in the research. The vast majority wished to be attributed, however due to the sensitive nature of information provided, the decision was made to anonymise the sample by using pseudonyms. The leader of the Community during the research, Pádraig Ó Tuama, and Iain Davey, the son of founder Ray Davey, are the only interviewees not allocated a pseudonym. Due to their unique identities, it would be impossible to anonymise them. Attributing Pádraig also allowed connections between Pádraig's interview and his published work to be referenced.

Interviewees were aged between 23 and 78; 21 were male and 18 female, and the majority were engaged with Corrymeela in some way – employment, volunteering or as a Community Member – during the period of research. Although almost all resided in Northern Ireland, only 24 of the respondents identified as Irish or Northern Irish (the rest were originally from a variety of European countries, England, Wales, Scotland, Canada and the USA). This variety, which is not representative of Northern Ireland's demography, is likely due to the international nature of Corrymeela's work, which actively recruits volunteers from abroad (who then remain as staff) and the diverse nature of the Community, which proactively welcomes people from different backgrounds.

A number of empirical studies of peace and conflict in Northern Ireland select samples based on religious identity. Corrymeela is an ecumenical community and one of the few institutions

that has endeavoured to distance itself from the binary religious markers of 'Catholic', 'Protestant' or 'other'. Therefore, I did not ask participants their religious affiliation as I deemed this may cause offence and/or be considered irrelevant in terms of the Community's work. Some interviews were conducted with married couples and this was an organic process rather than a specific methodological choice. Many Corrymeela community Members are part of a married or cohabiting couple where their partner is also a Member. When arranging interviews members asked if it was to be together or separately, and I provided the choice - often it was simply more practical to interview together.

Corrymeela's membership is majority Presbyterian, majority middle class and aged in their 50s, 60s and 70s. The volunteer team tend to be younger and from far more diverse religious leanings, including a high proportion of atheists, and various socioeconomic backgrounds. Efforts were made to interview a representative sample based on this distribution, and the resulting participants comprise a largely representative cross-section of the Community. However, a methodological limitation must be highlighted. The participation of working class individuals within Corrymeela tends to originate from its staff base at the Ballycastle Centre and some of the Northern Irish volunteer team. While a number of volunteers were happy to be involved in the research, many of the serving members of staff approached were not prepared to be interviewed. The reasons for this were not clear but there was a certain wariness associated with having their views recorded and attributed. I was asked by some staff members whether the interview would be anonymous. Some of this response may be linked to the turbulent context of Corrymeela during the period of research. So, whilst the views of Corrymeela staff members are canvassed in the interview sample, *current* staff voices may be underrepresented in this research.

Positionality

Sanghera and Thapar-Björkert (2008: 553) state that "(p)ositionality frames social and professional relationships in the research field and also governs the 'tone' of the research". As a former employee and volunteer, I had a high level of prior knowledge and research access at Corrymeela. During my research I was treated as an 'insider' (*ibid*.) at Corrymeela and granted a comparable level of access as when I was a member of staff. I was given access to a range

of organisational documents and archives at Corrymeela; I had open access to all of the spaces at the Ballycastle Centre; and I was allowed to either observe or participate in group programme activities, volunteer trainings and daily worship.

Sanghera and Thapar-Björkert also note that where "trust, rapport and reciprocity already (exist), gatekeepers who were friends more readily opened the gate" (*ibid.*: 554). I was acquainted with most of the interviewees from my previous involvement at Corrymeela or other employment in Northern Ireland, and this built trust and allowed respondents to communicate openly. My 'insider' status reassured many respondents, who were more honest about their experience at Corrymeela than they may have been with an outsider whom they perceived as having an agenda inconsistent with the Community's. In addition, because interviewees were aware of my knowledge of Corrymeela, they could describe more complex concepts without qualifying their experience with background information. My research was perceived by most as a positive opportunity for Corrymeela. I was regularly approached by Members who asked to be interviewed, to the extent I had to decline some requests because they would have skewed the demographic of interviewees. As such, I acted as the gatekeeper for my own research as there were very few barriers in terms of access and none that impeded my intended research approach.

I highlight that my existing relationships and status, and the power it allowed in terms of the research, should be considered during this thesis. While this thesis draws on an array of triangulated sources on Corrymeela, my existing relationships and past experiences of Corrymeela have certainly "governed the tone" of this research (*ibid.*)

Whilst this research is primarily self-funded, I received two research grants of £1500 each from the Ray and Kathleen Davey Fund, which partially covered university tuition fees. Ray and Kathleen Davey were the founders of the Corrymeela Community and this trust awards grants to individuals' education and for the development of knowledge on peacebuilding. The grants were not conditional and did not influence the direction, content or conclusions of research in any way.

Discourses

Shared norms are a key component of social capital theory. Thus, when discussing the social capital of individuals and the development of relationships, it is necessary to unpick what is assumed as 'normal'. I refer within the thesis to both Corrymeela's and Northern Ireland's dominant discourses. This term refers to different types of communication, realised through a variety of forms, that reinforce norms and function to produce and reproduce the dominant power dynamics within a society (Bloor and Bloor 2007: 5; Dunn and Neumann 2016: 262; Schröter and Taylor 2018: 3-4). Discourse analysis understands language and other forms of communication to give meaning and create knowledge (Derrida 1981: 11), and assumes "knowledge as constitutive of reality" (Dunn and Neumann 2016: 262). Discourses are influential in the shaping of perceived "truth" and this can result in power imbalances and specific, sometimes discriminatory, perceptions of truth being normalised and considered as objective and incontestable (Bloor and Bloor 2007: 5; Dunn and Neumann 2016: 262; Schröter and Taylor 2018: 3-4). This practice is not necessarily conscious, rather it is a learned social process of adhering to what is considered 'normal' (Keller 1994; Schröter and Taylor 2018: 7). Norms are reinforced by discourse, which are types of communication realised through a variety of forms, including spoken and written language, images, art media such as music or dance, and social practice such as ceremonies, celebrations and other forms of routine human engagement (Bloor and Bloor 2007: 1-2, 8; Dunn and Neumann 2016: 262).

In Chapter Three I discuss the dominant discourses in Northern Ireland and how these have been established and sustained, and how Corrymeela uses alternative discourses to challenge sectarianism and "us and them" narratives. Critical discourse analysis serves to expose the subjectivity of the dominant discourses, by offering alternatives that challenge dominant power structures (Sanghera 2016). This approach involves distancing oneself from mainstream discourses in an attempt to unpick the assumed truths in any one social reality (Dunn and Neumann 2016: 262). Within the Corrymeela Community, the rhetoric of "speaking truth to power" is often used to describe this process. Corrymeela's official discourses are determined by its leadership and Members and realised through its website, magazine, newsletters, the verbal representations of the Community by its members and associates, artwork displayed at the centre, community traditions and ceremonies, and the telling and re-telling of stories about Corrymeela, the Northern Irish conflict and reconciliation. Corrymeela's voice runs counter to

the dominant social and political blocs on either side of the unionist/nationalist divide (see McQuaid 2012: 71 for an analysis of the dominant discourses in Northern Irish politics) and discourse analysis is used to explore this divergence. I argue that while the dominant cultural norms in Northern Ireland reject the notions of trust, reciprocity and shared norms between different identity groups, Corrymeela proactively encourages their realisation.

Justification

This research aims to contribute to a small but developing field of knowledge that challenges mainstream approaches to peacebuilding. There are a number of limitations to academic understandings of peacebuilding, specifically those that relate to the Liberal Peace. Peacebuilding practice has increasingly become a gendered, ethnocentric and 'expert'-led process – shaped by the 'lessons learned' by researchers and practitioners across different territories and communities – and understood as a one-size-fits-all model which can be imported to other conflict zones (Goetschel and Hagmann, 2009; Jabri 2007; MacGinty 2012, 2014: 551; Richmond 2011; Roberts 2011). Mainstream conceptions of peacebuilding assume the "primacy of the state" (MacGinty 2014: 551) as the dominant or only actor in instilling peace. Top-down approaches to peacebuilding have traditionally been heralded as the most effective and have been based on the power of the rule of law, democracy and liberal market economies to bring peace to conflicted states (Chandler 2015: 27-8; MacGinty 2011, 2014). This approach is reflected in Northern Ireland by the imposition of 'strings-attached' funding, discussed in Chapters Six and Eight, which dictates pre-determined peacebuilding outcomes from above. These traditionalist understandings of peacebuilding tend to ignore local context and how this may influence individual and group behaviour. The weaknesses of the neoliberal approach are notable in Northern Ireland and this research is intended to narrow this gap by diverting focus to the local context and the value of local actors' contribution to peace.

Despite the implementation of the peace agreement, many sociocultural, economic and political challenges remain in Northern Ireland. These in turn undermine inter-community relations. Berents (2015: 187) describes the *barrios* (slums) in Colombia as an example of a visible legacy of conflict. Unlike some other contexts, many of the legacies of the Northern Irish conflict are not wholly visible. Instead, the conflict is realised in absences. It is acted out in

the lack of interactions between identity groups, the lack of shared space and cultural events, and the lack of communal understandings of history and victimhood. In terms of direct violence, Northern Ireland has experienced a series of events in the past five years that have signified a shift towards more serious violence and the residual dominance of paramilitary groups. Recent unrest and acts of extreme violence in Derry/Londonderry are symbolic of the limits of Northern Ireland's peace. In a 1994 statement, following the ceasefire and other developments, the Leader of the Corrymeela Community, Trevor Williams (cf. Pulford 1997), recognised this ongoing challenge and justified the continued need for organisations like Corrymeela. He stated that "there is work for us as long as underlying attitudes are unchanged" and emphasised that "peace is more than the absence of violence", contending that in the Corrymeela Community's experience "we have glimpsed the possibility of another Northern Ireland, where the differences between us are no longer a source of threat, but a cause for celebration". Corrymeela emphasises the need for a proactive process to tackle the post-Agreement stagnation of peace, and this research intends to highlight the need for continued, targeted and coordinated strategies to further embed shared spaces and transform inter-community relationships.

Overview of the research

The thesis is divided into nine chapters, including this introductory chapter.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the Corrymeela Community. Corrymeela's history and structure are examined. Thereafter Corrymeela's identity is divided into three components. First, Corrymeela is examined as a formal peace and reconciliation organisation, tasked with delivering peacebuilding programmes and complying with the needs of its funders, users, staff, and Members. Second, it is understood as an ecumenical Christian Community. Corrymeela welcomes people of "all faiths and none" and ecumenism has been a central facet of its identity since its outset in 1965. Third, Corrymeela's embodiment as an 'Open Village', which promotes non-violent discourses and challenges mainstream understandings of conflict is explored.

Chapter Three serves two purposes. First, it explores the social and political context of civil society in Northern Ireland and provides a theoretical framework for analysis. It is argued that the segregation of society has been institutionalised via a system of consociational government and that Northern Ireland cannot yet be considered to be at peace (Morrow *et al*. 2018: 37). This forms the starting point of analysis for this thesis. The ways in which societal segregation are realised and how this has impacted upon civil society are explored. This discussion introduces the context in which NGOs operate and peacebuilding efforts are conducted. Second, an analysis of social capital theory and a theoretical framework are presented, which draw heavily from Putnam's (1993, 2000) theoretical understandings. The application of social capital theory to analyse relations in Northern Ireland is discussed and the 'dark side' of social capital, namely its capacity for exclusion and the prominence of 'perverse social capital' (Portes 2014; Rubio 1997) in post-conflict states, is also examined.

Chapter Four extends the analysis of social capital theory, dividing the theory into the three discrete elements of trust, reciprocity and shared norms. This chapter explores understandings of these elements in existing literature. A large part of this chapter is dedicated to Corrymeela's focus on norms and how it challenges the mainstream discourses of sectarianism and the notion of "us and them" in Northern Irish society.

Chapters Five to Eight present the empirical findings from field research, examining the ways in which Corrymeela has created an environment conducive to the exchange of productive social capital, and the challenges that have prevented it from creating this environment. The analysis is divided across its formal and informal work, and by its experience facilitating productive social capital and the associated challenges affecting its experience.

Chapter Five examines the exchange of productive social capital in Corrymeela's formal work. It is argued that in its formal work, Corrymeela promotes norms which challenge the dominant discourses of sectarianism and division in Northern Ireland. The Community encourages relationships between groups of strangers who attend the Ballycastle Centre and how its delivery of cross-community work has facilitated bridging social capital between individuals of different community identities.

Chapter Six analyses the challenges that have impacted Corrymeela's formal programme work and discusses how these have affected its capacity to facilitate bridging capital. Changes in the funding environment have posed the most significant challenge to Corrymeela's programme delivery, namely significant reductions in funding and changes in the conditions of grants. In recent years, the requirements to secure funding have changed and grants tend to be awarded based on the achievement of pre-determined outcomes defined by the funder. This has significantly restricted the capacity for Corrymeela to create the conditions conducive to the building of bridging social capital. Corrymeela has faced additional challenges in engaging some groups due to the prevalence of perverse social capital in Northern Ireland. It is concluded that the type of social capital facilitated by Corrymeela does not generate positive outcomes for all groups. In the final section of the chapter, the challenges of professionalisation resulting from Corrymeela's evolution from a social movement to a formal, operational NGO are explored.

Chapter Seven analyses the exchange of productive social capital in Corrymeela's informal practices. It argues that the informal activities of the organisation are how bridging social capital is most effectively facilitated. Through its use of space, rituals and Community culture, Corrymeela has sought to create a liminal space and institutionalise practices and behaviours that contribute to peaceful discourses. It is argued that Corrymeela's informal practices have made a significant contribution to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland during the conflict and in the post-Agreement period.

Chapter Eight examines the challenges that have impacted on Corrymeela's informal practices. Research reports a tension between the desired outcomes of funders and the reality of Corrymeela's informal practices. The outputs of the organisation's informal activities tend to defy quantifiable measurement and are inconsistent with the reporting mechanisms required by funding bodies. This chapter offers discussion of how the Liberal Peace agenda of the EU, British and Irish governments has challenged Corrymeela's traditional approach. Corrymeela has also experienced challenges relating to its provision of a universal welcome and in attracting the engagement of certain groups. Field research identified how the organisation's faith-based approach alienates some people, and its innovative practice and alternative

discourses sometimes served to deter some people's engagement. This necessarily limits its capacity to facilitate the exchange of social capital between certain groups.

There are number of appendices to this thesis.

Appendix 1 provides demographic information on the interviewees that supports the findings in the empirical chapters.

Appendix 2 is a written statement from the Chair of Council to the Corrymeela Community dated 04/04/16.

Appendix 3 is a selection of American universities and other organisations recently hosted at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre.

Language and Terminology

There are a number of language points to be clarified at the outset.

In this thesis, Community with a capital 'C' denotes the Corrymeela Community, inclusive of its 150 or so Members, staff and volunteer team. Community with a lower case 'c' indicates the more commonplace definition of the term, that is, of a group of persons who share space and value systems. Similarly, Members written with a capital 'M' denotes Members of the Corrymeela Community.

I refer throughout to the 'third sector'. This is defined as the range of formal and self-governing community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations operating within civil society that are neither public nor private agencies (National Audit Office, n.d.; Salamon and Anheier 1992: 135-6).

The purpose of this thesis is not to analyse the reasons for the conflict in Northern Ireland. I consider the conflict to have been between two main ethnic identities that are primarily defined by religion. As per Lijphart's (1975: 87-8) analysis, it is recognised that religious identity strongly coincides with other ideological identity types, such as political, national and native/settler distinctions. The terms Protestant/Catholic or Nationalist/Unionist are used to distinguish the different communities where it is deemed appropriate. Where possible I have avoided such diametrically opposed or binary definitions. Although much of Corrymeela's work has focused on sectarianism and facilitating contact between people from different religious backgrounds, its main objective is the overcoming of divisions in society between people of *difference* based on social class, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, religion and faith, or other divisions.

The modern conflict, sometimes referred to as 'the Troubles', is defined as the period of violent political conflict lasting between 1968 and 1998 in the geographical region of Northern Ireland. The focus of this research is the decade between 2009 and 2019, and this is referred to as the post-Agreement period unless otherwise stated. This project therefore concentrates on contemporary Northern Ireland. Clearly, these years were moulded by the enormous political efforts of both London and Dublin to stabilise the region in previous decades. This study is not intended to denigrate, or downplay, such peacebuilding efforts. But its own focus deliberately lies elsewhere – on the current and cultural circumstances in the territory, and how the peace process has worked out in practice in the present day.

Chapter Two: Explaining the Corrymeela Community

Introduction

To locate the experience of Corrymeela, this chapter offers an explanation of Corrymeela's history, organisational structure and leadership. The first section of this chapter describes the formation of Corrymeela and how it is located in the wider context of the Northern Irish third sector.

The second section examines Corrymeela's identity, which can be defined by three key components. First, Corrymeela is a formalised NGO that identifies as a Peace and Reconciliation organisation (PRO). Second, it is an ecumenical Christian community that welcomes people of different religious traditions and backgrounds. Third, Corrymeela has positioned itself as an intentional culture of peace that challenges dominant discourses of division and conflict. This aspect of its identity is described in various ways, including as a 'place of meeting', an 'open village', and the 'Hill of Harmony' and a 'lumpy crossing place' (both based on the translation of the original Irish 'Corrymellagh' (Corrymeela 2015a; Davey *et al*. 2012: 5-20; McCreary 1975: 27-9). This ethos has guided the direction and content of much of the Community's peace work. Some of Corrymeela's most effective peacebuilding practice is identified as taking place outside the remit of its formal programmatic work. In the post-Agreement period, NGO independence has been curbed by increasingly prescriptive funding grants, thus Corrymeela's capacity to facilitate everyday human encounters between people of different communities, and therefore build bridging social capital, has been challenged and in some ways diminished. Counter to many organisations however, this approach encompasses longer-term objectives of peace and reconciliation unrelated to the 'Troubles', which has allowed Corrymeela to adapt its programmes in order to survive in the contemporary funding environment.

Case studies of other peacebuilding actors may not require such an in-depth explanation of the organisation under scrutiny. However, to analyse the experience of Corrymeela I consider it necessary to describe it in more depth because the Community's identity and approach have directly facilitated the building of bridging social capital. This research concludes that

Corrymeela's formal peacebuilding programmes are significant to its experience in the post-Agreement era, however many interviewees described that its radical hospitality and the opportunity of encounter and relationship formation was central to its success as a peacebuilding actor.

The three elements of Corrymeela's identity are self-reinforcing and sustain each other. Particularly in its early years, the ecumenical and faith traditions of Corrymeela offered it legitimacy as a reconciliation community in Northern Ireland and secured its membership. As the third sector became increasingly professionalised, Corrymeela's identity as a PRO has provided it with added legitimacy and offered a counterbalance to the vague and woolly notion associated with its identity as the Open Village.

This chapter examines the three parts of Corrymeela's identity both to set the scene for the following empirical chapter, and to explain how the Community has forged the conditions necessary to construct productive relations across communities.

The foundation, ethos and history of Corrymeela

Corrymeela was founded in 1965 by Ray Davey, with the support of his wife Kathleen. Davey was a Presbyterian Minister who had previously worked as a chaplain for the YMCA during the war and in 1965 was based at Queens University, Belfast. That year, along with a group of student volunteers, he bought the land on which Corrymeela now sits and began to establish what is often referred to as Ireland's oldest peace centre (Davey *et* al. 2012; Interviews: Andrew Bruce 30/09/2016; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017). The student volunteers later became Corrymeela's first 'Community Members', of which there is now a dispersed community around Northern Ireland of approximately 150. At the time of its purchase, Corrymeela consisted of a main timber building (referred to as the Main House) and a series of small annex-style huts on the top plateau of a cliff overlooking the Atlantic coast, which had been owned by the Northern Irish Holiday Fellowship. Davey bought the site for £7000 without having secured funding, however he and his student followers managed to raise the funds within 10 days and Corrymeela was officially opened in October of the same year (Corrymeela 2015b; Interview: Alex Warner 27/2/2018).

Corrymeela was established in a time of relative stability and peace, and prior to the outbreak of the modern 'Troubles'. In this period, Ray Davey perceived a changing attitude amongst young people during his time at Queens University (Davey 1993: 64). He sensed that students in the 1950s and 1960s were highly motivated to take action towards positive social change in Northern Ireland and internationally and wished to galvanize this feeling (*ibid.*).

Literature on Corrymeela highlights that an effective analysis of the Community must consider the character and experiences of its founder and how these influenced the Community's formation (Godfrey 2010: 4; Robinson 2015: 135). Davey and other observers identified his experiences during the Second World War; his engagement the Iona Community; and his relationship with Tullio Vinay, who had established the Agapè community in Italy, as key influences in the formation of Corrymeela (Davey 1985, 1993; Morrow cf. Robinson 2015: 111; Stevens 2008). Lyle Newton (Interview: 12/10/2017) stated:

> "I think Ray was aware that all our fractures: of class, economics, education, are all the same divide. Whereas in England, you've got multiple fractures but they're all relatively minor. All our fractures have coincided. I think Ray had understood this because of his time in prison camp during the war and coming back, into a Northern Ireland which was clearly sectarian."

Nathan Reid (Interview: 11/10/2017) stated that he understood Davey's experience during the war to have "led him to have this more advanced idea of ecumenism as community, and building community as the only hope for the world". Davey's wartime experiences certainly reinforced his belief that Christian Community was the best possible hope for a peaceful society (Davey 1954; Interview: Nathan Reid 11/10/2017; Stevens 2008). Davey was initially stationed at YMCA Tobruk in Egypt during the war and found the need to broaden his chaplaincy to support soldiers from many different religious backgrounds (Davey 1993: 28-33). He described the small Torbruk chapel as "the most ecumenical institution I have ever been associated with", as it was used by Jews, Catholics, Plymouth Brethren, Church of England and the YMCA (Interview with Ray Davey cf. Callister 1990). Coming from what

Davey termed a 'Pan-Presbyterian world' into a context in which Christians of different denominations could engage in dialogue and learn from sharing, particularly in times of hardship, was hugely impactful for him (*ibid.*; Interview: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017).

Davey's experience in the Prisoner of War (POW) camps in Italy and Germany served to crystallise these ideas (McCreary 1975: 26). In 1942 Davey was captured by the Nazis and spent time in six POW camps. In 1945 Davey was moved to a Dresden POW camp and allowed to act as an area chaplain for soldiers in camps nearby. Davey was present at a camp close to Dresden when the city was bombed. He described his experience as "apocalyptic" and bearing first-hand witness to "the devastation of modern war and what it cost in human terms" had a momentous effect on him (Interview: Ray Davey in Callister 1990). Ellen Puckett (Interview: 7/10/2017) recalled speaking with Davey on his experience at Dresden and him stating that from this he realised "war doesn't work".

Once Corrymeela was established, Davey often spoke to Members about his experiences and learnings during the war. Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/17) recalled that "Ray talked about people in prisoner in war camp losing their hope, losing a sense of being, and those …that came into an experience of community, seemed to survive, and part of surviving was that they felt for one another, they supported one another, they told stories with one another about their wider world, and their hopes they had for the future, for their families". Davey spoke of how these experiences remained with him and shaped his thinking about community (Interview with Ray Davey cf. Callister 1990).

The Iona Community in Scotland was founded in 1938 by George MacLeod, a Church of Scotland Minister, who served as a Captain in World War One. MacLeod identified as a pacifist and was actively involved in social justice and poverty reduction, working in a Govan parish during the Great Depression. Motivated by the stark inequalities he had observed during the war (Mary MacLeod cf. Muir 2011a: 10) and within his parish, in 1938 MacLeod began a project to rebuild Iona Cathedral, recruiting a number of unemployed workers from the Clyde's shipyards and clergyman-in-training who were to assist in the work as labourers (Ferguson 2001; Iona (History page) n.d.; Muir 2011a).

The Iona Community describes itself as:

> "An ecumenical Christian community of men and women from different walks of life and different traditions in the Church engaged together, and with people of goodwill across the world, in acting, reflecting and praying for justice, peace and the integrity of creation; convinced that the inclusive community we seek must be embodied in the community we practice." (Iona Community 2017)

MacLeod emphasised the necessity of incorporating the Christian faith into all aspects of one's everyday life (Robinson 2015: 114) and aimed to make the Church relevant to communities, especially those living in poverty or experiencing hardship (Muir 2011a: 11-12). Davey connected with MacLeod soon after his return from Dresden. In the early 1960s Davey and his student followers visited Iona and observed how faith and everyday life could be connected, and were inspired to bring a version of this type of community to Northern Ireland (Interview with John Morrow cf. Callister 1990).

Tullio Vinay was a Waldensian pastor in Italy, known for harbouring and assisting Jewish families escape Nazi Germany during the Second World War. Like MacLeod, Vinay perceived the Church to be out of touch with the needs of its people and highlighted the need for genuine community engagement (Robinson 2015: 116). Vinay had become involved in community-building during the civil war in Northern Italy in the mid-1940s (Interview with Davey cf. Callister 1990). He emphasised the importance of reconciliation and reconstruction, particularly in the context of the aftermath of the war and its atrocities. Vinay founded the Agapè Centre in 1947, which describes itself as an international, ecumenical meeting place, for people of all religions and none "who leave behind their assumptions of knowing and holding the truth" (Agapè n.d.).

In the early 1960s, Davey took groups of students to visit the countries in which he had been prisoner of war (Interview with Davey cf. Callister 1990) and they visited Agapè to explore the

experiences of other Christian ecumenical communities (McCreary 1975: 27-9). Davey recalled one of the students asking him what was stopping them establishing a similar community in Northern Ireland (Interview with Davey cf. Callister 1990). Davey and Vinay developed a strong bond and Corrymeela's official opening in October 1965 was led by Vinay. During his speech, he declared that he envisaged the Community would be "a place of encounter and dialogue" for both religious believers and non-believers, and that it should act as a "question mark to the Church everywhere" to remind them to be responsive to modern contexts and "free from this instinct of preservation" (cf. McCreary 1975: 33). The parallels between the foundations and objectives of Iona, Agapè and Corrymeela are striking, and the theology of MacLeod – combined with that of Vinay – are evident in Corrymeela's vision of community (Robinson 2015: 135).

Organisational structure and leadership

The community element of Corrymeela means it is atypical in its structure as a PRO. Corrymeela is made up of 150 Members and 50 associate Members around Northern Ireland (Corrymeela Community 2015c). In addition, Corrymeela has a transient community of several thousand volunteers (*ibid*). Relationships in Community are publicly encouraged and celebrated, and many volunteers visit and revisit the Corrymeela Centre throughout their lives (Personal observations 2009; 2017, 2018; Volunteering at Corrymeela Ballycastle 2013). The dispersed Community of Corrymeela makes the organisation as a whole difficult to categorise. While Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre and Belfast Office together are formally registered with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland, the wider Community reflects Kaldor's (2004) categorisation of a social network, which she describes as "forms of communication and information exchange" (Kaldor 2004: 86, 91, 95). Structurally, Corrymeela is organised into a number of cell groups, mainly in Ballycastle and Belfast, for Members to meet regularly and take part in prayer meetings and fundraising activities. Many Members also run projects from their Churches under the banner of Corrymeela (Interview: April Geddes 29/1/2018). Corrymeela can be understood to embody a number of social forms and was described by one interviewee as 'amorphic' (*ibid*.).

Physically, Corrymeela is located across two main sites: the Corrymeela Centre at Ballycastle and the Belfast Office. The site at Ballycastle covers approximately six acres, and is located on a clifftop plateau about one mile outside of the town of Ballycastle. The site is made up of six main buildings: the Main House and the Davey Village, which are residential spaces with conference rooms, kitchens and dining rooms, used to host groups and facilitate programmes; the Croí, which is Corrymeela's place of worship; Coventry House and Cedar Haven, which are the accommodation residences for on-site volunteers; and the Recreation buildings, which house materials for outdoor activities and arts and crafts. The buildings are located more or less centrally around an area of grass and a small playpark. Corrymeela's Belfast office is the administrative hub of Corrymeela. Its location has changed over recent years and it now shares a space with the staff of fellow PRO Mediation Northern Ireland (MNI) on University Street in central Belfast. Many staff work between both sites, although some – especially those associated with the logistical operation of the centre – are based solely at the Ballycastle Centre.

Between 1965 and 2014, the leader of Community was responsible for the role of spiritual director as well as acting as the chief executive officer (CEO) for the organisation. Second in command to the community leader was the Centre Director who was responsible for the operational management of the Ballycastle Centre and Corrymeela's wider programme work. In 2014, a major review saw the leadership role restructured, with the Leader of the Community being explicitly responsible for "spiritual direction, vision and pastoral care" (Corrymeela 2015a) and an Executive Director post being created which oversaw the previous executive role of the leader, as well as the management of the Centre and other operational matters. Until 2014, every permanent leader of the Community had been a heterosexual, married, protestant male, with the exception of a short period in 2010 when Community and Council Member Kate Pettis stepped in after David Stevens' untimely death.

Between 2013 and 2019, Pádraig Ó Tuama was Community leader and his appointment signified a shift away from the traditional leadership and programmatic themes of Corrymeela. Pádraig is a poet, theologian, and practising Catholic who has been actively involved in lobbying the Catholic Church to amend what it teaches on the LGBT+ community (Shine 2018). Pádraig is a gay man and it should be emphasised that, while the sexuality of an NGO leader is considered irrelevant in many parts of Scotland, England and Wales, the context of

Northern Ireland is very different. Northern Ireland has lagged behind the rest of the UK in recognising and implementing equal rights for LGBT+ people. Homosexuality was legalised in Northern Ireland 15 years after England and Wales, and legislation allowing same sex marriage, adopted in the rest of the UK, was consistently blocked by Stormont and finally introduced in 2019 following a Westminster ruling. The change of leadership is particularly noteworthy in relation to Corrymeela's religious identity. Although identifying as ecumenical, Corrymeela has demonstrated a preference towards Presbyterianism in its membership and practice (Corrymeela 2018a; Interviews: Alex Warner 27/1/2018; Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Teresa Chapman 1/2/2018). Corrymeela's roots were strongly associated with the Presbyterian Centre at Queens and the majority of its existing membership is Protestant (Cichon 2000: 221). The Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland has condemned homosexuality, vocally so during the period of study (in 2018, for example, the Church voted against membership of those in same-sex relationships and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) have consistently blocked votes on same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland). Corrymeela had previously conducted some work around LGBT+ identity, although much of this was managed by Pádraig in his informal role as Faith and Life worker in the early 2000s. During the period of his leadership, the Community became more prominent in promoting LGBT+ rights and mediating the interface between the church and LGBT+ communities (see Corrymeela 2015d for example).

Between 2014 and 2020, Corrymeela was in a state of flux, attributed by interviewees to changes in its financial situation, structure and leadership. The division of leadership in 2013 had followed two major restructures in recent years and there was a sense of fatigue amongst some regarding the changes (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Alex Warner 27/1/2018; Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; April Geddes 29/1/2018). In addition, a series of gaps in leadership left Corrymeela somewhat adrift. In May 2017, Executive Director Colin Craig alerted Corrymeela's Board that he intended to retire. Teri Murphy, at that time at Corrymeela as its first 'scholar in residence', took on the role of Interim Executive Director and remained in this role for approximately one year. In June 2018, a new Executive Director, John Stewart, was appointed but in August went on unexpected long-term sickness leave. The organisation was left somewhat rudderless, and throughout 2018 was led by Council or interim leaders appointed from CO3, an organisation that provides temporary CEOs to the third sector. In January 2019 Tim Magowan began as Interim ED, the permanent post remained on hold for

John Stewart to return from extended sickness absence. This instability, combined with the changes in funding and political context, explored in the following chapter, represented a significant challenge for Corrymeela and its contribution to meaningful peacebuilding work (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 2018; Max Benson 2017; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018).

Corrymeela and the third sector

This section locates Corrymeela in the broader context of the Northern Irish third sector. Corrymeela's programmatic focus is consistent with the wider third sector engaged in peace work in Northern Ireland. Morrow *et al.*'s (2018) study identified that PROs aim to address a number of challenges in the post-Agreement period. These include: "Sectarianism and culturally continuous hostility; Physical and Cultural division and segregation and the absence of meaningful integration… [and] The absence of sustainable, long term plan for peace and reconciliation" (*ibid.*: 30). These objectives remain a focus of Corrymeela's work, as evidenced in its ongoing programmes and outlined in much of its literature (see for example the Community's (2017) Statement of Commitment; and Corrymeela's (2015e) programmes on marginalisation, sectarianism, and the legacies of conflict).

Corrymeela is not a single issue NGO and its remit remains consistently broad in many of its publications. Corrymeela's website provides that "ultimately, the work of Corrymeela helps groups learn how to be well together" and offers support to "fractured communities and people who are finding their relationships difficult" (Corrymeela 2015f). Its literature makes little mention of victim/perpetrator labels and identifies its engagement with a wide array of "youth and school groups, family and community organisations, faith communities and political parties" (*ibid.*). Morrow *et al.*'s (2018) research outlined a number of programme types that characterise PROs in contemporary Northern Ireland as: the facilitation of cross-community engagement; inter-community projects on shared themes; community advocacy through story-telling; training and education; and mentoring. Corrymeela's remit was best reflected under the headings of: "Engagement on contentious issues within and between communities and constituencies; Giving public voice to complexity and differing perspectives on conflict including 'story telling'; (and) support for innovative work in local settings" (*ibid.*: 36).

Unlike the majority of NGOs in Northern Ireland, Corrymeela was established prior to the outbreak of the modern conflict in 1968. Many NGOs in Northern Ireland formed in response to the conflict symptoms. The Peace Train, for example, was a NGO formed in response to the specific issue of the Provisional IRA repeatedly bombing the train line between Belfast and Dublin (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 155-6). Most NGOs focussed on exclusive issues, such as victims, young people, city ghettos or paramilitarism (Wilson 2008: 180), social marginalisation and alienation, the conservation of culture and community deprivation (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 169). Described by Wilson (2008) as the centre-periphery paradigm, these approaches dedicated focus and resources to the peripheries of the conflict, which, by framing the issue in terms of peripheral 'symptoms' presumed that Northern Irish society had a healthy core (Wilson 2008; 2012). This assumption both ignored the root causes at the core of the conflict and negated a holistic approach to reconciliation which might address the source of such symptoms. Ray Davey, influenced by other community and faith leaders as noted above, was also inspired by the post-second world war ecumenical tradition, specifically the work of the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Youth Service in Europe, and their offerings of sanctuary to Jewish and other minority communities (Wilson 2012). At its inception, Corrymeela was clear on its definition of reconciliation and sought to establish a Community committed to its realisation. Due to this clarity and commitment, Corrymeela avoided the knee-jerk response to the conflict common elsewhere in Northern Ireland.

Corrymeela's 'target audience' is far more diverse than many other Northern Irish PROs. The thematic focus of other organisations have tended to be guided by those involved in the groups' formation, which included *inter alia* Unionist or Nationalist communities (the Ulster Community Action Network Londonderry, for example, formed to serve the interests of the Unionist community only), women (Women Together was a group formulated to safeguard the interests of women in conflict), and bereaved families (such as Relative for Justice) (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 155). The groups involved in programme work at Corrymeela, or using the site as a residential space for their own programmes have historically been very diverse in terms of national, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious background, and this remained the case to some extent (though lower socioeconomic groups were increasingly excluded, which will be explained in Chapter Six). Perhaps the most unusual combination on site during my field

research was a motorbiking group of travelling Reverends from England sharing the site with a group of Buddhist nuns from Vietnam.

Corrymeela’s holistic focus on the wider issues of reconciliation and togetherness may explain its longevity as it has been able to adapt to the changing needs of society over its lifetime. In interview, a long-serving Community Member Lyle Newton (Interview: 12/10/2017) recalled that, prior to the outbreak of the ‘Troubles’, many of Corrymeela’s early conferences focused on the root causes of the conflict, specifically the need for desegregated housing, inter-marriage and a cross-cutting political representation. It was acknowledged by some that, although not the original purpose of the Community, the ‘Troubles’ was something that became an overwhelming priority for Corrymeela and shaped its spiritual identity and programme content during the conflict (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017). Regarding Corrymeela’s priorities in the post-Agreement period, Isobel Ellis (Interview: 12/10/2017) said: "I think the challenges are different again, it’s a totally different context: it was so *emergency* during the Troubles, now it is a more insidious thing". Many interview respondents agreed that Davey’s vision and the motivations for founding Corrymeela were still relevant today (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Connie Terrell 7/10/2017; Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Jimmy Palmer 7/10/2017; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018; and Nathan Reid 11/10/2017). Ellen Puckett (interview: 11/01/2017) stated "I just think it’s about living well together now, but that’s still about reconciliation, that’s still about reconciling that fractured nature, with the Christian vision of that we may all be one, because we’re one human family”. Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/2017) located Davey's vision in modern society by comparing it to the value of Belfast communities welcoming refugees and other races to the city and supporting them in establishing new homes. Some identified that, although sectarianism and political violence continued to pervade Northern Ireland and should remain a priority of the Community, the concept of reconciliation could be applied to other social issues in Northern Irish society, such as the inclusion and rights of people with disabilities, refugees, LGBT+ people and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Connie Terrell 7/10/17; Jimmy Palmer 7/10/2017).

Corrymeela's organisational identity

Corrymeela frames its identity on three primary concepts: a peace and reconciliation centre; an ecumenical Christian Community; and as a place of welcome, meeting and encounter. These concepts necessarily overlap, with particularly blurred definitions between the notions of reconciliation and Christian community. Davey outlines some of these elements in his 1985 book *Take Away This Hate*, where he describes Corrymeela as a 'CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY dedicated to RECONCILIATION' (emphasis in original). Corrymeela's formal peacebuilding work takes place within its role as a PRO, however much of what was identified as the Community's most impactful practice takes place outside of this formal remit, particularly within its identity as a place of welcome. This section will examine these three characteristics, identifying examples of practice that are illustrative of representative of this structure.

A Peace and Reconciliation Centre

In terms of its status as a NGO, Corrymeela enjoys considerable legitimacy and has a reputation as an effective PRO. The Community's identity as a PRO is well-established in its public discourse and among its Members. Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018) stated "I tend to go with a peace centre…Cross-community centre, peace and reconciliation centre...generally words around peace, reconciliation and cross-community would be how I would describe it". Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017) also described it as a peace and reconciliation centre, stating "generally when I think of Corrymeela or I'm describing it to somebody, I think of the Centre and I describe that part". In March 2017, the podcast 'On Being' visited Corrymeela and recorded an episode onsite (Tippett 2017). The host described Corrymeela as "a community that helped bring peace to Northern Ireland after generations of violent social fracture" (Tippett 2017). Elsewhere, Corrymeela is described as "an intentional community whose goal was to aid in seeking peace" (Wells 1999: 70); a place "bringing together from across the divide those who would otherwise never meet." (Whyte 1990: 28); and is often described as "Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation centre" (*Belfast Telegraph* May 22nd

2015; *Coleraine Times* 31st August 2017; Corrymeela 2015c; Corrymeela Strategic Plan 2016-2020; Corrymeela's Twitter bio; Interview: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; *Irish Times* 22nd May 2015; Vizard 2018). This reputation has resulted in visits from several high profile figures, including Prince Charles, who opened the new Main House in 1998 and marked Corrymeela's 50th anniversary in 2015; the Dalai Lama in 2005; the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2015; several heads of state from the Republic of Ireland; and – perhaps less eminent – Anneka Rice in 1995 as part of her 'Challenge Anneka' television series.

Peace centres are described in the literature as "overtly designed spaces… that explicitly address qualities of peacefulness and which help us learn how to be peaceful" (Reber-Rider 2008: 73, 85). In terms of localised peacebuilding initiatives, peace centres may have a number of objectives, but the foundational concept is one of idea exchange, relationship formation and living together harmoniously (see for example the TICAD Peace Centre in Rwanda, Apeadu Peace Center in Ghana, Agapè Community in Italy and plans for the Peace Embassy in Bosnia, which detail their commitment to these goals). Peace centres, as a subset of PROs, in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (RoI) are fairly sparse post-Agreement. Kilcranny House, based near Coleraine, and An Teach Ban in County Donegal were both established in 1985 as cross-community peace centres. However, funding difficulties forced both organisations to close in the late 2000s. The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, near Dublin, is a prominent peacebuilding actor and continues to engage in partnerships with Corrymeela via the Irish Peace Centres Consortium. Peace centres in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland tend to incorporate a combination of a residential centre, cross-community peacebuilding work and elements of spirituality and/or faith.

In the modern era the concept of reconciliation has been ill-defined in the field of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. Research from the mid-1990s found high numbers of NGOS referring to themselves as "reconciliation groups", many with differing notions of reconciliation and how it should be realised in practice (Love 1995: 8, 58-9). In the post-Agreement period, understandings of peace and reconciliation in policy and practice have remained vague and confused in the third sector (Morrow *et al.* 2018: 30) and there is a poor consensus on its meaning across Northern Ireland (Hamber and Kelly 2004: 1; 2005: 41-8). Other organisations have tended to refer to "peacebuilding" or "community relations" rather than reconciliation due

to the lack of an agreed definition, and a broad range of activities have been included under this banner (Hamber and Kelly 2005: 45; Morrow *et al*. 2018: 33). The surge in academic attention on Northern Ireland during and after the Agreement has further resulted in a general weariness around engaging with concepts of sectarianism and reconciliation (Jarman and Bell 2009: 3-5). Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) expressed that, in the post-Agreement era:

> "politics has diminished and even neutered the word reconciliation because it has commandeered it. I think peace programmes have commandeered the word reconciliation and have allowed it to be simplified and have it allowed it to be soft-washed in some way… I'm not so sure that a lot of reconciliation programmes really are committed to deep and meaningful reconciliation."

Corrymeela differs from other PROs in that it has consistently dedicated energies to defining reconciliation and has made efforts to speak into the silence on reconciliation in the public sphere. Much of the Community's published literature and engagement has aimed to emphasise the necessity of reconciliation in everyday life and the message that reconciliation is central to all meaningful peacebuilding progress. Corrymeela's founder, Ray Davey, viewed reconciliation as integral to Corrymeela. His understanding was largely scriptural, based on passages taken from the New Testament (Davey 1985: 111). Davey's understanding of Christianity and reconciliation was that one could not possibly be without the other. He considered that if one does not wish to reconcile, they cannot be a Christian. During the 1980s, Corrymeela's approach, which tried to model how the churches could practice reconciliation, expanded to also provide a model of reconciliation for wider society (Robinson 2011: 179).

Derick Wilson, a former Centre Director, built on Davey's concept of reconciliation in his 2012 work on the significance of reconciliation centres. Drawing on the experiences of Corrymeela between 1965 and 2008, Wilson (2012) examines the purpose of reconciliation centres during and after a conflict and states that reconciliation centres have three main tasks: 'promoting an educational rationale for reconciliation', 'developing and supporting community relations from the periphery' and 'facilitating difficult meetings'. In the post-conflict context, reconciliation centres should aim to be 'a meeting space open to all', a 'community that creates diverse, and

often unexpected, meetings across lines of difference', and a place that challenges societal institutions to 'promote trust building within their core structures and core business' (Wilson 2012).

Between 2013 and 2015, the Community produced a series of pamphlets on reconciliation named 'Think Peaces', which asked 'what is reconciliation' and discussed how it can be realised in practice at Corrymeela and in wider society (Dudley 2013, 2015; Hatch 2014a, 2014b; Lascaris 2013; Ó Tuama 2014; Reeves 2014; Stevens 2014; Tombs 2013; Wilson 2013). There is an emphasis on the relational and structural nature of reconciliation, and the contribution by Tombs (2013) in particular highlights Lederach's (1997: 30) understanding of reconciliation as a "focus and a locus" for erstwhile protagonists to meet and encounter one another. David Stevens, Community leader between 2003 and 2010, emphasised that reconciliation is not merely a concept which can be learned, but must be lived and Corrymeela provides that platform for people to 'model' reconciliation (Stevens 2014: 4). In interview (10/10/2017), Max Benson contributed that Corrymeela's focus on reconciliation aimed at "transforming old structures and relationships, which are full of enmity and hostility, and supporting relationships and structures that actually build something shared."

Corrymeela's contemporary discourse on reconciliation has been to reframe the mainstream understandings of the concept to practice a "radical commitment to reconciliation" in day-to-day life (Corrymeela Strategic Plan 2016-2020). The Community understands reconciliation as a transformation of relationships to a new and better way of being (Tombs n.d.: 4-5). Reconciliation is defined as "the restoring and transforming of relationships and structures harmed by division and conflict, so that they reflect a shared humanity and seek a shared future in which we live well with and for others" (Corrymeela Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016). It is of note that Corrymeela's relational understanding of reconciliation adheres to the concept of bridging social capital in terms of creating relationships across community boundaries. This will be examined in greater detail later in the thesis.

Analyses of the Corrymeela magazines in the period of study revealed articles focussing on reconciliation in every issue. The Easter 2016 issue includes an interview with Martin

McGuinness on “Reconciling Politics’. The interviewer, Community leader Padraig Ó Tuama, frames the questions around reconciliation and asserts Corrymeela’s stance with statements such as “(o)ne of the phrases we use a lot at Corrymeela is “Reconciliation is painful but the alternative is deadly”. The foreword to the Easter 2017 issue, written by Member Mark McCleary, proclaims: “There is a better way to live and that way is reconciliation.” Dr Duncan Morrow, a Community Member, provides articles in a number of the issues about reconciliation and the peace process (see for example Easter 2016 issue, pp. 10-11). The importance of grassroots and individual reconciliation - with others and also with oneself - is often emphasised. A passage from ‘Thoughts from the leader’ in the 2016 winter edition of the Corrymeela Magazine asserts:

> “Reconciliation should be found in the ordinary. In little and large ways, we can find ways to make the ordinary experiences of inclusion, embrace and justice accessible to ordinary people everywhere” (*Corrymeela Magazine* 2016: 5).

Many of the Community’s programmes give a practical focus to reconciliation. At its February 2017 event in Belfast, entitled ‘Reconciliation and Politics’, local politicians were asked how reconciliation was realised in their activities. The 2017 Summer School focused on storytelling and how narrative is relevant to reconciliation (see Corrymeela (2015d) ‘Events’ website). Reconciliation was often the theme of residential programmes at Corrymeela. A representative from Sadaka-Reut, a group of Palestinian and Israeli activists that visited Corrymeela in August 2016, described the group’s learning on reconciliation during a programme they participated in:

> “One of the main points we took back from that discussion concerns the aspects of reconciliation. Unlike (Corrymeela’s) work, we feel our communities are so far from that, perhaps to the extent we haven’t really considered reconciliation as something we at Sadaka-Reut should even be thinking about – but now we know we should”. (*Corrymeela Magazine* Christmas 2016: 7).

‘Heritage as Reconciliation’ was an ongoing Corrymeela programme on reconciliation, which explored the link between cultural heritage and contemporary conflict. Corrymeela worked in partnership with local authorities, Quarto Collective, Queens and Ulster Universities to deliver a series of events and conferences managed (for Corrymeela’s part) by programme worker Travis Sanford. In January 2018 Corrymeela hosted a winter school on ‘Heritage as Reconciliation’, which involved input from local community groups, museums, archaeologists and local authorities (Interview: Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). Ted Glenn (Interview: 31/1/2018) identified this programme as one of the most effective Corrymeela had conducted on reconciliation, stating:

> “by taking these fractured groupings into deep history, you find a new connecting point to each other, which isn’t about having to compromise on the current challenge – so rather than just envisaging a new future, we can also go back, be brought on a journey, where there was no Catholic or Protestant, there was none of these defining characters, so therefore they can all belong. And it’s tangible.”

Reconciliation was identified by many respondents as the central focus of Corrymeela throughout its five decades, and it was highlighted that it was not only realised through its official programme work but in informal encounters. Michele Tyson (Interview: 31/1/2018) recalled an incident in the early 1970s when she had brought a group of young people from Belfast to the Ballycastle Centre. A window had been broken by a few members of the group, and rather than admit responsibility, the perpetrators stated to the group leader they wished to return home immediately. Michele described that “things were lived out, rather than written in a manual”. She described that she had observed Albert, an experienced community worker at the Centre, walk with the young people and speak with them about the incident. Michele stated “it was a place where cooperation was modelled because Albert solved it all, sorted it, showed me what could be done, without giving me theory or preaching at it… the community-building, it was modelled, it happened, and that was how you learned.”

Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) described that reconciliation was also realised in much of what Corrymeela did outside of its formal remit in the post-Agreement era, stating:

> "if you define reconciliation as if something is broken or a relationship is out of sync, then you put the lens to the work you're doing - so family work, Protestants and Catholics coming together - did they come together? Yes…there's lots of ways (of) going 'here's what peace is, what reconciliation is, and we can measure that'."

Programme worker Sylvia McKinney (Interview: 29/1/2018) described how the ongoing 'rewilding' programme at the Centre was used to model reconciliation (rewilding is a conservation movement aimed at re-establishing and protecting natural wilderness). She understood the programme to allow new ways of approaching conflict and tension. She explained that, through the use of seemingly unrelated activities such as teamwork activities in the woods or by the river, group members could be equipped with the skills to reconcile more effectively (*ibid.*).

The number of examples of Corrymeela's formal and informal reconciliation practice identified during research were numerous and it is evident that reconciliation has been the Community's most significant focus before, during and after the modern conflict. Corrymeela's ethos and programmes focus on the relational nature of reconciliation and allow its work to be understood through the lens of social capital theory, as a process of developing trust, exposing sameness and building relationships between people from different community identities. While the wider third sector in Northern Ireland has grappled with the concept, Corrymeela has clearly defined its understanding of reconciliation and how it can be operationalised by the Community, and by individuals in wider society, to transform relationships and structures of conflict. Reconciliation tends to have strong religious overtones in Northern Ireland (Hamber and Kelly 2005: 19) and this association has been nurtured by Corrymeela, particularly by its founder Ray Davey and his original Members. I turn now to Corrymeela's identity as an ecumenical Christian community and emphasise the close overlap between this theme and its focus on reconciliation.

