How do Communities Conceptualised as Traditional Negotiate the Fluid Conditions of Contemporary Modernity?

by

Daniella Shaw

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Department of Sociology

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

University of Surrey

Supervisors: Prof Sarah Neal, Dr Paul Hodkinson, Dr Victoria Redclift

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Declaration of Originality

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Abstract

Taking traditional communities as exemplifiers of 'tradition-in-action', this thesis is based on semi-structured interviews and observations with Amish communities in the United States and a Jewish community in the United Kingdom. This research challenges antithetical notions of inert tradition *versus* a fluid, dynamic modernity within sociological literature, which has a tendency to posit tradition as temporally and spatially outside of modernity. Drawing on literatures that intersect sociological disciplines, particularly community studies, religion, diasporas, tradition and theories of contemporary (late/liquid) modernity (Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000), it explores ways in which these Amish and Jewish communities – described here as religion-oriented diasporic communities – negotiate the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity. It asks questions about what these negotiations reveal about the nature of contemporary modernity and how shedding new light on community boundaries, belonging and practices helps us to rethink and challenge prevailing meanings of community under contemporary conditions.

Through the findings, the research asserts that rather than being fixed, these communities exhibit varied communal boundaries, from non-negotiable to fluid, as well as fluctuating and contingent levels of belonging and socially situated practices and narratives that adaptively reproduce community to enable communal thriving. In so doing, it explores themes such as boundary-keeping processes, the appeal of embedding and the social/kinship networks that comprise community and form a basis for 'doing' community together. This research project makes methodological contributions, reflecting on the 'insider/outsider' researcher positionality, as well as cultural and logistical considerations with harder-to-access communities. Though these case studies are not intended to provide direct or simple 'like for like' comparison, themes emerging from both case studies highlight the multi-layered nature of belonging to communities conceptualised as traditional in a fluid, ever-changing modernity, effectively siting such communities and modernity as inseparable and co-constitutive.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"Everything changes. We just change slower."

Sarah, Amish guest house owner

Change, transience, and uncertainty epitomise contemporary conditions. When connections to work, home, locality, family and more, can all be continually adapted, broken and remade, what are the implications for those social entities that seek to maintain an element of consistency? Where and how does community fit when the world in which they are placed is fluid and everchanging? What, too, is tradition in a context of change? Is it an element of this process or a separate, fixed entity, concretised when everything else flows?

These are some of the questions that emerge from a world in flux. Sociology seeks to explain social phenomena such as these. However, are dominant theoretical perspectives well suited to enable us to address these questions? Social theory, founded on the premise of investigating and defining conditions of modernity, is predicated on Western-ethno-urban-centric assumptions, which conflate modernity with progress and dynamism, and tradition with inertia and the past. As a result, when the question is asked about the place of tradition and associated communities under fluid contemporary conditions, one must first step back and shed light on the dichotomisations embedded within the conceptual tools often used by social theorists. Dichotomies of vibrant contemporary modernity against fixed tradition must therefore be contested and recast. Communities conceptualised as traditional offer an apposite opportunity to assess what tradition looks like in this latest 'incarnation' of modernity and how these conditions are negotiated in practice.

The 'research puzzle' (Giddens, 2006: 79) guiding this research focusses on the interconnections between contemporary modernity and tradition, and this thesis explores meanings, narratives and practices of community which emerge in this context. In so doing, it seeks to address gaps in a body of literature which maintains the particularity and 'otherness' of tradition under contemporary modern conditions, and the related place of community under these 'liquid' conditions (a term coined by Bauman, 2000). It does so by exploring the negotiations of traditional communities, specifically religion-oriented diasporic communities (communities with diasporic routes elsewhere and a religious locus around which narratives and practices cohere), with the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity, looking at boundary-keeping processes, belonging and community-reproducing practices within Jewish and Amish communities.

To begin to address some of these 'puzzles', it is first necessary to understand what is meant by the much-deliberated terms introduced thus far, particularly modernity, tradition and traditional communities. Modernity, discussed in detail in Chapter Two, evokes both an Enlightenment era of rapid industrialisation, political disjuncture, urbanisation, as well as an ongoing condition, which traverses democratised political systems, capitalist economic forces, and values such as choice and individualisation (see Bendix, 1967; Galland and Lemel, 2008). By extension, theories attempting to describe what 'comes next' proliferate into post-modernity, post-post-modernity, late, liquid and other notions. The latter (late and liquid modernity) are the particular focus within this thesis and will be returned to below and throughout the coming chapters. At the centre of these definitions is the idea of a break from the past.

Relatedly, the difficulty in defining tradition is that the concept crosses disciplines (including politics and nationalism, community studies, cultural studies, anthropology) and is contested. Indeed, this thesis seeks to unsettle conceptualisations of tradition as fixed, inert and antithetical to modernity, to challenge the embedded nexus of "declining tradition and rising modernity" (Bendix, 1967: 308, cited in Bhambra, 2007: 52). Such typifications define tradition as that which existed pre-modernity, explored in further detail in Chapter Two. In *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm and Ranger propose that tradition is "a set of practices… which automatically imply continuity with the past" (1983: 1). This may serve helpful as a loose definition, though caution must be taken, as 'continuity with the past' is not synonymous with an absence of change. On a base level then, tradition can be a connection with the past, but not being fixed in or repeating it.

Characterising traditional communities assists somewhat with this definitional work. Traditional communities can be regarded as sites of tradition-in-action. Within them persist connections with the past, but also connections with other communal members, enacting practices and narratives that are linked to, but not stuck in past affiliations. Within these boundaries, a thread of continuity remains, whilst members, rituals and communal discourses continually morph. As Latour describes, it is "immutable [that] traditions have all budged - the day before yesterday… one chooses to become traditional by constant innovation" (1993: 75-76). Thus, a community may be traditional if it has a connection to the past, but that does not mean that it is *of* or *in* the past.

In her statement at the start of this chapter, Sarah, an Amish quilt shop owner and grandparent in Holly County, Pennsylvania, interviewed for this research, echoes this perspective on traditional communities. Perhaps, as she suggests, traditional communities are not fixed, but rather they just 'change slower'. Or indeed perhaps the rate of change is no different from the rest of the world, it just takes place in its own context, in some way boundaried, but not held in stasis. The next section will explore in greater depth the interrelation between contemporary modernity and tradition within social theory, returned to in Chapter Two (Literature Review).

1. Contemporary Modernity and Tradition

The quest to characterise the 'modern project' (Calhoun, 2010; Han and Shim, 2010) has long been a preoccupation of social theorists. With the increasing pervasiveness of the internet, the interchange of people and ideas across borders, and the proliferation of choice for many, attempts to understand the contemporary world have only intensified (Castells, 2000). Termed variously 'late' (Giddens, 1991), 'liquid' (Bauman, 2000), 'hyper' (Lipovetsky, 2005) 'second', or 'reflexive' modernity (Lash, 2003; Beck, 2016), 'risk' (Beck, 2011) or 'network' society (Castells, 2000), theories of this 'next phase' of modernity abound. Such explanations of contemporary fragmented and frenetic conditions have broadly (though at times critically) stood on the shoulders of classical theories of modernity. As will be explored subsequently, these classical social theories of 'first' modernity (including, but not limited to Marx, 1848/2008; Durkheim, 1915; Weber, 1922; Simmel, 1967) are fraught with assumptions that place tradition and modernity as dichotomous to one another. Principally, the persistence of the othering of tradition, which then extends into mainstream theories of the contemporary 'phase' of modernity. As such, it has been argued that in the classical sociological literature, tradition is posited as distant, rural and fixed (Robinson, 2006; Bhambra, 2007), and at times nostalgically revered.

Existing research on traditional communities – such as religious or place-based communities – and modernity, largely focusses on the more 'solid' (a term coined by Bauman, 2000) forms of modernity (industrialisation, urbanisation) and position modernity and tradition in opposition to one another. This study aims to build on the literature by looking beyond the structures of modernity, to explore the less tangible (and arguably more difficult to negotiate) fluidity of contemporary modernity. In so doing, it explores the interplay between contemporary conditions and communities seeking to retain a sense of cohesion and persistence. Despite being frequently conceptualised as being spatially and temporally distinct, this research seeks to highlight the potential for the coexistence and indeed the co-constitutive relationship between contemporary modernity and tradition.

By exploring the place of traditional communities in the contemporary context, this research also seeks to contribute to understandings of community construction and persistence, specifically in this case of religion-oriented diasporic communities. As will be expounded on in Chapter Two, such communities, with their exilic history and religious locus, offer the opportunity to explore the intersection of fluid conditions with traditional practices, belonging and boundary-keeping methods. Concurrently, this research aims to add the voices of members of those communities to the discussion, relaying their experiences of identity and belonging in the context of contemporary modernity.

2. Theorising Community: A Story of Decline?

Community has long been a source of intrigue for social scientists. Social theorists and researchers have at times sought to divide communities into different camps; such as those of 'fate' (natal, born into) and those of 'choice' (assigned) (e.g. Bauman, 2000; Guibernau, 2013). This research goes beyond that debate, seeking to add complexity to understandings of the contingent nature of boundaries (Chapter Four), belonging (Chapter Five) and of adapting practices (Chapter Six; see also Scholte, 2005; Beck 2007). Central to the story told of community, both from within those communities and the academic literature, is that of decline and conversely, of re-surfacing.

Discussions about the 'waxing and waning' of community are enduring in sociological studies of community (see Putnam, 2000; Bauman, 2000, 2001; Delanty, 2010; Mulligan, 2015). Bauman suggests that ideas of decline are nostalgic, proposing that "We seem perennially tempted to contrast our tawdry todays with past golden ages" (2000: 24). Such temptations for traditional communities are perhaps rooted in exilic experiences and the challenges of the process of adaptation. However, these characterisations may be cast as antithetical, placing tradition against modernity in a zero-sum game. This nostalgic contrast can be regarded as central to many studies of community (outlined in Chapter Two), be it Stacey's (1960) dichotomisation of traditional against non-traditional Banburians, the desire of Childerleyians in Bell's (1994) study to return to nature as against the metropolitan city life, and the challenges explored in studies of rural villages such as Rees's (1950) Llanfihangel research and Williams' (1956) study of Gosforth, to name a few.

Modernity is described in studies such as these as a threat to traditional community, perpetuating declensionism, for instance decrying the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation (Rees, 1950), the emergence of 'foreigners' (Stacey, 1960) commuting (Bell, 1994). Such portrayals arguably posit these communities as outside of modernity, a perception that becomes integral to discourses circulating within communities that present themselves as 'traditional', 'authentic' or outside of time. For some then, change (in the guise

of the fluid conditions of modernity) signifies loss of identity and is to be feared (for example for the Jewish community discussed in Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012).

Putnam's (2000) extensive (and contested) work, *Bowling Alone*, aims to provide large scale data to support this declensionist argument of 'losing' community amidst industrialisation, technological advances and breakdowns of social connections, echoing the notion that the individual has replaced community (Bauman, 2000). On the other hand, these factors of modernity are what other commentators of community see as a turn *towards* community. As Delanty suggests, "'Far from disappearing, as the classical sociologists believed… community has a contemporary relevance, which appears to have produced a worldwide search for roots, identity and aspirations for belonging" (2010: x, cited in Mulligan, 2015: 341; see also Back, 2015). Here a paradox emerges of the discourse of decline of community alongside an argued and related rise of community. An ambivalence towards community abounds, where for some there is too little community and for others, community represents too much fixity and not enough fluidity, a debate often racialised around discourses of assimilation and integration.

As stated, the declensionist debate emerges too from within communities. Gidley and Kahn-Harris (2012), for instance, refer to the conflicting narratives amongst British Jews that assert both strong numbers and an insecurity surrounding decline, in the form of discourses around the hybridising identities of 'out-married Jews' (176). They quote a headline in a Jewish weekly newspaper, which cautions: "Jews are not dying but Judaism and Jewish identity are…" (*The Jewish Chronicle*, cited in Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012: 176). For a diasporic community (one with exilic routes elsewhere, explored further in subsequent chapters), this touches on the tension between belonging, assimilation and security. Likewise, in an interview in *The Guardian Newspaper* in 2018, Amish member Daniel Weaver shared the fears of his community, that "if our people get lax and rub elbows too much with the world, then the world may not look too different – we become like the people outside" (Birrell, 2018; see also Amish periodicals including *The Budget, The Diary* and *Family Life* for related narratives).

In such an instance, declensionist narratives enable the maintenance of the social links and practices associated with the community, for fear of losing these to wider society. Blokland contextualises such insecurity as forming an integral part of contemporary urbanism, for which "fears of lost community are everywhere" (2018: 34). Though, to claim that this fear of decline is new would be to overlook narrative construction within communities outside of present conditions. As Wellman (1988) observes,

> "It is likely that pundits have worried about the impact of social change on communities ever since human beings ventured beyond their caves... In the [past] two centuries many leading social commentators have been gainfully employed suggesting various ways in which large-scale social changes associated with the Industrial Revolution may have affected the structure and operation of communities." (cited in Putnam, 2000: 24)

This same ambivalence led to academics in the 1950s forecasting that North America's Amish population would soon 'die out'. For instance, early career anthropologist, Gertrude Enders Huntington, was told by Yale Anthropology professors that she should study the Amish, as their "rigid religious orientation was certain to create serious mental illness, which certainly would contribute to the death of their culture" (Kraybill et al., 2013: x). In fact, the Amish are doubling in numbers every two decades (ibid). However, a deeper and more nuanced understanding can emerge by recasting communities, not as fixed entities that rise and

decline, but rather dynamic blends of social connections, shared doing, continually constructed narratives, flexing boundaries and layered belonging (as the data chapters within this thesis illustrate).

This notion of adaptability as a source of thriving and persistence will be returned to throughout the coming chapters, as a tension which defines the stories communities tell, the practices associated with these and what it means to maintain boundaries and to belong. Understanding this complex interplay removes the temptation to juxtapose community against contemporary modernity, as community comes to epitomise the fluidity with which contemporary modernity is characterised. The way in which communities are researched is central to how they can be understood and recast in a fluid context.

3. Researching Community

Community in action has been explored through shifting lenses, from local studies, in which locality and community are intrinsically linked (such as Rees, 1950; Williams, 1956; Young and Willmott, 1957; Cohen, 1982; Bell, 1994) to transpatial communities, that transcend space, place and locality (Anderson, 1987; Brah, 1996; Gilroy, 1997; Massey, 2000). As noted above, this research focusses on religion-oriented diasporic communities i.e. those with exilic diasporic roots and a religion-oriented identity. Such groups arguably provide a pertinent example of communities conceptualised as traditional, as they negotiate new localities, past connections to a distant 'home', associated both with trauma and nostalgia, religion-centred orientations towards utopic notions of return, a central book or belief system and a complex mix of rooted and adaptive practices and cultures (see Chapter Two; also see Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; Clifford, 2000; Hall, 2000). Exploring such communities offers the opportunity to bring together literatures on diaspora, with those on religion and on community. Positioning this research between these fields, alongside theoretical works on contemporary (late/liquid) modernity, provides a vantage point that allows the contestation of antithetical notions of tradition and modernity, whilst shedding light on the nature of communities under fluid conditions.

For this reason, the research questions will be explored qualitatively through two case studies of such communities: Amish communities in Pennsylvania (United States) and a Jewish community in London (United Kingdom) (reasons for these choices are set out below). A combination of a discourse and narrative approach (Squire, 2005; Bryman, 2012; Gubrium and Holstein, 2012) were employed to explore meaning-making processes, the interconnectedness of personal and communal narratives and to allow individual perspectives to emerge, including those of 'boundary-makers', 'outliers', former members and others with complex affiliations. This is explored through forty-five semi-structured interviews (twenty-four with Amish/former Amish members and twenty-one with members/former members of the Jewish community) and participant observation of communal religious services, events and in some cases with the Amish, homelife. Both methods aim to sensitively build a deep understanding and intensive analysis of each case. This will allow for the predominant research themes outlined below to be addressed. In the process, this research will ask questions pertinent to many communities conceptualised as traditional in their strategies of boundary-keeping and their struggle to create and retain a sense of communal self (see Neal and Walters, 2008).

4. Research Questions

The importance of this research is in contesting problematic assumptions that underlie academic theory and research on modernity, tradition and community. It does so by exploring how communities conceptualised as traditional negotiate the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity, by posing the following questions:

- How can the boundary-keeping processes and practices of belonging of traditional, religion-oriented diasporic communities be understood in the context of contemporary modernity?
- To what extent and in what ways are communal boundaries and belonging negotiated and adapted?
- What can the experiences of boundary-keeping, belonging and practices in these communities tell us about the nature of contemporary modernity?

Communities conceptualised as traditional will be explored in this research via the two case studies of religion-oriented diasporic communities outlined above i.e. two Amish communities in rural Pennsylvania in the United States, and a London-based Jewish community in the United Kingdom. As discussed above, within these communities, fear of decline and examples of thriving circulate simultaneously. The Amish are known to be tightly bounded, traditional and separatist. However, they persist within a hyper-modern North American context, in which choice, transience, smart technologies and 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007) proliferate. Under such conditions of fluidity, Amish communities and their members cannot be separated from the wider world in which they exist, even in the process of attempting to remain isolated. Economic and logistical necessity mean that in Pennsylvania (as with Amish communities throughout the United States and Canada) the Amish engage with the non-Amish world (known as the *English* world to the Amish, whose first language is an adaptation of a dialect of German). With a desire to retain Amish ways, but the inability to separate fully from the world beyond the Amish Church, these communities offer the opportunity to examine what happens to belonging, boundaries and practices where negotiations must take place and thus provide a rich case study for this research.

Likewise, the Jewish community is sited in a superdiverse, hypermodern context, though in contrast to the rural areas in which the Amish reside, the Jewish community is located in a frenetic capital city. This complements the Amish case study, by offering an insight into negotiations in an alternative setting. The wider Jewish community has long been a source of academic and wider intrigue. This case study community, however, sprung up in recent decades as a bridge that its founders sought between socially liberal values and religiously traditional practice. It thus demonstrates an intersection between elements that are conceptualised as modern, fluid and traditional. The relative newness of the community means that it has not yet been the focus of study in its own right.

The distant and more recent emergence of these respective communities and the reasons for their selection will be explored further in Chapters Two and Three subsequently. The choice of two such communities is intended to allow for a range of negotiations of traditional communities within contemporary modernity to emerge, rather than for the purposes of direct comparison, though some comparisons will naturally arise at times.

In order to address existing conceptualisations of contemporary modernity, tradition and community, Chapter Two (Literature Review), will survey three broad bodies of literature.

Firstly, by turning to contemporary modernity, including notions of 'late', 'liquid', 'hyper', 'second' and 'reflexive' modernity, ideas of a 'risk' and 'network' society. These are critiqued (employing for example Robinson, 2006; Bhambra, 2007) in order to recast persisting sociological theorisations of modernity and tradition. Next, the chapter explores community through seminal works such as Tonnies (1887/2017), then by looking at studies of community (for instance, Young and Willmott, 1957; Cohen, 1982; Bell, 1994). It moves on to unpick notions of community as fixed entities (for instance Anderson, 1987; Gilroy, 1993; Massey, 2000), and reviews more contemporary field-based studies (e.g. Neal and Walters, 2008; Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012), demonstrating the tensions between fixity, fluidity, rise, decline, thriving and struggling communities. Finally, the literature review turns to diasporas, religion and belief, to understand how traditional communities with diasporic origins and a religious locus can both enable an understanding of the co-constitutive relationship between contemporary modernity and tradition and challenge prevailing meanings of communities within fluid contemporary conditions.

Chapter Three (Methodology) lays out the methodological approaches to this research, by firstly outlining the use of qualitative methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews and secondly, reviewing the legacy of studies of community. It then outlines the case study communities in greater detail, surveying the histories, narratives and tensions within these and the choice of a combination of one Jewish case study site, but multiple Amish sites. Data gathering choices and the decision to employ discourse and narrative analysis techniques is explained subsequently. The specificities of researching these communities is the focus of attention for much of the rest of this chapter, in order to understand the particular challenges, opportunities and techniques arising out of the Jewish and Amish communities of study. This leads to a discussion of the sometimes hazy role of positionality, with a combination of 'insider' and 'outsider' connections to the case study communities and the impact this holds for the research.

This thesis then turns to the empirical data in Chapters Four, Five and Six, in order to address the research questions posed above. Chapter Four (Boundaries), aims to explore the variations of boundaries presented in these communities. It does so by proposing that three 'types' can be observed. That is, those boundaries that are 'non-negotiable', for which their presence is central to communal persistence, such as the language of liturgy and the spaces in which these communities come together. Following this, boundaries termed here 'necessarily negotiated' are explored. These are areas where the communities have had to adapt, though not always willingly, for instance in response to technological advances of smartphone use, growth in communal numbers and changing approaches to employment in the Amish communities. Finally, Chapter Four turns to 'fluid boundaries', particularly relevant for the Jewish community, such as the widening inclusion of women in religious practice and the informal nature of leadership structures. Though neither discrete nor exhaustive, the last two 'categories' point to the dynamic processes within traditional communities that establish tradition as co-constitutive and *of* the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity. This allows for a challenging of prevailing, often dichotomising, approaches to modernity.

Chapter Five (Belonging), builds on this argument, in identifying the contingent and varied nature of communal belonging under contemporary modern conditions. This chapter draws on theorisations of the potential to embed into community within contemporary modernity. Using the ideas of Bauman (2000), Lipovetsky (2005) and the like, this chapter turns to the data to understand the processes of disembedding/embedding/re-embedding that take place

in these communities and asks questions about the appeal of embedding in community. It then observes specific routes to embedding in these communities, namely family and social networks. Belonging begins to be seen as an interweaving of networks and relationships, rather than a community of individuals. This lays the foundations for the final section of Chapter Five, which looks at the layered nature of belonging within these two communities. It argues that to belong is not an ‘in’ or ‘out’ phenomenon, but contingent, layered and comprised of a shifting interplay of social hierarchies, temporality and levels of religious proficiency. The surfacing of notions of community as comprised of complex layers, both socially, religiously and on an individual level, allows for prevailing meanings of community to be built upon.

The final data chapter, Chapter Six (Practice and the Reproduction of Community), explores the ways in which community persists and communal futures are understood within these communities. It does so by examining three main areas of practice: youth engagement, the deployment of communal narratives and ‘shared doing’. With regard to young people, the data on education and innovation within both communities is explored, highlighting the potential for change in order to enable communal persistence. Communal narratives of both recent (‘experienced’) and temporally distant (‘non-experienced’) events are next discussed, as a means of retaining a sense of communal identity. Further, the section returns to notions of communal rise and decline discussed earlier in this chapter. Finally, Chapter Six looks at the ‘shared doing’ – the social, spiritual and everyday actions – that hold the communities together. It is argued that the interweaving of these practices, combined with the negotiations of boundaries explored in Chapter Four and embedding processes in Chapter Five, form the reproductive elements that enable the adaptive thriving of community.

In concluding, this thesis will return to the research questions and key themes from the findings, in order to establish how communities conceptualised as traditional negotiate the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity and what this can tell us about the nature of both contemporary modernity, its relationship to tradition and the meanings of community under these fluid conditions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

As explored in the previous chapter, contemporary modernity has been characterised as continually shifting and fluid. However, such notions intrinsically situate tradition – defined in the Introduction in terms of practice, narratives and an interplay of continuity and adaptation – as the polar opposite, as fixed and inert. Modernity is thus conceived of as adaptive, rational, current and fluid; whereas tradition is fixed, outdated and essentially rejectionist of a world 'outside'. As such, within dominant theorisations of modernity, tradition falls outside of and is dichotomous to contemporary modernity, meaning that understandings of our social world emerge as problematic. In order to interrogate these inherent dichotomisations, an exploration of traditional communities within the contemporary modern context will be undertaken. The study of community, specifically religion-oriented diasporic communities (defined below), as an exemplar of lived tradition, offers a lens through which to explore and disentangle some of the contradictions within theories of contemporary modernity. An exploration of communities conceptualised as traditional can thus enable the process of problematising social theory and offer greater understanding of the persistence and place of tradition under (and as co-constructor of) the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity.

The terms used to describe theories of contemporary modern conditions (late, liquid, second, reflexive, hyper) will be employed with reference to each theory in the forthcoming chapter, though the term 'contemporary modernity' will serve as a broader descriptor. Further, within this chapter, there is at times a conscious entanglement between the discussions of modernity, contemporary modernity, tradition and community. This is deliberate and inescapable, contesting dominant social theories that contend that these are unique geographic, social, conceptual, temporal and developmental phases. There are henceforth 'fuzzy edges' between the language, ideas and critique of modernity and late modernity at times. This emphasises the unfeasibility of classifying these into historically and characteristically distinct phenomena. As Inglis succinctly asserts,

> "…the classical assumption that there is something called 'modernity', and that it is wholly unlike anything that came before it, is again assumed; but now the modernity known by the classics is juxtaposed against the alleged contemporary condition (risk society, cosmopolitan society, liquid modernity, reflexive modernity, network society etc.)" (2014: 106)

The section on contemporary modern theory below seeks to question these theories, allowing for a critique of temporal discontinuity and spatial dichotomies that persist within the theories, implicitly 'othering' practices, narratives and communities regarded as traditional. Prior to this, it will be necessary to build on the discussion of tradition in the preceding chapter. Subsequently, community as the vehicle through which to understand lived tradition, will be explored in its shifting sociological conceptualisations, from the local (e.g. Rees, 1950; Young and Willmott, 1957; Cohen, 1982) to the 'imagined' or transpatial (Anderson, 1987; Brah, 1996; Massey, 2000). This will lay the foundations for identifying some of the tensions within characterisations of community, such as the belonging by 'fate' and by 'choice' debate, as well as the potential to re-embed (Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000). The remainder of this chapter will focus on religion-oriented diasporic communities, around which this thesis centres, which it will be suggested, illustrate many of the misconceptions and gaps in understanding pervading conceptualisations of contemporary modernity.

As will be defined in greater detail later in this chapter, religion-oriented diasporic communities share binding narratives based on the diasporic experience, together with practices, rituals and boundaries offered by a religion-oriented locus, as well as placed-based ties and interactions. They epitomise many of the notions of tradition explored in the following section of this chapter, alongside the shared lived experiences that constitute community. This will be examined in greater depth with reference to the practices of such communities and their relationship to narratives, meanings and sociality.

This chapter seeks to begin to disrupt persistent notions of contemporary modernity that at times overlook the complex interplay of fixity and fluidity and the varied nature of community boundary maintenance, belonging and practice, that will be explored in the three data chapters. In so doing, it brings together three often distinct bodies of literature on contemporary modernity, community and practice into a dialogue with one another. Conclusions in this chapter will thus return to the need to understand and reframe the complex and varied negotiations that exist between traditional communities and contemporary modernity, problematising notions of a new 'phase' of distinct, post-traditional, fluid modernity.

1. What is Tradition?

In order to explore understandings of tradition in a contemporary modern context, the focus in this chapter will be on communities conceptualised as traditional, with a focus on religion-oriented diasporic communities as exemplars of traditional practice, characteristics of which will be explained in greater detail next. Religion-oriented diasporic communities – including Jewish, Amish, Muslim, Sikh, Rastafarian, African Pentecostal and Anabaptist groups – to name a few, provide a pertinent example of communities conceptualised both internally, in broader academic social theory and in the wider social imagination as traditional. The question emerges of where and how communities such as these fit within fluid conditions. Within mainstream social theory, these groups epitomise traits that are constructed as traditional i.e. pre- or non-modern, inert and spatially and temporally outside of contemporary modernity (for example Giddens, 1991; Huntington, 1996; Guibernau, 2013).

Tradition is a 'slippery' concept upon which there is no consensus. Yet more so than with notions of contemporary modernity (discussed below), there exists a problem of defining tradition as a distinct category for the purpose of analysis, yet recognising it as inseparable from and co-constitutive of the conditions of contemporary society. Lipovetsky, for instance, in his assessment of 'hypermodern times', asserts the symbiotic relationship between the pace of hypermodernity and turning to the 'pre-modern' past, which offers 'guidelines', 'continuity' and 'roots' (2005: 62). However, such narratives risk further enshrining notions of contemporary modernity and tradition as antithetical. Arts thus observes,

> "Whereas tradition is in the literature often only negatively defined as all things cultural that are not modern, modernity is most of the time a much more precisely defined concept." (2000: 10)

The emphasis on whether or not rituals, symbols, acts, behaviours and beliefs are 'authentic' or 'invented' (for example Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Clifford, 2000) has somewhat dominated contemporary discussions around tradition (see also Jackson et al, 2013). However, tradition entails a more nuanced "hooking-up and unhooking, remembering and forgetting, gathering and excluding of cultural elements" (Clifford, 2000: 97). Clifford accordingly critiques the concept of tradition as an opposition to modernity, asserting that

tradition is “less about preservation than about transformative practice” (ibid: 100). Yet he can be seen to be racialising tradition where he claims that the ‘pre-modern’ is within the ‘modern’, exemplified, he suggests, by the persistence of communities such as African ‘Christianities’ and ‘Islams’ (ibid: 105). Such an approach has arguably allowed social theory to perpetuate pre-modern *versus* modernity binaries.

The way in which traditions are “reshaped and reconfigured” is elucidated further by Jackson et al (2013: 683) using empirical research into intergenerational experiences of women in Hong Kong and Britain. They observe,

> “Traditions then, are not inevitably characterized by ‘fixity’ and resistance to change as Giddens implies (1991: 145), but can be modified and reshaped in new historical circumstances, whether through deliberate revival or simply adaptations of everyday mores and practices… We therefore argue for an understanding of traditions as practices and values which, though inherited from the past (recent or distant), are reshaped and reinterpreted in new contexts.” (Jackson et al, 2013: 669; see also Smart, 1998)

Where modernity becomes defined by fluidity, it is perhaps yet more contentious to claim that pockets of ‘pre-modernity’ or tradition exist outside of this. Further, if bonds of a traditional community can be maintained in virtual or ‘liquid’ environments, how are the terms of inclusion (and exclusion) to be established and maintained? These lines are further complicated by instances such as the adept use of the internet by Ultra-Orthodox Jews to maintain a sense of community through shared religious teachings online, virtual home-schooling and communicating with others around the world (Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai, 2005; see also Rashi and McCombs, 2015). In this instance, a community that is frequently categorised as traditional and fixed is utilising dynamic contemporary modern tools to deploy and maintain communal narratives and boundaries.

An exploration of traditional communities in a contemporary modern context – as ‘tradition-in-action’ – offers a prism through which to examine and contest these prevailing dichotomisations. This will take place through a focus on religion-oriented diasporic communities, specifically Amish and Jewish communities, returned to later in this chapter. Next, this chapter will address in greater depth the nature and problematic interrelations between modernity and tradition in theories of contemporary modernity, returning later to conceptualisations of tradition through dichotomising processes.

2. Dichotomy in Theories of Contemporary Modernity

Attempts by social theorists to understand our conditions “pertain to questions of identity as well as those of analysis and explanation” (Therborn: 2003: 294). The ‘modern project’ is a simultaneously analytical, abstract and normative one (Han and Shim, 2010). Indeed, the notion of modernity was so central to founding sociologists, that it can be claimed that “sociology is primarily the study of ‘modernity’” (Inglis, 2014: 101; see also Bendix, 1967). However, as discussed above, assumptions are embedded within these classical theorisations of modernity, situated as they were in specific geo-political-socio-economic-historical milieus. With a world in motion, new generations of social theorists from the 1990s began to shift their thinking from modernity, to what comes next – ‘second’, ‘reflexive’, ‘late’, ‘liquid’, ‘hyper’ – modernity. However, as will be discussed, remnants of special, temporal, ethno, national and Western-centric bias persist herewith.

British 'structuration' theorist, sociologist Anthony Giddens describes 'late' modernity as "a 'runaway world': not only is the *pace* of social change much faster than in any prior system, so also is its *scope*, and the *profoundness* with which it affects pre-existing practices and modes of behaviour'' (1991: 16). Implicit within these depictions, Western, industrial, urban characteristics (i.e. the late modern) are juxtaposed against representations of tradition as inert, primitive, rural and distant. The profundity of the change described by Giddens is echoed in Bauman's work. Zygmunt Bauman, a foremost commentator on the contemporary social world, culture and consumerism, defines 'liquid modernity' as a "novel phase in the history of modernity" (2003: 2). He argues that we are encountering a different 'phase' of modernity, epitomised by uncertainty, impermanence and fluid attachments. He depicts a "liquid modern individualized society that has made long-term commitments a rare expectation, and the obligation of mutual assistance 'come what may' a prospect that is neither realistic nor viewed as worthy of great effort" (ibid: 66). It is argued that such mechanisms are a break from the past, in which embeddedness in a community of 'fate' was a life-long expectation. Within this conception, individualisation of society can be linked to notions of the decline of communal solidarity (explored in the previous chapter) as the detached individual becomes the main agent responsible for identity formation.

Giddens' 'runaway world' is more deeply emphasised by German social theorist Ulrich Beck (2011, 2016), who likewise ascribes uncertainty, or 'risk' as a defining characteristic of 'second' modernity. He argues that "the dynamics of global risks (such as climate change, economic crisis, terrorist threat)" epitomise the conditions of "world risk society" (Beck, 2011: 1347) and adds that contemporary 'risk society' is pre-occupied by the "*anticipation* of catastrophe" (2016: 264). This anticipation is around "future uncertainties" in the guise of human initiated "ecological, economic, and terrorist interdependency crises" (Beck, 2011: 1349) as opposed to natural crises (earthquakes, floods and the like) that he argues exemplifies earlier anxieties. The global nature of the 'risk era' of contemporary modernity entails, according to Beck, the need to reach out in order to survive all potentially global events, "to constitute a community with a common destiny in the interests of survival" (ibid: 1353). This is akin to Giddens' (1991) notion of retreat. If, as has become evident within much of the literature, contemporary modernity is defined by the features of urbanity, speed and impersonalisation, Giddens identifies a counter point that emerges – a desire for 'ontological security'. That is, seeking solace and constancy in a world of otherwise morphing meanings, connections and events.

This notion of rapidity and the resultant need to (re)claim lost certainties is echoed in the work of Manuel Castells. Castells, a Spanish sociologist predominantly occupied by the changing nature of networks of communication, also points to the "accelerated pace" of contemporary modernity in which rapid developments in technology have "transformed the social landscape" (2000: 1). His interest (as with those such as Sassen, 2005), is in the global inequalities produced by this change, not believing these transformations to be universal. He refers to elements of society that "risk becoming irrelevant from the perspective of the system's logic" and warns of the "consolidation of black holes of human misery" (ibid: 2). Echoing Giddens' notions of 'ontological security' from the pace of change sought through the retreat inwards, Castells describes,

> "In such a world of uncontrolled, confusing change, people tend to regroup around primary identities: religious, ethnic, territorial, national." (ibid: 3)

He goes on to cite religious fundamentalism as an example of this 'regrouping', seeking "personal security and collective mobilization in these troubled times… a *bipolar opposition between the Net and the self"* (ibid; Eisenstadt [2000] additionally exemplifies this conflation of community and religion with fundamentalism, as explored in the following section). Whilst Castells acknowledges the global specificities of features of contemporary modernity, the 'bipolar opposition' and caricatured example of religion epitomise dichotomisation within social theory. He recognises, however, that identity-based community "is not a new trend, since identity, and particularly religious and ethnic identity, has been at the roots of meaning since the dawn of human society" (ibid: 3).

What then is different, one might question. Castells (like Giddens, Eisenstadt and other contemporary social theorists) can be accused of claiming that turning inwards, to identity-based associations for support and comfort, is separate ('bipolar') from contemporary conditions, a step outside of these, rather than a feature of contemporary fluid modernity. Moreover, the potential of communities of identity to be seats of cooperation, tolerance, acceptance and reciprocity is overlooked, as Castells points to "the increasing distance between globalization and identity" (2000: 22). Thus, those elements that do not fit with the tradition/modernity dichotomy are dismissed. This is echoed in Beck's proposition of the retreat to 'renationalisation' and 're-ethnicisation' (2011: 1351). In contrast, Will Arts speaks of an 'acceleration' of society that leads to a 'deceleration' of turning into regional and ethnic traditional identities, which he more optimistically argues produces "an intriguing coexistence of and contrast between cultural tradition and modernity" (2000: 4). This more nuanced approach begins to offer an understanding of tradition and contemporary modernity as co-constitutive, in which the conditions of one go on to produce the other. Arguably, Bauman (2000, 2001) too suggests the need for attachments as an antidote to fluid conditions. However, he is pessimistic regarding the success and longevity of such attachments. The seeking of identity-based associations can thus be viewed as attractive within fluid modernity, but to claim that they are 'in contrast' to or the polar opposite of modernity and that the bonds of community are doomed to be broken is problematic and unnecessarily dichotomising.

For French philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky, rapidity and threat are also central features of what he defines as 'hypermodernity'. He sees something "absolutely modern" in nature in the contemporary era, yet a modernity that is 'hyper' (2005: 31). He asks, "Hypercapitalism, hyperclass, hyperpower, hyperterrorism, hyperindividualism, hypermarket, hypertext – is there anything that isn't 'hyper'?" (ibid: 30). The consequence, he suggests, is that ideas of progress typical of modernity have been usurped by anxiety about the future (examined further in Chapter Five with reference to the data). Such anxiety is expounded too by Scott Lash who describes the "'chaos' or noise of the unintended consequences that leads to system dis-equilibrium" (2003: 50). As opposed to the 'first' modernity, in which the individual is 'reflective', the individual of 'second' modernity is 'reflexive', epitomised by what Lash describes as the "outsourcing of the family", for instance whereby parents give mobile phones to their children as a means of parenting or the proliferation of start-ups, freelancing and subcontracting (ibid: 51). For Lash, this is a world in which we must create our own rules. He draws on Beck's ideas of 'place-polygamy' enabled by advances in technology and challenges the notions within Giddens thesis of late modernity, arguing that the distinctions between agency and structure are defunct under contemporary conditions that are 'non-linear' (addressed with particular reference to young people in Chapters Four and Six).

Thus emerges a proliferation of ideas around contemporary modernity that, whilst providing important understandings of the contemporary conditions of fluidity, can be seen to perpetuate a dichotomous definition of modernity against tradition, in which tradition is 'over there' and 'then' (Robinson, 2006). They do so in the shadow of theories of modernity that assert a uniqueness to these conditions and a distinctness that borders othering. In light of this, it is necessary to extract from theories of modernity in the contemporary 'era' important characterisations, whilst drawing on ideas that historically situate and spatialise these concepts. Drawing on perspectives from beyond classical sociological conceptions of modernity can enable this process of understanding. For instance, the work of Jennifer Robinson (2006), geographer of international urban theory and development, is critical of established notions of modernity and brings attention to urban-, ethno- and Western-centric othering. Whilst sociologist Gurminder Bhambra's (2007) mobilisation of postcolonial theory allows a rethinking of modernity and its relation to sociology, unravelling what she identifies as the 'rupture and difference' within sociological theories of modernity and by extension contemporary modernity. Uma Narayan, too, in her feminist critique of cultural essentialism draws on the ""superiority" of "Western culture"" in colonial narratives (1998: 89), that has carried through a cultural othering between 'the West' and 'the Rest', producing "hegemonic representations of particular cultures" (ibid: 104). Such thinkers provide a wider range of conceptual tools with which to interrogate notions of modernity that have perhaps taken for granted the dichotomies they have enshrined.

2.1 Discontinuity and Dichotomy: Othering Tradition in Contemporary Modern Theory

Typifications of contemporary modernity explored above implicitly suggest a modernity that is 'here' (i.e. in the West) and tradition that is 'elsewhere' spatially and/or conceptually (Robinson, 2006; see also Magliocco, 2012). By situating theorisations of modernity (and by extension contemporary modernity) in the (urban) West, tradition as an ethnocentric, rural and fixed conception becomes apparent. Moreover, where 'late' (Giddens, 1991), 'liquid' (Bauman, 2000), 'reflexive' (Lash, 2003) or 'second' (Beck, 2016) modernity are employed to denote a 'new era' in modernity, such characterisations add fuel to the contestable and teleological argument that periods of pre-modernity/tradition, modernity and late/liquid/second/reflexive modernity represent discreet and progressive historical periods. The following two sections return to the discussion of tradition from the start of this chapter, exploring these discontinuities and dichotomies further. First, in terms of modernity (and consequently contemporary modernity) being posed as a discrete historical 'era' and secondly with regards to modernity being theorised spatially, both as Western and urban-centric.

2.1.1 Temporal Discontinuity: Tradition as 'Pre-Modern'

For Giddens, modernity is a "post-traditional order" whereby "doubt... permeates into everyday life as well as philosophical consciousness" (1991: 2-3). The notion of an order that is 'post' traditional implies a break from the past or a "watershed" (Arts, 2000: 10). This suggests a discontinuity between the traditional and the modern, which Inglis argues falls at "the altar of schematic periodization" (2014: 104; see also May, 2011). Within this schema, history is seen as leading up to contemporary characteristics, teleologically arriving at late modernity. However, the 'trinity' of pre-modernity, modernity and late modernity (Inglis, 2014: 106) is problematic given the plethora of features that pervade the 'eras' and point to the traditional existing within the modern (and by extension the late modern). For instance, Giddens describes that within modernity the "transformation of time and space, coupled with disembedding mechanisms, propel social life away from the hold of pre-established precepts

or practices" (1991: 20). This is arguable given that phenomena labelled as traditional, or 'pre-established precepts', such as religion, seem to exist within the context of contemporary modernity. He states, "In the post-traditional order of modernity, and against the backdrop of new forms of mediated experience, self-identity becomes a reflexively organised endeavour" (ibid: 5). Regarding such characteristics as doubt and reflexivity as distinctly modern, or even late modern, conveys the contemporary era as entirely and philosophically discrete from that which went before.

Beck and Grande's contention that we are now in a 'cosmopolitanised' and 'individualised' second modernity further enshrines characteristics of tradition and modernity as distinct. This individualisation, they argue, entails "(1) detraditionalization; (2) institutionalized disembedding and re-embedding of the individual; (3) compulsory pursuit of a 'life of one's own' and lack of genuine individuality; (4) the internalization of risks" (2010: 420). This has been arrived at by what Beck and Grande characterise as a "sequence from Pre-modernity to First modernity and Second modernity" (ibid: 424). Beck asserts in a later work,

> "Isn't there a gulf of centuries between the threats, opportunities and conflict dynamics of border-transcending, radicalized modernization in the 21st century and the ideas, institutions and structures of industrial capitalism and national state authority rooted in the 19th century…?" (2016: 262)

Such a linear vision which asserts historical/social stages is difficult to reconcile whilst features of all three 'stages' persist in both the past and present. This notion is expounded by Eisenstadt, who identifies autonomy, "reflexivity and emancipation" (2000: 5) as modern features, juxtaposing the modern, "rational", model as against "ideologies of traditional authenticity" (ibid: 12).

As such, Adam critiques that these 'states' are "established retrospectively" and that social theory should focus on their "mutual implication" (1996: 135). Indeed, Calhoun urges a review of history, for instance to bring attention to examples of disembedding processes in pre-modernity, rather than consigning them to second modernity alone,

> "Isn't this [disembedding and re-embedding] arguably part of the background to the rise of Christianity among Jews and others in the merchant cities of the Empire...?" (2010: 615)

Describing various conditions as historical phases can be a productive analytical tool. However, as Calhoun illustrates, where and how do we draw the boundaries around these notions of pre-, first- and second modernity? And are characteristics such as fluidity, autonomy and disembedding, essentially contemporary? Contemporary modern features, categorised by social theorists such as Giddens, Bauman, Beck and Grande, who claim disembedding and insecurity as uniquely late modern, should consequently be cast therefore in the wider context of time. This can reveal that these 'trends' may indeed be more commonplace in the present, yet they are neither new nor of a discreet historical phase. Inglis reasons that within this approach, "historical account gets subordinated to the account of the alleged condition we are currently in" (2014: 104). In so doing, he argues, history becomes caricature. Instead, Calhoun suggests that looking to the past will allow us to see that "the postmodern was there all along" (2010: 616). For this reason, he advocates a "greater consideration of history" in order to understand contemporary phenomena in context (ibid: 617).

Bhambra likewise urges a review of history and how it is represented in the present, arguing that “the ways in which we understand the past are crucial to our understandings of ourselves and the world” (2007: 2). Regarding mainstream classical and contemporary social theory as replete with “temporal and spatial disjuncture”, Bhambra calls for the very notion of modernity (and by extension the theories of late, liquid, second modernity which it bore) to be problematised (ibid). Doing so will enable social theory to reconsider notions of modernity and the discipline of sociology on which it rests. Robinson contributes to the reframing of such notions in emphasising that modernity has been conveyed by classical sociologists in terms of a “sense of historical time, based on new, rational techniques for the ordering of time and space” (2006: 13; also see Hall, 1996). She argues that tradition is placed in opposition to this and “as having a mythical sense of time and a mystical and religious sense of causality”, unsuited to progress (ibid: 13), whereby Western modernity is forward moving, but that tradition, based elsewhere, entails a sense of time that is static and precludes progress. The implication of addressing this dichotomy is that rather than traditional communities being conceptualised as outside of modernity, one can in fact start to view such communities as co-constructors of and constructed by contemporary modernity.

Akin to Pierre Bourdieu’s (1986/2000) description of the ‘biographical illusion’ (explored in the context of diaspora in the later section), Bhambra advocates a re-orienting of understandings of history as interpretations, leading to an appreciation of our contemporary conditions in the context of the past,

> “…the way in which we understand the past has implications for the social theories we develop to deal with the situations we live in today. Through recognizing the constituted ‘other’ as always and already present in history and participating in its production, but written out of it, we can begin to reconceptualise forms of theoretical discourse and political practice today.” (2007: 11)

Thus, one might argue that in seeing the colonial subject, religion or other ‘subaltern’ (see Chakrabarty and Bhabha, 2002) in a historical context, we can begin to understand and deconstruct the othering of tradition and associated communities within understandings of the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity. Indeed, the notion of a discreet phase of late/liquid/second modernity can begin to be deconstructed.

Robinson depicts traditional communities as in fact necessarily dynamic, for instance in suggesting that “even the choice to defend tradition could be understood as a contemporary adaption to the present – a modernity” (2006: 21). This is particularly important in addressing understandings of religion-oriented diasporic communities, categorised as pre-modern/traditional, and by implication inert, but that can be recast as necessarily dynamic in order to persist, adapting to the fluid and disembedding conditions of contemporary modernity. As will be discussed below and in subsequent chapters, the deployment of practice, discourse and fluid boundary-making allows communities of this nature to cohere and at times thrive in (and as a part of) contemporary modernity, rather than be left behind by it.

Lipovetsky attempts to further redress this dichotomising tendency within social theory by highlighting hypermodernity’s “remobilization of traditional beliefs, and the individualist hybridization of past and modernity” (2005: 67). He calls this a “‘meta-traditionality’ and a ‘meta-religiosity’ without bonds” (ibid). Here emerges a productive understanding of

tradition and community through the lens of the hypermodern, as individualised, complex and beyond time constructs.