An Ecumenical Christian Community

Corrymeela is an explicitly ecumenical and Christian reconciliation centre. Internationally, there is a long tradition of religious and faith-based organisations in central roles within local peacebuilding efforts (Johnston 2005; Power 2012b). In Northern Ireland, a significant proportion of peacebuilding NGOS were either faith-based or founded by religiously-motivated individuals (Ellis 1984 cf. Whyte 1990: 28). Faith-based NGOs have tended to reflect the sectarian divisions in society, ascribing to exclusive Protestant or Catholic approaches and attracting single-community membership, and very few have taken a standpoint which transcends inter-denominational divisions (White 2012: 45; Belloni 2008; 2009: 8). Throughout its history, Corrymeela's approach to ecumenism has adapted to reflect the changing religious culture of Northern Irish society. At its foundation, the Community's ethos was deeply religious and adopted a largely Presbyterian approach. Throughout the organisation's lifespan this approach has softened and become more inclusive, and in the contemporary era Corrymeela's religiousness has taken something of a back seat (on Corrymeela's 'About' website, there is no mention of ecumenism or Christianity). Some interviewees contended that the Community's Christian identity had become confused in recent years and others emphasised the necessity to adopt a human rights discourse above a faith-based approach to maintain the Community's inclusiveness. This section examines Corrymeela's approach the ecumenism and faith, the physical space used for worship and the changing nature of ecumenism in the post-Agreement era.

Corrymeela's ecumenical ethos

Corrymeela's formation and development was motivated partly by a frustration with the inaction, inflexibility and stagnation of the Churches towards such social action, particularly in Northern Ireland and Ireland (McCreary 1975:92-100; Interview: Davey cf. Callister 1990). During this period, the mainstream churches' stance mirrored that of politics and rivalries were realised by the churches "defin(ing) themselves against "the other" (Robinson 2011: 176) and hardening their stance to maintain membership "because they were in survival mode" (Interview: Ted Glenn 31/1/2018; Robinson 2011: 175). This hardening resulted in a number of Members being attracted to Corrymeela because they could continue to practice their Christian faith in a more open and inclusive manner (*ibid*.). Ray Davey emphasised that his vision was one of Christian community, which would allow Christian people to come together

and move away from the individualism of religious life towards participatory faith and group engagement (Davey 1985: 102-4). Davey claimed that the Churches in Northern Ireland failed to engage with their communities beyond their congregations, and recognised that the church in many communities was not accessible, especially to young people (Davey 1985: 109). From his work with young people, the majority of whom were from working class communities, Davey (1985) identified that many perceived their Church to be concerned with matters that had little relevance to them. Davey's aim was to develop a bi-directional relationship between the Church and young people, making each more relevant to the other (*ibid.*). He considered this as vital to the future of Northern Irish civil society.

One of Corrymeela's earliest objectives was therefore to act as a question mark, to both the churches in Britain and Ireland, and to wider society (Interview: Nathan Reid 11/10/2017; John Morrow cf. McCreary 2007: 92). It is important to note that in the context of 1960s Northern Ireland, religion was a prominent force in society, and ecumenism – even limited to mixing within Christian faiths – was revolutionary and exciting in this context (Hutchinson (2019: 18) described this seemingly benign form of ecumenism as "outrageous in 1965"; Interviews: Alex Warner 27/1/2018; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). Identifying as "Christian", rather than denominationally, was a radical shift in terms of the dominant discourses of the time (Interviews: Alex Warner 27/1/2018; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). Individuals who were challenged by their own denomination could continue to worship at Corrymeela without abandoning their faith (Interview: Alex Warner 27/1/2018, Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018). Many individuals, who later became Members of the Community, found Corrymeela's ecumenism to be refreshing and exciting. Michele Tyson (Interview: 31/1/2018) described that in 1960s Northern Ireland, religious worship could be "pretty deadly" in terms of engaging its audience, and worship at Corrymeela presented the gospel in new and exciting ways. With its "mish mash" of denominations, she felt the Community modelled out what an inclusive Christian community could look like (*ibid.*).

Other members reported that if it were not for Corrymeela they could not have remained within their own religious communities. Joshua Cameron (Interview: 30/1/18) stated that he believed, even in the contemporary era where Christian faith was not such a pervasive force in society, Corrymeela could "help people across a range of denominations who have difficulty within

their own denomination". He added that he had been removed as an elder from his own church due to his support for same sex marriage and this was one of the reasons Corrymeela was important for him. Nathan Reid (Interview: 11/10/2017) shared that he often told people that "being a Member of Corrymeela and being involved in it and all the interaction and sharing, at different levels, theological and personal, has helped me survive in the Christian ministry in the church of Ireland, because you realise everything isn't in blinkers". The Community's membership continues to be defined by the tradition of questioning the church. Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/2017) described how she had come to be involved with Corrymeela after a Member had said to her "if you want to be part of a community of people who are asking questions, then join us, because we are all asking questions."

Corrymeela's ecumenical identity is defined as a Community "that is open to all faiths and none" (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; this phrase is used frequently in Corrymeela programme events' synopsis, see Corrymeela Events page 2017-2018). For a number of Members, the link between ecumenism and Community define Corrymeela. Colin Craig (cf. *Corrymeela Magazine* 2014: 1), the former Executive Director of Corrymeela, and one of the early Members, claimed that:

> "We need to remember that Corrymeela was not just founded as a reaction to sectarianism, but out of a Christian vision as to how we can truly build communities that live out the values of equity, diversity, interdependence and sustainability. This is a transformational commitment."

Alex Warner (Interview: 27/1/18) described that "the gospel is really about Community, it is about how to live our lives, and Community is a very important way of living our lives together". Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017) discussed the link between the gospel and Corrymeela's approach stating "Jesus said 'I am the way, the truth and the life' and I think that that's what Corrymeela is trying to live out, is a way of being, a truth of Jesus in the sense that this is the true way to be with one another".

There has also been an emphasis on liberation theology within the Corrymeela Community. Liberation theology begins from the premise that the bible is a subjective text that readers can choose to interpret from the standpoint of God's preferential option for the poor. Contrary to Corrymeela's origins, liberation theology primarily originates from Latin America and traditions of the Catholic Church. Liberation theology is understood as a bottom-up movement, realised within communities of Christians (usually outside of the formal Church) that adopt a faith-based approach to social change. This approach directly relates to the Community's commitment to social justice and is often couched in these terms rather than formally recognised as liberation theology. Many of the early Members studied and were motivated by the theology of Bonhoeffer (Interview: Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). Bonhoeffer was a German theologian who promoted ideas about living in Christian community (Bonhoeffer 2009) and who is said to have influenced the development of liberation theology in Latin America, to the extent that "the Protestant contribution to (liberation theology) cannot be explained without his influence" (Ana 1976: 188; Walter 2016). The discourse of liberation theology and social justice has endured in the contemporary period. Education worker Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018) described that he was motivated by the "liberation theology kind of bit of our work, in that it's kind of faith in practice". However, a number of interviewees expressed unease at the perception that Corrymeela's recent work tended to only be accessible to more affluent groups (Interviews: Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). This tension is explored in greater depth in Chapter Six.

The ecumenical space

The Croí (pronounced "cree" and meaning "heart" in Irish) is the physical space used for worship at the Ballycastle centre and is considered the religious and spiritual centre of the Community. The Croí is a standalone building at the Ballycastle Centre, which was opened in 1979, and is designed both like an anatomical human heart, with two chambers, and like a human ear, in the shape of a spiral with an inner space, to symbolise the importance of listening and hearing. The Croí is used in the morning and night for Community worship and all staff and volunteers are encouraged to attend worship on a Monday morning each week, which takes a set format.

While there is a worship coordinator, worship in the Croí can be led by anyone: resident or visitor to the Community. During the period of research I observed a variety of different approaches from different religious traditions. One morning's worship was led by Jerry Barnett, the worship coordinator at that time, and focused on the story of the Good Samaritan. Jerry used the story to talk about subversive behaviour, and related it to issues of white privilege and gender equality. He concluded the worship by playing a song by Rage Against the Machine. I attended other worships during my study visits, some led by people of different faith backgrounds – including the Buddhist nuns, atheist volunteers and Muslim groups. When worship was to be led by a visitor, particularly those from different faith backgrounds, I observed that there tended to be a higher turnout and there was a sense of excitement and interest about new approaches.

Outside of worship times, the Croí is a calm quiet place, sometimes used for programme work and sometimes used by individuals seeking to sit quietly in contemplation. Jo Watson, the Fundraising Director at Corrymeela, described it as a place where people from different backgrounds could be together in worship, even if they did not attend Church in their own communities (Interview: Jo Watson cf. Robinson 2015: 155). She believed this was because, unlike worship in formal settings, the open space of the Croí and voluntary nature of attendance allowed people the choice of rejecting it (*ibid.*). Former Centre Director, Harold Good, reinforced that worship could be experienced in different ways at Corrymeela and its voluntary nature and the invitation for different people to lead it was central to its inclusivity (Interview: Harold Good cf. McCreary 2007: 52).

Ecumenism now

Corrymeela's original membership base was deeply committed to realising reconciliation from an almost exclusively Christian perspective. Throughout its existence, the leaders of the Community have been "theological figureheads" for Corrymeela (Robinson 2011: 176), directing the discourse via their practice and published written work. Davey (1993: 14)

describes Christ as "seeking to break down all the barriers that that separate us, and bring us together as brothers and sisters in one family". His successor, John Morrow, during his leadership stated "(i)t is our task to prepare the ground, sow the seeds, nourish the plants and reap the harvest, but it is God alone who brings the growth and brings in His Kingdom" (John Morrow cf. Robinson 2011: 179). Between 1981 and 1997, Roel Kaptein, a Dutch theologian, inspired by his work with Rene Girard, ran a series of workshops at Corrymeela on theories of conflict, mimesis and scapegoating, and in 1993 published a book with Duncan Morrow, a Community Member and the son of John Morrow, on the subject. Many of the conclusions drawn by Kaptein and the wider Community emphasise the need for people to develop peaceful relationships by following the way of Christ together (Wells 1999: 78-9; Kaptein and Morrow 1993). Similarly, former leader of the Community, David Stevens, published a book in 2008 on 'texts to explore', which had influenced Corrymeela's ethos and practice. These texts were all drawn from the bible and Stevens' argument includes passages such as: "(o)nly a rediscovery of the Servant Lordship of Christ and the depth of His healing love can unite us and free us to create the new structures which are necessary for a new society" (Stevens 2008: 10).

Corrymeela's approach to ecumenism has adapted through its history. The inclusiveness of the Community in its early history is contested, with some Members claiming the Community did not initially permit Catholics as Members. Michele Tyson (Interview: 31/1/2018) perceived that in its early days Corrymeela "wasn't as much welcoming to Catholic members as it might have been" and attributed this to fears that the founding Presbyterian members would be outnumbered and leave if the balance was tipped too far. Teresa Chapman (Interview: 1/2/2018) recalled that in the 1960s two Catholic women became involved in the Community, one as a provisional Member, before it was pointed out to Ray Davey that the woman was a Catholic and he advised her that she would not be permitted membership. Teresa remembered that the reason Catholic Members were eventually allowed into Community was that there was additional funding available for organisations that had cross-community membership (it should be noted that Ian Davey (Interview: 30/5/18), Ray Davey's son vehemently denied that there was ever any stance denying Catholic membership). Other Members recall that in its early days, there were discussions on whether to maintain Corrymeela as a Protestant-only community, though these are contested by other interviewees (Robinson 2011: 176; Interview: Ian Davey 30/5/2018). Teresa Chapman (Interview: 1/2/2018) understood this decision was

related to Ray Davey's position as a Presbyterian Minister and his desire to retain links with the Church. Throughout the Troubles, religion was a contested subject and a "lowest common denominator approach" was often adopted, emphasising Christianity and reconciliation rather than denominational differences, in an attempt to circumvent conflict (Robinson 2011: 177, 180; Wells 1999: 77). This worked to an extent although some Members wished to remain true to their own denominations and were reluctant to relinquish their community's traditions (Robinson 2011: 180).

The reaction of wider Northern Irish society to Corrymeela's ecumenism has been mixed. The rhetoric of the DUP in the early days of Corrymeela's existence was that the Community was heavily associated with Catholics. Nathan Reid (Interview: 11/10/2017) recalled a story from around the 1970s or 1980s when the Archbishop of Canterbury had visited Corrymeela and then travelled to Ballyvoy to meet with the Reverend Ian Paisley. Paisley was reported to have later said to his congregation that he had met the Archbishop "who had been up at Corrymeela, probably saying a mass or two", insinuating Corrymeela was a strongly Catholic institution. Paisley is also reported to have described the ecumenism of Corrymeela as "diabolical" (Hutchinson 2019: 17). One of Corrymeela's founding Members, Craig Cameron, recalled that he had made attempts to "build bridges" between Corrymeela and the Free Presbyterians over several years, which were repeatedly rejected (Craig Cameron in an Interview with the author cf. McCreary 2007: 39). Nathan Reid (Interview: 11/10/2017 also recalled that Paisley rejected both Corrymeela and Ray Davey's notions of reconciliation.

In recent years, as demographics and the religious culture in Northern Ireland have shifted, Corrymeela's membership is becoming more diverse and less dedicated to an exclusively Christian narrative of reconciliation and community (Interview: Colin Craig cf. Robinson 2015: 130-131). While ecumenism and openness is reinforced, there is an acknowledgement that religious division is not the only, or most dominant, division in society. In comparison to Britain, Northern Ireland remains "residually sort-of Christian" (Interview: Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018) but there has been a drift away from religion in recent years. Colin Craig, interviewed by Leah Robinson (2015: 130-131; 2011: 172) during her research on Corrymeela, observed changing demographics in the volunteers at Corrymeela. He believed that the younger generations were less comfortable with the "language of worship" and, more widely,

society was becoming increasingly secularised in Northern Ireland (*ibid*.). The Corrymeela Prayer Guide (2017: 2) also recognises the drift:

> "Corrymeela is proud to have begun in the vibrant environment of a faith tradition that was exploring its boundaries. This has continued. Where once the major divisions were between Christians of Catholic and Protestant identities, we have also become interested and attentive to other areas that divide us - divisions between people of different faiths and none; differences between genders and sexual orientation identities; divides between ethnic, political and economic backgrounds".

April Geddes (Interview: 29/1/2018), the interim CEO during one of my visits, commented that Corrymeela's Christian identity had become very confused in recent years. She contended that "just because you have one time a week, in the Croí on Monday morning, where you have a ten minute reflection about harmony and then you say the prayer of courage, does not make this a Christian organisation". She discussed that Corrymeela's discourse on public theology – found online and in the Community's publications – did not match the reality on the ground, particularly at the Ballycastle Centre where there was a growing atheist and agnostic population among volunteers – especially those representative of Gen Z and "noners". She believed the Community's "funny relationship with Christianity" meant that evangelical Christians didn't recognise Corrymeela as Christian at all, and at the same time atheists felt alienated because it was too Christian (this is discussed in further depth in Chapter Eight). Robinson (2015: 130-131) conducted research at Corrymeela and also identified this trend, stating that Corrymeela's legitimacy was challenged due to its Christian basis and desire to be open and inclusive to all in an ever-diversifying Northern Ireland. The tensions in its identity have resulted in Corrymeela being alienated from both the conservative churches in Northern Ireland and from those who reject religious associations (*ibid*.). April Geddes (Interview: 29/1/2018) spoke about an interaction during a staff and volunteer meeting where there were discussions on who was going to lead worship. One of the volunteers had agreed to lead worship, declaring "okay let's take the Croí back from the Christians, I'll do it!" April believed this statement was indicative of the tensions between Corrymeela's identity as a Christian organisation and as an inclusive space, and represented the alienation felt by both evangelical Christians and atheists in Corrymeela.

The ecumenical traditions of Corrymeela have been varied and have adapted over the years of its existence. The Community's approach to ecumenism has not been without challenges, and these have reflected the politicisation of religion throughout its history, with the main challenge of the post-Agreement period relating to the Community's capacity and willingness to welcome fundamentalist faith traditions and atheists, and wider tensions around human rights and faith. Despite the tensions, the Croí was still well used as a place of worship during my research visits, and in general the spirit of openness and welcome of different faiths is evident in the Community's discourse and within its Members.

A place of welcome, meeting and encounter

The final element of Corrymeela's identity is the more woolly notion of a place of welcome, meeting and encounter. Perhaps because of its ambiguity, this concept was referred to in many different ways during interview, including as a place of sanctuary (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017), a safe place (Interviews: Charlie Jeffrey 7/10/2017; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017), a meeting place (Interview: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017); and an open village (Interviews: Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018). This element is also explored in some of the texts on Corrymeela (see for example Davey 2005; McCreary 1975: 33; John Morrow, *Dawn Magazine* 1985, no. 106/7, p. 9 cf. Love 1995: 9; Ó Tuama (2013: 36) talks about the "transformative power of human encounter"; Robinson 2015: 123, 131; Author's conversation with Dr. Duncan Morrow, Department of Politics, University of Ulster 20th September 1997 cf. Wells 1999: 79).

These concepts suffer for their vagueness. On Corrymeela's peace, community and Christian identity, April Geddes (Interview: 29/1/2018) described Corrymeela as "very confusing" and perceived a significant disconnect between Corrymeela's vision, discourse and the reality of work at the Centre. Lucas Green (Interview: 6/4/2019) stated:

> “Corrymeela's biggest failure is being too abstract. Nobody really knows what it is. Is it a residential centre? Is it a spiritual retreat? Is it a conference centre? Nobody really knows what it is. And I do think that's because of the abstract language. Since Corrymeela doesn't know what it is, it hides that in complicated airy fairy language and behind airy fairy mission statements.”

References to Corrymeela as a place of encounter and an open village originate from speeches made at Corrymeela’s official opening in October 1965. Following Vinay’s speech (cited above), Ray Davey delivered a speech about his vision for the Community: "We hope that Corrymeela will come to be known as "the Open Village", open to all men of good will who are willing to meet each other, to learn from each other and to work together for the good of all" (cf. McCreary 1975: 33).

The rhetoric of the open village has been sustained into the contemporary period. There is a physical reminder of this speech in the new Davey Village building at the Ballycastle Centre, where Davey’s quote features on the wall of the dining area (see figure 1 below). Corrymeela’s letter to Members (dated May 2016) from the leader, Padraig O’Tuama describes that “We always strive to be the Open Village – open to all who need to come”.

Figure 1: A reference to Davey's speech adorns the wall in the dining area of the Davey Village

The concept of an Open Village relates primarily to the Corrymeela Centre at Ballycastle. Interviewees referred to the Centre's location by the sea, its proximity to nature, the view of Rathlin island and the nearby cliffs as important, but many also described the feeling of the place, the Croí, and the atmosphere created by the relationships inherent to the space (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Jess Williams 27/1/2018; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Teresa Chapman 1/2/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). On this, Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/17) recalled a Hungarian academic who had visited Corrymeela and said "it's great to talk about horrible things by the sea". Talking about his own experience facilitating groups at the Centre, Benny said:

> "I think it's me, but it's actually the ocean. The location - and you can over-spiritualise that - but there's something about a six-acre site, where it is epic, dangerous, two seas colliding – you know you couldn't make it up. There's something about that changes

> the conversation. I use lots of other residential centres, it's interesting to see the contrast. So cheaper ones sometimes, not the same volunteers ever, but I'm still doing good work there. And on one level you don't need this configuration to do good work, but this configuration can make other things work. So talking about horrible things by the sea: It's a cracker."

Joshua Cameron (Interview: 30/1/18) similarly stated "you don't go through a time warp when you get there, but you go through a point where you have left normality behind and things are different". It is this atmosphere of opportunity that draws many Members and volunteers to Corrymeela – particularly those who are not religious (Interview: Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018).

Some interviewees stated that the element of encounter at Corrymeela was the most important and simultaneously the most difficult to describe to outsiders (Interviews: Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/ 2017). Isobel Ellis (*ibid.*) concluded her description of the Community by stating "at the end of the day, I feel I just have to bring (people) by the hand to the place, honestly it's as bad as that, I don't think you can explain it". From my own observations and experience of Corrymeela, I agree with this perspective. Corrymeela - despite its challenges and shortcomings - has a different atmosphere to other organisations and there is a kind of 'magic' to the space at the Ballycastle Centre that is difficult to convey to someone who has never visited. My experience within Community was that people seemed more open, communicative, and prepared to engage with difference than in wider society, particularly within wider Northern Ireland. The approach is a purposeful and proactive challenge to the dominant narrative in Northern Ireland of "cruelty being normal and compassion abnormal" (Kapur and Campbell 2004: 40).

Corrymeela' status as an open village has also translated to a place of new ideas. During the height of the conflict, Corrymeela provided sanctuary for people and ideas and acted as a safe space for people who wanted to progress interests that were counter to the dominant discourses of those in power (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). Corrymeela was a place that, over time and through experimental approaches,

learned how to create the right conditions for this transformation to take place, focussing on individual and group needs and using a person-centred approach to create an environment in which difficult questions could be addressed in a safe space (Interviews Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Sylvia McKinney 29/1/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018; Ó Tuama 2013: 36). Benny Ray used Seamus Heaney's (1995: 4) concept of 'glimpsed alternatives' to describe the most important work of Corrymeela that allowed "moments where you see the possibility of being" (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/17). Benny believed that Corrymeela's effectiveness was achieved by bringing families and cross-community groups together at the Centre and creating the circumstances where they could experience alternative ways of being together (*ibid*.).

The following chapter develops an analytical framework, using social capital theory, with a specific focus on the value of bridging social capital in peacebuilding. While Corrymeela's identity as a place of welcome, meeting and encounter remains vague and ill-defined, this element of its practice is the most important when considering bridging social capital. Many interviewees provided numerous examples of individuals forming relationships across sectarian divides because of the space and environment provided by Corrymeela, rather than due to the content of its formal peacebuilding programmes. Some programmes in Northern Ireland have been criticised for adopting a tick-box approach to cross-community work, fulfilling funders' conditions but failing to transform inter-community relationships in any meaningful way. Despite significant challenges, Corrymeela has sustained its identity as an open village since the Agreement and this has allowed the creation of an environment conducive to the development of bridging social capital across community divides. This argument will be developed throughout the thesis.

Conclusion

Corrymeela's identity has adapted and altered throughout its history, reflecting changes in the internal dynamics of the organisation and the external political and social environment of Northern Ireland. In the contemporary era, Corrymeela is well-established as a faith-based PRO. While Corrymeela continues to be known as a religious organisation, its work has adapted in the post-Agreement era, particularly its focus on faith, which has shifted to bridge

new divides, including those between LGBT+ communities and religious communities. Corrymeela's formal role as a PRO has continued, and while it is not so actively engaged in work involving paramilitaries or communities in active conflict, programmes continue to focus on addressing sectarianism, marginalisation and other sources of societal division.

In other case studies of PROs, the identity and work of the organisation may not be of great importance in analysing peacebuilding work. In the case of the Corrymeela Community, I found it necessary to explain its work and wider community activities in depth because its holistic approach is what has facilitated the transformation of relationships after conflict. The three elements of its identity have been necessary to sustain each other. The combination of Corrymeela's role as a peace and reconciliation centre and – particularly in its earlier years – as a religious NGO have granted it a legitimacy that is necessary to engage in peacebuilding work in Northern Ireland. Beyond these roles, the space of welcome, meeting and encounter offered by Corrymeela have created an environment conducive to the development and exchange of bridging social capital. As McCreary (1975: 59) notes, without the administrative focus demanded by a registered NGO, Corrymeela – particularly its site at Ballycastle – could be accused of creating a Northern Irish 'Shangri-La', by promoting a discourse of harmony and welcome but leaving the dirty work of peace to others elsewhere. Between the balance of Corrymeela's formal programme work and informal practices, individual relationships have been established and maintained across ideological frontiers. The empirical chapters examine these experiences in depth, focussing on the ways in which Corrymeela's formal and informal peacebuilding practice has facilitated social capital in post-Agreement Northern Ireland.

Chapter Three: Consociationalism, Civil Society and Social Capital

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain social capital theory and how it is used to understand peacebuilding and the experience of Corrymeela. This argument relies on an understanding of context. The first section of this chapter therefore locates Corrymeela's experience by explaining post-Agreement Northern Ireland, specifically the system of consociationalism and how peacebuilding has been partially delegated to third sector actors. A detailed analysis of consociationalism is beyond the scope of this thesis. Various arguments on consociational theory in its application to Northern Ireland are acknowledged, but the purpose of this section is solely to outline the system in which communities and PROs are operating.

The second section examines civil society approaches to peacebuilding. This compares the peace process in Northern Ireland with well-established peacebuilding theory, and literature that emphasises the role of elites and civil society in peacebuilding. The Agreement made provisions for community reconciliation and these built on a solid tradition of third sector community work in Northern Ireland, established during the conflict. The section develops the argument that locally-based PROs have a significant role and responsibility in peacebuilding.

The third section of the chapter examines social capital theory and argues that the concept of bridging social capital is particularly valuable for explaining the formation of relationships within civil society. Social capital is defined as the social resources available to an individual as a result of their human networks, memberships and relationships, which coalesce around particular shared norms, values and beliefs and result in positive or 'productive' outcomes (Campbell *et al.* 2008: 23; Putnam 2000: 22; Morrow 2006: 65; Muir 2011b). There are various derivatives of social capital, including cultural (Bourdieu 1986), spiritual (Morrow *et al.* 2011: 28; Stark and Finke 2000; Woodbury 2003: 2) and linking social capital (Gitell and Vidal 1998; Szreter and Woolcock 2004; Woolcock 1998; 2001). However, this thesis focuses primarily on bridging capital as developed by Putnam (2000: 19), which refers to the type and extent of connectedness between members of different communities (Campbell *et al.* 2008: 2). In the context of resolving civil conflict, bridging social capital is recognised as having significant value in transforming inter-ethnic relationships and reconciling

communities (Graham 2016: 8-9; Häuberer 2014: 575; Hughes *et al.* 2011: 979; Potter and Abernethy 2013). It is also important to note the impact of so-called ‘perverse social capital’ (Rubio 1997) and the nuances and context-specific peculiarities of Northern Ireland, which are also explored in this section.

Context and Consociationalism

Northern Ireland experienced around 30 years of violent conflict throughout the modern ‘Troubles’. The Agreement was established in 1998 and was perceived by many to bring an end to this period of conflict. Compromise was achieved by establishing a consociational system of government, primarily via a power-sharing executive that ensured multi-party cooperation. The Agreement also included provisions for civil society to be reconciled. These included, *inter alia*, pledges to desegregate housing and education, and support for the third sector in programmes on reconciliation, understanding and respect (Northern Ireland Office (NIO) 1998: 21, 23; Byrne 2001: 328).

By including concurrent top-down and bottom-up peacebuilding strategies, the Agreement adhered to a number of accepted peacebuilding approaches theorised in mainstream peace studies literature, such as Lederach’s (1997; 2003) three-tier peacebuilding model and the literature on multi-track diplomacy post-conflict (see for example Diamond and McDonald 1996; Mapendere 2005; Wasike *et al*. 2016). This adherence, however, was largely theoretical. In reality, top-down peacebuilding has been stalled by the dysfunction and collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive in 2017 and further undermined by the leaders of the regionally-dominant parties in Northern Ireland who have found, through both inertia and design, that it is in their interests to maintain ethnic segregation (Taylor 2009b: 320). As a result, the intended top-down element of the peace process, in terms of the devolved political representatives at Stormont, has been largely absent (Campbell *et al.* 2008: 32).

The political system established as part of the Agreement has “fostered the separate development of two communities” (Cochrane 2001: 104) by institutionalising the recognition of ethnic difference and propagating ethnic division into the state provision of education,

housing and other areas of public life (Burton 1979: 64; Donahoe 2017: 4; Hughes *et al*. 2007). This has resulted in civil society and state institutions being maintained in silos from above (Guelke 2009: 107; Higson 2008: 3; Mitchell 2006: 53; Whyte 1990: 101; Wilson 2008: 182). Space continues to be considered as ethnic territory (Boal 1996: 152; Dawson 2007: 10-1; McGrellis 2010: 765; Whyte 1990: 33-5; Wright 1987: 18). In 2011 there were twice as many peace walls as during the period of the Troubles (Brewer *et al.* 2011: 5). Almost half of the population live in housing segregated on ethnic lines (Hughes *et al.* 2007) and 2014/5 figures show that only seven per cent of school pupils attended integrated schools (Department of Education n.d.). Inter-religious marriage is consistently low, at around 10 per cent in 1996 (Morgan *et al*. 1996), 2005 (Northern Irish Life and Times (NILT) 2005) and 2009 (Glynn 2009). In recent years (2013-2017) paramilitary revenge and punishment attacks have increased by as much as 60 per cent (McDonald 2018), and at Easter 2019, violence in Derry escalated to a level sufficiently extreme to attract press attention from outside of Northern Ireland. Liechty and Clegg (2001:12-14) argue that the level of segregation across ethnic lines represents a self-sustaining system of sectarianism, "so efficient that it can take…sane and rational responses to a situation which it has generated and use them to further deepen sectarianism". Some politicians have built much of their identity and electoral base on maintaining this division and demonising the "other", thereby discouraging cross-community engagement and actively "provok(ing) neighbourhood battles" (Acheson *et al.* 2012: 19), all the while being rewarded for their efforts via re-election and continued political control (Taylor 2009b: 320).

Consociationalism is the term used to describe a particular type of power-sharing government. Lijphart (1969: 211) used the term to describe "fragmented but stable democracies" consisting of pluralist societies. The system's key features include a power-sharing governmental coalition, institutional protections for minority group rights (referred to as "segmental autonomy" by Lijphart (1979: 500)), collective veto powers, and electoral systems that allow for proportional representation (Lijphart 1969: 216-7; McGarry and O'Leary 2004: 1-2; 2009b: 16-17; Taylor 2009a: 3-4). Initially, the concept developed to explain peaceful but politically segmented states, where parties were divided on ethnic lines (Switzerland receives a lot of academic attention as a functional consociational democracy in, for example, Bohn 1981; Henderson 1980; and Lijphart 1969: 211). An extensive body of literature examining the

prescriptive utility of consociationalism as the governmental preference for post-conflict states then developed. Consociational democracy is often recommended as an effective way to move out of civil conflict (Coakley 2009: 145; McGarry 2001: 124; O'Leary 2005: 19) and govern ethnically-divided heterogeneous populations (Guelke 2009: 108; Lijphart 1969).

Prior to 1998, although the language of consociationalism was not widely used, its principles guided negotiations in Northern Ireland, including Britain and Ireland's political approach to the territory and within the power-sharing provisions of the Sunningdale Agreement (McGarry and O'Leary 1995: 321; 2009b: 23). In his analysis, Lijphart concludes that conditions favourable for consociational democracy were not present in Northern Ireland at that time; there was no support among the leadership and public (namely within the majority Unionist community) for proportional representation and power-sharing (Lijphart 1975: 99, 104). Consociationalism was eventually institutionalised within the Good Friday Agreement by means of a mandatory coalition at the level of the executive, which guaranteed a multi-party government and shared leadership within the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). Other key consociational principles were also institutionalised via the single transferable vote electoral system, the d'Hondt mechanism for allocating the Executive, obligations for political parties to register as unionist, nationalist, or 'other', and the creation of structures to ensure ethnosectarian group 'rights' (Dixon 2005: 357; Higson 2008: 2, 4). Since 1998, the Executive, when it has been in operation, has functioned as a power-sharing government divided on ethnic lines, with the DUP and Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) as the main representatives of the Unionist community, and the Sinn Féin and Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) representing the Nationalist population (Higson 2005: 3).

In relation to consociational theory, the Agreement can be understood from either a segregationist or integrationist perspective (Dixon 2005: 357). The segregationist logic is based on the premise that ethnic identities are largely pre-determined and unalterable (Dixon 1997) and relationships therefore cannot be easily transformed (Simonsen 2005: 298). Strict consociationalism does not foresee prospects for integration or reconciliation within society. It is based on "constitutional engineering from above" (Dixon 1997: 4) to maintain division and manage conflict, rather than to transform relationships or change the status quo. By contrast, integrationists understand consociational government as a way to create cross-cutting

cleavages and reconstruct conflict identities and relationships (Dixon 1997: 3, 2005: 357). In the integrationists' view, consociationalism is expected to erode ethnic alliances over time and create cross-cutting political supports based on new issues unrelated to the conflict (Lipset 1960: 88-9; McGarry 2001: 124-5). The creation of power-sharing structures is seen as an opportunity to favour moderates and construct a middle ground politics (Dixon 2005: 357). This gradual process of change depends both on integration between individuals at the community level (Hughes *et* al. 2011: 983; Morrow 2006: 77) and the cooperation modelled by leaders at the elite level, which allows for communal trust (Lijphart 1969: 211; 1977: 1, 16; Nagle 2013: 464). This transcendence was the original objective of the Agreement (Higson 2008: 5), however the integrationist aims of the Agreement have been largely rejected by the political parties (Dixon 2005: 357), resulting from the complex combination of pressures from community powers below and the calculated self-interest of political elites.

In the context of 'post-conflict' Northern Ireland, academics and policy makers have reported that the Agreement has hindered the role of civil society as a peacebuilding force. Guelke (2003: 69, 75) highlights the contradiction between the Agreement and its aim for a positive civil society, noting that the limits of a consociational system were not explicitly recognised, "not least their implications for the entrenching of divisions and the reduction of the influence of cross-community groups and civil society more generally". This trend has been acted out in voting preference since the Agreement, as more moderate parties – namely the SDLP and UUP - have experienced marked reductions in their share of the vote (ARK 2007) while the DUP and Sinn Féin – the parties that have "displayed their ethnosectarian credentials most brazenly" – have made significant electoral gains (Higson 2008: 6). This is despite survey data showing that 23 per cent of the population does not support any of the four main ruling parties nor the Alliance, and that 45 per cent considered themselves as neither unionist nor nationalist (NILT 2017).

The preference of the political parties is not necessarily reflected at the grassroots. Northern Ireland's relatively small population size has resulted in an overly-intimate relationship between some community leaders and political representatives, which has, at times, resulted in politicians succumbing to more extremist pressures from below. This is not a new phenomenon; Buckland (1979: 278) describes this pattern of responsiveness in the early 20th century also. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the majority of the population, however, support increased mixing between communities (Campbell *et al.* 2008; Lloyd and

Robinson 2011: 2148). The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey, for example, has consistently found that the majority of people would prefer to live in mixed-religion neighbourhoods, work in mixed-religion workplaces and send their children to mixed-religion schools (NILT 2006-2017 inclusive). Research by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) evidenced significant support for increased integrated education services in Belfast (NICIE 2013). Other research has suggested that individuals who have experience of mixed marriages or relationships are more likely to send their children to mixed religion schools, are less likely to adopt the traditional identity binaries of unionist or nationalist, and are more likely to spend time outside of Northern Ireland (Hewstone *et al.*, 2008; Lloyd and Robinson 2011: 2147-8).

While the discourse of most political representatives adheres, for the most part, to socially-acceptable attitudes about progressing peace and resolving difference, there is evidence to suggest these elites seek to maintain their position of power by sustaining societal segregation. Politics remains divided on ethnic grounds and negotiations are based on zero-sum gains (McMonagle 2010: 265). Added to this, at the time of writing the Northern Irish Executive had recently been re-established following its suspension for just under three years. In this context, there is a need to shift the focus from top-down to bottom-up peacebuilding, specifically to the role of civil society.

The civil society approach is found widely in peace literature and practice. There is a developed literature exploring the role of NGOs as agents for the neoliberal agendas of international funding bodies and other governmental structures (see for example, Hyde and Byrne 2016; MacGinty 2014; MacGinty and Williams 2009; Richmond 2010; Van Leeuwen and Verkoren 2012). In simple terms, some researchers contend that civil society has been co-opted into implementing strategies that are consistent with the approach of the dominant governmental or international power in the region (this concept is explored later in the thesis in terms of its impact on Corrymeela). To facilitate the entrenchment of liberal principles – namely democracy, market economy, and the rule of law – international resources are often dedicated to bolstering civil society post-conflict (Hyde and Byrne 2016: 96). Aside from the sometimes contentious arguments on the Liberal Peace, the civil society approach is recognised as a legitimate and practical post-conflict intervention. Research from the states of the former Yugoslavia, for example, has emphasised a role for civil society actors to crosscut ethnic division and transform the social order from below (see for example Bešić 2018; Ignatieff

1995: 135; Powers 1996). Potter and Abernethy 2013 also explore comparisons between Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) and Northern Ireland, and advocates of this approach have been vocal in Northern Ireland throughout the period of the modern Troubles (Dixon 1997: 9; Love 1995: 53). The following section examines the literature on peacebuilding from the bottom-up.

Civil society approaches to peacebuilding

Parallel to a system of consociationalism, the Agreement made some provisions that adhered to a civil society approach of resolving conflict (Byrne 2001: 328). This approach involves the construction of interdependent networks between elite, mid- and local-level actors that enhance trust, cooperation and transform relationships (*ibid.*; Dixon 1997: 3). Pledges within the Agreement on integrated education (Byrne 2001: 328), the establishment of the Human Rights Commission, desegregated housing and support for organisations to "develop reconciliation and mutual understanding and respect between and within communities and traditions" (NIO 1998: 23, 21) were indicative of this trend. In the decade after the Agreement, there were also several examples of the Executive engaging meaningfully with policies on reconciliation and "building shared society" (Wilson 2008: 179, 186). The Civic Advisory Panel, initially called the Civic Forum for Northern Ireland, is one example. Set up under Strand One of the Agreement, it consisted of 60 representatives from a variety of social and cultural sectors and aimed to provide a platform for civil society to communicate with and lobby the OFMDFM (Northern Ireland Assembly 2013). (Note though, the Civic Advisory Panel operated inconsistently, with a number of suspensions and a major restructure). The British Government, particularly under New Labour from 1997 onwards (and more so while Northern Ireland was governed by direct rule between 2002 and 2007), placed added emphasis on bottom-up civil society approaches and encouraged the devolution of power from centralised government structures to community organisations (Hughes 2015: 10; Mulgan 1998: 200).

Civil society has been a rich source of societal transformation. NGOs, by facilitating inter-community contact, are identified in the literature as a counterbalance to the elite-level consociational settlement (Byrne 2001; Dixon 1997; Graham 2016: 12). The third sector was well-embedded by the time of the Agreement and is considered by some as a substitute for a

deficit in state provision during and even after the conflict (Acheson *et al*. 2005; Donnelly-Cox *et al.* 2001; Leonard 2004). Mitchell (2009: 243) suggests that in the case of Northern Ireland, the operation of NGOs "helped to consolidate attitudes toward peace and to create the institutional basis needed to support the formal peace process". As a collective unit, the NGO sector is recognised as having an influence on politics from the bottom-up in terms of encouraging constructive debate, providing a political platform for former-paramilitaries, and creating an alternative space for transformational leaders to model reconciliation (Cochrane 2001: 110-11; NICVA 2003 4-5 cf. Farrington 2008:134-5).

The combination of a top-down approach (consociational) and bottom-up (civil society) approach to peacebuilding envisaged within the Agreement is consistent with strategies promoted within mainstream literature on peacebuilding. Lederach (1997) contends that conflict transformation is best achieved via a three-tier model, whereby peacebuilding activities take place concurrently at national, regional and local levels. There have been many contributions to this theory specific to the context of Northern Ireland, emphasising the need for community-level input in conflict transformation (Brewer *et al.* 2011; Morrow and Wilson 1996). Acheson *et al.* (2012: 25) describe that "(a)t the top of (Lederach's) pyramid stands the elite leadership of the protagonists to the conflict that focuses on high-level negotiations and where the emphasis is on visible leadership from identifiable individuals". Based on extensive empirical research and experience in conflict zones such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Israel/Palestine, Kosovo and Cyprus, Autesserre (2010, 2014, 2017) concludes that "only a combination of top-down and bottom-up efforts can build a sustainable peace" (Autesserre 2017: 118). Investment in civil society is supported by the Liberal Peace agenda because it is understood to strengthen and increase institutions acting to counter the state and bolster political participation opportunities (MacGinty 2011: 183-4). The simultaneous process of peacebuilding by local nongovernmental actors with support from above is also perceived as the most effective means of establishing peace in the Western Balkans region (Bešić 2018; Last 2007: 84; Richmond 2006: 379). Within peacebuilding practice, this concurrent process is well-established and sometimes known as "multi-track diplomacy" (Mapendere 2005: 66). It is understood to involve negotiations between governmental and other elite officials (track one diplomacy), which are complemented by interaction and cooperation between civil society actors (track two diplomacy) (Mapendere 2005: 67-8), and beyond that between individuals in everyday interactions across different platforms at the grassroots (Wasike *et al*. 2016: 1-2).

Against the backdrop of a dysfunctional peace process, peacebuilding has been largely consigned to third sector actors during the post-Agreement period. The absence of elite level peacebuilding is demonstrated in the conduct of Northern Ireland's local political leaders. At best, their contributions can be understood as apathetic in terms of transformational leadership, or at worst as proactive attempts to incite sectarianism within the communities they represent (Owicki 2018: 8). Liechty and Clegg (2001: 18) argue that in order to move past sectarianism a culture of blame must be transformed into a culture of responsibility. Blame and a lack of responsibility – often represented as political scandal - are commonplace to the extent it has been normalised as part of democratic politics in Northern Ireland (Owicki 2018: 7-8, 19). Such trends are not peculiar to the province. Castells (2009: xxxii) describes how, as a result of expanded information technologies and the rise of media politics, political representatives are increasingly perceived as the "face of politics". As a result, personality and politics are synonymously linked, thus the exposure of scandal to discredit one's character has become a key strategy for actors to further their political power (*ibid.*). This has acted to maintain a divisive discourse of "us and them" in Northern Ireland and perpetuate distrust between ethnic communities.

There are many examples of the culture of blame, but I provide only two here to illustrate my argument. First is a general point regarding conduct within parliamentary debates. Wilson and Stapleton (2001) point to a number of linguistic mechanisms within parliament in which "the socio-historical context of conflict can be seen to pervade the debates and provide the backdrop for the ongoing antagonism and point- scoring between individuals". These included tendencies of Unionist members to address Sinn Féin as "IRA/Sinn Féin", thus explicitly connecting the democratically elected party to a terrorist group (Wilson and Stapleton 2012: 79-80; see also Stormont Parliamentary debates on 25 September 2000, 8 May 2001 and 10 September 2002, suggesting that this phrase endured for a number of years post-Agreement). Wilson and Stapleton (2002: 84-7) also suggest that the Sinn Féin's use of Irish language is divisive and provocative, in that it was, at the time of research, a minority language for which no translation was provided and thus an overt expression of Irish nationalism. Second, and more recently, DUP MP Little-Pengelly was accused of sectarianism in July 2018 when she contacted Transport NI to express "serious concerns" about the naming of a bus stop in Belfast, which was called "Short Strand", an area traditionally associated with and occupied by

Nationalist communities, and surrounded by majority Unionist communities. The stop was not within Little-Pengelly's constituency, but she claimed she was acting on behalf of a constituent in expressing concerns about its inaccurate naming which did "not reflect either the area or the history of the area in which the stop is situated" (Bain 2018; Monaghan 2018). Although Little-Pengelly denied any sectarian motivation, her motive was perceived by some as maintaining notions of 'us and them' and territoriality at a known interface, and this was the basis of much of the criticism directed towards her on Twitter (see, for example, Naomi Long's and BBC reporter Mark Simpson's posts and comments from 26th July 2018).

The commitment to peace in Northern Ireland's political elite can therefore be questioned. While the degree of scandal in Northern Irish politics may not be particularly remarkable in comparison with other western democracies, the difference is that the reverberations of such scandals threaten the fragile equilibrium of peace and power-sharing in this small country far more than its neighbours. Despite this, politicians routinely take risks which, when discovered, upset the balance and have in some cases resulted indirectly in the collapse of government. MP Iris Robinson's extra-marital affair and related financial conflicts of interest with a 19-year-old man in 2010 and the allegations that Gerry Adams turned a blind eye to his brother's abuse of children are apt examples of this type of conduct (White 2010). Many of these scandals adhere to the entrenched discourse of "us and them", and they expose the incapacity of political representatives to function appropriately within the newly established political structures (Liechty and Clegg 2001: 17). Other research has evidenced a perception amongst third sector practitioners of Stormont representatives' tendency to "buy favour" through their actions in their constituencies, rather than respond effectively to the needs of the area (Hughes 2015: 283).

The peace process' adherence to mainstream peacebuilding theory, specifically that of coordinated multi-tier initiatives, is therefore largely theoretical, rather than applied. The consociational merits of the Agreement were based on hopes of transformational leadership that would model cooperation and thus instil inter-community trust from above (Lijphart 1969: 211, 1977: 16; Nagle 2013: 464). In the absence of transformational political elites, and at times the absence of a functional government altogether, the "trickle-down effect of peace…is weak in Northern Ireland" (James 2008: 120).

Due to the absence of a top-down peace process, responsibility for peacebuilding, by default, has been deferred to those at the grassroots. It must be acknowledged that considering local actors as the primary peacebuilders does not adhere to accepted peacebuilding theory which emphasises a concurrent bottom-up and top-down approach. Despite this, I consider that unilateral peacebuilding activities by community actors are still preferable to no activity at all. This observation is particularly compelling in the case of Northern Ireland since, in practice, input from elites has proven intermittent, inconsistent and faltering: London and Dublin have, to some extent, psychologically withdrawn since 1998, while power-sharing arrangements at Stormont have been subject to repeated, and prolonged, breakdown. Thus, Northern Ireland's experience illustrates the value of the maxim that even if the ideal model of peacebuilding is not realised, local actors still retain the capacity to make some meaningful social change.

Bottom-up peacebuilding efforts focuses attention on individuals and their relationships. Literature on the role of NGOs posits that community organisations are the primary instruments for creating connections between individuals at different levels in society by highlighting their shared interest and promoting reciprocity and relationships (Acheson et al 2012:18; Feld 1981; Häuberer 2014: 570; NIVCA 2003 4-5; in Farrington 2008:134-5). Drucker (1990: *x*) describes NGOs as "human change agents" and their product as "a changed human being". He argues that NGO output can therefore be understood in terms of changes in individual behaviour, circumstance, vision, hopes, competence and capacity (Drucker 1990:85). In its 2003 Policy Manifesto, the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) also emphasised the power of the community sector to overcome division: "(t)he not-for-profit ethos of the sector means that it actively seeks to build collective or community profit (capital) within economically and socially deprived communities when it is delivering services… Strong civic networks can offset sectarian divisions and work at the community level has the potential to encourage outward-looking and outward-reaching development rather than inward-looking competitive communities" (NIVCA 2003 4-5; in Farrington 2008:134-5).

The concept of 'relationship transformation' as a form of peacebuilding is not uncommon in the context of Northern Ireland. In research of 8 PROs, Gidron *et al.* (1999: 289-90) identified that all but one of the organisations promoted a discourse which framed the individual as both

the source and solution to the conflict. Morrow *et al*.'s (2018) research identified relationship-building and/or strengthening as an integral part of PRO practice. Cross-community peacebuilding work has generally taken the form of bringing together groups from different communities and creating a space that encouraged dialogue and a "more positive inter-communal atmosphere" (Love 1995:53). The content of these programmes has been varied, including alternative practices like yoga and art therapy as ways of bringing people together in the same space and encouraging relationships (Acheson and Milofsky 2008; Donahoe 2013).

Peace at the grassroots level is about relationships and within this thesis local-level peacebuilding work is, therefore, understood to be about transforming relationships. There is an established literature supporting this approach, such as *inter alia* Hamber and Kelly (2004: 3) who state that "relationships require attention to build peace"; and Lederach's (2001: 842) contention that "(r)econciliation is first and last about people and their relationships" (see also Boulding 2000; Bloomfield *et al*. 2003; Jarman 2016; and Wilson 2008).

Social capital theory: a theoretical framework

A definition of social capital

Relational peacebuilding as described above can be understood through the heuristic tool of social capital. This section will offer a conceptual framework on social capital and explain civil society as the arena in which the building of social capital takes place.

Much energy has been dedicated to establishing a succinct definition of social capital (see for example Graham 2016: 18-20 and McClenaghan 2000). Drawing on this literature, I define social capital as the social resources available to an individual as a result of their human networks, memberships and relationships, which coalesce around particular shared norms, values and beliefs (Campbell et al. 2008:23; Cuesta 2009; Field 2009; Graham 2016: 20; Halpern 2005; Putnam 2000: 22; Morrow 2006: 65; Muir 2011b). Social capital results from a reciprocal processes and generates positive outcomes for those involved in its exchange.

Putnam (1993) suggests three core attributes of social capital human relationships: "the presence or absence of trust, the expectation of reciprocity and the existence of networks" (Putnam 1993 cf. Morrow 2006: 66; Putnam 2000: 19-23, 134-7) and I also include these attributes in my analysis.

Social capital theory is well-explored in academic literature (see for example Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988, 1989; Graham 2016; Häuberer 2011, 2014; Putnam 1993, 2000). The term has become increasingly popular in the fields of social change, community development and post-conflict theory as a means of conceptualising and understanding social relations (Field 2009; Fine 1999: 4; McClenaghan 2000; Morrow 2006). Social capital theory was expanded and crystallised by Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* (2000), which examines the decline of civic participation in the USA in the latter part of the twentieth century. Putnam's central research questions examines the types of relationships that support successful liberal democracies and market economies (Morrow 2006: 69). Using empirical data, Putnam (2000) examines patterns of engagement across a number of subcategories of social and economic life and argues that a "decline of generalised reciprocity" has resulted in a reduction in the "productivity of individuals and groups" and the resulting "socially desirable outcomes" (*ibid.* 505, 19, 288*).* Putnam describes this process as the erosion of social capital and outlines the ways and reasons why people have become socially disconnected. He argues for an institutional and individual solution, via public policies and structures that promote opportunities to replenish the stocks of capital (*ibid*.: 403).