2.1.2 Spatial Discontinuity: Tradition as 'Over There'

Giddens posits globalisation as a central feature of contemporary modernity, describing it as a "dialectic of the local and global" in which "no-one can 'opt out' of the transformations brought about by modernity" (1991: 22). The implication is that there is no exemption from the conditions of modernity, which pervade the world. However, a contradiction arises in Giddens' argument as he refers to "core geographical areas of modernity" (ibid) and does not appear to regard modernity as a universally equal condition, rather some places are more modern than others. This incongruity exemplifies some of the difficulties of positing the idea that tradition and modernity exist spatially apart from one another and illustrates the tendency to theorise modernity as based in particular geographical milieus. In so doing, it overlooks the persistence of tradition within the modern, in both practice and in the imagination.

Mainstream social theory can be seen resultantly to "float loftily" in what Beck defines as an enduring "condition of universalistic superiority and instinctive certainty" (2016: 258). In response, he advocates a "cosmopolitan turn", moving towards a less European and North American-centric approach (see also Bhambra, 2007). Despite attempts to move beyond "old dualisms of internal and external, national and international, us and them" (Beck, 2011: 1349), however, Beck does not entirely succeed in overcoming traditional/modern dualisms of time, place and culture. Exploring the East Asian context allows Beck (2016) to assert that second modernity has its 'varieties', but it seems that all iterations are ascribed degrees of the same features (i.e. descended from Western 'second' modernity). Likewise, Bruno Latour follows this pattern. Whilst attempting to re-orient contemporary modern theory away from the West, Latour claims that non-Western modernities are "imitating the West" (1993: 9). Thus, although Latour, like Beck, claims contemporary modernity to be present beyond the West, it is implied as semi-traditional or a less-modern attempt to replicate a 'true', Western modernity. This enshrines assumptions of the West's concept of its own "superior modernisation" (Arts, 2000: 6).

Hence, whilst in some ways the notion of 'varieties' of modernity moves theorisations beyond Western-centric conceptualisations of contemporary modernity, such theories do not successfully eradicate dichotomies, instead asserting that modernities 'elsewhere' are based on traditional ways of being (Han and Shim, 2010), emerge more slowly and are iterations of a project that is essentially Western. For instance, Eisenstadt (2000) claims that in the contemporary era, modernity has spread and taken on various forms across Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Eisenstadt is partially successful in looking beyond a single Western notion of the modern, yet fails to challenge the underlying precepts that the imposition of the concept of modernity on different ways of life may indeed render the notion of modernities defunct as a category, rather than point to modernity having spread and adapted.

In challenging this othering of tradition, Eisenstadt argues that religious movements are as much co-constructors of modernity as they are "anti-modern" (2000: 17). However, his analytical failure can be regarded in his primary example being "fundamentalist religious movements", with negligible reference to the more varied lived experiences of mainstream religious and diasporic communities within contemporary modernity. This mischaracterisation is further revealed when offering the example of the Islamic notion of '*ummah*' (global community) as a 'new' transnational concept. A spatial and temporal split

emerges in which the most global elements of religion are ascribed to contemporary, transnational modern conditions, rather than historically sited. Despite Eisenstadt's later concession, that from these movements emerge a multiplicity of modernities "far beyond the homogenic and hegemonic visions of modernity prevalent in the 1950s" (ibid: 24), he still fails to regard such communities as in fact *of* modernity.

Regarding modernity as a politicised and racialised notion, Robinson highlights that such pervasive conceptions of modernity privilege the West. As such, they demote other experiences of modernity, particularly in the global south and rural areas, as being "alternative" (2006: 7). Assumptions of dynamic, distinctively urban modernity support this claim. Robinson compellingly challenges such assumptions,

> "As key Western writers on cities such as Georg Simmel and Robert Park sketched the theoretical foundations for urban studies at the turn of the twentieth century, they did so in the tracks of colonial practices of racialisation and cultural difference. On this basis they erected a fantasy about the cities they knew as being creative, dynamic, modern places. This fantasy about the nature of urban experiences in the West persists…" (ibid: 4)

Bhambra extends this critique of the "'specialness of the West'" (McLennan, 2000: 281, cited in Bhambra, 2007: 5). She acknowledges the move towards theories of multiple, alternative or global modernities, but cautions,

> "Across a range of theoretical positions, then, modernity can be seen as resting on a basic distinction between the social formations of 'the West' and 'traditional' or 'pre-modern societies." (Bhambra, 2007: 3)

Goran Therborn attempts a more nuanced characterisation of modernities as 'entangled'. He proposes,

> "Most generally, there are constitutive entanglements of modernity and some tradition, coming out of the infinitely variable incompleteness of every modern rupture with the past, and out of the plasticity of most traditions." (2003: 295)

With some of the hitherto discussed contemporary theories of modernity veering between orientalism and dismissiveness of the traditional 'other', Therborn questions the "conflictual configurations" in which modernity and tradition are historically incompatible (ibid: 298). Therborn suggests that the difficulty for "moderns" is with postcolonial "local others", who live within, but were once geographically distant (ibid: 299). Following this logic then, the inability to reconcile the traditional and the modern, is in part due to the fact that the former was once considered physically elsewhere, but post-war and post-independence migration, as well as the ease of travel, has shifted that balance, but not the fear and misconceptions that accompany othering. Thus, his explanation of the interplay of time, space, tradition and modernity goes further than that of Eisenstadt, Giddens and Beck, in this assertion above, that modernity and tradition are entangled, rather than polar opposites, and that persistent othering of tradition is rooted in processes of movement.

Calhoun provides an alternative approach which offers a valuable counterpoint to what he perceives as this "false universalism" replete in the theories of Giddens, Beck and the like (2010: 267). He points to Paul Gilroy's (1993) *Black Atlantic* as a constructive move towards "histories of interconnections rather than discrete nations", something he believes is essential to creating a 'value-free' social science (Calhoun, 2010: 607). This redress allows for

contemporary modernity to be viewed in terms of dynamic relations rather than distinct features with fixed spatial origins. Taken in combination with the critiques of Bhambra and Robinson, the reconceptualisation of contemporary modernity becomes both an analytical and normative project, as is discussed below.

Understanding contemporary modernity and tradition thus extends beyond theory, into an exploration of how we understand our conditions and ourselves in the past, present and future (Calhoun, 2010; see also Arts, 2000). Beck describes the methodological implications of this in his advocating for 'methodological cosmopolitanism',

> "This historical connection—between social actors and social scientists—alone gives rise to the axiomatics of methodological nationalism. And methodological nationalism is not a superficial problem or minor error. It involves both the routines of data collection and production and basic concepts of modern sociology such as society, social inequality, state, democracy, imagined communities, multiculturalism, and, for us in Europe, our understanding of the European Community." (2011: 1347)

Hence, the implications of the persistent spatial and temporal dichotomisation within mainstream theories of contemporary modernity are wide-ranging and the need for alternative approaches to surface is significant. Latour proposes that we should therefore turn to conceptualisations that acknowledge "the multiple entities that have always passed in a different way" (1993: 76), as an alternative understanding of contemporary modernity. Theorisations of contemporary modernity can thus recognise that, "We have never really moved forward or backward but have simply been caught up in a process of classification and re-classification" (Bhambra, 2007: 8). It is this approach that will be considered throughout the chapters that follow, in which an understanding of traditional communities can offer an alternative perspective of contemporary modernity as co-constitutive, rather than a binary of the modern, juxtaposed against the traditional. In order to do so, it will next be necessary to turn to theorisations of community and the lived expression of forms of tradition.

3. Theorising Community

'Community' in the academic and social imagination is simultaneously lost and found, new and ancient, declining and on the rise, utopic and nostalgic, proximal and aspatial, authoritarian and egalitarian, abstract and real, fixed and dynamic, central and peripheral. Indeed, Blackshaw characterises the concept of community as now existing,

> "'…independently of sociology, like a renegade, forever on the run, always one jump ahead of any attempt to identify with it any conceptual precision. By now it is hard to know whether community has changed, is still the same or was never what we thought it was in the first place." (2010: 10)

In the 1950s, George Hillary (1955) attempted to gather nearly one hundred definitions of community (see also Crow and Allen, 1994; Dalley, 1998). Such difficulties in definition lead Brent to ask, "What sort of phenomenon is community? What 'something' is it that does not appear to have a concrete existence, but which nevertheless has important effects on people's lives"? (2004: 214). There are indeed contested and contestable understandings of community (Kühle, 2014), yet even as society shifts over time, community continues to hold resonance (Blokland, 2018), relating perhaps to some extent to the search for 'ontological security' within theories of contemporary modernity explored above (e.g. Giddens, 1991).

Kühle asks three enduring questions that preoccupy scholars of community: "How do we define community, how do we measure community and how are communities changing?" (2014: 175). This section addresses Kühle's question of definition, exploring how theorisations of community have preoccupied scholars and how these conceptualisations have changed over time. The risk is that the loosest definition of community – solidarities, networks, social capital – can mean all things, labelling every human contact as a form of community (Delanty, 2010). However, restricting community to locality, occupation, political allegiance or religion for instance, risks undermining and neglecting those ideas and experiences around which people cohere and feel a part of a community that may seem at first peripheral. The second and third questions, of measuring community, are explored in the subsequent methodology chapter (Chapter Three), surveying changing methods for exploring community, though theory and empirics are not entirely distinct. This thesis seeks to answer a further question not posed by Kühle i.e. What is community's continuing appeal? This is explored throughout and in concluding thoughts.

This section will explore how social scientists have sought to explain, understand and construct community. This will take place by looking at the development of early ideas around what constitutes community, followed by a deeper exploration of shifting conceptualisations of community, including an assessment of boundaries, belonging and embeddedness. Finally, the case of religion-oriented diasporic communities will be outlined in greater depth, to lay the foundations for the forthcoming data chapters. This discussion aims to bring theories of contemporary modernity, and relatedly of tradition, into dialogue with conceptualisations of community. In this way community – specifically traditional communities exemplified in this research by religion-oriented diasporic communities – becomes a tool through which to examine the nature of contemporary modernity and to challenge dichotomisations explored hitherto.

3.1 Shifting Conceptualisations of Community: Exclusion, Connectedness and Belonging

Human connection has long been a source of enquiry. As early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza were occupied with sketching the nature of human interaction (Strath, 2015). For Emmanuel Kant, community was constructed as both shelter and exclusion a "'with whom' and 'against whom'" (ibid). In the late nineteenth century, German social theorist Ferdinand Tonnies, regarded by many as pivotal to early theorisations of community, discussed at length the distinction between two structures that make up the social world, translated from the German as Community (*Gemeinschaft)* and Society (*Gesellschaft*) (though Sorokin identifies elements of Tonnies ideas on community as far back as Confucius, Plato and St Augustine [Sorokin in Tonnies, 2017: vii]). Tonnies posits that "'Community means genuine enduring life together, whereas Society is a transient and superficial thing' (Tonnies, 1887/2017: 19)", producing a mutually exclusive characterisation of community as fixed, innate and natural and society as modern and progressive. Further, *Gemeinschaft* entails elements including "dense and demanding social ties", as well as institutions, rituals and perceived in-group similarity and common beliefs (Brint, 2001: 8). This characterisation of community arguably reflects Tonnies' own context of "a Romantic yearning for a premodern world distant from the economic and political modernization taking place at that time in Germany" (Samples, 2017: xi). Such a characterisation echoes ideas of modernities discussed thus far, in which contemporary modernity fits the description of *Gesellschaft*, a fast-moving entity which leads to the seeking of shelter in the familiarity of *Gemeinschaft*. Like modernity, the former is progressive and

dynamic, whilst the latter emerges as an idealised notion, which is essentialised, akin to notions of tradition. These connected dichotomisations within theories of community and of modernity offer the opportunity for the study of the former to shed new light on understandings of the latter, as this thesis explores.

From the early to mid-twentieth century, the field of Community Studies has undergone interrelated shifts in both theoretical conceptualisations of community and in methodological approaches to their study (Crow and Allen, 1994). In the US, the Chicago School's emphasis on urban sociology from the work of Robert Park (1915) on social structures, community and behaviours in the city began to map distinct communities, starting with Chicago. Community's definitions and variations became of greater interest within both urban and rural contexts during the period which followed. Emerging in the subsequent decades in the UK were studies of specific communities (for example Rees, 1950; Williams, 1956; Young and Willmott, 1957). These tended to 'seek out' communities, predominantly rural localities, exploring how these groupings negotiated conditions of 'solid' forms of modernity (Bauman, 2000) – namely industrialisation, telecommunications and transport – and the resultant transience of populations. In addition to this, deliberations arose regarding the dis-embedding and arguable re-embedding of individuals from their existing (generally local and rural) communities into new contexts (Young and Willmott, 1957; Cohen, 1982; Bell, 1994).

Attempts to 'find', label and externally define communities arguably cemented notions of community as natural, existing and fixed, as 'sociological objects' (Alleyne, 2002), a contestable perspective later criticised by social constructionists (e.g. Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Freud, 1994). For social researchers during this period, community was synonymous with local geographical place (the small village, the network of urban streets). In these depictions, based around often nostalgic and idealised attitudes of longstanding kinship links and villages, Simmelian notions of simple, traditional and local community life were juxtaposed against modern, industrialised, mobilised city life. For instance, in Stacey's study of Banbury, tradition is defined in terms of "Conformity, stability, conservation of established institutions and values" (1960: 168), whilst Crow and Allan write about "'traditional' neighbourhood patterns" (1994: xviii) and the 'traditional working class', with little interrogation as to how this constructs such communities as being outside of modernity. The dichotomisation inherent within Tonnies earlier works thus persists in the separation of industrial, modern life with intimate community.

Despite continued immigration, less geographically rooted groups were largely absent in the early Community Studies literature, though this began to emerge in the 1960s and 70s in the context of race, class and migration, for instance in Rex and Moore's (1967) study in Birmingham focussing on racial conflict in the urban context and Rex and Tomlinson's (1979) later work on class and urban colonial immigration. Such groups were thus arguably not granted the 'community' status of the British village, suburb or urban streets, perhaps an indication of the 'over there' referred to in Robinson's (2007) work. The implication of such a fixed definition of community, bound up as it is with place, is the concretisation of an otherwise fluid set of phenomena. As Brent argues,

> "Claiming community as organic or natural is to try to assert the existence of a foundation for it outside of the society in which it exists. But no social structures possess this extra-social certitude. None has an independent starting point, either as a core or as a foundation. Cores and foundations are themselves constructed." (2004: 218)

Towards the late twentieth century, attention turned towards more transpatial, diasporic and ‘imagined’ communities (e.g. Anderson, 1987; Bhabha, 1990) as well as towards understandings of place as tied up with notions of nostalgia and time (Massey, 2000). Theorisations of community came to encompass communities of identity and affect, shifting further from purely geographical conceptions. From feminist movements, to political and transnational groups, the emotional content of a community became regarded as a new locus. This challenged conventional conceptions of community, whereby notions of the core of community shifted from the village hall to the ideas, often utopic, change-centred or nostalgic, enacted through cultural and religious practice, choice, complex narratives and dis-embedding mechanisms (see Smart, 1998). Relatedly, community in a contemporary modern context has been presented as the site of retreat from unfamiliarity (Heller, 1995; Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000; Halsall, 2014). Within the boundaries of community, short-hand can be used, "No footnotes are needed; from few words, much can be understood" (Heller, cited in Morley, 2000: 17). Much like Giddens’ notion of ‘ontological security’ in a world of flux, this is apposite particularly for diasporic communities, finding themselves in new geographical contexts, experiencing their identities externally constructed as 'other', and 'different' (Alleyne, 2002). For Bauman community is thus simultaneously nostalgic and utopian, “paradise lost or paradise still hoped to be found” (2001: 3).

The complex relationship between rootedness and transience of diasporic communities makes such groups particularly interesting to the contemporary modern context of this research, adding another layer of identification to a religion-based orientation, discussed below. However, caution is needed when positing community as a fixed site of security for diasporic and ‘culturally different’ groups (Alleyne, 2002) for fear of casting such communities as remnants of the past. Indeed, Alleyne argues that such an approach perpetuates the ‘West and the Rest’ discourse, for which “’We’ (in the West) have individuals in society, while they (the Rest) have community (of course, ‘we’ once had community as the dominant form of social organization, but ‘we’ dropped it on the way to modernity)” (2002: 611). He also argues (in an earlier piece) that viewing such groups as culturally distinct enables an ‘ethnicisation’ of community, whereby community is synonymous with minority, a signifier that such entities operate outside of the mainstream state and social apparatus and as pre-modern and primitive (ibid). Alleyne thus proposes pushing the idea of community up the “conceptual food-chain” to allow for more abstract conceptions of it to surface as “ever-changing”, as opposed to being based solely on the notion of shared roots (2002: 622).

Accordingly, Alleyne asserts that community should be “understood in action”, referring to the “large body of comparative ethnographic evidence which shows communities to be imagined, constructed and reconstructed in ongoing human relations, sometimes consensual, sometimes contentious” (2002, 608). Likewise, Studdert and Walkerdine seek to re-orient the study of community around “the action of communing”, arguing that community cannot be essentialised as it is “constructed temporarily” (2016: 613). Through their empirical work in urban settings, Neal et al argue that it is this adaptability and emotional content through sociality that give community its “constant appeal” (2018: 4). Viewing community as part of urban multiculture opens the opportunity to regard community not as ‘other’ to the urban, fluid contemporary modern conditions, but to see it as implicitly a part of these conditions and community as dynamic.

This approach allows for community to be understood as sites of ‘doing and being together’, as an “iterative process” between participation and connection, where shared interests

become springboards for wider conversation and social connection beyond the purpose of the group (ibid: 12; explored in depth in Chapter Six). Brint hence defines community as "aggregates of people who share common activities and/or beliefs and who are bound together *principally* by relations of affect, loyalty, common values, and/or personal concern (i.e. interest in the personalities and life events of one another)" (2001: 8; see also Halsall, 2014). This places social connections at the centre of community, looking beyond singular notions of place, belief and other identifiers, to the social ties which both hold community together and enables persistence in the face of change (see also Brent, 2004). Symbolic practices of community otherwise understood as central, fixed and universally held, can instead be cast as layered and nuanced, where the content of community holds different meanings to different people (Blokland, 2018; see also Lee, 2005).

The opportunity, rather than the constraint, of community within a globalised world thus emerges (Alleyne, 2002: 618). As such, Wasserfall et al propose that a degree of fluidity is enacted, in part through accepting the behaviours and beliefs that exist on the "margins" of 'thick boundaries (1999: 140; 'thin boundaries', they argue, are more rigid). One of their research participants describes the tolerance experienced as part of these 'thick boundaries' in terms of knowing that community is where "any bloke can come to – no matter what he's done – and get help" (ibid: 143). Boundaries are thus the site of difference and togetherness, as Wasserfall et al identify,

> "…boundaries, precisely because of their inherent complexity, also point to areas of creativity with the potential to restructure relations between individuals and societies as well." (ibid: 150).

The social connectedness implicit within community thus allows for tolerance and acceptance at communal boundaries, which are continually contested and negotiated in the processes of "boundary work" (ibid: 138; see also Brent, 1997).

Taken alongside understandings of community in terms of affect, place, security and meanings, the recognition of social ties ('being' and 'doing' together) as central to community allows for the layered and dynamic nature of community to be explored (as returned to in Chapter Six). As outlined above, this will take place here through the vehicle of understanding religion-oriented diasporic communities. The remainder of this section will focus on key sociological debates around community, embeddedness and the potential for belonging, leading to a deeper discussion of the communities of focus.

3.2 Belonging and Disembedding

Whether one is born into a particular community (also termed 'communities of fate' [Bauman, 2000], 'natal affiliation' [Day, 2011]) or 'assigned membership' [Guibernau, 2013]) or whether individuals *choose* to belong, as an "active engagement in the construction of his or her own self-identity" (Guibernau, 2013: 27) are the primary identifiers of belonging for theorists of community. However, belonging is more layered, contingent and complex than this debate can reveal, arguably yet more so in the context of religion-oriented diasporic communities, defined in the previous chapter and in greater detail in the next section. This phenomenon of 'choice' is posited as a contemporary modern feature (e.g. Guibernau, 2013; Giddens, 1991). Yet, whilst individual freedom was arguably not a cornerstone of 'pre-modern' society and the overall tendency was to remain in the same community, the variety of religious denominations and schisms alone illustrates that a degree of dynamism and fluidity has long been present in community and identity formation. Thus, this binaried

conception of belonging is not wholly satisfactory, highlighting the need for a more fluid, nuanced and varied understanding of belonging. What is required is more detailed scrutiny of conceptions of the variability of belonging through processes of embedding, dis-embedding and re-embedding (explored in the context of the case study communities in Chapter Five).

By extension of the above discussion around the nature of contemporary modernity, for Bauman and Giddens, a uniquely 'liquid/late' modern phenomenon is in the non-permanence of belonging, in that one can disembed from community under contemporary conditions. Giddens (1991) suggests that individuals are not solely determined by the structures into which they are born, but that instead they can lift themselves out of these and re-embed into new associations. This is a crucial distinction between Giddens and Bauman, as Bauman (2000) appears more pessimistic about the potential to re-embed into communities, whether virtual, geographical or imagined. Exemplifying Bauman's pessimism regarding the nature of contemporary modern relationships is his reference to a lack of permanence and the erosion of a commitment one could regard as lifelong or enduring. He writes of "the man with no bonds", suggesting people's loose connections to one another lead to the "yearning for security of togetherness" (2000: vi-viii) that can never be satisfied as he warns,

> "You sought the relationship in the hope of mitigating the insecurity that haunted your loneliness; but the therapy has all but inflamed the symptoms, and now you feel perhaps even less secure than before, even if the 'new and aggravated' insecurity oozes from different quarters." (ibid: 14)

Bauman argues that contemporary relationships, based on assumptions of mistrust, encourage individuals to only come together in the short-term, for personal gain and never to deeply re-embed in new attachments, contending that, "all the motives, impulses and acts from which human bonds and lasting commitments are plaited'' is missing (ibid: 69). This partial account neglects those for whom connections to community, family and/or other bonds are central and lasting. Further, it assumes that short-termist relations and 'yearning for security' are distinctly 'liquid' modern, an argument that is symptomatic of temporal discontinuities explored hitherto and conveys simplistic notions of 'in or out' belonging implying singular, uncontested and unproblematic adherence to an unchanging object.

Utilising these characterisations of belonging, either Bauman's assessment, that one cannot attain the security of re-embedding, or Giddens' analysis that it is possible to re-embed in a modernity that is fluid, but to do so may either be incomplete or outside of modernity, appear as the only options. This establishes already critiqued dichotomies between 'free', modern, disembedded individuals *versus* renouncing freedom to become a 'traditional' adherent outside of such choices and the conditions which create them. What becomes evident is that the embedding, disembedding, re-embedding conception may benefit from a recasting, understanding this process instead in terms of a fluidity of woven attachments, with multiple threads framing new identities around which individuals can temporarily or more permanently cohere, never entirely leaving behind a sense of previous connection (or disconnection).

Talja Blokland (2018) interrogates extant sociological ideas of community, arguing that like ideas of modernity, Western and urban-centric approaches to community focus on belonging as enshrining fixity, idealism and exclusion ("a 'they' as well as an 'us'", Blokland, 2018: 36),

which do not serve as useful frames of understanding belonging in an age of 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007). She suggests,

> "…we can experience belonging on very many scales. While this may be freedom, it also obliges us to make choices related to belonging or to the practices of doing community we engage in. A doxa of "community" in which adhering to codes, norms and values would be self-evident and naturalised is no longer applicable in a globalised, urbanised world." (2018: 40)

From this approach, belonging to community is cast as contingent, based on dynamic encounters. In such an analysis, being a part of a community does not necessarily equate to similarly experienced feelings of belonging for each member, as we "differ in how well we are 'in the know' regarding the behaviour of others, and how well we are able to find our ways through the everyday encounters and be comfortable" (ibid: 2018: 38; explored further in the context of religious proficiency and social/kinship networks in Chapter Five). Blokland's notion of belonging thus accepts that within community, symbols may be shared, but not necessarily the meanings attached to these.

What becomes clear is that an approach to belonging is needed that looks beyond binaries of choice *versus* fate and accepts that (re-)embedding into community is possible, though belonging itself is contingent, being structured, differentiated, situated and in continual flux. Religion-oriented communities, particularly those with diasporic roots, offer an opportunity to explore and expand such understandings, assessing through lived experience the social ties, meanings, processes and practices through which a sense of belonging is refracted. Such communities possess complex narratives around which religious identity, geographic routes and often traumatic experiences of uprooting coalesce (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; Agamben, 1999). Thus, as will be explored in the context of the Amish and Jewish communities in the chapters that follow, such communities tell a complex story of belonging, belief, practice, adaptation and journey explored forthwith.

4. Religion-Oriented Diasporic Communities

Having considered the shifts in ideas of community from purely place to a complex combination of affect, belonging, social ties and at times transcending geographical boundaries, theorisations of religion, belief and diaspora will be explored, leading to a discussion of narrative construction and the character and place of practice. This section will begin to introduce the case study communities returned to throughout this research, namely Amish communities in Pennsylvania (USA) and a Jewish community in London (UK). Such communities arguably epitomise notions discussed above of tradition, 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991) and disembedding origins, characterised by fixed and fluid traits which can be regarded as both traditional and contemporary modern in nature. They possess narratives of diasporic experience and centre around a religion-oriented locus, with associated practices. These two aspects of religion and diaspora will initially be discussed separately, ending in a discussion of practice for such communities.

4.1 What are 'Religion-Oriented' Communities?

Durkheim's oft-quoted definition of religion is that of a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and surrounded by prohibitions – beliefs and practices that unite its adherents in a single moral community, called a church" (1912/2001: 46). However, this is not sufficiently inclusive of the communal and social element of 'religion-oriented' communities explored here. The term 'religion-

oriented' is imperfect, but it is used here in an attempt to overcome the pitfalls of understandings of communities of religion as centred around a purely 'religious', often theistic (or institutionalised) character as implied by the terms 'faith-based' or 'religious' communities. There is a plethora of communities that cohere around a religion, that comprise members who do not necessarily regard themselves as religious believers *per se*. Here, the emphasis will be on *belonging* to such groups, taking into account where necessary the role played by *believing* in associated religious tenets (Day, 2011; see also Smart, 1998). Such communities have been theorised across disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, theology and religious studies, international relations and psychology, emerging from divergent frameworks and modes of research (Day, 2011). The focus here will be predominantly on sociological understandings of religion and belief as a marker for community and a locus of belonging.

There are those such as Wasserfall et al that place society and religion in opposition, much like Tonnies conception of society as against community and the dichotomies within theories of modernity discussed hitherto. They suggest, for instance, that religious adherents "see themselves as enacting different sets of God-given commandments: those individuals are not at all secular and have very clear ideas of a public Good – indeed a divine Good" (1999: 145). However, these same individuals function as part of wider society, not in isolation from it, and therefore illustrate a melding of various degrees of values, beliefs and behaviours relating to both society in general, often posited as secular, and religious beliefs. Others, such as Gidley and Kahn-Harris (2012), emphasise the communal aspect of 'religion-oriented' communities (much like the notions of 'being' and 'doing' together discussed earlier in this chapter). They note, for instance, that for Jewish ritual practice to occur (such as certain prayers requiring a quorum of ten, and ritual slaughter according to dietary laws), community is a pre-requisite. That is not to suggest that one cannot be a Jew without a community. Rather, that in order to fulfil certain aspects of Jewish practice, the infrastructure provided by numbers is required.

Early theorisations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries centred around the 'belief' aspect of religion, with Tylor defining religion in terms of "belief in spirits" (1871/1958, cited in Day, 2011: 4). Durkheim (1915) challenged this privileging of belief, focussing instead on the importance of practice and shared experience in religion. Weberian views began to emerge, regarding religion as a means to find order and meaning. For instance, Lévy-Bruhl (1926) argued that collective ritual and organised religion can be seen as a response to insecurity (Day, 2011: 12). Drawing on anthropological roots, Geertz (1973) shifted focus further towards cultural practice and symbolism within religion. Smith (1977, 1978, 1979) goes on to provide valuable explorations shifting from belief to a sense of belonging and affiliation, further signifying the splits in theorisations. Arguably belief can be understood as a complex interplay of all of these notions, encompassing a personal belief, ritualistic practice, shared narrative and a sense of belonging.

Theorisations of religious belief in the context of modernity vary, from propositions that the modern individual will 'discover' the irrationality of religion (Keane, 2002, 2007), the related rise in secularisation debates (Luckmann, 1967) and the threat of pluralism to religion-oriented communities (Berger, 1967). Many such debates draw on notions of religious resurgence and decline. In more recent decades, conceptions of the fluidity of modernity have appeared in the study of religion, for instance in Roof and McKinney's (1987) 'new voluntarism', whereby contemporary modernity offers a choice of practices, communities,

belief systems and identities. This further challenges the construction of traditional communities as intransient and fixed.

Day, an anthropologist of religion, suggests that "in conditions of late modernity, belief to many people is an expression of how they belong to each other" (2011: 27). She goes on to posit that "Belief in 'the social' in this context is an expression of emotion and relatedness through belonging and longing, often arising to draw clear boundaries between 'us' and 'them'" (ibid: 193; see also Magliocco, 2012). Religion, as with community, can thus be seen as social, forming part of the process of boundary-making and community construction (returned to in the section on practice below and in Chapter Four). Religion, seen through the lens of community in this way, is thus dynamic and with purpose, rather than fixed, innate and inert.

Religion-oriented communities are a pertinent example of the spatial and temporal dichotomies within theories of modernity and exemplify the unease with which theorists of contemporary modernity treat intersections of tradition and modernity. Interestingly, in Bauman's *Liquid Love* (2003), a work that pays much attention to what binds humans together under these fluid conditions, Bauman makes scarce reference to religious affiliation. Guibernau on the other hand, draws on religion using the controversial 'clash of civilisations' discourse (see Huntington, 1996), where religion represents the tradition that is embattled in an age-old struggle with modernity. She refers to the "re-appropriation of religion as a mechanism seeking the actualization of tradition", promoting a "'book of answers 'to day-to-day problems' and the 'rejection of modernity'" (2013: 175). Symptomatic of this dichotomising approach is the way in which she places religious groups outside of the context of modernity, portraying such groups as pre-modern, rather than *of* and co-constituting modernity.

This is perhaps reflective of the wider unease sociology has felt towards religion, resulting in the need to problematise pervasive understandings of religious communities as inert, primitive and pre-modern. Magliocco offers a wider lens through which to understand religion-oriented groups in the contemporary context. She observes,

> "The movement of peoples across the globe as a result of decolonization, political upheaval, and economic collapse has given rise to a growing interest in the effects of migration upon religious practice." (2012: 148)

This acknowledges the fluidity of such groups, exemplified through practice (explored subsequently) and draws attention to the relationship between religion-oriented groups and diasporic experience, which will be turned to in the coming section.

4.2 Diaspora and Narrative-Construction

This section will expand on the notion of diaspora raised earlier and attempts to define this concept, through highlighting the deliberate, dynamic and adaptive ways in which narratives of exile, trauma and utopic longing are constructed. This will allow for a discussion on the role of practice centred around these narratives (i.e. their practical, social and ritualistic enactment) and the related religious locus for religion-oriented diasporic communities, returned to at the end of the chapter.

Much like community, diaspora has become so widely applied as a concept that its meanings have become somewhat diluted. Originally coined to describe the Jewish Babylonian exile from Ancient Jerusalem around 600BCE, the term has been applied to movements of groups

due to war and persecution, slavery, trade, economic migration and "any and every nameable population category that is to some extent dispersed in space" (Brubaker, 2006: 3). From a simple definition of common genealogical and geographic origins (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993), diasporic groups can be taken to mean a dispersed community maintaining both social and emotional ties to a lost homeland, conceptual or otherwise, though theorists also identify collective memory, desire to return, language, ethnicity, religion and boundary-maintenance as comprising diaspora. As such, Soysal (2000) settles on the broadest conceptualisation of diaspora, as a middle place between 'home' and 'host' (cited in Redclift, 2016: 15). From this 'middle place' a tension arises between being 'distinctive' and "hybridity, fluidity, creolization and syncretism" (Brubaker, 2006: 6). For Chandler this points to the "contradictory, but constitutive, obligations to both change and remain the same… [whereby] narrative is the 'dynamic glue'" holding the self together (Chandler, 2000: 212, cited in May, 2011: 363; much like Gilroy's [1997] 'changing same' discussed earlier in this chapter). As stated, the intersection of these changes and retentions makes such communities worthy of greater investigation in order to understand the contemporary modern condition as inevitably entwined with tradition.

As with community more broadly, diasporic communities tend to be regarded by social scientists as "bona fide actual entities" (Brubaker, 2006: 10) that are fixed, unchanged, and boundaried, leading Brubaker to suggest that,

> "…we should think of diaspora not in substantialist terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim. We should think of diaspora in the first instance as a category of practice, and only then ask whether, and how, it can fruitfully be used as a category of analysis." (ibid: 12)

Whilst groups identifying as diasporic may not agree wholly with this sentiment, it raises questions about the identification, measurement and study of diasporic groups. Accordingly, Redclift calls for an awareness of more complex differentiations within diasporas and an attention to "latent identities" (2016: 16). In this vain, broader understandings of diaspora, focussing on those elements that comprise "diasporic consciousness" (such as language, food, rituals) enable the researcher to move beyond the problem of definition to one of practice (ibid). Such practice arguably coheres a group, bestows its identity and enables its persistence. Hence, this research goes on to explore both the more abstract expressions of boundaries and belonging, alongside the practices and shared actions that comprise the ongoing diasporic experience in a religion-oriented context.

For diasporic communities that are oriented around a religion, early diasporic constructions around a religious doctrine and practices become increasingly complex through the narration of exilic, often traumatic experiences, geographically uprooting and fragmenting communities (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; Hall, 1996; Gilroy, 1997; Cohen, 1997). As discussed, for these communities, boundary-making is a process that is both practical, in terms of religious ritual, practices and observance, and conceptual, in terms of drawing on notions of home that are often utopic (and at times messianic); ideas which circulate through discourse, liturgy and the communal imagination (Anderson, 1987; Wettstein, 2002; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). At the same time, as with migrant communities worldwide, religion-oriented diasporic communities grapple with balancing integration, adaptation and assimilation, as well as the experience of minority ethnic status. As such, fluidity operates together with the retention of a locus of religious/diasporic identity through narrative deployment and practice, making such groups worthy of greater study in understanding how adaptation and tradition are

inseparable in a contemporary context, a theme returned to in Chapter Six with reference to the research findings.

The themes within this section will lay the foundations for exploring the interplay of these traits as lived experience, as emerges through practice, boundary-making and belonging in the data chapters to follow.

4.2.1 Narrating Loss, Home and Longing

By definition, diasporic communities' exilic roots entail some manner of trauma and suffering, be it persecution (Cohen, 1997), 'domicide'/the destruction of home (Blunt and Dowling, 2006), or slavery (Gilroy, 2000). For these communities, boundary-making is a process that is both practical and conceptual. Hall (1996) argues that this loss is filled with the selective narration of memories, a process Bauman, refers to as, "The resurrection of the past, keeping the past alive, can only be attained through the active, choosing, reprocessing and recycling, work of memory", in what appears as a fluid phenomenon (Bauman 2004a in Lentin, 2010: 20; see also Bourdieu, 1986/2000). The remembering and narration of such experiences is key to the meaning-making process of diasporic communities (see Ahmed et al, 2003). What is of interest is the way in which memories and histories are absorbed and retold (Butler, 2004). Communal narratives construct a sense of lost home, acting as a form of collective self-defence against external pressures such as racism, much like the inward-turning 'ontological security' Giddens describes in times of frenetic fluidity and flux (Hall, 2000: 148; see also Brah, 1996; Wasserfall et al., 1999; Alleyne, 2002). The meaning of these narrations becomes more significant than the chronological reliability of their telling. Brent suggests that,

> "Illusion and rhetoric are indeed an important part of social reality, which is not based only on a rational instrumentality, but has strong aesthetic and narrative components – human cultural activity, with all its creative energy, and is a major part of social construction." (2004: 216)

The 'illusion' of community produces "very real effects", regardless of the historical solidity of the relaying of events, as a "'past' of a strangely ahistorical kind" (Redclift, 2016: 2; see also Derrida's [1982] notion of a "past that has never been present" in Brent, 2004: 220).

Whilst not explicitly looking at exilic experience, there is an important body of literature relating to memory and trauma which can contribute to understandings of the way in which such experiences shape the powerful narratives of communities and their members (Freud, 1991; Butler, 2004). These can effectively be applied to the metanarratives of community. Thus, one is presented with both memory and the internalisation of belief as a means to make sense of chaos, trauma, insecurity, for instance and as constructing a sense of 'home' or belonging. Narrative construction becomes a purposeful, adaptive and ongoing project, far from the fixity ascribed to such communities and is the domain of the social and the individual internalisation of meanings.

Journeys of exile and trauma, and the enactment of these through discourse and practice, become a part of the communal narrative, distinguishing it from those around. For instance, Gidley suggests that for Britain's Jewish community,

> "…suffering and sorrows at home, by one's flesh and blood in a closely remembered landscape, were felt bodily in exile, in a way that sharply contrasted to Anglo-Jewry's de-territorialised and disembodied sense of self." (Gidley, 2013b: 661)

Retaining the story is to maintain communal identities and secure boundaries. However, as discussed above, this is a fluid process. One could thus argue that diasporic narrative construction, enactment and retelling is continually in process, constructed by modernity and therefore *of* a fluid modernity, rather than outside of it. This may appear through the use of modern media such as the internet, or through strengthening, inventing or reinventing traditional practice, liturgy or narratives, such as utopic ideas of Zion emanating from exilic history (Jews, Rastafarians), or relationships with the land and re-enactment of seventeenth century religious practice (Amish, returned to in Chapter Four).

Jewish discourses of exile, for instance, are evident early on in community constructions, as reflected in Old Testament writings. One example of this is in the psalm that begins, "By the rivers of Babylon/ There we sat down and wept/ When we remembered Zion" and continues "…How can we sing the Lord's song/ In a foreign land?" (extracts from Psalm 137: verses 1-6). This notion of dislocation from 'home' carries forward into prayer and modern discourses, revealing notions of return, utopia and messianism (Ruppin, 1934). Relationships with place are complex, in some cases reconstructing physical home (e.g. the synagogue) with a sense of belonging and community, in others reflected in political nationalism (e.g. political Zionism). Thus, notions of 'returning' persist not only as biblical-historical ideas, but in contemporary discourses (Levine, 1986**;** DeKoven Ezrahi, 2000)**.** In another example, the Amish relationship with 'home' can be regarded as a more every day one. A religious fixity rooted in the period of exile (in terms of dress, practice, modes of organising) allow 'home' to be felt in the new context of rural North America. Home becomes both a private family and church endeavour and an agricultural relationship with the land (Hostetler, 1993; Kraybill et al, 2013; see also Hutterian Brethren, 1987). It is a conscious, creative and communal persistence that relies on these adaptive enactments.

In both cases, diasporic journeys and a religion-oriented locus can be identified (although each is unique and indeed diverse). This produces a variety of negotiations with the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity that make these communities an ideal lens through which to explore conceptualisations of tradition and modernity, and associated meanings of community in this context. In order to shed light on the practices, narratives, boundaries and belonging within traditional communities, this research will thus go on to focus on Amish and Jewish communities as case studies. These groups are explored further in the subsequent Methodology chapter. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the place of practice in such communities and the interplay with narrative formation, as an expression of fixity and fluidity of tradition under contemporary modern conditions. Such practice illustrates the way in which narratives and tradition are concretised into actions on a communal level.

4.3 Practice: Traditions and Narratives in Action

Founding narratives of exile, home and return discussed above are enacted largely through communal practices, including liturgy and performance of rituals. As outlined earlier in this chapter, religion-oriented diasporic communities can be regarded as pertinent examples of 'tradition-in-action'. Such communities represent a unique confluence of uprooting experiences, dynamic narrative construction and religion-oriented rituals, deployed in conjunction with a set of long-held religious beliefs. Exploring the nature, fluidity and enduring features of practices within these communities offers the opportunity to challenge notions that traditional communities, and by extension their practices, are unchanging and inert, thereby unsettling broader dichotomisations of what it is to be traditional and modern in a contemporary context.

Scholars of community have argued that practice exists in a dialectical relationship with communal narratives, belief and collective imagination. Such narratives inform practice, which can be regarded as reconstructing that which is deemed to be lost (such as a homeland). This can in turn re-imagine and cement narratives, in a somewhat reflexive and cyclical process (see Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Bhabha, 1998). To take the example of the Jewish Passover *Seder* (explored further in the Methodology chapter), from the narrative of exile of the Israelites from Ancient Egypt in the Old Testament came the annual retelling through the reading of the story, with symbolic foods representing elements of the story (such as saltwater for tears, horseradish to recall the bitter experience of slavery under the Pharaoh's reign, see Jacobs, 1999; Schama, 2013). The narration of and belief in the story thus arguably produces the yearly practice, but likewise the practice reinforces and re-imagines the narrative. Salamon and Goldberg succinctly depict this simultaneously dynamic and rooted nature of practice, proposing that,

> "Concrete performances, placed in the context of ancient narratives, exhibit both constancy and change, accommodation conjoined with appropriation, and resistance along with resilience, emerging out of the dynamic interplay of ritual, myth and symbol." (2012: 134)

Their description of practice, in this case within folklore communities, offers tools which one can apply to practice within the communities of study in this thesis, i.e. religion-oriented diasporic communities. They identify three 'vehicles of expression' that form the 'language of culture' – namely ritual, myth and symbol. They go on to define ritual as repetition of acts, without the intention of a specific result (ibid: 124), such as the Jewish *Shabbat*, or rites of passage like baptism. Myth in this context is sacredised and tells a founding story, much like that discussed in relation to narrative construction above. Lastly, symbol is "social learning in the transmission of culture" and takes place through "meaning-making and performance" (ibid: 127). Practice is thus deemed as a social and cultural endeavour, one that resonates with individuals in the community. This will be returned to later in this section.

Shove et al contribute three additional features beneficial in understanding practice (albeit with some overlap with Salamon and Goldberg's). These are 'materials', 'competencies' and 'meanings'. They elaborate,

> "- materials – including things, technologies, tangible physical entities, and the stuff of which objects are made;
> - competences – which encompasses skill, know-how and technique; and
> - meanings – in which we include symbolic meanings, ideas and aspirations." (2012: 9)

They propose that "practices emerge, persist, shift and disappear when connections between elements of these three types are made, sustained or broken" (ibid). Though 'materials', such as the Amish *Ausbund* hymn book and the Jewish prayer book, the *Siddur*, are referenced at times in the chapters that follow, this research is predominantly concerned with a combination of the latter of these three elements, for instance in discussing the respective rules of religious proficiency and knowledge for the Amish and Jewish case study communities (i.e. competencies) and the extent to which meanings are shared and represent a shared sense of belonging (Chapter Five). This is applied together with Salamon and Goldberg's emphasis on ritual, for instance in weekly church services for the Amish, and myth, in discussing the deployment of narratives within the communities and the symbolism these hold individually and collectively.

A particular emphasis within religion-oriented diasporic communities must too be focussed on 'doing' together (see Chapter Six). As explored in reference to community more broadly, Shove et al (2012) contend that practice is "essentially modes of social relations, of mutual action" (ibid: 4). They apply Giddens' (1984) structuration theory to argue that social practice is able to emerge out of "structures of rules and meanings, and these structures are, at the same time, reproduced in the flow of human action" (Shove et al, 2012: 3). This asserts practice as 'human', produced, social and consequently dynamic. As they argue, "innovation in practice is an ongoing and not a one-off process" (ibid).

Neal and Walters also surmise that practice, evident in 'mundane' and 'everyday processes', is the site of sociality of community and that this is worthy of attention beyond sociological notions of community in terms of boundaries, 'imaginings' and symbols (2008: 293; see also Back, 2015). However, the relationship between practice and communal narratives or imaginings should not be overlooked. In his article on the 'meanings and meaninglessness' of religious ritual, Lee (2005) suggests that the link between communal narrative and ritualistic practice cannot be assumed to be uniform and unanimously experienced. Problematising assumptions from classical sociologists such as Durkheim (1954), Lee argues that each individual may attach personal and disparate meanings to practice or ritual (2005: 5). He cites Anabaptist groups such as Old Order Mennonites and Amish communities' enactments of baptism, expulsion and other communal practices, deducing that,

> "If the members of a group see themselves enacting a ritual, they may assume that they share religious belief, an assumption that can certainly enhance the impression of being socially integrated… They do not, however, need to share any common beliefs in order to enact the ritual successfully… Enacting ritual requires participants who know the right moves, possess the props, and can make the expected noises at the right moments: regardless of what they may believe." (ibid: 6)

For Lee, practice is perhaps social, but not an expression of shared communal belief or universally held narrative. Thus, it might be pertinent to conclude that the social constructions and enactments of narratives through practice (with their associated meanings, rituals, symbols and competencies) though of crucial importance, do not imply uniformity and that individual meanings and a sense of belonging must also be considered (returned to in Chapter Five).

The interplay of these elements and the relationship between practice and narratives within religion-oriented diasporic communities will be explored in greater detail in the data chapters. At this stage it is important to understand practice as both possessing often long-held roots and as dynamic, social and in flux, challenging notions that tradition is pre-modern and fixed. Practice in the case of these communities thus offers the potential to explore the co-constitutive relationship between tradition and contemporary modernity and to begin to shed new light on understandings of both the nature of traditional communities and modernity.

Conclusion

Theories of contemporary modernity – whether 'liquid', 'late', 'second', 'hyper' – are replete with an othering of tradition. This occurs through positing tradition as both spatially and temporally dichotomous to modernity, as 'over there and then'. However, by employing the critical tools provided by those such as Robinson, Bhambra and Calhoun, a reframing of contemporary modern theory can take place. This allows for geography and temporality to

be replaced conceptually with a perspective that looks beyond notions of centres of modernity, which in turn has implications for opening up the often normative project of social theory and the methods by which these are constructed.

Community, too, has been understood in terms of binaries of fixity and dynamism. However, shifts in conceptualisations of community have moved beyond the notion of 'finding' community towards broader approaches to transpatial communities and communities of affect, and those expressing a connection to a place situated elsewhere and in a different time. Debates on the dis-embedding potential and belonging to community under the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity illustrate the divergence of understandings and the tendency to convey community as fixed and pre-modern. Yet interventions by those such as Blokland enable belonging to be viewed as fluid and the content of community as holding different meanings for individuals, beyond fate *versus* choice binaries that once preoccupied theorists of community. Further, contributions from those such as Alleyne, regarding the de-ethnicisation of community, Brent's and Neal's emphasis on sociality and Wasserfall et al's on boundary-work and fluidity, enable community to be viewed afresh as contingent, dynamic and continually constructed.

As discussed above, religion-oriented diasporic communities pose a valuable context in which to explore these contradictions and the interplay between tradition and modernity. As communities conceptualised as traditional, these groups express complex negotiations within the conditions of contemporary modernity. The dynamic and necessarily fluid nature of these communities challenge pervasive notions of tradition as unchanging and outside of the characteristics of contemporary modernity.

From an exploration of the dynamic and adaptive construction of key communal narratives, such as the Amish and Jewish case study communities, combined with the creative deployment and socially remade practices related to these, emerges an opportunity to regard traditional communities as rooted, yet fluid. The dialogue this entails with contemporary modernity cites tradition as a co-constructor of the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity. 'Tradition-in-action', viewed through the lens of religion-oriented diasporic communities, thus begins to challenge theoretical temporal discontinuities and spatial dichotomies that situate tradition as outside of contemporary modernity.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, this research project emanates from a critique of inherent spatial and temporal dichotomisations of tradition and modernity under fluid contemporary conditions. It seeks to better understand the interplay of tradition and fluid modernity by exploring the lived experience of tradition as exemplified in the narratives, practices and related boundary-making endeavours of religion-oriented diasporic communities, with an emphasis on Amish and Jewish communities as case studies. In so doing, this research aims to address the questions posed in the Introduction chapter, by exploring the nature of contemporary understandings of belonging, practice and community boundary-making processes and the meanings of community under contemporary conditions.

This will be carried out through a case study approach, employing a combination of semi-structured interviews and participant observation with Amish and Jewish communities. To contextualise this, this chapter will begin with a discussion of the rationale for a qualitative case study approach, encompassing an overview of methodological approaches used in some key studies of community thus far. It will continue by outlining the research design, including the reasons for choosing interviews and observation, as well as the logistics of sampling. The subsequent section will explore the religion-oriented diasporic communities chosen as case studies, namely Amish communities in Pennsylvania (USA) and a Jewish community based in London (UK). This section will also turn to issues of access, communication, positionality and logistics. Data analysis methods will be outlined, followed by a consideration of ethics relating to the research. Finally, some reflections on the specific negotiations within these two field sites will be surveyed, demonstrating the reflexive approach taken in this research.

1. Research Design: A Qualitative Case Study Approach

This section will explore the rationale for selecting qualitative research methods for this project, moving on to a discussion of the justifications and limitations of a case study approach. The empirical literature on Community Studies will be drawn on, to contextualise my research design within the field. This lays the foundations for discussing my choice of interviews and participant observation for this research.

1.1 Qualitative Approaches to Community Studies

Qualitative research methods entail detailed explorations and enquiry into the quality of human experience (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative approaches – such as semi- and unstructured interviewing, ethnographic and participant observation, document, discourse and narrative analysis – have dominated the field of Community Studies, offering specific, in depth and contextual assessments of the cases of focus. Enabling the flow of narrative through qualitative methods, Paul ten Have highlights the advantage in searching for "hidden meanings, non-obvious features, multiple interpretations, implied connotations, unheard voices" (2004: 5; see also Ragin, 1994). As discussed further below, Putnam's (2000) large-scale study of the argued decline of community employed a quantitative approach, arguably exemplifying omissions of depth of narrative, communal complexity and voicing of personal experience. Although this is a seminal work for reasons explored elsewhere, one could argue that his portrayal of the 'loss' of community may have incorporated greater nuance had qualitative approaches been employed. As Mulligan critiques, "such accounts end up being descriptive rather than explanatory and offer no new insights into the contested meaning of

community" (2015: 351). To remedy these omissions, Back argues that a "Goffmanesque attentiveness" to everyday life via qualitative research methods allows for the exploration of "a complex structure of feeling with networks of interaction as well as structural dimensions" (2015: 833; see also Charles and Davies, 2005; Day, 2006). In line with this approach, my research assumes that 'community' is not an inert, externally measurable and quantifiable entity, but a fluid and social set of connections, practices and stories (see Pujol and Stainton-Rogers, 1996; Robinson, 2006), requiring the attentiveness offered by qualitative methods.

As will be outlined in the rationale for interviews forming the primary method in this research, the advantage of qualitative, over quantitative methods, is in the ability to ask open-ended questions that allow unstructured responses, to hear stories and to attempt authenticity in relaying communal voices, rather than replicability and generalisability. I have therefore selected a qualitative approach to this research to explore the intricacy of communal processes. This assumes a constructivist approach, in which I as the researcher am sited within the research, acknowledging that I play a role in its co-production (see final section on Positionality and Reflexivity; see also Back, 2007 on the importance of listening in social research). The primary research method in my study – interviewing – along with participant observation, offers the context through which to build trust in order that participants' feel most able to communicate. This will be discussed in more detail after a look at the case study approach and examples from the field of Community Studies.

My research employs a case study approach, as this allows a deep exploration of interwoven communal and individual experience. Through the focus of two primary cases – Amish and Jewish communities – emphasis can be placed on garnering a variety of voices, to understand in detail what is entailed in negotiating fluid contemporary conditions. Before turning to my justifications of this selection and its potential limitations, this section provides a brief overview of the development of methodological approaches to the study of community within the field of Community Studies. The purpose of this is to understand the empirical, rather than conceptual, techniques deployed by researchers of community, focussing on methodological approaches, their strengths and limitations and the bearing these methods have on my own research. The studies discussed below are emblematic of studies of community rather than exhaustive. A stronger emphasis is placed on those which are methodologically pertinent to this research project and the methods I have selected. The aim is that by situating this research within the empirical context of the field of Community Studies, the choices I have made in my research can be better explicated.

Brint (2001) identifies three traditions of Community Studies: the study of 'place-based' communities, studying 'elective communities' for example based on reading preferences, and comparative studies (5). The field of Community Studies in the UK as it emerged in the early to mid-twentieth century was typified by studies of individual locales, both rural and urban. Tangible local elements of daily life, such as occupation, family life and transport formed primary areas of research and analysis (for example Rees, 1950; Williams, 1956; Young and Willmott, 1957; and Cohen, 1982). Although my case studies can be regarded as similarly based in particular locales, in contrast to these early studies, they epitomise aspatial and transpatial themes, such as diasporic notions of belonging, boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, rituals and shifting narratives. Though as with the above examples, these are arguably also constructed through everyday detail, speech and action.

Young and Willmott (1957) carried out intensive semi-structured and structured interviews. Further qualitative data was provided by their personal insights, friendships and observations

from one of the researchers who lived with a family in the area. The researchers attempted to strike a balance between "fairly precise" quantitative data from formal surveys and "richer material" from the more intensive interviews (Young and Willmott, 1957: 174). Although this combination garnered plentiful data, it is debateable that 'precision' is indeed desirable or attainable.

Young and Willmott's study can be seen as a more reflexive, personal approach than earlier studies as they make reference to their own limiting role in the research. They observe that "…we can only report what people say they do, which is not necessarily the same as what they actually do" (ibid: xix). Relevant here is the complementarity of observation alongside interviewing as a means to learning about a case study. The addition of observation, whether or not this is ethnographic (see Participant Observation below), enables a different perspective to be added to findings. Spickard describes the advantage of the interplay of the two methods,

> "If, for example, a teacher unconsciously interrupts women in class while not interrupting men, we cannot discover this by asking her to report her actions; only observation will do. Mere observation will not, however, tell us why she interrupts. We can only discover this by asking her to tell us her version of what is going on." (2007: 125)

For this reason, the case studies in my research will be examined with a combination of semi-structured interviews and observation. Whilst the use of multiple methods of interviews and observation aims to gain a more 'accurate' picture, my role in asking questions and being present, in addition to the desire for participants to give a 'positive' view of their community, must be acknowledged here (see Cohen, 1982; Crow, 2012). As will be explored below, this is particularly so in the case of the Amish, who have been subject to what one might label 'orientalist voyeurism' through media, tourism and entertainment (see Kraybill et al, 2013; see also *Amish in the* City, 2004; Breaking *Amish*, 2012; *Living with the Amish,* 2012*; Amish Mafia*, 2012).

Relatedly, a critique of some of the earlier studies of communities, is that in the search for detail, one can also argue that power imbalances between the included and excluded, the 'boundary-keeper' and 'outlier', are overlooked. My research seeks to avoid this pitfall where possible, in accessing a sample comprising different levels of belonging (see Access and Sampling below).

Bell's observational work in Childerley (1994) involved extensive interviews. He remarked that he did not always record these interviews, as sometimes it was more appropriate for the openness of the participants to make notes and write them up later (Bell, 1994: 247; see also Baker and Edwards, 2012). Although this makes remembering key details and themes more difficult, there is synergy with my research, particularly in the case of the Amish (discussed below) where trust and sensitivity were required over the taking of detailed fieldnotes. Bell describes that participants at times were more confident and comfortable to open up during informal moments of observations than in interviews, a factor sometimes mirrored in my own research. Bell's study is more reflexive than earlier studies, partly due to his need to justify his choices, as he asserts that as an American of Jewish descent, he is more of an 'outsider' than others who have studied British communities. Likewise, Cohen (1982), in his research in Whalsay, stresses that studying specific cultures, takes place inescapably through the lens of

each researcher. The benefits of the case study approach thus become inseparable from my need as the researcher to acknowledge my place in the research (see also Neal et al., 2016).

Empirical community studies, demonstrated by this small snapshot, offer grounding for my own research. The focus on two case study communities, explored through qualitative methods, seeks to attain a similar depth and specificity, allowing for "detailed and intensive analysis" (Bryman, 2012: 48; see also Mason, 2018). These case studies offer the opportunity to explore lived examples of tradition in thick, rich detail. The case study approach has, however, been critiqued, as is discussed next.

1.1.2 Critiques of the Case Study Approach to Qualitative Research

Brint suggests that case studies of communities provide "piecemeal findings" and lack generalisability (2001: 5), a common critique alongside accusations of lacking replicability (e.g. Yin, 1984). Crow further critiques that "many community studies have been assessed as falling short of social science benchmarks of best practice relating to representativeness, reliability and validity" (2012: 406), though he explains that this is due to case studies focussing on an "unusual or distinctive community" (ibid). However, is this problematic? Can the value of the case study exist in the learning of real-life context-dependent knowledge as a "method of learning" about the social world (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 222; see also Burawoy, 2009)? As Eysenck suggests,

> "sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases—not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something!" (Eysenck, 1976: 9, cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006: 224)

Writing about the sub-field of 'Community Restudies' to an extent supports this claim, with attempts at re-studying Stacey's Banbury (discussed in Chapter Two), for instance, revealing problems embedded both in the original research and in returning (Crow, 2012; see also Lassiter, 2012; Phillipson, 2012). These examples echo the perhaps unattainable replicability of studies of community. However, knowledge of the social can be attained through the distinctiveness of particular communities rather than wider generalisable assertions (see Cohen, 1982; see also Hall, 2000 on universal *versus* particular approaches in a Western-centric context). It is not suggested in my research that the case studies are replicable and widely representative of traditional communities. However, following Eysenck's logic, the analysis of my case studies allows for learning about the nature of tradition, modernity and community in specific cases.

With religion-oriented case study communities come additional considerations. Particular care must be taken, for instance, to avoid what Spickard refers to as "the inaccurate timelessness of traditional ethnographic writing, with its false assumption of an unchanging 'ethnographic present" that can accompany research with religious communities (2005: 354). My research design and analysis therefore rely on avoiding the temptation to regard findings as reflective of enduring and unchanging patterns. In so doing, bringing together methodological approaches from the field of Community Studies alongside religion-oriented case studies can overcome the hazards described hitherto (see Baron, 2019 on the need for Religious Studies to borrow methods from Community Studies).

1.2 Case Studies: Amish and Jewish Communities

This section outlines reasons for selecting the case study communities, followed by further details on communal histories and identities, leading to context specific considerations that apply to these two groups. This research is focussed on two case studies of religion-oriented

diasporic communities: Amish communities in rural Pennsylvania (US) and a Jewish community in London (UK). These case studies will be generative of data to address the research questions and present the opportunity to gather deep and rich data on communities self-defining and possessing traits associated with tradition, in different spatial contexts i.e. rural and urban, in which contemporary modernity and tradition play out. Furthermore, encompassing both an urban and a rural case study is important due to the implicit assumptions within sociological literature that tradition is rural, other and distant (see for example Giddens, 1991), notions that this research seeks to unsettle. These case studies are not intended as a direct comparison with each other, but rather they offer insights into the themes of belonging, boundary-making, practice and narratives in different contexts, providing a variety of insights into religion-oriented diasporic communities' negotiations with contemporary modernity.

They share historical roots in places elsewhere, for the Amish in Western Europe and for broader UK Jewish community from Eastern and Western Europe, as well as the Middle East and North Africa. The routes out of those places of persecution to a new place have informed community structures and ritual enactments. Both communities are situated in the global North, in Western-capitalist societies. This uprooting experience entailed an interesting interweaving of necessitated change and attempts at retention, which provide a useful backdrop with which to ask questions about boundaries and belonging. Additionally, the centrality of a religious faith (Christian or Jewish) for these communities speaks to attempts at holding true to beliefs and rituals associated with these, leading to their descriptions as traditional. Yet these two case studies have also been selected as, on the surface, they demonstrate differing responses to internal and external circumstances, such as the role of women in religious practice or the rural *versus* urban localities. By selecting these varied contexts, the research questions can be addressed with breadth of understanding of different negotiations, as well as the depth that the case study approach offers.

For reasons explored below, two Amish sites in Pennsylvania were used in this research: Holly County and Sherwood County (both pseudonyms). The Amish communities in Pennsylvania emigrated from Switzerland, Germany and surrounding areas in the 18th Century and have sought to maintain cultural and religious practices ever since, largely (though as will be explored in the data chapters, not uniformly or entirely) rejecting attributes of modernity such as technology. The specific Jewish community of study, whilst possessing diasporic roots and having predominantly emigrated from Eastern Europe over the early parts of the last century, is itself a young community of approximately two decades. Ideologically it seeks to reconcile Enlightenment thought and socially liberal values with religious law and traditional practice. Despite these differences, there will inevitably be some cross-over in experience, such as the exilic narratives or the influence of external encounters, and it will be important not to dichotomise these two communities.

It is noteworthy at this point that whilst these case studies have been selected with great consideration, there was significant choice in terms of communities that self-defined as or are otherwise conceptualised as traditional, with a religious centre and diasporic roots, such as Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Rastafarian and African Pentecostal communities. Their existence challenges the argument deployed by those such as Putnam that "attachment to community would be effectively destroyed by industrialization and associated urbanization" (cited in Mulligan, 2015: 340-341). These communities are all worthy of further research, though for some, particularly Muslim communities, there has been an over-focus and scrutiny, of which

I was reluctant to contribute. The two case studies here were chosen, not because those others cannot themselves offer rich insights into the co-constitutive relationship between fluid contemporary modernity and tradition. Rather, the access provided to the Jewish community through my existing links, as well its intersection as being in a cosmopolitan hub and demonstrating religiously traditional and social liberal values, made this an appealing case. For the Amish communities, they are under-researched beyond the field of 'Amish Studies' or genetic research, making this an apt opportunity. The challenge of the more remote access and location also provided a valuable counterpoint to the Jewish case study, and *vice versa*. Thus, the fact that these specific communities were under-researched or requiring a new approach to research make them an apt selection. The justifications for selections are expanded upon in the next section.

1.2.1 The Amish Case Study Communities

The Amish – an Anabaptist (literally meaning re-baptisers) group that emigrated from sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe after persecution from Catholic and Protestant establishments – retain many practices and a separatism within the wider context of hybridised, hypermodern America (Hostetler, 1993; Kraybill, 2013). Extant studies of the Amish assess their relationship with modernity in terms of contact with state institutions, technology and tourism (Hostetler, 1993; Kraybill and Olshan, 1994; Kraybill, 2003; Farmwald, 2004). In an ever-connected world, they increasingly interact with non-Amish circles, often out of economic necessity. This research aims to build on the literature by exploring the less tangible challenges posed by contemporary modernity to their sense of cohesion, separateness and fixedness. Amish communities are diverse and adherence ranges within and between such communities. The Amish are a pertinent choice as they offer the opportunity to examine notions of modernity and tradition in a rural setting, which is posed in the literature on modernity as outside of the urban/Western construct of modernity i.e. Robinson's (2006) 'over there and then'.

There is significant diversity of Amish groups in terms of approach to practice, separatism and uses of technology. As well as differences of geographical origin before arriving in the United States, the Amish have undergone 'splits', divisions or schisms either in the distant or recent past, creating new Amish churches with their own leadership, *Ordnungs* (set of rules) and customs (Kraybill et al, 2013). For instance, one group has split so many times that it no longer has sufficient numbers of members to be able to marry into the group and are beginning to seek marriage partners in other Amish groups (discussed further in the data chapters). From a methodological perspective, the range of Amish communities posed a challenge to the initial intention to research one case study community.

Amish settlements are split into local church districts of between thirty and forty families. When a district grows too large, it is split in two. If there is a rift over the *Ordnung*, for example over the use of certain farming technologies, a split will also occur. This is unusual in the more liberal-minded Holly County settlements in recent decades, but far more common amongst the Amish groups in Sherwood County, a more remote and rural region of Pennsylvania. Thus, to have focussed on one community, or church district, would have meant speaking to representatives of most of the families within that church. As many Amish people are not comfortable to speak with 'outsiders' about their way of life, this would have been unfeasible. It was therefore decided to travel to a variety of church districts to encounter a sufficient number of people willing to participate in the research.

These areas were Holly County and Sherwood County (pseudonyms to protect communal and individual confidentiality), Pennsylvania, approximately two hours' drive from each other. The types of Amish churches differed between the two regions. The Amish communities in Sherwood County are known to be more conservative and have taken on fewer technologies and adhere to stricter dress codes than the Amish groups of Holly County. The communities are more rural and remote, with homes often spread further apart. In contrast to the more liberal Holly County communities, many Sherwood County Amish do not allow indoor plumbing in their homes and therefore possess outhouses. They have communal telephones for the use of several homes, whereas Holly County Amish largely allow telephone sheds attached to their houses. However, it should be noted that within both areas, there is significant variation in communal rules and family practices. Despite the differences in ways of life, there are key shared features underpinning these Amish groups in different parts of Pennsylvania, such as holding church services at home, following an *Ordnung* and the Dordrecht Confession (the founding Anabaptist document dating back to the seventeenth century), aiming to live separate from the 'outside world' and other more specific observances.

These different Amish communities exemplify a variety of features, offering the opportunity to further understand the varied negotiations of this traditional community (or set of communities) with contemporary modernity and what in the process becomes deliberated, permitted and rejected. As with the Jewish case study, internal variations of practice, understandings and opinion will also be addressed. As one interviewee emphasised, "Just because we are Plain, doesn't mean we are always peaceful and get on together".

A challenge when working with Amish communities is access. They are communities that by definition are separatist. Therefore, in planning this research, two years were spent liaising with gatekeepers, particularly in academic circles, to enable at least indirect access on arrival to the area. These recommendations aided the process of access to some degree. However, a core of repeated names pointed to a relatively small and perhaps self-selecting group of participants involved in such studies. These raised the question of the methodological robustness of research carried out with Amish participants. In seminal works of Amish studies, explanations of the methodological approaches chosen are often brief and at times an addendum in the back pages of a study. Further, anecdotal evidence seemed to be a major source of data gathering in some such studies. That is not to say that the knowledge garnered from these studies is unable to provide valuable and new insights. However, this sheds light on gaps that may be filled with the use of more robust methodologies, such as wider and more diverse sampling techniques.

Many leading scholars of the Amish (although not all), themselves come from Anabaptist traditions with similar historical and religious roots to the Amish. In one respect, this enables more in-depth understandings of the customs, language, narratives and liturgy of such groups. However, one could argue that this may be an explanation for the predominantly uncritical – or as one observer described, "sanitised and idealised" findings on the Amish from this core group of academics. This is particularly so as there is little reflexive discussion about these researchers' positionalities in their work. The benefits and potential disadvantages of 'insider'/'outsider' status in this research will be explored subsequently, due to the centrality of this factor on data generation with these two case studies.

Within a community in which family, communal, generational and gender roles are of such importance, a consciousness is required regarding which members of the Amish communities

are accessed and what can be extrapolated from this. Thus, participation – including and beyond 'boundary-keepers' and 'outliers' – was key in this research. An awareness of beliefs and religious rulings regarding technology was also of importance, as was being explicit and seeking permission for the use of recording equipment.

Sensitivity is vital in this context. In recent years, the Amish have been the recipients of somewhat voyeuristic interest. As discussed previously, a series of television programmes have been made about the Amish which have referred to Amish people in somewhat orientalist exoticising terms (see Said, 1978 on 'orientalism'), and tourism has vastly increased in rural Pennsylvania's 'Amish Country'. As the researcher, it is important to be regarded as separate from this and to ensure interviewees understood that this research is confidential and without an agenda. A further level of cultural sensitivity was also necessary. The ethos of Amish doctrine is that of frugality with language. Silence dominates as a response to major events such as death. This requires patience on the part of the researcher and allowing space for silence. Active listening skills, in terms of listening beyond what is said, hearing the gaps and watching body language allows for these spaces of silence to be far from redundant occurrences.

1.2.2 The Jewish Case Study Community

Gidley and Kahn-Harris characterise Jewish communities as having been de-spatialised, moving from the 'shtetl' (Jewish villages) to towns and cities throughout Europe (2012: 171). Consequently, affiliation and practice are no longer as closely connected to locality as they once were. This offers the opportunity to disembed and re-embed into communities of differing interpretations of Jewish laws, practices and values. The Jewish community of study predominately traces its diasporic routes from Eastern Europe (Ashkenazi Jews), though a minority of members hold Spanish (Sephardi) or Middle Eastern (Mizrachi) heritage, or self-define as Jews of Colour. These communities more widely and historically have experienced multiple exiles and periods of migration (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; Cohen, 1997; Schama, 2013). As Boyarin and Boyarin posit, "Somehow the Jews have managed to maintain a sense of being rooted somewhere in the world through twenty centuries of exile from that someplace" (1993: 714).

Gidley and Kahn-Harris note that sociologists (including those of Jewish backgrounds) have largely avoided researching British Jewish communities (2012: 169). They suggest that communal leadership within British communities has become increasingly concerned with security, uncertainty and change, mirroring the wider context of Beck's 'risk society' and the lack of attachments in Bauman's 'liquid modernity' explored in the previous chapter (ibid). These fears, they argue, are focussed around increasing numbers of marriage to partners outside of the Jewish religion and the fear of antisemitism. British Jewry can be characterised as a 'community of communities' (Commission on Representation of the Interests of the British Jewish Community, 2000 cited in Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012: 174), given, yet more so than the Amish, the variations and diversity in practice and expression.

The Jewish case study community formed approximately two decades ago and once operated as an informal group. It is now embedded within a large institutional infrastructure and can be regarded as religiously traditional, in terms of liturgy and practice and socially liberal, in terms of gender equality and LGBTQ+ inclusion (explored further in Chapters Four and Five). It was set up by a small collection of people and is currently a community with approximately three hundred members. The community building is situated in suburban London and its members meet for Saturday Sabbath and festival services, as well as for educational and social

occasions. It is mixed gender-wise, though more than half of those leading prayer services are women. The community is comprised of many families, ranging from those with babies and young children, to those with young adult children. There are single members and couples of varying ages, though the overall demographic is likely younger than many other Jewish communities of its size. Many members are professionals in a variety of careers and most live within a walk or short drive of the communal building. A small number of non-Jewish partners attend services with their Jewish partners. I selected this community as a case study as it is an example of a community operating within a setting that the literature on modernity would pose as modern, Western, urban, 'enlightened'. However, it crosses this dichotomisation by placing traditional religious practices at the heart of its philosophy. In addition, the apparent permeability of boundaries makes for a diversity of members, which can offer a variety of insightful experiences and observations.

As yet, there has been no research carried out with this case study community. This research therefore offers the opportunity to explore the complex negotiations of the community with modernity, carried out through practice, roles, boundaries and communal narratives for the first time. As will be discussed below, being in part an 'insider' within the latter community offers opportunities (access, understanding meanings and practice), but also challenges, in terms of acknowledging subjectivity and the role in co-constructing data.

2. Data Generation: Interviews and Participant Observation

This research uses a combination of semi-structured interviews and observation during a series of visits to each case study site. As outlined above, it is felt that surveys cannot convey the complexity of sentiment regarding one's associations with and perceptions of one's community as they are taken from what Bell terms "dizzying heights" (1994: 243). Thus, they may miss the subtleties this research seeks to explore.

Archived documents were analysed as part of this research. For the Amish case studies, this comprised autobiographical writings in a variety of Amish periodicals, as well as local Amish newsletters and published diaries and autobiographical writings by local Amish writers. For the Jewish community, these were founding documents, including minutes of communal meetings, note-worthy correspondence between 'boundary-makers' and community e-newsletters. This archival data provided a degree of useful background research and context to the communities of study. They did not, however, offer the insights anticipated for deeper data collection. Most pertinently, significantly more data was generated than anticipated from interviews and it was therefore decided that interviews would be foregrounded as the primary source of data collection. I thus made the decision that for both case studies these documents would be drawn on for contextualisation of the communities, rather than forming a part of the research data.

2.1 Interviews

Savage and Burrows (2007) highlight the centrality of interviews in the development of Community Studies and resultantly in Sociology, with case studies forming a vital part of these enquiries (see also Tamney [2005] for his use of informal interviewing with religious working-class communities). In the field of Community Studies, interviewing became a seminal method of data generation from the time of the Chicago School in the 1930s (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2014). Informal and semi-structured interviewing, employed first by these early researchers of community, enables a fluidity of data generation and the "social production of knowledge"

(Brinkmann and Kvale, 2014: 16) through a “collaborative dialogic relationship” (Moen, 2006: 61).

My approach falls between ‘hermeneutic interviewing’, which seeks “to capture people's own understandings of their lives… as if from the inside, communicating them to outsiders as accurately as possible” and ‘non-hermeneutic interviewing’ which “presumes that the inquirer can know things about her/his informants' views that are hidden to the view-holders” (Spickard, 2007: 128-130; see also Squire et al., 2014). In borrowing from both perspectives, this research acknowledges the value of participants’ narratives, in addition to exploring the potential of themes that arise that they may not be fully cognisant of.

A breakdown of participants and their gender, age and other identifiers is provided in the below section on Access and Sampling. The semi-structured interviews used in this research allowed for a framework within which to explore notions of inclusivity/exclusivity and belonging, communal structures and practices, shifting roles, identity and external influences. Interviews ranged from informal twenty-minute conversations, with a small number of interviews taking up to two hours. The average interview was one hour long. In introducing the research and its aims, I also chose to introduce myself, including the fact that I am from a Jewish background. This was to ensure transparency, build trust by being open and to avoid misunderstandings. On one occasion, I had unintentionally not shared my religious background with a former Amish interviewee. This resulted in an assumption that I held Christian beliefs, leading to a difficult conversation with the former Amish member and her Evangelical Mennonite partner that led to the interview ending early.

Some connections with Amish participants were made via phone calls, which often involved leaving messages first, as fixed line telephones for Amish people are situated in a shed outside the home and are accessed infrequently. Details were passed from gatekeepers. Other connections were made by spending time in Amish areas and retail businesses, with interviews arranged for a later date. Three of the interviews, two with more liberal Amish members and one with a former Amish member, took place over the phone and recording of those was permitted by the participants. Invitations into participants’ homes meant that most interviews took place in people’s houses. Some took place in local markets, or in Amish shops. Situating interviews in spaces that were familiar with Amish participants allowed for greater ease and openness. It also offered the opportunity for observation into Amish lifestyles, such as technologies in the home and family customs.

Most interviews with the Jewish community took place over the phone, as this was the preference for many participants, particularly those with professions that involve long hours and commutes. In the majority of instances, rapport was able to be built easily, perhaps due to my perceived ‘insider’ status. Many of these conversations were around one hour long, involving the sharing of personal and at times sensitive information. Arguably, the physical distance produced by being on the telephone enabled the sharing of personal stories with greater ease. Other interviews were in people’s homes or the community building. Community leaders and early interview participants made some initial approaches to prospective participants or passed on details. I also approached participants at communal events. Participants overall were eager to take part and share their experiences and spoke freely. Notably, those who had been engaged for longer in the community or were more deeply involved often spoke for longer during interviews.

During interviews, questions were asked about the history of the community, the participants' story of past and present involvement, feelings of belonging and changes in recent years. However, the intention was also that a level of fluidity within the interviews allowed for narratives to emerge in as organic a way as possible. The nature of the interviews varied between communities. Within Amish communities, frugality with language is a key ethic and thus silence is an important factor of daily life and social interaction. It was thus necessary to allow time for semi-structured interviews, giving space for reflection and asking clear, pertinent questions. In the case of the Jewish community, it is outwardly reflective, and discussion and speech form the foundations of community construction. Thus, the semi-structured interviews provided sufficient space for data gathering.

A recording device was used for all interviews with the Jewish community, whilst notes were also taken on a laptop. However, only three of the Amish participants were recorded, due to levels of discomfort with the use of electronics in daily Amish life. This was illustrative of the need for culturally sensitive and appropriate approaches for each case study, discussed in further detail below. Instead, in many cases note-taking with paper and pen, rather than any electronic device, allowed for data to be captured. However, a minority of Amish participants expressed discomfort with this. In this case, I recalled as many significant details as possible. This included remembering key facts and some direct quotations. Some data was therefore lost in the process, but this was outweighed by the benefit of openness and the data this enabled to surface in those interviews.

Gubrium and Holstein advise that "Understanding *how* the narrative process constructively unfolds in the interview is as critical as appreciating *what* is selectively composed and preferred" (2012: 32). This is reflected in both questioning and analysis. For example, in allowing ample space for interviewees to relay personal and communal histories, as well as events that made an impression on them. The interview questions thus offered the opportunity for narratives, rather than brief answers to emerge, such as those inquiring about ancestral connections with the community or personal roles within communal activities. Awareness was key in understanding that these retellings were contextual and, in some part, "performed for the researcher" (Bryman, 2012: 413). This is a phenomenon that has been noted in previous studies, for instance in the way people relay coping with chronic health conditions in a positive light (Bury, 2001) and means that the presence of the researcher becomes central in co-constructing data (Squire, 2005).

2.2 Participant Observation

Observation offered the opportunity to further explore communal structures, practices and cultural enactments. Ethnography, a prolonged, immersive and observational study from within a case study site has long been the method of choice in studies of communities (see Clifford, 1986; Bourdieu, 2003; Scott, 2009; Hammersley, 2018). Ethnographic observation is associated with the field of anthropology, with place-based studies involving immersion in a locale for a year. The method has been used in research within religious communities (e.g. Spickard, 2007). Debates surround the colonial legacy of ethnography and what this means in a twenty-first century context (for example Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Armbruster and Lærke, 2008; Bell et al, 2013). This research does not fit neatly within the time and intensity of traditional ethnographic observation, though it borrows elements from ethnographic observation methods. I was situated near the Amish field sites for two months and was located near the Jewish case study community due to it already being local to me.

As with studies such as Bell's, during observations, informal conversations at times emerged, offering further explorations of the research themes. In the case of the Amish, there were local events, markets, shops and homes. For the Jewish group, there were opportunities to attend meetings, religious festivals and Sabbath services. As will be discussed with reference to my positionality, the level and nature of participation differed in the two contexts. Being a member of the Jewish community enabled a comfort with practices, whereas those of the Amish community were less familiar, as were those carrying out the practices.

Observations with the Amish community took place by spending time in members' homes (including sharing meals) and local retail businesses, as well as communal events such as fundraising auctions. This enabled themes such as interaction with local communities, social norms, practices and hierarchies to emerge. The time spent with participants also developed trust, ease of communication and led to sharing and the potential for interviews. With Jewish participants, my involvement with the community led to in depth and regular observation opportunities, such as Sabbath services, festive occasions and educational and social events. Fieldwork notes were either taken during observations, or more commonly, immediately afterwards, to avoid detracting from the act of observing and creating discomfort with participants (see Baker and Edwards [2012] on the researcher being distracted by the note-taking process; see Shaffir [2004] on observing non-discursive factors). Fieldnotes included personal thoughts and interpretations, as well as anything that was relevant about positionality during the observation. Handwritten fieldnotes were transcribed to facilitate analysis (see below). Note-worthy comments were, where possible, recorded verbatim rather than paraphrased, to give direct voice to participants. Though as described below, this required a sometimes difficult position as both participant and observer. In both communities, consent was gained from community leaders, local leaders and individuals.

2.3 Access and Sampling

Gatekeepers, such as community leaders for the Jewish group, and academic researchers of 'Amish Studies' for the Amish groups, were key to accessing participants for interviews. A total of twenty-one people from the Jewish community and twenty-four members or observers of the Amish community were interviewed at varying lengths, in addition to informal conversations with academic and local community gatekeepers (not included in the table of participants below as these did not follow the format of the interviews and were for background research). As discussed above, links with local academics allowed for some introductions to local Amish community members. The initial intention was to use a snowballing technique in order to access Amish participants. However, this approach had to be adapted, as explained in further detail below. From within the Jewish community, close contact was made with its chairperson, who provided access to some founding members, or 'boundary-keepers'. As leadership is entirely lay and voluntary, an awareness was needed of the fluidity of these structures.

Ready access was available to the Jewish group, which was both experientially and geographically close, as this was my own community. I thus had contacts to begin with and knew the routes to gain wider access to participants, knowledge of community structures and knowing some of the lay community leaders. In addition, I attended community events and services, which allowed me access to approach members. A two month long trip was made to Pennsylvania to gather data on the Amish communities, which entailed a consideration of budgets and timing. The trip took place in the late summer and early autumn months. The timing was both for personal logistical reasons and due to me having been offered a

fellowship at Elizabethtown College, which has a centre for Anabaptist Studies. The centre offered access to gatekeepers and resources. I stayed in the vicinity of several Amish settlements, but for practical reasons, did not stay with Amish residents themselves.

Forty-five interviews were undertaken; twenty-four with Amish/former Amish members and twenty-one with members/former members of the Jewish community. The number of interviews reflects Wolcott's rationale that,

> "…keep asking as long as you are getting different answers… with our little samples we can't establish frequencies but we should be able to find the RANGE of responses" (Wolcott cited in Baker and Edwards, 2012: 3-4)

Of the Amish communities, sixteen identified as women and eight as men. The gender imbalance is likely reflective of the greater willingness of Amish women to speak to another woman (see Crow, 2012 regarding greater female participation in social research; see also Davidman, 1991 on her work with women converts to Orthodox Judaism), as well as the fact that many Amish men work in farming and construction and are thus more difficult to access and schedule times with. In contrast, many of the women work in Amish retail businesses and local farmers' markets. Ages varied from eighteen years, with the oldest interviewee in her eighties. In the Jewish community, twelve identified as women and nine as men. Participants were not explicitly asked about gender or sexual orientation, though where this is relevant and possible to protect confidentiality, it has emerged in interviews and is relayed in the data chapters. The table below provides a demographic breakdown of age, gender, case study community and site (a more detailed outline of participants and interviews can be found in the Appendices).

Figure 1: Table of Research Participants

Name (pseudonym)	Case Study	Field Site (Amish, pseudonyms)	Gender	Age	Interview Location
Abe	Amish	Holly County	m	20s	Farm
Abram	Amish	Holly County	m	40s	Shop
Amos	Amish	Sherwood County	m	50s	Shop
Anna-Beth	Amish	Sherwood County	f	60s	Market
Annie	Amish	Holly County	f	70s	Home
Beth	Amish	Sherwood County	f	50s	Local community centre
Caleb	Amish	Sherwood County	m	30s	Home/tour of farm
Daniel	Amish	Holly County	m	30s	Phone (recorded)
Eliza	Amish	Sherwood County	f	18	Market
Esther	Amish	Holly County	f	70s	Home (meal)
Eve	Amish	Holly County	f	40s	Shop
Gaby	Amish	Sherwood County	f	60s	Market
Grace	Amish	Sherwood County	f	70s	Market
John	Amish	Holly County	m	60s	Home and farm
Jonah	Amish	Holly County	m	50s	Phone (recorded) and market
Katie	Amish	Sherwood County	f	30s	Home
Lydia	Amish	Holly County	f	40s	Home
Mandy	Amish	Holly County	f	20s	Shop
Naomi	Amish	Sherwood County	f	60s	Home

Peter	Amish	Holly County	m	70s	Farm
Rebecca	Amish	Holly County	f	50s	Phone (recorded)
Ruth	Amish	Holly County	f	80s	Home (meal)
Sarah	Amish	Holly County	f	60s	Shop
Sarah-Jane	Amish	Holly County	f	70s	Home and local locations
Abby	Jewish		f	40s	Skype
Adam	Jewish		m	40s	Phone (recorded)
Benjamin	Jewish		m	40s	Home
Danielle	Jewish		f	30s	Phone (recorded)
David	Jewish		m	40s	Phone (recorded)
Emma	Jewish		f	40s	Phone (recorded)
Estie	Jewish		f	30s	Skype
Gerry	Jewish		m	60s	Phone
Hannah	Jewish		f	40s	Phone and community centre
Ilana	Jewish		f	30s	Phone (recorded)
Jaden	Jewish		m	20s	Phone (recorded)
Janice	Jewish		f	40s	Community centre
Joanne	Jewish		f	50s	Phone (recorded)
Jon	Jewish		m	20s	Phone (recorded)
Joseph	Jewish		m	30s	Phone (recorded)
Laura	Jewish		f	40s	Phone (recorded)
Miriam	Jewish		f	40s	Phone (recorded)
Olivia	Jewish		f	20s	Phone (recorded)
Richard	Jewish		m	40s	Phone (recorded)
Simon	Jewish		m	50s	Phone (recorded)
Tali	Jewish		f	70s	Phone (recorded)

Participants included ‘boundary-keepers’ i.e. those who seek the persistence of community and play an active role in this, either in a position of leadership or from other sections of the community. It was important within this study to give a voice to those on the margins of community (‘outliers’), who may or may not partake in communal activities, but for whom the community offers a combination of comfort and discomfort, inclusion and exclusion. The aim was for a generational mix and a variety of professions, which was largely achieved. There were a range of professions in both groups, though educational levels were higher in the Jewish community, as will be explored in Chapter Five.

The criteria for inclusion/exclusion in this research was to an extent flexible and open (Newby, 1977), but largely consisted of:

- Community founders, leaders and lay leaders: offering insights to the construction of community, boundary-keeping strategies and hierarchy
- Self-defining members: providing ‘insider’ insights; interwoven personal and communal narratives; understandings of practice, roles and perspectives on inclusion/exclusion
- Regular attendants at communal occasions: insights into communal gatherings and responses/connections to these

- Self-defining partial/semi-involved members (e.g. attend but do not wish to formally affiliate, are affiliated but choose not to attend communal occasions): alternative views on communal identity and the significance of affiliation; experiences as simultaneously included/excluded, 'insider'/'outsider'
- Self-defining former members: experiences of exclusion and/or choosing to dis-embed from the community
- Self-defining non-members with insights into the community: an 'outsider' perspective offering potentially different interpretations of narrative, inclusion/exclusion and practice (for background research)

This mix of participants allowed for a variety of voices to surface, conveying the heterogeneity of the communities, in addition to levels of belonging that may not have emerged had only the most engaged members been involved.

When working with groups such as the Amish, for whom privacy and varying degrees of separatism are a way of life, trust and familiarity are a key component of the participant-researcher relationship. The use of gatekeepers is a powerful tool in this respect, legitimising the researcher to those they seek to work with. There were some initial challenges in this regard for this research. Two key gatekeepers with whom I had formed a connection in the years leading up to the fieldwork were unexpectedly and unavoidably unable to be present in the initial weeks in Pennsylvania. The most expedient route to participant recruitment was therefore no longer available. Seeking out additional gatekeepers, primarily other academics in the field, assisted with overcoming this, as did approaching individuals in Amish predominant areas, such as shopping areas. A significant amount of time was invested in making approaches without the use of gatekeepers.

This was a labour-intensive exercise which, whilst it eventually resulted in meeting a variety of non-typical participants and generating data, had its drawbacks. For instance, with a gatekeeper present to make personal introductions, that legitimation and familiarity would have been more immediate. Instead, each approach required explaining credentials, establishing trustworthiness and contacts and to build rapport. The impact was that it took longer to make introductions. However, this arguably resulted in a broader and more diverse sample. The use of two field sites offered more opportunities to access potential participants within the time limitations. Spending most days immersed in the field sites, in areas where multiple participants live in proximity to one another, allowed for time to be maximised to both fit in interviews and recruit participants in nearby local Amish businesses. This time and labour-intensive approach resulted in the recruitment of a significant number and spread of participants despite the obstacles presented at the beginning of the field research.

Related to this, with the Amish the snowballing technique did not work as planned. In general, irrespective of how well an interview had gone and how positive the rapport was, Amish participants were often reluctant to recommend others to speak with. This allowed for some valuable observations about the relationship between Amish people and the 'outside world'. However, from a researcher's perspective, it meant that each new contact provided access to themselves alone and it was required to start the recruitment process anew each time. Occasionally, this occurred by me accompanying an existing research participant and asking them to make introductions, which enabled a level of trust upon my initial conversation. At other times, I approached individuals and explained my research and background. By making connections based on sharing my own identity, almost all the people I approached showed

an interest and either shared an informal conversation with me at a market or arranged to meet with me for an interview later. The next section describes how the data from interviews and observations were analysed and the consideration involved in this process.

3. Data Analysis

This section discusses my choice of a discourse and narrative analysis-based approach and will explore the ways in which these techniques were applied to interviews and observations. It goes on to assert the importance of considering the contextual, interpretive and performed nature of narrative telling, asserting that different meanings and uses of language in speech and writing circulate in the communities of choice. Coding approaches will subsequently be outlined.

3.1. Data Sources

As discussed in the Research Design, semi-structured interviews gleaned rich data which lessened the need for archival data, which was found to be insufficient in addressing the research questions. Interviews were supplemented by participant observation, to gain a deeper understanding of the case studies and to allow for the surfacing of different experiences. As noted above, fieldnotes were taken either at the field sites or shortly thereafter. In analysing the data, an awareness was necessary of contradictory findings from different data sources.

3.2 Discourse and Narrative Analysis

Discourse analysis regards text and talk as social practice, rather than a medium through which to discover an absolute truth, and assumes that language is not neutral – that it constructs, rather than reflects reality (Gill, 1996: 246). Spickard asserts that "Discourse' is more than mere language; it is an institutionalized way of thinking, embedded in language, that shapes people's thoughts" (2007: 133). Thus, by analysing the discourses as they permeate through the interviews, an understanding can be gained of the individual, in terms of their relationship to the communities to which they belong(ed) (Squire et al., 2014).

Using these assumptions, a combination of discourse analysis and a narrative approach will be used due to its emphasis on "the stories that people employ to account for events" (Bryman, 2012: 584). Bryman explains that this methodology entails 'sensitivity' to: the connections people make between past, present and future; the way in which they situate themselves and narrate their roles in events and occurrences; and the stories they tell about these experiences (ibid). There is much debate about what narrative is and what learning can emerge from the analysis of narratives – be it structural, contextual or content based or focussing on language, culture or political change, amongst other foci (Ricoeur, 1984; Todorov, 1990; Plummer, 1995; Labov, 1997). Squire proposes a holistic approach in that, "We may want…to look at narrative at a conceptually intermediate level… a level that takes in the individual, social and cultural character of particular narrative formations" (2005: 12). This perspective is echoed by Back, who posits that "…the everyday matters because it offers the opportunity to link the smallest story to the largest social transformation" (2015: 834). Squire's 'intermediate level' and Back's notion of 'linking' serve as useful conceptions of narrative for this research, which seeks to learn about individual experiences and the construction/co-construction of communal identity under the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity.

Gehart et al (2007) suggest that narrative analysis is embedded in the whole process of research, from sampling and access through to data generation and analysis and is thus not

purely employed after data collection (see also Moen, 2006; Squire et al., 2014). In this research, data generation and analysis cannot be strictly categorised as narrative in nature, as it only meets some of the criteria for this. Instead, it takes a "pragmatic direction, choosing theories, methodologies, data and modes of analysis that are not unique to any one approach" (Squire et al., 2014: 11). Thus, elements of the narrative approach are applied, particularly using the stories people tell about themselves which take into account the relationship between individual experience and cultural context (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) i.e. the connection between a participant's narrative and what this can reveal about the community and their relationship with it.

Bourdieu cautions of the 'biographical illusion' in relaying one's story, in which interpretation and meaning associated with one's biography or narrative takes precedence over an accurate and sequential retelling (1986: 302), thus adding meaning to events and experiences (see also Clifford, 2000). It is therefore important to explore questions such as: Why is this story being told? What meaning has been attached to this story? And what themes emerge when this story is linked with others? Before addressing how these stories are coded and analysed, this section turns to the importance of the emergence of different communal 'voices' in the research.

3.2.1 Voices

It is an important endeavour in research such as this to problematise claims to authenticity emanating from spokespeople and community leaders (referred to as 'boundary-keepers') from 'within' religion-oriented diasporic communities, impressing further the need for narratives from those on the margins of community to be given a voice. Therefore, a narrative approach was taken in order to enable multiple voices to be heard, avoid singular claims to legitimacy, experience and authenticity and to gain a rich and deep picture of the stories of the communities of study in relation to the research questions (see Squire et al., 2014; Moen, 2006 on the multiplicity of voices in narrative research). Such an approach attaches agency to participants. As Gubrium and Holstein observe, "Reconceptualizing interview roles in terms of narrative practice presents a more active version of how interview participants actually operate. Their agency is recast as artful, collaborative, and suffused with discourse" (2012: 28). This enables voice to be given equally to participants, regardless of levels of inclusion, and bestows power in the interview setting (Crow, 2012).

For communities conceptualised as traditional, with a diasporic and religion-oriented core, narratives deployed via oral, practiced and written storytelling are central to the perpetuation and persistence of identity. For example, as stated in the previous chapter, the story of the Exodus of the Israelites (later to be known as the Jews) from Ancient Egypt, is retold on a yearly basis in Jewish tradition through the Passover *Seder*. *Seder*'s literal translation is 'order', emphasising the importance of an ordered retelling of a pivotal story (Tabory and Stern, 2008: 22). As discussed with reference to Bourdieu's (1986) 'biographical illusion', the importance of this order is not necessarily chronological, but rather the meaning associated in the narration of a communal story (see also Grbich, 2015). Acknowledging this and reflecting it in the research methods can facilitate the telling of stories of inclusivity/exclusivity, community construction and belonging.

This research is predicated on the supposition that tradition is multifarious and that communities theorised as traditional, rather than being monolithic, comprise a broad diversity of members possessing wide-ranging histories, perspectives, practices, roles, commitments and experiences of inclusion/exclusion. This is additionally intersected with

markers such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, occupation, religion, nationality, locality, political affiliation, to name just a few of the more frequently studied identifications (see Yuval-Davis, 2011). Some of these roles and differences were therefore reflected through the research design and methods, as no individual interviewee/participant was taken as a spokesperson for a whole community. Thus, each participant's 'story' was equally regarded.

3.3 Coding

In terms of coding, Bryman cites Riessman's four models of narrative analysis (2004*b*, in Bryman, 2012: 412). These are: thematic – focussing on content rather than how the story is told; structural – emphasising the way in which a story is relayed above the content; interactional – in which the interaction between the person telling the story and the listener is at the forefront; and performative – the performance of a story to an audience and at times their response. As discussed, a combination of these approaches was employed in acknowledging that no single perspective can stand alone. The content of a participant's narrative was crucial to learning about their story and the way in which it intertwines with the community. However, the way this is told (structure and performance), through speech, body language and silence can expose a deeper layer to the narrative i.e. the emotions – conscious or not – associated with the account. In addition, Squire's holistic approach was used, considering the individual, social and cultural linkages described above. The findings in this research were most reliant on the themes within interviews, as reflected by the thematic coding, with an awareness of how answers related to wider personal/social/communal themes.