Social capital is the "the "actual and potential resources" (Campbell *et al.* 2008: 23-4) mobilised by an individual for their personal benefit through their membership in social networks and which is constantly accumulated and exchanged via everyday interactions (Campbell *et al.* 2008: 23-4; Graham 2016: *vii*; Häuberer 2014:574; McClenaghan 2000:568). Based on an analysis of existing studies, Putnam (2000: 288-9) understands social capital to have a number of benefits that allow individuals to "translate aspirations into realities". These include: the collective resolution of community issues via cooperation; a reduction in the social and economic costs of everyday transactions; improvements in societal cohesion by developing people's awareness of their communal objectives; and membership of networks that provide "helpful information" (*ibid*.). Häuberer (2014: 574) provides

examples of social capital in practice, such as a person lending their car to another, assisting with domestic tasks, or helping with another's tax return. Social capital can be accessed via formal and informal social networks (Putnam 2000: 338-9; Varshney 2002: 46). Informal networks take the form of familial and friend associations, whereas formal networks consist of "membership and participation in associations" (Putnam 2000: 22 cf. Häuberer 2014: 572). Putnam (2000: 288-90) concludes that individuals engaged in formal networks have improved chance of obtaining social capital resources than those who are not engaged.

Social capital is categorised in terms of 'bonding' and 'bridging' capital. Generally, bonding social capital refers to the type and extent of connectedness between members of the same community; whilst bridging social capital refers to this connectedness between members of separate communities (Campbell *et al.* 2008:25; Putnam 2000: 22). Putnam argues that high levels of trust, reciprocity and networks within and between groups, allows, respectively, for strong bonding and bridging capital (Putnam 2000: 22-4, 134-7). Trust is understood to develop from "face-to-face interactions", and the more numerous and routine these interactions, the higher the corresponding level of community trust (Acheson *et al*. 2012: 24). These attributes provide a strong basis for analysis of social relations in Northern Ireland. I have argued that segregation and division represent a major challenge in reconciling Northern Irish society. Activities that facilitate inter-community relationships and trust (bridging social capital) can therefore be considered as an appropriate approach to addressing this challenge.

Civil Society and Social Capital

The relationship between social capital and civil society is important to this study. Whilst there is a well-developed literature on 'civil society', which at times is complex, there does exist some consensus on its analytical import. Understanding civil society as a form of associational life is an established theoretical perspective, particularly in works on social capital (Graham 2016: 2-3; Kaldor 2004: 42). Mainstream concepts of associational civil society describe a layer of human interaction and a network of social contracts, which are independent of the state (Farrington 2008:115; Graham 2016: 2-4; Kaldor 2004:44-45). Key components of "individual autonomy and voluntary association" (Gellner 1994:5; Graham 2016: 2-4) are also agreed upon. These manifest themselves in self-organised groups such as the media, religious groups,

trade unions, private industries, and NGOs, and further includes those entities' self-generation, interactions (Guelke 2003:68; Kaldor 2004:44-45), and "the set of relational networks - formed for the sake of family, faith, interest and ideology - that fill this space" (Walzer 1991:23). Kaldor (2004:42) also identifies "individual rights, autonomy, deliberation, (and) contract" to hold constant across this understanding of civil society. Civil society is described as the arena in which social capital is constructed through voluntary associations and a network of relationships (Graham 2016: 2-3, 15). Onyx and Bullen (2000: 24) define that "social capital is the raw material of civil society".

Social capital and the State

To understand the experience of a local NGO, the relationship between the state and social capital must be considered.

Social capital reduces the role of the state. This reduction is based on four claims. First, the process of individual engagement in networks and relationships takes place independently of the state and as a result of individuals' free will (Coleman 1994: 312-13). This is a process that may be encouraged by government, via public policy, but cannot be replaced or controlled by government intervention (Field 2009: 135). Second, the laws of the state allow an element of trust in cooperation or interaction with strangers, and many state institutions are in place to manage cooperation between individuals or groups where there is a high level of mistrust (trade interactions are perhaps the best example here) (Cook *et al*. 2012: 143). Higher levels of trust between individuals and within communities reduce the need for statutory guarantees. Third, in liberal democracies, the State operates to ensure its citizens access to resources (Field 2009: 139). Social capital allows positive outcomes for individuals as a result of their community-level social networks and the associated norms of trust and reciprocity. This system of individual benefit allows individuals to prosper – and access non-economic resources - based on their own social networks and relationships. In communities with strong social capital, there is therefore a narrow space for the state to intervene, and indeed little need for State intervention as communities can flourish without additional supports. Fourth, in communities with high stocks of social capital, people "get on with one another" (Halpern 2005: 171) and thus there is less requirement for state intervention for communities with peaceful relationships. The benefit of social capital is recognised in governmental public policy and in many liberal

democratic societies state policies are designed to encourage social capital, because it reduces the need for state intervention (Field 2009: 139; the Scottish Government, for example, is explicit in its social capital strategy and associated objectives, see for example Black *et al.*, 2018; Ormston and Reid 2012).

By contrast, an emphasis on social capital is criticised by some for perpetuating neoliberalism, encouraging the retreat of the state and placing responsibility on individuals and communities for the hardships that they encounter, rather than on state institutions. Although civil society occupies the space outside of the State and may reduce its role, social capital cannot replace governmental functions (Putnam 1993: 42). Some research examines the role of social capital during conflict, and argues that in times of conflict – due to the absence of the state– the family becomes the core unit to protect and support its people (Mehmet and Mehmet 2004: 295). While this argument is sound in terms of non-economic resources, there are obvious limits to what social capital can provide, and it cannot replace a welfare system (Avis 2002; Field 2009: 136; Fine 2000: 8). A stable economic environment is also considered as a prerequisite for social capital to develop (Letki 2008; Li *et al.*, 2005; Marschall and Stolle 2004; Oliver and Wong 2003).

The relationship between social capital and the state can thus be understood as a bi-directional process. Boix and Posner (1995, 1998) argue that social capital can make "consociational democracy possible" (although the empirical evidence for this claim is questionable (Halpern 2005: 184-6)). From the bottom-up, social capital allows for individuals to share certain norms, experience higher levels of social trust and exercise tolerance of one another's political participation, thus contributing to effective democracy (Inkeles 2000; Putnam 1993; Sullivan and Transue 1999). From the top-down, public policy can adopt an approach which can encourage social capital, and create a stable economic environment, and the two operate in parallel (Hughes 2015; Putnam 1993: 42).

The negative side of social capital

Social capital literature tends to highlight the multiple benefits of accruing social capital (Field 2009: 79; Portes 2014: 18407), emphasising it as a positive social force. There are however a number of potentially negative aspects of social capital that are relevant to this thesis. Social

capital should not be considered as an exclusively positive social force: it is complex and its effects are at times ambivalent.

There are challenges for Northern Ireland associated with strong bonding capital within single identity communities. Bonding social capital has been criticised in the literature for reinforcing group segregation, resulting in communities that are "exclusive, and inward looking" (Graham 2016: *ix*). Some argue that strong bonding capital can function to maintain societal segregation in terms of *inter alia* housing, education, employment and associational life (Donahoe 2017: 83; McGrellis 2010: 764; Murray and Darby 1980: 5 cf. Whyte 1990: 61; Rose 1971 pp. 114-5). In her observations on Belfast, Leonard (2004: 927) argued that bonding capital excludes bridging capital, thus for bridging capital to evolve "the conditions that led to the development of bonding social capital need to be undermined". Conflict is often seen to encourage bonding capital by valorising "ethno-national identity (to) become a rallying point in times of tension or fear, leading to a retreat into a basic, secure group identity" (Smith 1999: 276). Peacebuilding work that focuses on single-identity programmes (and therefore bonding capital) has been criticised for reinforcing "otherness" and reflecting "an essentialist view of the conflict, perpetuating divisions within society" (Donahoe 2017: 85; see also McGrellis 2010: 764).

The literature further highlights that strong bonding capital, in the absence of bridging capital, may result in economic challenges. Strong ethnic bonds within single-identity communities can mean economic opportunities are reserved for its members (Portes 2014: 18407). This preference explains how some immigrant economies have been established and thrived in 'host communities' (Portes 2000: 5-7; Portes and Stepick 1993; Zhou 1992). The anonymity provided by the universal market is used to traders' advantage, and this advantage is lost if there is a strong preference to one's own community (Granovetter 1995; Portes 2014: 18407). It can result in stunted capital accumulation and negligence towards the market because of disproportionate levels of trust between ethnically homogenous groups (Portes 2014: 18407). Some researchers have attributed Northern Ireland's economic and developmental lag to the segregation and institutionalised mistrust between communities (Roche 2008 cf. McGrellis 2010: 765; Shirlow 2000). During the conflict, as communities were split along religious cleavages, individuals located and secured employment within their own ethnic communities (Whyte 1990: 61). As segregation became more entrenched, this pattern of employment

became self-sustaining, with very few individuals crossing the ethnic boundaries for work (Murray and Darby 1980: 5; Whyte 1990: 61-4). In the absence of links with 'the other side' individuals did not feel secure in accepting employment in a workplace dominated by "the other side" or travelling through areas associated with the opposing community as part of their journey to work (Whyte 1990: 63-4). Research by Jarman and Bell (2009) found that people from interface communities perceived some parts of the city to be off limits and this meant certain resources and opportunities were not available to them.

Interview respondent, Ciaran McConville (Interview: 11/10/17) recalled a story about his grandfather, Tommy, in 1950s Belfast, which was illustrative of the economic opportunities afforded by bridging capital, and the dangers associated with inter-community engagement in the absence of established capital:

> "So my grandfather would have had difficulties getting work….my grandfather would have been an old Republican, he would have been in the IRA. But his best friend would have been a Protestant, neighbour, called Willie John O'Hara. And Willie John got him a couple of jobs back in the 30s, 40s and 50s. One of the jobs was down in the shipyards and one day when he was coming out of the shipyards he doesn't know what happened, he woke up in hospital. When he woke up, there was a policeman standing at the bottom of the bed, and the policeman wanted to know did he know what happened to him. My grandfather hadn't a clue. And he was there with his head heavily bandaged. Willie John said "this is what happened Tommy" and he held my grandfather's jacket up. And on the back of the jacket was a T and the T stood for Taig. And what it was, somebody in the shipyard had identified my grandfather as a Catholic, and when he was walking out with this T on the back of his jacket, somebody had just caved in the back of his head, with a metal pipe. He had a fractured skull…
>
> The other thing he told me, once Willie John got him another job in the Shankill and again, at some stage somebody identified him as a Catholic, and the premises he was in was a long narrow room, a woodworking place. And Willie John was working as well, he came running in to the workshop and shouts "Tommy quick get out, get out!" and my grandfather spotted two men coming in with bandanas around their face, and both of them were carrying pistols and they were coming into shoot him because he was Catholic" (*ibid.*)

Despite the negative consequences associated with bonding social capital – and a primary focus on bridging capital in this thesis - it is too simplistic to understand bridging capital as always having positive effects in civil society and bonding capital as an exclusively negative force. Putnam (2000: 23) describes bonding capital as a "sociological superglue" and bridging capital as "a sociological WD40" and emphasises that they are distinct yet operate in parallel to produce positive outcomes. Some studies have evidenced that "the sense of security derived from membership in a safe and dependable intracommunity network" supports the accrual of bridging capital because there is increased confidence to construct inter-communities associations (Boix and Posner 1998 cf. Campbell *et al.* 2008: 30). Bonding capital also has various benefits in terms of economic development, reduced crime, protection of vulnerable members of community, and improved health (Putnam 2000: 22, 306-31). In the context of Northern Ireland, bonding capital may result in single-identity communities addressing issues of socioeconomic deprivation within their neighbourhoods, which can have long-term benefits in terms of regeneration and community empowerment (Campbell *et al*. 2008: 32). McGrellis (2010:764) identifies how Northern Irish young people benefited from both bonding and bridging capital at different points depending on context. A Community Group respondent in Byrne's (2011: 101) research described bonding capital as a sort of precursor to the formation of bridging capital, stating that "(i)f we do the single-identity work, the natural evolution is that people will want to learn more and engage with others of different cultures". Graham's (2016: 128) research also identified that, in some instances, "a certain amount of single-identity functional bonding work is necessary before cross-community engagement is even imaginable". I emphasise therefore that although this thesis' primary focus is the building of bridging social capital as a form of peacebuilding, this focus does not discount the value of bonding capital.

While Putnam (2000) discusses many of the potential benefits of social capital, he also emphasises that some terrorist acts, serious and organised crime gangs and far right racist groups are facilitated by strong social capital (*ibid*.: 21-2). This is described as perverse social capital and is discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Perverse social capital develops when the networks and norms associated with social capital reward criminal and/or rent-seeking behaviour (Rubio 1997: 815). This social effect can have a significant detriment on productive activities that promote economic growth (*ibid*.). During the Troubles in Northern

Ireland, the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) (1987: paragraph 3.47) concluded that there was a significant 'black economy', particularly within Catholic districts, consisting of informal and unregulated employment agreements between networks of individuals within the community. This unofficial workforce was established to the extent that the SACHR reported that it probably resulted in an overestimate of the unemployment figures for Northern Ireland at that time (*ibid.*).

Social Capital in Northern Ireland

Social capital theory has great explanatory value in a study of the peace process in Northern Ireland. The argument that imagined and material divisions in Northern Ireland have prevented trust, reciprocity and networks from developing between opposing communities is consistently convincing. Theoretical contributions also offer valuable insights into how social capital can be utilised as a framework for understanding the conflict and for developing civil society based conflict transformation strategies.

There is a persuasive paradigm that examines social capital approaches to the Northern Irish peace process. Most relevant for this study is Graham's (2016) book which examines the construction of bonding, bridging and constricting capital within victim support groups. She contends that social capital should be reconceptualised when applied to deeply divided societies, and emphasises that trust and leadership can determine whether bridging or bonding social capital is constructed. Graham examines victim groups, identifies that these are primarily single-identity engaged in bonding social capital, and argues that this is incentivised from above by governmental and European funding policies. This observation supports conclusions explored later in this thesis regarding the impact of neoliberal funding policies on PROs.

Graham (2016: 107-111) highlights that the concept of social capital has been included in peacebuilding strategies at national and regional levels such as the Executive's 'Good Relations' agenda and the type of programmes supported by the PEACE monies from the EU. However, her research also suggests that a number of groups felt that the government had not provided sufficient guidance on how social capital strategies could be integrated into their local/grassroots programmes (*ibid.*: 115). This echoes previous research by Campbell *et al.*

(2008: 32) that evidenced a perceived lack of state support for social capital amongst third sector actors. Graham (*ibid*.: 116) remarks that the creation of bridging social capital within victim groups is in spite of, rather than because of, incoherent public and funding policies.

Variously, social capital approaches have also been used to: compare single-identity and mixed communities (Campbell *et al*. 2008); argue that membership of associations strengthens bridging social capital (Muir 2011b); examine the availability of social capital to young people (McGrellis 2010); and contend that bridging social capital can be utilised as a method of conflict transformation (Hughes *et al*. 2011; Morrow 2006). Potter and Abernethy (2013) argue that social capital is gendered and women are a significant, but largely ignored, force for bridging social capital in the peace process. The authors further state that the consociational agreement placed elites who were associated with the traditional conflict identities of the 'Troubles' in power, therefore institutionalising these divisions and discouraging forms of bridging social capital between communities. In their study of social capital and trust, Hughes *et al*. (2011:978-9) describe how outbreaks of violence can cause fluctuations of community engagement. Counter-intuitively, the authors contend that withdrawal from engaging with other communities is intended to *protect* existing inter-community (bridging) social capital rather than risk conflict that may result from engagement during times of tension, which cause potential damage to existing inter-community relationships. There is some anecdotal evidence that this is a common reaction when conflict arises. For instance, a historical account of life in Portaferry at the beginning of the 20th century by Cronne (2003: 80) describes:

> 'When, for whatever reason, a feeling of sectarian tension was aroused, this was instantly recorded on the sensitive seismograph of the juvenile community in black looks, snarls, insults and fights. Among adults, apart from some drunken brawl, it simply meant that people, who ordinarily passed the time of day very civilly with one another, preferred not to speak. Perhaps it was the easiest way to avoid unintentionally giving offence, and I think that was understood by everyone'.

The accrual of social capital is also recognised by practitioners as a legitimate means of peacebuilding via relationship transformation. Lisa Dietrich, the director of Community Relations In Schools (CRIS), describing its successful peacebuilding models, stated "(b)ringing

groups of people together like this is rich, and undoes the scapegoating that can often happen when people have existed in silos" (Lisa Dietrich cf. *Corrymeela Magazine* 2nd edition 2018: 7). Ellen Puckett (Interview: 7/10/17) also discussed the importance of relationships in peacebuilding work:

> "I think the relationship is so important. More than contact. You can have contact…you know kids would go into a bus, and then would have gone off and done different things, and...You would have gone through a different area, kids would have gone all quiet because they'd see different murals and different flags and stuff, but they didn't have a chance to talk about it, and they'd stay with the fear. They've had the contact, they've had the exposure, but unless they've had the relationship with someone they don't really understand that."

Social capital and economic resources

A number of studies have focused on the relationship between social class and peacebuilding (see for example Byrne 2009; O'Malley 1994; The Portland Trust 2007; Rose 1990), however I comment only briefly on this relationship to highlight that access to economic resources has an important impact upon inter- and intra-community relations. The worst violence of the Troubles disproportionately affected those from lower socioeconomic areas (Kapur and Campbell 2004: xii, 3; Love 1995: 28; Rose 1990 p. 383). Correspondingly, in the period directly after the peace agreement, levels of economic regeneration improved and there were indicators that this led to improved community relations (Jarman and Bell 2009: 9). Evidence suggests that deprivation and poverty can negatively affect peoples' commitment to relationships with their neighbours, and can exaggerate negative stereotyping and inter-community mistrust (Letki 2008; Li *et al*., 2005; Marschall and Stolle 2004; Oliver and Wong 2003; Sampson *et al.,* 1997). Community relations are tested when there is competition over employment and housing (Hunter 1982: 39) and accordingly, people are more willing to make connections if they have more choices, opportunities and higher levels of control and life satisfaction (all factors associated with higher socioeconomic status) (Letki 2008: 117). Lower socioeconomic classes are more likely to live in neighbourhoods affected by crime and antisocial behaviour, both of which discourage trust and the development of new relationships and also erode the sense of community (Letki 2008: 105,117). The availability of economic

resources therefore has an indirect impact on the building of social capital, both within and between communities. This is important to note when considering Corrymeela's work with deprived communities and its Membership, the majority of whom are from more affluent socioeconomic backgrounds. This is discussed further in chapter six.

The specificities of social capital in Northern Ireland

As Letki (2008: 119) notes: "social capital is a multifaceted and multilayered phenomenon, and its various dimensions have different individual-level determinants". The individual, community, and national contexts are all important. I therefore highlight a number of points regarding how social capital functions at different levels in the specific context of Northern Ireland.

First, empirical measurements of social capital have tended to be premised on the level of voluntary participation in community groups. Bebbington (1999: 2036), for example, treats group membership as a "surrogate indicator" of social capital. Empirical studies have had a relatively narrow focus in terms of the type of group and social interaction under scrutiny (Anheier and Kendall 2002: 353). Research suggests that group memberships are made up of a self-selecting group of individuals, who are already more civically engaged, trusting and likely to form relationships with others (Stolle 1998; 2001).

By contrast, group membership in Northern Ireland has been used as a tool to maintain division and, in some cases, structures of violence. Inclusion in a group most often involves social and economic exclusion from and for others (Harris and De Renzio 1997: 926; Portes 2014: 18407; Waldinger 1995). The membership of many groups in Northern Ireland depends on one's ethnic identity. Some have warned of the potential for homogenous voluntary associations to "reinforce members' views and isolate them from potentially enlightening viewpoints" (Li *et al*. 2005; Putnam 2000: 341 citing Lipset 1960; Stouffer 1855; and Berman 1997; Waldinger 1995). Distinctions have been made between 'civil' and 'uncivil' society (Levi 1996), and criticisms made of undifferentiated definitions of civil society in conflict, which are wide enough to include sectarian or paramilitary organisations (Farrington 2008:132) or that actively

promote division or even sectarianism (Chambers and Kopstein 2001: 838-9). Guelke (2003:69), for example, warns that broad definitions of social capital and civil society, based on the influence and reach of the third sector, would categorise the Orange Order as part of a strong civil society. Belloni (2009: 6) echoes this, arguing that the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Orange Order, both considered as civil associations, perpetuate community divisions and tension. Thus, group membership in Northern Ireland is not an accurate indicator of the 'health' of civil society or its levels of productive social capital. While it may act as a proxy measurement of bonding capital, the lack of organisations with a cross-community membership excludes this approach as an accurate measurement of bridging capital.

Second, it is important to note the role of perverse social capital in Northern Ireland. The key elements of social capital – trust, reciprocity and norms – which underpin systems of productive social capital are also, paradoxically, the features which facilitate the activities of organised crime groups (Gilbert 2009: 57; Putnam 2000: 313-4). Indeed, Putnam (2000: 314) notes that the "networks and norms of reciprocity serve the interests of the members in much the same way that social capital embodied in bowling teams helps their members". There have been a number of empirical evaluations of the operation of perverse social capital. In his examination of perverse capital, Rubio (1997) argues that research on Colombia is not comparable to the empirical assessments of social capital in the United States, which correlate crime and delinquency with low stocks of social capital, because the existing infrastructure in Colombia means criminality is often a rational economic choice, and can be positively associated with reserves of productive social capital. He argues that social capital in Colombia – realised through "the takeover of existing institutions or by creating their own contacts, networks, information systems, power relations" – have facilitated the activities of serious and organised criminal gangs and drug cartels (*ibid*.: 808). Horowitz (1983) also describes this process in her examination of Latino gangs in the USA. She describes that the gang is maintained through continual reciprocal acts between its members (*ibid*.: 187). Many of these acts facilitate criminality yet bring positive outcomes for individuals and the group as a whole (*ibid*.). Perverse social capital is thus the term used to define capital that does not benefit the State or promote market growth (McIlwaine and Moser 2001: 968; Rubio 1997), but which still benefits individuals and is premised on the same discrete elements of trust, relationships and shared norms.

Indeed, the assumption that social capital brings positive economic benefit and growth (through legitimate means) is a common one in the literature (Cuesta 2009; Fine 1999: 5; Putnam 1993: 38). Rubio (1997: 815) discusses the behavioural norms in a system of perverse social capital, and highlights that if the friends and family around you adopt norms that inspire delinquency and criminality, then these types of behaviours will be more likely, particularly in societies where such behaviours pay economic or social dividends. Handelman (1995: 33) illustrates this point using an anecdote about a wedding toast made by a well-known *vor* (thief) in Russia:

> "The more friends a person has, the better he is, and that's what gives us strength…so let us drink to our cause, which is always to help each other, to stay close to each other, and to be together all the time. That is our dignity as *blatnye* (members of the criminal world)".

In systems of perverse social capital, gang or guerilla leaders may act as role models for young people and encourage the accrual of perverse social capital (Cuesta 2009; Rubio 1997). Mark Gallacher (05/04/19), a former gang member in Glasgow, also supports this position, discussing the perceived rewards of life in a gang. He states that for him, "education stopped at the school gates and traditional education was seen as a barrier to achieving the reputation gang members craved in their 'scheme'". He stated that being part of a gang was a cultural norm, which was intergenerational and reinforced by a lack of exposure to other types of 'employment' (*ibid.)*.

I conclude that individuals adopt behaviours within their own context in order to reap the social and economic rewards offered, and these are reinforced by the norms which develop in parallel. This can result in perverse social capital, whereby trust, relationships and norms reinforce so-called negative behaviours, such as criminality, delinquency or gender inequalities. Perverse social capital necessarily excludes, by providing benefits for individuals engaged in networks of such capital, but negative outcomes for wider society, thus creating distinctly separate communities (McIlwaine and Moser 2001: 968). The associated behaviours are deemed as negative from the perspective of the State. Because of context-specific cultures, institutions and norms however, they continue to result in positive outcomes for the individual. Systems in

which perverse social capital is a dominant feature are often underpinned by generalised violence and criminality (McIlwaine and Moser 2001: 968).

Perverse social capital is one of the major challenges faced by PROS in post-Agreement Northern Ireland, specifically within communities in which paramilitary structures maintain control. The challenge of perverse capital at Corrymeela, which is particularly significant among young people, will be discussed in the empirical chapters Six and Eight. For some communities affected by multiple deprivation and poor employment opportunities, paramilitarism represents the most secure economic option, or in some cases the only option. High levels of bonding social capital within these communities are likely to reward certain criminal and rent-seeking behaviours, and there are very few alternative incentives to accrue stocks of bridging social capital. Young men are recognised as one of the most 'at risk' groups, more likely to be involved in violence than female peers (Campbell *et* al. 2016; Hamber and Gallagher 2015: 71). Young males exhibit poorer school performance rates (Nolan 2014: 97) and are far more vulnerable to involvement with paramilitary social structures, either via recruitment or as the victim of punishment attacks (Campbell *et al*. 2016; Hamber and Gallagher 2015: 73-4). Young men in economically deprived communities are even more at risk (Campbell *et al*. 2016). In the post-Agreement period, the trend for punishment beatings and shootings has not subsided. In 2017 there were twice as many punishment shootings recorded as in 2016, and the number of punishment beatings was the highest in ten years (BBC News 18th January 2017; BBC News 18th May 2017; PSNI 2017). At the time of writing in 2019, violence in Derry/Londonderry was also escalating. There has been a recognition in academic and policy literature that this demographic group requires specialised and targeted interventions (Campbell *et al.* 2016.).

A project I was involved in during the early 2010s (while working for a different PRO in Belfast) offers an illustrative example of the operationalisation of perverse social capital in Northern Ireland. Part of the PRO's remit was to conduct shuttle mediations between paramilitaries on the Republican and Loyalist sides. The admittedly apocryphal story of one case was that the Loyalist paramilitaries required to carry out some form of visible retaliation, as they had been 'wronged' by the IRA and tradition dictated the need for community punishment. Due to the political context at the time, the Loyalists were reluctant to be violent

towards members of the Republican community and sought the support of mediators to progress. A deal was struck whereby the Loyalists would attend a Catholic Chapel early one summer morning, cover it in (water-based) yellow paint, have their photos taken by the vandalised church, and thereafter discreetly wash the paint off using power-hoses. It was agreed that the mediator and a Catholic priest would observe, and the Loyalist group could publish the images in their community newsletter to reassure their constituency they had taken appropriate retaliatory action. Inter-community trust, reciprocity, norms and networks are all present in this example. While it may not illustrate what is normatively considered as a 'positive outcome', a temporarily vandalised church was considered a productive and mutually acceptable outcome for both sides.

Social capital must be considered against the often idiosyncratic backdrop of Northern Irish culture and it may not always operate in the way that is expected, particularly by comparison to communities that have not experienced civil conflict. Fine (1998: 9) argues that context, which includes power structures, economy and conflict, may entirely dictate how social capital operates in a specific time and space. McIlwaine and Moser (2001: 966) examine the impact of violence on social capital, and argue that it may be "simultaneously eroded, fostered or reconstituted" as a result of violence within communities. In the wake of community violence, networks of social capital can act as 'shock absorbers' that maintain intercommunity relationships where they might otherwise falter (Personal communication with Tim Wilson 22/01/19). The social capital under scrutiny is context-specific and is understood as a fluid and dynamic concept, reactive to other cultural, social and economic forces (McIlwaine and Moser 2001; Woolcock 1998: 159), and one which does not necessarily produce positive outcomes for everyone, or for the state.

Conclusion

In the post-Agreement period, Northern Ireland has faced many challenges to establishing peace and a productive civil society. White (2012: 43) writes that "the challenge for Northern Ireland is to foster an associational life that allows individuals to cross extant community barriers and develop relationships with members of the other community that both humanise and empower the other". Campbell *et al.* (2008:35) state "the challenge remains to devise

appropriate strategies that facilitate the emergence of bonding (and) bridging… social capital in ways which allow complementarity both within and across communities and at every level of government". The division of unionist and nationalist communities and their lack of association with one another was embedded long before the outbreak of the modern Troubles. Recognition of the challenges of segregation were included in the Agreement alongside pledges on the "promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society" and "the allocation of sufficient resources, including statutory funding as necessary, to meet the needs of victims and to provide for community-based support programmes" (NIO 1998: 23).

Despite the inclusion of top-down and bottom-up peacebuilding approaches, the Agreement has not had the intended trickle-down effect of peace. The murder of a young journalist, Lyra McKee, in Derry on the 21st anniversary of the Agreement was symbolic of its limits. The Agreement inadvertently acted to entrench extant ethnic divisions and maintain society in Unionist and Nationalist silos from above. In addition to the consociational system, the lack of responsibility of some political elites, their focus on blame, and the collapse of the Northern Irish Executive has absented the government from an active role in peacebuilding. Accepted peacebuilding strategies, namely theories put forward by Lederach (1997, 2003) and conclusions from empirical research (Autesserre 2010, 2014, 2017; Bešić 2018; Last 2007: 84; Richmond 2006: 379), depend on the concurrent activities of elite, regional and local level actors. In the operational absence of the state, the onus for tackling the existing challenges has now fallen to civil society actors.

This thesis is supported by a body of literature which discusses the role of individuals and relationship transformation as a form of peacebuilding (see for example Donahoe 2017; Gidron *et al.* 1999; Love 1995; MacGinty 2014; Morrow *et al*. 2018). Social change is achieved ultimately through a gradual process of relationship development and transformation. This chapter has explained how relationships after conflict can be understood using social capital theory. Following an extensive literature review, social capital was defined and, based on Putnam's conceptualisation, understood to be based on three core elements of trust, reciprocity and shared norms, resulting from the existence of social networks (Putnam 1993 cf. Morrow 2006: 66). Rather than assuming that social capital ensures positive liberal outcomes, this thesis recognises the potential for it to act, as Cuesta (2009: 38) describes, as "the glue which draws individuals together" or "the repellant that takes groups and individuals apart". It is

acknowledged that it is highly context-dependent, resulting in positive outcomes for some but not necessarily for all individuals or for the State.

While the limits of any social science theory to explain the complexities of post-conflict dynamics are recognised (Cuesta 2009: 37; Sen 2000: 11), I argue that social capital theory offers a robust framework for understanding social life in Northern Ireland. Further, the concept of bridging social capital offers a potential buffer, if not a partial solution, to many of the challenges faced, whether those are political scandals, escalating violence or wider macro-issues such as Brexit and the Irish backstop. Bridging capital has the capacity to act as that 'glue' that prevents the wider breakdown of community relations in times of tension, and represents a vital stock of trust, resilience and tolerance in the wake of potentially destabilising events. There are certain socioenvironmental conditions that facilitate the exchange and development of bridging capital, including those created by PROs' cross-community programmes that bring members of opposing communities together in meaningful ways. It is on these conditions that I focus in the next empirical chapter.

Chapter Four: The application of theory: identifying social capital at Corrymeela

Introduction

This short chapter presents the framework that will be used for analysis, and expands on the explanation of social capital theory from the previous chapter. There is an evidence base on the relationship between NGOs and social capital and the theoretical framework outlined here has been applied in other empirical studies of social capital and NGOs (see for example Hughes *et al*. 2011; Islam 2016; Love 1995; Ruan 2017). There is a consensus in the literature that "(v)oluntary organisations become instruments for the formation of social capital" by supporting relationship formation, based on trust and cooperation, over repeated instances of positive contact (Anheier and Kendall 2002: 352; Pettigrew 2011; Putnam *et al.* 1993: 89).

The defining elements of social capital to be explored are trust, reciprocity, and shared norms resulting from the existence of networks and relationships, which result in positive outcomes for individuals. These discrete elements allow an analytical approach to the work of Corrymeela in the following chapters. The first section of this chapter briefly examines the different understandings of trust, reciprocity and norms, and how they are evidenced in the context of peacebuilding work. Much of Corrymeela's most impactful work was identified as taking place outside of its formal programme activities, and relates to the recognition of sameness between people from different backgrounds. For this reason, a brief analysis of the mainstream discourses relating to cultural difference in Northern Ireland is offered, as this is necessary for contextualising Corrymeela's approach and the different discourses it promotes.

There is an important caveat in my deployment of social capital. It is difficult to separate the characteristics of social capital, as they are both self-reproducing and interdependent. Therefore, while the elements are examined in separate sections, the concepts may overlap and though specific examples are used to illustrate discrete elements, empirical evidence will be considered across the three discrete characteristics.

The discrete elements of social capital and their application in practice

This section explores social capital's defining elements of trust, reciprocity and norms, to examine how they operate and develop in communities in Northern Ireland.

Trust

Of the key elements of social capital, many consider trust the most difficult to define (Anheier and Kendall 2002: 343; Field 2009: 72; Graham 2016: 23, 25). Fukuyama (1995) is the most definitive, in describing it as the "the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour" which is based on the communal norms shared by those within the community (Fukuyama 1995: 159). He contends that a positive association exists between levels of trust and social capital. Cuesta (2009: 38) describes individual trust as a community-level ideological system, based on "the belief that people do not take advantage of others; and the belief that people are ready to help those in need". Field (2009: 70) defines it as a form of social "lubricant", which reduced the cost, bureaucracy, and risk of social transactions. Putnam (2000: 137) summarises as follows: "people who trust are all-round good citizens and those more engaged in community life are both more trusting and trustworthy". Putnam further describes trust as a self-reinforcing concept: it relies on expectations of fairness and reciprocity from others; and both trust and reciprocity are norms that result from social networks among individuals (Field 2009: 35; Putnam 2000: 19). Trust is understood to develop from "face-to-face interactions", and the more numerous and routine these interactions, the higher the resultant level of community trust (Acheson *et al*. 2012: 24). In terms of non-economic resources, a reduction in cost and risk can be considered as resources that benefit an individual (*ibid*.). The benefits arising from trust mean that it is a highly relevant component of social capital (Field 2009: 71).

Trust can be divided into two types: particularised or "thick" and generalised or "thin" trust (Graham 2016: 26-7; Putnam (2000: 136) uses the "thick" and "thin" designations). Particularised trust is that which characterises close personal relationships that feature frequent contact and exist within wider established networks (Anheier and Kendall 2002: 350; Graham 2016: 26-7; Putnam 2000: 136). Generalised trust is the expectation of certain norms of

behavior, that allows an individual to form trust of people they do not know well, or at all, but with whom they perceive some sense of shared community (Putnam 2000: 136; Rahn and Transue 1998: 545). Generalised trust is key to the formation of bridging social capital, and therefore peacebuilding work (Graham 2016: 27), and explains the need for PROs to construct an environment in which people feel secure and can identify communal norms and sameness with others in that space. Trust is more likely within and between single-identity communities. Putnam (2000: 136) argues that trust is more likely between strangers within ethnically homogenous groups because they have "some background of shared social networks and expectations of reciprocity".

The development of inter-community trust in Northern Ireland is limited by a lack of contact between communities and the threat of "representative violence", whereby "anyone of a great number of people can be 'punished' for something done by the community they come from" (Wright 1987: 11). The distinction between generalised and particularised trust is also useful in explaining Northern Irish division. Lederman *et al*. (2002) discuss how group trust can be exclusive as it creates a division between individuals willing to engage in group norms of trust and those who are unwilling. This division is used to explain membership in serious and organised crime groups within some communities (*ibid*.).

Cooperation is made easier with the presence of trust (Cook *et al*. 2012: 143; Field 2009; Putnam 2000: 135-8). The rule of law allows an element of trust in interactions with strangers, and many state institutions are in place to manage cooperation between individuals or groups where there is a high level of mistrust (trade interactions are perhaps the best example here) (Cook *et al*. 2012: 143). The trust involved in social interactions is not one which requires state intervention or regulation, although it may involve a perceived risk for one or both parties involved. Third sector organisations can, however, act to foster the environment in which generalised trust can develop by providing structure and a controlled environment that allows participants to feel more secure due to the emphasis on their shared interest (Anheier and Kendall 2002: 350).

Reciprocity

Trust is very closely interlinked with the key component of reciprocity (Field 2008: 35). Reciprocity is a mutual understanding whereby if one person does something for another, it is expected that the person will 'return the favour' (Graham 2016: 22; Putnam 2000: 20-1). Social capital is understood as the outcome of reciprocal social processes. Putnam (2000: 135) describes reciprocity as "fundamental to civilized life" and argues that the majority of moral codes that govern societies adhere to this understanding. Similarly, reciprocal processes for Kapur and Campbell (2004: 109) are "a necessary pre-condition for the fulfilment of ordinary human relationships". Gospel notions, based on the book of Luke's 'Golden Rule' "do to others as you would have them do to you" are also used to explain reciprocity (*ibid.*). Very similar to the concept of personalised and generalised trust, Putnam (2000: 21) extends the concept to a generalised reciprocity, which is a type of 'pay it forward' mentality that assumes "I'll do this for you without expecting anything specific back from you, in the confident expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road." Putnam (*ibid.*) concludes that a society based on generalised reciprocity is more "efficient" than one which is characterised by distrust. Reciprocity is influenced by one's access to resources and one's trust in notions of generalised reciprocity (McIlwaine and Moser 2001: 967; Portes 1998: 15). Much of this trust will be learned in one's community, dependent on whether friends, family and neighbours subscribe to a system of generalised reciprocity, and if their material environment allows them to do so.

In post conflict contexts, reciprocal relationships can be fractured, as the risk associated with reliance on others is too great (Kapur and Campbell 2004: 109). For society to be repaired, it is essential that trust in reciprocal processes is restored (*ibid.*). As Chambers and Kopstein (2001: 139) argue, reciprocity involves the recognition of others as equals who deserve respect, even when one is ideologically opposed to them. Corrymeela is overt in its promotion of ideological reciprocity, humanising the other, mutual respect and emphasising the sameness of individuals (Interview: Lyle Newton 12/10/2017).

Shared norms

Norms are collective understandings of the conduct and responses that are appropriate in certain circumstances (Hechter and Karl-Dieter 2001: 11). Norms influence individual

behaviour, and are shared and sustained within communities through their repeated application (Elster 1991: 111). When considering social capital theory, the concept of shared norms and values generally refers to a group's mutual understandings of trust, reciprocity and cooperation, i.e. whether they can trust and respect reciprocity from others (Edwards 2014: 7; Putnam 2007: 137). The existence of shared norms and values allows individuals to develop trust and therefore enables cooperation (Campbell *et al.* 2008; Putnam 2000; Morrow 2006; Muir 2011b). To understand how social capital operates in Northern Ireland it is necessary to examine the norms that currently shape social life in the territory. Many of these norms are at odds with those of trust and reciprocity because they encourage insular attitudes and distrust of people different to oneself.

Each society has context-specific norms that impact upon everyday interactions. These norms are particularly influential in post-conflict societies, where the threat of violence, institutionalised segregation and inequalities may have impacted significantly upon group trust and cooperation. To understand the extent of division and distrust between Unionist and Nationalist communities, it is salient to examine how 'Othering' and stereotyping were established and how they have impacted upon social norms. It is pertinent to examine which norms guide relationships, particularly between individuals from different ethnic communities. The conflict in Northern Ireland characterised society with a generalised fear and mistrust (Wright 1987), and entrenched norms of sectarianism and conflict. It is additionally important to examine this status quo because the ideas Corrymeela champions are different, particularly the promotion of trust and reciprocity between previously opposed groups.

Northern Irish cultural norms

Beginning from a historical perspective, discourses about the differences between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland have been largely exclusivist and have ascribed to a divisive "us and them" narrative. Historical discourses labelled Protestants as 'citizens' and Catholics as 'natives' (Wright 1987). The notion of citizen society demanded natives' assimilation into citizen culture, and if this did not occur, coercion tactics could be justifiably employed. Non-

compliance resulted in natives being allocated fewer and poorer resources and excluded from other aspects of the state apparatus (*ibid.*). Sectarianism has been easily maintained because, from the time of the 17th Century plantations onwards, religious labels corresponded not only to faith groups, but also to "ethnic and cultural status, social class, ownership of property and land, economic wealth, employment, education, and political power" (Ruane and Todd 1996 cf. Brewer and Higgins 1997: 7). These features of identity have been combined in what LeVine and Campbell (1972) describe as "pyramid-segmentary" whereby the division of communities based on a combination of religion, politics, culture and history, became entirely normalised.

Similarly, the two groups have similarly been divided into proponents and opponents of 'the regime' (Rose 1971). Because the regime of the British state was seen as a legitimate structure to which many Protestants gave their loyalty, those who refused to assimilate, and in many cases who actively opposed the regime, were regarded as nonconformist and their community culture was stigmatised (*ibid.*: 152; Wright 1987: 4). More 'fundamentalist' Protestant groups viewed the Stormont parliament as a "Protestant government for a Protestant people" (Rose 1971: 152). In response to the forced allegiance, political parties, third sector organisations and paramilitary groups were mobilised on behalf of Catholic communities to pose a challenge to the regime (*ibid.*: 154).

Linked to the discourse of innate difference is the friend-enemy distinction as explored by Schmitt (1996). This distinction draws its identity markers based on definition on what constitutes the 'Other'. While Nationalist and Unionist communities may have some superficial forms of interaction, the 'Other' is always considered as the enemy and as inherently different to the in-group (*ibid.*: 26-7). This understanding of the 'Other' means that in times of intercommunal tension, conflict – in the form of physical violence - is always considered as a possible option (*ibid.*). In the context of Northern Ireland, the friend-enemy distinction was heightened at the time of partition in 1921 when, beyond population numbers, Protestants were in a position of perceived dominance, a perception based almost entirely on their allegiance to Britain and notions of unionism (Cash 2009: 240). During periods of violence:

> "…people are driven back to the comfort of a knowledge of righteousness and order. Aggressive certainty replaces chaotic self-doubt" (Morrow 1997: 56).

In times of insecurity then, friend-enemy mentalities revert to ideas of 'Othering', division, hatred, exclusion and dehumanisation, and define the differences between the in-group and the 'Other' in extreme terms in order to secure their own identity (Cash 2009: 241). This attitude influences aspects of social and political life, so that political elites, in order to maintain power, must maintain "exclusivist scripts and performances" (*ibid.*: 247). The friend-enemy distinction narrows the space for any form of middle ground identity or politics so that one must ascribe to one side or the other to guarantee their societal position.

Historical narratives of Unionist and Nationalist communities have tended to be mutually exclusive, with very few shared stories (Smithey 2011: 152). History tends to be remembered in terms of the greatest advantage to one's in-group (Dumas 1973: 41 cf. Love 1995: 12) and this memory acts to rationalise and legitimise the in-group's actions, labelling "my violence as provoked" but "your violence as unacceptable" (Wilson 2013: 59). There is very little overlap between the two narratives, which makes construction of a shared history difficult (Smithey 2011: 152). Competing historical narratives are used to emphasise group difference by various political actors, because it allows a maintenance of the status quo and enhances their political capital (Burton 1978: 47). In addition, there is constant recourse to history by means of storytelling, visual displays, and cultural rituals such as marching, murals and bonfires, thus ensuring the divided histories remain at the forefront of peoples' social and political consciousness (Burton 1978: 48).

Norms in Northern Ireland have developed to take the form of a dehumanising discourse, whereby the opposing group have been portrayed as inherently and irreconcilably different to the in-group, as to be incomprehensible, strange, threatening and/or dangerous (Mitchell 2006: 16). Identity is often antithetical: the in-group has defined itself by what it is *not*, drawing on the perceived negative characteristics of the 'Other' for this definition (Cash 2009: 240). On this, David Ervine, leader of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), referring to both Unionists and Nationalists, stated "the reality is that we may not know who we are, but we know who

we're not" (cf. Mulvenna 2016). Thus, Protestantism and Unionism are often grouped together with anti-Catholicism to have similar definitions (Morrow 1997: 58).

As a result of this "us and them" binary, many aspects of sociocultural life became considered as partisan. Space becomes territory and social life is defined by identity. Certain cultural activities are 'owned' by one side or the other. Sport is a relevant example here, whereby rugby, cricket and soccer, are 'Protestant', whilst Gaelic football and hurling are 'Catholic'. The recent television series *Derry Girls* explored this division through a satirical lens, depicting a cross-community engagement event for young people whereby the participants had to record group similarities and differences on a blackboard (*Derry Girls* 5th March 2019). The differences list far outnumbered the similarities and included items such as "GAA versus football", "Protestants love gardening", "Catholics watch RTE" and "holidays - Catholics go to Bundoran, Protestants go to Newcastle" (*ibid.*). This process extends to the idea of opposition being part of group identity: if one side claimed space or mobilised in a particular way, the other side must also reassert their territory or mobilise in an equivalent manner (Dawson 2007: 9; Wright 1987: 17). The formation of the Ulster Community Action Network in Derry/Londonderry was itself motivated by a perception that the Nationalist community in the city were better-served with third sector services and the Unionist community deserved the equivalent access to services (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 155).

Conflict theory alerts us to how, during conflict, recognising 'the Other' as an equal citizen becomes difficult, and what often occurs is that groups form their knowledge and beliefs about opposing traditions in that group's absence (Wilson 2008: 182; Wright 1973). Dehumanising the other and directing violent behaviours towards them then becomes more legitimised and common (Cannon 2003; Fitzduff 2011: 150; Mitchell 2006; Wilson 2008: 182). In contested societies, groups feel threatened by one another and assumptions are often based on being fearful of the other group. Because the 'Other' is perceived as a danger, it becomes easier to dehumanise them, and thus construct negative stereotypes, then people can be ridiculed and demeaned based on their defining identity (Allport 1979; Reynolds e*t al.* 2012). The result in Northern Ireland, clearly stated by Hargie and Dickson (2003: 293) is that "sectarian attitudes are taken in by children almost with mothers milk" (*sic.*). The 'Othering' process is so

normalised that stereotypes of Protestants and Catholics are assumed knowledge, with children as young as three years old being aware of the negative characteristics of the 'Other' (*ibid*).

Notions of superiority and inferiority have also sustained religious divisions in Northern Ireland. At the extreme, the perceived differences have fostered a belief within single-identity communities that 'their people' will go to heaven and those outside their group will go to hell (Mitchell 2006: 16; Morrow 1997: 60; Paisley 1988; 1994; 1997 cf. BBC News 12th September 2014). Perceptions of religious division are an established and entrenched norm to the extent that political leaders reference them in their public discourse. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Councillor Roy Gillespie infamously expressed this view in 2006 when he referred to murdered teenager Michael McIlveen, stating "as a Catholic he won't get into heaven…Catholics are not accepted into heaven" (*Irish Times* 13th May 2006).

Using religious identity to define social cleavages has the additional effect of encouraging competitive and zero-sum approaches to social and political life, in which group advantage is also always understood in terms of the other group's loss (Brewer and Higgins 1997: 10; Cochrane 2001: 107). Religious values are defined in a way that mean actions perceived as justice by one group are regarded by the opposing side as a direct threat to their physical and spiritual territory (Fitzduff 2011: 152). There are examples of this mentality from the fundamentalist Protestant ideology, whereby any move towards ecumenism or acceptance of Catholic institutions is seen as a significant breach of Protestant religious values (Morrow 1997: 60-1). Reverend Ian Paisley regularly criticised ecumenical organisations, such as Corrymeela and the Presbyterian General Assembly, and those engaging with ecumenism were viewed with a generalised mistrust by him and his supporters (Interviews: Alex Warner 27/1/2018; Andrew Bruce 21/4/2017; Morrow 1997: 61).

In summary, a number of historical, religious and cultural discourses reinforce the norm of innate and irreconcilable difference between identity groups in Northern Ireland, which serve to undermine trust and reciprocity across community divides. Religious identity, which also includes historical and cultural characteristics, is the defining feature of Northern Ireland's civil society groups (Wilson 2013). Many identity-forming narratives promote a perception of

history and culture that suggests groups cannot live together harmoniously and, therefore, must be divided. Wilson (2013: 59) argues that, for the peace process to progress, "citizenship and not group identity is established as the primary point of self-identification" because this promotes diversity, equity and mutual interdependence as the defining features of identity groups, resulting in inter-group mixing, positive contact and reconciliation (Eyben *et al.* 1997; Wilson 2013).

Norms in the Corrymeela Community

Corrymeela has adopted an opposing stance to mainstream discourses in Northern Ireland. On this, Hutchinson (2019: 75) wrote: "[w]e try, at Corrymeela, to work creatively to eradicate the binary of *goodies and baddies*, whilst at the same time keeping everyone accountable and responsible for their actions." Where conflict dynamics are categorised in terms of the ethnic split between Nationalists and Unionists, Corrymeela has distanced itself from this binary interpretation and promoted new ideas and understandings of conflict and peace. Rather than positioning itself at the centre of two warring factions (such as the New Ulster Movement or the Democratic Dialogue (McQuaid 2012)), Corrymeela communicates a radical message about humanity that does not consider the Unionist/Nationalist debate as central to its mission. As a result, Corrymeela's position does not conform to the mainstream political discourse on identity.

In recording some of the atypical norms promoted by Corrymeela, Hutchinson (2019: 90) states: "[e]very moment of our lives has the potential for a reconciliation". Reconciliation is the focus of many of the Community's publications and many interviewees communicated other cultural norms that could be considered as counter-narratives - such as its radical hospitality, the Open Village, and 'the transformative power of human encounter'. Acceptance is also promoted. Nathan Reid (Interview: 11/10/2017), carried out research on Corrymeela in the early 2000s, "asking questions about what words stand out for people, about Corrymeela, and the word acceptance really came out on top".

An analysis of Corrymeela's experience as a locally-based PRO must therefore take into account its radical approach to trust, reciprocity and the norms that underpin them. The norms that it promotes create an environment aimed at facilitating greater levels of trust, reciprocity and shared values across community divides by providing a safe space in which people can develop lasting relationships. Crucially, the Community challenges the Northern Irish traditions of insular, inward looking and exclusivist bonding social capital by proactively encouraging trust, reciprocity and the sharing of norms across community divides. It further rejects established norms of difference by facilitating activities and a culture which promotes recognition of sameness. The ways in which these concepts are operationalised will be explored in depth in the following empirical chapters.

The language of social capital at Corrymeela

Individuals involved in Community do not use the specific terminology of social capital. However, the key elements of social capital – trust, reciprocity, relationships, and shared norms – are manifest in Corrymeela's public discourses and in the language of its published literature. The work and activities of Corrymeela identified in this thesis as facilitative of social capital, are called variously: "the transformative power of human encounter" (Ó Tuama 2013: 36-7; Tippett 2017); "relational" work (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018); "living well together" (Corrymeela Community and Prayer Guide 2017: 2, 80-81; Tombs 2014); "intentionality" (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018) and "(n)urturing relationships and growing developmental practices between people" (Corrymeela Strategic Plan 2013-16). In some contexts, the concepts of trust and reciprocity are couched in Christian terms (see for example the Corrymeela Community and Prayer Guide (2017: 5) which commits Members to "walk 'the way of the Gospel together'", or Tombs (2014: 4) who states "(e)mbracing the other, and living with regard for others, is not an obstacle placed in the way of a more satisfying life, it is God's revealed way for us to fulfil our true selves".

Corrymeela has been widely recognised as an institution in support of positive relationships, trust and reciprocity (Love 1995). Community leader, Pádraig Ó Tuama (2013: 36), stated that much of Corrymeela's work is based on the concept of bringing people of difference together

to encounter one another so that relationship transformation can take place. In terms of promoting a shared space of learning together, Smyth (2008: 77) describes Corrymeela as a “seedbed that will lend sustenance to a fuller scale public forum”. Wilson (2008:183), whose work includes empirical research on Corrymeela’s programmes, remarked that in an “environment that is structurally committed to diversity and guided by a programme that promotes an interdependent society, (people) can foster relationships that erode partisan identities”.

The Community’s notions of hospitality focus heavily on reciprocity, particularly the concept of ideological reciprocity discussed by Chambers and Kopstein (2001: 139). According to hospitality manager, Jerry Barnett (Interview: 29/1/2018), Corrymeela’s radical hospitality meant:

> “…making sure that everyone who comes through the door, that their dignity that they already have, is affirmed. That they, as individuals, are celebrated, regardless of the communities they’ve come from, the drives that they connect with, even through their own acts, that they know we are glad that they’re here. In Christian terms, for me, I’d say to know that they’re loved.”

Ellen Puckett (Interview: 7/10/2017) had a similar understanding, stating that hospitality at Corrymeela was about opening the mind, listening, providing a safe space, and learning to understand others. These practices and processes are understood at Corrymeela to result in “positive relationships and respect for diversity” (Corrymeela Strategic Plan 2013-2016). The positive outcomes resulting from the development of relationships at Corrymeela have been emphasised from its inception and throughout its history (Davey 1993: 18; Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017). Despite their various terminology, there is consensus on the social practices described as dialogue, sharing, and the development and sustenance of interpersonal connections, which results in “relationships of mutual respect and trust” (Corrymeela Strategic Plan 2013-2016).

This language, used regularly within Community and in the literature on Corrymeela, incorporates the elements of social capital. While social capital is not expressed in those specific terms at Corrymeela, synonymous language is used that emphasises the importance of relationships, shared norms and reciprocal trust, resulting in shared benefits for individuals, Corrymeela and Northern Ireland more widely. This explanation of its work is sufficiently consistent with the theory of social capital to allow a fairly coherent analysis using the proposed framework. Value is given to the understanding and language of research participants and thus, while a social capital framework is used for analysis, the language identified above is also used in this discussion to demonstrate the facilitation of social capital by Corrymeela.

Conclusion

For the purposes of this research, social capital is understood as a resource, resulting in positive outcomes for individuals, which results from relationships that feature trust and cooperation, and are reciprocal in terms of input and benefit. These characteristics are self-reinforcing and each discrete element is required for it to be recognized and categorised as social capital. Thus, in the following chapters, if such relationships, resources and benefits are demonstrated, it can be assumed that these are evidence of social capital.

This chapter examined the history of social norms in Northern Irish society and highlighted that Corrymeela challenges these through its discourse and practice, which pertain to notions of radical hospitality, acceptance and reconciliation. Via these processes, Corrymeela is actively encouraging an environment in which the development of bridging social capital between individuals is more likely. "Thin" or generalised trust is a key feature of bridging social capital (and therefore peacebuilding) and involves the elucidation of shared norms between individuals to allow a perception of communality (Graham 2016: 26-7; Putnam 2000: 136-7). Environments that allow this type of recognition are complex and, in peacebuilding work, must be carefully planned. The founder of Corrymeela, Ray Davey, promoted the key message that "we are all the same" (Interview: Lyle Newton 12/10/2017) and many of the Community's programmes aim to expose shared values. In the following chapters, I will argue that, overall, Corrymeela has been successful in fostering the conditions that allow generalised

trust, reciprocity and relationships to be established within and between groups by exposing peoples' sameness, shared norms and promoting mutual respect.

Chapter Five: The strengths of Corrymeela's formal programme work

Introduction

This chapter examines Corrymeela's experience, focussing on the strengths of its formal peace and reconciliation programme work. Its programme activities are greatly varied in approach, content, and type of participant, but there are some commonalities in theme and approach. Examples of different programmes are used to illustrate the range, type and scope of Corrymeela's work, and have been selected to demonstrate the organisation's contribution to nurturing and building social capital. Formal programme work is defined as recognised peace and reconciliation programmes for which Corrymeela has a defined funding source, staff and/or volunteers allocated to the programme, and specific objectives. These activities are considered as the 'official' or formal work of Corrymeela acting as a registered NGO.

This chapter has two sections. First, Corrymeela's programme structure is outlined and commonalities across its programmes are described to provide some background and comparison to the type of approach being used in the post-Agreement period. Corrymeela promotes a series of norms which challenge the dominant discourses of sectarianism and division in Northern Ireland. These norms promote the discrete elements of social capital. The Community also encourages trust- and relationship-building between groups of strangers who attend the Ballycastle Centre.

Second, Corrymeela's cross-community programmes are examined. These represent the 'bread and butter' of Corrymeela's organisational output, and I discuss how these have acted to build social capital. Though counting for a significant quantity of Corrymeela's output, the proportion of Corrymeela's programmes that can be considered cross-community has dwindled in the post-Agreement period and other programme types have replaced its traditional residential programmes. This has had an impact on the development of social capital, which is examined in the following chapter.

At the outset, I wish to highlight a recognised limit to this chapter. In some areas, Corrymeela has been modest in recording and publicising its peacebuilding successes. As a result, there are a number of lessons on peacebuilding that are omitted. A number of Members emphasised that Corrymeela's influence, in terms of transforming relationships and peacebuilding, was widespread, but that the Community's propensity to carry out its work quietly meant it had not been proportionally recognised for its achievements. Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) stated that, with hindsight, previous leaders "bemoan(ed) the fact they went incognito in society" and Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/2017) acknowledged that in the 1990s and early 2000s "lots of good work was being done but it was wasn't being recorded". As funding conditions have become more stringent, third sector organisations have increasingly recorded and publicised their success stories. Katherine Bryan (*ibid.*) noted that "now we're trying to record everything". Prior to the Agreement, Corrymeela operated for a long period on philanthropic grants and non-prescriptive funding contributions, and thus were able to remain silent on some of their more sensitive work (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017). Corrymeela may still have a programme of work that continues beneath the radar, and the analysis of Corrymeela's experience that follows is thus limited by the potential omission of these activities.

Corrymeela's formal programme traditions: creating the necessary preconditions for social capital

As we have seen, social capital theory emphasises the importance of relationships that are based on reciprocal trust and shared norms. Relationships are more likely to form if individuals feel the risks associated with social transactions are reduced (Anheier and Kendall 2002: 350) and if they consider the space they are in as safe (Jarman and Bell 2009: 13). Corrymeela provides this reassurance through a number of its formal practices and approaches, many of which have been used consistently across its decades of work. These practices are designed to influence the environment of openness and welcome at the Centre, to create trust and challenge accepted norms, and to encourage participants to be more accepting. This section examines the type of programmes Corrymeela offers, how the Centre establishes an environment of trust, and how the residential experience, storytelling and experiential learning are used as mechanisms to identify shared norms and build trust between individuals.

Corrymeela has a long history in the facilitation of peacebuilding programmes, which have taken two forms. First, Corrymeela has a self-programmed schedule of work, with a programme staff responsible for managing and delivering programmes based on funding conditions and organisational objectives. The programme areas for this work were split across four themes during the period of research: sectarianism, marginalisation, public theology and legacies of conflict. Corrymeela publicises that it works with schools, family, community, faith and life, and international education groups (Corrymeela 2015e). A number of interviewees noted that, due to changes in the funding environment, this type of 'in-house' work was less common than it had been in previous years (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017) stated that "certainly in the year I was there as a volunteer [1998], there was a lot more Community Members bringing up groups, which is maybe not so much the case anymore - I could be wrong - but my impression is there's not so much… a lot more groups are coming up, kind of, self-programming" (*sic*.). Second, the Corrymeela Centre at Ballycastle is used as a residential site for other groups, who effectively hire the space and its facilities, and facilitate their own programmes. These groups tend to be organisations or public sector agencies that have objectives and characteristics consistent with Corrymeela's ethos, such as schools, faith groups, and other charitable organisations, mostly involved in work related to peace and reconciliation. There are also some hybrid arrangements, where groups hire the site and are partly self-programmed and partly reliant on Corrymeela staff to facilitate. The majority of focus over the following chapters will be on Corrymeela's self-programmed work. Corrymeela has a far higher level of control of these programmes' aims and desired outcomes. External organisations' objectives may have no relation to the building of social capital as they merely rent the space at Corrymeela for their work, thus these programmes have been largely excluded from analysis.

At the outset it is important to highlight the impact of Corrymeela's residential work. Many of its programmes take place with groups in their local community and feature a residential element, comprising "working with people in different communities, bringing them away for a few days to think, and act and enjoy themselves, but then working with them when they were back" (Interviews: Max Benson 10/10/2017). The Centre regularly hosts groups in bedrooms within the Main House and the Davey Village. The residential element was identified as significant in facilitating relationships between group participants (Interview: Jerry Barnett

29/1/2018; Max Benson 10/10/2017). The sustained contact between individuals, sleeping, eating, socialising and engaging in communal activities together was considered a powerful force in the development of trust and relationships. The literature suggests that trust is more likely to develop where there are routine and frequent face-to-face interactions between different identity groups (Acheson *et* al. 2012: 24; Allport 1979; Hughes *et al*. 2011: 968). Kapur and Campbell (2004: 39) talk of the value of sustained contact with the 'Other', using the specific example of paramilitaries who were in prison together. From taking classes together while imprisoned, paramilitaries from opposing sides developed relationships and engaged in a humanisation process (*ibid*.). The pattern of establishing relationships within host communities, having different groups regularly engaged with one another, and concluding with a sustained period of face-to-face contact at Corrymeela, adheres to this model of trust-building, better facilitating the conditions conducive to developing bridging social capital.

At the start of its programmed activities, facilitators at Corrymeela usually draft a 'contract' with groups present, asking for rules and responsibilities to be identified and agreed upon (Love 1995: 127; Personal Observations 2009, 2016-8). Groups are reminded of the importance of confidentiality and respect for their fellow participants. If the facilitator anticipates tension over certain issues, these are often named at this point and rules of engagement are discussed and agreed (*ibid*.). For example, I observed a youth group session where certain discriminatory words were identified by the group and banned for the duration of their programme (Personal Observations 2017). Clear boundaries are thus set, which remind participants that although they are in a new place that promotes new ideas with new people, there are still rules, and these can act as reassurance that allows people to feel more comfortable to participate (Interview: Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2019; Wilson 2008: 185-6).

Corrymeela has a radical and creative approach to addressing difficult issues. This programme style has been motivated in part by the Community's tradition of engaging with conflict at its root cause and challenging the dominant approach of the third sector to address symptomatic issues at the periphery of the conflict (Wilson 2008: 180). Ellen Puckett (Interview: 7/10/2017) provided an illustrative example of this traditional approach, recalling a cross-community girls' programme she facilitated in the 1980s:

> "I'd have said to them, "right you're going to meet these girls. Now I want you to be friendly, and you know, talk to them, and engage in conversation. And one rule: nothing about history or politics". The very thing of sectarianism is laughing, because actually it made it worse in some ways. Because they'd say "oh look at her, her eyes are real close together. Oh look at what she's wearing. Oh look at her, she's bitter looking". So all the mind reading is going on. And they'd be asking to go out to the toilet. And why was that? "Oh you want to see them toilets. It's true what they say about them, they're stinking". You know? So now you go away, they recognise them if they see them in town. They say "look there's one of them girls, she's one of them. She was at that scheme that we were at." And she's saying "she's dead bitter, you want to see their toilets". Now, that's actually worse."

Former Centre Director, Paul Hutchinson, criticises stereotyped representations of reconciliation for assuming "conflict is always on the margins of society…that there is no conflict in the middle or centre of society…(and) a lack of connection between margin and middle" (Hutchinson 2019: 1). This preference and the previous experience of its Members has forced the Community to develop programme approaches that cut through Northern Ireland's culture of politeness and evasion. In the post-conflict era, the cultural disposition to politeness and avoidance, which manifests itself as a complete absence of discussion around the issues of sectarianism, has acted as a residual barrier to peace. This has resulted, in part and over time, from a lack of contact with the 'other side', limiting peoples' knowledge of 'safe' subject areas (Wilson 2008). Liechty and Clegg (2001) named this response as "non-sectarianism": the avoidance of provocative subjects – particularly religion and politics – in mixed social settings. Former Centre Director, Ronnie Millar, was of the view that the tradition of staunchly ignoring certain topics posed a significant challenge to Corrymeela's programmatic activities in terms of reconciliation (Interview: Millar cf. Robinson 2015: 148). Millar recalled that groups tended to deny having any negative feelings about the 'other' and so it was difficult to reach a point where individuals could recognise their own biases publicly, allowing deeper dialogue to take place. This dialogue is required to develop the relationships, trust and shared norms necessary for the exchange of bridging social capital between participants. Corrymeela's programme approach has developed to counter this "non-

sectarianism". Many programmes use seemingly unrelated group activities to explore difficult issues, primarily by developing participants' relationships using an activity that unites them through a shared interest or objective.

Experiential learning is one example of this type of approach. It is defined as the process of learning through experience and reflection, and has been a consistent component of Corrymeela's programme work, with all ages and types of group. Experiential learning has been described as a type of 'functional integration' in an environment of controlled contact (Darby 1990: 5; Hughes *et al*. 2011: 968). In terms of social capital, inter-group trust and expectations of reciprocity are more likely to develop where groups' shared values and common goals are exposed. Hughes *et al*. (2011: 982) concluded that, alongside positive contact, activities that expose shared objectives between different groups (as in experiential learning), or highlight shared roles (such as being a mother or someone who is bereaved) diminish mistrust between divided groups. The mechanism of working towards a common goal while retaining one's group identity is described by Darby (1990: 5) as a way to 'reduce and manage the effects of sectarian differences'. Experiential learning activities tend to be physical tasks that the facilitator explains, supports during their practical operation, and then debriefs afterwards. The debrief is the most important stage of this process because it allows the elucidation of participants' feelings and attitudes towards other group members and their interactions (Interview: Sylvia McKinney 29/1/2018; Personal Observations 2016-8).

I observed various experiential learning activities, including 'Raising the Sun' and 'Bridging the Gap' (Figures 1 and 2 below), that were used routinely during my visits, usually in the early stages of a group's programme as an introductory activity. The activities rely on communication and teamwork and encourage the group to identify common goals (Personal observations 2009, 2016 - 2018). I observed groups quickly identify the common objectives of the task and successfully work together towards the desired outcome, usually laughing and joking along the way. In evaluations, these activities were often recognised as being of the greatest benefit in bringing groups together and creating closer relations (Corrymeela Programme Evaluations 2016-7; Personal observations 2016). The approach of opening up difficult conversations via the elucidation of common goals is also used by other PROs in Northern Ireland, such as CRIS who "build up capacity by focusing on topics that are not

considered 'divided', i.e. common needs, mental health, (and) anti-bullying" (Lisa Dietrich cf. *Corrymeela Magazine* 2nd edition 2018: 7).

Following the initial group-building sessions at Corrymeela, other activities, such as Four Corners (where posters stating 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' are posted on each of the four corners of a room and individuals express their opinion on a chosen topic by choosing where to stand) were used to open up discussions more directly. These sessions have remained largely unchanged since at least the early-1990s (Correspondence with former volunteer, Tim Wilson 07/07/19).

Figure 1: A group of young people participate in 'Raising the Sun', an activity that requires teamwork and communication to carry a ball upon a hoop that is lifted by an individual thread controlled by each participant.

Figure 2: A group participate in 'Bridging the Gap', an activity that requires teamwork and communication to allow participants to traverse an area without touching the ground.

Martha Martin, a church leader from Canada who regularly brings groups to visit Corrymeela, also describes the radical approach of the programmes (Martin 2017). She described how the approach of Paul Hutchinson, who had facilitated her group, encouraged introspection and gave meaning to the group's activities:

> “Rather than just a straight “talk” about Corrymeela, he invited us into conversation through a variety of “third things”, as Parker Palmer would call them – poems, a song called “Listen” by Christy Moore, some personal stories, some yarn pulled taut to demonstrate a line, polarized views, and tension. Each one built on the other, and each one opened up a place inside of me for new ideas, understandings and reflection” (*ibid.*)

Story-telling models are also used regularly in Corrymeela’s programmes and the Community places significant emphasis on the value of storytelling. The Community’s Strategic Plan (2017: 80) states “(s)torytelling is at the heart of Corrymeela" and commits to using stories throughout its formal work, including in its marketing, recruitment and fundraising activities. Community Leader Pádraig Ó Tuama (2013: 37) described storytelling as a relational process, stating that:

> "The Corrymeela Community believes that the quality of the telling of a story will be related to the quality of the listening of the people. There is no shortcut to human encounter."

One interviewee, when asked to describe Corrymeela said it is “a safe place for people to tell their stories” (Interview: Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017). The origins of this approach can be traced back to Ray Davey’s experience as chaplain in the World War 2 prisoner of war camps. Lyle Newton (Interview: 12/10/2017), a Community Member and one of Davey’s close friends, told that Davey had two key learnings from his experience: that people are all the same and the power of telling stories. Davey had explained that “by telling stories of your life, by sharing something of yourself, other people then share about their life, and again you discover: we are all the same!” (*ibid*.).

Storytelling, like experiential learning, has as its core an aim to build trust and expectations of reciprocity between strangers by exposing their sameness. This approach adheres to the wider literature on storytelling as conflict transformation (see Boulding 2000a; Galtung 1996; Kornelsen 2013; Senehi 2009). Kornelsen (2013: 243-4), for instance, describes how transformation may take place when storytelling is used to make the ‘other’ seem more like the

self. Storytelling is a universal practice that allows identity, assumptions, commonalities and the meaning attributed to these to be named and explored (Kornelsen 2013: 246-7; Senehi 2009).

Corrymeela uses a bank of stories in its work, sourced from its history and from individuals' experience. In literature on Corrymeela, Davey (1993; 2003), McCreary (1975), Love (1995) and Wilson (2008) all include a number of individual anecdotes within their analyses. Stories are used regularly at daily worship in the Croí, and there is a section of the weekly 'Monday Morning Meeting' dedicated to telling "stories of living well together" (Personal Observations 2016). The continuity of this approach suggests that this format of communication, as a means of emphasising sameness and building trust, retains its power and meaning over time and across groups of people. Sometimes, fictional stories are also used, often to illustrate more starkly the hero/villain dichotomies and explore difficult concepts a step removed from reality (Personal Observations 2009; 2017; 2018; Kornelsen 2013: 247).

Many of the residential programmes are interactive, placing equal importance on each participants' stories (Interview: Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017). Katherine Bryan observed that this model allowed people to "meet in their humanity", expose their vulnerabilities to one another, and recognise the privilege of being able to hear each other's' stories (*ibid.*). Graham (2016: 130) understands storytelling as a "process of humanizing the Other", which allows the building of generalised trust.

A powerful example of how storytelling allowed introspection and relationship transformation was provided by Community Member Michele Tyson (Interview: 31/1/2018), who recalled a moment in which she told her own story and it vastly improved her relationships with others she had previously felt opposed to in the Community:

> "…on the Friday nights of Members' weekends, you very often have a Member telling their story and I was asked to tell my story. This was quite a long time ago, it was the time I was working in the jail. I used to get very cross with people at Corrymeela, because people used to get very anti-my students. Now my students were all the top

political prisoners, so people had their reasons, but they were my students! I was like a mother hen! So, I used to feel there was no listening to this. So I worked myself up and I talked that night. I talked about my work, my students, working in the jail. I talked about how I felt, that the Community ostracised the people and condemned them and not others. I talked about all that. I had really geared myself all up: "I am going to say this and then I am going to leave". And afterwards, people came up to me …all these people, I got tremendous support. I thought I was talking to people who would be against me. In fact I talked to people who may not have always agreed but came back with empathy, who has listened and who had some really good conversations. That really surprised me. It made me much more part of the community. I had stood apart, as I say I used to get very cross just because...in a war situation people do get cross don't they? But it was such a tremendous experience and people who I would never have expected. It was just the sort of conversations that came after that and it was so humbling."

The use of storytelling to build reciprocal trust, acceptance of others and shared norms for individual benefit in this example are evident. This may not only have been between Michele and her fellow members with whom she felt initial animosity, but it could have generalised to members' future encounters with those with whom they felt initially opposed, due to the positive experience of this encounter. Charlie Jeffrey (Interview 7/10/2017) commented on the frequency of this type of encounter at Corrymeela, stating that "on a pretty regular basis here, you would hear about groups and individuals within groups who have found this place quite amazing, in terms of their own awakening to other issues and ways of looking at things; that's quite common."

Corrymeela's traditional programme approaches seem to be rooted in social capital theory, placing emphasis on mutual understanding, respect, cooperation and trust that result in relationships that benefit the individuals engaged in the process. Rather than engaging with these concepts head-on, Corrymeela's practices have exposed sameness and trust indirectly, allowing for relationships to develop organically through and around its formal programme activities. While some of its programme content is unique, Corrymeela's use of storytelling and dialogue exchange as a peacebuilding technique is representative of trends across the wider

third sector in Northern Ireland. Graham (2016: 128-9) and Morrow *et al*. (2018: 36, 56), for example, conducted research of a number of PROs in which many practitioners reported that cross-community storytelling, delivered across individual workshops and residential trips, was effective in building social capital between participants.

Empirical examples of social capital at Corrymeela

Many interviewees could recall examples of Corrymeela's peacebuilding success stories, based on the development of relationships and trust between group participants, and these are also well-recorded in the literature on Corrymeela. This section examines a number of examples drawn from the literature and field research that show how Corrymeela's formal programmes effectively facilitated the conditions conducive to social capital. This process was assisted in some ways by highly experienced facilitators at the Ballycastle Centre, and sometimes resulted from Corrymeela bringing groups of people together who would likely not have otherwise met and formed relationships.

Some of the recorded accounts of Corrymeela's successes are quite remarkable in terms of the extent of transformation that is recorded, particularly in its historical accounts. Journalist Alf McCreary (1975: 66) describes the successful mixed-school projects which began at Corrymeela in the 1960s, studying joint projects in geography: "Children who might not have met a Protestant or a Catholic during their entire school career can meet at Corrymeela and on equal terms". McCreary described the reaction of one participant, 'Jimmy':

> "[w]hen he came back to Belfast he asked if he could return to Corrymeela but with the same mixed group of children. He explained why. "At first I was a bit scared to go off as I knew there might be fighting. I was told that you could get a 'good kicking' from the other side. But we found out that the other boys were just like us and we liked them." (*ibid.*).

McCreary goes on to describe a letter received by Corrymeela staff from a young girl who had been part of a joint project, which stated:

> "Thank you…It really was a wonderful time. I changed my attitude to teachers, and to Protestants" (*ibid.*).

Davey recalled a similar account of a young girl, visiting Corrymeela, who had disclosed to a Community Member "my mummy knows what is wrong with this country. It's them Protestants" (McCreary 1976 *Corrymeela: Hill of Harmony in Northern Ireland:* 68 cf. Wells 1999: 76*)*. The Member had told the girl that they themselves were Protestant, to which the girl replied "(b)ut, ah, you are not a Protestant when you are at Corrymeela" (*ibid.*), illustrating that she considered those around her at Corrymeela to have similar values and identity to her own.

A number of interviewees provided similar examples of highly impactful programme work from the period prior to the Peace Agreement. Ashley Workman (Interview: 11/10/2017) recalled her experiences of working with a family group during the late 1970s:

> "One of the weeks that I remember, I'm not sure how they were recruited, but one of the weeks seemed to be focused on people who had lost somebody, somebody who had died, as part of the Troubles, in their family. So they were all bereaved families that were coming. And…I remember one girl who had still got shrapnel in her back, someone else who had seen their father killed in front of them in the kitchen. These dreadful situations, and they came really very tense, and they were from both sides of the divide…from the Protestant and the Roman Catholic side. They were coming as two separate groups but when they came to Corrymeela, they came and gradually got to know each other, and came to realise the 'other' didn't have horns as it were, and that they could talk with them, that they had the same feelings, the same things had happened to them, on the other side. Those were really important weeks, where an awful

> lot of learning took place. A lot of hard work but a lot of learning took place, and it was a whole week so it made a huge difference."

This example reinforces assertions from the literature that repeated, positive contact between groups allows trust and relationships to develop (see for example Acheson *et al.* 2012; Allport 1979; Chambers and Kopstein 2001).

Recalling another example of relationship development, Community Member, Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/17), described one of her first experiences at Corrymeela, during the 1980s, when she attended with Seed Group, a cross-community youth work project led by Corrymeela:

> "I didn't meet any Catholics until I was like 17, because of the area I lived in was predominantly Protestant. Um, so...you know, I think Seed Group was the main encounter for me to watch footage of the Troubles that I had grown up in and not realised it was, that anything was...out of whack. So...me and my friend Trish, she was watching it from a Nationalist point of view, and I was...Loyalist, yes probably, and we were both shocked by what we saw. Everybody else went off to lunch and we were just sitting on the floor, couldn't take it in. And I think from that point onwards, we kind of...I don't think we ever apologised to each other about what our side of the community had done to each other, there was just an understanding, that as two young women, we were both impacted by this story and we weren't going to let it ruin our friendship."

Not all of Corrymeela's successes were so explicit, and other anecdotal examples better captured the nuances inherent in cross-community peacebuilding work. Wilson (2008:182) conducted research at Corrymeela on Good Relations in the 1990s. He recorded the experiences of a Trade Union group and noted the interaction between two members:

> "George (a Protestant) spoke over coffee with the facilitator. He was embarrassed that he did not know that Francis, who was also in the group, had recently had someone in his family killed by loyalist terrorists, "When I met him before, I said nothing about the incident". George spoke of now wondering whether Francis would think that he didn't care, couldn't be bothered or even supported loyalist paramilitaries. The facilitator asked him, if he felt able, to speak to Francis, making his regret and sorrow known and clarify that things were clear between them. It turned out not to be an issue for Francis who said, "How were you to know George?" George spoke about this to the group, provoking group members to look at how sectarian differences get caught up with human life in such ways." (Trade Union group, Wilson 1994 cf. Wilson 2008: 182)

The historical accounts of Corrymeela's relationship transformation programmes expose the importance of reciprocity in peacebuilding work. Generalised reciprocity involves the mutual respect of others, even where individuals are ideologically opposed (Chambers and Kopstein 2001: 139). Many of Corrymeela's contemporary programmes also purposefully expose the ideological differences of groups, but in a controlled environment that encourages respect and curiosity. Corrymeela delivers material from the 'Together: Building United Communities (T:BUC) Good Relations' resource pack (a government-endorsed guide to planning programmes before, during and after youth (aged 11-19) camps). The flags, symbols and emblems workshop is often delivered, where participants examine the history of the Union, Tricolour and other flags and emblems, and debunk myths about their meaning (Personal Observations 2009, 2016). Young people tended to be put in mixed groups and discuss their own understanding of the flags and symbols. The session usually concluded with the young people working together, using arts and crafts materials, to design a flag for Northern Ireland with new, shared symbols and meanings (*ibid.*). I observed these sessions to be very successful in establishing relationships between young people from different communities during their visit to the Centre, who then formed friend groups based on shared interest rather than ethnic identity during their residential visits.

Another regular session that promotes generalised reciprocity through mutual respect is the "International Café" in which Corrymeela volunteers host a table each, complete with photos, maps and various national emblems and paraphernalia from their home country. The young

participants visit each table, identify the volunteer's country on a map and discuss its flag, culture, food, music, and traditions. The aim of this session is "to explore different countries around the world and get a better understanding how diverse life is" (Corrymeela (n. d. (a)) and to "explore similarities and differences with respect in a safe environment" (Corrymeela (n. d. (b)). The diverse range of volunteers present between 2009 and 2019 – hailing from Germany, the USA, Sweden, Cameroon, Uganda, Vietnam, India, Pakistan and El Salvador to name a few – allowed young people to be exposed to a range of cultures and backgrounds. A primary 7 participant reported:

> "I loved the International Café, I got to learn about the Volunteers and where they came from, it was so interesting. All of the Volunteers were so lovely and they were all so enthusiastic about everything we did. It was the best trip I have ever been on." (Primary 7 pupil, Rowandale Integrated Primary School cf. Corrymeela 'Primary Schools' website 2019)

Other school groups reported similarly positive experiences of this programme (see for example St Patrick's and St Brigid's Primary School 2017 who described it, and other activities organised by Corrymeela as their "best global learning experience so far!").

The International Cafe activity was extended to adult participants in 2018, when the Centre hosted "World Café" in a Peace IV-funded project aimed to "discover, share and build new relationships and stories" through local communities engaging with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and exploring "colourful arts, foods, music and a creative storytelling workshop" (Corrymeela 2018b). A participant reported "(w)e are more alike than we are unalike….it was wonderful to be back in a multi–cultural, multi–racial community again" (Corrymeela 2018c).

Other programmes that exposed shared norms and values between different identity communities had similarly successful outcomes. The Girls' Model School and Our Lady of Mercy Girls School in North Belfast completed a cross-community programme involving two

residential visits at Corrymeela in 2009. The participants reported increased understanding, tolerance and respect for 'the other side', interest in the 'other side's' culture and an improved understanding of Catholic and Protestant traditions and culture (*Corrymeela Magazine* Spring 2009: 31-2). Between 2011 and 2013, Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) led a programme called "Having a Say", which explored the relationship between police and young people, and was supported by a volunteer from the USA, Peter. Part of Corrymeela's approach was to tell "new stories into fixed stories" (*ibid.*). Initial responses to engaging with the police amongst the group of majority Catholic young people were very negative. Benny was unaware at the outset of the programme that Peter's best friend had been fatally shot by the police in the USA. During the programme, Peter asked to share his story with the young people and police officers present. Benny recalled that Peter felt safe enough to discuss his experience and answer questions. His story was described by Benny as "one of the keys that opened (the discussion) up" and allowed participants to consider how identity can be reframed. Success, in terms of the overall programme, was defined as "reduced antisocial behaviour, better relationships between young people and the police" and Benny identified Peter's story as pivotal in cementing participants' commitment (*ibid.*).

Corrymeela has used similar storytelling approaches to expose sameness and encourage relationship formation in adult programmes. Anita Hurley (Interview: 2/2/2018) spoke about a funded storytelling programme she had developed called 'Inside Out' and the inter-community social capital it facilitated. Anita worked with urban groups in Belfast and groups in more rural areas of Northern Ireland. She stated:

> "I don't just say this because it was my work but I genuinely think I was forging ground with peacebuilding work. You know there were people coming into a room and having a conversation that they never would have had before. I had a policeman's wife in the room with (participants from) Parkside - I mean Parkside lived on one of the most volatile interfaces on Limestone road - talking and talking about what it was like to be a policeman's wife, like really, really significant conversations" (*ibid.*)

Corrymeela's storytelling and experiential learning approach contribute to facilitating the discrete elements of trust, reciprocity and shared norms required for the development of social capital. Storytelling has the underlying effect of exposing participants' sameness through sharing information and building mutual respect from recognising communal experience. The process of discovering commonalities is facilitated by Corrymeela through various practical activities but in each instance offers opportunities for knowledge- and information-exchange to expose sameness and build trust. Personal description of lived experience allows others to gain an "intersubjective understanding" and understand the 'other's' perspective (Kornelsen 2013: 243-4; Senehi 2009). Storytelling is further recognised as an effective way to "morph 'the other' and 'the self" to emphasise sameness and mutual interest in conflict transformation practices (Kornelsen 2013: 243-4). Corrymeela's storytelling relied on a deep engagement between individuals, rather than just cursory contact during programme work. Ellen Puckett (Interview: 7/10/2017), who had extensive experience in programme work, emphasised that, more than contact, the formation of relationships was central to Corrymeela's most meaningful work. This was a common theme of Corrymeela's programme work and the dual process of both telling a story and listening was emphasised. Charlie Jeffrey (Interview 7/10/2017) described this approach as key to the process of relationship transformation:

> "Storytelling I think is quite important, people telling their own stories. Learning to listen as well. I think you understand people a lot better when you have this personal contact with each other. An opportunity too for myths to be dispelled, myths are the great dividing line between people, the assumptions that we make about each other. I think that's a very important aspect of what happens here."

In the wider literature, face-to-face interaction between individuals from different identity communities is recognised as having multiple benefits in terms of social capital. Graham's (2016) research found similarly productive effects from storytelling, with one respondent stating that cross-community storytelling was the most effective way to build social trust between opposing groups (Mary interview, 18 April 2011 cf. Graham 2016: 130). Overall, Graham (*ibid*.: 135) found that victims' groups engaged in storytelling and shared dialogue workshops "increased generalized trust to a level where group leaders felt that they could continue working on cross-community relationships well into the foreseeable future." Putnam

(1993; 2000: 340) discusses that this type of social interaction develops individuals' capacity to trust and cooperate, and makes generalised reciprocity more likely. More widely, he contends that engaging with others within a voluntary association allows "opposing sides in a democratic debate to agree on the ground rules for seeking mutual accommodation" (Putnam 2000: 340).

Group facilitation

Alongside programme content and approach, the capacity of the facilitator was key in many of Corrymeela's programmes because they were charged with controlling the delicate process of developing trust and reciprocity between groups. A number of interviewees acknowledged that the success of a peacebuilding programme could depend on the technique and abilities of the facilitator, although it was acknowledged other factors – such as group readiness and attitude or the political context of the time – were equally important (Interview with Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Stevie Ettenberg 30/09/2018; Sylvia McKinney 29/1/2018). In his research on Corrymeela, Love (1995:53) described how badly planned or managed programme work can "serve to increase and confirm prejudices already held by the 'opposing' groups". Due to perceived differences between groups, carefully planned contact, engagement and activities are required to facilitate positive exchanges (*ibid.*). Despite this acknowledgement, Corrymeela had a sometimes confused approach to providing effective facilitation, sometimes drafting in young volunteers for the process (examined in greater depth in the following chapter).

That said, Corrymeela was fairly consistent in its understanding of the role of the facilitator and their independent relationship with the group. Wilson (2008: 185-6) believed that staff should apply Corrymeela's values in their work, and to do so required them to acknowledge their own prejudices and what response those attitudes may evoke. Corrymeela staff interviewed by Robinson (2015: 165) discussed that "to make people feel comfortable, one has to put a bit of themselves aside, despite what they might think or feel." Understanding the role of facilitator as independent of the group was important in identifying and drawing out shared norms and reciprocity. Identifying one's own prejudice and positionality could also impact on the role, and be used to model how prejudice could be overcome and relationships transformed.

Ellen Puckett (Interview 7/10/2017) discussed how, as a schools worker at Corrymeela she came "face-to-face with (her) own sectarianism" following an encounter with a man from a fundamentalist evangelical background. Following this, Ellen understood the role of a facilitator to be about "opening your mind and listening, to points of view that actually make your hair stand on end, but listening to them, and then, within the space that you provide, a safe space, you can then begin to seek understanding about this." Ellen often modelled reconciliation by referring to herself as a "recovering sectarian" when facilitating group programmes at the Centre (Personal Observations 2016-8).

Corrymeela has a bank of experienced facilitators (though due to funding pressures, this number has decreased in recent years, the impact of which will be examined in the next chapter). The experience and knowledge of Corrymeela's pool of facilitators contributed to the building of social capital because, from their work over a number of years with a diverse range of groups, many were experts in human behaviour and had the ability to 'read a room' and use specific techniques to support relationships and build trust. Certain Members of the Community are well-known as skilled facilitators and were referred to by some in interview as household names: both Anita Hurley and Benny Ray referred to "the Derricks, the Duncans, the Brendans and the Colins" (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Benny Ray 8/10/2017). The collective experience of staff allowed the skillful transformation of more tense groups in some instances (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Sylvia McKinney 29/1/2018; Personal Observations 2009, 2016-8). Sylvia McKinney (Interview: 29/1/2018) talked about her development as a facilitator over several years, noting how her experience allowed her to encourage relationship development:

> "With the experience over the time whilst observing and watching others work in the way they do, whether it was Derrick Wilson or Mary Montague or people who had fluid, real skills, you knew and trusted yourself to go a little farther with some situations, and so in creating the space, and the readiness of the emergent group, to really work on 'what are their questions', and when you're doing some single-identity work, what are the questions you most want to ask the 'Other'? In such a group, you know, it could range from 'does the pope wear red socks' to 'why does the IRA kill my father' sort of stuff. A massive range of sensitive to light-hearted to deeply-searching

> questions. And for the 'Other', this could be between employed and unemployed, it could be Protestant and Catholic of course, all of that, but it could be questions about gender issues, all kinds of things and then out of *that* you begin to know you can call out the question of ' we women think this' or ' we unemployed think this', the more stereotypical lines…it was crucial to ask the group or individual to make 'I statements…', so 'I as a woman think this, out of my experience', or "I as a catholic" as it was, so that people began to hear real stories from each other and so the human story began to come out. And I think when you know how to hold those moments, you can prepare people in some way to share and deepen their understandings and perceptions of one another … it can be a tender engagement and have quiet moments when you may want to draw out something more. But often the wisdom in the groups holds its safety and honesty. Creating enough possibilities through doing some of these exercises and bits of work together, people show up and commit. ….Or you have to be a stronger guide and say 'we're going to close that and mediate somebody who is speaking too much'…I think all those are sculpted and you have some level of control as a facilitator …It's worth a try sometimes, to coax people to step outside the box by knowing these tools. Or people are already volunteering it, some incredible work is [happening] in this place because somebody is already ready for that to set an example and say "we are going to go down this route."

In other examples, the role of facilitator was less crucial, rather it was the interaction of group participants who would not have otherwise been brought together had it not been for Corrymeela, which allowed for meaningful attitudinal change. Gerry McCambridge (cf. McCreary 1975:15) commented that, at its outset, Corrymeela was one of the only existing institutions that allowed the partisan peoples of Northern Ireland to learn how to come together, and that this was particularly remarkable in a system which kept people apart so persistently. This was also the case in the post-Agreement period. A number of interviewees noted that Corrymeela had exposed them to people they would not otherwise have met and, from positive contact, allowed them to form relationships and gain a better understanding of others (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Connie Terrell 7/10/2017; Jimmy Palmer 7/10/2017; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018). Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017), a Community Member who works as a police officer, described a weekend in which Corrymeela had hosted a group of refugees and how this

exposure had allowed a deeper engagement than the type of interaction he would experience in his professional life:

> "I think some of the conversations I had just this weekend and have had the last number of Community weekends, meeting with people from the Muslim faith…I think having a better understanding of people of other faiths is really important and that's something I haven't experienced elsewhere. I'm living in a Christian society and I was always under the impression that they're so totally different, we have nothing in common with Muslims, and…while I've done, you know, for want of a better world, education for mutual understanding in terms of my police work, in terms of: "these are the things you can and can't do with Sikhs, or Muslims, or Hindus, and this is how to approach them in terms of the correct procedures", it still doesn't really give you an understanding of who they are or what they're about. Or what their religion is about. And so that's been really helpful, this weekend was great."

Jess Williams (Interview: 27/1/2018) provided a similar account of her contact with people with disabilities at Corrymeela:

> "I think the biggest thing I learned was about people with disabilities. In all my life, I was never really in contact a lot with people with disabilities and it was simply great that at Corrymeela everybody is treated the same, that you - you know this word 'equity' - everybody is treated according to their needs, but equal on that level. And that's the biggest thing: I have no fear anymore or don't feel uncomfortable anymore to maybe sit in front of a blind person or a person who is in a wheelchair or a person who has mental health issues, and that really came through Corrymeela."

Many similar accounts were provided in interviews regarding the impact of Corrymeela Members' relationships with members of the L'Arche Community and how engagement with people with disabilities could encourage personal introspection and provide wider learning for

communities in Northern Ireland (Interviews: Isobel Ellis 2017; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017). On this, Isobel Ellis stated:

> "Jean Vanier [the founder of L'Arche] even spoke about this in terms of our Troubles. He said: "these people will lead you out of this". But we still haven't given them the chance. …they're just so free, because they don't seem to carry the baggage that we carry, in terms of relationship…it's a very unconditional relationship." (Interview: Isobel Ellis 2017)

Pádraig O'Tuama told a comparable story of a group Corrymeela had facilitated in Belfast, which brought together people from Christian and LGBT+ identities as part of an encounter between groups that would not otherwise connect. Some of the participants came from a background of "deep caution about lesbian, gay, bisexual (and) trans people" (Ó Tuama cf. Tippett 2017). One participant, who described himself as a fundamentalist Christian, addressed the group: "I have a question for all of the homosexuals in the room…I want to know how many times, since we've met together in the last while, have my words bruised you". Other participants responded that his words had hurt some of them. Ó Tuama described how:

> "…this man who had gone to the edges of his own understanding and asked others to help populate that edge with information and insight, said "are you telling me that it's painful for you to be around me?" And somebody went "yeah, it is." And he was the one who chaplained himself into that space. And I couldn't have made that happen, as the facilitator of the room, like if I had said "do you realise that your words are bruising?" You know none of that would have been sufficient, because what he was being brought into was the transformative power of human encounter" (*ibid.*)

These accounts provide evidence of Corrymeela's role in building bridging social capital by engaging different people outside of the traditional parameters of reconciliation work in Northern Ireland, which tends to focus on faith identity as the main cleavage of division.

Corrymeela, as an intentional space that "advocate(s) and instil(s) peaceful approaches to conflict and concern for humanity" (Reber-Rider, 2008: 73), encourages a wider culture of acceptance, and challenges the traditional discourses of "us and them" that relate not only to Protestant/Catholic divisions, but the othering of LGBT+ communities, people with disabilities, and refugees, amongst others. Policymakers have identified correlations between sectarianism and racial prejudice, thus programmes that address tensions between groups of difference have wider benefits in terms of tackling societal segregation (Doebler *et al*. 2017: 15). Thus, while these experiences do not relate directly to overcoming sectarianism, there is still value in constructing a wider culture of acceptance that normalises engagement with 'the Other'. A column on reconciliation in the *Times* from 1988 described Corrymeela as the most "complete expression" of the notion that "(w)hat is common to all of those engaged in the dozens of reconciliation groups throughout Ulster is the conviction… that before structural changes can be made to create a more just and peaceful society there must come changes in the way individuals respond to one another" (*Times* 12/07/88: 13). Relationships and mutual understandings of people perceived as different to oneself act to embed notions of sameness and acceptance, which act as the basis on which generalised trust and reciprocity is built (Boulding 2000: 1-2; Galtung 1996: 196; Graham 2016; Putnam 2000; Reber-Rider 2008: 7).

In an analysis of the Community's experience of building bridging social capital between people who may not have otherwise connected, Corrymeela Football Club (FC) also deserves a mention. Corrymeela FC was established in the late 1980s by two former Corrymeela volunteers with the explicit aim of bringing together men from different communities (Interview: Travis Sanford 2/2/2018; Morris 2017). The Club's constitution states its objective is to "promote cross-community relations by maintaining links with Corrymeela Community and through the participation of individuals in Association football." The cross-community identity of the club is widely known, and there are two teams made up of men from various social classes and religious backgrounds (Interviews: Michele Tyson 31/1/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). The cross-community composition of the team is monitored by its organisers, and if the ethnic balance is deemed to have tipped too far in one direction, there is a "concerted effort" to equalise membership by advertising in a majority ethnic area (Interview: Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). Cross-community football teams are rare in Northern Ireland, and the league in which Corrymeela FC plays is almost exclusively Protestant - and sometimes sectarian - which has meant the team is sometimes negatively targeted during games

(Interviews: Michele Tyson 31/1/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). Corrymeela programme worker, Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018), played for the Corrymeela team and was confident that many of the team would not have relationships with one another if it weren't for the club. He stated:

> "Monday night, Wednesday night, Saturday, Saturday pints afterwards… a lot of boys would go out on a Saturday night with each other...a couple of years ago we had a player who would have been from a very strong Loyalist background, had UVF tattoos all over him, it was always interesting in the changing room, just looking around going 'that's a Catholic teacher from West Belfast, and there's your man with his UVF tattoos' you know? But we'd a player die tragically young and I always remember we went to the funeral and you're looking down at all the players there and the mix was amazing. And actually I didn't know they were Catholic until they crossed themselves after the prayers, and you're going 'oh I didn't know that'. So yeah it's definitely a seat of constant contact for 30 years. Without doubt." (*ibid*.)

Community Member, Michele Tyson (Interview: 31/1/2018), also spoke of the club's demographic and how "the football team would have the son of somebody who was heavily involved in the UDA and the son of someone who was equally heavily involved elsewhere... but none of that affected the football team".

There is an established literature on trust built from sport, and the role of sport in peacebuilding (see for example Borsani 2009; Giulianotti 2011; Höglund and Sundberg 2008; and Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure 2009 'Sports Matters'; Liebmann and Rookwood 2007, on the specific context of Northern Ireland). Research conducted by Cárdenas (2016: 11-12) found that other cross-community teams in Northern Ireland had a significant impact on peacemaking due to the bringing together of interethnic groups in non-violent social settings. Hughes *et al*. (2011: 982) observe that sport, as a mutual interest, can play a cross-cutting role in inter-ethnic relationships and act to reverse negative trust developed during conflict. Sport in Northern Ireland is ethnically ascribed and divided (Cochrane 2001: 107; Mitchell 2006: 16), and football tends to be Protestant-dominated. Corrymeela FC's proactive

inclusion of Catholic members into the team and North Down league (which is majority Protestant) not only acts to build bridging capital within its teams, but to model out what cross-community engagement can look like to other single identity teams (Interview: Michele Tyson 31/1/2018).

The team's links with the Corrymeela Community are now a little distant (Interviews: Michele Tyson 31/1/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). In its early years, Ray Davey attended many of the club's matches and the team regularly visited the Ballycastle Centre (Interview: Michele Tyson 31/1/2018), however nowadays most players do not know much about Corrymeela or visit the Centre (Interviews: Michele Tyson 31/1/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). I contend, however, that this disconnect can be considered as a success, in that the Club now acts as a sustainable organisation, that facilitates bridging social capital in parallel, but separately, from the Community, and thus is independent from the funding and structural challenges of Corrymeela and indeed the wider challenges resulting from the neoliberal funding agenda. Michele Tyson (Interview: 31/1/2018) described the club as "one of the unacknowledged impacts of Corrymeela" and believed the cross-cutting influence of the team was significant, describing it as "an impact where the name has formed them, and the name sustains them and it's a really, really important impact, because all the other teams are one side or the other".

Conclusion

There is evidence of bridging social capital being facilitated at Corrymeela, and of the organisation creating the conditions conducive to the building of bridging capital. Experiential learning and storytelling techniques have been utilised across the decades of Corrymeela's existence as a means of exposing groups' shared humanity and building social trust and generalised reciprocity. The physical site of the Ballycastle Centre provides a wealth of resources to support the delivery of such programmes, and there is a vast written resource of programme activities, developed by skilled programme workers over the years, that further facilitates this process.

Corrymeela's formal programmes have facilitated inter-group bridging social capital in three key ways. First, Corrymeela has provided a safe, rules-based space and culture in which groups of difference are exposed to each other and in which they can feel safe to form relationships. Clear boundaries are set in which groups are tasked with communal goals that distract from their differences and expose their sameness.