Top level conceptual themes that emerged included: ritual and practice, boundaries, belonging, knowledge, threats/challenges. This were guided by the interviews, whilst being cognisant of some of the themes within the literatures of community, tradition, diaspora, religion and contemporary modernity. An example of the more detailed level of coding subsequent to this follows.

Figure 2: Example Sub-Codes on the Theme of Belonging:

Sub-Code	Description
Fear of change and insecurity	Community is shelter from the fast-moving world outside, it is familiar and secure
Like-minded people	The place where you can be with people like you
Acceptance of diversity	Where people's differences are accepted

In organising and coding interviews and observations, an awareness was maintained of these intersecting themes and modes of communication. Word and OneNote facilitated the organisation and coding of multiple data sources, allowing for connections to be made efficiently. It was deemed that, as found by other social researchers, CADQAS programmes such as NVivo could create distance between the researcher and their data (see for example Fielding and Lee, 1998). The tools chosen were considered appropriate as they enabled familiarity (rather than distance) with the text, using subsections akin to nodes for recurring themes in a narrative, recording language uses and shifts in narratives. Transcribed interview and fieldnotes were thus stored, organised and searched efficiently, enabling the process of reading and analysing stories (Gibbs, 2007).

4. Ethical Considerations

This section speaks to a combination of formal ethical processes, such as gaining informed consent; considerations specific to the two case studies, such as communal dynamics, language and approaches to recording technology; and to my place within this research. My experiences around ethical considerations, potentially sensitive case studies and a combination of 'insider'/'outsider' positionality aim to add to the body of community research and the delicate, considered and pragmatic approaches that are often required.

This research was carried out in accordance with the Economic and Social Research Council's Framework for Research Ethics (2015) and the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice (2017), with approval from the University of Surrey Research Ethics Committee and abiding by the ethical guidelines of the academic study centre local to the Amish research sites (for a discussion of ethics in social research, see Bulmer, 2008; King and Horrocks, 2010; Bryman, 2012).

4.1 Professional Background and Experience

Working in a professional capacity for more than ten years with religion-oriented diasporic communities, developing programmes to encourage positive relations and representing related concerns to policy-makers, afforded me the opportunity and experience to embed in and work with tightly bounded communities. This allowed the chance to gain a deep understanding of the sensitivities of working with such communities, the challenges they face and the most appropriate ways of engaging with members, including 'boundary-makers' and 'outliers'.

4.2 Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Recording

Informed consent assumes that the participant has fully understood that which they are consenting to and that their consent is voluntary. To ensure this level of understanding, consent forms and information sheets needed to be clear, concise and free from jargon and were accompanied by a verbal explanation, without persuasion. The potential dissemination and intended use of the research findings was made clear, transparent and explicit. Participants were not pressured into taking part and it was made clear at the beginning and throughout the process that they were free to withdraw at any time. In the case of the Amish, ease with written English differed between individuals, so it was important to ensure they could relay what they were reading, as this research assumes that the quality of consent is the priority (Coomber, 2002), though translation into 'Pennsylvania German' was deemed unnecessary. In order to access communal events and practices, consent was sought from community leaders. Structures varied significantly between the two case studies. As such, different approaches to gaining consent in each community were used (as described earlier in this chapter).

To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for the communities of choice, as well as for individual participants interviewed or encountered in gathering data. Features that could help to identify an individual were concealed. The extent to which this may have affected 'accuracy' of data were considered. In Bell's study, he acknowledged the impact that protecting participants' identities could have, quoting de Tocqueville, "I would rather let my comment suffer than add my name to the list of those travellers who repay generous hospitality with worries and embarrassments" (de Tocqueville 1969, 20 cited in Bell, 1994: 245). In this research, the participants' privacy and community dynamics were the priority. However, through interviews and observations, an awareness was maintained of any

potentially vulnerable participants or sensitive information that may be disclosed, participants at risk, or criminal activity taking place. It was expressed to participants that certain disclosures, such as criminal activity, were not bound by the confidentiality agreement and that reporting to a third party may be necessary. Data are stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Any documents relating to the research is password protected.

4.3 Culturally Specific Considerations

Ideally, all interviews would have been recorded. However, there were many Amish participants who are uncomfortable with technology and days within the Jewish calendar where members observe restrictions on the use of electricity. On such occasions, observations were noted discreetly. In these cases, fieldnotes needed to be sufficiently detailed to be analysed sometime after the event, yet expediently concise (Lofland and Lofland, 1995: 107).

Other cultural considerations include a sensitivity to internal politics and hierarchy, gender, generational and other roles and the dynamics between community members. Bryman cites the SRA Ethical Guidelines, emphasising that the "'social researcher should try to minimize disturbance both to subjects themselves and to the subjects' relationships with their environment'" (cited in Bryman, 2012: 510; also see Potter, 2006). Hence, in this research it was necessary to ensure the benefits of the research outweigh any risk of harm and disruption not only to the participants, but to the functioning and dynamics of the community.

As discussed, there has been significant interest in Amish communities for the purposes of televised entertainment. Amish communities, and in particular youngsters, have been exoticised through a process of orientalist voyeurism. It was therefore important to gain the trust of the Amish people who participated in this research, to avoid being viewed as part of this growing phenomenon and that it is understood that stories relayed would not be shared inappropriately.

4.3.1 Language and Social Norms for the Amish

Educational levels and language impacted both access and the data generation process with Amish participants. English is a second language to most Amish people, who speak 'Pennsylvania German' within the community, whilst 'High German' is the language of prayer and preaching at church. The English spoken is fluent of sorts, however, the combination of having a British accent and a different use of language and syntax initially made for stilted communication. After the initial interviews, my increased familiarity with commonly used Amish terms and their meanings, such as 'visiting', instead of 'meeting' or 'talking' and of syntax, lessened the impact of these differences. Garnering a greater awareness of both accent and 'Britishisms' and finding alternatives for terms which were not familiar e.g. by speaking about 'The Church' or 'congregation' instead of 'community', further assisted this process.

In addition, it became evident early on that many Amish people are neither used to, nor comfortable with talking about their beliefs, community, practices and religion. It is in fact discouraged and far from the norm within the community. Moreover, much as anyone would find it difficult to answer a question about those things we take for granted in life, asking about 'Amishness' and Amish ways of life elicited at times a puzzled response. Sometimes this was because the premise of the question, such as contemplating church services, was unfamiliar. At other times, my 'outsider' status made participants initially reluctant to share. The discomfort was felt most acutely when talking about church authority, such as the role of

bishops and ministers. This made data generation on this theme more complex, yet was in itself informative. Investing in building rapport and trust enabled a more open conversation in many, though not all, instances. Acknowledging my position within the research was essential in these cases, as explored below.

4.4 Positionality and Reflexivity

“What we “see” is inevitably shaped by the fact that we are language; by our spatial, temporal, and social locations (by culture, history, status); by our occupational or other idiosyncratic concerns...” (Lofland and Lofland, 1995: 68). As a result, my identity in the field differed in the two settings. Within the Amish community, that meant being an ‘outsider’, being an academic from a non-Amish community and residing in an urban setting in the United Kingdom. With the Jewish community, being a ‘native’ researcher (Asad, 1973), already participating in communal practice and familiar with some ‘boundary-keepers’ and members, posed a different set of challenges. However, ‘insider’/’outsider’ status is fluid and context dependent. In Heley’s work on rural ethnography and the ‘insider’/‘outsider’ question, he observed that “my local identity was itself multifaceted, contingent and dynamic” (2011: 223). Despite growing up in the village used as his case study, he became aware of his ‘insider’ status at times, but ‘outsider’ in terms of class, marital status and other identifiers. As a young, single academic, he noted, “Geographical proximity did not therefore translate into cultural propinquity” (ibid: 226). Thus, ‘insider’ status cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, Alexander observes that, “Ironically, for ‘native’ researchers, even more than ‘non-native’, the dangers lie in the claiming of a specialist knowledge or access” (2004: 147), reflecting the role of the researcher’s outlook, experiences, identity and perceptions. Spickard points to the particular importance of “the problem if subjectivity” in ethnographic study of religious communities, in terms of the “insider/outsider problem”, social power imbalances and how the researcher represents participants in writing up, as the researcher is “part of the picture” (2007: 140).

Thus, Crow concludes that with community research, one cannot “bracket out the individual researcher’s unique creativity and imagination” (2012: 410; see also Baron, 2019 on the researchers “recursive, relational journey”: 2064). Likewise, Neal and Walters (2006) discuss the complexity of the researcher’s position. They highlight the risk of performance and co-production of data when the researcher has ‘outsider’ status. They reflect on a ‘Goffmanesque’ performance by the researcher. In this case Neal mobilises her rural background in order to build rapport with women in rural communities, which she refers to as a “dialogical and rapport building methodological approach” (Neal and Walters, 2006: 183). However, Neal and Walters echo Heley’s experience of a fluid ‘insider’/’outsider’ status, noting that “…who we were and our (undeclared) ethnicity and our (declared) place relations constantly reinforced and disturbed our familiar-strange, insider-outsider research relations” (ibid: 181; see also Spickard, 2005 on ‘insider’/’outsider’ negotiations in religious communities). In this vein, in gathering and analysing data, I remained conscious of my own co-productive affect within the research.

4.4.1 Positionality: Findings from the Field

Coming from an urban (and British) setting, undertaking academic studies (where Amish schooling ends at around fifteen years old) and being Jewish are all uncommon markers in the Amish settings visited, as is being a woman proactively seeking conversations with people they are unfamiliar with. Many of those I encountered had little or no experience of meeting people with a degree level education, and less so with a woman undertaking post-graduate

study. Consequently, building trust and rapport was a time-consuming task. My ‘outsider’ status impacted on how data were co-constructed in interviews, though this is not measurable and there is no neutral researcher-participant exchange. However, the interest around those markers of difference also opened the opportunity for questions that allowed a flow of conversation, once trust had been established, and thus may be regarded in some ways as advantageous.

It was important in this research, with both communities, to be open about my positionality and significant markers of identity, including coming from a Jewish background. This was to allow for an open conversation about what community means as an individual and a researcher and to establish an open exchange, thereby building trust quicker and more deeply. Being Jewish amongst Amish communities garnered a variety of noteworthy responses. On several occasions, an often-used term in the region was relayed to me. The phrase ‘Jew you down’ was explained as haggling down a price shrewdly and relentlessly. This did not come across as being used to cause offense, but of course it reflected a lack of understanding of and the naïve perpetuation of stereotyping of Jews using long-held antisemitic tropes. Others were interested, asking questions in response to the ones posed to them, about subjects such as dress, prayer and technology. There was occasional talk of identifying with the experience of the persecution of Jews, with discussion at an Amish dinner party centring around this theme. Further, one woman, with a relatively liberal Amish outlook, drew connections to what she saw as “Jewish parenting and morality” and her own Amish experience, as well as to the shared experiences of persecution in Europe. This highlighted that an ‘outsider’ status was not simple or universally regarded, yet it was rarely immaterial.

Other lines of association, such as being a parent and a woman, allowed for connections to be established (see Neitz, 2002 on researcher multiple identities and fieldwork). This was generative of data around parenting and passing on culture to the next generation and resulted in speaking with more women than men in the Amish communities (see Access and Sampling section). This factor can be seen to have assisted in establishing trust and building rapport, and being invited to family oriented occasions such as meals with children present.

For the Jewish community, knowing some participants posed both opportunities and challenges. The challenge was in reaching out beyond social networks and recognisable members and beyond those of the same age, generation and level of belonging as me. The combination of gatekeepers and a snowballing technique allowed for this to occur. A further consequence of an ‘insider’ status (though not fully, as being a researcher can place one as partially ‘outside’) is that participants assumed familiarity with practices, language and narratives. One interviewee asked,

> “… The only thing I would like to ask you is: are you Jewish? …The only reason that I’m asking that is cos I wasn’t sure, and if I’m saying things that a non-Jewish person might not understand. That’s the only reason.”

Thus, questions needed to be posed specifically to ensure data was generated that was not reliant on reading between lines of what was being shared. These responses and negotiations illustrated the conditional and fluid nature of the researcher-participant relationship, in which various identity features can act as both obstacles and opportunities to build rapport and gather rich data. As this section demonstrates therefore, ethical considerations affected each level of research, from sampling through to analysis.

Conclusion

This research employs a narrative approach, predominantly gathering data through semi-structured interviews and observation with members from a selection of Amish communities in two field sites in rural Pennsylvania and a Jewish community in London. The aim was to gather and analyse oral stories, observed practice and rituals and to draw on archival material as background research. Through a reflexive and iterative process, this research intends to give voice to a diversity of participants, exploring the interweaving of personal and communal histories and boundary-keeping, not bestowing authenticity, representation or legitimacy to any individual or group. Drawing on everyday speech, action and practice, the themes of inclusion/exclusion, belonging, practice, roles and external engagements are researched in order to explore how members of communities conceptualised as traditional, particularly religion-oriented diasporic communities, negotiate the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity.

Research with Amish communities in Pennsylvania posed some specific methodological challenges. Many of these were foreseen, such as access, language and positionality, yet designing a comprehensive response to each of these occurrences was not wholly possible before arriving at the sites of study. Whilst certain unpredictable factors such as the absence of some gatekeepers, made for labour-intensive field research, they also enabled spontaneity in the field and the opportunity to creatively seek a wider sample and an additional case study site. These methodological negotiations, far from hindering data generation, feed into findings around themes such as Amish engagements with the outside world and existing academic approaches to understanding these groups. For the Jewish community, a 'semi-insider' status provided the opportunity to understand practices, gain access and build rapport. However, in order to ensure that stories relayed were not lost in assumptions made about an 'insider-researcher', conversations relied on a specific opening of questions to allow greater details to emerge.

Both case studies offer the opportunity to widen learning about methodologies, reflexivity and positionality when researching communities. This includes contributing insights into the nuanced and multiple nature of 'insider'/'outsider' positions, the effect of the researcher's presence on data generation and analysis and the specific sensitivities of religion-oriented and isolated communities around hierarchy, restrictions and representation. Additionally, the lack of research or particular extant approaches to studying such communities mean that these two case studies are valuable both for methodological learning and the content of data which was able to be shared, which is explored in the three subsequent data chapters.

Chapter Four: Boundaries of Community

Introduction

The review of sociological literature in Chapter Two identified a dichotomisation of fixed tradition against a dynamic contemporary modernity (with notable exceptions such as Robinson, 2006; Bhambra, 2007; Calhoun, 2010). One can argue that according to these binaried characterisations, boundaries that demarcate communal practice, inclusion/exclusion and identity within traditional communities must therefore be solid, inflexible, unchanged and destined to remain the same, or alternatively to cease to exist within contemporary modern contexts. This chapter contests such propositions, exploring the complexity of boundaries under the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity as identified within the case study communities, suggesting that they are perhaps neither entirely unchangeable nor destined to vanish.

It does so by recognising through the findings that rather than communal boundaries of practice, inclusion/exclusion and interaction being rigid, in fact there are multiple degrees to which tradition and modernity interflow under contemporary conditions, "just as a balloon which bounds air responds to changes in the relative pressure of air inside and outside itself" (Wallman, 1978: 205). Within the Amish and Jewish case studies, three categories of boundaries are apparent: those boundaries that are deemed unchanged and unchangeable by members i.e. fixed; those that have been negotiated out of necessity (primarily due to external pressures); and those boundaries of community that have become more open and fluid as part of a purposeful shift from within. This chapter will discuss each of these forms of boundaries in turn, though it is important to highlight that such categories enable analysis, but that "typology remains tidier than life" (Wallman, 1984: 20).

The first section will look at non-negotiable boundaries within both case study communities, discussing the language of liturgy, the importance of prayer spaces and religious hierarchies that persist. The following section turns to necessarily negotiated boundaries within the Amish community, specifically exploring responses to advancements in technology and changing attitudes to work. It will then look at the necessary negotiations both the Jewish and Amish communities have undertaken as a result of communal growth. Finally, this chapter looks at boundaries that can be regarded as fluid, by exploring widening inclusivity and informal communal structures in the Jewish community.

Although there will inevitably be some points of comparison between the two communities, the intention here is not to compare the expression of these boundaries between communities, but rather to identify the varied manifestations of boundary negotiation in religion-oriented diasporic communities. In so doing, this chapter seeks to disrupt conventional sociological notions of tradition – such as those proposed by Bauman, Giddens, Beck and Lash – as being fixed and unchanging, clouding the debate to reveal boundaries in traditional communities as multifaceted, often dynamic and the subject of perpetual negotiation and renegotiation. Indeed, it should be noted that these categories discussed herewith are themselves at times fuzzy. What emerges, however, is that rather than being dichotomous to modernity, tradition in this context is revealed as having a co-constitutive relationship with fluid contemporary modernity.

1. Non-Negotiable Boundaries

Boundaries that are non-negotiable refer to areas perceived by participants as unchanging or unchangeable. Unchanging in that members believed nothing has changed in the community's history or recent history in this area (such as liturgy), and unchangeable insofar as these areas or aspects of community life either are not permitted to be changed or that the community would cease to exist in its current form if these aspects change (such as coming together in person to pray). Whilst on the surface 'non-negotiable' may seem to imply passivity and fixedness, as will be illustrated in this section, these boundaries are retained as part of a deliberate, rational and often discursive process; a contrast to characterisations within some of the literature of the inertia and irrationality of religion-based communities (e.g. Keane, 2002, 2007). Thus, rather than the 'fixed' elements being of a pre-modern era (Bauman, 2000), these elements are themselves negotiations in reaction to and constructive of contemporary modernity.

This section therefore explores those factors that participants perceive as being more inflexible, suggesting that the dynamism of traditional communities is perhaps contingent upon consciously designated unshiftable boundaries and practices. Yet these loci are arguably brought into reflexive dialogues and discursive shifts in order to be 'preserved'. Thus, these non-negotiable boundaries are not a claim that the community itself cannot change, but that there is a thread one might identify as the 'same' in Gilroy's (1997) 'changing same' which needs to run through the community in spite of other changes.

1.1 Enduring Structures and Language of Liturgy

Liturgy is an essential aspect of communal and religious life for both case study communities. It is an intersection of community and religion and provides a focus for ritual, expressions of narratives of loss and longing and of sociality. The meeting of the communal, diasporic and the religious in this manner is a feature that makes these case studies interesting in their context and expressions. Within this section, the approach will be on exploring liturgy as a sociological expression, enabling understanding of the communities, rather than as a religious study of liturgy.

The Amish communities come together for worship on a weekly basis with other families for the Sunday Sabbath, at festivals and life-cycle events such as baptism and communion. The Jewish group gather together, on a Saturday for their Sabbath, on festivals and for life-cycle events such as Bat and Bar Mitzvahs. The liturgy is the formal expression of public worship that takes place during these times. The religious services for both entail a uniqueness of language (Hochdeutsche or High German for the Amish, Hebrew for the Jewish community) and a series of communal (and sometimes personal) prayers said on a regular basis from the same prayer book each time (for the Amish the *Ausbund*, for the Jewish group a *Siddur*).

A resistance to changing the religious liturgy, as well as the centrality of liturgy to the identity of the community and its members, emerged through the findings from each case study. These presented liturgy as both a linguistic and spiritual connection to notions of 'home', the maintenance of previous generations' customs and a sense of security through familiarity. The persistence of such practices contests Giddens' claim that late modernity 'propels' the social away from "pre-established precepts and practices" (1991: 20), as in both cases these practices persist. However, the conscious choice of retention can be regarded as simultaneously adhering to 'pre-established practice', but with a potentially more critical

approach to the ‘precepts’ that underlie them. This is explored in more depth throughout this section.

For the Amish participants, there was a near unanimous perception from participants that church services have not changed at any point since the arrival of Amish groups in the United States, that the hymns and tunes are the same as they always were and that the order of the services had not altered. Some were surprised simply by the suggestion implied by the question, and responses often entailed no further explanation than “Our church service is exactly the way it was when I was a child” and “Churches are the same as always”. Katie, a young Amish woman of a conservative background, expressed that keeping the liturgy of the service unchanged displayed “dedication to upholding traditions in the ways our forefathers did”. Her reference was to the religious practice of early Amish and Anabaptist figures in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, yet spoke also to the communal experience and narrative of persecution and dislocation inherent in the preservation of those practices, in a way recreating ‘home’ through prayer, a feature of diasporic communities replete within the literature (for example Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993). This was emphasised more explicitly when a woman from a different Amish group showed her *Ausbund* prayer book and explained that in church they always sing the same second song, ‘Das 140’, about Haszlibach, a region “in the Old Country”. This is a practice that others spoke of as typical of services regardless of denomination.

The language of the liturgy being Hochdeutsche, or German from the Highlands, further enshrines a rootedness to the ‘home country’, echoing diasporic expressions of nostalgia evident throughout much of the literature (e.g. Anderson, 1987; Ahmed et al, 2003; Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Rebecca, an Amish woman in her fifties, talked about the deep-rooted connection to the use of German,

> “A lot of the young people feel that we should leave the German and speak in English and the old people still cling to the German very, very hard… I certainly would have to say that some of the old bishops would have to die and the younger bishops would all have to agree [to the introduction of English], which I could not see that happening yet.”

Despite an apparent generational difference of opinion, the practice of worshipping in German remains central and entrenched for even this member’s relatively liberal group and any change towards English worship is near unthinkable for the community leadership.

For one former member of the Amish, Daniel, the desire to worship and study the Bible in a language other than German was a step towards exclusion. In early adulthood he challenged a local bishop to defend the use of German, receiving the response “‘because I said so’”. He went on to explain that,

> “I was completely out of line just to engage in that thought… to voice that out loud sort of made me, branded me as what they call – translates into ‘unsatisfied’ – and that’s like the worst slur you can call an Amish person is unsatisfied.”

Daniel felt that by reading the Bible in German, “you’re basically subjecting us to ignorance because we didn’t understand German…” For him, this contributed to the move to disengage from the Amish community. This could be seen as the tension between inclusion and the desire to retain tradition. Daniel’s experience can be seen in the context of Wasserfall et al’s (1999) ‘thin boundaries’ of community, which are rigid, in contrast to the ‘thick boundaries’

he characterises, that offer tolerance for the sake of preservation of membership. On the one hand, the rejection of linguistic adaptions enables a continuity of communal rituals, thereby strengthening communal practice. However, an alternative interpretation is that by allowing such disengagements, by not permitting such an adaptation, the community may be weakened via the loss of members. Though it should be noted that retention rates remain high and this case cannot be generalised without further understanding the reasons former Amish members have left, which is beyond the scope of this research.

The commitment to the maintenance of communal identity through language is reflected too in the persistence of Pennsylvania German as the primary spoken language of most Amish people – a tangible connection to the Germanic regions from where these communities originated some three hundred years ago (Kraybill et al, 2013). It is in this more rigidly held boundary that one might highlight the uniqueness of *diasporic* religion-oriented communities, for which nostalgia is arguably less a rejection of modernity and more an embracing of history and narratives that bind the community, including in the contemporary modern context. This reflects the depth of meaning associated with place, particularly in light of the traumatic disembedding of this community (see Massey, 2000 on place and meaning).

The language of liturgy provides a rootedness too for the Jewish group, with a deep religious significance to members in the use of Hebrew, the language derived from Jewish scripture dating back several thousand years (Finkelstein, 1975). Command of the language, again, for this community is seen by some as less significant than the spiritual connection its use offers members. One regular attendee, Joseph, shares,

> "…because a lot of people's Hebrew – including myself – is not fantastic, which means that, if you sat down you would be able to work out what it means, I don't think you're necessarily thinking about every word as you say it, which means that what is important to you is the familiarity and the rhythm and the poetry."

For Joseph, an involved member in his early thirties, the symbolism of the Hebrew liturgy provides a familiarity, a comfort and security connected to both the format of the prayer and its historical-religious heritage. He asserts that a change would be "a complete anathema to me." The familiarity of the Hebrew liturgy emerges as a form of comfort or 'short-hand' for the community, in which comprehension is less valuable than its effect (Heller, 1995). As with the Amish example, there are connections here to notions of a distant 'home' and exilic experience, leading to the construction of boundaries through the language of ritual (see e.g. Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993).

Noteworthy too is that the retention of language is a part of a considered, deliberate process, rather than a sign of passive inertia. Therefore, the retention of Hebrew and the rejection of introducing English content to the liturgy for the Jewish community cannot be viewed apart from the modern context in which such decisions are made. As Laura, a founding member illustrates, preserving language-based tradition is also a response to more reformist elements of the wider Jewish communities,

> "…there were a number of people who were kind of dissatisfied by, you know, the kind of progressive movement's attempt to improve the liturgy and make it more comprehensible and bringing in English, and there was just a feeling of 'well that just doesn't do it for me', you know, 'what does it for me is traditional davening [praying]."

This frames the non-negotiable boundary of language as a response to those, who for some were overly embracing externality, rather than a response to modernity directly. The adaptations to practice in this sense have consequently been negligible. It is not necessarily a comfortable solution for all members. As this long-standing member, Hannah, relays,

> "I think we're a little bit cowardly about not moving away from our *Siddur* [prayer book]… And I also recognise that moving away from the *Siddur* opens a whole Pandora's Box, so part of me is kind of fairly comfortable that we haven't really broached that one yet."

There is a deliberateness here to the maintenance of certain customs, in which a weighing up of preservation of practice against social values and radicalism takes place in an often difficult process, but one which is arguably led by feeling. The link to spirituality and religious legacy provided by the liturgy is therefore not without conflict for members. In understanding this tension, Barth's notion of the 'second naiveté' sheds light on the rational retention of customs that rely solely on an arguably irrational faith (Wallace, 2000; see also Wallman, 1978). As with the members above, a 'second naiveté' entails the perpetuation of often ancient rituals, not because they enable understanding or explanation of the world (as they once might have done), but for the symbolism entailed within them. This "tested and critical naiveté" can be seen in the Jewish community's choice to maintain liturgy that does not always sit with their social values (Barth, 1958 cited in ibid: 51).

In these two very different expressions of boundary-maintenance and retention for the Amish and Jewish communities, boundary-making in a fluid modern context can be understood as a deliberate process, even where that process in essence relies on the absence of change. The language of liturgy, whilst problematic for some young Amish members and clearly entails issues of comprehension in both communities, provides such a deep connection, both spiritually and nostalgically, that they have been closely guarded. Further, the co-constitutive nature of traditional communal identity formation and modernity reveals here the purposeful decisions, where, for the Jewish group, modern progressive values are held in careful and at times uncomfortable balance with practices that root the community spiritually and in its heritage. This tension is arguably not so pronounced for the Amish communities. For both communities, familiarity is held as a value and the prospect of change in the future is accepted, but projected away from current choices to secure the boundaries of liturgical expression, in which ritual may be the last communal feature to change. Yet what requires further examination are micro-level changes to liturgy that whilst not as significant as a change in language, may point to a degree of adaptation that is not widely recognised by members. The spaces in which these liturgical expressions are carried out will be discussed forthwith, as another marker of retaining communal practices.

1.2 The Centrality of Prayer Spaces

It has thus far been argued through the findings that for both communities, liturgy is a non-negotiable boundary, with negligible adaptations in terms of the language each community expresses this with. In addition to this practice-based boundary, a more physical boundary can be observed in these groups, albeit manifested differently – that of a physical space to come together in worship (though as discussed in the concluding chapter, the recent lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic have borne new virtual spaces in need of further research). Given that non-negotiable boundaries have been defined here as those that if removed negate the very essence of the community, it is hard to envisage what the Jewish

and the Amish groups would be with the removal of a physical meeting place in the guise of a synagogue (Jewish community) and a barn belonging to community members (for the Amish).

In the case of the Amish, coming together for prayer is a central aspect of communal life and inextricably connected to Sunday services and communal meals in members' homes and barns (Hostetler, 1993). In Sherwood County, where homes are more remote, barns where services take place are basic wooden structures. In advance of a Sunday service, family come together to create a space for shared prayer, with rows of wooden benches for seating. For the less isolated groups in Holly County, barns or large areas inside homes are used, though the space can still be considered sparse and basic, filled too with wooden benches. Not having a formal house of worship (such as a church building) is considered a fundamental aspect of communal and religious life. Indeed, former members who sought prayer in designated church buildings were no longer welcomed at Amish services and formed or joined new communities, often with Mennonites or Amish Mennonites, with new doctrines and institutions[1] (Kraybill et al, 2013). A senior communal figure spoke at length of the 'Church House Movement' of the 1880s, in which two-thirds of Amish people in his area moved towards designated church buildings, leaving the Amish and becoming Mennonites. This story, situated in relatively distant history, evidently resonated with him and the importance he and his community placed on not being attached to a centralised prayer space. This practice has echoes of the persecution experienced by early Anabaptists, who prayed together under the threat of violence and arrest.

The tradition of coming together to pray, followed by a shared meal, is termed as being 'in fellowship' (Kraybill, 1994). It is a place-based ritual so central that when one is 'shunned' or excommunicated from the Amish for breaking the communal rules, a major consequence is no longer being permitted to attend the weekly site of worship and shared meals i.e. to not be 'in fellowship' with one's community. Whilst held as a non-negotiable communal ritual, hosting thirty or more families in one's home or barn once or twice a year can entail personal sacrifice in terms of time, money and emotional labour. When visiting Katie (in her mid-twenties), she had returned from helping her mother who lived nearby to prepare for the Sunday service due to take place at her home. The preparations had been ongoing throughout the preceding weeks. The whole family, including several local daughters, had been cooking, cleaning and moving furniture and the men had transported tens of benches by horse and cart from the previous house that held the service. Katie spoke of feeling anxious when the community came to her home. It was conveyed, too, in other conversations that this custom was labour intensive, but valued deeply as a part of communal life. None of those interviewed expressed the desire to depart from this tradition. This privileging of the community over self is arguably incongruous with notions of contemporary modernity, in which individualism is conceived as more desirable, thus challenging Bauman's claim (explored in Chapter Two) that within contemporary modernity, "mutual assistance 'come what may' [is] a prospect that is neither realistic nor viewed as worthy of great effort" (2003: 66; see also Putnam, 2000).

The relationship to a physical space for communal prayer and meeting is complex within the Jewish community, who have moved premises several times in two decades from members' homes, non-purpose-built spaces, until finding a permanent synagogue building. The space is

[1] Amish Mennonites arose from a split with the Amish in the 1920s. They do not practice excommunication, hold church in barns, or ban technology or driving. Many dress 'Plain' and are sometimes confused with the Amish.

modern, with comfortable seating and all of the necessary artefacts for a religious service. It is this coming together in a physical, specific place that creates what one long-attending member called "a community feeling". Physical communal space therefore becomes imbued with personal connection, intimacy and worship, and at times sacrifice and discomfort. For the Amish, sharing a space in a member's home or property to pray together is a sacrosanct part of what it is to be Amish, speaking to the significance of family, simplicity and fellowship. Being situated in rural spaces, more geographically isolated from others, this space for coming together takes on additional significance. For the Jewish community, space represents the feeling of community and the persistence of tradition. For this group, living and working in a 'superdiverse' capital city (Vertovec, 2007; Gidley, 2013), a separate space serves a purpose of separation and togetherness. Amid the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity, often typified by the impersonal, a physical coming together in a space permeated with meaning holds a particular function and significance. It arguably offers both security and an effective conduit for the perpetuation of tradition. This physical coming together challenges declensionist arguments such as that of Putnam (2000), who assert that being 'alone' is the way of the modern world. The boundary of this practice is revered and held tightly in its purposeful retention. Such a process is echoed in the retention of certain forms of hierarchy, as discussed forthwith.

1.3 The Persistence of Religious Hierarchies

Structures relating to communal organisation and prayer services inherent within the case study communities reveal an enduring boundary of hierarchy. These are manifestly different examples within each community, but both offer understandings of how specific groups are esteemed and their place enshrined as a non-negotiable boundary.

There are complex understandings, with implicit and explicit rules about leadership and hierarchy in both communities. Both communities are led by lay leaders, rather than full-time or paid professional roles, though this structure differs between the two communities. For the Jewish community, this has resulted in a degree of fluidity surrounding the leadership of the group. However, hierarchy persists in this community through different ordered roles performed according to ancient tradition in the prayer service. Conversely, the Amish serve as an example of structural boundaries of leadership being firmly maintained. Both illustrate that much as liturgy and space are boundaries that, if crossed, alter the nature of the community - and potentially its persistence - expressions of hierarchy further reflect those limits of community which are not presently open to negotiation.

As discussed in the Methodology chapter, the Amish participants were members (and former members) of a variety of different Amish communities, offering insights into the diversity of the groups, but also those features which are a constant in all of these communities. One of the more apparent and immovable elements expressed by the majority of Amish interviewees was the leadership structure. Each church of around thirty families has at its helm up to four ministers. They take on the positions of Deacon (financial and discipline), Preacher (delivers Sunday sermons), Minister (more general) and at the most senior rule-making level, Bishop (Kraybill et al, 2013). These figures are chosen via a combination of being nominated by the congregation and random lots drawn from the nominees. Those proactively putting themselves forward for a role are most often automatically excluded from the process for having displayed excessive pride. The roles are unpaid, lifelong and encompass no training or specific additional religious instruction.

This selection process is deemed inviolable, unchanging and unchanged. Further, it is imbued with religious significance as the lots system consists of a particular prayer inserted inside one of the four nominees' bibles at random. A bishop, Amos, explained that the chosen bible indicates a divinely selected minister. Whilst ministers express a humility about their roles, often live a more frugal and simple life than the congregation and are no more educated (having left the Amish one-room school aged 14/15 years), the selection, roles and responsibilities are concretised and venerated. Indeed, ministers are held to a higher standard, as one interviewee emphasised, "ministers have more conservative dress and change at a slower pace. The old style was codified – a throwback to a different *Ordnung* [set of rules]."

This reverence of the communal leadership roles was often implicit within participants' reluctance to answer questions about their bishops, rather than in the explicit language they used. This was sometimes coupled with an expression of unease. For instance, in a conversation about mobile phones with Sarah, an Amish quilt shop owner in her sixties, she relayed that bishops "don't really like them". When asked: "Do you think the elders will ban them?" she was taken aback and merely answered "I can't say". This was observed again when talking about other rules with members, such as the bishops' willingness to consider new farming equipment. In each instance, it seemed that to question the rule-making process of the ministers was a taboo.

The rigidity of this leadership structure (rather than the personalities occupying these positions) must not be mistaken for simple authoritarianism. For ministers, humility was repeatedly highlighted as an essential quality and there is often a two-way process in decision-making on a significant area. Amos, a bishop from one of the strictest Amish groups in Sherwood County was particularly uncomfortable when asked about his leadership role. He didn't want 'outsiders' to know his position as it was not "humble" to advertise this information. His concern was that others might think "'he thinks he's something special'." Amos is also the owner of a crafting business and placed a strong emphasis on his hard work and craftsmanship, rather than his reputation as a lay leader.

The Jewish community's leadership does not possess the same enduring structure. In fact, leaders or co-chairs are lay, unelected positions. They are selected from a pool of 'core members' i.e. those that are often more religiously knowledgeable (not measured by training, but by proficiency in practice), involved in prayer services and socially close with other current and former leaders. Whilst this process is not regarded as fixed, and in fact some members have expressed interest in elections or a wider selection process, hierarchy remains enshrined in an altogether more ritualistic sense.

An ancient custom whereby those deemed to be descended from the High Priest in Biblical and Temple Judaism, is played out at certain religious festivals within the synagogue. *Kohanim*, the Hebrew name for priests, whose lineage marks them out as connected to the Biblical High Priest – stand at the front of the congregation and recite an Aramaic prayer (Jacobs, 1999). In addition, members remarked on the ritual whereby *Kohanim* are bestowed the weekly honour of being the first of the congregation to bless the Torah scroll before a passage is read (known as an *aliyah*, or 'going up'), followed by another group accorded Temple lineage (Levites) before any other community members participate (Finkelstein, 1975). Despite the discomfort of some members, including some lay leaders, this practice of honouring those with priestly lineage remains unchanged. The endurance of this prayer is viewed by some (including its proponents) as contradictory to the community's progressive

social values. Adam, a founding member, justifies the retention of the practice as a way of ensuring that those coming from orthodox communities will recognise the practice as familiar,

> "…if you've always been called up *Kohen* or *Levi*, you may feel very, very disenfranchised to come to an environment where you can't be. Now on the one hand you could say that those are technically privileges and the justification for the continuation of a privilege should not be that those who are privileged might be a bit miffed if it was taken away."

This connection to orthodoxy is illustrative of the way in which traditional practice and modern social values sit, sometimes uneasily, hand-in-hand within the same community. The contradictions this entails are explicitly acknowledged. The 'privileging' of a group linked to ancient priesthood represents a persistent hierarchisation that is not unnoticed or unproblematic for the members. However, a conscious choice has been made in order to preserve practice, so that it is not lost and remains an ongoing thread throughout the community and for those who may wish to join in the future. It challenges the othering of tradition as inert, as the retention is considered, uneasy and purposeful.

This echoes those rituals and boundaries discussed hitherto that for each community are deemed immovable and often sacrosanct. Through liturgy and language, the centrality of a meeting space and persisting hierarchies, it is clear that within the context of contemporary modernity epitomised by fluidity, there are powerful attempts by these traditional communities to retain a fixedness, or at the least, a thread that remains in some way the same. However, although this may on the surface look like a separateness and fixity (apparent in the temporal discontinuities explored in Chapter Two) that would assert tradition as outside of modernity, the deliberations, discomforts and at times deliberateness of retention within these non-negotiable boundaries points to a far more complex and co-constructive phenomenon in which the two concepts are inseparable.

Indeed, Robinson sees this process of choosing to 'defend' tradition as a modern "adaptation" in itself (2016: 21), a factor that has been illustrated through the Amish and Jewish examples. One can conclude that if tradition is to be taken as the binary opposite of the Enlightenment ideas of modernity, then one would assume rationality to be modern and hence not a feature of tradition. However, as illustrated in the above section, within traditional communities, practice and boundaries even where unchanged, are the product of deliberate decisions and at times purposeful retention. The rationality within tradition, as opposed to outside of it, is particularly apparent in those boundaries that are tested, and through necessary, but rational discussions, adapted. This is a challenge to those that believe decisions to continue religious practice are irrational in a contemporary modern context (e.g. Keane, 2007). This testing of boundaries is expounded further in the following section, exploring those boundaries of community that have become porous due to the necessity of external factors that are inseparable from internal conditions and *vice versa*.

2. Necessarily Negotiated Boundaries

Necessarily negotiated boundaries are those boundaries which have become permeable, primarily due to external challenges rather than the proactive will of members and communal leaders to become more inclusive and open. These negotiations can be hastened by rules or norms being infringed, the persistence of the community threatened or internal dissent expressed. This section proposes that it is in the adaptations that take place at these

boundaries that traditional communities are revealed as co-constructors of contemporary modernity.

With the exception of the challenges posed by community growth, this section predominantly refers to examples from the Amish case studies. This is arguably because those issues that Amish communities have had to address are as a result of being situated in, and therefore being a part of, the hypermodern context of North America. These issues encompass social and economic pressures, areas which the Jewish community has purposefully sought flexibility and change on at its founding (discussed in below in the Fluid Boundaries section). For example, for the Amish, economic changes have necessitated a revisiting of women's roles outside of the domestic sphere. For the Jewish group, the levelling of male and female roles within the community was a motivating factor at its inception and those wishing to practice according to tradition sought to do so in a gender-egalitarian context, seeking to marry their social values with their self-declared traditional religious practice. Thus, the majority of this section will look at Amish examples in discussing technological adaptations, work trends, family-life and the role of women. It will return to a discussion of both communities towards the end in exploring the impact of increases in membership on the fluidity of communal boundaries.

2.1 Responses to Technological Advancements

Technological advances have long been a focus of attention for Amish communities. The emphasis in this section is on how contemporary negotiations, particularly regarding smartphones, have impacted community identity and reveal the Amish as being *of* modernity, rather than external to it. This challenges the 'over there and then' approach to tradition (see Robinson, 2006); discussed in Chapter Two) in which the two phenomena cannot intermingle spatially or temporally. A brief survey of responses to more 'solid' forms of modernity, in the guise of farming technologies, will contextualise the discussion which follows.

2.1.1 Adoption and Rejection of Farming Equipment

For decades, conversations around technology have centred on farming equipment and such debates persist. As will be illustrated in this section, there is no 'Amish consensus' on this. In the vast majority of cases, responses to these technologies represent another example of deliberate retention or adaptation of communal practice and norms as a considered interaction within modernity, rather than existing as an unconnected parallel alongside it. These frontiers of change are drawn around machinery that impacts the daily lives of the predominantly rural Pennsylvanian Amish. Being a part of this modern negotiation contests notions of tradition as being spatially outside of modernity and situated in distant geographical milieus (e.g. Giddens, 1991; Beck, 2011), as here the rural and the modern intersect albeit in a considered, reflective process.

Economic demands have been a driver of change in farming practices for many Amish families and communities. With a historical focus on agriculture as a major source of income, competition from large scale farms with the ability to use modern industrial equipment threatens the financial viability of Amish farming (Kraybill and Olshan, 1994). Making a living has pushed the *Ordnung* (or set of communal rules) to its limits, compelling the need for negotiation of modern machinery. This not only impacts change within a community, but has had the effect of delineating liberal groups from conservative. In this process, community identity becomes multifaceted and far from homogenous, instead expressing a dynamism.

One liberal Holly County Amish market trader illustrates some of the dividing characteristics between these communities,

> “Up here cell phones and that sort of thing are a little bit more common than they are down south. Things like [my friend] for example, has a front load electric washer powered by a generator where down south that wouldn’t work.”

Differences abound. For some, even basic farming technologies are resisted, as these adaptations represent the opening of doors to further shifts in the community’s identity. The fear of excessive change is articulated by Rebecca,

> “I guess the bishops look at history and they see, you know, after the tractors were allowed and that brought something else and it just kept rolling until the church was no longer with the horse and buggies.”

Different interviewees spoke of communities splitting in two over the issue of technology. Ruth, an elderly woman recalled a split over large farming equipment in 1966, during which she took the more conservative side. However, in her home was an adapted tumble dryer and a lamp powered by a car battery; a trend that one local observer described as an Amish “culture of restraint [that] breeds innovation”. This cycle of rejection and acceptance is illustrative of a common pattern, whereby families and sections of communities have in the past rejected certain forms of technology and have formed new communities because of this rejection, but over time those new communities themselves adopted the same, and sometimes more advanced technologies. Thus, a community that may be founded on the rejection of technological advancements, later becomes an exemplifier of change itself, arguably based in part on the experience of prior ructions. This complexity is further elucidated by John, a market worker,

> “A farmer doesn’t need the same type of communications equipment that a carpenter does... Which is what makes *Ordnung* issues more complicated than they used to be too. You know, back when everybody was farming, it was easy to say what should be and what should not be and what was necessary and what was not.”

This nuanced approached is reflected in responses to rising smartphone use by certain groups within Amish communities. Indeed, despite the splits resulting for the Amish from advancements in farming equipment, developments in information and communication technologies have made securing communal boundaries an increasingly complex and fraught task which some believe can threaten Amish continuity (Kraybill, 2013). This is discussed in the sub-section that follows.

2.1.2 Smartphone Use

The rise of smartphone use has appeared to creep into many Amish communities without an awareness of its impact (Stevick, 2014). The access to contemporary modernity this technology offers, in its impersonal and impermanent connections through social media and information on other ways of being, represents the fluidity of a world formerly boundaried by the ban on electricity and computers. Smartphone use is a topic about which interviewees talked the most in reference to changes and threats to community persistence. As one participant put it, “If you have a car, everyone can see it, no one can see cell phones”. Another felt that, “Farming practices have changed, but it seems small compared to the effect of cell phones.”

For the remote, rural and conservative Amish groups of Sherwood County, it was felt there was almost no need to discuss mobile phones as they were so strictly forbidden for being modern and "worldly". When Amos, a conservative Amish bishop, was asked about mobile phone use amongst his congregants, he expressed surprise and relayed that they were expressively forbidden for all under the *Ordnung*. For these Amish groups, mobile technology and the internet are non-negotiable and for some the threat of modernity it represents in fact strengthens communal boundaries, rather than shifting them. However, in the larger number of more liberal groups in Holly County, members often felt that whilst mobile phones were not welcomed for baptised adults, they were not expressly banned, particularly not for pre-baptised teenagers and male contractors working in construction.

The concern came when youngsters were either openly or more surreptitiously unwilling to give up their mobile phones on being baptised. This impact of keeping smartphones was relayed by members of various groups as a "huge concern", "it could make it harder for youth to be church members" and "in a perfect world, no Amish kids would have them". This went to the core of attempts at separation from the world that defines the Amish. As Lydia, mother of five, expressed, "We always tried to be separate from the world, sheltered from the world. Now you can do anything; you can be exposed to the world". This simultaneous phenomenon of attempting to be separate from the world, but also *of* it is expressed in somewhat contradictory responses to smartphone usage in young people.

Eve, a liberal Amish shop owner, who shared her wish to "ban all mobile phones", went on to explain that they are useful when her children are far from home. Another, a woman with teenage children, spoke about smartphones with concern, yet relayed asking her children to 'Google' information for something she was writing. This generational difference is the point of permeability, at which boundaries of interaction with the external are simultaneously feared and encouraged. Thus, smartphones open a door into the fast-paced, aspatial and fluid world of virtual communities, infinite information and the capacity to make and remake bonds with distant people and render notions of tradition as dichotomous to modernity problematic. This is further evidenced by Amish teens' use of Facebook (Stevick, 2014). At many places where young people spend time in Holly County and surrounding areas, they were seen adeptly surfing the internet on iPhones, wearing headphones and posting on Facebook. Young Amish people in this context are co-consumers and co-producers of this most fluid expression of modernity. This leads to the question of who the boundary-makers are in this context: communal leaders, parents or young people? In fact, Rebecca's sentiment below was expressed by several parents interviewed,

> "But I see the young people making intelligent choices about the use of this. And if they, at their core of their being, want what's best for them and the community, they'll be just fine – even if they have a cell phone."

The trust put in young people reflects their role as boundary-keepers, deciding for themselves what is and is not permissible (see Gidley, 2014 regarding 'primary carriers' of practice).

Further, as contractors and others who require mobile phones for business use illustrate, many ministers have chosen not to confront the issue for fear of alienating and losing members and splitting the Church. Thus, an unintentional permeability of boundaries has emerged in recent years. A motivation for those religious leaders exercising greater permissibility is the avoidance of splits described above that emanated from disagreements over farming technologies, as some felt, "we would rather unity and diversity."

The attempt to cohere the community through greater leniency has the effect of allowing a process of osmosis between Amish youth and the fluid elements of modernity exemplified by the internet and social media. This renegotiation of communal boundaries challenges teleological arguments that place traditional groups such as the Amish in a discreet 'pre-modern' period as part of a 'schematic periodization' (Inglis, 2012; discussed in Chapter Two). Rather, cases such as this demonstrate Giddens' contradiction, that in fact "no-one can opt-out" of the changes that contemporary modernity brings (1991: 2). These changes not only reflect what technologies are or are not adopted, but as will be discussed below, they penetrate what it means to be Amish.