Second, Corrymeela has developed a depth of knowledge and resources on programme activities that facilitate social capital, and employs skilled facilitators who are adept at managing group interactions to encourage productive outcomes. Story-telling allows participants to discover common interests and experience, therefore developing generalised trust and expectations of reciprocity due to notions of sameness.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, Corrymeela administers group programmes that allow people who would not have otherwise have the opportunity to meet to engage with each other and deconstruct negative stereotypes, develop communal understandings and nurture relationships. This practice relates to James' (2008: 121) concept of 'concillium', which is a designated place of meeting for people of difference, where dialogue and exchange can occur outside of the boundaries of State-led institutions and away from the binary victim-perpetrator labels imposed after conflict. A 2004 project named 'The Voices behind the Statistics' interviewed approximately 200 young people around Northern Ireland about their experiences of sectarianism (Ewart *et al*. 2004). The young people highlighted the value of cross-community platforms where people could engage in 'normal' interactions. When asked what was needed, one participant stated:

> "(m)ore groups like Corrymeela. Stop the separation between religions and sit Catholics and Protestants down to talk' (*ibid*.: 59).

Corrymeela represents a place of meeting: sometimes it is intentional in who it brings together (such as its planned residential programmes that host Protestant and Catholic schools together); and sometimes it is unintentional, quietly exposing people of difference to one another and

facilitating relationships in a safe setting. Community Member Charlie Jeffrey (Interview 7/10/2017) describes Corrymeela as an opportunity to rehumanise the 'other', whether that is achieved by "bringing different schools together from different parts of Northern Ireland, or bringing groups from different parts of the world… it's an opportunity to see how other people live". Charlie observed that group transformation, through recognising shared interests and establishing relationships, was common at Corrymeela (*ibid.*).

In some instances, engagement has not been between individuals on either side of the conflict divide, but between people of other differences. Despite the main societal division in Northern Ireland being based on ethnoreligious difference, I argue there is still significant value in promoting relationships between people of difference outside of the traditional divide. The literature supports the belief that building a wider culture of acceptance between all communities is characteristic of a peaceful culture and promotes equity, diversity and mutual understanding and generalised trust (Boulding 1996, 2000, 2001; Galtung 1996; Reber-Rider 2008). The Corrymeela football club is illustrative of this type of social movement, as it promotes a platform of inter-community mixing that is now independent from the Community.

This chapter has focussed on the strengths of Corrymeela's work in terms of fostering inter-community relationships and therefore bridging social capital. The Community's commitment to the development of bridging capital is an attempt to bridge the gap between two institutionally separate communities. By providing the space and creating the opportunity for people from different communities to meet, build trust and expectations of reciprocity, Corrymeela is successful and effective in supporting the ongoing peace process. The key components of Corrymeela's programme work are relatively simple, and their unchanging nature is testament to their effectiveness over the decades of its existence. However, to examine Corrymeela's formal programme activities without acknowledging the barriers to this work would not accurately reflect its experiences. The post-Agreement era has been fraught with challenges, related to funding, logistical issues at the Ballycastle Centre, the political environment and the changing nature of the conflict. The next chapter turns therefore to analyse the challenges that have impeded Corrymeela's formal work.

Chapter Six: Funding, professionalisation and perverse social capital: the thorns in Corrymeela's side

"Nostalgia and profound memories were not enough to keep the place safe, warm and habitable" (Hutchinson 2019: 23)

Introduction

This chapter identifies the challenges to Corrymeela's formal work and analyses the impact on the organisation's capacity to facilitate productive bridging capital. In the post-Agreement period, formal programmes have been increasingly constrained by funding cuts and the need to achieve pre-determined outcomes set by funders. In addition, the pressures of professionalisation have posed a challenge to the delivery of formal peacebuilding work.

The first section of this chapter explores the changing funding environment, with a specific focus on funding reductions and the conditionality attached to funding grants, which reflect the Liberal Peace agenda of funders' approach to the peace process. This is well explored in contemporary literature. Morrow *et al*. (2018) highlight the ways in which reduced and changed funding streams have affected the third sector in Northern Ireland. This publication is used as a guide, and triangulated with other published literature, interview data and documentary analysis to examine Corrymeela's experience. This section is divided into two subsections on the current funding environment in Northern Ireland and how the recent changes to the funding environment have impacted upon Corrymeela's experience.

The second section of this chapter examines the pressures of professionalisation, and issues related to staffing and Corrymeela's organisational structure, which have affected Corrymeela's capacity to facilitate bridging social capital. Corrymeela began as something of a social movement (Davey 1993: 64; Kaldor 2004: 82) and like many organisations, became increasingly institutionalised as its role developed. Over the years, the Community has been forced, via legislative and policy obligations, to formalise its practice and adhere to defined

rules, which has posed challenges. Tensions between Community Members, staff and volunteers have posed further challenges, as has Corrymeela's working environment, which demands long hours and a significant emotional commitment.

An increasing limitation in the post-Agreement period is the disparity between the type of productive social capital offered by Corrymeela and the type of – sometimes perverse – social capital that brings positive outcomes to specific individuals within their communities. The final section of the chapter examines the reality of perverse social capital in Northern Ireland and issues of re-entry to host communities. I argue there is a gap between the type of social capital facilitated by Corrymeela and the type of capital that benefits some individuals, namely young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, within their own communities. This disparity means Corrymeela's programmes are not relevant or beneficial to some groups.

It is concluded that, in terms of formal peacebuilding work, Corrymeela's role in transforming relationships through the construction of social capital continues in the contemporary period, but has been constrained by a number of factors. It is also acknowledged that Corrymeela has survived one of the most challenging periods of modern history for the third sector and the challenges it faces are generalisable across other third sector organisations in Northern Ireland.

Funding PROs in Northern Ireland: a brief overview

During and directly after the Troubles there were significant funds directed to Northern Ireland from international and governmental sources. Graham (2016: *x*) estimates that almost £3 billion has been invested in the peace process, with a significant proportion of this directed to NGO and charitable organisations (*ibid.*; Acheson *et al*. 2012: 20, 27; Brewer 2010: 169). Much of the funding flowed from the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), the largest donor for which was the USA, and the European Union (EU), via a series of European Peace Fund programmes (Byrne 2011: 78). Much of the literature (see for example Acheson *et al.* 2012; Khan and Byrne 2016; Byrne *et al*. 2009b) categorises the funding periods according to the Peace funding cycles from Europe, i.e. the EU Peace I phase from 1995 to 1999, Peace II from 2000 to 2007, Peace III from 2007 to 2013 (and their respective extension programmes) and Peace IV from 2014 to 2020. The initial phase saw high levels of funding (described by

Graham (2016: viii) as an "outpouring") from international donors that supported economic regeneration and the return of the devolved government (Morrow *et al.* 2018: 20, 22). Since the introduction of austerity measures in the UK and Ireland after 2008, levels of funding have decreased (Morrow *et al.* 2018: 10-1). This reduction, coupled with a reduction in the instances of direct violence in Northern Ireland, resulted in "the central focus on peace and reconciliation" in third sector organisations being revised (*ibid*.).

The shift in funding for PROs has manifested in three main ways, which I will now examine: significant reductions in funding; a preference towards funding programmes that feature a 'cross-community' element; and a move by funders towards channelling funds through governmental and public bodies, rather than providing those funds directly to the third sector (Acheson *et al.* 2012: 27; Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Morrow *et al*. 2018).

The reduction in funding to PROs was partly due to the general level of funding that was channeled to Northern Ireland towards the end of the conflict. Following the millions of Euros diverted through Peace II and III, which represented an increase of over 400 per cent of previous contributions (Acheson *et al*. 2004), it was to be expected that funding would decrease following the peace agreement. In 2006/7, between the IFI and EU funding, over €100 million was dedicated to peace and reconciliation-related programmes. In 2016, this had decreased by over half to just under €45 million (Morrow *et al*. 2018: 22). Reductions in the level of conflict have further resulted in reduced international and government funding being dedicated to Northern Ireland (Robinson 2015: 132-3). Corrymeela - and other PROs - were aware of the reductions and adapted their approach accordingly, including becoming more resourceful (Robinson 2015: 132-3; Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). Corrymeela sold one of its residential properties (Knocklayd), adapted its approach to include programmes that recognised the multifaith demographic of Northern Ireland, and introduced a number of fundraising events (Robinson 2015: 131; Interview: Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017). Reductions in funding have affected the entire third sector (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 163) and the associated challenges are recognised by other PROs. Lisa Dietrich, the director of CRIS, interviewed for the second 2018 issue of the *Corrymeela magazine,* stated that "(w)orking in a restricted funding climate has been tough" and there was an "increase in competition regarding going for funds" among established PROs

(Interview: Pádraig Ó Tuama 30/1/2018, also interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). Respondents interviewed for Graham's (2016) research also commented on the increased competition for funds, with one group leader stating that it had resulted in intra-community competition between same identity groups (Ira interview, 17 May 2011 cf. Graham 2016: 100). Groups interviewed for Morrow *et al.*'s (2018: 32) research also reported a developing culture of ""unhealthy competition" between certain organisations, who were essentially vying for money from the same pot."

Changes in the types of organisations in receipt of funding has also affected local NGOs. Directly after the Peace Agreement, funding was directed towards the third sector, with significant investments in civil society (Acheson *et al*. 2012: 27; Brewer *et al.* 2011: 15). Following a recognition of the need for investment in economic development and the improvement of the functionality of state institutions, after 2000 European and governmental funding was increasingly diverted towards public sector and state bodies (Acheson et al. 2012: 27). Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) observed that this remained the case, stating that funding continued to be "corralled by government".

Funding has tended to be restricted to two main programme types: those that tackle sectarianism and thus feature intentional cross-community engagement or single-identity groups being prepared to engage in cross community experiences; and those that focus on development and poverty-reduction, and aim to capacity-build and improve resources in local communities (Byrne 2011; Hancock 2012). As a result of a shift by donors to fund programmes that include some element of cross-community work, there has been criticism of some NGOs over their cross-community tokenism and shallow efforts at embedding cross-community initiatives for purely cosmetic purposes (Graham 2016: 131; Karari *et al.* 2012: 600). Cross-community work is no longer considered unusual and the voluntary sector has seen a sharp rise in the number of organisations delivering these type of programmes (Interview: Jess Williams 27/1/2018). A Community Group leader from Derry/Londonderry interviewed for Byrne's (2011: 178) research expressed cynicism about cross-community programmes, asking "(a)re they doing it to achieve the goal of getting the funding for the project, or are they doing it because it is an important and necessary thing to do?".

Tensions over cross-community work have, in part, resulted from the ambiguity and lack of an agreed definition of reconciliation (Morrow *et al*. 2018: 15-6). Many NGOs that list reconciliation as one of their central objectives realise it through community development programmes, many of which may not include strong elements of cross-community work, and focus instead of more gradual, long-term initiatives (Petschek cf. *Corrymeela Magazine* 2nd edition 2018: 14). In some instances, organisations with a specific 'reconciliation' focus, which can demonstrate how reconciliation is being realised through concrete examples of cross-community exchange, have been more likely to secure funding than those organisations engaged in the 'long game' of reconciliation, through grassroots development initiatives etc. (*ibid*.; Interview: Ted Glenn 31/1/2018). Corrymeela has therefore experienced a higher level of competition over funding as more organisations have engaged in 'cross-community' initiatives (Interview: Ted Glenn 31/1/2018). In addition, its work that does not directly tackle issues of sectarianism, and Corrymeela's single identity programmes, are less likely to secure funding, despite their apparently equal contribution to conflict transformation (*ibid*.).

The impact of funding changes on Corrymeela

Reduced funding has also resulted in a reduction of staff and resources, which has affected the quality, quantity and direction of Corrymeela's work. This has been demonstrated in staff redundancies, a reduction in partnerships with other relevant organisations, and a focus on financial income as a key performance indicator of programme effectiveness and viability. Corrymeela established a 'social enterprise' department in 2015 in an attempt to generate income, and research evidenced that the dynamic of the groups visiting the Centre was changing. Many were middle class groups, some with a very tenuous links to reconciliation, and there were fewer grassroots, working class, inter-community groups present at the Centre. The capacity of Corrymeela to deliver programmes in local communities had also been curbed, meaning the traditional outreach/residential programme format (whereby group participants are exposed to one another over short interactions within their communities, before concluding the programme with a joint residential visit to the Centre) was not possible in some cases.

In the very early years of Corrymeela, founder of the Community Ray Davey espoused the view that "if the work's important then the money will show up" (Interview: Sylvia McKinney

29/1/2018). Adequate funding allowed Corrymeela to design and implement a peacebuilding approach that encompassed community outreach and residential experience, while promoting and developing its own ethos of reconciliation. This approach allowed the development of trust between programme participants through repeated "face-to-face interactions" (Acheson *et al*. 2012: 24). This was an intentional approach to build relationships across divides, which was described by Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) as "a nurturing cycle between locality-based and liminal space". A number of interviewees commented on the apparent abundance of funding for Corrymeela in the period before the Peace Agreement (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Charlie Jeffrey 7/10/2017). Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) described the early years of Corrymeela as a "different financial equation" and stated that "the end of the troubles [brought] shed loads of money". Even in the period between exploratory research in 2009 and the field research for this thesis, I observed marked changes in the availability of funding. Financial constraints were a regular topic of discussion in formal staff meetings, informal conversations, and Corrymeela's written correspondence, and the number of groups onsite at the Ballycastle Centre had reduced (Personal observations 2017, 2018; *Corrymeela Magazines* 2017, 2018).

Corrymeela was experiencing a period of particular financial hardship during my field research. Morrow *et al.* (2018: 3) found that:

> "For Corrymeela, the funding environment in the past decade has…been a challenging one. At times it has felt like sailing through stormy waters with no compass or map to guide us, or even a sense of where the final destination is."

Around 2014, Corrymeela lost core Community Relations Council (CRC) funding, which was a significant blow to its financial stability (Interview: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018). Part of the reason for this was because the Community had a large financial reserve of several hundred thousand pounds accumulated from philanthropic grants and other sources over the years (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018). Described by Alec Lloyd (Interview: 31/1/2018) as "the most healthy reserves in the charitable sector", it was believed that the CRC felt it was unethical to fund Corrymeela when they had a cash reserve of this size

(Interview: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018). The justification behind the decision to operate on Corrymeela's reserves is unclear, but over a period of approximately 5 years Corrymeela's reserves depleted from around £2.5 million to around £646,000, and this was of huge concern to Corrymeela's Council and Members (Interview: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; The Corrymeela Community Annual Report and Financial Statements for Year ended 31 March 2018).

Cochrane and Dunn (2002: 163) describe larger, well-established NGOs as "prisoners of their own success" and this is accurate for Corrymeela in terms of its physical site and staff resources. Towards the end of the active conflict, increased funding allowed improvements and additions to the Ballycastle Centre's physical infrastructure (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017) and increased staff numbers (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017). In the post-Agreement period, many funders increasingly "ringfenced" their grants, specifying that monies must be used exclusively for a particular project, which has had a negative impact on Corrymeela's (and other NGO's) organisational infrastructure (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 163). Cochrane and Dunn (*ibid.*) contend that larger, more established NGOs are more susceptible to such pressures, because they rely more on core funding to maintain property, resources and staff than smaller, more loosely-organised social groups, who have fewer resource obligations. Indeed, Corrymeela's Centre is large and expensive to run, resulting in outgoings of around £3000 to £4000 per week (Interview: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018). Ted Glenn was Centre Director during my research and stated that "just to keep the doors open costs a lot of money". Corrymeela's state funding, which supported the Centre's operation, has reduced significantly in the last three decades. In the early 1980s Corrymeela was in receipt of £100,000 per year from the government, accounting for approximately 35 per cent of the Centre's running costs (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017). By 2017, the government provided £70,000 to Corrymeela, accounting then for only 4 per cent of its running costs (*ibid*). Thus, while a sum of £646,000 may seem a healthy reserve, the Ballycastle Centre and its upkeep was very costly, and this figure was described as being "on the brink" in terms of the Community's financial stability (Interview: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018).

Corrymeela's funding experience has been fairly consistent with that of the wider third sector in Northern Ireland (see for example Byrne 2011; Morrow *et al*. 2018). Its staff numbers and physical infrastructure grew as significant injections of European, IFI and philanthropic

funding were received in the period preceding and just after the Agreement. Until recently, the Community's reliance on its reserves meant it had enjoyed a more financially secure position than other organisations. It is notable, however, that Corrymeela has survived where other organisations – particularly peace centres – have been forced to close. Peace Centres as a subset of PROs in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are fairly sparse post-Agreement. Compared to other organisation types, the physical infrastructure of a Peace Centre differs significantly, primarily due to the requirement for residential facilities. The most comparable organisations, Kilcranny House, based near Coleraine, and An Teach Ban in County Donegal were both established in 1985 as cross-community Peace Centres, however funding difficulties forced both organisations to close in the late 2000s.

The challenge of securing sufficient funding was reflected in correspondence and publications by Corrymeela during the period of research (see for example *Community News* February 2016 sent by email 8th February 2016; The Corrymeela Community Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31st March 2017; Corrymeela Council Update June 2018). The Community has become more prescriptive in recent years regarding suggested donations. Corrymeela statement of commitment outlines that "members agree to…give, according to our ability, to the funds of the community". The statement is footnoted with:

> "Members are asked to contribute between 4 per cent and 10 per cent of their net disposable income. The current target, for Membership contributions, is £76,000 per annum" (Corrymeela Prayer Guide 2017).

In a written statement to the community 04/04/16 (Appendix 2), the Chair of Council described Corrymeela's "difficult financial situation" as unsustainable and confirmed Corrymeela's deficit for 2015/6 as £500,000. Various measures were put in place to reduce the deficit, including creating redundancy packages for some staff, reduction of hours for others, a restructuring of departments, and "increased campaign income". This trend was reflective of other third sector organisations' experience also. Morrow *et al.'s* (2018: 29) study evidenced that over the past ten years, of the organisations studied, 15 per cent had reduced staff hours,

44 per cent had terminated programmes and 26 per cent had experienced staff redundancies as a result of the changing funding environment.

‘Strings attached’ funding

In previous years, funders tended to fund an organisation, rather than its specific programmes, with a limited conditionality on evaluating outputs (Morrow *et al*. 2018: 32). Funds from philanthropic sources and from fundraising, which did not tie the organisation to any set objectives, have also decreased (Interviews: Charlie Jeffrey 7/10/2017; Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017). At Corrymeela, unconditioned funding meant programme content could be fluid and largely at the discretion of the lead facilitator, which allowed Corrymeela to foster the conditions for participants to build relationships and “experience the transformative power of human encounter” (Interview: Sylvia McKinney 29/1/2018). Benny Ray, Centre Director during the 2010s, acknowledged the change when he discussed his experimental facilitation style at Corrymeela:

> "It was a great place to try new things. I know that there’s certain techniques I use now that were at the formulation stage and I thought “I can try this”… Less so now, because it has to matter in a different way, mostly economically” (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017).

Former programme manager Anita Hurley (Interview: 2/2/2018) also recalled the independence allowed by the early Peace II funding, stating:

> “Peace II was very different to Peace III in the sense of there was a lot of space within it, and they were really good funders and we weren't connecting into SEUPB [the Special EU Programmes Body], we were connecting into CRC [the Community Relations Council]. So we had reports to write and there were certain targets but actually even if you didn't meet those there was a *humanness* to Peace II.”

Modern funding grants outline a series of reportable objectives that must be achieved by the awarded organisation (Byrne 2011: 100-3; Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Charlie Jeffrey 7/10/2017; Pollak and Harvey 2013: 6-7). Ted Glenn (Interview: 31/1/2018) described the shift, stating that in the contemporary period "[p]eople don't give money to the Community, they give money to the work." This has affected Corrymeela's capacity to transform relationships because it has lost control of its programme content and delivery approach. The imposition of outcome-based grants operates in direct contrast to Corrymeela's historic programme approach, which has favoured an experimental and fluid model of programme delivery (as per the examples explored in the previous chapter). The changes mean Corrymeela has been forced to make compromises in its approach that have resulted in shallow engagement by participants over shorter periods and programme content that does not recognise trust- and relationship-building as necessary pre-cursors to effective peacebuilding. Former Centre Director Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) expressed his frustration with this structure:

> "If we believe that peace and reconciliation is about unexpected relationships, is about transformative relationships and structures, about people doing things tomorrow that … they couldn't imagine today. But if you have a funder telling you "we know what's going to happen tomorrow" then are we surprised that nothing new happened?"

Programme worker Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018) also expressed his dissatisfaction with this model, stating that "all the learning that NGOs like Corrymeela has behind it - keeping small numbers, building relationships – is just out the window". He expressed the view that programme participants - in this case teachers - know the work isn't effective but carry it out anyway "because that's what their funding objective is". This issue was again reflected in the wider third sector. Morrow *et al.* (2018: 7) reported that practitioners expressed concerns that "a premature reduction in funding before innovative approaches have been mainstreamed, could lead to a significant loss of learning". The T:BUC Good Relations Resource Pack also recognised the desperation for funding in its introduction. It asks users to consider the driving force behind applying for T:BUC funding, stating that simply "responding to a funding opportunity" is insufficient, and if the "lure of funding or pressure from the organisation to

gain additional income" is a motivation, the organisation should reconsider their programme (Education Authority Northern Ireland (EANI) n.d.).

Increasingly there has been a preference by funders for organisations and programmes that confronted the more moderate or "safe" issues of the conflict (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 167). Programmes that were more cutting edge or experimental were avoided and funds diverted to those that adhered to the traditional and less controversial interpretations of the conflict (*ibid*.). In the post-Agreement period, Corrymeela has increasingly opted for 'safe' programme choices, or else it has been partner to a lead organisation that has secured the funding, leaving Corrymeela very little control over programme design and delivery (Interview: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Charlie Jeffrey 7/10/2017).

Among other PRO practitioners, the prescriptive nature of funding is recognised as the greatest barrier to achieving meaningful peacebuilding work (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Morrow *et al*. 2018: 38). Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) bemoaned the fact that "[the funders] have already decided before a peace and reconciliation programme begins, what type of peace and reconciliation will develop". This process has been described as "mission drift" by Cochrane and Dunn (2002: 163), where NGOs are increasingly led by the demands of funders rather than their constituents. This conditioning of funding is indicative of the challenges posed by assumptions of the Liberal Peace and the tendency towards Neoliberalism. The Liberal Peace assumes the "primacy of the state" (MacGinty 2014: 551) as the dominant or only actor in instilling peace and assumed that a combination of the rule of law, democracy and liberal market economies will bring peace to conflicted states (Chandler 2015: 27-8; Hyde and Byrne 2015: 95; MacGinty 2011: 188). It has been criticised for its ethnocentric and 'expert'-led approach, guided by the 'lessons learned' from other conflict zones, from which a 'one-size-fits-all' model has been developed and imported elsewhere (Goetschel and Hagmann, 2009; MacGinty, 2012a cf. MacGinty 2014: 551). International funders use economic aid as an intervention to address socioeconomic issues post-conflict (Byrne 2011: 118; Khan and Byrne 2016: 1014; Richmond 2011) and interventions often reflect the ideology of the donor states and international bodies (Jeong 2005). In the case of Northern Ireland, funding conditions were shaped by the view that economic regeneration and job creation, particularly within deprived Loyalist and Republican communities, were a priority for a

successful peace process (Byrne 2011: 119; Cox *et al*. 2000; Irvin and Byrne 2001). As noted by Byrne (2011: 119) this approach to peacebuilding "resonated with the US view" on how to best approach post-conflict peacebuilding, which understands processes of reconciliation to result from sustained economic regeneration (Byrne 2011: 79; Lederach 1997: 76; 2005). The approach has resulted in the third sector increasingly acting as an agent for international funding bodies, taking on the role of state provision in many instances (Hyde and Byrne 2015; Herring 2011; MacGinty and Williams 2009).

Economic aid, aimed specifically at development and economic regeneration, while crucial, does not provide a panacea to legacy conflict issues, particularly around reconciliation (Byrne 2011: 78; Byrne *et al*. 2009a: 339) and this approach ignores local knowledge (Hyde and Byrne 2015). Corrymeela's focus seems to have been on developing and maintaining the discrete elements of social capital, particularly relationships and trust, and these are ignored by the neoliberal approach. MacGinty (2011: 196) describes that this co-option of the third sector from above has meant "civil society and the civic culture become a standardized bureaucracy that is dependent upon external funding and unreflective of the creative ingenuity and entrepreneurial acumen across the grass roots". Additionally, funders' poor knowledge of local context and cultural nuances can result in unintended consequences for post-conflict societies (Esman and Herring 2003; Ryan 1996: 218) and can cause significant damage to local peacebuilding efforts (Autesserre 2017: 125; Branch 2011; Byrne 2011: 118; Gallo and Vanholder 2015; Heathershaw 2009; Martin 2014). Byrne (2011: 116) notes, for example, that because the EU and IFI specifically recognised the need to address sectarianism and fund work on Nationalist and Unionist community identities, they inadvertently entrenched ethnic divisions.

Some of the imposed funding conditions in Northern Ireland have resulted in initiatives deemed irrelevant to the peace process. An interview respondent in Byrne's (2011: 100) research, for example, believed that the IFI was uninterested in local community projects, and preferred to fund "the big projects where they get maximum publicity". A respondent in research by Byrne *et al*. (2009: 354) further noted that the IFI's contribution funded all the businesses in the area to refurbish their shop fronts, "but it didn't help any of us". Third sector representatives interviewed by Byrne (2011: 116) emphasised the challenges for local-level peacebuilding

actors and believed there would be value in making the “funding process more participatory through engaging those at the grassroots to formulate the criteria and the goals of the funding initiatives in a cooperative funding application process, so that community groups have the opportunity to determine the terms of the engagement with funders” (*ibid*. 189). Other examples suggest that conditioned funding is considered insensitive to the reality of conflict legacy. For example, a Community group leader from Belfast noted:

> “…you had to be providing training to make these people employable again. Now these are people who have been the most deeply traumatized people in this conflict. They have lost family members and who have themselves been very badly injured. And to try and make them employable again is almost impossible” (cf. Byrne 2011: 103).

In some instances, the practice of conditioning funding with predetermined outcomes has undermined the capacity and effectiveness of local PROs in Northern Ireland by overriding local knowledge and understanding of how conflict dynamics play out in local communities (Autesserre 2017: 125; Byrne 2011: 102). In the case of Corrymeela this has been felt strongly, particularly as funders have challenged decades of institutional learning at the Ballycastle Centre (Interviews: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). In the post-Agreement period, the objectives of international funders have shifted towards promoting economic regeneration and ‘safe’ post-conflict transformation, which are at odds with the strategies known to work at Corrymeela.

Despite these restrictions, three of Corrymeela’s former Centre Directors believed that, to a limited extent, Corrymeela has managed to continue its experimental and learning work around the peripheries of the conditionally-funded work but agreed this has limited the ‘cutting edge’ transformational work of the earlier decades (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Ted Glenn 31/1/2018). MacGinty (2011: 85-6) describes this reaction as the “recalcitrance of grassroots stakeholders”, that is, the ability of local actors to “subvert interventions by the liberal peace actors” within the wider process of neoliberal peacebuilding. To counter the culture of prescriptive funding objectives, Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017)

spoke of securing mainstream funding and using it as a platform to establish the (non-financial) resources necessary to engage in the "edgier youth and schools and work". He explained:

> "…we'll have new relationships with teachers and youth workers who, hopefully, will have that vision and on the basis of that platform we'll be able to go wider and develop edgier work, in terms of political and civic participation, in terms of emancipatory work with young women and young men, LGBT, members of asylum-seeking families and refugee families, young people who are vulnerable and so on. And that's not the work this is going to fund…the State won't support us in doing edgy work".

Despite the shifting funding environment and reports from Members regarding Corrymeela's challenges, the Centre continued to host cross-community school, youth, faith and parent groups, and I regularly observed programmes incorporating many of the Community's 'tried-and-tested' approaches, specifically storytelling and experiential learning activities, as add-ons to the main programme content (Personal Observations 2016-8). Thus, while the organisation was facing challenges, there was evidence of its continued recalcitrance to the conditioned funding structures.

Due to the emphasis on reporting quantifiable outcomes of peace programmes, there was a perception amongst Members and staff that Corrymeela's work had to be financially sustainable, as well as being programmatically meaningful (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). Some Members felt that Corrymeela's objectives were incompatible with the quantifiable outputs required by funders. Ashley Workman and Nathan Reid (Joint interview: 11/10/2017) discussed these pressures in interview:

> AW: "Ray's vision in the first place was to provide an open space, a village, where people could come, be safe, and experience whatever they experienced. It's very hard for people to grasp that, until they've experienced it, and that's why it's really, really hard to talk about Corrymeela in quantifiable terms."

NR: Which we've tried to do, or been forced to do – for funding.

AW: Exactly

NR: And it's a heartache!"

This was consistent with the wider experience of NGOs in Northern Ireland and indeed internationally (Byrne 2011; Holt 2015: 9). Byrne (2011: 187) concluded that peacebuilding programmes, which aim for attitudinal and ideological change, "inherently resist qualifications". Peacebuilding practitioners, as well, agree that quantitative evaluations are not effective measurements of peacebuilding success (Holt 2015: 9).

Much of Corrymeela's work is communicated through its oral history and in anecdotal evidence, which is incompatible with the reporting mechanisms required by the EU and IFI. Facilitation of the discrete elements of social capital are not considered meaningful within this framework. This challenge was reflected in the experience of other NGO representatives, who provided that funders' criteria tended to focus exclusively on quantitative outcomes and numbers of participants reached (Morrow *et al.* 2018: 30). I also observed evidence of this trend in my employment at Corrymeela, particularly with a volunteering programme with which I was involved in 2009-10, funded by the Department of Education. The pressure to evidence participant numbers overtook other priorities of programme quality, and I had to regularly plead with visiting young people to provide their details and sign up as 'volunteers' for the duration of their stay at Corrymeela, in order that programme targets could be achieved (Personal Observations 2009).

Despite the challenges of prescriptive funding, for some programmes Corrymeela was able to meet the desired outcomes, only for delivery to be interrupted by terminated funding (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Benny Ray 8/10/2017). Continuity of funding has been a challenge for many NGOs (Morrow *et al*. 2018). Grants tend to be for short periods, typically for six or 12 months, and are easier to obtain than to renew, thus many programmes run for only short periods (Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 163). The programme objectives of the 'Having a Say' project (referred to in the previous chapter) were a reduction in antisocial behaviour and

an improved relationship between young people and the police. Corrymeela was able to evidence this output to the funder's satisfaction, an Independent Advisory group was set up, and a second pilot was established in Bushmills (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; *Corrymeela Magazine* Summer 2013; Moyle Policing and Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2012-2013). Following this, and with little explanation, the funding was discontinued. This is a stark example of how the lack of funding has had a fundamental impact on the construction of bridging social capital. On this, Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) stated:

> "I saw a girl three months ago who was on the programme [while in a shop]. She came from the counter, hugged me, and wouldn't serve anybody until she spoke to me. I'm thinking: I think something happened during those two years. We did something special. She says: 'yeah, any police now, I'm saying hello to, and if I don't know them I'll say do you know this person, that person?' So the relationship between the police in Ballycastle and those twelve young people changed. But the council said: 'it's only twelve people'.

This was the only programme of its kind in the district, and it was shown to develop deep and sustainable relationships between young Catholic people and the PSNI, yet it was discontinued and not replaced.

The impact on programme quality

There have been other, more general, effects of reduced funding for Corrymeela, which have impacted upon its facilitation of social capital, particularly in terms of its programme quality. Reduced funding means more resources allocated to securing funding and fewer, if any, resources are allocated to the evaluation of Corrymeela's work, which has led to "quality and self-reflection (being) diminished" (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017). Research on other NGOs also found community workers felt the structures and deadlines of the EU Peace funding cycles meant "you were not able to draw a breath, look at analysis of what was good, bad, indifferent of the first time around, and start to learn from it" (Belfast Community Leader cf. Byrne *et al*.'s 2011:354). Pressure from funders can also result in issues arising around

recording and professional integrity, as organisations do not want to report evidence of ineffective projects to donors (Bisset 2019).

Much of Corrymeela's experiences with professionalisation has resulted from changes in the funding context. The demands of professionalising dictate the resources an organisation dedicates to specific practices such as grant applications, report writing and record-keeping (Grodksy 2007:105; Morrow *et al*. 2018: 39, 49). Morrow *et al*. (2018: 30) identified that in the post-Agreement period a "long-standing issue" affecting the work of PROs was "(e)nergy being diverted into sustaining organisations". Similarly, Cochrane and Dunn (2002: 164) found a majority of the PROs they studied dedicated significant resources towards obtaining and maintaining funding grants, sometimes to the detriment of their core purposes. In the period of study, there was evidence that Corrymeela's core purpose and principles had begun to be diluted due to the pressures of securing funding. Former Centre Director, Ted Glenn (Interview: 31/1/2018), described post-Agreement Corrymeela as "ambulance chasers" always considering where the next "pot of money" will come from. He described how this pattern of resourcing drew focus away from Corrymeela's 'radical centre' approach of inspiring communities to engage with new narratives and dedicated its attention on securing grants (*ibid*.).

This was consistent with the experience of other community groups interviewed by Byrne (2011). Respondents noted the resource-intensive and "daunting" application process, particularly for EU Peace monies, describing it is as an "astronomical task" for staff and noting that the time and resources dedicated to applications was not commensurate with the amount of funding awarded (*ibid.* 99, 100). There was a belief among respondents that funding was awarded to organisations "because they are good at filling out the applications rather than the strength of the ideas" (*ibid*.). Of note, the research found that NGOs, usually the smaller organisations with fewer staff, often experienced challenges in successfully completing funding applications, because they required "a fair level of intellectual ability" (Byrne 2011: 99, 100). This was not reported during my field research, perhaps explained by Corrymeela's large number of university-educated staff and pool of highly-skilled individuals within its Membership base. Additionally, in recent years specific staff posts had been created at

Corrymeela to focus on tendering for funding grants (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Jerry Barnett 2017; Email correspondence with Alec Lloyd 29/04/19).

Other obligations also presented challenges and distracted from Corrymeela's programme quality. Travis Sanford explained that the funding conditions for his programme required several hours of administrative work per week (Interview: Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). Travis explained that where Corrymeela had previously employed an administrative assistant, this was no longer financially possible, and his work was "hindered by the fact that some of those more - sounds terrible - lower level tasks I do, which prevent me going out and doing more of the specialist stuff" (*ibid*.). During the period of research, a 'Social Innovation' department was established, responsible for income-generating activities that did not necessarily relate to Corrymeela's wider focus on peace and reconciliation (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018; Personal Observations 2016). Its establishment caused some significant tensions within Community, as some Members and staff did not feel it was consistent with Corrymeela's wider ethos (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). Also related to income-generation, there was an increased focus on selling rooms during operational and strategic meetings, (Personal observations 2016, 2017). In a written statement to the Community dated 04/04/16 (see Appendix 2), the Chair of Council identified the number of "bed nights at the Centre" as one of Corrymeela's strategies for increasing income. Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) highlighted that a focus on bed lettings was evidence of the diminishing "quality and self-reflection" of the work at Corrymeela, and this was primarily due to funding difficulties. In combination, these trends and shifts have acted, to some extent, to divert Corrymeela's focus and resources away from programmes that facilitate bridging social capital.

Corrymeela's pre-existing partnerships have also suffered as a result of the changing funding landscape. Unconditioned funding previously allowed Corrymeela to engage in strategic partnerships with other NGOs and public bodies, meaning Corrymeela broadened its participant pool and its programme quality benefited from external skills and knowledge (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017). Pre-Agreement, Corrymeela had several robust partnerships with other organisations, such as Women's Aid and GingerBread (A charity for lone parent families), which allowed routine, positive contact between different identity groups

and the elucidation of shared interests (thus facilitating the development of bridging social capital) (*ibid*.; Personal Observations 2009). However, organisational partnerships require resources in terms of staff commitment and administrative processes. Competition over funding (Byrne 2011; Morrow *et al*. 2018: 32) and the resources required to nurture organisational partnerships have meant Corrymeela has been unable to "think partnership" in this manner post-Agreement (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017) and existing partnerships have disappeared (Interview: Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). This mirrors the experience of other NGOs post-Agreement, only 27 per cent of which have increased their networks with other groups in the past ten years (Morrow *et al*. 2018: 29).

Related specifically to Corrymeela's engagement with education, the reduced availability of teachers' time, resulting from changes in the wider education system was also identified as a limiting factor for Corrymeela's effectiveness (Interviews: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2017). Corrymeela has a longstanding tradition of welcoming teachers for residential visits as part of school groups and teacher training (Interviews: Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018; Email correspondence with former volunteer Tim Wilson 4th June 2019). Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) explained:

> "Our models were: you identify teachers… the teachers then would come away for four or five days, you can't get teachers away for four hours now, they came for four or five *days*. Groups of twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty I remember coming – went through four or five days thinking together, and then going back into their schools but also working with one another, and then Corrymeela Staff going and visiting them. So again it's this to and fro but on a continuing reflective cycle".

In the post-Agreement era, programme workers at the Centre have reported that teachers do not have the time to engage in Corrymeela programmes as before (Interviews: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). The EU Peace IV's funding invitation involved a programme that incorporated nine hours of facilitation and 30 hours of mutual understanding classes for children (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017). Max Benson described this allocation as "pathetic" and suggested that Corrymeela do not apply for the funding because

this model was so at odds with Corrymeela's approach to education and relationships (*ibid.*). As an additional challenge, the release of a teacher from school outside of the formal remit of the programme costs around £150 to £200 per day, which is "prohibitive for a charity" (*ibid*). The reduction of teachers bringing children to Corrymeela on residential visits necessarily limits the access children have to forming relationships with those from a different background, negatively impacting upon their access to bridging social capital.

An additional barrier preventing Corrymeela from facilitating the conditions conducive for productive social capital is the increased cost of visiting Corrymeela, which has meant groups on residential visits stay for shorter periods. As noted, literature on trust-building contends that frequent and regular face-to-face interactions between individuals improves their level of communal trust (Acheson *et al*. 2012: 24). Whereas groups previously visited Monday to Friday or over long weekends, the Centre's timetable was increasingly filled with an assortment of groups staying over only one or two nights (Personal observations 2017, 2018; 'Craic from the Centre' email containing versions of Centre Information Sheet (CIS) sent to members 08/07/16; 23/09/16; 21/10/16; 02/12/16; 27/01/17; 02/06/17; 30/09/17 Interviews: Jimmy Palmer 7/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017). This has had a significant impact on the facilitation of relationship-building. Short periods away from one's community alongside members from opposing communities are described by Cochrane and Dunn (2002: 156) as "ghettoway days", and are criticised for having a shallow impact and being largely unsustainable in terms of forming inter-community connections (Interview: Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017). Joshua Cameron (Interview: 30/1/2018) criticised the Education for Mutual Understanding programme in this way, describing that "we had the Protestants stand at the back of the bus and the Catholics stand at the front and they sort of half-talked when they went round the museum and that was it". This pattern was also noted by a Community Worker interviewed in other research, who observed that the funding changes had encouraged cross-community engagement "at a distance" meaning group participants "talk about everything other than identity, sectarianism, good relations" (Byrne 2011: 122). Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) stated that these piecemeal, non-residential experiences significantly affected Corrymeela's capacity to construct a liminal space in which lasting relationships could be formed. Additionally, shorter visits to the Centre had an impact on logistics, as "a day group or a one-night group rather than a four-night group and a weekend group, mean(s) that the place

has to be turned over more, meaning that the domestic side of the Centre has more demands on it, including on the volunteer team" (*ibid*.).

By contrast to the view of most Members, which understands Corrymeela to be victim to its environment, former members of staff Alec Lloyd and Miriam Fields (Joint interview: 31/1/2018) offered a different account of Corrymeela's post-Agreement funding stance. Miriam said that Corrymeela seemed to be "paralysed around instigating new work, work that is indigenous to us [Corrymeela]". Both agreed there was a sense of inertia and lethargy around securing largescale funding for programme work. Alec recounted that Corrymeela had made an active decision not to apply for Peace IV resource to carry out work on post-conflict dialogue because it was "too much hassle" (*ibid*.). Alec described how his suggestion that Corrymeela apply had been dismissed, and that he had watched in disbelief as the Glencree Centre secured the funding to carry out the programme from "a hundred miles away in Dublin". On the current marginalization programme, which is Peace IV-funded, Alec stated that Corrymeela had been approached by the British Red Cross who required a residential centre to partner with them. Rather than proactively seek the funding or partnership, Corrymeela had merely accepted an offer to join a predetermined programme. Again, this is symptomatic of the third sector as a whole. Byrne (2011: 101) notes that the "rigid criteria of both (IFI and EU) funds at the grassroots level appears to have caused anxiety and inertia that impacted the…implementation of projects even though both funds were established to support…grassroots peacebuilding".

Funding's impact on staff, members and resources

Before productive social capital can be facilitated for participants, the more basic needs of the organisation must be met. An effective programme of work is dependent on a functioning organisational infrastructure, which ensures adequate resources and staff. A significant impact of changed funding has been a reduction in Corrymeela's staff numbers and high levels of work pressure on its existing staff and volunteers, which in turn has affected the depth and quality of its programme work.

As funding has diminished, Corrymeela's staff base has necessarily decreased (Interviews: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Anita Hurley 2/2/2018). A programme team of eight, which allowed the Community to locate half of its programme team at the Centre and half within target communities, has now been reduced to four and has resulted in the Centre severing its ties with some local communities in Northern Ireland (Interviews: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Anita Hurley 2/2/2018). Outreach workers previously worked within local communities to identify appropriate participants for programmes, and to prepare individuals to form relationships with the "other side" during planned residential visits. The role of outreach workers was crucial to easing the transition of group participants from their single identity communities into the starkly different ideological space of Corrymeela (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017). As a result of the redundancies, trust- and relationship-building between groups often faltered as group participants were poorly prepared for engagement.

Corrymeela was in the process of making staff redundancies and reducing the hours of others during my 2018 visit. Two programme workers, both based at the Ballycastle Centre, one responsible for youth work and the other for primary schools, were made redundant due to funding constraints during one visit (Personal Observations 2018). Without in-house staff, Corrymeela's capacity to promote its own agenda was limited. In the short term, the programmes that would have been recruited, managed and facilitated by these two fulltime members of staff were discontinued and in their place the Centre either rented out its space and facilities to independently programmed groups, or these were left unused (Personal Observations 2018; Interview: Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018).

Corrymeela's staff reductions should be seen in the context of experiences of other NGOs in the sector. In some other organisations, reductions have been significant, with staff numbers reducing to half of their original number, or in more extreme cases from 32 to six employees (Morrow *et al*. 2018: 38), or closing down completely (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017). In 2018, Corrymeela was one of 32 organisations to secure £72,000 through the Community Relations Council Core Funding Scheme for peacebuilding work, allowing for new staff appointments to be made. Corrymeela thus retains a competitive advantage above other organisations. Charlie Jeffrey (interview: 7/10/2017) discussed this in interview, stating:

> “We’ve seen a lot of organisations in Northern Ireland just go to the wall just because they’ve been extremely dependent on grant funding from both government sources like Community Relations funding but also from the other sources, like Ireland Funding and the local government. We’ve been fortunate in that we’ve been able to cushion ourselves against that.”

Some staff acknowledged Corrymeela’s financial challenges– some of which are significant – but due to this context define Corrymeela’s experience as successful, because they remain operational and have “survived” where many others have not (Morrow *et al*. 2018: 39; Interviews: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018).

Corrymeela’s institutional knowledge has also been affected by staff redundancies and an increased reliance on volunteers. ‘Deep’ and impactful peacebuilding work was the result of experienced facilitators, honing their craft over several years of experimental work. Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) explained how he had observed certain “amazingly significant Corrymeela Members” facilitate groups, often using experimental approaches based on “a germ of an idea, or a fully formed idea”. Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017) also described the impact of Corrymeela’s previous facilitators and their ideas:

> “Brendan McAllister and his work… has been heavily influenced by Corrymeela and he, as well, has heavily influenced Corrymeela. The two are hand in hand. The same with Derick, Duncan, you know they’re real leaders in terms of Corrymeela and the way that it has been and the way it has moved forward.”

In his study of Corrymeela, Love (1995:53) describes how an inexperienced facilitator can mean the difference between positive group contact and the situation descending into a “slanging match or ‘free for all’ situation”. Two former staff members observed separately that, as Corrymeela became increasingly motivated by funding, the staff team became younger and less experienced, and more programmes began to rely on volunteers and ‘interns’ (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). Corrymeela recruited ‘long-

term volunteers', who were young people aged between 18 and 24 years old who resided onsite at the Ballycastle Centre for a year and were paid £120 per month; and 'interns', who tended to be aged between 22 and 30, who were paid £220 per month and resided onsite but in a separate building to the volunteers. While the volunteers' work rota involved roles in the kitchen and housekeeping, as well as supporting programme work, interns tended to be assigned to a single, consistent role with more responsibility, usually supporting a specific member of staff or programme area (Personal Observations 2016-8). Many of the interns were recent graduates in their first 'professional' role, and during the period of research the majority were from the USA.

There was a perception amongst some staff members in this period that Corrymeela "didn't have money to hire staff and so developed intern positions" and that little consideration was given to the programmatic or financial impacts of this decision (Joint interviews: Alec Lloyd and Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). In comparison to the pre-Agreement period, when work was delivered by Community Members - many of whom were skilled professionals in education, facilitation and therapeutic roles - programmes were increasingly run by unskilled interns and occasionally by long-term volunteers. On this issue, Stevie Ettenberg recalled an experience with a visiting group at the Centre in 2012:

> "There is far too much pressure on the long-term volunteer like the time [staff member's] group from Belfast showing up with no programme, she didn't even show up, we had to make a programme as we went on with the group – a family group from west belfast with loads of weins [young children]…it was tricky to pull programs together when you had limited experience and resources" (*sic.)* (Email communication with Stevie Ettenberg 09/04/19)

Ted Glenn (Interview: 31/1/2018) also commented on this trend, stating that, when self-programmed groups visited the Centre, "we [Corrymeela] rent out the space and then we help facilitate that space for which we are paid something, which has always been the glamour round the volunteers, because often when we didn't have enough programme staff, you jacked the volunteers into that, who were often feeling completely out of their depth, and those who had

paid to be there were kind of going ‘this is a volunteer, he doesn’t know what he’s doing. What am I paying for here?’”

A reliance on volunteers mirrors the wider funding environment for the third sector, as organisations depend on volunteers more for their operation (Morrow *et al.* 2018: 29). The involvement of a few committed Members, who regularly attend Corrymeela’s Centre to deliver programme sessions for free, has acted “to disguise the absence of depth in staffing” (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017), but this is not a sustainable solution for Corrymeela. The delicate process of facilitating a safe space for trust and relationships to develop is difficult for inexperienced staff, particularly those aged in their early twenties with limited professional experience (Personal observations 2017-8).

There is an established literature on how third sector organisations use their staff. Drucker (1990: 111) writes that third sector organisations must get a high value return on the staff they employ as an NGO’s effectiveness depends on a high yield of human resource. Staff shortages and the resulting pressures put on staff and volunteers at Corrymeela has gradually resulted in intra-community tensions (Interview: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Interview: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017). The gaps left by staff were filled with volunteers and interns by Corrymeela’s management team, and this trend detracted from programme quality due to the lack of skills and experience.

During this period, employment pressures also began to impact upon workplace culture. The available literature suggests that the workplace culture of NGOs directly impacts upon its effectiveness (Bass and Avolio 1994; Mahalinga Shiva and Suar 2012:688; Ritchie 2000). Mahalinga Shiva and Suar (2012: 705) explain that “(a)n NGO culture based on mutual respect, trust, and recognition of each member’s contribution creates a feeling of ownership among these members, leading to more dedication to work, that in turn leads to better decision-making, resulting in a higher level of effectiveness”. This is key in explaining the challenges of programme delivery in Corrymeela’s contemporary experience. Research suggested that staff, volunteer and Member ‘buy-in’ to Corrymeela’s programmes was diminishing. Interviewees attributed this to tensions resulting from the uncertainty of Corrymeela’s financial position, the

type of programmes Corrymeela was involved in, and issues with its internal management (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Personal Observations 2017-18). This shift in culture also, arguably, bled into Corrymeela's programme work. As staff and volunteer relationships were affected by the organisation, so too was their capacity to deliver a high quality service that achieved the desired outcomes (Personal observations 2017, 2018; Interviews: Lucas Green 7/4/2019; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018).

The reality of Corrymeela's funding experience is certainly a nuanced one and while there are clear successes, it can be concluded that financial challenges have negatively impacted upon Corrymeela's overall capacity to facilitate productive social capital, particularly bridging capital. By the early 2000s, Corrymeela has honed its approach to facilitating social capital, through decades of developing and testing programmes and developing its workforce to have the necessary knowledge and relationships within local communities to prepare groups for cross-community encounters. The modern funding environment has significantly impeded these practices, by encouraging programme outcomes informed by an expert-led, 'lessons learned' approach from other conflict zones. While economic regeneration and cross-community contact is key to the peace process in Northern Ireland, there have been a number of unintended consequences of the EU and IFI's conditioned funding and they do not take account of local context or grassroots knowledge, such as Corrymeela's. The rigid structure of funding application and reporting mechanisms mean Corrymeela is unable to continue its delivery of tried-and-tested programmes, which were previously successful in encouraging relationships and trust between erstwhile adversities. Some of their programmes are now deemed less relevant to the peace process or, due to their predetermined outcomes or short lifespan, are believed to be ineffective in creating the conditions conducive to bridging capital.

Professionalisation

In parallel to financial pressures, locally-based PROs have also experienced challenges related to professionalisation. Boulding (2000: 84) describes peace movements as being socially

exciting, motivating people to unite and act. However, without a social form in which to realise those aims, motivations fade (*ibid*.). The paradox is that once a social form is established, usually as a peace-based organisation, "the very demands of organisational activity dull the vibrancy of intention" (Boulding 2000: 84). In post-conflict societies, pressure to professionalise is often institutionalised from above by international aid bodies. As civil society organisations act as agents for international funding bodies – in Northern Ireland's case, the IFI and EU – they are expected to adhere to the "dominant idealized image of a tidy, professional and service-oriented local sector" (Hyde and Byrne 2015: 96). Resources are therefore dedicated to ensuring NGOs professionalise and standardise their practice to meet this expectation (*ibid*.; Van Leeuwen and Verkoren 2012).

Corrymeela began as a social movement (Davey 1993: 64; Kaldor 2004: 82), which established a geographic base at Ballycastle in 1965. In the following two decades, Corrymeela utilised its dispersed community of Members to deliver much of its peace work. During the Troubles, a significant proportion of the Community Members were of working age and engaged in a number of industries across education, local government, the arts and therapeutic work. These Members were actively and regularly involved in delivering programme work at Corrymeela during their weekends off and over longer periods during the summer (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017; Teresa Chapman 1/2/2018). The Corrymeela Community and the Ballycastle Centre were very closely connected during this period, operating more or less as a synonymous entity (Interviews: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018).

The organic development of Corrymeela from a social movement with a charismatic leader, to its modern day form as a formalised NGO posed a wider problem in terms of staffing and strategy. The context in the first two decades of the Troubles was often one of "emergency" (Interview: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; McCreary 1975; 2007: 43), and work schedules and staff were scrambled together on an *ad hoc* basis (Interview: Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). Many Members were young, independent couples with few time commitments, who were dedicated to supporting the work of the Community (Interviews: Ashley Workman 11/10/17; Isobel Ellis

12/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). Pádraig Ó Tuama (Interview: 30/1/2018) believed that in the current economic climate, people generally have less free time and less stability in their jobs, thus Members are unable to commit to the Centre as they did previously. Many Members are aged in their 60s and 70s and unable to work the long hours required for programme delivery at the Centre. In tandem with the aging community, child protection policies and disclosure schemes have precluded members from undertaking some of the face-to-face work.

Members were drafted in during the pre-Agreement years to deliver programmes to youth and family groups at the centre (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017; Teresa Chapman 1/2/2018). Many Members were teachers, academics, doctors, community workers, and other related professions and borrowed from their work in their programme content and delivery (Interview: Ted Glenn 31/1/2018). Where specialised programme work was previously delivered by Members on a voluntary basis, the Centre now employs a small number of specialist staff, many of whom are experts in their field and are paid according to skill level (Interview: Anthony McLain 11/10/2017), but are under-resourced and their time is stretched across a number of different programme areas (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; April Geddes 29/1/2018; Benny Ray 8/10/2017).

Corrymeela's staff, strategy and structural challenges

From my own experience and the observations of other respondents, Corrymeela has sometimes operated chaotically to the detriment of its programme quality and strategic clarity (Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). I attribute this to three sources – supported by field research - and argue that is has a negative impact upon Corrymeela's capacity to transform relationships. First, is what Miriam Fields (Interview: 31/1/2018) described as "the Corrymeela triangle". The 'triangle' consists of Corrymeela's three key stakeholder groups: staff, volunteers, and Community Members.

Miriam described the relationship between the three groups as "dysfunctional" and explained that:

> "…the irony is that you know Members are here for the longest period of time but have the least investment in the daily operation of the space. The volunteers are here for a very brief time but have the highest level of investment, but they know they're going to be passing on and they know that people will forget about them because that's the transitory arrangement. And then the staff are somewhere in the middle, where the stakes are really high…they have a huge amount of say so in the direction of the organisation and Corrymeela's work, but don't have that same ownership as the Members and are dispensable. So you've got this really interesting dynamic that defies its very nature, but we don't actually talk about it" (*ibid.*)

Much of the tension of the 'triangle' resulted from Members' ownership of Corrymeela (Interviews: Jeremy Banfield 7/4/2019; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Pádraig Ó Tuama 30/1/2018). Former leaders Ted Glenn, Benny Ray and Pádraig Ó Tuama all talked of the pressure they experienced from Members over Corrymeela's strategic direction (Interviews: 31/1/2018; 8/10/2017 and 30/1/2018 respectively). A number of Members have been involved in Corrymeela since its establishment and this sense of ownership is understandable. Community Member Isobel Ellis (Interview: 12/10/2017), aged in her late 70s, has been involved with Corrymeela since the 1970s and attends the Centre to support its work almost every week. She observed that, in its early days, the majority of staff were also Members. This overlap had diminished in recent years. Isobel stated she was "very unhappy about it" explaining: "I don't like the event in which where we are sitting in the Croí, and talking about the organisation for which they carry so much responsibility and they're not in our midst". By contrast, Stevie Ettenberg (Interview: 30/9/2018), a long-term volunteer in 2012, stated: "there is a huge misunderstanding from the Community about the day-to-day reality of the daily life of a volunteer". This tension results in confusion around Corrymeela's strategic direction in some instances and drawn out, often-contested decision-making processes (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Ted Glenn 31/1/2018). Providing another example of this tension, Ted Glenn (Interview: 31/1/2018) recalled a meeting with Corrymeela's

Council he had attended as Centre Director, where they had discussed how to manage the high costs of maintaining the Ballycastle Centre. He stated:

> "…a woman was sitting beside me, who was a housewife, most of her life had been raising kids and so forth, and her head went down in the middle of this meeting, and tears started to run down her cheeks. People weren't picking it up so I said 'hold on, let me check'. And she said 'I'm terrified. I'm a housewife, I deal with a budget for food, and this is millions of pounds'. And, my sense was a) she was right and b) it was a case of misadventure; this was the responsibility that you had to carry to be inside that structure. 'Oh let's just lower the sense of responsibility?' You can't do that, it's legally what it is."

Another challenge related to Corrymeela's staffing and employment practices, which have been inconsistent on occasion and could be accused of being nepotistic and which have, in some instances, had a negative effect on programme delivery. Many of Corrymeela's staff members are skilled facilitators and some are charismatic leaders, successful at motivating staff to the cause, but few are experienced in business or personnel management. In a joint interview (31/1/2018), Miriam Fields and Alec Lloyd discussed this phenomenon, which they had observed over their ten years as Members:

> MF: "Is it just me or does Corrymeela hire people who are great facilitators and fantastic presenters, and speakers, but don't actually either like management or are very good at management?
>
> AL: 10 years ago? We became Members… and then I have watched it continue to happen, time after time…we [the Corrymeela Community] love people who can stand up and work a room, and we assume that because they can do that they can either run an organisation or run a department. And so far it just never ever happened that the good facilitator is also the good manager.

MF: And that can happen, in very rare combinations that *is* present, but I don't think that's happened in Corrymeela."

Other interviewees also discussed the appointment of staff at Corrymeela. Anthony McClain observed during his time as a volunteer during the late 1990s that staff positions were adapted or created to fit existing staff members' personalities and retain them at the Centre (Interview: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017). A number of members discussed an instance in the 1980s where Max Benson had been unsuccessful in the application process for Centre Director, and even after another individual was appointed, Ray Davey overrode the committee's decision to appoint Max in post (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017). Benny Ray recognised that much of the programme work delivered by Members was "built around their personality" rather than being based on specific programme objectives (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017). From my personal observations and experience, this has resulted in Corrymeela's senior management team – particularly within the Programme department - being comprised of skilled facilitators with a strong stock of programme resources, but limited time to deliver programmes or manage staff. This has contributed to a certain level of organisational chaos at Corrymeela, which I explore in further depth later.

Third, many of the staff and volunteers at Corrymeela are driven by a sense of mission or calling that results in an inappropriate combination of emotion, passion and professional practice and detracts from programme quality (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017). This is recognised in the literature on NGOs, particularly for faith-based organisations, as many contributors are motivated by "the Lord's work" or a "good cause" (Drucker 1990: 84). Organisations that imbue a sense of ownership amongst their staff are more likely to have a highly committed staff base (Mahalinga Shiva and Suar 2012: 705) and Corrymeela has a number of regular practices – such as the 'Monday meeting' – that allow staff and volunteers an equal voice on matters affecting the Community (Personal Observations 2009; 2016-8). Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017) discussed that, as a long-term volunteer, he felt very valued at the Centre, and that despite the Centre Director having decades of experience, he felt his opinion still mattered equally to the Director and other senior staff. Charismatic leadership can have the effect of instilling supporters with a sense of collective identity and group motivation

(Conger *et al*. 2000; Tucker 1968). The dependency on staff and volunteers has been combined at Corrymeela with charismatic leadership amongst the senior management team that has served to motivate staff and volunteers to commit significant energies to the Community's work (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017). Isobel Ellis (Interview: 12/10/2017) recalled how Max Benson, Centre Director during the 1980s, was able to motivate the Community through his leadership, stating:

> "(Max) was Centre director. And he was one of these people that pump people up to "you can do it". And, you know, like just when you're on your hands and knees on a Sunday afternoon, down the carpark comes another busload... Like he really just thought "we can do it" and he was very good building the morale of the Community, but he was burning them out like no business."

This combination of 'calling' and motivational leadership has resulted in staff, volunteers and Members working extremely long shifts at Corrymeela, up to 18 hours a day, in their dedication to visiting groups' programmes (Interviews: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Lucas Green 7/4/2019; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Email correspondence with former volunteer Tim Wilson 4th June 2019). Both Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) and Lyle Newton (Interview: 12/10/2017) described this emotional attachment to the work as "destructive" and Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/2017) talked openly of how the long hours and her commitment to dedicating every energy to group work had contributed to her experiencing acute mental health issues requiring hospitalisation. Isobel Ellis (Interview: 12/10/2017) stated that she had observed the same pattern of errors over her five decades of involvement at Corrymeela, whereby volunteers were tasked with the impossible in terms of programme work. She described programmes at the Centre where "we [Corrymeela] still want to pile in another family and another family, and then we wonder then why we're out of control". She believed this inevitably led to volunteers and staff being exhausted, which compromised programme quality.

An inappropriate emotional attachment to Corrymeela's practice also results from the 'Lived-in' Community at the Ballycastle Centre, whose lives are dominated by Corrymeela while they reside there. The 'Lived-in' community, comprising of the long-term and mid-term volunteers resident in Coventry and interns resident in Cedar Haven, are encouraged to regularly socialise

together, through mealtimes, organised social events and Community rituals. Because of the remoteness of the Centre and because many are international visitors, they have a very limited social network in Northern Ireland, therefore time off and away from the Centre is also spent together. For many of the 'Lived-in' community, the investment in the professional and personal life of the Centre meant that "work drama came home and home drama came to work" (Interview: Jeremy Banfield 7/4/2019), and in some instances distracted from focus on delivering high quality programmes (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Jeremy Banfield 7/4/2019; Lucas Green 7/4/2019; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018).

Some viewed this element of Corrymeela's experience as an innate part of its identity, which encourages introspection and creation of capital between those who live together on site. Harold Goode (cf. McCreary 1975: 19), Centre Director during the 1970s, stated: "Corrymeela is so real that we have all the tensions that exist outside. We are trying to overcome these tensions in our own way, but we recognise those tensions in ourselves….we are trying to learn how to build bridges…not only for others, but for one another". By contrast, some interviewees felt very differently about their experience at Corrymeela. On her final months' experiences at Corrymeela, Anita Hurley (Interview: 2/2/2018) stated "it was without question, the most painful time of my life, and I think I have lost friends through it and I think part of it is I don't think the Community knows how to deal with people they hurt". On the treatment of its staff, Isobel Ellis (Interview: 12/10/2017) stated "I think we've destroyed a lot of people". Lucas Green recalled an incident during his volunteer year when he was significantly distracted from work after two other volunteers had a serious argument in his bedroom in the early hours of the morning (Email correspondence with Lucas Green 29/04/2019) and I heard a number of comparable anecdotal accounts of this type of conflict during my research.

Despite the professionalisation of Corrymeela from a social movement to a formalised NGO, it retains an element of chaos in its work culture. The messiness of Corrymeela's work certainly has a negative impact on its experience, particularly with regard to agreement on strategic direction. The combination of the extremely long working hours, and the near-constant heightened emotional state of the 'Lived-in' community, and mismatch of reconciliation work with income-generating programmes at the Centre combines to create an often chaotic working environment. The chaos manifests itself in mental illness amongst the volunteer and staff team, Community-wide conflicts over decision-making, and poorly organised resources (Interview: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; April Geddes

29/1/2018; Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). On a more basic level staff and volunteers are exhausted (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Lucas Green 7/4/2019; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017). As discussed in the previous chapter, the development of relationships based on mutual trust and reciprocity is a nuanced process that relies heavily on the skills and practice of the facilitator and the careful preparation of the space and environment. There is evidence that the exhaustion and lack of focus can significantly detract from Corrymeela volunteers, staff and members facilitating the conditions for bridging capital to be developed to the best of their ability.

Economic barriers at Corrymeela

In Chapter Three, I argued that social capital can be both inclusive and exclusive (McIlwaine and Moser 2001: 967), and examined perverse social capital and how it can incentivise certain behaviours (Rubio 1997). This final section explores the limits to Corrymeela's formal programme work that result from its majority middle class Membership, some groups' limited access to Corrymeela, and the irrelevance of bridging social capital to certain disenfranchised, lower socioeconomic groups in Northern Ireland.

In the post-Agreement period, there is a general absence of lower socioeconomic class groups at Corrymeela. This absence is evident in Corrymeela's Membership, volunteer base and in its visiting groups. While class was not the cause of the Northern Irish conflict, it is certainly a significant and aggravating factor. During the conflict, working class areas were worst affected by violence and associated class inequalities have been sustained into the modern period (Dixon 1997: 12; Fay *et al.* 1999; Kapur and Campbell 2004: 2; Love 1995: 28-9; O'Malley 1994; Wright 1987: 10). Robin Eames, Archbishop of the Church of Ireland between 1986 and 2006, is quoted:

> "I've heard it said "they're not fighting each other on the Malone Road". It took me years to understand the implications of that remark. There are two communities here,

and one is involved in violence, suffering, unemployment, and injustice. The demarcation is class" (cited in O'Malley 1994: 31).

Overt sectarianism is positively associated with lower socioeconomic areas (Barrett and Carter 1962: 6; McFarlane 1978; Whyte 1990:32). Inter-ethnic mixing is more likely and more frequent amongst the middle classes in Northern Ireland as "kinship matters less, and friendships are frequently formed with non-kin" (Whyte 1990: 41), meaning opportunities for bridging capital are more plentiful. Letki (2008: 117) notes that individuals are more likely to form relationships if they have more choices and opportunities. Working class areas are thus in greater need of interventions to tackle sectarianism and repair relationships (*ibid*.; Hunter 1982: 39) and an exclusion of lower classes from participatory peacebuilding activities prohibits such interventions and the opportunity to accrue bridging social capital.

There is certainly a middle class majority amongst Corrymeela's Membership, which acts to alienate some participants and provisional Members from less affluent backgrounds. Voluntary group membership is positively associated with access to economic resources (Letki 2008: 118). Cochrane (2001: 99) describes the peace industry as "'the great and the good' looking for philanthropic projects to keep themselves busy between appointments at the golf club", and also states that middle class practitioners are often regarded as misinformed "toffs against terrorism" within the Northern Irish peace sector. The presumption of the financial capacity of Corrymeela Members was a recognised part of Membership agreement (Corrymeela Community and Prayer Guide 2016-8: 2). It was rumoured that one Member had donated £70,000 of his/her own money to the Community during a period of financial difficulty (Personal Observations 2016). Another Member, Alex Warner (Interview: 27/1/2018), disclosed that he donated around £1800 per year to Corrymeela and after the sale of his house, donated a lump sum of £10,000. He was surprised that I questioned his motivations for giving a relatively high sum, and stated:

"Quite a number of the Community do not contribute financially. I really find this difficult. I mean I've always been able to afford to pay Corrymeela....there were times where I thought 'I am certainly not giving Corrymeela another penny until they get that

> sorted out', but you can't do that. We need to contribute to the work of the Community: if you're a Member of the Community then you must get involved in change...I didn't broadcast it but obviously people heard about it" (*ibid*.).

At the other end of the spectrum, Jimmy Palmer and Connie Terrell (Joint interview: 7/10/2017), a couple with a young family, were interviewed together and entered into discussion regarding their contribution of time rather than money. They were unable to engage in formal, permanent employment because they cared for their son, who had profound and multiple disabilities and required 24 hour care. Connie stated she "got hung up" on being unable to contribute financially and repeated her justification for this several times Connie felt pressure to contribute financially despite it being recognised and agreed with the leader of Community that they could not afford to do so. Jimmy was satisfied their contribution of time – which was significant – was sufficient, however he was also aware of the expectations of the Community with regard to donations. The middle-to-upper class leanings of Corrymeela's Membership base seemed to restrict the diversity of people in regular attendance at the Centre.

Changes in Northern Ireland's political context have also resulted in the exclusion of certain groups from Corrymeela. Historically, Corrymeela conducted a lot of work with children and young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In the 1970s, Corrymeela evacuated children from urban communities hardest hit by violence, to protect them but also to prevent older children being recruited by paramilitary groups (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Interview: Yvonne Naylor, Former Volunteer and Schools Worker, current member cf. Robinson 2015: 158; McCreary 1975: 63; Wells 1999: 72-3). As lower socioeconomic districts were more severely affected by violence, this meant more children and young people from poorer backgrounds attended the Centre. In the contemporary era, as Corrymeela's self-programmed work has dwindled, and due to the preference for formally-organised youth groups (as opposed to the informal numbers who attended in the 1970s and 1980s), the number of young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds at Corrymeela has decreased significantly (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Jess Williams 27/1/2018).

Corrymeela had previously acted as a 'springboard' for people from lower socioeconomic

backgrounds, equipping them with new skills, ideas and relationships, which enabled upwards social mobility. In interview, Alec Lloyd (Interview: 31/1/2018) summed up the shift in Corrymeela's class focus during the post-Agreement period as follows:

> "…the Gathering stuff we did around the 50th [The Gathering was a series of events to commemorate Corrymeela's 50th anniversary, which involved former Members and participants of Corrymeela from over its lifespan], so many of the stories I heard from people were, you know: "I came to Corrymeela as this wee girl from West Belfast, and Ray Davey said to me, you know, "you're good enough" and you know I saw this job and I thought I couldn't even think about and he said "no you've got to apply for it" and then I ended up running some big social work department" - enigmas - and that were like three, four, or five of those stories that I heard from people. And I thought: I don't see that happening now, I don't see people coming in now who are different. It's kind of middle class, it's studenty. We don't have the kind of mix".

Miriam Fields (Interview: 31/1/2018) had been responsible for the new programme area of 'social innovation' at Corrymeela, tasked with generating income to support the Community's activities. Programmes included work around 'Peace Tourism', for international groups to have tours of peacebuilding initiatives and 'peace sites' organised by Corrymeela. Corrymeela had also refurbished and upgraded its shop at the Ballycastle site to sell a variety of books, stationary and artisanal products at reasonably high prices (Personal Observations 2017, 2018). A significant proportion of income-generation was sourced from visiting American university groups, who came to Corrymeela to learn about the peace process (See Appendix 3; Interviews: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Personal observations 2016-8). This area of programme attracted mixed reactions, as many Members and volunteers did not consider this type of work to be consistent with Corrymeela's strategic objectives of relationship transformation, particularly for Northern Ireland's peace (Interviews: Jeremy Banfield 7/4/2019; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018). Miriam Fields (Interview: 31/1/2018) described that, due to the focus on income-generation, much of her role had involved engaging with middle- and upper class people and, while she considered much of the work meaningful, she felt:

> "…we're being untrue to our call if we are not actually working with vulnerable people who are being impacted by conflict, here and/or abroad…But I just don't see us doing that work… I am worried about our work, because again the work I've seen, I've seen some inspiring stuff but to me there's something missing when we are not doing equally inspiring work with people at the coalface."

The cost of access to Corrymeela was an additional barrier for some groups. Interviewees reported feedback from the wider voluntary community that Corrymeela's room charges had priced it out of being considered by other peacebuilding groups (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). In 2016, a single occupancy room at the Ballycastle was raised to £139 per night, and the cost of a shared room was changed to £99 per person (Corrymeela 2016 'Price Changes for Retreats and Open Weekends'), more expensive than most of the hotels in the surrounding area. Miriam Fields (Interview: 31/1/2018) recalled a conversation during some outreach work: "one guy said to me, from North Belfast: 'we thought you were intentionally taking on strategies to only work with middle class church groups, because of your new pricing'." Previously, trips to the Centre had been personally affordable, or local fundraising initiatives could raise the amount required (Interviews: Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). Ellen Puckett (Interview: 7/10/2017), who had worked in a Belfast school during the late 1970s, recalled that bringing pupils and their families to the Centre during that time would cost around £1000 for a large group, and this could be raised by the pupils within their community. She lamented the fact that a family group she now worked with was quoted over £12,000 for less than a week's stay at the Corrymeela Centre. She felt that this cost could only be covered by formal grant funding as fundraising for such an amount would be impossible (*ibid*). Miriam Fields (Interview: 31/1/2018) commented that, despite securing income from "charging hapless American students a fortune", profits were not being used strategically by Corrymeela to plan and deliver meaningful peace work. She stated:

> "…it allows us to do things that don't happen anymore in the charitable sector. For example, have day-long sessions with the staff where everybody stops working but nobody really knows why we are together for team day because nothing really gets done. You know that way? Instead of actually doing strategic planning and even just getting to know what people do in their jobs?! Like: "Hi I'm (Miriam) this is my job,

> this is what I do", we build random things out of sticks, talk about what we got for Christmas, and watch some inspirational TED talk and call it a day. And have 18 cups of tea each. And you kind of go "how much did that just cost?" Getting the entire staff together, everybody's daily rate, how much did that cost and was it worth it and can we justify it?"

Corrymeela's middle class Membership and increased room rates have acted to limit the range of people present at the Ballycastle Centre, therefore restricting the social capital opportunities available. Higher prices have also meant Corrymeela is more likely to be visited by individuals and groups who *already* have opportunities to accrue bridging social capital, rather than those – namely in working class communities – who have fewer opportunities and are likely to reap greater rewards from the opportunities facilitated by Corrymeela.

Programme challenges: perverse social capital

The final limit to Corrymeela's work related to socioeconomic access is that, for some of the youth groups that did visit Corrymeela, the type of social capital opportunities on offer was not of benefit to them. Young people may attend Corrymeela and have the 'mountaintop experience' and engage with notions of sameness and reciprocity, but if they then return to their communities where there are few employment opportunities and the most secure financial option is paramilitarism, then the type of social capital that Corrymeela seeks to offer is irrelevant.

There are limits to some groups' access to the Community, particularly 'at risk' young people from lower socioeconomic urban backgrounds. Deprived, paramilitary-controlled communities offer a different social and economic incentive structure, which rewards criminality and rent-seeking behaviours and results in networks of perverse social capital. Individuals attending Corrymeela – or other PROs – from these communities require targeted and specific interventions, which are cognisant of both the benefits and risks that bridging capital may provide them. Corrymeela's contemporary menu of programme options, based on

neoliberal ideologies that assume liberal market economies and the rule of law as the starting point for development, did not take account of this reality.

Mark Gallacher, a former gang member from Glasgow, discusses the perception amongst disenfranchised groups of targeted group activities, such as those offered by Corrymeela (Gallacher, 05/04/19). On the services available to young people in his area, he states “these were attended by the same group of children on a weekly basis and it was very uncomfortable walking into a room where you feel unwanted and even feared” (*ibid*.). Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) also commented on Corrymeela’s bias, referencing the propensity of its programmes to require speaking in groups – the confidence for which is associated with middle and upper class groups - and noting that many of the Community’s events were, whether purposefully or not, “pitched at people with third level education”. In research from the late 1980s, Love (1995) also identifies this challenge, stating that Corrymeela’s programmes “depend on participants being verbally articulate which can block out significant numbers” (Lennon 1997: 82).

During one of my research trips to the Corrymeela Centre there were two groups from London onsite. While not directly related to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland, they were illustrative of the challenge posed by perverse social capital. The two youth groups were associated with opposing gangs in London, and had been brought to Corrymeela on a trip to explore issues around conflict and reconciliation (Personal Observations 2016). From the outset, it was obvious the young people had not been adequately prepared for the trip and there were significant tensions between the groups. This gradually descended into verbal threats and then two physical altercations, one involving a chair being thrown across a room, which ultimately resulted in the programme being abandoned (*ibid*.). From my experience over the years at Corrymeela, I observed a number of comparable groups visits from around Northern Ireland that descended into young people physically fighting and one group being asked to leave because they had brought knives onsite and there were threats of serious violence.

In some cases, engagement with “the Other”, both in terms of relationships and ideas, may actually put some individuals at greater risk. An article from the *Times* in July 1988 (Vallely

1988) describes a plaque that adorns the playground at Corrymeela, dedicated to Sean Armstrong "a friend of the (Corrymeela) community who was assassinated in West Belfast apparently because his youth programmes were too successful in drawing young people away from paramilitary youth structures" (Sean Armstrong was murdered on 30th June 1973 by the UDA/UFF and worked for Voluntary Services International at the time, a group which organised numerous cross-community events for young people (McKittrick *et al*. 2008: 375)). To some extent, this challenge has remained. The young people from London, present at the Centre in the contemporary era, repeatedly stated they could not be seen to associate with the other gang because it was not safe for them to do so (Personal Observations 2016).

The productive social capital facilitated by Corrymeela is therefore contrary to the perverse social capital operating in some participants' communities. Conflict and deprivation, which are positively associated in Northern Ireland, damage inter- and intra- community relationships, encourage communities to be inward-looking and discourage cross-community relationships (Letki 2008: 105; McGrellis 2010: 764). This posed problems for individuals, particularly those on residential visits, who engaged in the norms and networks of Corrymeela, and then returned to their own communities. Stevie Ettenberg (Interview: 30/9/2018), who came to Corrymeela as a young person from a staunchly Loyalist community, described that it felt as if he had a secret life in Community. He stated:

> "I would never talk about it, they could never understand…The community on the hill where people are equal is a fare way from [my hometown] the bitter hole that it is. Completely alien to people from [my hometown], never mind the cross-community work and it being based in Ballycastle [Ballycastle is known in Northern Ireland as a majority Catholic town]…when I had to leave the Community and going back to [my hometown] that was a very difficult process" (*sic.)* (Email communication with Stevie Ettenberg 09/04/19)

Re-entry from a cross-community experience into a host community was also identified in other research on PROs, including previous research on Corrymeela. Sean 'A', interviewed for research by Cichon (2000: 255), also highlighted the risk for some visitors to the

Community, stating that Corrymeela fails when it brings together different ethnic groups on neutral ground and then allows individuals back to their communities where "there is no backup system in place to continue the healing process" (Email correspondence from Sean 'A' to Ted Cichon November 9, 1999 cf. Cichon 2000: 255). Sean 'A' stated it was "like getting members of an Aboriginal Group and a group of Racists on a two day holiday together and after that time letting the Racists carry on as before without following up on the exercise" (*ibid.*). The challenges of re-entry into community are also documented by Love (1995: 53), who observed that short periods of inter-community encounter should not be expected to suddenly change the entrenched norms an individual has learned from their host communities. He asserts that such encounters require effective planning and skilled facilitation to have any positive impact. Ryan (1990: 83-5) also writes on this challenge, stating:

> "…if they conform to community pressure to continue to follow the 'community norm'… then there is little likelihood of the peacebuilding initiative bearing fruit. If they resist the pressure to conform then in all probability they will be treated with suspicion, probably marginalised or worse still, possibly eliminated".

Writing on the Springfield Inter-Community Development Project, a community activist interviewed by Cochrane and Dunn (2002:156) communicated frustration on the challenge posed by community norms, stating:

> "They'd been doing all this work with these kids, taking them away and then they brought them back, and as soon as they brought them back and let them go, it was like letting animals go out of a cage, they went back into the wild and they weren't changed in any way. They were changed for the days that they were away and made friends and all of this, but their understanding soon went away when they came home" (Billy Hutchinson (SICDP activist), interview: Dr. Feargal Cochrane, August 13, 1997 cf. Cochrane and Dunn 2002: 156)

It should be noted, however, that there were some individuals and sub-groups within Corrymeela, originating from single-identity communities, who had a more nuanced experience. A number of young people visited or volunteered at Corrymeela alongside peers from their home neighbourhood, and this united experience acted as a buffer to the potential risk and stark contrast between Corrymeela and their home communities. Lucas Green from the Shankill Road in Belfast, a well-known Loyalist community, came to Corrymeela as a volunteer aged 20. He described his home life and experience at Corrymeela as feeling very separate, stating "I absolutely didn't want the experience to end, and it did feel like I was completely out of the loop, and whenever I did go back to Belfast it felt *crazy*" (Interview: 7/4/2019). Lucas attended Corrymeela with a number of his peers from school, and as a result felt the impact of the "split life" to be less severe, as the distinction was blurred by the existing overlap between associates in his home community and Corrymeela (*ibid*.). Kevin Sloane was a long-term volunteer from a Republican community in Antrim, who attended Corrymeela with friends as part of a group, after being encouraged there by his mother, who had previously been a participant. Kevin felt that Corrymeela was:

> "…definitely something that existed outside my usual frame of reference, but it was also something I was very vocal about and would talk about it quite actively. There were definitely differences in friendships I had, where some people had been up to the Centre and would get the references/vibe of the place and those who hadn't been up. I was probably less sharing on the religious/spiritual side…I'm worried that I kind of exist as a bit of an outlier in that demographic anyhow – I've never really been shy in aspiring to leave my roots/background and if anything that would be a major part of my identity growing up" (Email correspondence with Kevin Sloane 7th April 2019).

Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) also talked of the 'safety in numbers' approach of forming bridging capital at the Centre, and the key role played by Community outreach workers in supporting transitions between communities:

> "…when it's worked is in many of the youth projects historically that Billy Kane and Ivan and Raymond Stewart and John McLaughlin [former community outreach youth

> workers at Corrymeela] and many others developed. Young people came to the Centre through relationships with them, experienced the liminal space of Corrymeela, and then went back to home and then in (one young person's) terms – you know, he went back home and he was beaten up, and he realised a number of things. One of the things was: you should never go to Corrymeela alone. So, the next time he would bring three or four of his mates, so when three of four of them came again, and then went back to their community there were three or four people so a) they weren't beaten up but b) they caused a bit of interest: "Oh, you seemed to have a good time". So, historically, at its best, the youth work was relationally-based in the city, or in the country area with a significant worker or a significant young adult, who then invited people to come away, who were with them when they came away, and then who were supportive of them when they came back. It went like that in a loop."

As discussed above, relationships with youth in local communities like this had been severed in the post-Agreement period due to funding cuts and the associated reduction in outreach staff at Corrymeela.

It can be concluded that, for some individuals, the type of productive bridging social capital offered by Corrymeela is both spatially and temporally bound, as it is only of benefit whilst at the Corrymeela Centre. For some individuals, particularly those coming from staunch single-identity communities, the social capital accrued at Corrymeela does not 'translate' back into their home community and this has to be managed by the individual, to their personal risk in some instances. The notion of being "at sea" between two communities is examined by McGrellis (2010: 774-775), who describes it as being one of the most vulnerable positions in society: "a place where neither the anchor of bonding social capital nor the lifebelt of bridging capital are readily available for use" (*ibid.*). For others, a brief experience of a different life and then the inevitable return to their home community can be difficult. On this, Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) stated "I think anybody who visits here gets a glimpse of otherness, the critique of that is it's just a big tease, in that they have to go back". Striking a balance with groups, whereby they successfully engage in Corrymeela (and all of the norms, trust, relationships and benefit that entails) and can safely communicate new ideas on return to their host communities, remains a significant challenge for Corrymeela. As previously mentioned,

understanding about the process of transition is also a significant limitation of this research. Little is known about any group's transition back into their home communities, and the longitudinal effects of their experience at Corrymeela. Significantly, for some groups the bridging social capital accrued at Corrymeela is spatially and/or temporally bound at the Ballycastle Centre. Further follow-up research is required to establish groups' longer term experience.

Conclusion

There are obvious challenges to Corrymeela's experience delivering formal peacebuilding programmes. Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) felt that "in the last few years we've lost our way" and many respondents communicated concerns that Corrymeela had "sold out" on its original purpose (Interview: Miriam Fields 31/1/2018) and the challenges of funding and professionalisation had detracted from the Community focus to reconcile different identity communities.

As discussed in the previous chapter, despite its challenges, Corrymeela has continued to facilitate relationships and learning between people of difference. During the conflict, Corrymeela was at the 'cutting edge' of peacebuilding work, offering onward transit for people fleeing persecution, a safe space for paramilitary negotiations, and engaging children and young people from some of the lowest socioeconomic neighbourhoods worst affected by violence. The current impact of the PRO is more shallow. However, the challenges explored in this chapter must be understood in the context of post-Agreement Northern Ireland: Corrymeela's experience is largely consistent with the wider third sector and new funding landscape, which features reduced funding streams (Bush and Houston 2011:78-82; SEUPB 2016a; 2016b), conditioned funding grants (Morrow *et al*. 2018) and an increased tendency for state-led initiatives to be favoured over grassroots, bottom-up programmes (Acheson *et al.* 2012: 27; Acheson and Milofsky 2008). These challenges have impacted upon Corrymeela's capacity to facilitate the necessary conditions for productive social capital to be accrued. Despite these limitations, Corrymeela has managed to resist some of the pressures resulting

from neoliberal funding policies and continued to use experiential learning and storytelling approaches as an 'add-on' to their funded work to create the conditions conducive to the development of bridging social capital.

Despite its resilience and recalcitrance, however, it is increasingly apparent that those most in need of social capital opportunities in Northern Ireland – young people from working class communities - are often not reached by Corrymeela, or by other organisations (Campbell *et al*. 2016), and this poses a significant challenge to effective peacebuilding. On this challenge, the literature is lacking in its ability to adequately explain the reality of grassroots peacebuilding. The first notable gap in the evidence base is on the role of perverse social capital in Northern Ireland. I observed that the 'productive' social capital facilitated by Corrymeela is contrary to the perverse social capital operating in some participants' communities. Some groups are therefore deterred from engaging with Corrymeela because it does not generate positive outcomes for them. Herreros (2004: 121) argues that social capital results from a "virtuous circle", contending that the generation of productive capital becomes the source of more productive capital. For some, Corrymeela has indeed been a snowballing source of productive social capital, while others have not benefited from its programmes or practices, or have been unable to access them in the first place. This raises questions about the gap between places that facilitate productive social capital and places that create "vicious cycles" of perverse social capital (Graham 2016: vii; Putnam 2000). Literature on the disparity between productive and perverse social capital in Northern Ireland is lacking. Many of those who engage in voluntary associations are a self-selecting group, and there is very little research on paramilitary-controlled communities and their engagement in NGO practice or access to bridging social capital. Putnam (2000: 316) suggests that where there is a lack of productive social capital in communities, "gangs emerge to fill the void". Further research on the limits of social capital's value to some groups, the temporal and spatial limits of social capital, and the issues of community re-entry would therefore be of benefit in developing a deeper understanding of the experience of disenfranchised groups and how NGOs might progress peacebuilding in those communities.

Chapter Seven: The 'in-between' work: Corrymeela's informal peacebuilding approach

Introduction

"I think Corrymeela is for me a group of people who do feel like they want, in small ways, to maybe change the world. We have probably learnt that it is about the small steps, to meet with people and to do your bit without actually being all that important in the scheme of things" (Interview: Teresa Chapman 1/2/2018).

This chapter examines the informal practices of the Corrymeela Community and how these have contributed to the facilitation of social capital within and between communities in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela's informal activities are defined as its practices that do not have a specific funding source and are not documented as part of its work as a registered NGO.

Some of Corrymeela's most successful peacebuilding activities take place outside and around the formal programme work of the Community, which some interviewees described as "unplanned" or "serendipitous" (Interviews: Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017; Teresa Chapman 1/2/2018). By contrast, my interpretations of these practices were that they were at least partly planned, designed to create the seedbed for meaningful exchange and facilitate relationships between strangers from different communities. As mentioned, MacGinty (2011: 85-6) described these practices as recalcitrant behaviour, intended to subvert the liberal peace agenda imposed upon NGOs by international funding bodies. Despite the tendency for funding conditions to incentivise new approaches, Corrymeela's holistic approach to peacebuilding has been amended but not abandoned in the post-Agreement period. This is largely because the effectiveness and sustainability of this approach is recognised and valued by staff and Members and, to some extent, is institutionalised at Corrymeela. The approach has acted to sustain the organisation's self-identity as an 'Open Village' over time, particularly in times of social, political and financial hardship. This chapter examines this approach and the practices used to embed it.

The first section examines Corrymeela's construction of liminal space and argues that the space at the Corrymeela Centre contributes to its peacebuilding activities by promoting neutrality and transition. The space at the Centre, away from sites of historical violence and the territoriality of urban space, exposes shared norms, encourages reciprocity and allows those present to model an alternative form of interaction to that which is prevalent in Northern Ireland.

The second section argues that Corrymeela's informal practices, particularly the tradition and rituals practiced at the Centre, encourage a culture of 'radical hospitality' that facilitates bridging social capital between people from different backgrounds. A space that is dedicated to embedding behaviours associated with peace is described as a peace culture in the literature and this concept is explored in further depth.

The final section examines the contagion effect of Corrymeela's norms, and argues that Corrymeela encourages the spread of ideas to wider society through its volunteer programme, Membership base and the norms institutionalised at its Centre. This process has value as it promotes the development of bridging social capital in wider Northern Ireland.

Corrymeela as a liminal space

In this section I argue that Corrymeela's use of alternative discourses and practices acts to create a liminal space at its Ballycastle Centre, which allows Corrymeela to promote an alternative mode of interaction in Northern Ireland. The Centre is a shared space for all people of difference, and this notion is reinforced in Corrymeela's practices and use of language. The space at Corrymeela, in its rurality and neutrality, is not decorated with the traditional reminders of community difference (such as flags, emblems and murals), and this shifts people away from their entrenched community mentalities. The recognition of sameness and establishment of reciprocity therefore becomes possible, allowing for the first steps in building bridging social capital. The concept of liminal space is useful in understanding this process. Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017), described how Corrymeela embodies this:

> “Liminal like subliminal, means threshold…people have to disengage and reintegrate if we are to learn new things. I think Ray [Davey], maybe without realising it, he certainly saw there was a need to create what I’m now calling a liminal space… a space that is commonly owned and that doesn’t belong to where people have come from, but that helps people imagine a different place that they might go back to. And I think that’s part of peacebuilding. So people come out of separate or separating or divided situations…our society is without a culture that causes people to meet and cross-cut… Therefore it’s important to get people who wish to disengage from that society, even for a while, and come into a different space, where they can imagine and engage with one another in a different manner. And then they’re faced, as we all are, with: “what sort of society do you want to go back to, and how do you want to act when you leave this space and go back?” So it’s this….Liminal means a space that doesn’t have the hierarchy of where you’ve come from and that’s Corrymeela, when it works well, it’s a place where very different people meet, without realising that they’re very different, in terms of social background and status. And that’s a character of liminal space, [it’s] when people with different positions in hierarchies and social power in other areas of life meet in a different space. And engage and imagine, and sometimes have unexpected relationships, and then go back.”

Liminality originates from the field of social anthropology and while applied infrequently, has a wider application in Peace Studies research (Mälksoo 2012). Mälksoo (2012: 485) argues that the concept of liminality defies International Relations’ tendency to give places “concrete classifications”. Liminality is necessarily vague, because it involves a dynamic, ever-changing process of change, described as “a continuous flow between different forms and ways of being” (*ibid.*). It involves a process of transition (Heilbrun 1999: 9), often described as a place of “in-betweeness” (*ibid.*; Kennedy 2001: 137; Mälksoo 2012: 481; Turner 1969: 95) and it is understood as a process of engaging with possible alternatives for the future (Kennedy 2001: 137). As described by Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017), it is a space of opportunity, described as a platform of potential change, from which a reconsideration and renewal of embedded power structures and traditions can begin (Mälksoo 2012: 481).

Space is contested and connected to the conflict in Northern Ireland (Brewer *et al*. 2011: 5; Dawson 2007: 11; Hughes *et al*. 2007; McGrellis 2010: 765; Wright 1987: 18). Urban and rural spaces are ethnically assigned and space is considered as territory (Barritt and Carter 1962: 53; Boal 1996: 154; Dawson 2007: 10-11; Whyte 1990: 33-34). The ethnic identity of each rural town and urban area is common knowledge amongst Northern Ireland's population (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018; Whyte 1990: 243) and rights of access to specific spaces are governed by strict cultural codes based on ethnicity (Dawson 2007: 11; Mitchell and Kelly 2011:312). Mitchell and Kelly (2011: 307) argue that conflict transformation requires the construction of "peaceful spaces", which they define as "secure, manageable spaces that embody the norms of intervening actors, and which act as epicenters from which these strategies can be consolidated" (*ibid*.). Corrymeela, in establishing a non-contested, neutral space, has challenged the traditional understanding of space and taken steps to provide the "peaceful space" necessary for conflict transformation.

Ray Davey's original vision had encompassed the idea of neutral and liminal space, particularly for young people (Davey 1985: 120). Corrymeela was intended to provide "the chance of having a completely new and different experience, away from their own district" (*ibid*.). Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) provided an empirical example of how the liminal space had impacted a number of Members who had come to Corrymeela in the 1980s as youth volunteers from single-identity backgrounds and had made friends from opposing communities. Max stated that he had observed a group at a recent Community weekend:

> "…the way they were walking round this house, they were talking to one another – friendships that had been established 20, 25 years ago, and they would go to the wall for one another. And they would point to many others who would go to wall for one another, and we'd have to say well, in liminal space terms, they are people who came out of partisan identities - and some of them had 'done time' - who got an opportunity to meet one another and they weren't all working class heroes, there were middle class ones… and out of that space, made choices in life about who would they be friendly with, the work they would do, the values they would have, the changes they would work for" (*ibid*.).

This trend has continued and there were numerous examples of individuals from opposing Northern Irish community backgrounds who had formed lasting friendships in the post-Agreement period (Interviews: Kevin Sloane 2/9/2019; Lucas Greene 7/4/2019; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018).

Without using the language of liminality specifically, other interviewees described the importance of the space at Corrymeela. Discussing the Ballycastle Centre, Teresa Chapman (Interview: 1/2/2018) stated:

> “It was a place you could escape to, away from your situation or your place for a while, but you always had to get back. So in that sense, it's a realistic place…where you learn new ways of doing things. Or of being with people, but then you have to go out and practice it."

On the education programmes at Corrymeela, Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018) discussed how the use of space at Corrymeela reshaped relationships:

> "In a society where space is contested in most places most of the time, what's it like to shift people into a different space? Into a space that is shared in some way shape or form, and where there's an intentionality behind creating that shared atmosphere. So, at the very basic level, in a society where there's very few spaces to do that, where do people meet? Hence the need to have residential space, where people can meet.”

A number of interviewees felt Corrymeela’s space gave people permission to act differently than in their everyday lives. Connie and her partner, Jimmy Palmer, who also attended the Centre to volunteer as Members, felt that Corrymeela encouraged a level of social interaction that was absent in “normal life” (Joint interview: Connie Terrell and Jimmy Palmer 7/10/2017). Katherine Bryan spoke about people with cancer and their families that she brought to Corrymeela (Interview: Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017). She described that because the space and

activities were so different to everyday life "it gives them permission to play". Following a residential weekend, one of her participants stated to Katherine "this weekend I forgot I had cancer" because "in a time in her life, when it was pretty crap she'd found somewhere where she could relax and be herself" (*ibid.*).

The geographical location of Corrymeela, atop a cliff by the sea, was described by some as a powerful, if serendipitous, part of its peacebuilding impact. Ó Tuama (2013: 36) wrote that the Community is transformative "because when you can be in a place of beauty it might be that your mind can be open to new and creative possibilities". Joshua Cameron (Interview: 30/1/2018) described how the beauty of the North Antrim coast was the first part of the transition of entering the space of Corrymeela. He recalled that driving to Corrymeela, the road allows view of the Ballycastle Bay, Sheep's Island and Rathlin Island and it reminds him that "you go through a point where you have left normality behind and things are different" (*ibid.*). Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) stated that it could be over-spiritualised, but the location of Corrymeela was important: "there's something about a six-acre site, where it is, epic, dangerous, two seas colliding – you know you couldn't make it up - there's something about that that changed the conversation" (*ibid.*). Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018) also believed the location was key to Corrymeela's impact, stating:

> "Absolutely without doubt, being on one of the most spectacular cliffs in Ireland makes a massive difference. All that idea of being back close to nature, close to the sea, all of that stuff is essential, particularly for groups that are in areas that just don't have that. All these clichéd stories, but they're true - around kids coming up who haven't been to the beach before, who haven't had this experience before."

Corrymeela's buildings were designed to intentionally encourage relationships, celebrate the natural beauty of the location and embody the notion of welcome (Interview: Alex Warner 27/1/2017). I interviewed Alex Warner, the architect who designed the rebuild of the Main House and who has offered architectural advice and support to Corrymeela since the 1970s. Alex described how considerations such as the location of utilities, the potential for sunlight in a room, the location of planted trees, and the shape of entry driveways have been key to creating the correct atmosphere for Corrymeela's purposes. Alex had recently advised on the building

of the Davey Village, ensuring that the main room for programme work included a wide window showing the vista of Kinbane (the coastal cliffs to the west of Ballycastle) (*ibid.*). Joshua Cameron (Interview: 30/1/2018) also commented on the intentionality of interior space, stating: “the fact that most of the public rooms are done with the big windows facing out, it's almost got a calming influence on people regardless of what's what”.

The rurality of Corrymeela was also considered important as it allowed individuals to leave community identities behind and engage in reciprocal relationships more readily. A number of Members involved in programme work discussed how the act of physically removing people from their own community to a new space was important to allow people to feel they could act in a new way (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Teresa Chapman 1/2/2018). Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/2017) described the Ballycastle Centre as “an oasis to come away to, like a retreat, a hermitage”. Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) talked about a residential trip to Corrymeela he had organised for a Canadian mediation programme he was facilitating:

> “…that group of Canadians, it took them to come here to talk about the Canadian flag. One girl salutes the flag, says: “I love the flag”. The indigenous girl goes: “I hate the flag, and now I’m afraid that we won’t be friends.” And they knew each other for two years. There’s something about dislocating yourself. How can you talk about a Canadian flag easier here than in Canada?"

In her research on Corrymeela, Robinson (2015: 163) interviewed the Secondary Schools Worker Ciara McFarlane, who believed that the neutrality of the space allowed shared values to be elucidated and relationships to form outside of the structures of the conflict that usually governed social interactions. Ciara observed that in their home communities many of the school pupils’ energies were dedicated to maintaining their community territory via various cultural practices such as mural painting. At Corrymeela, without the need to claim and assert territory, the young people were able to act more freely, and “form groups amongst each other based on common interest…as opposed to religious, political and geographical territory lines” (Interview: Ciara McFarlane 2009 cf. Robinson 2015: 163).

The space of Corrymeela, because of its rurality, natural beauty and neutrality have therefore contributed to fostering the conditions conducive to relationship transformation. When people are free of their own community identities, they are less defensive and more receptive to relationship formation. The sharing of communal space allows shared values to be exposed more readily than in communities where both space and values are ethnically ascribed. The remoteness of the Centre, combined with new types of activities and promoted ideas, gives permission to people to behave and engage in different ways. The accessibility of the beach and several beautiful walking trails near to Corrymeela have formed a staple part of its programmes, and the panoramic views of the coast framed by clever architecture, all contribute to the 'holiday' environment that allows visitors to relax and be open to new experiences, which includes new relationships (Interview: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017). While some of this is carefully planned and intentional, some elements have been serendipitous. Ray Davey and his followers saw the potential of the site in 1965 when it became available (Davey 1993; Interview: Travis Sanford 2/2/2018), but may not have predicted the scale to which space would characterise the conflict - and provide a future opportunity for peace - at that time.

Corrymeela as a culture of peace

In conjunction with the idea of liminality, Boulding's (1989, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b) work on peace cultures and peaceableness is a valuable tool in understanding how peace can be embedded through the building of social capital. Boulding (2000) argues that peace cultures are sustained by certain "peace behaviours": those which promote peace and make violence less likely (Boulding 2000: 101-4). Such behaviours do not rely on traditional societal dynamics of asymmetrical power relationships and one's maintenance of control over another (Boulding 2001: 56). Eisler (2008), also writing about behaviours that embed peace, argues that in order to adequately address violent behaviours within society, the traditional power imbalances inherent within gender relations should be exposed in both private and public domains and there should be a move away from a culture of domination towards a culture of partnership.

As discussed in chapter four, Corrymeela promotes norms that are distinct from those that inform mainstream discourses in Northern Ireland. Part of the way in which the norms of reconciliation, welcome, openness and the transformative power of human encounter are promoted is through traditions and rituals at the Ballycastle Centre, which intentionally subvert the mainstream discourses of division in Northern Ireland. Boulding (2000: 103) identifies celebration and ritual as forms of peace behaviour. At their best, she says, these reinforce notions of community, family, and identity. Activities such as singing, feasting, gift-giving, poetry and dancing reminds people of their place within society, allows individuals to relate to their own culture, and serves as reward for their commitment to their community (*ibid.*). Boulding (*ibid.*) argues that playfulness and celebration are essential elements in peaceable societies due to their capacity to "replenish the human spirit". Based upon these theoretical underpinnings, this section provides empirical examples of how Corrymeela uses peace behaviours to embed the norms of trust, shared norms and reciprocity, and to encourage relationships between people of difference.