2.2 Shifting Approaches to Employment

Necessarily negotiated boundaries have thus far been explored as those for which social and economic conditions have hastened change in communal norms and practice. The above example sheds light on how traditional communities relax and fix boundaries as an ongoing project. It is the same external economic pressures that have challenged a fundamental feature of Amishness; that of an agrarian lifestyle. As discussed with regards to technology, farming has become an increasingly problematic way to make a living. Industrial farming, along with rising land prices (particularly in Holly County) have resulted in a situation where the Amish have gone from almost exclusively being farmers, to only approximately half now owning farms (Hurst and McConnell, 2010). Instead, Amish men have moved to employment on non-Amish farms, working in construction, woodwork and often small trading businesses. These economic changes have also spurred the move of Amish women into the workplace. Many work in tourism, setting up and working in quilt shops and market stalls. As one former farm owner pointed out, "what it means to be Amish doesn't necessarily include farming anymore."

These shifting approaches to work outside of the Amish community have the consequence of contesting communal identity and everyday practice formerly linked to farming. Working on the land represents for the Amish the separation that is central to their outlook, as well as valued notions of hard work and a simple life and connections to the land from countries of origin (Hostetler, 1993). This section will explore these changes in the context of rising prosperity for some Amish business owners, transformations in communal norms and shifts in home life, including the changing role of women.

This shift is exemplified by Abram, a business owner in his fifties. Formerly the owner of a medium-sized farm, his souvenir shop receives busloads of tourists from as far as China on a daily basis. The second floor of the shop is a bottling plant for the drinks and condiments he and his wife distribute nationally. The couple are self-taught and now run three successful businesses in the tourism and food industries. This is a common story for the Holly County Amish. The necessity to live beyond farming has resulted in a dynamic negotiation of boundaries by breeding innovation.

Prosperity from these successful business ventures enables some Amish people to afford a way of life deemed by others counter to notions of 'Amishness' i.e. frugality, humility and simplicity. A community spirit and socio-economic equality from an agrarian lifestyle therefore encounters the modern market and its characteristics. Rebecca, an Amish author from a farming family, echoed the sentiments of many participants, that leaving farms "does lead us further away from life the way it used to be". She estimated that in her area of 130

families, there are only six or seven families that farm. Daniel, a former member of a Holly County Amish church recalled,

> “When I was a kid, there were half a dozen of us farmers who were mostly family that would help each other with crops, we’d rotate around and thrash at one farm and move to the next, and it sort of bonded the community together.”

Both the physical experience of labouring together and the similar incomes generated for different families by farm work have been eroded by distant and profitable employment prospects. This is significant for a community that has, for instance, rejected car ownership for the reason that members will move too far away from each other if they can travel more easily, unsettling the connection between proximity and community.

In addition, as discussed above, technology such as mobile phones and computers are being used by some contractors and shop owners to ensure competitiveness. This challenges the foundations of the Amish communities in two ways. Firstly, as highlighted above, by undermining notions of economic and social equality, which are difficult to maintain when some in business are earning significantly more than their farming counterparts. Secondly, by contesting the balance of power from religious leadership, to those with financial influence. This is particularly pertinent for the Amish, who keep shared money for times of difficulty in lieu of social security. Those who earn more, contribute more and thus their fellow members are more dependent upon them. One former member observed that “there’s enormous power transferring to entrepreneurs” which he felt remained unaddressed as this undermines claims that economic inequality is not an Amish trait. John, a senior member of the community also identified the widening gaps between people in different forms of employment and the impact on power dynamics,

> “There is a growing economic disparity, there is no doubt about that. I would say that the businessmen tend to be, they would tend to serve on more of the committees and they would tend to do more charity work and organise benefit auctions and more so. They can take more time without a direct economic consequence.”

The free time granted to those who are more prosperous, combined with the community’s reliance on their contribution to communal funds, has increased the influence of this growing class of Amish entrepreneurs. This has the effect of subtly shifting boundaries of power.

A further consequence of leaving Amish farms for employment is the increasing exposure to outside trends via necessary interactions with non-Amish people in the workplace. Through these interactions, external trends such as dress can slowly permeate the Amish. John, who is a father of five adult sons, relayed,

> “ [On the building site] there was, you know, guys with t-shirts and without their, without hats and, they just didn’t look very Plain [a description of Amish dress]… the job site has been a little detrimental to plain dress, but that’s on the job site. When they, you know, when they go to church they still have their good Amish clothes on.”

In order to integrate with non-Amish colleagues, formerly strict codes, such as that of ‘Plain dress’ become negotiable. Also evident within this member’s recollection is that there are still impermeable spaces, specifically the church. However, it is evident that daily customs become co-constructors of formerly ‘outside’ conditions, a kind of softening around the edges of communal boundaries.

Another such example is the decline in the use of 'buggies' or horse and carts. Though still strictly forbidden from car ownership and driving themselves, Amish market workers often travel long distances to work, becoming increasingly reliant on the use of taxis. Discussing the impact of moving from farm labouring to other forms of employment, this market stall owner describes their week,

> "The beginning of the week I go off to a cabinet shop to work and Thursday, Friday, Saturday I go off to market… Nowadays I ride in a car more than I do, you know, horse and buggy."

Having access to cars and working multiple jobs takes Amish men and women further from the family home. These new ways of working have impacted home life considerably. This is significant not just for the family, but because the home is a major source of the transmission of religious and cultural tradition, bible learning and deployment of Amish ways of life.

With such change comes the comfort of nostalgia. Gaby, a market employee in her seventies, recalled with nostalgia her childhood farm, where they "all pitched in". The parents and children would sit around the table for prayers and read the bible together and each child had responsibilities from a young age. However, whilst she mourned the loss of this way of life for her own children and grandchildren, she was not pessimistic about the persistence of Amish life without the farm, confident that enough remained to offer a new generation. This is reflective of the bishops' acceptance of change whereby the ultimate aim is the preservation of community, rather than each tradition that comprises it. Thus, the Amish can be both a cohesive community and adept at being a part of the fast-moving and impermanent economy of contemporary modernity.

Further impacting on home life is the increase in women working. Whilst religious roles of women appear to be non-negotiable in much the same way as religious liturgy, women's traditional place in the Amish family as homemaker has been renegotiated in recent decades. Female interviewees in particular remarked that they worked hard, often in tourist-centred Amish shops (quilt shops, market stalls, restaurants). This was in contrast to their mothers or grandmothers, who worked exclusively in the home. Rebecca reflected,

> "There's more and more of the women that work, and the husband's always away from home… But basically though, we still keep it together, it's just an accepted thing. I mean, you can't farm, and so you don't."

Gender roles within the community have thus become more fluid out of economic necessity (requiring of further research beyond the scope of this chapter). This impacts family life further, although Amish women's roles in the home have not been eroded, only adapted. However, the acceptance of the situation evident in Rebecca's words and that of Gaby, underlines that in amongst this necessary change of lifestyle is an inherent adaptably, an adaptability which may point to the endurance and indeed growth of Amish communities.

Thus, despite the disconnection of many Amish people from a traditional agrarian lifestyle that emerged out of a separatist response to persecution, many have proved able to successfully, though not always enthusiastically, renegotiate boundaries without undermining fundamental 'Amish values'. Nostalgia for the farming way of life persists, in a similar sentiment to religious yearnings for the 'old country', yet the ability to move with the changes has shown that dynamism and persistence can co-exist for many Amish communities.

2.3 The Impact of the Growth of Community

Thus far, this section has explored boundaries that have been necessarily negotiated due to exogenous factors (Wallman's air pressure from outside the balloon). Technological developments in farming and communications seep into the daily lives of Amish people, whether they are rejected or absorbed. Economic pressures resulting from rising land prices and a competitive agricultural market, as explored, have led to a renegotiation of how Amish people make a living, with consequences affecting the day-to-day customs and practices of families and communities. This section will explore a different kind of negotiation taking place within each of the case study communities, resulting from both the Amish groups and the Jewish community experiencing ongoing growth in membership. This challenges the identity of the community from the inside, pushing boundaries of inclusion and for some, compromising the intimacy inherent to communal life. This contests declensionist claims of those such as Putnam (2000) and Bauman (2000, 2001) that assert the impermanent connections and individualism characterising the era of fluid modernity render the solidarity found in these communities unattainable.

In the case of Amish churches, there is an understanding that once a community exceeds around thirty to forty families, it will need to split into two separate congregations with their own services and ministers, known as 'church districts' (Hostetler, 1993). The Jewish community's experience of congregation size is reflected more through feeling than any fixed limits it has set. In both cases, recent growth in membership challenges the close personal relationships found in small and manageably sized communities.

The Jewish group has grown from a small group of friends gathering in each other's homes to a community of approximately two hundred members, though most weekly services are attended by closer to sixty to seventy people. The growth in the community is apparent in two ways. With a gradual and continued increase in attendance at services over its two decades, regular numbers are often six times what they were at its founding. In addition, at certain festivals and life-cycle events (particularly a teenager's rite of passage, a Bat/Bar Mitzvah), friends and family of members can double the congregation's numbers. With these events taking place more often as the community increases membership, the impact has become more visible in recent years. This poses a challenge for the nature of the group, as an involved member highlights, "it wasn't intended to be this big". The community was established to offer a place for egalitarian prayer for a small number of friends and acquaintances, without the intention of growth or fixity of location.

The mixed responses to growth reflects that there was no coherent strategy regarding development in the founding years of the community. Benjamin, for instance, draws on the persisting values of "learning and inclusion" that have enabled communal boundaries to open to wider membership. However, for others, the size and closeness of the community is a fundamental value in itself and there is a palpable sense of nostalgia for the smaller congregation it began as, coupled with concern for the changing character of the community as it grows. Simon, a long-term member shared that, "I associate it – unrealistically now – with being a small minyan [prayer group]". They acknowledge the loss of one of the community's defining features whilst simultaneously yearning for its intimacy. This nostalgic response is explained further by Joseph,

> "I think it has diluted the intensity… When we were first going, you know, there would not be more than twenty or thrity people, all singing very loudly with their children on their laps, and now it's very different."

His reminiscence here points to the intensity or the spirituality experienced when this group of people familiar with each other would meet together in worship.

The character of the community, once based on informality and maintained by knowing one another, being proximal and being small, has been somewhat eroded. Joseph went on to liken it to "a mainstream service now. I only see it as getting more conventional", in which the radical and fluid nature of the community has become solidified. In this instance, growth means fixing boundaries that were once fluid. This process offers an understanding of traditional communities as neither entirely fixed nor totally dynamic, but rather one that goes through period of flux and adaptation, followed by a securing of boundaries.

A communal boundary was renegotiated when the group moved from a strict policy of not allowing the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony to take place in any of their services, to later redefining their stance and permitting these to take place, now up to two or three times a month. Laura recalls,

> "I came to realise that actually if you preserve a community in aspic it will die. And I think that by going with the flow and just accepting that change happens organically, we've somehow been able to stay much truer to what our original was."

This necessary negotiation of communal practice expresses the way in which fluidity, as opposed to fixity, has helped to maintain community persistence, much like the Amish response to changing work patterns. Thus, rather than being the antithesis of dynamism, its embracing of change marks this traditional community as thriving through dynamism.

However, less comfort is found when discussing how this form of growth brings in unfamiliar people, which for some challenges the familiarity and security of the space. This speaks to the attachment to the small, enclosed group it once was, which offered a form of security in the frenetic urban setting of London. This is far from Bauman's notions of "the man with no bounds", that can never attain the communal security she or he yearns for (2000: 14), but is reminiscent of Giddens' (1991) suggestion of the need for ontological security in a disconnected late modernity. The newness of many members and *ad hoc* visitors is arguably synonymous with the kind of change that such communities offer insulation from. Joanne discusses the impact this unfamiliarity brings to her as a regular attendee, who is "never quite sure who's who". There is evidently a level of acceptance of these ad hoc visitors and new members. However, unease is apparent and is illustrative of the tension between those communal values of openness and inclusion described hitherto, along with the centrality of a personal connection and intimate spiritual experience. From these difficult to reconcile boundaries of size and principles emerge a kind of unwritten criteria of community feeling entailing intimacy, familiarity, spirituality and an inclusion that expresses difficult, but necessary negotiations.

There is a commonality here with the Amish experience described above. However, the splits experienced by Amish groups are permanent and can be impactful for many years. Lydia, member of a growing Holly County church district described how her church district split six months ago, as it had grown to more than forty families. Her new district now has twenty-two families, which was "hard at first. It's difficult to know where to draw the lines. Some

people disagree with where they are drawn, but they have to just deal with it". She spoke with a combination of acceptance and loss, as close friends and family can no longer worship together.

For Amish communities, that double in numbers every ten years due to high birth rates and high rates of retention (Kraybill, 1994), splits are the most striking example of the impact of growth. There are other illustrations, such as that explained by Ruth, who spoke of layers of communal shifts. She noted, for instance, that there are more weddings now "sometimes 10-15 on a Tuesday" in the area and customs are shifting to accommodate this growth, such as holding weddings on Saturdays.

Splits due to dissenting opinions on technological adaptions are more characteristic of the most conservative Amish groups, as discussed above. In interviews, members of the mainstream and liberal communities drew links between the growth of communities and the need to be more inclusive of a diversity of opinions. John explains how this process takes place,

> "Well, you know, it's a sociological given that size brings its own problems and the larger the congregation becomes, the more complicated these issues become… So, yes, in a sense there's a more permissive segment, but then there's, there's a wider range, there's a wider range of people tolerating each other than there would've been say 75 years ago."

In these instances, boundaries of accepted practice and opinions have become increasingly permeable in order to maintain coherence, not amongst external threats, but in the face of successful retention and increasing of membership. This creates ambivalence about growth, which in one sense reflects the success of a thriving community, but also the fear of eroding the community feeling.

It is thus evident that members of these communities express attitudes varying from acceptance of growth as a natural progression of the community, to nostalgia for when there were fewer members, fear for the identity of the group and enthusiasm for its successes. Many members expressed more than one of these emotions. Such complex and at times contradictory responses to communal growth are identifiable in both case studies. Arguably an inevitable consequence of the necessary, but not always desirable, negotiation of boundaries of inclusion. The sacrifice of proximal and social closeness expresses a longing for the ontological and social security of these communities and the growth in those seeking shelter from the impersonal world beyond. However, the very process by which the security of the communities is maintained reflects a dynamism and fluidity characterised by Giddens, Lipovetsky and Bauman as hyper/late/liquid modernity, rather than their propositions that it is pre-modern.

3. Fluid Boundaries

Boundaries are those elements that delineate the community from that which is external, securing its uniqueness in terms of practice, membership, meaning-making and values. These boundaries are found, negotiated and reinforced through rituals, communal norms, written rules and modes of inclusion/exclusion. In the first section, the discussion of the negotiation of these boundaries has focussed on deliberate attempts at fixedness i.e. non-negotiable boundaries, as in the case of liturgy, the centrality of a physical space to come together and perpetuations of hierarchy. The focus has then turned to technology, work patterns and

community size, namely boundaries that have been negotiated out of external or internal necessity. Each community has illustrated the interconnection between tradition and modernity, in which boundary-maintenance takes place. For instance, in the selective acceptance and rejection of technological advances or the retention of liturgy as a considered, rather than inert, process. Though of course it should be noted, that as with any social categorisation, the lines can be somewhat blurred. This poses a challenge to the classical sociological literature, which marks out tradition as existing outside of modernity both temporally and spatially. Such notions of tradition as separate, implicitly and explicitly convey tradition as immovable, inert and with rigid boundaries. The examples above, however, have revealed a dynamism to traditional communities, where interactions with the contemporary conditions of fluid modernity are inseparable from decisions and practices within.

This section focusses predominantly on the Jewish community, in going further to illustrate the co-constructive relationship between tradition and contemporary modernity. In these examples, the fluidity of communal boundaries is revealed, where norms and membership can be renegotiated as part of a dynamic progression. These differ from the mainly Amish examples above as in those instances, boundaries have become permeable as a more reactive process. This relationship is visible through the proactive negotiation of communal boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, which reveal the potential for the permeability and fluidity of traditional communities. It explores the adoption of new rules at the community's inception regarding participation in and leading of religious practice in the Jewish community, particularly apparent through its approach to groups traditionally excluded in orthodox practice, as well as creating an informal structure.

3.1 Widening Inclusivity

The Jewish community represents a shift from the norms extant in the denominations it was born out of, particularly the orthodox communities many of its founding members previously attended, highlighting effective processes of disembedding and re-embedding (a process Bauman (2000) is more pessimistic about, as discussed in Chapter Two). In terms of participation in religious life, this shift is evident in the opening of communal religious practice and leadership, such as reading from the Torah, to women and others disenfranchised from ritual, such as openly LGBTQ members. The inclusion of these groups illustrates a proactive porousness of boundaries of participation in the construction of this community, contrasting the more rigid boundaries of inclusion characteristic of the communities many founders came from. This is explored here in terms of perceptions of tradition and participation within the community and the role of women. LGBTQ inclusion will not be discussed herewith, due to the identifiability of community members and the community itself within the data.

3.1.1 Women in religious practice

The Jewish community was established under key principles, namely tradition, inclusion and egalitarianism. Here, tradition sits alongside a variety of values that are considered by some members as "innovative" and "out there". A core principle highlighted by several members and founders is 'egalitarianism'; particularly referencing women's inclusion in religious practice, leadership and prayer. Hannah, a founder, conveys the significance of this value,

> "I think that the egalitarianism was already comparatively radical. There wasn't anywhere where you could do full egalitarianism and a traditional liturgy that was orthodox… So that, in itself, was revolutionary."

Being able to maintain traditional liturgy whilst also transcending limits of gender norms within orthodoxy, expresses a deliberate rather than reactive shift in boundaries.

This combination of 'radical' social progression and religious tradition in itself challenges the idea that tradition exists outside of contemporary modernity, as the two are present alongside each other. If tradition is judged by rigid notions of hierarchy, patriarchy and resistance to change, then communities such as this would be defined as outside of that, as non-traditional. However, to many of its members, the community is an expression of both tradition and modernity. Its boundaries are secure, yet inclusive and permeable by new social rules, which also impact the religious sphere. Estie, a former attendee, speaks about the inclusivity existing alongside familiar traditional practices in the community's early years,

> "I remember being struck by, first of all, by the way that women were participating in the service, and second, by the fact that these were tunes and prayers that I remembered from my childhood. We went to an orthodox *shul* [synagogue] until I was ten."

Here, the combination of tradition and egalitarianism is valued for the familiarity it offers, along with opportunities to engage. This is expressed as unchallenging as the two comfortably reflected this former member's personal outlook and desires.

Others were more conflicted in understanding the nature of the community as both traditional and inclusive simultaneously. This contradiction for some sheds light on the strength of narratives around tradition *versus* modernity. Richard, a medium-term member, characterises the incongruity,

> "Well, I suppose, traditional more to me would be from a practice point of view… And therefore, if you look at the service, you could argue that although the liturgy and text is traditional, the practice of having men and women doing things could be viewed as not traditional."

The traditional element for these members is found within religious liturgy and practice, whereas the modern features of the community are based on who can take part in these practices. The discourse of tradition as fixed and modernity as fluid perhaps resonates for some in the community, who choose to see practice and liturgy as traditional and social inclusiveness as a non-traditional aspect of the community.

The negotiation of boundaries here is complex. The community in part is defining itself in opposition to orthodoxy, whilst simultaneously identifying through similar practices and liturgy. As some of those with close experience of the community reveal, it is thus both traditional and not, orthodox and radical, changing and static. However, this case illustrates that a proactive opening of the boundaries of inclusion does not negate the traditional nature of the community and in fact seems to strengthen boundaries through inclusivity. This is important for understandings of tradition within the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity insofar as the traditional (i.e. practice and liturgy) and the non-traditional (i.e. egalitarianism) successfully, although sometimes awkwardly, co-exist.

In a further example, in an orthodox synagogue, men wear a prayer shawl (known as a 'tallit') but this is not accepted practice for women (Jacobs, 1999). In this community, it was also not initially a common practice of this community for women to wear a prayer shawl. However, in recent years it has become increasingly so. At times, there have even been debates as to whether this should now be a requirement for women reading from the Torah, as it is for

men. However, on the whole the decisions are personal and individual. Ilana describes her own journey to wearing the 'tallit',

> "I think slowly more and more women [here] have started to wear [tallit] over the years, and in particular I heard some really lovely stories of how different women started to wear it... And so it made me think I would like to… But it was a slow decision."

The example of 'revolutionary' egalitarianism as a founding principle for the group, explored earlier in this section, is contrasted against the slow, considered move towards women adopting a traditionally male prayer garment. This is arguably reflective of the ongoing dynamism and fluidity of boundaries of custom and participation in this community. Boundaries continue to be negotiated in an organic, rather than radical project. This highlights a parallel process of securing boundaries constructed at the inception of the group – such as female participation, which is now a non-negotiable aspect of the community's identity – at the same time as opening up new frontiers. There are multiple possible explanations for this fixity co-existing with fluidity, which will be returned to at the end of this chapter. At this juncture, the significance of changing modes of participation, both radical and gradual, illustrate the flow of values associated with modernity in a community self-defining as traditional.

3.2 Informal Communal Structures

As discussed hitherto, boundaries such as inclusion of women in religious practice have for this community been proactively negotiated. The negotiation of a different communal norm can be seen in the adaptation of communal structures from formal hierarchies to informal and open processes. For instance, within an orthodox synagogue's prayer service, men and women do not sit together and are assigned different sections of a prayer space, often divided by a light curtain or on different levels of a building. In this Jewish community, however, different genders sit intermingled, with no physical divisions. This gives the services a different aesthetic to orthodox services and illustrates the rejection of a long-held custom. The significance of this is once again the inclusive approach to gender alongside and orthodox-style liturgy. Discussing the founders' rationale for this, David, a medium-term member describes,

> "…and [they] didn't feel comfortable in the sort of formal service set up as men and women sitting separately, or if there was mixed seating, it was still quite a formal service."

Challenging norms of gender separation was an initial aim of the group and this seating format has persisted. In addition to expressing the community's values of egalitarianism, inclusion and participation, as this member conveys, it also contrasts the formality of communities the members came from. As with women's participation, this began by a radical opening of boundaries, then fixed to enshrine the new custom.

Another focus on inclusive participation is present within the above excerpt i.e. the informal approach in the leadership of services. In many synagogues, prayer services are led by an individual, often a rabbi. The community's value of inclusive participation, however, has resulted in a more flat structure in which any member with the requisite skills can lead prayer services, read from the Torah and share their thoughts in a ten minute learning slot. Hannah explains that "we explicitly wanted a style of service that people were engaged in and

contributed to". Contesting notions of leadership in this way imposed a new, informal aesthetic to the format of the service.

Participation is opened up further through a rota of members who each Saturday take on a variety of parts of the service, such as reading from the Torah, leading prayers and overseeing the flow of the service. Those on the rota are communal members who volunteer to be involved. An emphasis on spirituality is maintained through the introduction of additional tunes to work with the liturgy, as Danielle, a former member, adds,

> "…exploring the, all different types of music, both traditional from different traditions, more modern, innovative but still never moving too far away from the traditions of, traditional beliefs of Judaism."

The significance of music to both the Amish and Jewish communities is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Six. Here, it exemplifies the persistence of what this member refers to as "the traditions", alongside the "modern, innovative" musicality introduced. This again serves to illustrate that for this community, traditions and modernity through extant practice and innovation co-exist. The fluid boundaries offer options of inclusion to those formerly excluded, but this permeability does not negate an ongoing locus of that which is familiar, or traditional.

The negotiation of boundaries of inclusion and (in)formality, through widening participation and loosening communal structures, is a potent example of tradition and the non-traditional becoming reconciled through a proactive and considered process. It further reveals identity and community-making as an ongoing project, rather than community being a fixed entity with impenetrable boundaries. An exploration of the changes within the Jewish community at its inception and since (though it should be noted that many of the community's innovations occurred in its early stages), offers the chance to widen sociological understandings of tradition as varied, community as moving and membership as both fluid and diverse in its interpretation of communal identity. Though the expressions of tradition are at times confounded, the permeability of the Jewish community's boundaries of inclusion are illustrative of its situatedness within contemporary modernity and as being co-constructive of its fluid conditions.

Finally, as the sections throughout this chapter illuminate, the layers in the process of re-writing the norms of community, fixing these new norms and dynamising new frontiers, reveals boundary-keeping under the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity as multifarious. As well as entailing fluidity, these negotiations reflect a process of fixity i.e. fixing new boundaries of inclusion and practice. As Laura, one founder of the Jewish group shares, "Every now and again we kind of have a bit of a middle-aged angst about how much more creative we were when we were young." The 'revolutionary' and 'radical' actions themselves become new norms, traditions and non-negotiable boundaries. This is seen in the case of broader inclusion and the informal approach to services for the Jewish community, as well as in the acceptance of some technological advances that become the new standard within many Amish communities. Thus, a break from the past that once epitomised fluidity comes to be the new fixed boundary and communal dogma. Herein, boundary-keeping for traditional communities under contemporary modern conditions emerge as an entanglement of fluidity and fixity, tradition and modernity.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to challenge classical sociological notions that other tradition, casting communities and their associated practices and norms as temporally and spatially distinct. In so doing, tradition is relegated to the status of inert, pre-modern, uniform and distant. Through the exploration of boundary-keeping within two religion-oriented diasporic communities, an alternative perspective of tradition has been offered, proposing that through three forms of boundary-negotiation, the Amish and Jewish communities exemplify dynamism, rational and deliberate decision-making, adaptation and permeability, alongside elements of fixity in areas that are particularly central to communal persistence. These attributes situate these traditional communities as within and co-producers of contemporary modernity.

Through the examples of liturgy, the relationship with space and enduring (though vastly different) hierarchies, the first section of this chapter explored non-negotiable boundaries in the two communities. These boundaries reflected that for each community, there are loci that are imperative to the persistence of that community. However, each attempt at boundary-maintenance entails deliberate, considered and arguably rational decisions made to retain practices and structures, rather than the negation of change due to inertia. Thus, while a cursory glance at these retentions may serve to support classical sociological understandings of tradition as immovable and beyond rationality, in fact the processes that have led to the retention of these boundaries convey an altogether more vibrant phenomenon, in which characteristics of tradition and modernity are intertwined.

Necessarily negotiable boundaries were next defined as rules, norms and practices that both communities (though this section focusses largely on the Amish communities for aforementioned reasons) negotiate due to external and internal pressures. These include technological developments (particularly smartphones), changing work patterns and a more internal transformation for both communities in the guise of growth. These shifts are explored in terms of an interplay of acceptance, ambivalence and nostalgia; another counter to the claim that such communities epitomise homogeneity. Each negotiation expresses a willingness to adapt for the sake of persistence. In these examples, both Amish and Jewish community members are simultaneously maintaining communal boundaries and consuming and constructing a fluid contemporary modernity.

The proactive negotiation of boundaries explored in the final section, with reference to the Jewish community, provides a pertinent challenge to those that would assert traditional communities as unable and unwilling to change. Through the inclusion of women (and LGBTQ members) and by loosening formal structures, both radical and organic boundary shifts have taken place. This sheds light on the potential for change and elucidates how such change impacts on members' perceptions of their community, where tradition and modernity coexist. This complexity is illustrated in a final discussion in which boundaries are considered not as either fixed or fluid, but as an ongoing multidimensional process.

For both the Amish and Jewish communities, aspects of community continue to thrive within relatively clear boundaries, retaining certain values and practices, whilst simultaneously adapting to and negotiating tensions between these and fluid conditions. This challenges characterisations that assert traditional communities as lacking dynamism, as if this were so, persistence would likely be unattainable.

The chapter which follows assesses the implications for belonging to a community under fluid conditions, further contesting claims to homogeneity and the assertion that in contemporary modern conditions the potential to embed and re-embed in community is impossible.

Chapter Five: Belonging and Embedding Processes

Introduction

The previous chapter sought to recast boundary-making processes for traditional communities as fluid, diverse, deliberate and adaptive. It illustrated that rather than tradition being both fixed and dichotomous to modernity, traditional communities exhibit elements of dynamism enabling the persistence of a core identity. This chapter builds on this to propose that belonging to traditional communities under contemporary modern conditions is in itself a dynamic process, layered and varied. It addresses questions such as the appeal of belonging, processes of dis/re-embedding and what this tells us about community persistence under fluid conditions. It explores the relationship between belonging and social/familial connectedness as routes to belonging and the role of religious proficiency in belonging processes. These themes contest ideas of traditional communities as homogenous and distant from modernity and bring greater understanding of the nuanced construction and experiences of belonging in a fluid world.

This chapter assumes May's assertion that belonging is "a crucial aspect of being a person…[that] involves a process of creating a sense of identification with one's social, relational and material surroundings" (2011: 368). Using examples from the Jewish and the Amish communities, it explores individual feelings and communally held notions of belonging, indicating that to these communities, belonging is contingent and ranging in degree, rather than assumed equally by all members (see Ryan, 2018). Finally, this chapter returns to debates explored in Chapter Two which typify late/liquid modernity as a state of disembedding, in which (re-)embedding in community is unattainable due to the suggested individualised nature of contemporary modernity and inability to genuinely belong (see for example Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000; Guibernau, 2014; see also Smart and Shipman, 2004 and Jamieson, 2011 for a critique of Giddens and the 'individualisation thesis'). It asks: if this is the case, how might the persistence of communities such as the Amish and Jewish groups be explained?

This chapter therefore assesses those claims by exploring the potential for (re-)embedding into traditional communities, whilst acknowledging that the generalisability of communal experience requires significant caution. It suggests that embeddedness can be regarded as a proactive process, rather than passive repetition, and explores the benefits members stand to gain from belonging to such communities in a world epitomised by choice. It casts embedding as an existing, continual and achievable process maintained by a sense of belonging. This enables communities of religion to be understood in broader terms than a belief-system that otherwise seems to run counter to contemporary modernity (see for instance discussion of Wasserfall et al, 1999 in Chapter Two).

Whilst contesting problematic dichotomisations of modernity *versus* tradition and, by extension, an othering of traditional communities that circulates within the theories of Giddens, Bauman and their contemporaries, it is important to note that some ideas within these theories (such as that of 'ontological security' and elective embedding) enable a deeper understanding of the meaning of community under fluid conditions. A nuanced approach to such theories thus allows for a combination of building upon and challenging extant conceptualisations of contemporary modernity.

This chapter draws on research findings and community literature to argue that belonging is not an 'in' or 'out' phenomenon, but varied, and dependent on multiple factors, including

family and social networks, time and religious proficiency. Such stories allow for the emergence of belonging as various; for some deep, for others fragile and for many, fluctuating over time (May, 2011).

1. Embeddedness Under Contemporary Modern Conditions

As discussed in Chapter Two, central to notions of human relationships in late/liquid modernity is the conception that one cannot successfully be embedded in (or re-embed into) community (Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2003; Lipovetsky, 2005; Beck and Grande, 2010). This characterisation arguably assumes that for tradition, one is born into a community and is destined to remain within it, implying that embedding is solely the domain of 'the traditional'.

This section challenges the "erroneous conclusion" that embedding is simply a matter of birth or choice, 'in' or 'out', but a more complex set of ongoing processes (Ryan, 2018: 236; see also Hite, 2003), within which one can choose to continue to be a part of, or become more deeply embedded within, a community of birth, for instance in the case of Amish baptism in adulthood, discussed later. The discussion below therefore focuses on embedding mechanisms of belonging; asserting the potential for individuals to (re-)embed into new contexts and to do so electively within fluid contemporary conditions, whilst recognising that there are processes somewhat unique to religion-oriented communities, and in some cases to these specific groups.

Individual narratives emerging from the case study communities reveal active and extant processes of embedding, disembedding and re-embedding. First, the appeal of embeddedness within a religion-oriented diasporic community will be explored, followed by an assessment of the relationship between disembedding and embeddedness.

1.1 The Appeal of Embedding

This section uses the research findings to examine the appeal of embedding into a community, particularly in the context of modernity, and what community offers its members, in terms of 'ontological security' and structured social support. If, as this chapter suggests, there is an element of choice entailed in joining a traditional community, what motivates the decision to embed, given the fluid conditions that do not necessitate group membership? This is particularly apposite for the Jewish community, for whom leaving entails a less substantial rupture from familiarity than perhaps for the Amish.

In many discussions with Amish and Jewish community members, belonging to community emerged as the provision of security in uncertain and chaotic times (Tonnies, 1887/2017). Contemporary modernity is characterised, particularly for some Amish participants, as a threat motivating desires to come together in support, meeting and prayer. For the Jewish group, members are essentially urban and modernity is not explicitly named as a threat. Rather, the language of familiarity and warmth generated by belonging to a community implies a response to outside influences, providing refuge from a too-fast world.

Theorists of late/liquid/hyper-modernity (for example Castells, 2000; Bauman, 2003; Lipovetsky, 2005) argue that this fast-paced world results in a turning inwards to attain 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991). The continuity of a community providing a combination of a stable belief system, collective memories of home, ritual and support, familiarity and predictability, offers a permanence that the transience of fluid modernity cannot.

With the Amish, narratives that emerged in discussion around 'the outside world' reinforced feelings of safety and security associated with the community. Amos, the Amish bishop of a

conservative group discussed in the previous chapter, explained, “Modernism moves so fast and is such a threat that people don’t want anything to do with it”. He reasoned that if the change produced by modernity (such as the internet and the presence of choice) was slower-paced, people from his community might be “more interested in it”, but as it was, people feared it. He also framed this in religious terms: “The more modernist people become, the further they move from being Godly”, thus juxtaposing religion and community with modernity, a paradox meaning that modernity is both a threat to and a unifier for the church.

Amos perceived that more young people join the church (i.e. staying Amish) than when he was young, which he attributed to modernity. Thus, belonging to the Amish in these cases can be regarded as offering protection from outside chaos. Amish church members often reference a pamphlet known as ‘Rules of a Godly Life’ which offers guidance on ‘thoughts’, ‘words’ and ‘works’ for Amish people. The bishop contrasted this guidance with the undesirability of the symbols of contemporary modernity. For Amos, the “Plain life” offered by an Amish lifestyle and church (see Kraybill et al, 2013), is both comfort and protection. To an extent, one might perceive that the bishop was describing modernity as a positive threat, enabling the community to cohere and persist, with high retention rates. Without the assumption and fears relating to the rapidity of contemporary modernity, one can ask what else allows the Amish to persist so successfully? Tradition and fast-paced modernity are, therefore, inextricably linked. In the absence of the fluid conditions typified by contemporary modernity, a traditional community may not be so attractive. Despite the lack of nuanced understanding of the dynamism of tradition in Giddens’ work, the notion that the frenetic nature of contemporary modernity results in the search for ‘ontological security’ (1991), speaks to these findings.

Urbanness and ‘progressive’ forces too were juxtaposed against a ‘Godly’ life. Caleb, a farmer from a more remote group in Holly County – one of the most conservative Amish denominations – relayed his interest in scientific conferences relating to food production. This was in itself a self-declared uncommon Amish interest, which took him into urban settings avoided by most of his peers. Caleb spoke of a large city he had visited for a conference, explaining that to him, “it was like a prison”. The perceived threats during his city visit are in part a result of the importance the Amish place on separatism.

Rebecca, a more liberal Amish author, referred to New York City as “the scariest place ever”. She recalled “I’d never ever met such people”. Simmelian notions of the impersonal city (Simmel, 1976; see also Fischer, 1982) epitomise a chaos from which ‘ontological security’ can be sought through rituals, rules and togetherness, as much as by a rural life. Eliza, discussed above, spoke too of the Amish youth groups she was involved with as playing a role in “keeping modern things out”.

The experience of Daniel, a former Amish community member, explored later in this chapter, mirrors the tension between ‘outside’ engagement as progress and inside the community as safety. He reflected,

> “I think, you know, the kind of story of my life is that there is an internal struggle in the Amish community that – between sort of progressive engagement with the outside world and a more reactionary isolationist dogmatic orthodox belief.”

He went on to describe separation as fundamental to Amish life, positing external engagements as,

> “…counter to their core identity. Their reason to exist is so central to being separate from the larger world and the idea that in the context of hegemony that the larger world is defining and creating their reality, pretty much sort of undermines everything they believe in and stand for.”

He later described his brothers’ choice to be baptised as signing up to the ‘dogma’, a ‘submission and compliance’ he believed betrayed his brothers’ authenticity – an arguable pay-off for the security their membership provides. For Daniel, this eventually led to Amish life becoming intolerable, but he identified that for others, this ‘isolationist dogmatic orthodox belief’ is embraced for the rigid safety it provides against an intangible liberal ‘outside world’.

It is important to note that for the Amish, encounters with the ‘modern world’ take place at a greater distance (and in more rural contexts) than for the Jewish community, who regard themselves as integrated within it. However, even with the Amish group, the sense of security comes from continuity and human connection, rather than purely physical separation.

This sense of enclosure from the world is expressed differently for the Jewish community, reflecting their positions as urban, well-travelled citizens of a cosmopolitan city. Simmel’s (1976) characterisations of the metropolis provide a pertinent frame for exploring how ‘ontological security’ is sought for the Jewish community in this context. Tali, a non-native Londoner, described belonging to the Jewish community in the context of the depersonalised city,

> “...outside of London, everywhere’s so much more friendly. Londoners are very, are very standoffish until they know you and so I don’t feel – yes, I feel I belong to the community in that I’m a member. You asked me what did I think of as a community; it’s belonging to something.”

The juxtaposition here suggests that this newer member found community in part a buffer against a detached urban setting. Reflecting on her impersonal ‘standoffish’ experiences since moving to London conjured feelings of security, belonging and connection drawn from the Jewish group.

Another member of the Jewish group, Richard, expressed the effect of these bonds,

> “There was the American TV programme ‘Cheers’ and the theme song was ‘you wanna go where everyone knows your name’ – and so coming – not having family over here, not having an extended friendship network, it helped to create family and extended friends… We’ve had Bat Mitzvahs and I’ve felt that they’ve been well celebrated within the service, and if, God forbid I had a loss or whatever, I would feel supported.”

The knowledge that one will be recognised and acknowledged, have others to share good and difficult times with, and the religious practices that provide a framework for this, all sit within the wider context of a city in which detachment is inevitable, particularly during the working week. This notion of the comfort and persistence of close social ties of community within the urban setting supports the ‘community saved’ thesis, which challenges the notion of urban ties being weak and impermanent and instead argues connections develop in multi-stranded dimensions in urban contexts (see Keller, 1968 and Wellman, 1979 for early discussions of this argument). This familiarity is for Rachel, below, also assumed. Having joined the community as part of her process of converting to Judaism, she too expressed feelings of (sometimes intangible) closeness and social support,

> "…So I think it's just a, just everyone's closeness. So, I mean maybe it's just kind of like of a warm sort of feeling… For example, when we finished our conversion, just the way everyone was coming up to us and, you know, when someone does their first Aliyah [calling up to bless the Torah], everyone's just so, like genuinely thrilled for you. And, you know, you can't fake that. And that just comes from sort of the close-knit community."

One can draw here on Heller's depiction of community, where meanings are assumed and "few words are needed" (cited in Morley, 2000: 17). Whilst no explicit threat is recalled, the group performs a protective function emotionally and a level of intimacy. This emerges as a generalised 'warmth' for members of the group who have come from elsewhere, to an environment which offers a homey feeling. Further, the knowledge that co-members will offer support in celebration or loss offers an emotional safety net potentially unattainable in work or other spaces, echoing a sense of home and family.

This ontological comfort is strengthened further by the like-mindedness within both communities, though discussed with more overt consciousness within the Jewish group. David, a Jewish participant, defined this affinity as "a group of people, mutually supportive, shared values, shared behaviours, shared culture if you want – ways of dressing and doing things and eating and behaving etc". These characterisations could equally apply to the Amish community.

This theme of closeness and shared thinking arose in many interviews with members and former members of the Jewish community. One founder, Adam, described the early years, saying "I feel like I've built an additional home for myself… I've got a spiritual home. I never had one before." The confidence and security of knowing the community will be there every week is illustrated in the particular event below, described by Emma, a semi-involved member of approximately five years,

> "…Yeah, sense of familiarity, belonging, kind of home. I mean, I'll tell you, it's kind of interesting you know, I'd been [abroad] all week working and I came back and I had this – obviously two things had happened that week: one was the American election results and the other was Leonard Cohen dying and I'm a huge Leonard Cohen fan… I had this real need to go to *shul* [synagogue] on Saturday. I had a conviction that it would – I mean, it's kind of a really weird thing I think to say, but I felt like I needed to be amongst my own people and I knew that there were people in the *shul* that would feel the loss of Leonard Cohen profoundly."

The regularity of services offers a solid support and intimacy in the face of external change, in which the religious facilitates the social. However, as discussed later in the chapter, these bonds, driven by social networks, longevity and religious proficiency, also produce layers of belonging, at times operating akin to hierarchies (see Ryan, 2018's work on 'differentiated embedding').

David addressed the balance between the community's warmth and its members' engagement with a fluid, urban in this case, modernity. Rather than the community presenting a solid boundary between a safe environment and outside modernity, he talked about the negotiations,

> "And my, yeah, I think that a lot of people came from quite traditional families and were challenged by how do they keep that kind of warm fuzzy feeling of a community,

> but live with modernity and live with equality, live with the degree of compromises that happen, you know, and so, you know, it's an attempt to kind of link those two."

As implied by David, this like-mindedness does not assume uniformity. Indeed, community is articulated in both the Amish and Jewish communities as being like family, a place where you can disagree, but still belong. Diversity of opinion is therefore assumed to some extent and toleration of this is what makes community. This was explored by Hannah, a founder of the Jewish group and then by Rebecca, the Amish author, below,

> "So there are things that I think on principle are not quite right, but my own kind of definition of community is that, you know, a 70 or 80% fit is brilliant and you, you know, you wouldn't seek to find a better fit than that because you probably can't, so you tolerate 20 or 30% of stuff that you don't really approve of or like or doesn't sit quite right with you."

> "We have a greater variety of people and opinions of how they choose to live their lives… We used to have splits in my grandparents' time, it was so hard, so now they are trying to keep united… Certain things are tolerated. They would rather unity and diversity."

In addition to familiar rituals and regular gatherings, this level of acceptance is arguably where the confidence and security are drawn from for many members. In a world epitomised by easy disconnections, being able to dissent and remain within those boundaries offers a level of safety akin to family. However, as explored in Daniel's case below, this acceptance has limits.

This security also comes from connection with familiar others, the knowledge that co-members will provide support when needed, and the ease of communications; all arguably stable antidotes to the fluidity in which members exist. Enshrining this security is also the peace of mind provided through continuity, which comes from knowing that the community will be there every week, whether you want to go or not (see May, 2016 on 'duration' and belonging). Some of the founding members of the Jewish group foresaw this element as being key to attaining a sense of belonging early in its development. Adam, a founding member, recalled,

> "And he [a professional community leader] said, very wisely: 'You need people. People don't want to engage with the whole question of "Are they on this week? Are they not on this week?" They need to know that if they fancy going… they need to know where to go. So you have to go weekly'."

Under the transitory conditions of contemporary modernity, the knowledge that there is something dependable is arguably an orienting presence for both communities. Weekly rituals on the Saturday or Sunday sabbaths, festivals, communion and life-cycle events are defining loci around which members, and communal identity, cohere. As asserted in the previous chapter, such rituals are core to both communities that would be in essence different without these face-to-face gatherings for prayer and meeting[2]. Not only do these rituals offer boundaries that assert the uniqueness of the community, but they offer a sense of self, rootedness and comfort for individuals, whose lives otherwise intersect with an ever-changing world. Thus, like-mindedness, acceptance of diversity (though with limits in the case

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[2] As discussed in the concluding chapter, bringing Jewish communal activities online in response to Covid-19 lockdowns provides an opportunity for regular non-face-to-face meeting.

of the Amish in particular), regularity and familiarity combine to provide members with a constant, an 'ontological security'.

1.2 Embedding and Disembedding Mechanisms: In Search of Community

The distinction, often polarised in the literature (for example, Durkheim, 1915; Day, 2011; Guibernau, 2013; contested by Hite, 2003; Ryan, 2018), between the choice to belong and belonging by birth is arguably unconstructive, risking further entrenching notions of fixed tradition (and communities thereof) as non-modern. Is a person born into a community, who remains within it, to be considered outside the fluidity of contemporary modernity? Findings from the case study communities challenge these binary distinctions.

In the case of the Amish, one is born into the community, but not formally bound by its rules and system of discipline until the choice to be baptised is taken in early adulthood (generally between sixteen and twenty-five years old) (Stevick, 2014). This choice is a defining feature of the Amish. However, the norms deployed via families and churches govern behaviour and practice prior to baptism (see Morgan, 2011 for an exploration of 'family practices'). Thus, one is partially embedded, with the potential to disembed (albeit an often painful process). It would be a misunderstanding of a tenet that the Amish hold as seminal (Kraybill et al, 2013) to claim that one is Amish by birth and there is no choice in the matter, notwithstanding questions as to the extent to which the choice is free, given both the consequences of leaving and the pervasiveness of the Amish lifestyle and practices. This emerges through the findings below, where Daniel spoke of leaving the Amish and Rebecca talked of her initial emotional response to her son leaving the community, revealing an intricate interweaving of social, communal, diasporic and religion-oriented features in communities such as this. In some ways, the choice of baptism can be seen as exhibiting contemporary modern features, whereas the profound discomfort caused by leaving could be regarded as a trauma of leaving a past fixity behind.

Disembedding from the Amish takes place in two primary and institutionalised ways: through choosing not to be baptised and therefore never technically joining the Amish church (or being bound by its rules), or by leaving after baptism (Hostetler, 1993). The former enables one to continue a level of contact with peers and family members within the Amish community. The latter can take place for a variety of reasons. Some decide, for theological, marriage, social, business, family or other reasons that they no longer wish to be a part of the church. Others contravene the *Ordnung* (literally 'order', or set of rules) of their Amish church and through enactments of church discipline are excommunicated (explored further in Chapter Six). There is inevitably some overlap, for instance in cases where a baptised member considering leaving deliberately breaks a rule (such as owning a car) knowing they will be excommunicated, an occurrence relayed by several Amish church members. The findings below seek to demonstrate that despite entailing difficulty, known routes to disembedding exist and are accepted (though variably) for the Amish. This illustrates both the fluidity in the option to disembed, and the maintenance of a traditional community through the exclusion (by choice or otherwise) of the most non-conforming minority. Likely, it is an interplay of the two.

An important distinction, as one member pointed out in discussion, is that some former Amish people who join other churches are banned if they were already baptised members, but are welcomed back if they were not baptised prior to leaving. There are thus clear advantages to leaving the Amish community before being baptised as opposed to afterwards. Annie, mother of three adult daughters, explained that it "was good the kids changed [left the church] before

taking up membership… It was something to work through. Moses came back to his own people through wisdom". The benefit to Annie's daughters was the option to re-embed within the church, having not left under the more controversial circumstances of excommunication or post-baptism departure.

Eliza, a young woman from a more conservative community, shared her story, illustrating layered disembedding. Having lost her mother in childhood, Eliza's father remarried a non-Amish (though devoutly Christian) woman, leading to his excommunication. However, when she came of age, Eliza was still permitted to be baptised and join the church, regardless of her father's status. Eliza's father, having been 'shunned', was no longer permitted to partake actively in church, for instance by taking communion. However, she explained how he would sit quietly at the back of church services on Sundays to listen. A further process of (re-)embedding took place when Eliza's family later decided their church district "became too liberal" so they moved to be "Plainer", in a different area and more conservative Amish church, where she became an active member and participated in committees and youth group activities. Eliza's story provides insight into Amish processes of disembedding (and re-embedding) that embody fluidity, choice and adaptation (although within a more conservative context); features not commonly associated with tradition in the literature.