Trust is a key component of productive social capital and forms an important part of Corrymeela's Community culture. One way in which trust is manifested at Corrymeela is in the idea of radical hospitality and welcome. Members and staff believe that if visitors feel they are entering a safe space, where they are welcomed, they are more likely to form relationships (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018; Sylvia McKinney 29/1/2018). Hospitality Manager, Jerry Barnett (Interview: 29/1/2018) explained how he used radical hospitality to build generalised trust:

> "There's a danger sometimes of actually not hearing everybody, and to make sure everybody gets heard, and that for me is where people feel truly valued, and where people can work from a place of dignity and worth. Which then creates a safe platform for them to learn more. So some of my work is about hospitality and for me that really means actually making sure that everyone who comes through the door, that the dignity that they already have, is affirmed. They are celebrated: that they, as individuals, are celebrated, regardless of the communities they've come from, the drives that they connect with, that they know we are glad that they're here."

Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) believed that Corrymeela was "great at welcoming people and saying goodbye to them" and this reinforced the idea that everyone who visits the Centre has value and is loved. Martha Martin (2017), a Canadian church leader who brought groups to visit Corrymeela and who had previously come to Corrymeela as a volunteer, explained how she observed this concept practiced at Corrymeela:

> "From the moment I arrived as a mid-term volunteer in June 2011, providing radical hospitality was stressed as one of the most important aspects of participants' experience at Corrymeela – and our group certainly experienced that in a big way this week. Whether it was in creating a safe space to learn and grow throughout the week, to providing a welcome sign on our arrival ... or making porridge, as Yvonne and Maria did every morning for us, to toast and hot chocolate at night, we felt welcomed."

Corrymeela has a number of traditional practices intended to extend a radical welcome. Part of the volunteers' preparation for every visiting group is to prepare a large, usually colourful, poster that states "Welcome" and the group's name, which is then fixed to the front door for their arrival (Personal Observations 2009; 2017-2018). On departure, the group's assigned volunteers wave the bus off from Corrymeela Centre's main car park and then run to the edge of the cliff which overlooks the road and cheer, whistle and wave to the bus until it is out of sight (Personal observations 2009; 2017-2018). When a group's programme begins, the duty manager for the site - known as the 'Cover person' - attends to deliver what is habitually referred to as 'the Cover speech' (Personal Observations 2009, 2017-2018; Hutchinson 2019: 13). The speech includes information on general housekeeping, such as smoking areas and fire alarm routines, but also incorporates a section on welcome and trust. It is emphasised that everyone is welcome at Corrymeela: they can feel at home at the Centre and may help themselves to tea and biscuits (the Northern Irish hospitality staple). Groups are reminded that there are other people on site who may be different to them and everyone should be respected (*ibid.*). Participants are encouraged to mix with other groups, volunteers and staff, especially at mealtimes.

Within the 'Cover speech', the duty manager also explains that there is a policy of trust at Corrymeela, which is realised in two main ways. First, visitors are trusted to strip and remake

their beds with fresh linen at the end of their stay. “Bed rolls” containing fresh sheets, covers and pillow slips are provided to groups on the day of their departure. Second, bedroom doors cannot be locked at the Corrymeela Centre (except from the inside), so when visitors are participating in programme activities, their rooms remain unlocked. Thus, people are requested to be respectful of one another’s space and exercise trust of one another when leaving their rooms. The policy is one which jars with many visitors and it has not been without issue (there have been instances of theft on site in which people have had valuables stolen from their rooms (Interview: Lucas Green 7/4/2019)). The overall intention and effect of this introductory speech, however, is to highlight that Corrymeela is a place different to that which visitors are accustomed, and that welcome, hospitality, trust and respect are core concepts and practices in the Community. The fact that these messages are hidden amongst more banal information on fire alarms and mealtimes has the effect of framing trust and welcome in parallel to other, more normalised, daily practices (Personal Observations 2016, 2017).

An examination of mealtimes at the Centre provides further evidence of how Corrymeela uses tradition and ritual to create relationships and encourage transformation. Meals are prepared at Corrymeela by the kitchen staff and Corrymeela volunteers, then served canteen-style from a hatch to the dining room (see Figure 1 below, which shows the dining area in the Main House at the Ballycastle Centre).

Figure 1: The dining hall at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre

The dining hall is set up in tables of six, and there is an unofficial policy encouraging staff and volunteers to sit with different groups as a means of promoting interactions (Personal Observations 2009, 2017, 2018; Martin 2017). There were various examples of bridging capital being initiated by inter-group mixing during mealtimes. I established many relationships from sitting with strangers and getting to know them over a meal. In one instance, I made connections with a visiting Rabbi from Israel, resulting in a free lift to Dublin and an invite to visit his peace centre if I was ever in Jerusalem. This type of interaction was commonplace. Martha Martin encouraged her participants to mix with people they didn't know and observed that a number of them blended well with the other groups present onsite (Martin 2017). On the power of this tradition, she stated:

> "That's the pattern at Corrymeela – volunteers and participants are encouraged to mix themselves up, meet new people, and engage in conversations with folks they haven't met. Some of my most meaningful encounters at Corrymeela have occurred over mealtimes. We tell our stories, share our experiences, and make new friends" (*ibid.*)

Community Member Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/2017) recalled a political conference that she had supported at the Centre. She described how the dining hall was extremely busy and there were few seats left. Party members from the DUP and Sinn Féin were present at the conference and a number of their group were resistant to sitting together over lunch. Katherine told me:

> "I think it was quiche we were having for lunch, and the two people didn't want to sit beside each other. And I said "look if you want to have lunch, you're gonna have to sit!" And so we got Sinn Féin and DUP to sit at the same table, just because of quiche!" (*ibid.*)

Once everyone is seated for a meal, a member of the Community stands and taps a metal Tibetan singing bowl, which rings out a long high note as a signal for people's attention (Personal Observations 2009, 2017-8). The Community Member then states:

> "We have a tradition here at Corrymeela, where we take a moment of silence to give thanks for the food and the hands that prepared it in our own way. Let's do that now." (Personal Observations 2017-8; Hutchinson 2019: 7; Interview: Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018).

This statement is purposefully broad to include people of different faiths and none (Interview: Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018). The dining hall then falls quiet as people give thanks. Individuals tend to bow their heads and clasp their hands as if praying, some close their eyes, and some participants – unfamiliar with the tradition – keep their eyes open and look around, apparently puzzled. Chambers and Kopstein (2001: 139) observe that reciprocity involves the recognition of others as equals who deserve respect, even when there is an ideological opposition. The moment of silence promotes this norm, encouraging visitors to acknowledge difference in the room but be respectful of different traditions. During my research visits, I observed Jerry

Barnett raised both arms up above his head during the moment of silence. He explained the reasons behind this, which relates to Chamber and Kopstein's (*ibid.*) concept:

> "For me the moment of silence is first of all an interfaith space, because a moment of silence is inclusive, it doesn't matter what your faith is or non-faith or whatever, you can give thanks in a way that also doesn't then intrude in other people's…this is a moment of worship and thankfulness for me and so I am going to raise my hands and be even more deliberate, for myself, in a way which again isn't intruding on other people... For me it's very important to have that, allow other people, even in silence to have their individuality. Sometimes you're forging a way, giving people permission to do that, and that's really important to me because then it already says: there are different ways of expressing, even in silence" (Interview: Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018).

Jerry described the moment of silence as a process of subverting dominant norms and assumptions, contributing again to Corrymeela's construction of liminal space. On creating new relationships, Hutchinson (2019: 7) notes that this moment also offers another opportunity for Corrymeela to remind people that they are connected to strangers, those who "grew, picked, cleaned, (and) packed" the food".

Following the moment of silence, the Community Member (who has sounded the Tibetan singing bowl) asks for volunteers to wash the dishes. This has been a tradition at Corrymeela since its establishment and is an intentional way of encouraging people from different backgrounds to mix (usually one person per table is selected, which tends to ensure a mixed group). The dishwashing rule also acted to emphasise the importance of reciprocity. I observed a number of teachers reminding their school groups of the 'pay it forward' mentality, stating to their children "the other group did it yesterday so today is our turn". Acheson *et al*. (2012: 24) writes that trust is develops from "face-to-face interactions", and the more frequent the interactions, the higher the level of trust. Jerry Barnett (Interview: 29/1/2018) describes the practice of washing dishes together as "the soft place where you begin to go to chat away, not knowing who the other person is". When asked to provide an example of Corrymeela's most

successful work in terms of trust- and relationship-building, Jerry recalled the engagement of two visiting groups who were washing dishes together:

> "I remember a group of ex-combatants, who were here, very rough round the edges, lots of issues, lovely guys. And then we also had an LGBT+ group. And they weren't doing any work together, but just to see the connection, while doing dishes together, for two groups which would not have met in any way shape or form outside of Corrymeela. It was just actually lovely, in terms of just gently breaking down some barriers. I don't think it was deliberate, it was probably more serendipity." (*ibid.*)

One of my research trips coincided with the presence of these two groups at Corrymeela and I too observed the apparent 'breaking down' of barriers. In particular, the LGBT+ group included a transgender woman, and the space provided by doing dishes together allowed not only the ex-combatant group, but many volunteers, Members and staff to interact positively with this individual (Personal Observations 2017), for whom there is significant stigma associated with her identity (Walch *et al*. 2012: 2584-6). Research provides that "interpersonal contact with sexual minorities is associated with lower sexual stigma and prejudice", and contact such as that facilitated by Corrymeela can lead to reductions in transphobia, prejudice and a general improvement in relationships (see, for example: Collier *et* al. 2012; Cramwinckel *et al*. 2018; Walch *et al.* 2012). I would suggest that the opportunities for such positive engagement in Northern Ireland, outside of interactions engineered specifically for the primary purpose of enabling contact, are rare.

Generalised trust can arise from positive interactions between groups who do not associate regularly or at all. Interactions such as those described above are illustrative of Corrymeela's success in facilitating the development of generalised trust between strangers. In wider terms, Corrymeela's mealtime traditions build the notion of shared community, which supports the development of generalised trust and reciprocity between groups from different identity backgrounds (Putnam 2000: 21,136; Rahn and Transue 1998: 545). These practices are a consistent part of Corrymeela's daily activities, which have systematically brought together groups of difference over a shared task in a safe space. Hutchinson (2019: 8) observed that this tradition introduces something that is different, but because of the frequency of meal times,

participants quickly come to know what to expect. I observed many times groups looking lost and bewildered on their first meal at the Centre, but by the third or fourth they were happily working with people they had just met to serve food, eat together and clear tables (Personal Observations 2009, 2016-18). I observed – and was part of – the dishwashing efforts of many different group combinations during my field research at Corrymeela and witnessed the connections made. Dishwashing, a simple and everyday activity, successfully exposed sameness between groups who had never met before, and therefore developed their expectations of reciprocity by allowing them to learn it was safe – in this environment - to expect benefits from strangers and equally to offer something in return. As noted by Kapur and Campbell (2004: 109), following civil conflict, it is essential that trust in reciprocal processes is restored for peace to be embedded. Even where these groups did not differ in ethnicity, normalising the process of engaging positively with strangers has value in constructing a wider culture of acceptance and normalising generalised trust and reciprocity between groups.

Events of national and cultural importance are celebrated at the Centre, which has the effect of normalising difference and providing an opportunity to engage constructively with strangers. Cultural celebrations are recognised depending on the nationalities making up the volunteer team (during my time as a volunteer at Corrymeela, I was stopped at Belfast airport the day before Burns Night to be questioned on why I was transporting 22 haggises in my checked luggage and had to explain the tradition). The Centre has also held a Seder feast to celebrate the Passover ('Craic from the Centre' email sent to members from the Corrymeela Community, 28th April 2017) and there is a Thanksgiving feast each year. In more recent years, many volunteers have taken part in Ramadan in support and solidarity with Muslim members of the volunteer team (Personal Observations 2016, 2017). Individuals routinely highlighted cultural or religious events at the moment of silence at mealtimes and I observed a number of group participants asking volunteers or other participants questions about their cultural identities (Personal Observations 2016-8). This process of engaging, listening and learning allows the identification of sameness and therefore creates expectations of generalised reciprocity with people of difference. By institutionalising traditional celebrations of one's own and other cultures, Corrymeela diminishes "us and them" distinctions and emphasises notions of sameness.

There was also an institutionalised process of engagement with difference within the 'Lived-in' Community at the Ballycastle Centre. Corrymeela's (2017: 2) prayer guide states "(w)e are active in seeking out those whose life tells a different story, to meet, learn, apologise, change, love and live well together" and this approach was practiced by many volunteers, Members and participants. Interviewees were asked about the type of people they encountered at Corrymeela and a large majority confirmed they would never have engaged with some of the people they met at the Centre if it had not been for Corrymeela (Interviews: Connie Terrell 7/10/2017; Jess Williams 27/1/2018; Jimmy Palmer 7/10/2017; Correspondence with Lucas Green 7/4/2019; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018). A number of respondents commented on the social opportunities Corrymeela provided them. Lucas Green, a long-term volunteer in 2012-13, stated: "the biggest thing I learnt at Corrymeela was social skills, I could talk to many people, many strangers, and this skill certainly carried on to my current profession" (Interview: Lucas Green 7/4/2019). This was echoed by Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017), a long-term volunteer during the early 1990s who recalled "I certainly learned a lot during that volunteer year about living with people, living with people of difference, different opinions, the way of life I suppose, in terms of that way of being". Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) described Coventry House as an "interface…for cultivating good reflection about yourself" and commended its diversity, stating you would not experience that anywhere else in Northern Ireland. Stevie Ettenberg, a long-term volunteer in 2012, provided a striking statement in relation to the influence of Corrymeela on his social capital:

> "The centre was a huge stepping stone for me. I changed a lot while I was there. Deep down I always felt I never belonged in [my town]. I was not like the other people. Was not a Loyalist or a hate filled Protestant. My thoughts were always questions of why? And what the hell is this. I meet a few lovely Canadians at the centre since meeting and walking with these people I decided I wanted to move to Canada…I was the only thing (holding) me back was my self-belief. The centre and the people I met there awoke my deep down confidence…it truly changed my life pal. It made me believe in myself and woke me up to global issues. Anything is possible: to create opportunities, not to wait on them, how to network…" *(sic.)* (Email communication with Stevie Ettenberg 08/04/2019).

Shortly after leaving Corrymeela, Stevie applied for a visa to Canada and now lives and works in Vancouver, where he is married to a Canadian woman. The employment prospects and opportunities to network with people of difference in his home town were extremely limited. Corrymeela's bringing together of people from different communities, to both a physical and ideological space, facilitated bridging social capital that supported Stevie to secure positive outcomes which would otherwise not have been available to him (*ibid*.).

In many instances the exposure of shared norms and notions of reciprocity were not overt in Corrymeela's programme content, but they informed the approach. Mothers' groups who came together from either side of the ethnic divide in North Belfast, focused on their shared identity as mothers and discovered that they faced similar challenges and had comparable experiences (Interview: Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Sylvia McKinney 29/1/2018; Personal Observations 2009). Relationships were built over cups of tea while the Corrymeela volunteers organised outdoor activities for their children. Commonalities were then subtly exposed through respite activities (women shared their stories as they were given a hand massage by the programme workers, for example). At no point during the programme did the facilitator explicitly discuss ideas of "us and them" or Davey's core principle of "we are all the same" (Interview: Lyle Newton 12/10/2017). Yet, by the close of the programme, many women had made strong bonds and would name their newly discovered sameness (in their own terms) during programme evaluation (Corrymeela Programme Evaluations 2016-8). Research by Byrne *et al*. (2009: 347) also noted the peacebuilding opportunities afforded by the elucidation of sameness within and between women's groups, with a Group leader from Derry/Londonderry describing a women's programme as follows:

> "Protestant communities who came together very suspicious of each other, and came with all their baggage about their troubles. By the end of the year-long programme, or it might actually have been shorter, they were women who went on trips together and were friends and they talked about their traumas and kind of cried together, and laughed together".

The opportunities for networks of generalised reciprocity and trust to be built are evident in the daily practice of engaging with difference at Corrymeela. Liminality involves the renegotiation of existing power structures and a questioning, if not abandonment, of the status quo. Corrymeela employs a number of practices and traditions that are subversive and challenge what is considered 'normal'. The strangeness of Corrymeela is part of what allows the construction of a liminal space, by allowing unfamiliar acts, which subvert dominant discourses, to become more familiar. Processes that encourage engagement with difference are peppered amongst normal acts, such as eating and cleaning. Volunteerism, internationalism and ecumenism were institutionalised at Corrymeela by Ray Davey, but are alien to Northern Ireland's cultural status quos (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017). These processes encourage relationship formation with strangers. Unfamiliar cultural rituals and traditions that bring people together allow these processes to be enjoyed and further encourage engagement.

The contagion effect

Another way in which Corrymeela's informal activities have contributed to productive social capital is the spread of new ideas amongst networks of people who meet at Corrymeela and remain connected by its networks. This section examines empirical examples of this process, termed 'the contagion effect' because it entails the taking and spreading of new ideas. This effect was described by Love (1995: 55) as the "knock on' effect" whereby, following a positive experience of contact with "the Other", it can be assumed that an individual is more likely to promote positive change within their own community by, for example, setting up a youth group or other type of association. This change in attitude can be perceived as a result of positive contact and can spread within local communities, where other individuals ascribe to this mode of "new thinking", and new networks of support are created (*ibid*.). Such practical changes potentially foster greater possibilities of positive attitudes towards different community ethnicities within the neighbourhood (Interview: youth groups at Corrymeela from Ballymurphy, Turf Lodge Shankill, Newry, Ballymena, Londonderry, Lucan and Cork 1988/89 cf. Love 1995: 55). This form of social change suggests that bonding social capital may also play a part in promoting bridging capital and developing productive inter-community relationships.

Corrymeela is explicit about its intention to extend its culture and ideas beyond the Community. A sign above the exit in the Main House at the Ballycastle Centre states "Corrymeela begins when you leave" (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Sign above the main entrance to the Main House at the Ballycastle Centre

The message is a reminder for visitors to take what they have learned about reconciliation and apply it in their own communities (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Lucas Green 7/4/2019). Ellen Puckett (Interview: 7/10/2017) described the effect as follows:

> "…our hope when the volunteers leave is that they take that with them whatever it is that they have absorbed about here, whatever that is for them, they take that out…. And that the people who come to us also go out and do whatever it is they've learned about themselves, others, their relationships, whatever they've learned about living well together."

A number of Members talked about how they had used their learning from Corrymeela and applied it in their own lives (Interviews: Anthony McClain 11/10/2017; Benny Ray 8/10/2017;

Charlie Jeffrey 7/10/2017; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017). Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017), who worked as a police officer, said that his experience at Corrymeela "definitely influences the way that I approach situations, influences the way I try and deal with that conflict breaking it down, taking space to examine what's behind it or what's around it, and also about trying to be real with people, trying to be human with people". Joshua Cameron (Interview: 30/1/2018), who works in Northern Irish politics, explained that for him, this message was a reminder that "you're not just there to get away from things, you're there to get refreshed for something different". Similarly, Stevens (2008: 8) described Corrymeela in this way as "an energiser for change in church and society".

There were a number of examples of how Corrymeela's norms and associated practice had been spread by Members. Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/2017) worked as a programme manager for a Cancer charity in Belfast. I interviewed Katherine in her Belfast office and commented on the space as being similar to Corrymeela (see Figure 3 below). She confirmed that this was intentional, and talked about her use of space and language as originating from her experience at Corrymeela:

> "…the environment is colourful, it's like an oasis in the city. I would have said similar things about Corrymeela: you know, it was like an oasis to come away to…the base of the round tower being a sanctuary for people to come to. I think the language that I've acquired has come from being at Corrymeela, because I wouldn't have got it from a textbook I don't think" (*ibid.*).

Figure 3: Katherine Bryan's office space in Belfast, with a view to the courtyard she also uses in her work.

Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) believed that Corrymeela encouraged its Members, volunteers and participants to make brave decisions about who they would have relationships with, the type of work they would engage in and the values that were important to them. He contended that there were a number of community organisations, with lifespans of between five and 25 years, which had been established at Corrymeela (*ibid.*). A number of Members recognised that Corrymeela's influence was widespread but that the Community's propensity to carry out its work quietly meant it had not been proportionally attributed with its achievements (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Michele Tyson 31/1/2018). Largescale, well-recognised cross-community initiatives, such as the establishment of Lagan College and Mill Strand Primary School (Northern Ireland's first integrated high school and first integrated Primary in the Triangle area), and Tides Training (a well-established PRO) are all accredited as emerging directly from Corrymeela (Interviews: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Ted Glenn 31/1/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). While there are some observable links between these organisations and Corrymeela, none publicly acknowledge Corrymeela in their background information (Lagan College n.d.; Mill Strand IPS n.d.); Tides Training 2016). The origins of the Alliance Party (Northern Ireland's most moderate and centrist political party) originally as the New Ulster Movement, also has its origins at Corrymeela (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Leonard 2012), but again the links are difficult to attribute and not advertised by the Alliance. Less well-known are the origins of the Peace People and, separately, the Cross Group, who were initially hosted

at Corrymeela prior to becoming formalised movements (Personal correspondence with Max Benson 06/11/17).

A number of Members were also involved in other high-level peacebuilding work across Northern Ireland, yet did not advertise their Corrymeela involvement. A former employee of MNI, described how it took him years to realise that Brendan McAllister and Joe Campbell (MNI's director and assistant director respectively) were, in fact, Corrymeela Members (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017). Benny Ray contended that Corrymeela's influence could be observed by identifying the "key sectors in Northern Irish society" related to peacebuilding and observing that there were Community Members in every sector (*ibid.*). This was echoed by other respondents, who suggested that tracing Corrymeela volunteers would clearly evidence the contagion effect of Corrymeela's message across multiple sectors (Interviews: Katherine Bryan 9/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017).

Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) and Benny Ray (Personal correspondence: 30/12/2019) felt the Community had harmed itself by not being better at recording and advertising the contagion effect as an organisational success. Benny (*ibid.*) stated:

> "Corrymeela was a lab to try out ideas (or to make up in a response or panic to the unusual situation)
> These ideas were then further road-tested in other contexts
> Those external contacts and contexts did not come with footnotes describing the origins (or the evolving process) of the practice
> Therefore lots of practice that became famous did not have a Corrymeela patent
> Also, some of it evolved beyond recognition of the original idea" (*sic.*)

While its effectiveness was not fully recorded, there is significant value in fostering ideas of peace and reconciliation in different sectors of Northern Ireland, particularly if these ideas are "absorbed into the dominant blocs and adapted by the major players" (McQuaid 2012: 72). This concept is also touched upon by McCreary (1975: 67) who described the young volunteers who spent time at Corrymeela and went on to become youth and community workers around

Northern Ireland as "(o)ne by-product of inestimable significance". Many of these individuals spent considerable periods of time at Corrymeela, some as long-term volunteers, resident at the Centre for a year or more. In one academic assessment of peacebuilding, Corrymeela is recognised as a "(seedbed) that will lend sustenance to a fuller scale public forum" (Smyth 2008: 77). The same concept is referred to by some in Corrymeela as "the pollen of peace" (Courtney 1974; Courtney cf. *Corrymeela Magazine* Spring 2008: 35; Interview: Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017), named after Corrymeela Member Roger Courtney's (1974) song of the same title, which was aimed to "move and encourage many people in their commitment to peace and hope" (Richardson, cf. *Corrymeela Magazine* Spring 2007). A number of the responses quoted in Love's (1995: 230-1) research also evidence this notion with respondents providing that: "Corrymeela hopes to help change people who in turn can share in the changing of attitudes and structures in churches/school/community/home"; and Corrymeela helped "(t)o enable staff and Members to work with and for others in their local areas or in their work places so that they can spread the reality of people of different religious denominations and political affiliations living and working together in peace and with respect for each other". The extension of Corrymeela's discourses on openness, acceptance and human encounter is thus an impactful component of its peacebuilding practice. While the contagion effect of Corrymeela has not been formally recorded, many interviewees referred to this influence as important in Corrymeela's peacebuilding experience.

Conclusion

A body of evidence exists to suggest that Corrymeela had a significant and positive impact upon the peace process through its informal activities. Within the literature on social capital, it is recognised that third sector organisations can provide the necessary structures and safeguards that remove the risks of engagement with the 'Other' and emphasise the shared interest of different groups, thus offering an environment in which generalised trust develops (Anheier and Kendall 2002: 350). Corrymeela's facilitation of trust- and relationship-building has involved constructing a liminal space, embedding peace behaviours at the Ballycastle Centre and creating a contagion effect of ideas across various groups and professional sectors in Northern Ireland.

Everyday processes, such as eating together, giving thanks for the food and celebrating welcome and goodbye serve to consolidate ideas about acceptance of cultural difference and human sameness. Many people who would not have otherwise met have encountered one another at Corrymeela, and this engagement has facilitated the deconstruction of extant community barriers not only between Protestant and Catholic communities but groups of different ages, sexualities, genders, religions, ideologies and nationalities.

Corrymeela normalises the process of accruing bridging capital in a society that discourages engagement with difference. Attitudes acquired at the Centre are continued in Corrymeela's Members' and participants' relationships and approach to their home communities and work life. Networks of relationships have been established and nurtured at Corrymeela that intersect different communities and professional sectors.

These informal practices have remained an unchanged part of Corrymeela's approach for decades, taking place in parallel to its formal programmes. This process of facilitating bridging social capital continues in the post-Agreement period, and Corrymeela still contributes meaningfully to the peace process in this way. There is, however, a fine line between everyday social interaction and the type of peacebuilding practiced by Corrymeela (Love 1995: 53). Consequently, many of Corrymeela's most transformative practices are undocumented and remain unacknowledged. A major challenge of this localised approach is that the process and effects of creating a liminal space, embedding a culture of peace and encouraging human connection have no measurable meaning for its funders. The next chapter examines this and other tensions that impact upon Corrymeela's experience.

Chapter Eight: "Hippies on the Hill": the challenges to Corrymeela's informal practices

Introduction

This chapter examines the challenges experienced by Corrymeela in sustaining its informal practices that contribute to peacebuilding. The previous chapter concluded that many of the most meaningful transformations are believed to take place outside of the remit of Corrymeela's formal programmes, often not publicised or recognised fully. I have argued that funders provide financial grants to PROs based on the achievement of quantifiable outputs, and in recent years have increasingly dictated the desired and specific outcomes of grants. As many of Corrymeela's informal activities do not adhere to these conditions, they are considered largely irrelevant to funders. These practices therefore do not have a core funding source, are not recorded, and learning is lost. The first section of this chapter outlines the difficulties of quantifying and reporting Corrymeela's informal practices, and argues that this poses a significant challenge in terms of maintaining activities that encourage relationship-transformation and facilitate bridging social capital.

The second section of this chapter explores the challenges related to Corrymeela's norms of radical hospitality and the tensions resulting from welcoming all individuals and groups. First, Corrymeela has experienced challenges resulting from tension between its identity as an 'Open Village' and its operation as a functional NGO, with associated financial obligations. Second, theoretical literature contends that where social capital includes, it also excludes (Harriss and De Renzio 1997: 926; McIlwaine and Moser 2001: 967; Portes 2014: 18407; Waldinger 1995), and accordingly, in promoting the norms of trust, reciprocity, openness to difference and ecumenism, Corrymeela necessarily excludes certain groups. Corrymeela has experienced challenges engaging with groups that support contrasting norms, specifically those groups that express fundamentalist religious views that are sometimes hurtful or violent towards people outside of the in-group. This tension has impacted on the breadth of Corrymeela's impact as it has excluded some groups and individuals from developing relationships.

The final section discusses the challenges experienced by Corrymeela in the type of norms and transformational activities it promotes. Some groups have been excluded or have rejected engagement with Corrymeela due to its very alternative approach and/or its promotion of ecumenism. This section concludes that Corrymeela's 'strangeness' and specific approach alienates it from some funding sources and engagement with some groups and partnerships.

The unmeasurable work

"…you can never tell which particular bit affected who and how much, where" (Interview: Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018)

One of the main challenges facing Corrymeela's informal practices is that they are exactly that, notably *informal*. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to quantify the outcomes of these activities as proof of impact, which has become a core requirement of international and governmental funding (Interviews: Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018). For successful applications, funders increasingly demand the achievement of pre-determined outcomes, some of which are based on numbers of participants reached and the majority of which are to be achieved over short time periods (Interviews: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018; Personal Observations 2009; 2016-7; Morrow *et al*. 2018). Corrymeela's informal activities do not adhere to this structural conditioning and are therefore not funded, or likely to attract investment, and they require to secure funding from different sources. This section begins with an analysis of the reasons Corrymeela's informal activities defy a straightforward or quantifiable analysis, and explains why this has resulted in challenges in relation to securing funding for these practices.

Corrymeela's understanding of reconciliation relies on a fluid approach that allows for the unexpected and serendipitous (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/2017; Derick Wilson 2006 Interview cf. McCreary 2007: 99). Isolating the specific cause and effect of Corrymeela's practices is difficult and is not the focus of its facilitators (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017). Corrymeela understands relationship transformation as a dynamic

process, which requires a process of trial and error in many of its programmes (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Max Benson 10/10/2017). Discussing this approach, Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) spoke of his experience as a facilitator at Corrymeela:

> "It's a good place to make mistakes, Corrymeela, I think that's counter-cultural. You're modelling learning. How do you learn? By getting it wrong the first ten times…So the messy stuff of Corrymeela I think is one of the gifts."

A number of Members who were experienced facilitators commented on this phenomenon, stating that the unexpected outcomes of Corrymeela programmes were often the most impactful and the source of greatest learning (Interviews: Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017). Nathan Reid (Interview: 11/10/2017) stated, "a lot of the most important things that happen are in spite of, or aside from, any programme" Isobel Ellis (Interview: 12/10/2017) echoed this view, stating:

> "…where the unexpected things happen, you can't set it up as a discussion. It happens between somebody at the dining room table, all round the place it's happening in a very intense way…We can have sessions and we can have a topic and we can have people breaking up into groups, but actually that's not where it happens. It's in the informal, totally unexpected encounters that happen here."

Katherine Bryan (Interview 9/10/2017) also provided examples:

> "I wasn't trained as a counsellor when I was at Corrymeela but I think, now having done the training, that's what we were offering. We were listening to people in the wee hours of the morning when nobody else was up. You'd be making toast and hot chocolate or whatever, and just listening to a mummy disclosing about sexual abuse or whatever had happened. You're given the tools to deal with that confidentiality, but I think you were a listening ear and you were holding them in some way."

Mistakes and unexpectedness are counter-cultural and, as there is a higher level of competition for fewer grants, a trial-and-error approach is considered risky (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Bisset 2019). The subjective and individualised nature of these practices do not adhere to the programme outcomes encouraged by funding conditions, which tend to demand quantitative and objective outputs. A number of respondents communicated that any attempt to evidence causality directly in Corrymeela's approaches and outcomes would prove difficult if not impossible, despite the organisation's successes (Interviews: Ashley Workman 11/10/2017; Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017). Joshua Cameron (Interview: 30/1/2018) explained the challenges inherent in establishing causality:

> "…it's very difficult to say the specific Corrymeela impact as opposed to Corrymeela being part of a general movement. There were things happening in society, different events happening, different people doing them in different places, and Corrymeela at one level perhaps brought some of those things together, and gave it a sort of face which encouraged the grassroots-type work. But it's very difficult to say "specific event X" at Corrymeela had difference "Y". Although I have no doubt that probably for a number of individuals, including me, it reinforced my feelings of the kind of society I wanted."

Ashley Workman (Interview: 11/10/2017) attributed this challenge to the difficulties of communicating Corrymeela's original purpose to 'outsiders', stating:

> "Ray's vision in the first place was to provide an open space, a village, where people could come, be safe, and experience whatever they experienced…It's very hard for people to grasp that until they've experienced it and that's why it's really, really hard to talk about Corrymeela in quantifiable terms".

This challenge has been consistent throughout Corrymeela's history. Isobel Ellis (Interview: 12/10/2017) had recently been examining some of Corrymeela's archival documents and told

me “all through that archive stuff there’s this constant theme: how do you tell people in the outside world what Corrymeela is about? This is a huge question.”

The recording mechanisms used for Corrymeela’s informal practices are also inconsistent with contemporary funding conditions. Many of Corrymeela’s informal successes are not recorded in writing but in the oral histories of its Members and participants. In his account of Corrymeela, McCreary (2007: 64) contended that Corrymeela’s main effects are demonstrated in the personal stories of its participants. Consistent with this, despite interviewing a number of current staff and Members, no one offered written documentation as evidence of Corrymeela’s work during my research. Rather, interviewees provided me with numerous stories of their own and others’ experiences. Similarly, Hutchinson (2019: 11), recalling a youth group which has visited Corrymeela on a residential trip, stated “(t)hey had learnt a lot, most of which they could not get down on an evaluation page”. Community Leader Pádraig Ó Tuama (Interview: 30/1/2018) stated:

> "Reconciliation hurts and you can’t justify that in a spreadsheet. If you were to put reconciliation on a spreadsheet, it wouldn’t add up. And yet when you put it into a story, people find the kind of life that they wouldn’t have expected."

On the discrepancy between the understanding of reconciliation encouraged by funders and the reality practiced at Corrymeela, Hutchinson (2019: 1) discusses a number of alternative empirical examples of ‘living reconciliation’ that occur at Corrymeela. The examples he provides include reciting the prayers of another religion (*ibid*.: 28), the aging Community Members who attend the Centre every week to tend the garden (*ibid*.: 48), and the Community’s reaction to an outbreak of scabies amongst members of the ‘Lived-in’ Community (*ibid*.: 58-61). He concludes, repeatedly, that “(e)very moment of our lives has the potential for a reconciliation” (*ibid*.: 90). Ashley Workman (Interview: 11/10/2017) also argued for the value of storytelling to demonstrate success and offered an alternative image of effective reconciliation:

> "If you're talking about quantifiable, I can think of one particular person who was in there during the Troubles, whose house - the windows were broken and all sorts of things happened. She came to Corrymeela, and she found something. Some peace, some acceptance, some realisation that life doesn't have to be like that. And she is still coming to Corrymeela. She is still involved in her own place, in building peace, and…has been transformed, and has grown, you know. That's just one person. But I know that's hard…for reasons of data and percentages and whatever, but that's a living proof, that whatever she experienced at that time kept going, didn't just stop when she went back home."

Prior to the Agreement, storytelling was sometimes used to report outcomes to funders. Katherine Bryan (Interview: 9/10/2017) recalled the tactics of a staff member during the 1990s, who tried to capture Corrymeela's informal work in writing:

> "The fundraiser, Madeleine Donnelly I think her name was, she was always looking for vignettes. Wee stories that would just show the gemstones, or the gold that was inside and she was trying to sell that to a funder in a document and just trying to catch them in the first page and just kind of go: this is the kind of magic that this place offers."

Due to the shift towards 'strings attached' funding, the practice of reporting the "wee stories" has been discontinued (Interview: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Personal Observations 2016-7). Indeed, the highly bureaucratic, administrative processes of reporting funding outcomes precludes the opportunity to report anything more qualitative outside of the pre-determined objectives in most cases (Byrne 2011; Personal Observations 2016-7).

Another source of tension for Corrymeela results from the differences between its formal and informal outputs. Ó Tuama (2013: 36) acknowledged that staff meetings "start late in Corrymeela because they know that there are some conversations that can only take place in the dark, by firelight". This acknowledgement blurs the boundaries between Corrymeela's formal programme outputs (facilitated via its staff meetings) and informal activities (late night conversations by the fireplace) and does not reconcile the contradictory outputs. On this,

Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) made a distinction between the two "faces" of Corrymeela, which he called "the Corrymeela Community" and "Corrymeela PLC". He used "Corrymeela PLC" to describe the formal, registered NGO of Corrymeela, and "the Corrymeela Community" to describe the informal structure, network and practices that the Community embodied separately from its formal programmes. He argued that much of Corrymeela's most impactful work was conducted by "the Corrymeela Community", but that these successes could not be attributed to the NGO (*ibid*.). Benny contended that the outcomes of Corrymeela's formal programmes and informal practices were often incompatible:

> "Community Members say 'I remember family groups that really changed my life and changed the family's life'. Ok, that's not really what 'Corrymeela PLC' is about, but it is what *Corrymeela* is about. So, you keep getting different narratives as to what was a success and what was of benefit. And it's not one against the other except it sometimes is, because if you have had a genuine epiphany at a family week, then you want that for 'Corrymeela PLC'. And so that one week starts to become the benchmark by which 'Corrymeela PLC' can be measured against and I think that's unfair."

On the 'contagion effect' of Corrymeela, Benny also discussed that, despite having a widespread impact in establishing other organisations that offered opportunities to build bridging social capital, because this was a result of Corrymeela's informal practices, the successes were not attributed to Corrymeela:

> "You name all these different schools that were formed and all that. That's success, but it's not 'Corrymeela PLC' success. So, integrated schools, the Alliance Party… you can see a link, it's a nice piece of work, but not 'Corrymeela PLC'."

Programme worker Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018) also expressed concerns about the tensions between Corrymeela's formal and informal outputs, stating:

> "There is an intentionality in the culture of the place but sometimes it can get lost and sometimes I think in recent years and months we are so obsessed with logistics now that we are in danger of losing our flow. It would be a concern of mine. But, there's bits of Corrymeela I would love to tighten up on and be a bit more business-like, and there are other bits you need to be a bit more natural."

Liminality defies structure (Rumelili 2012: 495-6) and this goes some way to explaining why Corrymeela's operationalisation of a liminal space defies a neat analysis of outcomes as demanded by funders. Corrymeela's informal practices are locally-developed strategies that are sensitive to timing, context and group need. Its liminal approach embeds a dynamic, ever-changing process that continually adjusts to allow for the exploration of new "ways of being" (Mälksoo 2012: 485) and this approach promotes the building of trust, relationships and shared norms. Roberts (2011: 411) argues that the liberal peace - the basis of conditional funding in Northern Ireland - lacks the necessary dialogue mechanisms to allow peacebuilding approaches to be sufficiently inclusive, participatory and legitimate to local actors. Corrymeela has experienced increasing tensions in sustaining its informal practices as it has been hostage to the agenda of "liberal peace agents", in the form of the Irish and British governments, and their conditioned allocation of EU funds (MacGinty 2011: 203-4). While Corrymeela's institutional learning has proved, over decades of experimentation, that the facilitation of social capital is best effected by certain informal practices, this local knowledge is largely discounted by the liberal peace agenda. Corrymeela's local peacebuilding approach, its outcomes and how 'success' is recorded is completely at odds with the approach, output and recording mechanisms encouraged by funding bodies.

Until recently Corrymeela had been cushioned by its financial reserves, which had supported its informal activities to a certain degree (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Anita Hurley 2/2/2018). Following the depletion of this reserve between 2014 and 2019, a number of Members voiced concerns regarding the impact a lack of resources could have on Corrymeela's strategic direction and informal practices (Interview: Anita Hurley 2/2/2018; Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018). Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) articulated this concern in interview, stating "I think that in the last few years where we've lost our way…Part of what we've lost is the vision of it, and partly it is determined now by the fact that no funds

were available… at the moment we're not able to do mainstream *or* edgy work because we don't have the resource".

It remains to be seen whether Corrymeela will manage to sustain those informal activities that fall outside of the remit of formally-funded peacebuilding, or if it will increasingly become victim to "civil society engineering by the liberal peace powers" (MacGinty 2011: 206). Throughout its existence, Corrymeela's programme work and informal activities have operated in parallel, as mutually reinforcing and interconnected processes. Maintaining a liminal space that extends a radical hospitality to its visitors requires resources and Corrymeela's informal activities have certainly been impacted negatively by changes in the funding environment. Without its commitment to maintaining an 'Open Village' and associated practices, Corrymeela would take a very different form than intended by its founders and its facilitation of bridging social capital would likely be significantly curbed.

The tensions of a universal welcome

As outlined in the previous chapter, Corrymeela embeds the norms of radical hospitality and welcome as part of its process to support bridging social capital. Corrymeela has experienced two main challenges inherent in extending a universal welcome. The first relates to the tension between existing as an 'Open Village' that promotes radical hospitality, and operating as a functional NGO, for which bed and board have associated financial costs. The second challenge relates to Corrymeela's discourses that promote diversity and acceptance of difference, and the tensions inherent in welcoming groups that espouse fundamentalist or discriminatory norms. This section explores these challenges with use of examples from field research and the existing literature on Corrymeela.

Corrymeela is known as an international place of pilgrimage, especially among Christian groups, and this has meant the Centre sometimes plays host to unexpected, non-paying visitors. A number of visitors, including volunteers and Members, have expectations that they can receive bed and board for free at the Centre, regardless of the level of their volunteering input. Financial constraints have meant the extension of free board has been restricted in recent years

and this has limited the diversity of visitors to the Centre and affected the Community's capacity to facilitate bridging social capital.

Because of its discourse of universal welcome, saying no is a challenge for Corrymeela. Paul Hutchinson (2019: 52-3) provides an illustrative example, about welcoming a German man, Elijah, to the Ballycastle Centre. Elijah was on a "pilgrimage for peace" headed for Jerusalem and visiting peace centres as well as the Nazi Prisoner of War camps during his journey. Elijah emailed ahead of time but then arrived at the Centre unexpectedly. Hutchinson remembered:

> "I smiled and shook his…hand, welcomed him, and asked why he had not replied to my email. (We are hospitable at Corrymeela, but not push-overs. Generous but discerning. We welcome strangers fifty weeks of the year, but we try to do it with wisdom and boundaries.)…*Let's talk about how long you are staying. What about you stay until Monday?* To which Elijah replied: No. I think Tuesday" (*ibid*.).

I witnessed this type of interaction a number of times at Corrymeela. The tension between running as an operational NGO and acting as a Community of welcome meant there were often issues associated with individuals perceiving Corrymeela as a place to stay and visit for free (Personal Observations 2009, 2016-8). The scrutiny and tightening of Corrymeela's expenditure during the post-Agreement period meant resources could not be spared so readily for chance visitors. Access to the Community was therefore restricted to those who were financially capable or those groups who were deemed worthy of the concession. During one research visit, for example, a group of Jesuit priests on pilgrimage from the USA were warmly received and housed for free, but free stays for former volunteers were greatly limited during this period (Personal Observations 2016).

The expectation of free hospitality was not only the case for strangers to the Ballycastle Centre, but for Community Members and former volunteers too, who often arrived at the Centre unannounced, expecting the bed and board that they had been afforded in the past (I too would have been guilty of this for many years as a Community Member) (Personal Observations

2009; 2016-8). The culture around welcome was shifting during the post-Agreement period, and the Corrymeela Council had sent out a number of communications regarding bed lettings for Members and former volunteers ('Corrymeela Volunteering Meeting notes' 07/12/16). A new policy introduced to control the numbers of non-paying guests meant those who wished to attend had to be registered as "guests" of volunteers or staff already resident on site (Personal Observations 2016-8). This move necessarily limited the number and diversity of visitors to Corrymeela and correspondingly the opportunities for the development of bridging social capital.

The second tension inherent in promoting a universal welcome relates to the necessary exclusion of certain groups. As outlined, where social capital includes, it can also potentially exclude (Harris and De Renzio 1997: 926; McIlwaine and Moser 2001: 967; Portes 2014: 18407; Waldinger 1995). Field research provided that Corrymeela's promotion of trust, reciprocity, openness to difference and ecumenism necessarily excludes certain groups, primarily those who are committed to fundamentalist religious positions that can be discriminatory and/or hurtful towards people outside of their in-group. Regardless of the source of tension, the discrete elements of social capital, especially trust, are unlikely to develop where tense encounters over ideological differences inform individuals' perception of one another.

The 'Lived-in' Community was particularly sensitive to certain visiting groups' attitudes. I observed that homosexuality and religion, in particular, were divisive issues and there were (separate) conflicts on these issues between visiting groups and the Corrymeela volunteers during my research visits. During one visit, I joined a conversation between Zoe Hawkins and Anna O'Neill, a married couple from Canada, and a woman visiting from a church group who concluded the discussion on the women's marriage by stating "well, they do say love the sinner, hate the sin" (Personal observations 2017). Zoe and Anna were shaken by this encounter, mainly because they had not been prepared for it within "the safe space of Corrymeela" (Joint interview: Anna O'Neill and Zoe Hawkins 12/5/2018). Paul Hutchinson (2019: 24) recalls a comparable incident when he gave a tour to some visitors. A geologist, drafted in to support building work, had told Paul the earth beneath Corrymeela was 200 million years old. He

included this fact in his tour for the visitors, who immediately contested it, stating that the earth was created by God just 6000 years ago. They then asked:

> "Is this really a Christian Centre?
>
> When were you washed in the blood of Jesus?
>
> What church do you go to on Sunday?
>
> Do you think the Bible is <u>all</u> true?" (*ibid*, emphasis in original).

Paul continued the increasingly difficult tour thinking "I hope we can disagree well" (*ibid*.).

On another research visit, a member of a visiting group used anti-Islamic rhetoric during Worship, which upset several of the volunteers (Personal Observations 2017). The incident resulted in one volunteer confronting the person responsible and obvious tensions in the following days. Hutchinson (2019: 54) recalled another similar incident, again involving Elijah, the German man who arrived unexpectedly, who was keen to speak to someone of the Jewish faith during his visit:

> "Elijah… had heard there was someone from a Jewish heritage living at Corrymeela, and blurted out loudly: *Where is the Jew?* Causing both consternation and concern in the five-foot one female volunteer he had spoken to. Maybe it was the fact that Elijah was two feet taller than she was. Maybe it was his tone of voice. Anyway, she went and found Yael and told her the Teutonic tale. The Jew was not amused. Eventually Elijah met 'The Jew' and said*: Hello, can we talk about the Holocaust?* Yael paused, considered the request, and then said: *No.* And walked off without an explanation. There is no obligation for the only Jew at Corrymeela to listen to a German talking about the Holocaust" (*ibid*.).

Corrymeela's staff team were aware of the tensions inherent in welcoming groups with different beliefs and traditions into the Community (Interview: Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018;

Miriam Fields 31/1/2018), however the response to incidents was largely *ad hoc*. Episodes such as those described usually resulted in lively debate on the tension between Corrymeela being considered a place of welcome for "people of all religions and none" and as a safe place for the marginalised (Interview: Jerry Barnett 2017; Personal Observations 2016). Some volunteers and staff concluded, over a number of discussions, that the creation of a safe space conflicts with the simultaneous extension of a universal welcome (Personal observations 2016; Interview: Jerry Barnett 2018). For some groups, Corrymeela's management issued a 'warning' to the 'Lived-in' Community about the incoming faith traditions and only paired resilient volunteers with such groups (*ibid*.). In the post-Agreement period, considerations of risk was extended to decisions on volunteer recruitment. Miriam Fields (Interview: 31/1/2018) remembered that, in the mid-2010s, the selection committee had labelled one volunteer as "too Christian" and he had been placed on the reserve list as a result of their concerns about his Conservatism. Miriam had highlighted this was religious discrimination and he was eventually invited to the Community, notwithstanding continued concerns from some of the committee (*ibid*.).

Despite its best intentions, Corrymeela's promotion of norms of reciprocity between different groups has not included every group. While the Ballycastle Centre in particular promotes norms of welcome and radical hospitality, this cannot always extend to individuals or groups who advocate discriminatory discourses. There is the potential for discriminatory belief systems to be deconstructed by positive human encounters, however groups of difference must have a platform to express themselves, be listened to and interact in order for this process to take place. Only some of the Members and staff at Corrymeela are prepared to take risks to facilitate this platform at the Ballycastle Centre. Pádraig Ó Tuama's recent work facilitating encounters between members of faith and LGBT+ communities is important work in this context and should not be understated. Ellen Puckett (Interview: 7/10/2017) was another of the few Members who felt comfortable to embrace divisive views in Corrymeela. She explained:

> "Hospitality is not just the food, the space, it's also the mind. It's opening your mind and listening, to points of view actually make your hair stand on end. But listening to them and then, within the space that you provide, a safe space, you can then begin to

> seek understanding about this. "Tell me more about that? I want to understand where this is coming from? Can you explain that?" and through these open questions you begin to understand a bit more, and maybe change your own a little bit. And maybe they, as well, in the mutual sort of opening up, all of us kind of go "oh right, there's some understanding there."

The exclusion of some groups necessarily limits the extent to which bridging social capital is developed between certain communities. Research suggests Northern Ireland's population is becoming less tolerant towards racial difference (Doebler *et al*. 2017: 10, 14; Knox 2011; Savaric 2014; McGrellis 2010: 766; McKee 2015) and in the context of a widespread shift towards populism in the UK and Ireland, positive contact between groups from different backgrounds is crucial. Decisions regarding which groups are welcome at Corrymeela continue to be made on an *ad hoc* basis (Interview: Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018), thus while the opportunity to build bridging social capital between ideologically-opposed communities does take place at Corrymeela, it is only in carefully planned circumstances and subject to various limitations. In some instances, disturbing interactions between ideologically opposed groups have precluded the building of social capital between volunteers, Members and/or group participants.

Alienation factors

The final challenge in relation to Corrymeela's informal activities is that elements of its identity as a Community can serve to alienate certain individuals and groups and prevent them from engaging. One significant limit to this research was in identifying people who chose not to engage with Corrymeela. Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017) recognised that there must exist "a percentage of people who were there, like 'hi it was grand there, kind of been there, done that' and then just move on". In a general sense then, Corrymeela's capacity to facilitate social capital is limited by those who choose not to engage or do not have the opportunity to do so. However, field research also suggested Corrymeela's alternative practices and faith-based approach to peacebuilding served to alienate certain groups and communities.

Corrymeela uses a number of approaches and activities that are considered unusual (Interviews: Lucas Green 7/4/2019; Stevie Ettenberg 30/9/2018). The Community's facilitation of social capital is operationalised through a number of practices that require an initial acceptance of difference, and some individuals are not willing to make the commitment necessary to engage. Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) described this as the "strangeness" and "otherness" of the Community that jars with visitors. If the strangeness is not adequately explained, understood and overcome, then the opportunities to accrue productive capital can be lost.

The disconnect between Corrymeela and the nearby town of Ballycastle, less than two miles away, provided an example of this barrier. In the post-Agreement period, people in the town continued to refer to Corrymeela as the "hippies on the hill" and little was known about the Community in Ballycastle, other than that it was a source of people from Belfast and international volunteers (Interview: Connie Terrell 7/10/2017). Similarly, Hutchinson (2019: 12) talked of his experience with a group who he felt were alienated by Corrymeela's alternative culture. Reflecting on the use of the Tibetan singing bowl he wrote:

> "When it's a group of hard-nosed, fast-working business leaders who are at the Centre for a training day, and who don't want any reference outside of their own economic paradigm. The Tibetan-bowl sound is for them the sound of pension-free activists, hippies, do-gooders, lefties, pie-in- the-sky arty-types. This sound is not of the real world, their real spread-sheet, finance-driven, target-laden world" (*ibid.*).

A number of Members and volunteers also provided examples of practices at Corrymeela that they did not understand and could not engage with. Anthony McClain (Interview: 11/10/2017) spoke about a workshop during his time as a volunteer in the 1990s where he and other volunteers felt like they were being "brainwashed" by Corrymeela's senior staff. He explained that they were led in a session by Lyle Newton, programme worker at that time:

"we all felt like we were being totally corrupted…(Lyle) said: 'if somebody gets upset when they're talking, about whatever it is they're talking about, if they want to be hugged or they want to be touched or they want to be held, then they need to provoke that invitation, so they put out their hand, or they ask to be hugged', but that we shouldn't, as others in the room - and it's totally right - shouldn't put our hand on them, shouldn't try and comfort them in any way unless they ask for that comfort. He said it a bit more flowery than that obviously. But we were all just like 'that's just nuts'…So I remember we came out that meeting, and we were just all 'this is fucking nuts' (*ibid*.).

Some of Corrymeela's informal practices are based on quite complex ideas and if these are not adequately explained, participants do not engage and productive social capital is not facilitated. A number of volunteers in the post-Agreement period had issues with Corrymeela's commitment to hospitality. Corrymeela describes hospitality as a holistic process of welcoming individuals into the space and hearing their stories as a means of exposing sameness and building trust (Interviews: Ellen Puckett 7/10/2017; Jerry Barnett 29/1/2018). Part of Corrymeela's hospitality is also about ensuring rooms are clean, the facility is ready, and there is the offer of tea and biscuits on groups' arrival, so that visitors may feel at home, comfortable and secure (Interviews: Benny Ray 8/10/2017; Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017). The link between housekeeping and hospitality is sometimes not adequately explained and a number of volunteers in the post-Agreement period have been reluctant to commit to cooking and cleaning duties, which is a regular part of the long-term volunteer rota. Lyle Newton and Isobel Ellis discussed this tension in interview:

Lyle: "…there was an American girl, she wanted to change the world really and she thought she was coming to a centre where she would actually be doing the facilitation of the paramilitaries, and when she discovered that she was pushing a trolley and supporting members of staff or whoever to do it…

Isobel: The place is strewn with them actually Kirsty, when [hospitality and peacebuilding] they're the same" (Joint interview: Isobel Ellis and Lyle Newton 12/10/2017).

Benny Ray (Interview: 8/10/2017) also commented on this issue, stating: "people, volunteers, staff, come and are like 'why do I have to do this? I wanted to work with people': Get the bed ready, that's working with people."

I observed that some international volunteers, whose cultures assigned domestic duties to lower socioeconomic classes, took particular issue with these tasks (Personal observations 2016-18). In some instances, this resulted in rooms being poorly cleaned, not prepared for guests' arrival, and participants then complaining and/or being moved rooms. Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018) commented on how some practices intended to promote hospitality had been appropriated by staff and volunteers at Ballycastle who did not understand or engage in the concept:

> "…there's some aspects where we are incongruent. So we say have a trust policy but we lock the bedroom after they're cleaned and then sometimes forget to unlock them when a group arrives and then ten minutes later tell them we have a trust policy and that's why we don't have keys. We now have laundry guardians that sit at the bottom of corridors, handing out, and collecting in dirty and fresh linen, because again we have a trust policy but we don't. So there's a couple of wee areas where we've drifted from our stated values. I've brought it up numerous times and don't really get anywhere with it."

Corrymeela commitment to model certain norms, including that of trust and reciprocity, is discredited to some extent by confusion and poor engagement around their meaning and operationalisation. If groups arrive to unclean bedrooms or sullen volunteers, unhappy in their duties, the baseline for their engagement with others is compromised and the opportunities to accrue productive social capital can be affected negatively.

Corrymeela's faith-based approach has been a second source of alienation. Religion is divisive in Northern Ireland (Brewer and Higgins 1997: 12; Love 1995: 25; Mitchell 2006; Whyte 1990: 51, 104) and for some, Corrymeela's Christian ecumenism has prevented them from engaging

with the Community. Joshua Cameron (Interview: 30/1/2018) recognised that "no doubt there are some people who are confirmed atheists who are put off because it is a Christian organisation". Jess Williams (Interview: 27/1/2018) similarly observed that:

> "Corrymeela is a Christian community and many people wouldn't come because it is a Christian community. I would know quite a lot of people who felt kind of forced to go to worship...and I know it isn't meant that way but if you really don't believe or you don't want to show your belief within the group you're going there with, it's a tricky one - and society is simply developing in a different direction."

Jess told me that several years before she began as a staff member, there was a different employment opportunity at Corrymeela but she had not applied because she felt she was not "Christian enough" for the Community (*ibid.*). She was conscious of its reputation as Christian centre, despite its ecumenical leanings, and stated "I recognise more and more with people when I speak with them and say "I am a Corrymeela Community Member" then I always feel the need to say "but I am actually not a Christian". Hutchinson (2019: 8) recounted a discussion he had with an international volunteer who stated to him that the symbols and rituals at Corrymeela had no meaning for her because, as an atheist, she could not disconnect them from religion: "(t)his is the problem with rituals: If they are empty for you, they are empty, no matter how meaningful they are for others."

Conversely, Corrymeela is not considered religious enough by some. April Geddes (Interview: 29/1/2018) stated that she had spoken with some visitors from Evangelical traditions who described Corrymeela as "very confusing, because evangelicals come here…and they go: "this isn't Christian…*at all*!". Corrymeela's links with the Christian Churches in Northern Ireland has varied. Former Community leader John Morrow, interviewed by McCreary (2007: 92) stated that the "the Church at large does not accept our theology" and several Members recognised the difficult relationship between Corrymeela and the Churches in Northern Ireland (Interviews: Andrew Bruce 21/4/2017; Joshua Cameron 30/1/2018; Lyle Newton 12/10/2017; Nathan Reid 11/10/2017).

Alec Lloyd (Interview: 31/1/2018) commented over recent years he had observed that the Corrymeela volunteers with the most faith had tended to be Muslim and he highlighted the irony of this. He further commented that life within Coventry House, the volunteers' residence, was inconsistent with the Community's Christian approach, stating "it became a bit of a frat house, you know: all the drinking, a lot of weed being smoked, a lot of casual sex…is that what we are trying to do?" (Interview: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018). On this, Miriam Fields (in a joint Interview with Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018) stated:

> "If we aren't about spiritual formation in a traditional Christian sense, shouldn't an experience at Corrymeela be formative in a broader spiritual context. So shouldn't we be trying to challenge people to deepen their relationship, with the world and with each other, and to really ground themselves during their time at Corrymeela? And gain deeper spiritual insights and that Spiritual with a capital S kind of way. And instead, we seem to provide them with an atmosphere where they can black out or go wild. Do you know what I mean? We are not really inviting introspection or reflection" (Interview: Miriam Fields 31/1/2018).

During my time as a volunteer and staff member I also observed this tension within Coventry House. The 'Lived-in' Community seemed to be roughly divided into two groups: the young volunteers who worked long hours then returned to Coventry to socialise and drink into the early hours; and the volunteers, who were often older, who had been attracted to Corrymeela because of its religious underpinnings and engaged more determinedly with faith at Corrymeela. Strong and lasting relationships still developed between the two social groups but there was a definite difference in experience and purpose.

Due to its strangeness and its ecumenical faith-based approach, Corrymeela attracts a self-selecting group and alienates others to some extent. Field research suggests that individuals from strict atheist or evangelical background are less likely to engage with the Community because of its Christian ecumenical discourses. Corrymeela has had a varied and sometimes difficult relationship with the Churches in Northern Ireland, which may have further restricted its Membership. The development of bridging social capital relies on the formation of

relationships between members of different communities and in terms of peacebuilding, this is most productive when communities that are ideologically opposed have the opportunity to connect. The exclusion of some groups necessarily decreases the diversity in participation at Corrymeela and restricts the degree of bridging social capital and breadth of community networks that can be facilitated by the Community.

Conclusion

Beyond consociationalism, PROs in Northern Ireland face a number of obstacles in facilitating meaningful work that builds bridging social capital. Empirical research has evidenced incoherent government policies on social capital and a general lack of macro-level support for NGOs to engage in bridging social capital (Campbell *et al.* 2008: 32; Graham 2016: 116). Funding policies have also acted to de-incentivize the inclusion of bridging social capital approaches in reconciliation work (Graham 2016: 115).

In terms of identifying quantifiable outcomes, Corrymeela's informal activities defy a straightforward analysis and their outputs are not consistent with the outcomes increasingly required by funders as part of grant conditions. Corrymeela relies heavily on storytelling and oral histories as a record of its informal activities, and these are also inconsistent with how organisations are expected to report measurable outcomes to funders. These tensions have resulted in a divergence between Corrymeela's formal and informal work, despite these elements being historically interwoven.

Many interview respondents believe Corrymeela's informal activities are its most impactful outputs in terms of effectively facilitating inter-community relationships while at Corrymeela and beyond. Some expressed significant concerns about Corrymeela's formal programme focus and how its informal activities had been affected by changes in strategic direction and the funding environment (Interviews: Alec Lloyd 31/1/2018; Max Benson 10/10/2017; Miriam Fields 31/1/2018; Travis Sanford 2/2/2018; Ted Glenn 31/1/2018). Max Benson (Interview: 10/10/2017) stated that "in the last few years, we've lost our way"; Travis Sanford (Interview: 2/2/2018) expressed concern that "we are in danger of losing our flow"; and Michele Tyson

(Interview: 31/1/2018) said “in the professionalisation of it, I think it's lost a lot of the spontaneity”. Corrymeela’s identity and purpose is realised through its informal work, namely its construction of a safe, liminal space that promotes alternative, peaceful discourses through innovative practices. The changing funding environment and its impact on Corrymeela’s capacity to continue this balance of work represented a significant challenge in the post-Agreement period.

The challenges experienced by Corrymeela in trying to justify and sustain its informal practices are consistent with the wider experience of the third sector in Northern Ireland, which has been victim to the pressures of elite-level actors’ neoliberal peace agendas. At the outset of this thesis I identified that the Liberal Peace does not adequately capture the reality of local-level actors’ experience and knowledge of peacebuilding, and its tendency to be gendered, ethnocentric and ‘expert’-led means it has significant limits in its applicability (Goetschel and Hagmann 2009; Jabri 2007; MacGinty 2012; 2014: 551; Richmond 2011; Roberts 2011). I spoke to a number of experienced facilitators at Corrymeela who insisted that there is no universal approach to peacebuilding and even within the micro-culture of Corrymeela it is a necessarily experimental and fluid process. Peacebuilding operates on a delicate balance, some approaches work at certain times, in some places, and flexibility and adaptability is required for success.

Insights on everyday peace are more meaningful in understanding the experience of Corrymeela’s informal practices, which have acted to subvert elite-level peacebuilding approaches and which are misunderstood or deemed irrelevant by funders. Acts of everyday peace are described as “subversive” (MacGinty 2014: 551; Vulliamy 2014) because they consciously contest the dominant discourse within a specific cultural context, and take place outside the realm of formal NGO- or state-led peacebuilding programmes. Corrymeela managed, for a time, to be a space where this fluidity of work was possible. Much of its capacity depended on its economic stability. In the post-Agreement era, although it has experienced significant challenges, Corrymeela has been resilient in its preservation of some of its locally-developed peacebuilding approaches, continuing to use practices within and in parallel to its formally-funded work.

There are also some valuable contributions from empirical research that give value and weight to the experience and lived reality of local actors (see for example Gidron *et al*. 1999; Graham 2016; Morrow *et al*. 2018; Power 2012a, 2012b; Robinson 2015; Wells 1999; Wilson 2008, 2012, 2014). Hughes (2015: 287), for example, summarises one of the key conclusions of this thesis in his own research by stating: "(m)ajor international donors are withdrawing from Northern Ireland, resources are becoming more scarce and concentrated, and the end of a post-conflict funding boom has robbed the sector of the financial and moral support that was key to its existence and its sense of self-identity" (Hughes 2015: 287).

Beyond the limits of the Liberal Peace and contributions of everyday peace, this area of research continues to defy the application of a traditional academic framework. Many research participants expressed frustration or difficulty in having to explain Corrymeela to someone in academic terms without "bringing them by the hand to the place" (Interview: Isobel Ellis 12/10/2017). A number of participants said that the type of peacebuilding that took place at Corrymeela was difficult to document. Much of the rich data on storytelling and transformational experience at Corrymeela does not fit into the moulds required by the neoliberal peacebuilding frameworks nor those provided in academic literature. Miriam Fields (Interview: 31/1/2018) provided an illustrative analysis of the inexplicability and uniqueness of Corrymeela, stating:

> "…somebody asked me once "what's the alchemy of Corrymeela that creates all of it" and I sort of said "you know I think if Corrymeela closes its doors in a couple of years - which we may well do, I hope we don't - I think that the physical site will be used for something like Corrymeela, because I think there's something present in the physical site. It's the opposite of visiting a former concentration camp where you come into that space and right away you go (gasp). You know there's something. If there was no sign you would know something had happened there. I think that the magic of Corrymeela in part is that so many people have taken such humane risks over the years with each other in that space, and have shown such generosity of human spirit to each other in that space, that I think that infuses the space."

Human life does not fit neatly into predictable categories, and is particularly irregular in circumstances where everyday norms and practices are being purposefully subverted. In Corrymeela's case, that engineered subversion is in response both to the neoliberal agenda of elite actors and the mainstream discourses within local communities in Northern Ireland that normalise and institutionalise sectarianism, segregation and "us and them" mentalities.

For the purposes of structural clarity, the empirical chapters were divided into binary categories of Corrymeela's formal programme and informal activities. It must be emphasised however that these programmes and practices are deeply interlinked and mutually dependent. During my research, Corrymeela was undergoing a discernment process with the aim of clarifying its strategic direction. It remains to be seen how Corrymeela will balance the requirements of its funders with its tradition of creating human connection through its informal practices. Funding pressures meant Corrymeela's senior management and Council were being forced to make difficult decisions. Abandonment or significant changes to either its formal or informal work would represent a fundamental shift in the organisation's approach to peacebuilding. Any such changes to Corrymeela's approach in the future pose a number of risks in terms of maintaining an effective peacebuilding approach that is cognisant of Corrymeela's decades of local, tried-and-tested experience.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Summary

The title of this thesis refers to the dust having settled in Northern Ireland. The implementation of the Good Friday Agreement signified a period of transition after years of violent conflict, and was expected to eventually lead to peace. The outcomes of the Agreement differed markedly for the various actors involved in the peace process. Twenty two years on, the initial commotion following the Agreement has subsided, and PROs in Northern Ireland are experiencing a different state of flux. Research on the fate of peacebuilding organisations after peace agreements is a developing field and little is known about the challenges affecting these organisations after political transitions and when funders begin to withdraw.

Using social capital theory, this thesis developed a theoretical framework to analyse a locally-based PRO in Northern Ireland, the Corrymeela Community. Based on Putnam's (2000) theory, I argued that social capital can be evidenced via the presence of three discrete elements: trust, reciprocity and shared norms. Similar to Graham's (2016: 145) account, which concluded that "the virtuous circle of social capital is simply unrealistic in deeply divided societies, no matter how strong civil society might be", I noted a number of nuances of social capital specific to the context of Northern Ireland. Bonding and bridging social capital were differentiated, as were productive and perverse capital, the latter of which poses a divisive challenge to peace in Northern Ireland. Bridging social capital was identified as of particular value to peacebuilding because it is indicative of productive connections between different identity communities. The segregation of these communities has been and continues to be a source of long-term conflict in Northern Ireland.

Through its ethos and in its formal programmes and informal practices, Corrymeela facilitates the building of social capital. Its approach, which includes experiential learning and storytelling techniques, has created an environment in which the exchange of productive social capital between individuals is encouraged. Generalised trust is a primary feature of bridging social capital. Research for this thesis showed that Corrymeela uses a series of approaches and

techniques to elucidate the shared norms of its participants, which allows a perception of communality, generalised reciprocity and trust.

This conclusion chapter summarises the main thesis findings, discussing the facilitation of social capital at Corrymeela, the generalisability of Corrymeela's experience to other settings, and options for moving peace and reconciliation forward in Northern Ireland at a critical time.

Social capital at Corrymeela

Overall, I conclude that Corrymeela continues to facilitate bridging social capital between different identity groups, but that its capacity to do so has been challenged and compromised in the post-Agreement period. Corrymeela's formal programmes and informal practices are interconnected and interdependent, and its location, Members, staff and volunteers all contribute to its multiple experiences.

Several developments in the post-Agreement period have affected Corrymeela's capacity to maintain facilitation of social capital at previous levels, such as those achieved during the 1990s and early 2000s. It was argued at the outset that consociationalism, the collapse of the Northern Irish Executive and the partisan – and sometimes sectarian – approach of Stormont's political representatives, constituted a significant barrier to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. However, civil society actors, particularly PROs, can counteract the segregation imposed from above. Beyond the limits of consociationalism, it was concluded that changes in funding have had the greatest impact on Corrymeela's experience post-conflict. Corrymeela's ability to operate effectively has also been inhibited by issues related to professionalisation, internal tensions within the Community, its capacity to alienate some identity groups, and its inability to respond to the phenomenon of perverse social capital within local communities in Northern Ireland. These pressures have caused Corrymeela to shift the focus of some of its programmes, resulting in criticism from some Members that Corrymeela has "lost its way" (Interview: Max Benson 10/10/17). From a review of literature and empirical research on organisations comparable to Corrymeela, it can be concluded that many of these funding shifts are the result

of the pervasive Liberal Peace Agenda, summarised in the next section, which has shaped the experience of the wider third sector in Northern Ireland.

The experience of locally based PROs in Northern Ireland

The research question in this thesis addressed the experience of locally-based PROs in post-Agreement Northern Ireland, using the Corrymeela Community as a case study. Allowing 'the dust to settle' and assessing the experience of Corrymeela more than twenty years after the peace agreement has identified the challenges that local peacebuilding organisations face when peace agreements are reached, funding decreases and the spotlight of international attention on the conflict fades. This research has produced a detailed analysis, reflective of the nuances of Corrymeela's experience during this period.

Where possible, I compared Corrymeela's experience to that of other peacebuilding NGOs in the Northern Irish third sector. A number of organisations have simply not survived in the post-Agreement period, being forced to close, or downsize significantly, due to losses of core funding and increased competition for grants. Large organisations similar to the Corrymeela Community, such as Public Achievement and Kilcranny House, have met this fate.

Like other PROs that have endured the post-Agreement period, Corrymeela's experience is indicative of trends affecting the third sector more widely. Some generalisation of Corrymeela's experience is possible. First, the funding environment has become increasingly hostile and competitive as available funding has decreased, forcing organisations to be more innovative in their practices. Corrymeela, like other NGOS, has reduced its staff base, relied increasingly on volunteers to deliver its programmes, and has developed strategies to generate additional income, such as its establishment of the Social Innovation department and development of partnerships with several US Universities.

Second, assessing Northern Ireland in the post-Agreement period has also allowed a measured assessment of the longer term impact of neoliberal funding policies on grassroots initiatives in

post-conflict territories. Funding has become increasingly prescriptive, with pre-determined programme outcomes based on the assumptions of the Liberal Peace, namely the presumed value of instilling democracy, the rule of law and liberal market economies in bringing peace to post-conflict states (Chandler 2015: 27-8; Hyde and Byrne 2015: 95; MacGinty 2011: 188). In Northern Ireland, the neoliberal agenda is manifest in funding that supports shorter-term programmes, shallow cross-community engagement and economic development initiatives that have, in some cases, strengthened bonding capital, thereby acting to entrench, rather than reduce, ethnic community divisions (Byrne 2011: 116).

Richmond (2011: 12) contends that the Liberal Peace acts to "represent the ways donors, governments, and institutions produce political subjects or citizens best suited to fulfil their policies, agendas, interests, and ideologies". MacGinty (2011) suggests that in response to this imposition from above, hybrid situations develop, whereby local actors manage to retain elements of their own practice and identity within the framework of neoliberalism. The ways in which the Liberal Peace imposes policies, interest and agendas from above in Northern Ireland was highlighted, and contrasted with the struggle of local actors to retain elements of their own practice, knowledge and identity within the framework of neoliberalism (MacGinty, 2011; Richmond 2011: 12).

The tension between these two frameworks best explains Corrymeela's position. Corrymeela's formal programmes, because they are funded by the EU, British and Irish governments, have tended to be more representative of the liberal peace agenda than its informal practices. Its informal activities are representative of what MacGinty (2011: 85-6) describes as recalcitrant behaviour by local actors. Corrymeela has strived to survive and retain its identity during the post-Agreement period. Staff and Members communicated that, while Corrymeela was increasingly a victim of the neoliberal funding agenda, they continued to keep one eye on the "edgier" work and had sustained their traditional informal practices of storytelling, trust-building, experiential learning and relationship transformation in and around the formally funded work. Corrymeela's informal activities have not formed part of its official programme work, therefore their impact has not been publicised. They are mainly recorded in Corrymeela's oral histories and in anecdotal evidence. This method of recording is inconsistent with the criteria set by funding bodies and Corrymeela has faced challenges because of this.

In other respects, Corrymeela's experience has not been as representative of the wider third sector. Corrymeela had enjoyed a privileged financial position over several years, operating with a large capital reserve until recently. This resource, along with core funding sources and a number of affluent Members who contributed to the Community's operational costs, allowed Corrymeela to develop a large base at its Ballycastle Centre with a wide staff and programme resource. As core funding diminished and Corrymeela's financial reserve depleted, the running costs of its Centre have become a significant burden. As noted by Cochrane and Dunn (2002: 163), this initial prosperity and development of resources has meant Corrymeela – akin to some other large organisations – has become a "prisoner of its own success", now broadening its work remit and risking "mission drift" in order to preserve its staff and Centre.

In terms of social capital, Corrymeela has been compelled, because of funding stipulations, to adopt programme content and structures that are not consistent with its traditional approaches and have, in some instances, meant it has been unable to facilitate social capital as effectively as in earlier years. The funding pressures have also denied some groups' access to Corrymeela; thus social capital opportunities are restricted to those who are financially capable. Further issues of professionalisation, staff and volunteer tensions have also reduced Corrymeela's capacity to facilitate the conditions most conducive to developing bridging social capital. Finally, tensions around Corrymeela's universal welcome have meant some identity groups, namely those ascribing to conservative faith traditions, have been excluded from equal social capital opportunities within the Community.

Looking forward

The outcomes of the Good Friday Agreement have been different for different actors in the process and the post-Agreement period has been an extremely difficult time for civil society organisations. Hughes (2015: 287) wrote that the third sector in Northern Ireland "is entering a period of upheaval and transition". Morrow *et al*. (2018: 37) echoed this concern, stating that "many [PRO practitioners] felt that the current political impasse, the uncertainty of Brexit and the changes to council structures and policy frameworks underpinning our crawl away from

the conflict, all amount to a bleak future for peace and reconciliation activities". The authors describe the current period as a ‘critical juncture in our peace and political processes’ (*ibid*.: 23).

The challenges for peace and reconciliation activities are further compounded by ongoing tensions at Stormont and the uncertainties of Brexit. At the time of writing, the Northern Ireland Executive had been recently been re-established following its suspension for almost three years. Violent attacks, including the targeting of police by dissident republicans, continue. The United Kingdom left the EU on the 31st January 2020, as this thesis was submitted. The additional challenge Brexit poses for Northern Ireland’s fragile peace may mean that the dust of conflict will be kicked up again, and the role of local peacebuilding organisations will re-emerge in an amended or altogether new role. Assuming that the dust has settled for Norther Ireland may, therefore, be somewhat short-sighted.

If a lasting peace is to be established, one of many challenges for Northern Ireland continues to be the development of strategies that facilitate an associational life between segregated communities (Campbell *et al*. 2008: 35; White 2012: 43) and this is a task for both civil society and State actors. The Good Friday Agreement commits to “the allocation of sufficient resources, including statutory funding as necessary, to meet the needs of victims and to provide for community-based support programmes” (NIO 1998: 23). The continued capacity of NGOs depends on the state to fulfil this commitment by allocating resources and providing support commensurate with the needs of local communities. The literature notes a perceived lack of state support for bridging social capital initiatives (Campbell *et al.* 2008: 32; Graham 2016). Thus far, Corrymeela has survived through austerity, but there will be limits to its continued capacity to maintain the norms, practices and relationships that support peace in Northern Ireland. Without a supportive relationship with state and funding actors, the experience of civil society actors will continue to be fraught with even more challenges.

The continued progress of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland requires more empirical research in a number of areas to show what works and with whom. In terms of designing effective peacebuilding programmes, the relationship between bonding and bridging capital in

Northern Irish communities could be better elucidated. On the one hand, some studies have argued that strong bonding social capital encourages insular, inward-looking communities, which makes cross-community work more challenging (Bush and Houston 2011 p. 59). On the other hand, research has also found that the security enabled by being part of a network of strong bonding capital within a single-identity community can, in fact, encourage inter-community relationships (Boix and Posner 1998). This research raised a number of questions on the operation of social capital, for which there are no easy answers. There would be value in understanding fully the other peculiar ways in which social capital functions in the specific context of Northern Ireland. Hughes *et al*. (2011: 978-9), for example, note the role of "hunkering down" in response to external community events in Northern Ireland, as a means of preserving existing bridging capital in times of tension. A recognised limitation of the thesis is that it focuses solely on participants' experience of Corrymeela while they are engaged in its programmes. There is the possibility that the social capital facilitated by Corrymeela is spatially and temporally bound. Further longitudinal research is required to establish what happens to individuals and groups after they leave Corrymeela, and how this impacts on their reserves of social capital.

Going forward, some research has highlighted newly emerging challenges for civil society organisations, related to increased racial diversity and discrimination in Northern Ireland. The impact of increased immigration from Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America was noted by Byrne *et al*. (2009a: 352-9), who highlighted the associated need for Northern Irish society to develop "cross-cutting forms of social solidarity and more encompassing identities" (Putnam 2007: 137) to maintain social solidarity. Northern Ireland is noted as an exceptional case in Western Europe due to the links between its sectarian past and the normalisation of negative attitudes towards different identity groups in its present (Doebler *et al*. 2017: 2; McVeigh 2015). One factor contributing to discrimination towards ethnic minorities is identified as "a lack of contact with out-group members" (Doebler *et al*. 2017: 14). Further research would be valuable, first in identifying how racism manifests in local communities, and second, in establishing whether the strategies previously and currently used by PROs in addressing sectarianism could be adapted or generalised across to programmes which address racism within and between communities.

The research for this thesis also identified a gap in the evidence base on the function and impact of perverse social capital in Northern Ireland. Empirical studies from elsewhere, such as those by Cuesta (2009), Horowitz (1983), Gilbert (2009) and Rubio (1997) focus on how perverse social capital manifests and operates within specific local communities. This provides rich data on the way in which norms, local socioeconomic structures, and networks of family and friends combine to reward rent-seeking, delinquent and/or criminal behaviours. There is a paucity of empirical research into the function of perverse social capital within local paramilitary-dominated communities in Northern Ireland. As disenfranchised young people represent a major challenge sustaining peace in to Northern Ireland, NGOs will need to develop strategies – recalcitrant ones – to address the networks of perverse social capital inherent in some of Northern Ireland's single identity communities. Without a better understanding of perverse social capital, local PROs and other peacebuilding actors, including the State, will be limited in their response to the sociocultural and economic issues within these communities.

In a final assessment of the experience of the Corrymeela Community I consider the value of its particular approach. While it has succumbed to some of the pressures of a changing political and financial environment, Corrymeela has been generally consistent in its approach for almost six decades, and this has shaped its experiences. Peacebuilding is not a straightforward business, and despite some of the tensions inherent in its operation, Corrymeela continues to deliver meaningful peacebuilding activities through formal programmes and well-established informal practices. The emotional investment of its Members, staff and volunteers is a necessary part of this survival: a Community of Corrymeela's breadth and capacity requires a significant human commitment to survive and be consistent in its commitment to reconciliation.

The organisation's recent forays into work with refugees and interface work between faith and LGBT+ communities has recognised a new source of conflict in Northern Ireland that requires to be addressed. This new initiative demonstrates the innovative approaches that have contributed to its survival. Corrymeela has brought people together across religious, national, ethnic and other identity divides for almost 65 years, creating numerous lasting connections, and there is certainly enduring value in this.

Putnam (2000: 23) describes how bonding social capital acts as a "sociological superglue", bringing people together in relationships, whereas bridging capital is "a sociological WD40", easing interactions between different groups. In Northern Ireland, there remains "too much superglue….and not enough WD40" (Graham 2016: 146), thus there continues to be the need for organisations like Corrymeela to provide a platform for inter-community relationships to be established and nurtured. Civil society in Northern Ireland had a hugely significant role in gaining community buy-in to the Good Friday Agreement (Cochrane 2001: 110-11; Guelke 2009: 104; White 2012: 37). Third sector organisations continue to play an important role in what should be considered an ongoing peace process, counter-balancing the consociational influence of its government and facilitating inter-community associations where possible and practicable. Existing empirical research suggests the success of social capital approaches to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. Morrow (2006: 77) summarises thus: in Northern Ireland's peacebuilding sector, "(t)he principle that trust, reciprocity and open networks reduce transaction costs and build a sustainable society should inform all that we do."

Considering the value of platforms for bridging social capital, like Corrymeela, more widely than just Northern Ireland, it should be noted that it forms part of a network of peace centres that continue to create networks of people, who have read the theory and seen the practice, committed to peace and reconciliation. Many of these people (including me) go on to work in peace, education, social work and justice sectors, taking with them the ethos of acceptance and reconciliation instilled in them from these Communities. Since my experiences at Corrymeela, I often consider the wider applicability of its approach. I imagine a situation in which political and trade leaders could realise, through lived experience with people of difference that, as Ray Davey asserted: "we are all the same". The world would almost certainly be more chaotic, and Corrymeela is a place of chaos. But it may be a more peaceful and reflective chaos, rather than the chaos of conflict, populism and prejudice that is our current reality.

In a last recognition of Corrymeela's approach, which places value on the transformative power of language, I conclude this thesis with a poem, reflective of Corrymeela's experiences of peacebuilding, based so much on optimism, hope and playing the long game of peace, in an innately hostile environment. The poem is by Seamus Heaney (1991: 77) and it was quoted by Bill Clinton in his 1995 remarks to the citizens of Derry/Londonderry on the Northern Irish

peace process, and also recited by Ray Davey in 1998, shortly after the Good Friday Agreement, on the opening of the new Main House at the Ballycastle Centre (*Corrymeela News: The journal of the Corrymeela* Community, Summer 1998, p. 5 cf. Wells 1999: 80).

History says don't hope
On this side of the grave
But then, once in a lifetime,
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history can rhyme.
So hope for a great sea change
On the far side of revenge.
Believe that a further shore
Is reachable from here

Appendix 1: List of Interviewees

Lyle Newton

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 12/10/2017

Lyle is a Corrymeela Community member aged in his 70s and from a Protestant background who resides in Northern Ireland. He previously worked as a maths teacher in a high school. He has been involved in Corrymeela since the 1960s having attended Queens University with Ray Davey. He is still actively involved in programmes at the Ballycastle Centre and attends regularly. He is married to Isobel Ellis. They were interviewed together.

Connie Terrell

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 7/10/17

Connie is a Corrymeela Community member, aged in her 30s and from a Catholic background who resides in Northern Ireland. She has been involved as a member at Corrymeela for less than 10 years. She and Jimmy Palmer are in a relationship, they have two children, a daughter and a son who has severe and multiple disabilities. Connie and Jimmy spend a significant amount of their time volunteering at the Ballycastle Centre. They were interviewed together.

Anna O'Neill

Interview: Remote by skype, 12/5/18

Anna is a former mid-term volunteer at Corrymeela, she attended the Centre for 6 months in 2016. Anna is aged in her 30s, she is Canadian and married to Zoe Hawkins who also attended Corrymeela at the same time. Anna is from a Mennonite background and works in restorative justice.

Jimmy Palmer

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 7/10/17

Jimmy is a Corrymeela Community member aged in his 30s. He does not identify with any one religion. He has been a Community member for less than ten years. He moved to Northern Ireland from England and is in a relationship with Connie Terrell, and they have two children together. Jimmy and Connie spend a significant amount of their time volunteering at the Ballycastle Centre. They were interviewed together.

Ted Glenn

Interview: Ted's home address, Ballycastle, 31/1/18

Ted Glenn has been a Corrymeela Community member since 1973, aged in his 60s from a Catholic background. Ted was the Centre Director of Corrymeela between 1990 and 2001, and Executive Director between 2014 and 2017. Ted is married to Sylvia McKinney who is also a Community Member and former member of staff. They reside close to Ballycastle.

Andrew Bruce

Interview: Andrew's home address, Scotland, 21/4/17

Andrew Bruce is a Corrymeela Community member aged in his 70s and from a Protestant background. He was heavily involved in Corrymeela's establishment in the 1960s and was close friends with Ray Davey. Andrew now lives in Scotland and has limited involvement at the Ballycastle Centre however is still involved with the Community remotely.

Joshua Cameron

Interview: Stormont, Belfast, 30/1/18

Joshua Cameron is a political representative in Northern Ireland and a former long-term volunteer and former Community member. He is aged in his 60s and from a Protestant background. He retains close links with a number of existing community members and routinely visits the Ballycastle Centre.

Nathan Reid

Interview: Dundalk, Republic of Ireland, 11/10/17

Nathan is a Corrymeela Community member aged in his 70s and was clergy person of the Church of Ireland. He is from the Republic of Ireland and is married to Ashley Workman. They were involved in Corrymeela from 1966 onwards as volunteer programme workers and still regularly attend the Ballycastle Centre. Nathan and his wife Ashley were interviewed together.

Max Benson

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 10/10/17

Max is a Corrymeela Community member aged in his 70s. Max is from a Protestant background and resides in Ballycastle. He has been involved in Corrymeela since the late 1960s as a student at Queens University. Max was Centre Director at the Ballycastle Centre in the late 1970s to the 1980s and has remained heavily involved since. He regularly facilitates visiting groups at the Centre and sits on Corrymeela's Council.

Jerry Barnett

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 29/1/18

Jerry is the Hospitality Manager at Corrymeela, based at the Ballycastle Centre, aged in his 30s. Jerry is from Wales and moved to Northern Ireland with his wife in the early 2010s. Jerry previously worked as university chaplain and is from a Protestant background. His wife is a Community Member (not an interviewee) and they have two children. They reside very close to the Corrymeela Centre and spend a lot of time onsite.

Ashley Workman

Interview: Dundalk, Republic of Ireland, 11/10/17

Ashley is a Community Member, aged in her 70s, who resides in the Republic of Ireland. She was previously involved in family work at Corrymeela, and has been involved with Corrymeela since the 1960s. She attends the Ballycastle Centre occasionally. She is married to Nathan Reid. They were interviewed together.

Isobel Ellis

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 12/10/2017

Isobel is Community Member, aged in her late 70s, who resides in Ballycastle. She previously worked as a GP. She has been involved with Corrymeela since the 1970s and was previously heavily involved in family programmes. She is still actively involved in various programmes at the Ballycastle Centre. She is married to Lyle Newton. They were interviewed together.

Michele Tyson

Interview: Michele's home address, Belfast, 31/1/18

Michele Tyson is a Community Member aged in her 70s. She is originally from England but resides in Northern Ireland since 1969. She is from a Methodist background. Michele previously worked as an academic and during the conflict she worked in Northern Irish prisons. She attends the Ballycastle Centre infrequently but remains connected to Corrymeela's work within Belfast.

Iain Davey

Interview: Iain's home address Edinburgh, 30/5/18

A pseudonym has not been used for Iain Davey. He is the son of Ray Davey, now aged in his 70s. He currently resides in Scotland and is from a Presbyterian background. When working, he was employed as a medical doctor. He is not a Community Member.

Katherine Bryan

Interview: Katherine's workplace, Belfast, 9/10/17

Katherine Bryan is a Community Member, aged in her 40s, who resides in Northern Ireland. She is from a Protestant background. She became involved with Corrymeela as a long-term volunteer at the Ballycastle Centre during the 1980s. She is currently employed as a programme worker for a cancer charity in Belfast. She attends the Ballycastle Centre regularly to support programme work and is also involved in Corrymeela's activities in Belfast.

Alex Warner

Interview: Alex's home address, Bangor, 27/1/18

Alex Warner is a Community member aged in his 70s who resides in Northern Ireland. He is from a Presbyterian background and has been involved in Corrymeela since the 1960s. Alex still works as an architect and designed Corrymeela's 'Main House'. Alex also used to host a

number of Corrymeela events at his own home. He is now only occasionally involved in Corrymeela events.

Zoe Hawkins

Interview: remote by skype, 12/5/18

Zoe is a former mid-term volunteer at Corrymeela, she attended the Centre for 6 months in 2016. Zoe is aged in her 30s, she is Canadian and married to Anna O'Neill who also attended Corrymeela at the same time. Zoe is from a Mennonite background and works with survivors of sexual abuse.

Anthony McClain

Interview: public place, Antrim, 11/10/17

Anthony is a Community Member and resides in Northern Ireland. He is aged in his 40s, originally from the Republic of Ireland and from a Methodist background. He is employed as a police officer in the Republic of Ireland. He became involved in Corrymeela as a summer volunteer in the mid-1990s and became a long-term volunteer in 1998. He is still involved in the Ballycastle Centre on occasion.

Alec Lloyd

Interview: Alec's home address, Belfast, 31/1/18

Alec is a Community Member aged in his 40s who resides in Northern Ireland. He is from a Protestant background. Alec was employed in the senior management of Corrymeela until 2017 and heavily involved in the Ballycastle Centre and Belfast operations during this time. He and Miriam Fields were interviewed together.

Teresa Chapman

Interview: Teresa's home address, Belfast, 1/2/18

Teresa is a Community Member aged in her 60s, who resides in Northern Ireland. She is from a Protestant background and is from Switzerland but has lived in Northern Ireland since 1967. Teresa is married to a former Community Leader of Corrymeela. She is still very actively involved in Corrymeela's activities in Belfast and at the Ballycastle Centre.

Ciaran McConville

Interview: public place, Newry, 11/10/17

Ciaran is a former Community Member, aged in his 60s from a Republican and Catholic background, who resides in Northern Ireland. When interviewed, Ciaran was a Community Member however during the period of study he terminated his Membership with Corrymeela. He came to Corrymeela as a volunteer in the 1970s and remained at the Ballycastle Centre as a youth worker for several years. Until 2019 he was actively involved at the Ballycastle Centre with Corrymeela's programme work.

Benny Ray

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 8/10/17

Benny is a Community Member, aged in his 40s, who resides in Northern Ireland. He is from a Presbyterian Background. He was Centre Director between 2009 and 2014. Benny is still actively involved in various programme activities at Corrymeela and often works as a facilitator for visiting groups at the Ballycastle Centre.

Sylvia McKinney

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 29/1/18

Sylvia is a Community Member, aged in her 50s, who resides in Northern Ireland. She is originally from England but has lived in Northern Ireland since 1977. She is married to Ted Glenn, the former Centre Director of Corrymeela between 1990 and 2001, and Executive Director between 2014 and 2017, and Sylvia also worked at Corrymeela during these periods. She remains heavily involved with supporting programme work at the Ballycastle Centre.

Charlie Jeffrey

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 7/10/17

Charlie is a Community Member, aged in his 60s, who resides in Northern Ireland. Charlie is from a Protestant background. He is originally from England but has lived in Northern Ireland since 1971. He was employed as a college lecturer and an IT manager. Charlie is still heavily involved with Corrymeela providing support with the Ballycastle Centre's IT. He is married to Ellen Puckett. They were interviewed separately.

Miriam Fields

Interview: Miriam's home address, Belfast, 31/1/18

Miriam is a Community Member, aged in her 30s, who resides in Northern Ireland. She is from a Protestant background. She has resided in Northern Ireland since the early 2000s. Miriam has worked in various programme staff roles until 2017. She currently works in peacebuilding and community development. She and Alec Lloyd were interviewed together.

Kevin Sloane

Interview: Remote by Skype, 02/09/18

Kevin is aged in his 20s, and resides in England. Kevin is from a mixed background and identifies as Catholic. He was involved in Corrymeela as a group participant in the early 2010s and was a volunteer between 2012 and 2013. He now works in England in film production.

Travis Sanford

Interview: Corrymeela Belfast Office, Belfast, 2/2/18

Travis is currently employed as a programme manager at Corrymeela, based between the Ballycastle Centre and Belfast office. He is aged in his 30s, resides in Northern Ireland and is from a Protestant background. Travis' mother is a Community Member and is also heavily involved in Corrymeela. Travis has therefore been involved with Corrymeela since he was a child.

Jess Williams

Interview: Jess' home address, Belfast, 27/1/18

Jess is a Community Members, aged in her 50s, who resides in Northern Ireland. She is originally from Germany but has resided in Northern Ireland since 2005. She does not identify with any one religion. Jess previously worked at the Ballycastle Centre as a programme manager between 2007 and 2011, and became a Member in 2011 after leaving her post. She currently works in peacebuilding and trauma and is occasionally involved with Corrymeela programmes.

Stevie Ettenberg

Interview: remote by Skype, 30/09/18

Stevie is a former long-term volunteer, aged in his 30s, who resides in Canada. Stevie is originally from Northern Ireland, and from a Protestant background. He was a long-term volunteer between 2013 and 2014. He now works as a butcher and is no longer involved with the Community.

Anita Hurley

Interview: public place, Belfast, 2/2/18

Anita is a former Community Member and member of staff, aged in her 40s, who resides in Northern Ireland. She is from a Protestant background. Anita was a senior manager in various roles at Corrymeela between 2004 and 2017. Anita married her partner at Corrymeela in 1999 and became a Member shortly afterwards. Anita left her employment and terminated her Membership in 2017. She is no longer involved with the Corrymeela Community though retains friendships with several other Members.

April Geddes

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 29/1/18

April was acting as the interim Executive Director during one of my field visits to Corrymeela. She resides in the USA and is aged in her 50s. April works as a peace practitioner in the USA and has encouraged young adults she works with from the USA to volunteer at Corrymeela. She also volunteered at Corrymeela every summer between 2011 and 2017. She acted as the interim Executive Director at Corrymeela for a period of approximately one year between 2017 and 2018. She currently works remotely with the Corrymeela Community on its sectarianism programme from the USA.

Ellen Puckett

Interview: Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, 7/10/17

Ellen is a Community member, aged in her 60s, who resides in Northern Ireland. She is from a Protestant background. Ellen became involved in Corrymeela in 1973 and has remained heavily and steadily involved as a Member since. She worked as a school teacher and routinely brought school groups up to the Ballycastle Centre. She is not involved in various programme activities, continuing to facilitate workshops for children and young people. She is married to Charlie Jeffrey. They were interviewed separately.

Lucas Green

Interview: Remote by Skype, 7/4/19

Lucas is a former long-term volunteer, aged in his 20s, who resides in South Korea. Lucas is from a Protestant background though does not identify with any one religion. Lucas was a long-term volunteer between 2012 to 2013. He now works as an English teacher and is no longer involved with Corrymeela.

Jeremy Banfield

Interview: Remote by Skype, 7/4/19

Jeremy Banfield is a Community Member, aged in his 30s, who resides in Northern Ireland. He is originally from the Republic of Ireland and is from a Catholic background. Jeremy was a long-term volunteer between 2013 and 2014, and a volunteer intern between 2016 and 2017. He works in community development and is still involved in supporting programme activities at the Ballycastle Centre.

Pádraig Ó Tuama

Interview: Corrymeela Belfast Office, 30/1/18

Pádraig is aged in his 30s, and resides in Northern Ireland. He is originally from the Republic of Ireland and is from a Catholic background. Pádraig was the Leader of the Corrymeela Community between 2013 and 2019. Prior to being leader, Pádraig worked for several years for Corrymeela facilitating 'Faith and Life' programmes. Within his role as Leader he continued to facilitate some programmes and was heavily involved in Community life throughout the period of study. He worked between both sites and often resided at the Corrymeela Centre at Ballycastle.

Appendix 2: Written statement from the Chair of Council to the Corrymeela Community dated 04/04/16.

April 4, 2016

Dear Community Member, members of staff, interns and volunteers,

Over the last 12 months Council, supported by the Finance and Personnel Committee, has closely monitored Corrymeela's difficult financial situation. At its last meeting on March 29th Council addressed the issue of the budget for 2016/17.

Our funding landscape has changed — we see an increase in, and changing demand for, our work, but a decrease in traditional sources of funding. The lack of core funding for the last financial year was also a factor. However, we were glad last year to secure core funding from Irelands Department of Foreign Affairs, and for this current year (2016/17), from the Community Relations Council.

In the last few years, Council agreed to invest in the work of the centre from our reserves, which currently stand at £1.6 million. In terms of quality, improved experience at the centre and organisational learning, this investment has been very fruitful. But it has proved difficult to find the resources to reach the targets for increasing income, including from bed nights at the Centre. The fantastic events organised for Corrymeela's 50th anniversary have yet to result in major donations, although the contacts developed are significant. Many of those events were funded by event-specific gifts for which we are very grateful.

At last Tuesday's meeting Council concluded that the current deficit of some £500k for 2015/16 was unsustainable. Colin was asked to review the budget for 2016/17, to reduce the forecast deficit by between £200,000 to £300,000 (i.e. up to 20% of the current cost of running Corrymeela) through a combination of the following:

- Increased bed nights at the centre
- Retirement and redundancy packages.
- Restructuring of departments.
- Reduction of hours
- Realignment of salary bands.
- Savings to the running costs.
- Increased campaign income.

Staff have all been briefed today (April 4th) and a full report with proposals for the way forward will be brought to an extraordinary meeting of Council on Monday April 11th. Staff are invited to engage with the Executive Director during this period if they wish to propose any arrangements such as retirement or redundancy. It is intended that any staff whose hours may be affected or whose jobs are at risk will know by Thursday April 21st.

Please note that this decision is taken so as to ensure the long-term sustainability of Corrymeela, not because of an immediate crisis. Council believes it would be irresponsible to not take this decision at this time, as to delay action would eventually put many more of our staff and future work at risk.

This announcement comes at a time when we are keenly aware of the extraordinary commitment of the staff — to support and deliver high quality programmes and hospitality to thousands of people per annum. In light of this I make a strong plea to members of the community to keep the wellbeing of staff in both prayer and action, refraining from speculation or public discussion about matters that affect individuals to whom we are deeply grateful for their dedication and commitment. In times like this we are, of course, conscious of the overall vocation and witness of the Corrymeela Community. However, our first consideration should go to our Corrymeela staff — they continue to serve to the highest standards and our loyalty and consideration is with them in the first instance.

This announcement also comes during a time when we are appealing to the community to consider their regular giving. We are seeing a huge uptake on the messages and programme resources of the Corrymeela community, with increased invitations for partnerships and sharing with faith communities and organisations of good will in the UK and Ireland. We continue to be convinced of the vocation and work of the Corrymeela Community and in taking these measures are seeking to ensure the long-term sustainability of our work and witness.

Council will also be meeting on April 19th. All members of council are open to hearing your questions - please feel free to contact them in this period. A more detailed report will be given during the business meeting at the community weekend, from April 22-24th.

Our wider work reflects the quality and tone of our inner work - so we continue to honour and be mindful of the staff for whom this is unsettling news. We continue to hold them in prayer and thought, and Council requests that any conversations with and about these measures be carried out in a way that demonstrates the integrity of our commitment to be members of Corrymeela. We also ask that conversation about this letter be restricted to those people among community, staff, interns and volunteers, and not beyond these groups. It is vitally important to Council that those whose jobs may be affected know that they are the focus of our duty of care, so I thank you for upholding this discipline.

Yours sincerely,

John Hunter (Chair of Council)

Appendix 3: A selection of American universities and other organisations recently hosted at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre.

Available at: https://www.corrymeela.org/programmes/international-education/hosted-universities

Below is a selection of American universities and others recently hosted at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre.

Arcadia IPCR
Bernadotte Academy Sweden
Berufseinfuehrungskurs Bistum Basel
Cothran Center for Vocational Reflection
Facing History and Ourselves
Friends Forever International
Gemeinsamer Pfarrkonvent
Grand Valley State University
Greater Atlanta Christian School
Greater Chicago Church
Indiana Wesleyan University
Loyola Marymount University
Luther College
Missouri State University
Ohio Wesleyan University
Religion Kantonsschulen Aargau
Rudbeckianska gymnasiet Västerås
Sheryl Shenk Pilgrimage
St Joseph's University
St. Alban's Episcopal Church Youth
The Reconciliation Journey
TourMagination
University of Colorado Boulder

University of Dayton

University of Georgia School of Social Work

University of Louisville

University of Mary – Study Abroad Trip

Virginia Theological Seminary

Volunteers In Mission – Belfast Peace Project

Whitworth University

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