This is further illustrated by returning to Daniel, a former member of an Amish community who left after baptism due to feeling the community no longer fit his outlook (explored in the next chapter in greater depth). For him, the process of leaving did not convey a dramatic or negative experience with his Amish community. Daniel explained,

> "…there wasn't some huge trauma or dysfunction, you know. I'm sure there was pain – there's always pain [laughs] in the human experience– but I wouldn't say there was some really troubled, you know childhood or dysfunctional family or even community necessarily."

He maintained contact with other family members and spoke in academic circles about issues of concern to Amish people. Hence, one might conclude that Daniel's disembedding is partial; that his Amish identity, whilst not reflected in formal membership, is followed through within his daily activities and his vision of the outside world. Hence, his traditional, arguably natal, identity co-exists with his non-Amish lifestyle, embodying the experience of a partiality and multiplicity of identities simultaneously.

The story below of Rebecca, an Amish mother, illustrates that for the family, an adult child leaving the church can be distressing, resulting for many in a choice between supporting a child's wishes and enacting the church's requirement of separation. Her son had chosen to leave the church with his wife, who was not prepared to follow the church's *Ordnung.* In this case, as in others that were shared, continuing to welcome the child into the home was the eventual decision,

> "…oh well, they chose to do that [leave] and first I cried, and then I tried to persuade them to come back and my husband tried to persuade them to come back and after a bit you just accept it. If this is what they want to do now, this is what they'll have to do. But no, they are not Amish… They have different friends and they live in a different community… but they know that they're welcome. And we have nice visits when they do come."

Here, Rebecca expressed a negotiated sense of belonging, in which her son is simultaneously "not Amish" but is also still "welcome". For the Amish, one concurrently belongs and does not belong to the community until baptism, though there is arguably a threshold of adherence required even before baptism. Thus, the process of formally embedding into the community by baptism intensifies a pre-existing sense of belonging. The choice to be baptised is a defining feature of the Amish community, one which brought persecution and the eventual exile of its followers to the United States (Hostetler, 1993). The tradition of not coercing the next generation to be baptised is particularly valued, in an echo of the community's diasporic roots and persisting narratives that relate to these (explored further in the next chapter). However, given that young people grow up in the Amish church, dress 'Amish', attend Amish schools and live an Amish lifestyle, it is difficult to argue that they are not already embedded in the community. This also reveals the lack of consensus on what 'Amishness' means. Grace, who has three adult sons, none of whom joined the Amish Church, was happy that they are "followers of Jesus", which was sufficient affirmation of their Amish upbringing. To Gaby, an elderly market-stall worker, being Amish meant "hard work, honesty, being born Amish, following the rules and regulations". These variations may not be new. However, they shed light on the nature of identity in the contemporary era, as complex, neither wholly given nor assigned.

The Amish tradition of *Rumspringa*, meaning 'running around' (Stevick, 2014: 5), widely misunderstood in popular culture and 'reality' television programmes as a 'gap year' from being Amish (see for example *Breaking Amish*, 2012 and *Living with the Amish,* 2012), allows additional freedoms to young people prior to baptism. This represents the opportunity to widen experiences before choosing to formally join the church. Practices during this time vary significantly between churches, families and indeed individuals. Rebecca relayed how her family had a tendency towards 'wild' activity during this time,

> "…like we have a group of young people here who would not do any of that; they don't have cars, they don't touch alcohol or anything like that, they're always well brought-up, well-behaved young people. But, in my family, it's, we are not like that. I mean our children are the biggest kind of, do it bigger with the wild crowd. And for them, for me to tell them they're not allowed or supposed to do that is, we just let them find their own way."

Whilst referring to her own and later her children's experiences of adopting 'outside' practices, such as driving cars, drinking and late nights, Rebecca also noted how she and most of her children had eventually decided to give these up to join the Amish church. This kind of *Rumspringa*, though looming large in the non-Amish imagination, emerged as the least common. Most interviewees relayed far less dramatic experiences of the period, with the most significant freedoms involving attending 'singings' – Sunday evening hymn singing where young people of sixteen years and older sing hymns and socialise with members of the opposite sex (see Kraybill et al, 2013). This choice of a more conservative *Rumspringa* experience is based on social norms rather than explicit church rules, in which the religious and social become interwoven. Regardless of degrees of wider experience during the period, this practice arguably illustrates a manner of choice which can be interpreted as the potential to disembed. Continual membership into adulthood therefore cannot be assumed, meaning that leaving the community by choosing not to be baptised is a disembedding process available to all young Amish adults. The consequence of this understanding is that, despite the opportunity to embed within the Amish community, inbuilt is an impermanence of

membership reflective of fluid modern conditions. What is difficult to measure here, however, is the extent to which this process is reflective of contemporary fluid conditions or long-standing Amish tradition, where the two appear entwined.

The reverse process, of people joining the Amish from other backgrounds, was unheard of for most participants. Ruth, a moderate Amish woman in her eighties, explained that no-one joins the Amish anymore as “it’s too hard to give things up”. She knew of people that had tried to join six years previously, but had left after attempting the lifestyle. She spoke about a “Native American Indian” family that joined several generations ago, who are still Amish. Their status, largely beyond the realms of this research, was interesting. As Ruth described, “They have lots of descendants now, with darker skin”, conveying that for this octogenarian at least, difference stemming from having roots outside of the Amish can persist. As such, the potential for Amish-born people to both embed and disembed was greater than for those with no Amish background to join, due to inbuilt structures to manage embedding processes.

For the Jewish group, disembedding from a previous community – often associated with childhood and family – seems to be a natural precursor to re-embedding into the current community. Many had left former communities that were either too fluid and not considered sufficiently grounded in knowledge and tradition, or too fixed and not offering modern values of inclusion (as discussed in Chapter Four). For the majority of these members, the narrative of embedding within their current community begins with a story of disembedding from another. Emma, who had been a member of the community for approximately three years, could not answer questions about her relationship to the community without first asking,

> “Um, can I just preface what I say now, by just saying a couple of things about where I come from first, cos it might be helpful?”

Emma returned later in the interview to the community she left and the reasons for this, connecting it to her deeper commitment to her more recent community. This disembedding story intersects too with her attitude towards tradition and her different positions, as an excluded woman in her previous community as against her inclusion at present. She relayed, with some frustration, that

> “There’s also a degree of, um, the women – I mean, you know, the women [in my former community] – it’s not just that we sit separately; we’re kind of non-existent in the service… So I think, when you say traditional, the word that would come to mind is ‘alienation’.”

This is not an uncommon narrative, in which feeling excluded for a specific reason (for example gender, sexual orientation) from a previous community informs a deeper sense of belonging based on that element being fulfilled within the newer community. One might identify this as the point at which religious and social norms are negotiated by the individual in the process of forming a new sense of belonging in a chosen community. Interestingly, Emma’s use of the present tense to describe a former community illustrates an enduring connection to that original community.

Thus, in addition to noting the centrality of disembedding to members’ stories of embedding within this community, one could reflect on the relationship between reasons for having left a former community and the nature and depth of belonging in the latest community. For example, Jaden, an LGBTQ community member, described feeling connected because they were not welcomed into their previous community and therefore deeply valued that form of

inclusivity within their current community. Benjamin (discussed in Chapter Four), after having left a less orthodox Jewish community that he felt was not sufficiently intellectual (in terms of Jewish legal adherence and critical religious discussion), discussed feeling a sense of belonging in this community through the prism of it being a 'learning community' (explored later in this chapter). The disembedding and re-embedding mechanisms visible here not only contest notions of the unfeasibility of embeddedness within contemporary modernity, but also allow belonging to emerge as different for each member, and for community to be recognised as imbued with varying meanings dependant on each member's journey (see Lee, 2005). Thus, embeddedness becomes possible within fluid conditions, and belonging to a traditional community develops in part as an individualised process. Some synergy emerges with Giddens' (1991) emphasis on agency within this elective form of belonging in late modernity.

These disembedding processes also highlight the potential to leave communities regarded as natal (Day, 2011; Guibernau, 2013). For the Jewish group, one can be born into the community and take part in all the life-cycle events, such as circumcision and baby naming ceremonies, rites of passage such as a Bat or Bar Mitzvah and weddings, but choose to leave at any time. Members can also come from any other Jewish community and become embedded within this one. This illustrates proactivity rather than passivity of belonging and reveals participation and membership as a decision, rather than an obligation. What emerges from this understanding of embedding/re-embedding/disembedding processes simultaneously challenges and converges with the literature on contemporary modernity. Dichotomisations which assert the fixity of tradition as opposed to the dynamism of contemporary modernity (see Chapter Two) are contested in so far as traditional communities and their membership are revealed as dynamic. Movement occurs in and out of communities, epitomising the fluidity of contemporary conditions through disembedding processes displayed here within traditional communities. Whilst revealing the co-constitutive relationship between modernity and tradition, somewhat overlooked in the works of Giddens, Bauman, Lipovetsky and the like, this conversely re-asserts their notions of late/liquid/hyper modernity. Bringing together this literature with the literature on community and belonging (such as Jamieson, 2011; May, 2016; Ryan, 2018), we can ask: Can it not thus be observed that the existence of individualised choices to belong, fluctuating commitment, and flexibility of membership in traditional communities such as these, support the characterisation of a fluid contemporary modernity put forward by the aforementioned thinkers? Later in the chapter the complexity of belonging as layered will be explored. The section which follows discusses the routes to embedding within these contexts.

2. Routes to Embedding

This chapter has explored the appeal of belonging and demonstrated the potential for disembedding from traditional communities, often in order to re-embed into another. The appeal of such embedding under fluid conditions emphasises feelings of home, acceptance and warmth that provide members with what Giddens (1991) terms 'ontological security'. Within this relationship between a dynamic world and a secure community is an interplay, rather than discontinuation, between the fluidity of modernity and tradition. What follows is an assessment of the routes towards embeddedness, highlighting the complex social and kinship networks that enable one to (re-)embed under otherwise impermanent conditions (see May, 2016; see also Castells, 1997 on 'network society', Jamieson, 2011 on varied embedding and Morgan, 2011 on 'family practices'). These routes refer to factors that draw

prospective members towards a community, facilitate the process of embedding in it and often dictate the degree to which one feels belonging and is perceived to belong. For the Amish, the role of family appears to be of far greater significance than social networks. For the Jewish community, both networks featured as important. This section will discuss how for both groups, family and social dynamics play a key role in belonging. This lays the foundations too, for a discussion of the role of religious knowledge in layered belonging, in the final section of this chapter.

2.1 Family and Social Networks

May suggests that "belonging is an intersubjective experience that necessarily involves other people… and therefore, mere familiarity with a place, a group of people or a culture is not enough for us to gain a sense of belonging" (2011: 369). Within the Amish and the Jewish communities, both family (spouse, parents, offspring, siblings) and social networks play a pivotal role in whether one joins the group, the degree to which a member attends communal services and events, and how much they become embedded within the community. For instance, for some in the Jewish community, a lesser feeling of belonging, or perceiving that others think they belong less, was due to others in their family being less interested in religious and communal life, inhibiting an individual family member from becoming more immersed. In other cases, the reverse can be said, in that a family member's growing interest encourages others to become more involved and feel a greater sense of belonging, refracted through a familial experience. This begins to paint a picture of embedding processes predicated upon intricate networks that persist in an era typified by some as individualistic (Wellman, 1990; Putnam, 2000).

Members and those close to the community believed family to be a significant deciding factor in the eventual choice to join the Amish Church (i.e. to be baptised), to reject baptism or to leave after baptism. This is articulated by Amish author and mother, Rebecca,

> "Well, it's very seldom that they leave. If they do leave, they usually have some very decided problems with their father or their mother – like they have a harsh home life and they are hurting inside and have, want nothing to do with the Amish, because the Amish to them, betrayed them."

Family emerges as being as, if not more, influential than the member's belief. As discussed earlier, despite the tradition of joining the church in adulthood by choosing baptism, Amish children partake in cultural and religious rituals on a daily basis. With the exception of Sunday prayer services, which are communal, these rituals are family-oriented, such as praying and reading the Bible at home (Hostetler, 1993). Kinship networks therefore become the principal lens through which Amish identity is engaged with until early adulthood. This is particularly notable for issues like mobile phone ownership, whereby families often enact rules in lieu of the church. As father of five, John, explained, "the battle [to belong] is won at the family altar, long before it gets to the church level".

Sometimes belonging is made more difficult as a result of family. Eliza, whose mother died when she was a child and father remarried a non-Amish woman, provides a pertinent example. As discussed previously, her father was excommunicated due to his second marriage. She relayed, however, that she and her sister were able to be baptised, but her younger half-siblings, born to the "second mother", will not have this option. Eliza explained that her background "gave me a different perspective… It could make it hard to be Amish". Whilst Eliza was able to join the Amish herself, family background and complexities act as a

barrier to communal membership for some. Thus, the elective element of Amish belonging can be regarded as applying only in some instances, revealing that embedding is not an option for all in a context where Amish people, situated in fluid conditions, can intermarry with others.

In the Jewish community, for which boundaries have thus far been described as largely permeable, family dynamics, enacted through life-cycle events, can be seen as a route to embedding (see Morgan, 2011). Membership is often taken up as family units, couples and to a lesser extent, by single individuals. Emma described her family occasions as the source of her increased commitment to the community,

> "So, I should say that until about two years ago, three years ago, I probably wasn't a very regular synagogue attender at all. We were members and we had been members for years and years, but we didn't come regularly. And then my mum died about two and a half years ago and my dad, I kind of went primarily to support my dad actually."

Without this link, Emma was doubtful that she would have become a member of the community. Life-cycle events within Jewish communities more widely are enacted communally (Finkelstein, 1975). For instance, when a parent, spouse or sibling passes away, one will say an additional responsive prayer within the regular prayer services for a year after the death (Jacobs, 1999). For Emma, this process precipitated her father's and her own more regular engagement in this specific community. The experience dovetailed with another life-cycle event, her son's bar mitzvah, (a rite of passage at which a child – for boys aged thirteen, for girls at twelve years – reads from the Torah scroll in front of the community (ibid),

> "…There were two things coinciding: one was the loss of my mum and one was my son's imminent Bar Mitzvah… so I think I'd made a decision that a) I needed to go and support my dad and b) if we were gonna have a bar mitzvah and actually do all the stuff that we wanted to do around that, that we better kind of feel like we were part of something rather than just gate-crashing, you know, a service. So it kind of propelled me into going more regularly."

Marking these relationships as an insider, rather than a 'gate-crasher' of the community was important for Emma and reflects others' engagement with the community due to family events and beliefs. In this respect, the community emerges as an institutionalised social support network, in which one can seek solace and support in times of celebration and mourning. Embedding within such a community becomes a process connected to family and support networks. This community, defined by its religion-oriented locus and diasporic roots, is for many members (like Emma) more than theology and heritage. It is an interweaving of the familial and social connections and the communal focus (i.e. Jewish and diasporic) in a mutually reinforcing relationship. Evident here is a combination of looser ties and a level of desire to engage in this religion-oriented community, but the engagement itself is catalysed by family networks. Further, the presence of arguably looser links of co-congregants, alongside tight-knit kinship networks expressed in Emma's vignette is suggested in Wellman's 'community liberated' thesis where differing levels of ties exist across different urban contexts (Wellman, 1996). This allows nuance and a layered approach to understanding the persistence of a traditional community such as this in an urban, contemporary setting, through the more fixed, tight connections of family.

These refracted relationships within the Jewish and Amish communities are complex. Family can hasten or inhibit engagement, make embedding smooth or challenging and offer events

around which the community can cohere. Thus, routes to embedding within communities characterised as traditional within fluid conditions enable understandings of such communities as layered, comprising intersecting networks and producing a degree of fluidity.

A similar trend can be seen with social networks, which not only dictate whether one might join the community, but also how deep their sense of belonging may be upon joining (returned to in the subsequent section on levels of belonging). This is most pertinent in the example of the Jewish community, for which the newness of the group means there has been a continuing trend of people joining through friendship networks. However, Annie, an Amish grandmother, also shared what being a part of the community means to her in terms of social relationships,

> "For myself, the wonderful fellowship effort, everybody's a friend. The strong bond. It's amazing as many of the young people still want to be part of this group… They are 'brothers and sisters'. These kids could be driving cars."

This is something the Amish participants discussed infrequently. One could conclude this was because the friendships and networks were indivisible from the community and thus taken for granted as the glue that binds. Further, the privacy with which Amish participants treat such relationships resulted in few stories of friendship being shared. This section therefore focuses on the Jewish group.

For many members of the Jewish group, community was expressed in terms of belonging to a network of institutionalised social support, albeit with a religion-oriented locus, particularly in terms of weekly sabbath services, life-cycle events and key religious days. For these members, the community is the physical coming together of friends, providing support networks and security, at times articulated as more prized than the religious offerings associated with the community. Miriam, a more recent member explained,

> "You know the big factor of us joining it was that actually the people I know in it are people I respect and like and inspire me and I wanted to be part of that service."

Miriam's sentiment was echoed by many research participants. It arguably reflects a gap in theorisations of community under the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity, which have a tendency to regard community as a collection of individuals coming together (e.g. Putnam, 2000; Bauman, 2000; Guibernau, 2013, for a critique see Wellman, 1996; Brint, 2001). However, the social and familial routes to belonging to and relating to communities offer an alternative understanding of community as comprised of overlapping social and family networks holding the community together and enabling its organic growth and persistence in a context of impermanent connections.

As discussed, social situatedness often dictates whether people join, how much they belong and if they stay. Within the Jewish community this phenomenon developed through a social group which formalised around religious practice and belief. Viewed this way, the religious-orientation and particular belief system of the community appeared for some, at times, as secondary to the social networks that enable it to persist. For Joseph, who had become increasingly involved and central to the community, the coherence of and dependency on the social group was of greater consequence than religious belief,

> "I think the fact that it's, there are these quite strong friendship groups mean that it would be a huge wrench, even if you had an existential crisis with it, I don't think

> people would go anywhere else... It's where your friends go, it's where you live… what else would you do?"

Whilst the specific elements – Jewish, traditional, socially liberal, diasporic – may provide the substance, narratives and occasions around which the community coheres, the glue that binds the community is arguably its networks of people as much as its practices. Abby, a former member, present in the first years of the community, explained what this meant to her,

> "Well the common denominator between what I'm saying now and what I'm saying about when I was a 28-year-old wanting a place to go for Shabbat dinner, is kind of the same. You know, it's people. I mean, yes – yes there are kind of rituals around what it means to be a synagogue community, you know. I don't know, a newsletter with all the stuff going on and, you know, just an order, a service that you can predict and all the rest of it – but, at its core, it's a supportive network of friends."

Simon, another long-term member, shared his reasons for joining,

> "I've never really gone for ideological answers to where you *daven* [pray]. I think it has an awful lot to do with community and I think ideology is stressed way above its importance. So that the vast majority of people for whom issues of community and companionship and being with people that you get on with are far, far more important."

This is not necessarily unique to this community above other Jewish communities. Yet the significance of social networks is arguably deeper, given that the community is what Hannah calls, "a friendship community – of people who used Jewish practice to kind of deepen relationships". Hence, this community grew out of social connections, forming the roots that have allowed it to persist. It is arguably this feature that gives the community strength, adaptability and resilience where there is the potential for wide choice as to where one belongs.

As with the Amish community, the Jewish community is cemented through weekly prayer gatherings, life-cycle and yearly occasions, which offer the opportunity to come together, enabling the persistence of community refracted through social/family connectedness. For the Amish, the primacy of family becomes a means through which belonging is attained, maintained or lost. For the Jewish group, for whom family connections are important, social linkages are to a greater extent a route to embedding and doing so successfully. Yet in being connected through social and familial networks, one's belonging becomes informally classified, in an unconscious system of layering of members, as explored in the next section.

3. Levels of Belonging

> "I think there is a sense of there's a history, there's a group of core people that were there right from the get go and they're all quite close… I kinda feel like 'well fair enough, that's the way it works' you know, and I wasn't there at the beginning and I'm not actively trying to be more involved, and even if I was trying to be more involved, I can't do some of the things that it would be helpful for me to do in terms of running the service. I'm not, um, well I'm not learned enough, I can't read fluently enough in Hebrew etc… But it does kind of create a sort of – perhaps a sort of sense of there's an in-group."

Emma, recent Jewish community member

This research demonstrates that the implication of community being built upon friendship and kinship networks is that rather than each individual having a relationship to the community, community is comprised of intersecting networks, producing multi-layered belongings, akin to hierarchies, that persist within the two case study communities (see Ryan, 2018 on "differentiated embedding"; see also Blokland, 2018). This is most explicitly acknowledged within the Jewish community and is evident within the passage above, along social lines and length of membership, in addition to hierarchies of religious proficiency. As this phenomenon is most pronounced in the Jewish community, it will be the focus in this section, which reviews the factors through which levels of membership, from core to periphery, are refracted. These levels are dictated by implicit and perceived understandings of what it is to belong to a community of tradition within an impermanent contemporary modern context.

3.1 Social Connectedness

Chapter Four discussed the ethos of inclusivity within the Jewish group. Whilst this was not explicitly challenged, there is a perception among those embedded in the community that some belong more than others and that, notably, others might perceive themselves to belong less. As such there is a group of members referred to (though not by themselves) as 'core members', with some outside this group considering themselves as more peripheral. This feeling in part relates to the community's roots as having been formed by a close-knit circle, as discussed above. Hannah described the quandary felt within the group at its founding between preserving its intimate atmosphere and opening up,

> "It's basically a group of friends getting together in somebody's home, but what we're doing is semi-open. Not anyone can walk in but it's available to like-minded people who are interested… You just have this sense like 'this is our thing and we're gonna be the gatekeepers and decide who's in and who's out."

Early uncertainty surrounding the communal identity and boundaries led to what might be regarded as a soft form of exclusion, not based on set rules, but on an *ad hoc* and emotive sense of who should be included. Abby, present in the group's early years, placed herself at that time "on the outskirts". Estie, also a member at the time, conveyed her experience of the layering of membership,

> "But from being in the middle, there was this sense of sort of enterprise and commitment… I worried always about how people on the edge of the constellation were feeling. And it was, cos the difficulty when you have a community that starts with a group of people who really, really like each other is, well, what about people who aren't part of that group?"

This dynamic has persisted through the regular contact implicit as participants and leaders of the community and, to an extent, the feelings of core and peripheral membership have endured on a wider scale. Like the social and kinship ties outlined above, this illustrates the importance of routes to belonging, and further reveals that these tighter social ties (see Wellman, 1979 and 1996) have implications for how members internalise their belonging and status within the community. They reveal a fixity that is perhaps at odds with the permeability intended at the community's founding and the persistence of traditional structures alongside fluidity. This is conveyed differently according to one's perceived layer of belonging. Hannah, the member who described the difficulties of being a gatekeeper in the early years, reflected

on how this manifested within the current context through “a bit of that bantery thing” shared by those referred to as ‘core members’, perceiving that “I think that we’ve got good at being warm and welcoming”.

These ‘core members’ were seen by those who felt on the periphery as ‘belonging’ to a greater extent, and were more central to the community’s functioning. However, those viewed as ‘core members’ did not have the reverse perception of more recent attendees belonging less, or themselves as being more deeply embedded. This speaks to the significantly varied experiences for members of different ‘levels’, who, despite being members of the same community, do not appear to always relate fully to each other's experiences of belonging to the community (Jamieson, 2011; Ryan, 2018).

For some, these different layers, often delineated by social group, hold different values of belonging, as illustrated by Richard, a member of over ten years,

> “I think that there is a degree of exclusivity and some of our friends won’t come because they feel kind of left out or marginalised; that there is still a feeling of a central group who quite rightly are very committed to the community but there’s also to some extent a degree of self-righteousness that goes with it.”

He likened this ‘central group’ to a traditional orthodox synagogue, in which lay leaders of the community, characterised as “three old men with hats” would be seated at the front during prayer services. He explains that “whilst there’s definitely not three old men with hats, there are people who sit in the front, there are people who sit at the middle, there are people who sit at the back.” Richard places himself as “second or third tier”. This reveals too that within this largely open, socially liberal community, a degree of social connection enables a deeper level of embedding not easily otherwise attainable. One can question whether indeed this community could persist in its current form without the social connectedness that has the implicit effect of layering belonging; whether the structure of religion is, in isolation, insufficient for persistence. Whilst great caution must be taken in generalising the experience from one community to others, this example can lead one to ask: Is an element of fixity or structure such as this a prerequisite for tradition to thrive under fluid contemporary conditions? The section which follows further suggests that belonging within the Jewish community exists on a tacitly understood layering as a result of longevity and regularity of attendance, a feature one might suggest is distinctly non-fluid.

3.2 Longevity and Regularity of Attendance

Many of those who considered themselves as more on the periphery of the Jewish community regarded those who had been attending for all or most of the community’s lifetime as more ‘core’ and more deeply embedded in the community than themselves (see May, 2016 for an exploration of duration, belonging and the ‘temporal self’ and Hite, 2003 on ‘full embeddedness’, trust and time). The degree to which members felt they belonged was often articulated in terms of membership duration; founding or early members were regularly referred to as ‘core members’. Olivia prefaced her interview with “I probably should’ve said this in an email really – but that I’m a convert, so I’m kind of new to the whole community anyway.” Emma was clear in stating her level of embeddedness early on in the interview,

> “I feel a bit of an interloper and I feel like that’s fine and I’m OK to talk about it, but I think I just wanna preface everything I say about it, saying there are loads of people who are much more embedded than I am… I feel a little bit kind of out of that in a way."

She further explained that not only the length of time attending, but the regularity of attendance, placed her in an in-between position, where she would belong more if she 'did' more, but would be 'disregarded' with lesser participation,

> "…the core members, if they feel like you're genuinely involved and pitching up quite regularly and it's not just about… getting your kids into the right secondary school or it's not just about, you know, or attending enough for bar mitzvah and then you're gonna disappear again, I think you're more welcome… So I feel like I'm more recognised and more welcome because I go quite frequently these days and I think if I kind of, if I took my foot off the pedal, I would probably feel a bit disregarded, but whether that's because I'm being disregarded or because I feel guilty or something is an altogether different question."

This fluctuation of membership is more contingent than purely being included or excluded. It reveals a fluidity of membership between members, but also within an individual member's lifetime (Ryan, 2018). Further, the language used conveyed a sense of the speaker's own level of inclusion, with certain members referring to the community as 'them', not 'us'.

The correlation between levels of commitment and a deeper level of belonging and inclusion is difficult to ascertain in this community. For some, commitment shown through regular attendance had not necessarily granted 'core membership' status, and others who showed a lesser level of commitment arguably resultantly felt less deeply embedded in the community. It is not assumed, however, that more peripheral members were less committed or exhibited a greater tendency to look elsewhere for community, as many such members had been attending for a significant proportion of the community's lifespan.

Inclusion within this inner circle again emerges in terms of three key markers – longevity/regularity of attendance, social connectedness to the 'core' and religious knowledge/ proficiency. Importantly, these routes to deep embeddedness are rarely explicitly acknowledged by boundary-makers, but rather are implied and based on perception, particularly for those who believe themselves to be more peripheral, as expressed by Richard,

> "Um, I think people come and if you keep on coming, then eventually you get recognised and then I guess if you come to the Shabbat [sabbath] lunches, if you try and learn or get onto a rota, if you come to meetings and those sorts of things, you're more likely to be included."

Richard attended sabbath services approximately three times a month and had been a member of the community for a little over ten years. His perception that greater engagement was needed, particularly in the sphere of religious leadership of the service, produced the feeling of being on the periphery, of what he described as "second or third tier".

Perceptions of routes to belonging (as opposed to not belonging) are essentially straightforward, yet to attain a deeper sense of belonging, the routes are more complex. As a new member, this may not be apparent. There are nuanced, multifarious meanings for some people (such as founding or deeply involved members), imperceptible to those who recently joined or came from a non-Jewish background, revealing meaning-making in this community as both nuanced and specific, much like Heller's notion of a community where words are not needed to understand one another (Heller, 1995). Danielle, who converted to Judaism within the community in recent years relayed,

> "Um, I think they could just turn up and I think they would, well they always sort of make people, I think they notice if there's sort of new people or if not, I mean, if you were confident enough to – I remember even when I first went I didn't have a clue which books I needed and somebody showed me."

The perceived primacy of both social connections and longevity/regularity of attendance situate the Jewish community within features of tradition and of fluid, contemporary modernity simultaneously.

For the Amish, the experience of longevity does not apply in the same manner, as joining the community from elsewhere is rare (discussed earlier in this chapter). However, appearing at church on Sundays and partaking in regular events emphasises the value of time. Rather than referenced explicitly by interview participants, time engaging with the community and regularity of attendance is implied within the weekly commitments made by members. This appears less of a hierarchy and more so an expectation on members more broadly.

Thus, the Jewish community's experience differs from the experience of temporality in the Amish community. May's framework helps differentiate here, as she outlines two types of belonging: "the first is experienced as linear chronological duration and follows the rules of narrative", applicable more to the Jewish case study; "while the second is experienced 'out of time' and does not follow the same rules of coherence or linear temporality" (2016: 637), applicable more to the Amish case study, though outlined in reference to both communities in Chapter Six. As referenced above, proficiency and knowledge of religious practice further enable the most prominent levels of belonging in the Jewish case study community, and this is considered next.

3.3 Religious Knowledge and Proficiency

The sociological literature on community and religion emphasises the role of belief (e.g. Wasserfall et all, 1999), belonging (such as Day, 2011) and shared practice (see Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012). An area arguably largely absent from this is the impact of religious proficiency and the degree to which greater religious proficiency leads to a deeper sense of belonging (see May, 2011 on the importance of contributing to one's own world to feel embedded within community). This link was particularly prominent within the Jewish community, for whom learning and knowledge surrounding Jewish practice and liturgy are central. Founding members highlighted 'education and learning' as key communal values from inception. For the Amish communities, for whom formal education ends at eighth grade (age 14/15 years), neither members nor religious leaders attend theological seminaries (Hostetler, 1993). The custom of selecting religious leaders (as discussed in Chapter Four, via nominations and the random selection of a bible carrying a certain prayer) results in leaders possessing no greater religious instruction than ordinary members. For the Jewish group, as is customary within Jewish communities, there is a learning sermon (called *Dvar Torah* or spoken interpretation of the Old Testament) delivered weekly during the sabbath service (Shulman, 2008). Within this community, where no professional figure, such as a rabbi, leads the service, this sermon is most often delivered by community members, illustrating congregants' high level of knowledge.

The wider approach to learning and education within the community is reflected by the high number of professionals within the Jewish group. This was not the case for the Amish, many of whom worked in farming and construction. The approach to education within the Amish was illustrated by an anecdote relayed regarding a young Amish woman attending nursing

college; her fellow members disapproved of her desire to study beyond middle school age. For the Amish, seeking a greater degree of knowledge seemed to be the antithesis of expected faith and the simple lifestyle aspired to. To reach outside of the educational norms was to challenge one's status as a community member (Kraybill et al, 2013). Therefore, knowledge does not appear to impact communal hierarchies for the Amish as it does for the Jewish community. Indeed, greater possession of knowledge can have a converse effect on depth of belonging. The intellectualisation of religion in the Jewish context, and the relative lack thereof for the Amish, was thus a notable difference.

Knowledge as a source of deep belonging for many Jewish members was frequently based on perceptions of others' knowledge levels i.e. it was perceived that others (including 'core members') were more knowledgeable than oneself. This feeling of not knowing 'enough' had the effect on some of inhibiting full involvement and a greater sense of belonging. Further, to 'core members', religious learning was an important communal value, but an understanding of the disempowerment felt by others was rarely expressed. This echoes the relationship explored above between longevity, social networks and levels of belonging (e.g. May, 2011; Ryan, 2018).

That learning has been a fundamental ethos for the Jewish community since its inception may in part be due to the choice to not be led by a rabbi or other professional religious figure. Benjamin, an early member, recalled the consequence of this communal structure,

> "…everyone needed to kind of take responsibility. Everyone needed to kind of step up to the plate. Everyone needed to learn something and therefore we needed to be a learning community in order to enable that to happen".

Knowledge here is perhaps as pragmatic as it is ideological, so that the community could be self-sustaining. Knowledge was not regarded as a prerequisite for acceptance into the community, but a willingness to learn in order to take on roles such as leading the prayer service and reading from the Torah scroll was valued. For early members, this was a pull factor to the community. Estie, a former member, talked about how the rigorous intellectual nature of the community that "held it together" in her years of engagement: "precisely that it attracts and supports people who want to be seriously Jewishly engaged. It doesn't cut corners; it doesn't make compromises and that's important I think". Adam recalled feeling, "that I was with a bunch of people who actually were interested in what was going on and if they didn't know, did want to find out". Thus, for those striving for a learning environment alongside their prayer service, the community was a home, offering intellectual religious intensity and a clear route to embedding.

As the community and hence the variety of members has grown, this ethos has been adapted. Joseph, a lay leader, reflected,

> "So I think there was probably a time when people were a bit, you had to participate, there was sort of an expectation that unless you were *leyning* [reading from the Torah scroll] or *davening* [leading prayers] you weren't really part of the community. And actually more and more you look around and there are plenty of people who are very connected, who come every week, who are very dedicated, who are just congregants."

This opening up has enabled a wide variety of members to join. However, as suggested below, depth of embedding is still often associated with degree of Jewish skills and knowledge. Hannah shared,

> "I think we'd like people to show up and find a way to participate actively and I think that there are ways to do that. So the obvious ways are, like, you've got amazing Hebrew or you've got amazing Jewish knowledge or you've got an amazing voice and because I kind of have some of that skillset, like, I'm a bit privileged, so I don't know whether it's OK to say to other people 'but find a way that you can be useful because we need all sorts'… I mean maybe I'm being a bit wilfully naïve – maybe there's a bit of a hierarchy of the people who are fluent or who can sing really nicely. But I personally think that whilst those are really wonderful things, we need a heap of other things for a community to thrive."

This produces levels of not only those who can/do and those that can't/don't, but also of those that 'do' different things for the community. These 'types' of engagement are implied, but Hannah went on to attempt to categorise these as: "the people who show up who are dutiful participants and attendants who don't actually do any big flashy stuff – they don't lead from the front… the shower-uppers"; "people who can sing and who are very fluent with Hebrew who can lead prayers and leyning"; and "people who are MC people who can make announcements and who can kind of, you know, get the mood of the room right". The acknowledgement is that the community needs more than knowledgeable leaders to thrive. However, this raises the question of those who do not fulfil any of the above types and attend, often regularly, for many years (for a related discussion on longevity, see May, 2016).

Implicit within these layered belongings is a somewhat circular relationship between religious proficiency and social inclusion within the 'centre' of the community. This is in part apparent in the way that holding knowledge can transcend the religious/liturgical/ritual sphere and cross over into communal relationships and an individual sense of belonging or lack thereof. Knowledge enables a centrality. This is felt most deeply by those who perceive themselves as not possessing it, as Tali shared,

> "Because I know very little and so, and people are so knowledgeable there… and I sometimes feel inferior – but not in a horrible way, but just, you know, I often think 'Oh I'm nothing like their standard!' – which I'm not! [laughs]".

Knowledge in this sense produces a legitimising effect, where those lacking knowledge feel less like members. For some, this motivates a personal journey of learning to possess greater religious proficiency and to purposefully or implicitly belong more deeply. For others, the perception of being less proficient and feeling a lesser sense of belonging is a mutually reinforcing experience leading to immobility within the community. Through holding knowledge, one attains a level of social capital (Colclough and Sitaraman, 2005). It is thus arguably simpler to embed within the community and to a deeper level if one has access to knowledge, as this allows greater participation as well as social confidence and prominence. Knowledge thus becomes a short-cut to deeper belonging, enacted via unwritten criteria which another founder, Laura, described,

> "And so I do think that there's a route to be absolutely central, whether you've got *shul* [synagogue] skills or not. It's just that it's a much quicker one if you've got *shul* skills."

Estie described that this privileging of knowledge enabled her to "very, very quickly be moved into the mainstream of the community." In contrast, Miriam expressed acceptance that she belonged outside of this 'core group' given her lack of religious proficiency, sharing: "I've gotta be honest, there is like an inner gang that stands out, you know… but then that's how, how else is a service gonna run?". Other members, who joined at various points within the community's history from a range of backgrounds, referred to their statuses variously as: "I'm much less educated. So in that way I haven't really got a leg to stand on", "I think people assume that everybody else knows Hebrew words. That's something that annoys me", "they're quite learned", and "they seemed to know everything. But then it soon transpired that, you know, we're all in the same boat". This layering of belonging leads to an unintended dynamic produced by the necessity for lay leadership to possess the proficiency needed to sustain the community's religious practices. Whilst knowledge was necessary to maintain the community and its identity, there was no sense that the levels of belonging it produces were a desired consequence or required for the community's effective functioning, or of how the capital thereby produced interacts with the given identities of existing members.

Implicit within these insights is that perception of knowledge is arguably more central in producing hierarchies than actual religious proficiency. Members' perceptions result in a self-construction of boundaries producing a sense of hierarchy. Through this interweaving of knowledge and perceptions emerge invisible catalysts and boundaries of belonging. Though they are not formal boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, they are facilitators of one's level of belonging. The capital gained from these deeper levels of belonging enables those deemed 'core' to the group to act as boundary-makers, possessing the ability to construct and manage boundaries around ritual, practice and inclusion, whether through fixity or innovation.

Combined with the intersecting social connections and significance of longevity, knowledge produces a community in which each individual belongs differently, embeds with varying degrees and perceives others through their own lens of belonging. Therefore, one might ask whether there is something essentially modern in the centrality of knowledge (much like the 'second naïveté' explored in Chapter Four) and an element of fluidity in these individual, fluctuating links to community that enable it to sustain and withstand change. Considering the roles of social connectedness, temporality and religious proficiency allows community to be understood as a complex intersection of factors producing individual and group notions of belonging that move beyond explicit rules and act as norms circulating beneath the surface. Within this framework, community is belonged to in ever morphing processes that encompass a fluidity of individual membership and consequently broader implicit notions of membership, community composition and communal identity.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to convey the potential and varied nature of embeddedness under fluid contemporary conditions. Exploring examples within the Amish and Jewish communities of embedding/disembedding/re-embedding mechanisms allows for the emergence of a narrative asserting that disembedding is not inevitable nor embeddedness unattainable in a fluid contemporary context. Instead, it demonstrates that the appeal of embedding is in part a response, the seeking of 'ontological security' amidst the fluidity of contemporary modernity and that, relatedly, traditional communities, through processes of embedding, exhibit fluidity more commonly associated with contemporary modernity. This allows for the borrowing of notions of 'ontological security' and elective embedding from theorists of contemporary modernity (for instance Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000; Lipovetsky, 2005; Beck

and Grande, 2010), whilst simultaneously contesting dichotomisations and notions of fixed tradition inherent within these conceptualisations.

However, as the findings within this chapter illustrate, whilst the presence of (re-)embedding processes contests the notion of late/liquid/hyper modernity as essentially disembedding, the dynamic nature of belonging in these communities in fact also re-asserts the fluid nature of contemporary modernity. In so doing, tradition (as explored here through religion-oriented diasporic communities) and modernity are epitomised to an extent by the same features of fluidity.

Yet this can lead one to ask: What allows the persistence of communities such as these, preventing their dynamism from writing them out of existence? It is suggested within this chapter that this consistency in part emanates from routes to embedding through social and kinship networks, which attract, retain and bind members. These routes begin to illustrate the intersecting networks that persist within these two communities, offering resilience amidst continually shifting conditions. Notions of seeking ‘ontological security’ (Giddens, 1991) and ‘solace’ (Bauman, 2001) in a (for some) threatening fast-paced world emerge as useful in understanding motivations to embed and continue to belong to community. However, the potential to attain this appears perhaps more optimistic than theorists of modernity might purport. These networks, traversing with religious knowledge/proficiency and longevity/regularity of attendance (particularly for the Jewish community), generate levels of belonging, which reveal embedding processes in contemporary modernity as individually experienced, in flux and varied.

Incorporating literatures on contemporary modernity (cited above) together with wider community literatures on, for instance, ‘differentiated embedding’ (Ryan, 2018; see also Hite, 2003; Jamieson, 2011), temporality (May, 2016), everyday life, kinship and individualisation (Smart and Shipman, 2004; Mason, 2008), offers the opportunity to better conceptualise contemporary conditions. Taken alongside the above findings, the implication of these case studies for our understanding of belonging within contemporary modernity is that belonging can be understood as a constant negotiation, not simply in terms of inclusion and exclusion, but as a process, networks and a dialectic with others. Communities conceptualised as ‘traditional’ thus appear in these instances to negotiate fluid conditions through a complex combination of change and fixity, through strong ties, longevity and regularity and through taking steps to facilitate embedding, for instance through religious proficiency. Despite their significant differences in context, both the Amish and Jewish case studies demonstrate this interplay through dis/re/embedding mechanisms, familial and social links and relationships with time. These examples enable community to thus be understood as simultaneously individualised and socially connected, assumed and built. These networks alone do not facilitate community persistence. Rather, along with boundary maintenance (Chapter Four) and the deployment of binding narratives and practices (Chapter Six), embedding processes offer one means by which traditional communities negotiate the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity.

Chapter Six: Practice, Persistence and the Reproduction of Community

Introduction

Community under fluid contemporary conditions has thus far emerged as dynamic, deliberate and comprising differentiated and fluctuating levels of belonging. As such, boundaries of community possess varying degrees of fluidity and fixity (Chapter Four), whilst embedding mechanisms that operate within these communities demonstrate the layered and contingent nature of belonging (Chapter Five). The forthcoming chapter builds on this understanding, adding that communal practices are tools of community that operate alongside boundary-keeping processes and networks of belonging in order to enable these communities to negotiate fluid conditions, reproduce themselves and to successfully persist.

Locating the practices through which communities produce continuity allows us to understand the tools with which traditional communities negotiate fluid conditions. As illustrated in the previous data chapters, the processes that maintain communities conceptualised as traditional are themselves fluid, adaptable and adapted. Returning to the research questions (see Introduction), this offers the opportunity to rethink prevailing meanings of community as more adaptive reproduction, rather than rote repetition.

Three practices are outlined here as key themes that surfaced from the data, though these practices are of course not exhaustive. These communal tools of reproduction are: approaches to engage young people through education and innovation; the deployment of narratives, both historically/mythically-rooted and more tangible; and the practices implicated in 'doing' community together. The vitality of these communities that emerges – in addition to the transfer of communal culture to new generations – challenges declensionist assumptions (such as Putnam, 2000; Bauman, 2000) in much of the literature on community, explored in greater depth in the introductory chapter. It also contests singular arguments that posit one or another feature (for example, the fear of modernity) as the sole source of communal continuity within contemporary modernity (for example, Giddens, 1991; Beck, 2010).

Literature focussing on the acts of 'doing' together in a religion-oriented, diasporic or broader communal context will provide a framework for understanding the role of practice within these communities (Geertz, 1973; Shove et al, 2012; Salamon and Goldberg, 2012; Ahmed et al., 2016; see Chapter Two for a more extended discussion). This chapter seeks to bring together the data with these literatures, alongside work on diaspora and narrative deployment, to offer an explanation of communal persistence that acknowledges the processes that result in communal thriving through the interplay of retention and adaptability.

Religion-oriented diasporic communities are of particular interest here for the religious/biblical/exilic narratives that support communal persistence, as well as the rituals built around these narratives and experiences. Though it should be noted that such processes can of course be identified within other forms of community. This discussion will begin by examining approaches to engaging with young people, a theme that emanated from the field research.

1. Youth Engagement: The Next Generation of Community Members

Arguably the greatest talked about 'threat' to communal persistence is that of young people wishing to leave. This section is driven by the research data around fears and approaches to young people, rather than explicitly giving voice to young people, which was beyond the scope of this research and thus those direct voices are largely absent. With the continuity of the community resting on the decisions of young people to continue with traditions, participation and membership, participants from both the Amish and Jewish communities spoke at length about youth membership and engagement. For both communities, creation of opportunities to engage young people in religious and communal life, amidst the lure of the 'outside world', loomed large in communal discourse and activities. A combination of education, innovation and as discussed in Chapter Four, tolerance, operate with differing levels of 'success' in order to enable a new generation of members to continue to connect with the community. The research project was focussed on over 18s. Whilst this does include some young adults (18-25), the majority of what follows is centred on the anxieties and perceptions of the older generation about young people, rather than directly representing the views of these communities' younger generations. Education as a form of community reproduction will first be turned to, followed by adaptive attempts at innovation with and from younger members.

1.1 The Role of Education in Communal Persistence

The two communities vary significantly in their approaches to cultural and religious education. For the Jewish community, as explored previously in Chapter Five, practical religious instruction for young people (and adults) is a central principle of the group. For the Amish communities, formal education is not held in high esteem, with legal exemptions meaning that the school leaving age for Amish youth is 14/15 years (Hostetler, 1993), though learning about Amish ways and beliefs tends to be integrated into daily life. The two case studies will be discussed separately here, to illustrate different approaches to education within these traditional communities, rather than for the purpose of direct comparison.

A concern amongst some Amish parents is the increasingly enquiring approach that the younger generation is showing. Eve, a quilt shop owner and parent, notes that: "Kids question things now. I just did as I was told, didn't ask why the *Ordnung* changes, I just accepted it". Whilst by non-Amish standards the questions being asked might not be regarded as critical (for example, asking to know more about the use of' 'High German' for prayer), Amish churches and adherents speak often of an unquestioning faith in which one does not ask why things are done, instead showing commitment and "obedience" to the faith by adhering uncritically (Kraybill et al., 2013: 60). In this context of faith without questioning, educational endeavour involves example-setting and the continuation of tradition, as opposed to academic engagement with biblical and other texts. For instance, Eve goes on to explain that if they stay in accommodation on holiday that has a television, she tries "to teach the kids so they won't want to do that. I keep them occupied". The emphasis in her story is on prevention through distraction, rather than, for example, imparting a theological grounding.

Eve (and others) expressed that there needs to be "more thought" on how young people respond to the challenges of the modern world, particularly internet access and narratives constructed about Amish youth by those outside of the community. Abe, a young Amish man, shared his concern regarding non-Amish narratives about Amish youths' experience of *Rumspringa* (a period of greater freedom between sixteen years of age and baptism, explored in greater depth in Chapter Two) and the influence this has had on young Amish people

themselves, arguing that an education surrounding this ritual specifically is needed for young Amish people. He defined *Rumspringa* as “following self”, a time for youth from age sixteen to explore themselves and their outlook. Within his community, and wider Amish communities (through his writing in Amish periodicals), he has “tried to find more positive words” to explain this period and educate young Amish people. One of Abe’s primary concerns is with the younger generation’s approach to money and the lack of a systemic approach within the church to teach about this. He highlights that there is a greater level of prosperity for young Amish people than in previous generations as a result of employment outside of Amish communities. In this context emerges the challenge posed by the intersection between Amish values and what is regarded as the ‘outside world’ that young people encounter as Americans in a capitalist contemporary modern society, coupled with a lack of education surrounding both what it means to be Amish and being a young person in the world. Fearing the impact of this, Abe says he wants to “save the youth” from pastimes such as “motorcycles and jet skiing”, arguing that it “affects our community and how much money they have when they are starting a family”. This trend is relatively recent, so its impact is ongoing, and the fear is for not only this current generation, but the implications of the Amish family unit. The double effect is of having greater disposable income to spend and access to leisure activities that are not expressly forbidden before baptism, but that do not fit well with Amish traditions of simplicity and frugality. This produces a tension that Abe believes continues after adherents of this generation have been baptised and would be ameliorated with a new approach from church and youth leaders.

Religious and cultural education for Amish youth thus appears experiential and is sited in everyday family rituals, rather than academic learning. A varied picture becomes evident, whereby minimal formal religious instruction opens a gap which is being filled by ‘outside’ society and to an extent, by outreach churches who emphasise the importance of more academic bible study and religious literacy. At the same time, retention rates remain high (at least 85% according to Stevick, 2014: 26), arguably pointing to the lesser emphasis on education potentially enabling the continuity of Amish practices and community. In this case, a combination of the rigour of home-sited practices and the relative absence of academic-style religious education serve to perpetuate community adherence.

For the Jewish community, religious instruction takes place in the home, in a wider community network through formal education and within the community by experiencing and learning to lead prayer services. This section focusses on the latter, as it is a specific communal endeavour. There is a combination of optimism about the level of proficiency and confidence in the community’s young people, alongside concern as to whether teenagers and young adults would be sufficiently interested in participating in religious communal life (explored further subsequently). Gerry, a member in his sixties, believes that the focus should be on,

> “…making the younger generation reinvigorated and bring it back to whatever the new generation thinks is the new way of continuing that concentration on the importance of prayer and how to make it meaningful and modern.”

Noteworthy here is that the intention of educating and ‘invigorating’ young community members is not necessarily for the community to remain the same in terms of practice, but rather ensuring prayer continues to hold meaning. This entails a level of inbuilt fluidity, whereby the reproduction of the community is not synonymous with an absence of change.

A proactive involvement of young people in leadership positions in communal services provides a vehicle for this experiential learning process. For example, Miriam, a parent who joined from an orthodox community, was struck by the role her teenager was invited to play in the community after having learnt to read from the Torah (Old Testament scroll) for his Bar Mitzvah,

> "[In my former community] I cannot imagine my thirteen-year-old being on the *leyning* [Torah reading] rota, he just had his Bar Mitzvah a few months ago, so I thought, 'isn't that lovely?'"

This in some ways mirrors the experience of adult members who have themselves sought to learn to participate in and lead religious services when joining the community. Benjamin, a long-term member reflects on "the focus on learning and inclusion and encouraging people to take responsibility for part of the service". The hope expressed by several of the first generation of members is that this greater level of knowledge will enable a carrying forth of the community into the next generation. Hence the community in part persists through ensuring the transference of knowledge of practices and early opportunities to feel embedded in these, rather than act as young spectators. Danielle, a member in her twenties, believes this is best achieved through open, informal and experiential learning, whereby children "experience it like by osmosis, you know? So the tunes just kind of float around them". Other members believe there to be gaps in the community's education strategy. David, a semi-involved member, who is also a parent, expresses a different experience,

> "…but I think that's the challenge for any community, is this balance of how children sit within the service. And I think there's a, there's this very structured children's service set-up which has positives and negatives, because basically it takes the children out of the service at an age when they're beginning to realise what's going on around them... But then the service becomes very alien to them… They're then getting encouraged or forced to come along in the weeks, months, year in the run-up to their Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah, to this strange thing that they haven't really experienced before… and once they've had their Bar and Bat Mitzvah it's kind of irrelevant to them. You know they're, it's just being something that's being garbled in Hebrew, which they can't really relate to".

The 'children's services' referred to entail a level of teaching about stories and liturgy, yet they take place in a different room, outside of the main service. Resultantly, young people that choose to attend (or whose parents choose for them to attend) these youth services, are being educated in the communal rituals, but in fact are not fully embedded in the communal experience of prayer along with adult members (a common practice within Jewish communities across different denominations and therefore not unique to this community). Whilst being an effective tool of education, therefore, this structure may have the counter-effect of discouraging the embedding of young people within the wider/adult communal services.

This sentiment is not unique to this particular community, but the ambivalence here can be seen as a reflection of communal ideals, as against the reality of a varied group of members in a community dealing with its first generation of young people and grappling with how best to educate them. There is a sense of progress in where their young people stand, in comparison to their own experiences, at the same time as not feeling entirely at ease with the system for ensuring continuity through education in coming decades. Although education

arguably means something very different for Amish communities, the notion of not been fully confident in how to pass on the religion and culture, yet feeling there are real successes, is evident within both communities (though as noted earlier, these are the thoughts largely of the parents' generations, rather than the young people themselves in this research project). These successes appear to illustrate the opportunity for change and innovation, or at least tolerance, in order to ensure that the traditions that remain are ones that young people will want to be a part of. Education becomes the site of the potential reproduction of communal practices for future generations, but in such a way as to open the prospect of future practices differing and adapting. Thus, the reproduction of these practices necessitates at times being open to amending them. Yet the approach to communal persistence through transferring rituals involves a wider approach than education, with innovation and accommodation therefore also emerging as important tools.

1.2 Innovation: Adapting to Persist

Within the Amish and Jewish communities, members expressed an awareness of the need to be dynamic and to innovate in order to retain young members. Innovation looks different for each of these communities. Amish responses to young people vary depending on how conservative or liberal the church district is. For the strictest groups, little flexibility is granted with regards to innovation of social, cultural and religious practice (as seen in smartphone use in Chapter Four). Thus, sometimes shifts can be subtle, as explored forthwith.

Sarah-Jane observed that "Amish youth have changed dramatically in the last five to seven years". She reflects that "kids used to have crazy parties at the barn all night. That's almost non-existent now. Now they play volleyball, have supper, sing, snack in their homes and play games". She explains that,

> "They [Amish youth in the area] were being wild, taking drugs etc but an Amish lady became interested in music. She taught kids to read and sing music on Sunday evenings instead of singing in unison in Gregorian chants. They sing hymns. It spread like wildfire. The message from the music went to people's hearts and changed the youth. They are now calm and well-behaved"

This is a specific case and although to those not familiar with Amish lifestyles, singing hymns on a Sunday night may not seem like innovation, changes such as these are a source of tension for some communities. Indeed, Rebecca, an Amish parent, said of the new style singings,

> "If their parents agree that they should sing from the Christian hymnal books I think they do gladly, and then there's parents who don't want their children to do that, so it causes some, it causes some friction".

Similar sentiments were echoed by other Amish parents. The 'Christian hymnal books', whilst Christian, are not specifically Amish and follow different tunes or cadences. Thus, to these Amish youngsters, being offered the opportunity to sing new melodies and songs in social groups was a change from the previous offerings of familiar hymns. Amish parents too, explained that these singings entice young people away from sometimes 'wild' behaviour that is caused by disenchantment with existing activities available within the community. This new custom being incorporated into some Amish communities keeps young Amish people within their communities and enables them the chance to socialise with their Amish peers. For many, these singings act as an opportunity to meet future spouses. Thus occurs (not without tension) an opening up of new spaces for these Amish young people within an Amish context. These may not look like the Amish activities of previous generations, but by allowing such

innovation within this community, young people are incentivised to stay within their Amish churches and thus are arguably more likely to be baptised, meet an Amish spouse and to continue to perpetuate wider Amish traditions. Evident within such adaptations is the 'constancy and change' that Salamon and Goldberg (2012) argue epitomises traditional communities, whereby persistence, retention and dynamism are necessary interlocutors (see Chapter Two).

These innovations present differently within the Jewish community, but emanate from a similar desire to ensure young members are attracted to the community, even if that entails making changes to the communal practices. Laura, a leader within the Jewish community, and a parent, expresses a similar concern to that above, that young people are less interested in existing offerings within the community,

> "I think particularly as people's kids are getting older, that people talk more and more about what they can do to keep their children interested. I think it's very interesting actually that despite the commitment of the parents… despite all of that, the teenage kids don't really come."

The radical principles on which this Jewish community was founded is, for the generation that was born into the community, no longer deemed radical. Indeed, for some young members in their teenage years, what was dynamic to their parents' generation, is to them more like an outmoded institution. Danielle consequently identifies the need for innovation in order to stay relevant to those who are beginning to start families,

> "I think there will be a generation of people, well hopefully they will become the next kind of generation, if you know what I mean? And then hopefully it'll carry on. But there would have to be kind of this handover I guess, eventually of new people leading it and it might change slightly."

Adam, a founding member, welcomes this idea, though he is sceptical, based on what he regards as an absence of young members in their late teens and twenties (a trend that is not unique to this community; see Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012),

> "It's sort of a lost generation for ten/fifteen years, you know, from fifteen years old until about thirty, it would be lovely to think that a lot of them will step up to the plate and take on some of the roles that we've been doing. I think that's something to think about. It's not about the actual 'what you do', it's 'who does it."

This view that 'doing' within the community is more important than what is being done explicitly, is echoed by members both new and long-term. Hannah, a founder, talks about the desire of young adults to innovate both within the community and by building something new outside of it, but her hope is that "people of other generations than us will come along and breathe life into it" to allow it to continue. She believes this embracing of change reflects the nature of the community,

> "One of the things that's kind of held [the community] together is the fact that it's doing something a little bit different. And if it's not doing the different thing anymore, if it's not that, then will it kind of still cohere?"

Mapping Shove et al's (2012) three features of practice assists in understanding how change can in fact enable such persistence, rather than undermine communal identity. Present in the Jewish community are the use of materials (such as the prayer book), competencies

(religious/ritual literacy) and meaning attached to these (notwithstanding that these meanings may vary from person to person). The continued connection between these elements identified by Shove et al facilitates community-binding practices, regardless of the content of those specific practices. Few 'core' members articulated a desire to keep the community the same, acknowledging that the community was radical when it was founded and dynamism is essential to enable it to continue. Joseph explains that not only will this help retain young people from within the community, but it shows the community's "ability to attract new members. New or, you know, younger, young people, unlike ourselves!". Hannah recalls a conversation with a young member, wishing to build something outside of the community,

> "'I mean look, you must do what you wanna do, but why do you want to? Because [we] would love it if you came. You know, we're middle-aged old farts! Come and, you know, rejuvenate us. We're not age specific'. And actually I think he was quite cool with that, but I know that there were some people who felt that they needed some ownership of something and they wanted to set up their own thing".

In fact, several key members, such as Joseph, were open to the idea of a new community emerging: "it may be that there'll be a new community and you know, we'll be the grown-ups and there'll be some kids doing the next cool thing." There is potential for the identity of the community to continue through its branching off into new groups, "and sort of sow the seeds of [this type of] thing elsewhere in the world", for some showing that the community has been a success as it spawns young members who wish to continue to innovate elsewhere or using varying new approaches. Though Joseph notes with some irony that there is perhaps a cycle of dynamism and institutionalisation, which will be repeated in the coming generation,

> "Right, so there'll come a point when they'll grow up and they'll realise that they need a regular building and their kids'll need a *cheder* [Sunday school] and they need to pay for burial, or yeah, whatever the good positive reasons are for joining a *shul* [synagogue]. You know, at that point we can lend them our wise counsel, and then get a bit irritated by all these kids!"

The attempt to innovate and give space for young people to do so is important to the Jewish community. It represents the 'flow of human action', the dynamism of which reproduces community (Shove et al, 2012). Simon, an older member, articulates, that "You've always gotta change. You gotta adapt. You gotta do stuff". There is no universal communal consensus on the level of innovation and engagement required and desired. From the perspective of a new, younger member, however, "a little bit more could be done to bring young people in… I'm not sure recruitment is very good". Though as discussed in the previous two chapters, growth in this way is not necessarily an aim for a community that was founded on an ethos of (amongst other values) friendship and familiarity.

These challenging negotiations reflect both communities' concerns that a new generation is seeking something different from the existing one and that shifting interactions outside of the community lead to different requirements from inside the community. Whilst education emanating from the current generation of boundary-keepers in some ways enables the persistence of the communities, there is a sense, particularly in the Jewish community that the project of persistence is ongoing and will therefore need to be taken up by the emerging generation of members that are currently entering adulthood. Thus, though important, education alone – whether more formal, as in the Jewish case study, or sited in the daily lives

of the Amish – is not an all-encompassing explanation of communal reproduction for these communities. Indeed, as illustrated, innovative approaches to prayer, practice and indeed social interactions, enables the persistence of such communities, by continuing their appeal to a new generation of potential adherents. Herein lie elements of fluidity that facilitates the endurance of tradition, further revealing the inseparable nature of the relationship between the two under contemporary modern conditions and revealing community boundary-making as a creative, rather than repetitive endeavour. Attention will now turn to a less future-oriented practice, that of narratives and their binding affects within such communities.

2. Narratives: The Stories that Bind

The stories we tell and the way we do so not only root us in our past but also allow us to make sense of the disembedding routes that brought us to the present (see Bourdieu, 1986/2000); Gilroy, 1993; Ahmed et al, 2003; Butler, 2004; Blokland, 2018). For these diasporic communities, having a religion-oriented belief system at their core and having been once uprooted from elsewhere, narrative construction is both a remembering of the communal past and a guide to communal continuity. As Gidley identified of the East London immigrant communities he studied, "…diasporic memories were woven into the day-to-day… the memory of these contexts remained a living memory, nurtured in a number of material forms" (Gidley, 2013b: 651; see also Deleuze [1988] regarding the coexistence of the past and present in communal narratives; and Spickard [2005] on the interplay between experience and ritual). Stories of past persecution are woven into this, though more explicitly perhaps for the Amish groups. In addition to quasi-mythical ('non-experienced') stories of where the communities come from and the journey taken, more micro ('experienced') narratives of the individual communities circulate, though in a way at times owned by boundary-keepers and reflective of the hierarchies of belonging discussed in the previous chapter.

These might be termed 'experienced' and 'non-experienced narratives'. The 'non-experienced' being those stories that have circulated in the community for generations, centuries or indeed millennia, but were not experienced by any current members or their direct predecessors. These are often stories of persecution and exile experienced by communal ancestors hundreds, if not thousands, of years earlier. The 'experienced' narrative is the story of the more recent past, in the living memory of members about the emergence of their particular community, be it a new Amish church district in recent years or the founding of the Jewish group approximately two decades ago. These tell stories of coming together, community building endeavours, and more personal experiences within the building and maintenance of the community, that have taken place within the lifetime of members.

2.1 Non-Experienced Narratives: The Retelling of Exile

Non-experienced narratives tell stories central to the community, that occurred many generations or centuries ago and that serve a vital role by being retold. Narratives of persecution and exile circulate throughout both communities. The diasporic, exilic roots of the Jewish and Amish communities were in part the motivation for their choice as a case study for this research, for the potential to examine the imagination of community as it persists in late/liquid modernity. It speaks to a past uprootedness still pertinent in a contemporary world conceptualised as itself disembedding (as discussed in Chapter Five and the literature outlined in Chapter Two on diaspora and narrative construction). This section suggests that these narratives, whilst not universally shared by community members, nevertheless hold an important role of rooting these two groups that have complex understandings and

constructions of home, and that in so doing, they contribute to the persistence of the communities.

For the Jewish group, these originate from as far back as Biblical and Temple periods and are referenced in liturgy and the commentaries of the Torah (Old Testament and the later compendium of Rabbinic thought, the Talmud) and the subsequent period (Schama, 2013). Exile from Babylon (as relayed in the often-recited Psalm 127 – *By the Rivers of Babylon*, referred to in Chapter Two), following the destruction of the first Temple, appears throughout liturgy as recited in most Jewish communities, in all prayer services (Wettstein, 2002). The Amish story of persecution dates from its separation from the European Protestant and Catholic churches, told in liturgy and recorded in personal stories dating back to the sixteenth century. Found on the majority of Amish bookshelves (and other Anabaptists') is a tome called *The Martyrs Mirror* (also known as *The Bloody Theatre*, or *Martyrer Spiegel* in German; Kraybill et al, 2013). This book chronicles the stories of the often violent persecution of Amish and other Anabaptists in Europe (Weaver-Zercher, 2016). The stories are well known and possession of the book is assumed for most Amish people.

Annie, an Amish woman in her sixties, speaks of owning the 'Martyrs Mirror'. She recalls the stories being told at her children's school, with excerpts appearing in textbooks and children's reading books. This is one example amongst many that reveals the centrality of this book within Amish homes, though Annie concludes: "In our homes we all have them, but we don't really read them". Thus, this example also reflects that there are many Amish people that struggle with *The Martyrs Mirror*, its readability and content. The symbol has remained, but the meaning is perhaps lost. Indeed, some, like Rebecca, question its relevance in the present day,

> "Well, I'd love to tell you they [young people] do [read *The Martyrs Mirror*]. But probably not. *The Martyrs Mirror* is, sometimes I hate to think how much we are like the Catholics. You know, we broke away from the Catholics because of infant baptism and things, but a lot of these old, like the *Ausbund* [prayer book] and *The Martyrs Mirror* and those, they're almost more like a relic of history and I think very few of our people, our young people especially, even crack *The Martyrs Mirror*. Maybe more of them, of the conservative ones would than would the group of people I know. It is still precious. I mean, these books are all very precious."

Some feel discomfort or a lack of familiarity with the details surrounding the stories within *The Martyrs Mirror*. For instance, Mandy, a young woman working in a traditional Amish quilt shop, expressed unease when asked about the stories and instead pointed to the regional Amish information centre as a source of this information. Here, several of those interviewed seemed to feel greater ownership of the narrative or to feel equipped to speak about Amish people, again relaying hierarchies of belonging (and knowledge) explored in Chapter Five (as well as limited formal education of religious texts). Daniel, a former member of the Amish explained his frustration regarding the degrees of confidence in telling the Amish story. He shared that,

> "I have no access to my story and I'm scripted out of it and it's actively taken away from me. I'm not allowed to play in the sandbox of my own reality."

The reflective nature of Daniel's statement may be attributable to his experience of life and education outside of the Amish community since he left and one must be cautious in suggesting that this is a widely held notion for the Amish. However, in this case it reveals that

the narratives associated with his Amish identity are both fixed and held by others. Implied in Daniel's account is that he can neither tell the story, nor 'play'/actively engage with it. Thus, from this perspective, the reproduction of community takes place through narratives that are held elsewhere and seem to be relayed effectively enough to resonate with Amish people, though not necessarily to inspire a sense of ownership over it.

Sarah-Jane expressed concern that Amish people "don't know where they came from", explaining that "they don't read *The Martyrs Mirror*". Others expressed an awareness of this lack of connection with the founding story of the Amish (explored previously), believing this gap to be exploited by Evangelical Christian groups in order to encourage young Amish people to leave their churches. John, a liberal Amish business owner, had taken it upon himself in part as a response to this, to create an interactive exhibition on Anabaptist history, partly so that Anabaptists and predominantly Amish people can learn their own history and in part to educate others. The exhibition uses hi-tech reflective screens and artwork from an Amish artist, in a convergence of contemporary technology and a long-held narrative. Films include an actress (who is Amish-Mennonite) telling the first-hand story of the journey from Europe to America. This, and many other stories in the exhibition, are drawn from *The Martyrs Mirror*, in a retelling of a foundational narrative using modern means. It is too early in the exhibition's development to ascertain responses to this. Its emergence, however, points to the gap that some Amish people are identifying in terms of familiarity with founding communal stories and that the format of *The Martyrs Mirror* is no longer sufficiently engaging to relay its content.

Non-experienced narratives for the Jewish community were rarely discussed explicitly, and where persecution was referenced, it was mostly in relation to communal decline, discussed below. However, as explored in Chapter Four, liturgy has experienced little change for the Jewish group and this liturgy refers often to notions of return and exile. In the formation of new structures, liberal social values and centring on shared musicality, ancient narratives of loss, disembedding and yearning persist. The liturgy, as discussed previously with reference to non-negotiable boundaries (Chapter Four), is central to communal boundary-keeping, and whilst not expressed explicitly, it is difficult to refute the importance, the communal significance and performative nature of recitations of these narratives on a weekly (if not more regular) basis (see Winter, 2010 on the performance of communal histories). Added to this, educational content explored during congregant-led sermons at Sabbath services reference themes in the weekly Torah (Old Testament) readings. Examinations of themes of dislocation were apparent, including the Israelite exodus from Egypt and the biblical character Abraham's journey to new lands. As in many synagogues, these themes of disembedding experiences are drawn on in communal discussions and actions (explored below), for example with refugees and other marginalised groups. More overtly discussed for the Jewish group was the story of the community's founding, explored in the next section.

The importance of founding or 'non-experienced' narratives is well noted in the literature (for instance Hall, 1990; Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; Gilroy, 1993; Brah, 1996; Cohen, 1997). What is noteworthy here are the ways in which these narratives are deployed and enable the reproduction of these communities under contemporary modern conditions. The examples of John's Amish exhibition and Daniel's loss of ownership over the Amish story, perhaps illustrates that the retelling of these stories is central to Amish identity, yet the means of retelling them are no longer appropriate for this time. In the case of the Jewish community, the opposite might be observed. That despite social innovations and other adaptations to communal practice (turned to earlier in this chapter) the non-experienced narratives continue

to be told through at times ancient means. The relationship to specific communal narratives (i.e. church district and synagogue community) plays out differently, and more tangibly, in these communities, as is explored forthwith.

2.2 Experienced Narratives: Deploying Shared Experiences

Experienced narratives tell a more recent story, present in communal discourse, rather than more distant, abstract allusions. They have been experienced either by members of the community directly or within their lifetimes. Such narratives explain how specific communities or church districts came about and contribute to the formation of present communal identities (see Redclift [2016] for a discussion of recent diasporic experiences of the 'Bihari' community). A key example is when an Amish church district divides into two. Splits within Amish communities, as explored previously, whereby one church district becomes two separate churches, based on a disagreement regarding new rulings, are far more characteristic of conservative groups, particularly in more remote rural areas. For the more conservative members then, these narratives of separating and re-forming were often within their lifetimes and impact the 'type' of Amish person they described themselves as e.g. Renno, Nebraska or Peachey Amish (Hostetler, 1993). For liberal Amish churches, these narratives are more historical, for example in their grandparents' time, and indeed can be seen as in part the cause of current toleration and flexibility in order to avoid further division (see Chapter Four).

The example earlier in this chapter, of splits in Amish communities, offers another insight into experienced narratives and identity construction. Katie, a mother of five in her late twenties, described her commitment to her church, framing her identity as a particular type of Amish, rather than expressing a commonality with the Amish more broadly. In a discussion of what being Amish meant to her, for instance, she focussed on elements that distinguished her group from other Amish groups,

> "We're the highest [most liberal] church here. We have less than forty families… We don't have singings 'cos there aren't enough young people in the church… Our buggies [horse-drawn carts] have lights… We've got no bishop right now, not for two years."

Katie described that her telephone is in her kitchen, unlike others who have an outside 'shanty' and explained her acceptance of the use of curtains in her home. She was open too about the disadvantages of this small community, such as her son having to find marriage partners beyond their church "up the valley". Katie's story, drawing on reasons for the communal splits and differentiating features of her community as against others in Holly County, reveal the significance of experienced narratives in identity formation and boundary-keeping, impacting the importance of practice and the narratives that enshrine their development and persistence.

The two forms of narrative (non-experienced and experienced) are not necessarily distinct. Within a conversation with Esther, an Amish grandmother, a complex dynamic emerged, connecting the non-experienced historic persecution catalysing immigration to the United States (US), with experienced discrimination within living memory in the US,

> "Yeah, I think they still in their hearts say they love martyrdom and they, I think they choose to feel that they *must* be different or they won't make it to heaven. Yeah. Oh yeah, I know there's plenty of people who feel that way. History is very important to the Amish. Hmm. And I think they feel that, you know, to truly carry out their Amishness, they must have a sense of being persecuted. Although we certainly are *not*

persecuted. I would not, I mean, my mother says – and she's a wise old lady – she says that prosperity is more harmful than persecution would ever be. My mother says she remembers well going to town and being spit on, 'ever like blacks'."

For Esther, the non-experienced quasi-folklore of the stories of *The Martyrs Mirror* enables a distinct Amish identity to persist, in which persecution becomes a continual frame of reference, even where the more concrete threat appears to be "prosperity". This is interwoven too with the experienced narrative of discrimination.

Other stories persist about recent, experienced struggles. In the 1950s, Amish parents and leaders resisted a ruling requiring children to stay in school past eighth grade (aged 14/15). Many Amish families kept their children off school, often resulting in arrest and imprisonment, until a law was passed exempting Amish young people from school past eighth grade (Kraybill et al., 2013). This period was often referenced, for instance at a dinner party in which an Amish artist in her sixties recalled that "If you didn't send your kids to school, you went to jail", as her father did on two occasions. It was a turning point in Amish engagement with the state and the narrative is thus deployed frequently in other conflicts with local and national officials, such as attaching lights to horse-drawn carts for safety, or Social Security exemption on ideological grounds.

The role of narrative deployment in maintaining community under fluid conditions is thus twofold. It holds an otherwise potentially disparate group of people together in a shared story (enabling persistence) and simultaneously differentiates the group from 'the outside'. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, it can have the added effect of delineating levels of belonging based on who holds these narratives. This is particularly the case for experienced narratives, i.e. stories told about the construction of the community or sub-community within living memory.

The Jewish community is approximately two decades old. Members who were not around at its founding, even where they may now be considered part of the 'core group', are less cognisant of the story of how the community came about and about early negotiations around inclusion and practice. Whilst founding members could relay in detail the motivations for the community, its evolution and growth, others including long-term members, struggled to recount much of this. When asked, responses from members ranged from, "I genuinely don't really know about how it came about", "So this is what I know, because I sort of only started coming maybe 9/10 years ago, and it's sort of what filtered down", to "I was involved somewhat on the periphery in the very early days, so I don't know how much of the story I can accurately convey. I can tell you my impression." The (non-)sharing of the story is not an intentional omission. However, from the varying levels of familiarity with and ownership of this narrative, from those who hold the experienced narrative to those who are largely unaware of it, one is presented with hierarchies of belonging in much the same way as those explored in Chapter Five. Nonetheless, for boundary-makers this shared experience is a binding one, reinforcing communal networks and in part enabling the dynamism inherent within the founding story to transfer to the younger generation, as was discussed in the previous section.

2.3 Discourses of Rise and Decline

A further discourse that pervades both the community literature and to an extent, communities themselves, is that of community's 'rise' and 'decline'. As explored in the introductory chapter, scholars of community have long been preoccupied with the

weakening, re-emergence and growth of community (for instance Putnam, 2000: Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012; Redclift, 2016; Blokland, 2018). Within the Amish and Jewish communities too, these conversations and concerns circulate in various forms.

Daniel, the former Amish member discussed in previous chapters, explains the history of the Amish in the context of a schism around the American Civil War during which, he asserts, "two-thirds assimilated into the Mennonite dominant culture". He describes how he sees this fear of losing members through 'assimilation' connected to enduring narratives of decline, referring to church leaders' deployment of this narrative,

> "They said: 'See – you can't do this if you in any way participate and do anything other than absolute, total acquiescence to authority of the Church, If you don't do that, you become Mennonite and then you become something else'. And that dynamic has defined who today's Amish are. It defines what the struggles are and it forms all of the issues that today's Amish, that like makes them who they are, what their issues are and what their trajectory is, where they're at in terms of being progressive… the rejection of education was about that, they successfully – that be to some degree – were able to keep the world at bay and kind of control what their adherents think and how they talk about things."

He talks of ministers warning that changes in practice will lead to a loss of identity: "this sort of corruption of – there's no cohesive whole to hold you together anymore, there's nothing to fall back on because there's nothing there." This fear of the loss of the cohesive frame, through the deployment of narratives and the withdrawal of engagement with wider society, binds the communities. Though, Daniel observes that this may not be a long-term solution, that it relies on tools of reproducing community that may eventually demobilise communal identity through a lack of knowledge and intellectual engagement. Whilst, as stated previously, the concerns of someone who has chosen to leave the community may not represent that of those who are still within the church, there was anxiety expressed too by existing members regarding the pull of the 'outside world' and the need to keep members within communal boundaries.

In a different but related vein, Jewish members articulated uncertainty about both the potential to lose young members and the impact of growth on the nature of the community, combining narratives of both decline and growth. Joseph exemplifies this fear,

> "I wouldn't underestimate what growing has meant, because I think it has diluted the intensity… when we were first going, there would not be more than twenty or thirty people, all singing very loudly with their children on their laps, and now it's a very, it's very different now."

This almost mournful nostalgia for a smaller, more intimate community expresses a simultaneous rise in communal numbers alongside what appears for Joseph to be a resultant decline in community feeling. The nostalgic leanings that circulate within the more abstract non-experienced narratives described earlier operate on a micro level, towards a more recent comfort. In both cases, the present fairs less well than notions of a more perfect past (see for instance Bauman, 2000). In addition, apparently contradictory accounts of rising numbers are juxtaposed against a sense of wider insecurity (Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012). There is thus a twofold discourse that circulates in both the Jewish and Amish communities. One for which anxiety emerges around the impact of growth (or outside influences) on the content of community and the other is the enduring fear of loss of membership, expressions of both rise

and decline causing communal fears. Within this context, narratives about the community's direction can serve to unify in a common cause and shared concern, driving a perpetuation of communal activity, and drawing on shared understandings via 'framing' past experiences of loss (Redclift, 2016).

As explored in Chapter Two, narratives and practices operate within a dialectical relationship, forming, reconstructing and reimagining each other. As such, this chapter will now turn to acts of shared communal practice. The forms that such activity takes will be explored in the context of 'doing' community together.

3. Shared 'Doing': Weaving the Fabric of Community

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the membership of the case study communities is diverse, comprising differing levels of belonging and with members representing a broad variety of observances, beliefs, opinions, interests and personalities. Whilst boundary-keeping processes (explored in Chapter Four) can enable a degree of persistence in such groups, this section argues that 'doing' together i.e. carrying out actions with others in the community, is necessary for communal coherence and continuity. Neal et al's (2018) work on conviviality in three British cities highlights the significance of shared action as a binding force across difference. So too for Blokland (2018), the 'performance' of community emerges as an area significant of study to better understand and conceptualise community in urban spaces. Ritual religious practice in religion-oriented diasporic communities can be regarded as sites of 'doing' together, though this 'doing' is likewise performed through social and other activities discussed below. It is this shared activity that centres 'human action' as a tool of the reproduction of community (Shove et al, 2012; see also May 2011; Ryan, 2018).

Shared 'doing' was at the core of the way in which many members spoke of their communities and was observed in social, religious, charitable, educational and other environments, knitting communities together through collective volunteer work, prayer, learning, eating and the like. The presence of belief *per se,* whilst an important locus for religion-oriented diasporic communities such as these, is arguably not sufficient to enable communal persistence in the context of so much choice. Added to this, as Lee (2005) explores (see Chapter Two), congregants within a community of rituals may well not share the same beliefs or interpretation of rituals and symbols (see also Blokland, 2018).

This section therefore focusses on how 'doing' together weaves the fabric of community, binding individuals and families into a communal entity. It first explores 'doing' in the social sense, particularly in the form of charity, eating and learning. This 'social doing' refers to those areas that for many in the Amish and Jewish communities construct their congregation as a fully encompassing community, not purely based on religious ritual and belief. These activities may relate to the religion-oriented principles of the community, but essentially pervade daily life, in terms of being there for each other in times of need and for mundane, everyday coming together. In closing, this section shifts focus to a more explicitly religion-oriented form of 'doing', shared spirituality and prayer. As this research began to explore in Chapter Five, with regards to social networks, by bringing together debates around communal, religious and social shared action, community formation and persistence for these types of traditional communities can be understood more broadly than in terms of religious practices alone. This overview will begin by looking at coming together in charity and volunteer work.

3.1 Charity and Volunteering as Communal Endeavours

For the Amish community, 'Amish Aid', a form of communal insurance in place of Social Security, offers financial benefit as well as social support to community members in need (Kraybill et al., 2013). The Amish are legally exempted from paying social security, due to their belief that the community should support itself and one another. This shared investment of inputting monthly or annually into the communal kitty binds the community together in a common fate. For instance, if a member is unwell or involved in an accident, funds will be taken from the church district's reserves to pay for medical bills. When medical bills exceed funds available, community members come together to hold large auctions and other fundraisers to meet costs. The 'barn raisings' that loom large in the popular imagination (during which men from a community come together to build large wooden barns for a fellow congregant in a day) are now less common, as many liberal Amish people do not require the manpower due to their acceptance of battery powered tools (Hostetler, 1993). Though still a feature of more remote, conservative communities, the shared 'doing' involved in erecting a barn together is replaced by the act of donating goods and fundraising for the local Amish Aid, as Jonah, a local Amish businessman describes,

> "Yuh, well usually the most popular expression of mutual aid – I mean of helping each other in times of need – was, like say, the barn raising. If you needed a barn built, you invited your neighbours and you built a barn, or a house or whatever it may be. Nowadays with hospital bills – somebody has hospital bills that they're having difficulties paying for or some sort of need, what they'll do is they'll hold what they call a benefit auction – you know, everybody brings something and donates and then the auction is off, and there's always lots of food there and then the proceeds go to the party in need. And there's dozens of them, well, yeah, there's a dozen of 'em every month."

Naomi, an Amish woman relays her experience of Amish Aid, in a dual illustration of shared social 'doing'. She describes a fire that in recent years destroyed her home. It was members of the local Amish community who rushed to the house to extinguish the fire. Following the incident, congregants then cleared the debris from the house and helped to rebuild it, housing her and the elderly woman she cared for, for several months in the meantime. In another display of communal support, the elderly woman had come to her some years earlier after Naomi offered to look after her, as there were no living relatives to do so. When the house was rebuilt, local Amish women made quilts, donated clothes and built furniture for the two women. This show of communal assistance is commonplace across the Amish denominations. It connects members together and offers a safety net.

For the Jewish group, coming together on volunteer projects within a larger Jewish community offers a sense of purpose, a route to belonging and an antidote to an impersonal urban environment. In addition to supporting external communities in need (e.g. asylum seekers, the homeless), voluntary projects provide assistance to the elderly and others who articulate that this support structure is vital to them within the community, and would thus make leaving an unattractive prospect. This member, Ilana, reflects,

> "It's like a family. I know if I need anything, if I lose a parent or I'm ill, there will be someone to help out, to bring food or be there, that kind of thing. It makes me feel looked after, I think it makes me feel secure."

Volunteering also involves giving time to enable the running of services and related events. This sense of shared endeavour through giving time freely so that the community can continue to function means that many members feel invested in the community and bound with its fate.

For both the Amish and the Jewish communities, the assistance – emotional or practical – offered in times of need is a draw to the community, and indeed “support”, “aid” and “knowing someone will be there” was offered by members of both communities as their primary motivation for remaining members. The anxieties surrounding a life without such support is articulated in sufficiently strong terms as to be a major motivation for remaining within the respective communities. Combined with the solidarity produced by these shared actions, leaving the community represents a loss of real or ‘ontological’ security for many of these members.

3.2 Communal Meals and Eating Together

There is a significant literature on the sociology of food (with regards to community, see for example: Fischler [1988] on the evolutionary roots of food practices; James and Curtis [2010] on family practices; Hughes [2019] on communal resilience and food; though Beardsworth and Keil [1990] criticise the relatively under-researched area of food as it relates to ‘human action and experience’). Hughes suggests that “celebrating with food at festivals reinstates a connection to home and facilitates the continuation of traditions and rituals” (2019: 301). For the Amish, eating lunch together after Sunday worship is part of the process of ‘fellowship’ and is a central tenet of communal life (Kraybill et al., 2013). The whole community comes together at a member’s home, contributes food and shares news of the week with one another. As well as acting as a tool of communal binding, the strict rules regarding who can dine together can also act as a means of exclusion and at times ostracisation.

There are two main contexts in which Amish people describe the significance of eating together. One is practical, in terms of the community being akin to family, in which everyone prays together on a Sunday and then eats together, hosted by a community member. Whilst some spoke about this with a degree of anxiety of hosting thirty or more families, many enjoyed this ritual. The other way in which eating together manifests in the communal imagination is discussed by members (and former members) in terms of its exclusionary potential i.e. when people are not permitted to share meals with the community. Caleb, an organic farmer referenced earlier, who only feeds his child home-grown organic produce (to mitigate against allergies), relayed the suspicion with which they were held when they did not partake of the communal meals. He describes that church members “found it strange” that his daughter did not eat with them after church. He spoke of this driving a wedge between his family and the wider community.

Those who have been excommunicated from the church are not permitted to share a meal, though this rule is enacted with variation across denominations. The father that was excommunicated when he married a non-Amish woman (described in the previous chapter), was not permitted to eat with the community. A more liberal Amish member, Lydia, relayed that, “at a family get together you probably would eat cafeteria style, you wouldn’t sit at the same table” as excommunicated members. Whereas Amos, a bishop of a strict group explained, “They can’t eat together or invite excommunicated people over” and Beth, a woman who left a moderately conservative Amish church, explained that when she returned to her parents’ home subsequent to leaving, her parents “would not touch me or share a meal together”.

The centrality of Amish meals has become part of the story many Amish people tell about themselves to non-Amish. In tourist areas of Pennsylvania, Amish owned, staffed and Amish themed restaurants are an important part of the economy. On several occasions, Amish women opened their homes for meals as part of this research, many of them for a fee as it is their primary source of income. The everyday act of eating for the Amish therefore takes on wider implications. These meals, and the execution of rules relating to them, become both sites of boundary-maintenance and acts of communal reproduction. The retention of these traditions enables a sense of regularity and rootedness, and arguably contrasts the hectic Amish working week, in which members can find it difficult to convene.

The Jewish group's approach to shared meals can be viewed in two distinct time periods. When the group was small, informal and without a fixed meeting place, shared meals were a significant part of the communal experience, following on from prayer services, much like for the Amish, but on a smaller scale. Hannah recalls, "We had all our meals together and all of our *davening* [praying] together. They were extraordinarily intense experiences". For some, such as Abby, a shared meal, as with shared prayer, is synonymous with community,

> "There was a big debate about whether or not we also wanted to have meals on a regular basis, so obviously I did because I didn't have a family. I had parents [far away], but I wanted to have a Shabbat community, you know."

The 'doing' of meals together for Abby becomes a construction of home in the absence of family. Others, in the initial months of the community's development, viewed the social side of the shared meals as a potential distraction from the goal of coming together to pray and advance religious proficiency. Laura recalls,

> "…we abandoned the meal thing because it was too much work and it was attracting people that wanted a social life but didn't, you know, people sort of turning up after the service had finished for the food."

To some degree, this different approach echoes the hierarchies that emerged in the early years of the group. Decades later, there are periodic shared meals for the whole community, to which members are invited to contribute. More significantly, smaller informal gatherings for meals after Sabbath services have allowed for the emergence of subgroups, networks and strengthened social connections, as Benjamin reflects,

> "I certainly remember spending a lot of time in [a founder]'s flat for meals and all that sort of stuff. And then there are people I think who have met through the *shul* [synagogue] and have become quite close outside of [the community] as well, you know, going to each other's homes for Shabbat meals and that sort of thing, who are another sub-community."

This 'doing' together of communal and smaller meals, along with other shared social acts, strengthens the communities, taking them from congregations at prayer services to a community of social interaction. They act as sites of bonding, taking the community from one of praying together, to one of 'doing' together. These acts strengthen bonds between members, enabling a more robust coherence of community and sense of shared being. As with the Amish groups, eating together also offers a changing pace from a frenetic, often urban and impersonal, working week. Such spaces, constructed through eating together following praying, provide a solidity to the communities, perhaps minimising the impacts of wider changes that surround them.

3.3 Learning Together

Chapter Five discussed religious proficiency as a (hierarchied) route to belonging in the case of the Jewish community. Additionally, earlier in this chapter, the role of education in communal persistence is examined, for the Amish as a home-based experience and for the Jewish community, as a proactive communal project, both entailing a degree of innovation. The act of learning together can also be regarded as a shared endeavour, a form of 'doing' that connects members to one another. This learning in the case of Amish communities happens on a family level. The Jewish group is part of a wider community which offers numerous forms of informal and formalised learning on religious and cultural topics. It is arguably the less formal, practical style of learning religious practice through enacting it that binds this specific community.

As discussed in the previous chapter, learning as a community is one of the founding principles of the Jewish group. David relays the shared nature of this learning venture,

> "I think there was this idea of learning from the beginning... I think it was about people having an opportunity to learn some of the skills that they didn't have in sort of practice – like a real opportunity to do that within a community. Everyone needed to learn something and therefore we needed to be a learning community in order to enable that to happen."

He mentions learning as a key facet of the communal identity recurrently and believes it is a feature that has "held the community together". Likewise, Janice, a founding member recalls,

> "We always used to talk about learning, cos learning was something that we were pretty interested in. I mean, there've been an awful lot of rabbis gone through the place. People who've ultimately become rabbis."

However, despite the identity of the community as one focussed on learning, as it has matured, one can question whether the expectation is on the individual taking responsibility for their own learning, as opposed to it being a communal activity. For instance, those who became rabbis, learn outside of the group context.

Initially, as Janice recollects, the act of learning was a group experience and involved experimental techniques, such as storytelling, and a shared sense of innovation,

> "And what's happened over time is that it's sort of gone back to – and although they're different topics and different people do it – it's gone back to quite a standard format in terms of the *Dvar Torah* [speaking about the Torah] as opposed to an interactive session or a dramatic drama-based, the sort of things to do with, you know, drama."

In practice, this means that the learning slot in the middle of the Saturday service involves a member talking from notes on a key theme from the week, generally related to the portion of the Torah being read in the service, rather than participative or creative attempts at relaying values within that week's stories that were attempted two decades previously. Educational content is still, therefore, at the centre of the community, though there is arguably in more recent years less of a shared learning experience than in the early years of the Jewish community.

For the Amish, learning together as families, rather than as a community as a whole, draws a strong connection linking the family unit with the church, enacted through everyday rituals at home. Gaby, an Amish woman in her seventies, reminisces that when her father had a

farm, they sat round the table for prayers and read the Bible as a family. She described this mealtime ritual as a primary means of religious instruction for young people outside of school and after (often hard to grasp) church sermons (see Chapter Four). It is a long-held ritual, but one that has been compromised in many cases by changing work patterns in which the father no longer works in a family-owned farm and the mother often works at least one job. For the Amish, this begins to place a yet greater significance on the shared experience of church, which is explored below in reference to shared spirituality and prayer.

3.4 'Doing' Spirituality Together

There is an extensive literature within the sociology of religion around the relative importance of belief, versus belonging, within religion-oriented communities (for example Durkheim, 1915; Geertz, 1973; Smart, 1998; Day, 2011). The experience of coming together in prayer and spirituality is explored here as a means of maintaining community intensity. Whilst belief for many is a driving force, there is a sense, especially for the Jewish community, that praying together in a communal setting transcends belief and is rather an act of 'being' and 'doing' together.

In both communities, religious services offer a spiritual experience that contrasts with fast-paced daily life. Most notably, this spirituality emerges out of communal, rather than individual worship. Music and singing liturgy together play a key role in this shared feeling in each community, both within services and at times outside of a place of worship. In Amish church services, which take place in members' barns, the singing of hymns from the *Ausbund* prayer book involves singing and harmonising in unison, which appears much like a choir. It is a communal effort, with men and women at times taking different parts to achieve complex harmonies. The effect is a spiritual experience, linked to religious imagery, as well as the narratives of persecution described in the previous section. There is a unifying aspect to the service beyond a particular church district. Amish members from a variety of denominations articulated the uniformity of the order of service and the use of the *Ausbund* regardless of church. Lydia described that "we all sing the *Loblied* ['Hymn of Praise'] for the second song in every service and the pattern in the church services is identical".

As discussed in reference to youth, creating spiritual spaces through singing together is a feature of the Amish carried through to the next generation. Sunday evening 'singings' merge the social with the spiritual. An opportunity to meet future spouses and be distracted from non-Amish influences, these events form a foundation for early Amish adulthood. Katie, from a church district that has limited numbers due to a recent communal split expressed her concern that her eldest son would struggle to find a spouse, as "we don't have 'singings' for our young people as there aren't enough young people in the church, so the youth have no means of dating". The space created by 'doing' spirituality together becomes a stage on which lifecycle events and rituals are played out.

For the Jewish community, music has also become a means through which to enact spirituality together. Spirituality in services, particularly attained through singing together, was a notable feature of the community from its founding. The group's experience of the spiritual can be seen too in the creation of a space, one separate from mundane weekly events, in which support can be provided for different life events. Hannah articulates that the founders were aspiring to a "style of service that would involve people", "that would be spiritually uplifting". The comfort provided by the spiritual musicality of the community is a feature that attracted many members since its inception. It speaks to Giddens (1991) notion of 'ontological security' in that it provides a nurturing, warm space, distinct in content from the chaotic urban world

around it. Estie, a former member, who attended services in the community's early years recalls,

> "I mean, the music was just beautiful, really inspiring, and the more so for being home-made. It had this sense of being home-made. Authentic, that was very very important and I think, I think it is fair to say that it has become, it remains my model for healthy, a healthy community."

Despite growth, this intensity present at the beginning persists, including for those members who joined in more recent years. Danielle finds that in the space created in a weekly Sabbath service, "you can just have a good sing and, like, feel part, you know, feel part of something". Significant in the context of a frenetic city, she attributes this to the focus within the room, brought about by singing together,

> "…and no one's really chatting, like everyone's into it. You know, they've not just gone there to catch up with their friends, they're actually there because they want be there and be praying and stuff."

This shared spirituality for many individual members becomes part of a complex interplay of (un)belief, varied observance and 'doing' together. Emma explains,

> "I'm not a religious person at all and I do have a kind of inherent belief in God… and I do find myself occasionally wanting to speak to some higher being about something or, you know, and I find that the music, the kind of quality of the music and the quality of the singing in the service takes me nearer to that place."

Richard shares,

> "Sometimes I like praying and sometimes there is a genuine, I'm not much of a believer, but sometimes there's a genuine spirituality when people pray together and you feel like a community praying together."

According to its members, this community is somewhat unique in providing a space for people expressing varied levels of both personal belief, home practice and communal participation. The experience of the spiritual space, created by music, is arguably a major feature which allows the coming together of these potentially disparate members. This has the impact of not only binding members together, but also offering solace in difficult times. Miriam, who joined a few years previously explained the support garnered from the construction of this communal space,

> "And then my dad – my mum died – found himself going because he found the service more, I don't know, meaningful, more spiritual, more musical, yeah it just kind of lifted him to a place that he wanted to be taken to at that point."

The spiritual feeling created by the coming together of this group takes on a tangible feature for members. The sense of grounding and fulfilment received by this is an incentive to continue to participate, regardless of personal belief or religious observance. It thus enables the reproduction of community by incentivising continual attendance based on the emotions engendered by the experience of creating a spiritual space together. 'Doing' spirituality together for this group therefore serves several roles. It enables individuals to connect to the communal story, build a shared space that transcends difference through the intensity of the music and provides comfort during times of loss or other difficulty. Taken alongside other forms of 'doing' together illustrated in this section, in terms of volunteering, eating, learning

and being spiritual together, sociality and shared action can be seen as actively binding the community (Shove et al, 2012; Neal et al, 2018). Community can thus be understood here as persisting beyond structures, beliefs, history and norms and as sited too in the constantly shifting processes of acting together. This vibrancy challenges notions of the fixity of tradition and demonstrates that such communities can be thriving, adaptable entities, rather than immovable and solid, allowing their persistence and reproduction over time, even amongst a backdrop of fluidity and flux.

Conclusion

The reproduction of community enables its persistence, but community's reproduction does not equate to it remaining the same (Gilroy, 1997). Indeed, the reverse can be argued, that the more open to adaptation, the more resilient the community. As has been illustrated with reference to a new generation of members, openness to innovation, both radical and seemingly subtle, results in a community that continues to be relevant to young adherents. Creative interplays of narratives, both deeply historical/mythical and those within living memory, further bind community in a shared endeavour. Though this manifests with differing levels of success within the Jewish community, based on levels of belonging and length of membership and within the Amish based on knowledge of founding stories and engagement with more recent narratives of church subdivisions. Finally, 'doing' together sites community-making in actions and interactions, such as volunteering, eating, learning and singing together. This allows traditional communities, particularly those with a religion-oriented diasporic locus, to be understood beyond belief and religious ritual, as communities of 'human action' (Shove et al, 2012), shared endeavour and solidarities.

This understanding of community-making and reproduction does not propose that each of these practices of community are deliberate and with purpose, but rather reflects on the many threads that come together to enable communities such as these to persist amongst fluidity. Indeed, in some examples, such as with young people's adaptations, for instance, these communal elements are themselves fluid, positioning these communities as *of*, rather than distinct *from* the fluid contemporary context. Whilst one might argue that the change itself is a de-traditionalising and destabilising process, the retention of membership, members wishing to act within the community frameworks and the persistence of communal endeavours, can be recast as the endurance of tradition through adaptability.

The picture that emerges encompasses the personal and the social, reflective spirituality and action, securing and flexing of boundaries, transferring the old and innovating the new. Gaining insights into the application of these 'tools' by members and boundary-makers offers a greater understanding of the enactment of identity and community boundary-making under contemporary modern conditions. It challenges those that posit tradition as monolithic, distant and fixed, whilst unsettling commonly held notions of community rising and community lost. These case studies enable an exploration of the intersection of notions of community, religion and diaspora, and brings these into view in a contemporary modern context. This offers the opportunity to view the coming together of future generations, communal narratives and action as tools of reproducing community, all elements of a complex and moving pattern that enables communal persistence.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Introduction

Tradition and traditional communities i.e. those which epitomise features such as past connections and shared practice, have been conceptualised by some social theorists as unchanging, from another time and place outside of late/liquid/second/hyper/reflexive modernity (e.g. Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000; Scott and Lash, 2003; Beck and Grande, 2010). The Amish and Jewish case studies have been taken as two examples of traditional communities, to explore how tradition and the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity relate. These communities were termed in the opening of this thesis as religion-oriented diasporic communities and are of interest for their (self-)definition as traditional, their religious-locus that is reflected in communal practices and the exilic narratives that connect them to their diasporic roots. The focus on these two communities was for the purposes of understanding a variety of negotiations with contemporary modernity, as opposed to a comparative exercise, although some elements of comparison were inevitable given the focus on their relationalities to modernity. Further understanding the case study communities presents the opportunity to challenge binary ideas of late/liquid modernity versus tradition. In so doing, they offer a vehicle for this research to ascertain how communities conceptualised as traditional negotiate the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity, explored by addressing the following research questions:

- How can the boundary-keeping processes and practices of belonging of traditional, religion-oriented diasporic communities be understood in the context of contemporary modernity?
- To what extent and in what ways are communal boundaries and belonging negotiated and adapted?
- What can the experiences of boundary-keeping, belonging and practices in these communities tell us about the nature of contemporary modernity?

In answering these questions, this project sought to contest dichotomisations in the literature outlined in Chapter Two, that posit tradition and contemporary modernity in opposition to each other, characterising the former as fixed, distant and pre-modern and the latter as fluid, dynamic and adaptive. Using empirical findings with the Amish and Jewish religion-oriented diasporic communities allowed for tradition to be explored as lived experience.

This research does not conveniently map onto a particular field of sociological study and thus brings together empirical and theoretical works from the fields of community, tradition, diasporas, religion and contemporary modern theory. By bringing these fields into conversation, empirical findings from the case study communities can benefit from insights bridging transpatial identities, rituals, narrative construction, communal structures, norms and values, factors that can become siloed within different sociological disciplines. In addressing the research questions through the case study findings, three key themes emerged; boundaries and boundary-keeping processes, belonging as varied and fluctuating and the adaptive role of practice and narratives in communal persistence. Bringing the community and other literatures (tradition, diasporas, religion, modernity) into dialogue with each other enables these three areas to be explored in a multidimensional way.

This thesis has been structured by exploring boundaries, belonging and practice sequentially through observations and the stories shared by communal members and former members.

However, these 'elements' of community are not mutually exclusive. The literatures outlined above, alongside methodological considerations, laid the framework for investigating these communities. Tailored methodological approaches were required and adapted throughout, particularly in terms of ethical considerations and positionality that were unique to these communities and my research position in relation to them (discussed further below).

This chapter will start by providing a brief overview of the findings, before returning to the research questions and the three themes of community identified above, that address the questions posed at the start of this thesis. This will be followed by an assessment of the implications of these findings, how they relate to the literature and what contribution this research makes to related fields. Addressing the limitations of the research will then lead to the opportunity to consider further research, which is of interest in the changing context of Covid-19 and the effect this has had on in-person communal activities.

1. Overview of the Research

Through the data gathered from the Amish and Jewish case study communities, three overarching themes emerged that shed light on how traditional communities such as these negotiate fluid contemporary modern conditions. These are: boundary-keeping processes; varied and contingent belonging; and the ways in which practice reproduces community. As will be précised herewith, these areas both explain the persistence of community, whilst highlighting the adaptations that take place that allow community to thrive, but not in stasis. Each of these themes offers insights that challenge dichotomisations that attribute fluidity to contemporary modernity and inertia to tradition.

Laying the groundwork for this research entailed bringing together three often distinct bodies of literature (in Chapter Two), specifically contemporary modern theory, community studies and tradition, with a focus on related fields of religion and diaspora. Some definitional work around 'tradition' was followed by highlighting temporal and spatial dichotomies within the predominant sociological literature on modernity and consequently on contemporary modernity. Borrowing concepts such as 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991) and 'disembedding' (Bauman, 2000) from theorists, was coupled with identifying problematic Western-ethno-urban-centric assumptions that position tradition as being of another time and place within many theories of modernity. This critique brought in works of social thinkers who challenge these assumptions (such as Robinson, 2006; Bhambra, 2007; Calhoun, 2010).

The Community Studies literature enabled an understanding of the varied ways in which community has been understood within sociology, with interest turning from local (for example Rees, 1950; Young and Willmott, 1957; Stacey, 1960; Cohen, 1982) to aspatial and transient communities (Anderson, 1987; Bhabha, 1990; Hall, 1996; Gilroy, 1997; Massey 2000). From this, a discussion of belonging noted tendencies towards binaried ideas of being either 'in' or 'out' of community. Finally, the literature review brought together religion and diaspora literatures, looking at the roles of narrative and practice, common markers of tradition. In bringing sometimes disparate literatures into conversation with each other, this chapter identified gaps in understandings of traditional communities, laying the groundwork to examine how such communities negotiate and co-construct fluid conditions in the subsequent data chapters.

The Methodology (Chapter Three) of this research outlined practical considerations when working with the case study communities. Its contribution is in the specific logistical and ethical considerations within this research with harder to access and under-researched

communities. This included my positionality as sometimes ‘insider’ (in the Jewish community) and sometimes ‘outsider’ (with the Amish communities). There were also nuances of language, sensitivities and norms (to a greater extent with the Amish community), that were highlighted in the close of this Methodology chapter.

The first data chapter (Chapter Four) looked at boundaries as comprising varying levels of fixity and fluidity. The most fixed boundaries – the language of liturgy, physical prayer space and religious hierarchy (though differing in nature) – represent the least negotiable elements of these communities. Without them, communal persistence did not seem attainable to members. As this chapter described, smartphone technology, changing work roles and growth in community size are boundaries that these communities negotiate out of necessity, predominantly externally motivated. Combined with the fluid boundary of inclusion and informal communal structures (specifically for the Jewish community), community’s capacity to thrive through adaptation becomes visible. Through exploring the wide-ranging boundary-keeping exercises, what at first sight appears to be inertia and inflexibility can in fact be regarded as a rational, purposeful retention of practice, processes of which are more commonly associated with contemporary modernity rather than traditional communities. Thus, negotiation and adaptation reveal communal boundaries as porous and therefore communities themselves as continually morphing aspects and co-producers of contemporary conditions, not concretised entities outside of these conditions.

Chapter Five moved beyond understandings of belonging as ‘in or out’, to outline complex structures of embedding and disembedding processes. Building on notions of disembedding mechanisms (Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000), these communities exhibited embedding, disembedding and re-embedding processes, demonstrating that for them, belonging is in continual negotiation. Citing connections to social and kinship networks, as both the route to embedding in community, as well as a determinant of depth of a sense of belonging, reveals belonging to be a dynamic process. Further challenging the ‘in/out’ conception of belonging, therefore, were the differing levels members felt that they belonged, particularly in the Jewish community. Belonging thus appeared to be as multifarious and dynamic as contemporary modernity is conceptualised to be. It is not a fixed axis between member and the community, but a moving nexus of relationships. This too challenged the notion replete within theories of contemporary modernity that tradition exists temporally outside of modernity. Indeed, there is something ongoing in the endlessly forming and re-forming connections that enable members to cohere, if not to an entity, but to the everchanging sociality of a community.

Chapter Six observed that in the findings there was an interweaving of practices that enable community to be reproduced generationally and help explain how and why such communities can persist. Bringing diaspora and tradition into conversation with each other, allowed for narratives to be explored as a tool of community that when deployed, holds the community together in a shared sense of history and forward-movement. This occurs through the ‘non-experienced’, centuries and millennia-old stories of exile and persecution that continue to be taught and read through liturgy that roots communities. This is in addition to the ‘experienced narratives’ from within members’ lifetimes, that are both binding and at times cautionary. Here, the shared actions of prayer, learning, eating and spiritual singing form the glue that binds the community through enriching and recurring experiences. Thus, as with belonging, practices emerge as in-process and adaptive, enabling communal thriving through the contemporarily shared actions of members, but underwritten by wider narratives.

Having summarised the trajectory of this research and its key findings around boundary-keeping, fluctuating and differentiated belonging and shared practices, this chapter will now return to how these findings can answer the research questions.

2. Research Findings: Negotiating Boundaries, Belonging and Practice

In researching how traditional communities negotiate the fluid conditions of contemporary modernity, three overarching themes emerged from the Amish and Jewish case studies: boundary-keeping processes; mechanisms of belonging and dis/re/embedding; and the reproduction of community through practices and narratives. These offer a lens through which to understand the adaptive and contingent processes within such communities, in the context of contemporary modernity. Such examples contest extant theoretical assumptions of the fixity of tradition and as such the two case studies build on research in this area. Surfacing from the findings with the communities, and tying in with the related literatures on community, tradition, religion, diasporas and contemporary modernity, these three areas reveal a combination of processes that challenge tradition *versus* modernity dichotomies. The findings will thus be explored by taking each of these areas sequentially, though they of course overlap, intersect and interrelate.

2.1 Varied Boundaries

As discussed above, boundary-making processes epitomise the interplay of retention and fluidity. What these two communities demonstrate is the creative traversing of some boundaries alongside the steadfast retention of others. Boundaries in the Jewish and Amish communities thus represent attempts to hold on to an enduring common thread (language, space, structure), whilst either necessarily or purposefully flexing (for growth, inclusion, employment) in order to persist. They are frontiers of the permeability between the fluid and the fixed.

Rebecca, an Amish writer and parent discussed in Chapter Four, illustrated these complex negotiations well. Despite the difficulties she relayed in comprehending High German in prayer services, a change to this was near unthinkable to her. Indeed, it should be recalled that the fixity of this boundary was for ex-Amish member, Daniel, a contributing factor to his leaving the community. Yet the multifarious nature of boundary-maintenance becomes apparent when Rebecca later shared that young people will "be just fine – even if they have a cell phone." The combination of a visceral reaction to shifting one boundary and the acceptance of the flexing of another boundary in the adoption of such a world-opening technology is a reflection of the tensions between movement and holding onto communal boundaries. However, within the Amish and the Jewish research, even those least shiftable boundaries were not a representation of inertia, but purposeful, deliberate and considered retention.

These lived experiences from the case studies challenge the theoretical suppositions with which this research began (Giddens, Bauman, Lipovetsky and the like) that situate tradition as inert 'other'. It contests notions of implicit boundedness such as we saw in Chapter Two in Day's (2011) assertion of the 'us and them' circulating in communities of religion or the notion Brubaker (2006) highlighted of diaspora communities being characterised in social research as distinct 'bona fide entities'. This is not to say the boundaries that seek to retain and delineate these communities do not exist – the 'non-negotiable' boundaries revealed otherwise – but rather these boundaries never cease to be reassessed, re-constructed and as examples such as smartphone use illustrate, reveal that traditional communities and

contemporary conditions cannot be neatly separated into different categories. The findings with these specific communities thus speak to the 'boundary-work' evident in studies such as Neal et al's (2018), Brent's (2014) or Blokland's (2018), applying this to the context of religion-oriented diasporic communities, arguably those communities most associated with features conceptualised as traditional.

2.2 Differentiated Belonging

Disembeddedness was described in the Literature Review as a defining feature of many theories of contemporary modernity (for example Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000; Guibernau, 2014). Yet findings from the case study communities challenge these assumptions. Rather, these communities exhibit embeddedness, and prospects of disembedding alongside the potential to re-embed. What emerged is a belonging that is nuanced and layered, drawing on what Ryan (2018) refers to as 'differentiated embedding' (see Chapter Two) exhibiting for these religion-oriented communities, a challenge to a typical focus on inclusion *versus* exclusion debates , instead asserting the fluctuating and varied nature of belonging in these contexts. Indeed, findings from the case studies reflect Ryan's suggestion that 'embedding' as a process, rather than fixed notions of 'embeddedness', may be the most useful descriptor.

Turning to the appeal of communal embedding, Giddens' (1991) conception of seeking 'ontological security' in uncertain times is helpful and illustrates that a selective rather than dismissive approach is needed regarding theories of contemporary modernity (though themes of community as providing safety from a hostile outside world can be found more widely in literature on diasporas and 'race', for instance Brah, 1996; Hall, 2000; Alleyne, 2002). This is echoed, for instance, in the example in Chapter Five of Tali, the Jewish community member who finds the community offers her a sense of belonging amongst an 'unfriendly' London. The same juxtaposition between a frenetic city and a safe community was raised by Caleb's anxiety in the 'prison-like' city and Eliza's work in her youth group to keep 'modern things out'.

Yet within these communities, understandings of belonging were nuanced, differentiated and fluctuating. The varying social and kinship connections relating to belonging reflect that belonging to these communities is predicated on networks, and is in part a social and familial process, rather than community being comprised of detached individuals who either belong or do not in their own right. Remember for instance Emma, who became involved in the Jewish community to support her grieving father and have a Bar Mitzvah for her son.

Further, it must be noted that those identities connected to former communal membership (be it ex-members of the Amish or Jewish communities) did not seem to disappear in both Amish and Jewish members' stories. The way in which Daniel's 'Amishness' still permeated his identity after leaving exemplifies this connection. As does the significance of past communal links for Jewish communal members who came from other communities who could not accommodate them, such as Jaden for being LGBTQ or Emma for wanting to participate in religious Jewish life as a woman. These journeys continued to define their sense of belonging to their new communities.

The factors, such as longevity, regularity of attendance and religious proficiency, illustrated that belonging is a dynamic process, that can change over time and in which there is a sense that some belong to a greater degree than others. Jewish member, Richard's placing himself as 'second or third tier', relating to his lesser religious proficiency and social connections, illustrates this. Though the fact that this can be changed demonstrates that one has agency

over their own level of embeddedness if they are willing to takes steps towards deeper engagement. What can be drawn from the findings is that belonging is neither static nor universally experienced. That belonging to community in these case studies both contests and supports theories of contemporary modernity by suggesting that community offers safety and consistency from a fluid world, but that belonging is itself fluid.

2.3 Adaptive Practices and Narratives

Practices and interrelated narratives of both the Amish and the Jewish communities enable the reproduction of community. However, as the data convey, this does not necessarily take the form of rote re-enactment of ritual. Whilst the 'ontological security' explored above explains to some degree the appeal of community, there is in addition something altogether more vibrant and organic that points to the thriving of these two communities. This was reflected in Jewish founding member Adam's attitude to young people, when he stated that 'what you do' was secondary to 'who does it'. For the Amish, the innovations for young people may seem modest, but Sarah-Jane's relaying of the modified 'singings' are an example of a shift nonetheless towards adaptation of practice for community persistence.

The issue of young people is not without anxiety for older members of both communities, who feared losing their membership, a factor which relates to Gidley and Kahn-Harris's (2012) findings of a 'lost generation' from mid-teens to early thirties in Britain's Jewish communities. Through such adaptive practices, the case study communities exemplify an interplay between thriving and fear, mirroring the rise and decline debates discussed in Chapters One and Six (see for example Putnam, 2000; Bauman, 2000; Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012; Kraybill et al, 2013).

The Amish tome *The Martyrs Mirror* (that chronicles early persecution) and the liturgy of both communities, harks back to a temporally and spatially distant home, illustrating the role of 'non-experienced' narratives as modes of communal reproduction (themes discussed in e.g. Anderson, 1987; Wettstein, 2002; Gidley, 2013b). So too for the stories told from 'experienced' living memory, such as the recent splits which make intermarriage impossible for Amish mother Katie's children or the binding experience of setting up a community for the Jewish founding members (though the latter is not widely held by those who joined in later years). The deployment of both distant exilic and recent cautionary or nostalgic experience offers coherence amongst adaptation. The shared roots are almost synonymous with a shared destination, in that both speak to a time of cultural and religious enactment that offer security and unity in a context of change and diversity. In each instance, whether in cautionary tales or unifying experiences, communal narratives reflect the intersection of diasporic pasts with religious and communal practices in the present.

Likewise, the experience of 'shared doing' offers the opportunity for practice to be viewed as living and dynamic. It is in the actions of members coming together – to learn, eat, assist others or in spiritual prayer – that community lives. Naomi's story of her Amish co-congregants housing her and rebuilding her home after a fire and Estie's feeling of being inspired by singing with others in the Jewish community epitomise these traditional communities' sociality (reflecting Shove et al's [2012] assertion that community exists in social relations). As such, formal and informal practices are enacted, adapted and repeated, in fluid processes of communal reproduction.

These findings build on the work of those such as Robinson (2006), Bhambra (2007), Calhoun (2010), challenging spatial and temporal discontinuities within contemporary modern theory

by acknowledging that for the case study communities, attempts at fixity occur alongside dynamism and adaptability. As such, tradition can be regarded as embedded within and a part of contemporary modernity. Hence, a perspective which proposes a linear teleological progression of pre-modern tradition, followed by eras of modernity and latterly liquid/late/second modernity therefore breaks down, when elements of all three 'phases' exist in a dialectical relationship with one-another. This helps to contest prevailing meanings of community under contemporary conditions by demonstrating that boundary-making, varied belonging and adaptive practice all entail considered, purposeful negotiations, through which community retains its appeal and ability to persist. This fluidity recasts notions of traditional communities from being solid entities, bounded and with a fixed membership and unchanging rituals, to being permeable, with constantly re-assessed boundaries, variable and changing belonging and practices which, whilst holding an important core (Gilroy's [1994] 'changing same' in Chapter Two; see also May, 2016), are the site of active, moving and at times adaptive processes.

The below section will sketch out the contribution of this research and its approach, reviewing the implications of the findings to the fields to which it relates and to methodological approaches to studying community. This will lead on to a discussion of the limitations of this research and finally to the potential for further research leading on from this project.

3. Contributions of the Findings

The religion-oriented diasporic communities employed in this research project as case studies emerge through the findings as dynamic, purposeful and sited in the fluid shared actions and networks of members. Key findings identified these characteristics in flexing and varying boundaries, contingent and fluctuating belonging and adaptive and socially rooted practices and binding narratives. Whilst the data apply to these specific Amish and Jewish communities, and generalising to wider groups is fraught with pitfalls, it is nonetheless possible to identify a wider contribution that studying them can make.

This will be discussed here in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of the case study communities, the intersecting literatures brought into dialogue here, the benefits of applying empirical research to social theory and the methodological learning emerging from work with hard-to-reach communities.

3.1 Applying Case Study Research to Inform Theories of Contemporary Modernity

This research emphasises that tying together social theory with empirical findings from community case studies contributes to a fuller understanding of both. Where tradition-in-action, reflected in the Amish and Jewish case study communities, contests antithetical theorisations of tradition under fluid contemporary modern conditions, the disjuncture between theory and lived experience becomes apparent. Thus, findings from these lesser studied communities add an empirical contribution to theoretical debates. These real instances of tradition-in-action reveal negotiations with contemporary modern conditions. They challenge their categorisation as immovable and instead reveal communal dynamism in practice.

Theories can be regarded as a product of the time in which they are conceived, and empirical material enables us to continually reassess not only their ongoing relevance, but also the conditions from which they were borne. Thus, applying empirical findings, although small, to sociological theories of modernity allows for the assertion that theoretical binaries do not always map well onto lived experience. The implication of research such as this is that the

forwarding of theoretical understandings of society can benefit from drawing on empirical data. As Jamieson cautions,

> "Theorists who place heavy theoretical weight on the power of discourse, are often disinclined to trawl the research evidence detailing the everyday interactions of personal intimate lives for confirmation or counter examples." (2011: 5)

The 'counter examples' provided by empirical findings challenge the pessimism regarding community persistence in theories of late/liquid modernity (particularly in the instances of Giddens, 1991 and Bauman, 2000), illustrating that within a fluid, changing world, communal continuities are still evident. By applying the experiences of traditional communities to debates on the nature of tradition and contemporary modernity, then, another dimension is added to the debate. This enables research such as this to contribute to voices that challenge Western-urban-ethno-European-centric assumptions that underpin sociology (e.g. Bhambra, 2007; Calhoun, 2010), where the findings contest sociological assumptions of dichotomy and inert tradition. Likewise, by bringing social theory into studies of community, community can be placed into a wider societal context. it further opens space to question prevailing meanings of community and by association, of co-constitutive contemporary modern conditions.

3.2 Deepening Understanding of the Case Study Communities

As highlighted in the opening chapters of this thesis, Amish communities can be harder to access, and existing research is often centred on describing practices for their own sake (with the exception of some important themes within Kraybill et al's [2013] work). The emphasis of studies thus far is placed on the navigation of more 'solid' forms of modernity, such as schooling, agriculture and technology, without significant focus on the wider context or the dynamism within. This is of course an important endeavour, but one that can be extended. This research contributes both a wider sample of participants (beyond the anecdotes of 'usual suspects') and enquires into less tangible negotiations around boundary-flexing, networked belonging and the deployment of narratives and shared practices within these communities. This knowledge adds specifically to understandings of these Pennsylvanian Amish communities and more broadly to understandings of how a self-defined 'separatist' community traverses fluid conditions in the hypermodern context of the United States.

The British Jewish community (as well as Jewish communities worldwide), are well-researched. With some exceptions (e.g. Gidley, 2013; Ahmed et al, 2016), existing studies of British Jews often focus on assimilation, ultra-orthodox or fundamentalist forms of Judaism, antisemitism or ties with Israel, further dichotomising understandings of traditional communities and modernity, or Jewish community *versus* wider society (see for instance Harrison, 2006; Graham et al, 2007). However, for the Jewish community studied in the thesis research, this is the first research carried out. The findings thus contribute an appraisal of a relatively new community, that can offer insights into communities developing in similar contexts. The community's ongoing boundary negotiations, such as its seemingly contradictory retention of liturgy along with radical inclusion as to who can lead it in services, its layered belonging, and adaptive practices, illustrate how this new community navigates community-building. The findings develop knowledge on this community, but this knowledge can also be cautiously applied to understanding negotiations that occur within long-standing Jewish communities negotiating ancient liturgy, social values and a hyperdiverse urban context. Employing the tools of Community Studies – alongside the typical Sociology of Religion and Diaspora Studies – enables a combination of viewing this community as both particular and yet related to wider community trends. Therefore, the specific knowledge

gleaned from this research on these two communities can be added to wider debates within the related fields.

3.3 Tying Together Community Studies, Religion and Diaspora Literatures

Beginning with the Literature Review, this thesis has demonstrated the benefits of turning to different bodies of literature to reframe understandings of community and of contemporary modern conditions. The research on these case study communities profits from being placed at the intersection of the study of communities, tradition, of diasporas, sociology of religion and social theory. This enables, for instance, viewing the Jewish community through a wider lens than solely through religious practice or diaspora and situating explorations of the Amish in the context of fluid contemporary conditions.

In *Religion in Diaspora* (edited by Garnett and Hausner, 2016), a series of authors bring into dialogue religious practices with historical diasporic stories (see for instance Ahmed et al's [2016] chapter on 'faith, place and race' in East London). This volume speaks to the benefits of applying tools located between the study of religion and of diasporas. My findings contribute to such a conversation between fields, by additionally applying debates and methods associated with Community Studies to the sociological study of religion and of diaspora. The deployment of narratives to cohere diasporic communities is well-discussed in the diaspora literature (e.g. Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; Hall, 1996; Gilroy, 1997; Alleyne, 2002). The Sociology of Religion literature charts the role of and associated emerging trends in communal rituals and practice (such as Lee, 2005; Day, 2011). The Community Studies literature responds to conditions of modernity and what it is to belong in uncertain times (for instance Bell, 1994; Crow, 2012). Bringing these fields into a conversation with each other allows communal persistence to be understood as a complex interweaving of narratives, rituals, belongings and a sense of internal and external negotiations. Thus, my research illustrates that a more thorough set of tools can be applied to the complex and varied factors that enable communities to persist throughout time and space, learning from the differing approaches from often disparate sociological and other fields.

3.4 Positionality and Research Design with Harder-to-Access and Under-Researched Communities

Within methodological writings, positionality receives significant attention (for instance Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Alexander, 2004; Neal and Walters, 2006; Heley, 2011). This research adds to the conversation with the use of further empirical findings in a harder-to-reach community i.e. the Amish, about where points of connection and of disconnection can work for and hinder a researcher. In terms of my own community membership, the distance it created with the Amish case study and the familiarity in the Jewish community was at times helpful to data generation, yet it was also the cause of suspicion and guardedness with the Amish participants and of assumptions with Jewish participants. However, immersing myself in Amish areas, around Amish businesses and shopping areas, and through invitations to participants' homes, allowed some of this distance to be closed. Through long days spent in both Amish field sites, I was able to quickly build familiarity with Amish social etiquette, language specificities and find ways to foster rapport and trust. This was in part aided by my openness in sharing my own identity, both communal and individual (as a parent, woman, member of a faith community). Despite the Amish case studies being more difficult to access, as an 'outsider' I was still able to gain a significant degree of access, illustrating the potential for openness within this traditional and self-defining 'separatist' community.

This learning can help understandings of positionality and openness, and how these can lead to more fruitful interviews in different contexts. In addition, this research contributes to understandings of positionality as multi-faceted, for example the role of the researcher's gender, religion, educational attainment, parenthood and nationality in these cases. Finally, it includes examples across local and further geographical contexts. Taking these case studies beyond the confines of fields such as Jewish Studies and Amish Studies, for instance, means that they can add to the fields of community, diaspora, religion, and social theory.

4. Limitations of the Research

There were some limitations to this research project, particularly with regards to the methodology. Some of these will be expanded upon in the subsequent section, on further research. The most significant limitations involved access, recruitment and data generation with the Amish communities, although there were also aspects of the research with the Jewish case study that could be developed. Often what were initially methodological challenges resulted in the garnering of unanticipated and rich data.

Recruitment of Amish participants, as discussed in Chapter Three (Methodology), was more difficult than anticipated due to the unforeseen unavailability of the gatekeepers with whom links had been developed in the two years preceding the fieldwork. A greater amount of time around the field site may have allowed for the development of deeper relationships with new gatekeepers. There were logistical and financial impediments to this option on this occasion, but future work with these communities would benefit from longer visits and an initial scoping visit to build more face-to-face connections, given that the prohibitions on technology make remote contact difficult with Amish communities. This challenge also posed an opportunity. In necessarily reaching out beyond gatekeepers' networks, I was able to reach a lesser researched sample of participants. This wide-ranging and more difficult to reach sample contributed to some existing Amish-based studies, that although rich in data, have at times been criticised as being focused on 'usual suspects' who are untypically well connected with non-Amish networks. In widening my Amish contacts, I also worked in two field sites, which allowed for a broader diversity of Amish voices to be expressed. This is an advantage for a community that is often portrayed in modern culture as monolithic.

The inability to engage in detailed note-taking and digital recording with the Amish community compromised the ability to retain the depth of what participants were relaying in some cases. This made some data difficult to capture, although not using a recording device and writing extensively during conversations put interviewees at ease and enabled them to share more (a factor discussed in extant research with communities, such as Bell, 1994). This also forced me to hone my active listening, in order to identify those aspects that were most significant to interviewees, which arguably benefitted data collection. In addition, letter-writing contact was initiated with some of the interviewees on my return. These were not used for this research, but have resulted in some ongoing contact and can offer insights and an alternative method of data gathering for future research.

It was not possible to spend time inside a barn for an Amish Sunday church service. It is uncommon as a non-Amish (especially non-Christian) person to be invited to such events. Greater time may have allowed for this barrier to be overcome, though this is not common. Attending an Amish-Mennonite church, at the invitation of a local member, was helpful in terms of the decorum and style of services, especially as a number of members were former Amish, but the services were in English, rather than High German, and in a dedicated church

building, rather than a barn. This observation of religious ritual would have added to the data, however, even with access, language would have presented a barrier. Realising that this would be an issue, I shifted focus to asking participants about the church services. This built a detailed picture, and in fact allowed for more of Amish members'/former members' experiences and feelings about church to surface, which provided findings used in all three areas of analysis i.e. communal boundaries, belonging and practice.

With the Jewish community, access was easier, and recording was allowed, which was beneficial to analysis. This research may have benefited from a wider range of participants, such as Black members and members of colour, LGBTQ members, younger and older members, disabled members and former members. Indeed, in recent months, networks have sprung up for some of these more marginalised groups within the community and is explored below with reference to further research. The benefits of a wider sample are also true for the Amish study site, though the sensitivities are far more pronounced with many of these groups, to some extent, prohibitively so. However, both case study samples were wide-ranging in terms of age, embeddedness, marital status, parenthood, gender and other pertinent factors.

In addition to the above limitations, if this research were to be repeated, questions to ask would be: Are there methods to employ in addition to those used in this research? Would creative, art or storytelling based methods allow for the emergence of more narratives that connect communal experience with life stories? Would focus groups offer a beneficial space in addition to one-to-one interviews? What techniques would enable access to a wider range of participants? Drawing on a variety of academic fields benefitted this research. Are there other fields, such as gender studies, that would offer a fresh lens with which to understand these communities? To what extent do gatekeepers direct findings and how can this be mitigated against? However, despite these areas of potential development, rich and extensive data were garnered, particularly from interviews, that allowed for detailed analysis and the identification of elements of communal adaptation, negotiation and contestation. The following section will reflect on some avenues for future consideration, in light of findings from this research, with the assumption that in carrying out such studies, the above questions would be addressed.

5. Further Research

The triad of communal negotiations – boundaries, belonging and practice – emerging from the Amish and Jewish case studies can act as a framework for future research with traditional, religion-oriented and diasporic communities. Such explorations can be further aided by the continued application of approaches used in this thesis, intersecting studies of community, diaspora, religion and the links that can be made with social theory. As referenced above, options for further research build on the findings of this thesis, its limitations and reflections, as well as considering societal changes (particularly the Covid-19 pandemic). These are explored below in terms of the impact of 'social distancing' measures, the voice of former members of communities, and widening the representation of participants within and beyond these communities.

5.1 'Socially Distanced' Community

The findings in this research point to the centrality of proximity for these particular religion-oriented diasporic communities. This traverses the significance of place in boundary-keeping processes, space as a representation of belonging and the practices that physical closeness facilitates. In Chapter Four, meeting in a physical space was highlighted as a fixed boundary,

without which the case study communities would struggle to persist. This theme was revisited somewhat in Chapter Five, which discussed the ways in which levels of belonging and space, particularly for the Jewish community, are interrelated. Lastly, in Chapter Six, shared 'doing', a key tool of communal reproduction, was noted in terms of learning, eating, volunteering and singing together. What does this mean in a Covid-19 world, in which coming together has become a risky and at times illegal enterprise? Has this spelled the end of community life and the disintegration of boundary-keeping, a sense of belonging and shared practice? The picture is a developing one, in need of research and reflection. It is a period treated as temporary, which impacts how communities respond to and conceive of communal adaptations. What is clear is that these communities have continued to persist in new and creative ways. What is also apparent is that narratives of separation, exile, hope and return have been a part of this process.

The Jewish community, like many communities around the world, has employed the use of Zoom, Facebook and YouTube streaming, in order to offer many prayer rituals and spiritual spaces. Another community has even offered a 'drive-in service' (Byers and Allen-Mills, 2020). This may be seen as a replacement for physical meeting, but where members speak of yearning to be together and attempts are made to combine social distancing rules with religious practice, it can be regarded as a blending of adaptation and retention, as has been seen through the findings in this thesis. Further, the impact of levels of belonging can be investigated, considering whether the internet maintains the social and hierarchal status quo or acts as an equaliser (e.g. everyone takes up the same amount of space on Zoom, there are no front seats and more people are needed to ensure a Zoom event runs smoothly, thus providing new opportunities). In these new contexts, is liturgy adapted? What boundaries flex and which become more rigid in response?

For communities such as the Amish, for whom online platforms are unlikely to be the solution, further questions need to be asked about the impact of 'distancing' on community, shared 'doing' and prayer. The Amish have remained relatively well-informed on emerging restrictions in areas such as the case study sites, with a desire to prevent the spread of Covid-19, but adherence to distancing has been varied as with the wider population (De Jesus, 2020). There has been limited research, yet some face-to-face contact, for instance with medical bodies, reveals that the Amish maintain a focus on facing health problems internally, with few of those infected with the virus visiting hospitals if avoidable (Snabes, 2020). In many cases, such as was found in Indiana, barn services continued, but with air circulating and outdoor meals, they have mitigated the fears of communities such as the Jewish community, which has experienced high infection rates caused by close contact (ibid). In other cases for the Amish, large and multi-generational family networks have caused a greater impact from the virus. There have thus been some local cancelations of church, foregoing Easter services and economic impacts as no non-Amish taxis operate to drive Amish people to work, and little construction work is available (Nark, 2020).

Further study can thus reveal the changing meanings and practices of community, place, space and shared 'doing' in extraordinary times of restrictions on meeting. It can do so by asking if space is now becoming for some a necessarily-negotiated boundary, rather than a fixed boundary, where communal persistence is now arguably conceivable in the absence of physical space. This is of course more likely for the Jewish community than the Amish. Worthy of further exploration is whether intimate group bonds of family and kinship networks are less likely to be a determinant of depth of belonging in virtual religious services and where no

service takes place at all (as for many Amish communities). Finally, one can look to communal practices to assess: a) the adaptations at are necessary in these unprecedented times and b) how these may connect to persisting communal narratives. Thus, employing the framework of boundaries, belonging and practice, allows for the examination of how traditional communities negotiate the current uncertain conditions brought about by the pandemic.

5.2 Experiences of Former Members

Contrary to theories such as Bauman's (2000) 'liquid modernity', that define fluid modernity in terms of disembeddedness (Chapter Two), Chapter Four of this thesis asserted that the case study communities in fact displayed elements of embedding, disembedding and re-embedding. Some former Amish and Jewish members were interviewed in this research, giving small insights into the experiences of those who have disembedded from these communities. These began to shed light on the intersection of clashes with non-negotiable communal boundaries, rupture with other members and the feeling of not belonging, and contestations of practice (particularly for the Amish). For the Jewish members, of interest are the disembedding mechanisms from communities elsewhere which led to their choice to join the case study community. These experiences can reveal a great deal about the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion from the perspective of those who are no longer included, either by choice or under duress. The stories of former members can offer insights into the boundaries of community that cannot flex to accommodate and where belonging has become unattainable. Exploring the reasons for disembedding, what remnants of attachment remain and what comes next for former community members can shed light on these particular communities, their rules and norms, and on the wider context into which members find themselves without the backdrop of their former communities. This offers the chance to address the question, what are the limits of inclusion within these communities?

5.3 Widening Participation: Subgroups and Other Communities

Finally, Chapter Four pointed to the fluid boundary that in the case of the Jewish community, has led to the inclusion of women in leading religious practice. Despite the ethos of the community as being LGBTQ inclusive, the sample did not offer the opportunity to explore this as is experienced by a significant number of members. Of interest would be the extent to which boundaries can flex towards wider inclusion and if this is represented in the lived experiences of those to whom this is relevant. This is not just the case with the Jewish group or in the cases of gender and LGBTQ status, but with the Amish too, and for other marginalised groups. This leads also to the question of whether there is something that makes practices either inclusive or exclusive of specific groups often on the fringes of or problematised and vilified within wider society.

Building on from the assessment of levels of belonging, it is thus pertinent to further explore subgroups within these communities. These may be widely accepted, such as mothers, young people, or those more likely to be on the margins both in a wider societal context and in these communities, such as LGBTQ members, disabled members and Black members. As Community Studies struggles to reflect diversity within communities and studies of diaspora and of religion seek to explore that which is similar, much can be achieved in understanding the nature of traditional communities of this ilk by looking at those voices that are least heard both in societal and research contexts.

Relatedly, these two case studies provide insights in their own right, but in their choosing was the necessary exclusion of others, be it Rastafarian, African Pentecostal, Sikh etc. Can different lessons be learned from these communities? To what extent can the experiences of

the Amish and Jewish communities be mapped onto other religion-oriented diasporic communities or others that can be conceptualised as traditional? Further research can assess whether the boundaries/belonging/practice framework, alongside an interdisciplinary approach of drawing on disparate fields, can enable new understandings of other religion-oriented diasporic communities to surface.

Concluding Reflections

This chapter has returned to the research questions through the themes of boundaries, belonging and practices, that arose from the findings. In so doing, it has outlined contributions this research makes to methodological approaches to positionality, as well as interdisciplinary approaches to the study of communities under contemporary modern conditions, tying together theory with empirical research. Highlighting the limitations of this research has led to an exploration of potential research into 'socially distanced' communities in an era of Covid-19, experiences of former community members and subgroups and potentially marginalised members, as a means to gaining greater understanding into the nature of community under contemporary modern conditions.

The findings offer understandings into the relationship between traditional communities and contemporary modernity, where these both epitomise fluidity and adaptation. These phenomena emerge as interwoven and intersecting, or indeed as components of the same entity of our current conditions that has erroneously been conceptualised as separate and in opposition to one another buy a legacy of Sociology founded on Western, European, ethno-centric and colonial conceptions of the world, in which practices and people that are unfamiliar become compartmentalised as tradition, but that which is familiar is modern. Shedding new light on these themes reveals the potential for community's persistence, challenging tradition as antithetical to fluid modernity

This poses a challenge of how we conceptualise traditional communities and their practices in such a way as to site them within contemporary fluid conditions, acknowledging that they experience the same ebbs and flows, inclusions and exclusions as the society in which they are situated. What then is the conceptual work to be done? It is not the complete discarding of notions of tradition, community, modernity and liquid/late modernity. Rather, the analysis of the data in this thesis shows that the answer lies in a nuanced approach, which borrows from theories of contemporary modernity, whilst acknowledging the problematic assumptions these make; by understanding the real-life experiences of those conceptualised as traditional, and by recognising that whilst rigid notions of community, modernity and tradition are flawed and overly dichotomous, their cautious use allows for an understanding of society and the negotiations of these social phenomena.

This research has thus borrowed from contemporary modern theory, employing concepts such as 'ontological security' whilst problematising dichotomisations of tradition and late/liquid/hyper/reflexive/second modernity. Applying this conceptual work to the case studies (and *vice versa*) allowed for examples of fluidity of boundary-keeping, belonging and practice to emerge, thus offering an empirical response to theoretical binaried approaches. Such lived examples shed light on both the nature of contemporary modernity and of traditional communities, as they are mutually producing, co-constructing each other and epitomising many of the same features of adaptation, permeability, retention and thriving. Throughout this interplay of fluidity and persistence, the findings point to the powerful role

of community, connection and belonging in people's lives, a factor arguably brought into even sharper relief during the challenges posed by the current era of Covid-19.

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Documentary Sources: Amish Periodicals

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The Diary (Kirkwood, Pennsylvania). A monthly correspondent magazine with reports from writers in many Amish settlements as well as sections on weddings, births, deaths, and accidents and other special columns.

Family Life (Aylmer, Ontario: Pathway Publishers). A monthly family and community magazine with articles, poetry, recipes, and children’s stories.

Appendix One: Interview Schedule - Holly County and Sherwood County, Pennsylvania

This interview schedule contains guideline questions organised thematically, followed by prompts. As the interview will be semi-structured, not every prompt will be used for each participant, wording may vary and depending on the flow of conversation, the order may also differ. As participants will be selected according to a variety of criteria outlined in the Protocol (e.g. lay leaders, former members, occasional attendees), some of the questions below will only be relevant to certain groups of participants. This particularly applies to former members. As such I have indicated alternative language or additional questions which will be adapted for this group, although most questions will be appropriate to all groups and will therefore remain the same.

Opening

Welcome
Hi, I'm Daniella. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of this research for my PhD. As you will have seen on the Participant Information Sheet, my research aims to look at how traditional communities respond to modern life. I will use my findings in writing up my PhD, to try and understand a bit more about communities, tradition and the modern world and how they relate to each other.

Interview logistics
The interview should take up to an hour and a half. Do feel free to let me know if you need a break at any time. During the interview I would like to find out a bit more about your connection with your community, your role within it, common practices and areas of community life. Anything you say to me will be kept confidential and everything I write up will be anonymous. It won't contain your name or the name of your community.

As we discussed earlier, I will be taking notes and recording during this interview. Thank you for giving me permission to do this (amend as appropriate).

Before we get started, is there anything you would like to be explained or clarified about my research or your participation?

Body of interview

I'd like to begin by asking, what is/was it like living here?

Prompts:

- What is/was your daily routine like?
- What do/did you enjoy about your community?
- Have/had you always been a member of this community?
- Former members: Would you mind explaining why you left this community?

How would you describe the core values, principles or rules of this community?

Prompts:

- Can you tell me a bit more about these?
- Would you call this community traditional?
- What do you think of when you hear the word tradition?

Are there practices, rituals, events or festivals that are particularly important within the community?

Prompts:

- Can you explain these a bit more?
- Do any of these hold/have any of these held particular significance for you?

- Who participates in these events/practices/rituals?
- Are there any groups of people who do not participate?

How would you describe this community and how it came about?

Prompts:
- Is there a particular story that is shared within this community?
- Could you go into more detail about this/these?

Is this community organised in a particular way?

Prompts:
- Who tends to play a regular role in the community?
- Are there leaders of your community?
- Do you have/have you had a particular role or responsibility within the community?
- What options are there for participating in the community?
- Are there issues/themes that are commonly talked about within the community? If so, how are these resolved/discussed?

How would you explain to a person outside of this community, what it means/meant to you to be Amish?

Prompts:
- What does it mean to belong to your community?
- Would you consider yourself a member of any other community?
- What do you feel when you think of community?
- How would someone join your community?
- Is membership defined in a certain way?
- Former members: Would you consider yourself a member of any other community since leaving the Amish?

Do/did you tend to spend much time with people outside of the community?

Prompts:
- Is/was this common?
- In what capacity do/did members engage with people outside of the community?
- What are your impressions of life outside the community?

What do you see as changing within the community in recent years?

Prompts:
- Can you tell me something about these changes and the impact they have had?
- Have any practices been adapted, introduced or rejected?
- Would you say there is anything in particular that has held the community together in recent years?
- Is there anything you think poses a threat to community life?
- What do you see as the future of the community?

Is there anything you'd like to add that I haven't asked?

<u>Closing</u>

It has been a pleasure finding out more about you and your community. Thank you. Let me briefly summarise the information that I have recorded during our interview. I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything you would like to ask at this stage? Thanks again.

Appendix Two: Interview Schedule - Jewish Community, London

This interview schedule contains guideline questions organised thematically, followed by prompts. As the interview will be semi-structured, not every prompt will be used for each participant, wording may vary and depending on the flow of conversation, the order may also differ. As participants will be selected according to a variety of criteria outlined in the Protocol (e.g. lay leaders, former members, occasional attendees), some of the questions below will only be relevant to certain groups of participants. This particularly applies to former members. As such I have indicated alternative language or additional questions which will be adapted for this group, although most questions will be appropriate to all groups and will therefore remain the same.

Opening

Welcome

Hi, I'm Daniella. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of this research for my PhD. As you will have seen on the Participant Information Sheet, my research aims to look at how traditional communities respond to modern life. I will use my findings in writing up my PhD, to try and understand a bit more about communities, tradition and the modern world and how they relate to each other.

Interview logistics

The interview should take up to an hour and a half. Do feel free to let me know if you need a break at any time. During the interview I would like to find out a bit more about your connection with your community, your role within it, common practices and areas of community life. Anything you say to me will be kept confidential and everything I write up will be anonymous. It won't contain your name or the name of your community.

As we discussed earlier, I will be taking notes and recording during this interview. Thank you for giving me permission to do this (amend as appropriate).

Before we get started, is there anything you would like to be explained or clarified about my research or your participation?

Body of interview

How would you describe the core values and principles of the community?

Prompts:

- Would you call this community traditional?
- What do you think of when you hear the word tradition?

Do you know how/how did the community come about?

Prompts:

- Is there a particular story that is shared within this community?

How did you come to join the community?

Prompts:

- What is/was it like being a member?
- With what frequency do/did you interact with this community?
- What do/did you enjoy about it?
- Does anything challenge you?
- Former members: Would you mind explaining why you left this community?

How would you explain to a person outside of this community what it means to belong to it?

Prompts:

- Would you consider yourself a member of any other community?
- What do you feel when you think of community?
- How would someone join?
- Is membership defined in a certain way?
- Former members: Would you consider yourself a member of any other community since leaving this community?

Are there practices, events or occasions that are particularly important to the community?

Prompts:

- Do any of these hold/have any of these held particular significance for you?
- Who participates?
- Are there any groups of people who do not or cannot participate?

Is the community organised in a particular way?

Prompts:

- What kind of people tend to play a regular role?
- Are there leaders of your community?
- Do you have/Have you had a particular role or responsibility within the community?
- What options for participating are there in the community?
- Are there issues/themes that are commonly talked about within the community? If so, how are these resolved/discussed?

Do/did you interact with people outside of the community as a formal representative?

Prompts:

- What is/was the nature of these interactions?
- What is/was the impact of these interactions?

What do you see as changing within the community in recent years?

Prompts:

- Can you tell me something about these changes and the impact they have had?
- Have any practices been adapted, introduced or rejected?
- Would you say there is anything in particular that has held the community together?
- Is there anything you think poses a threat to community life?
- What do you see as the future of the community?

Is there anything you'd like to add that I haven't asked?

Closing

It has been a pleasure finding out more about you and your community. Thank you. I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything you would like to ask at this stage? Thanks again.

Appendix Three: Participant Consent Form - Holly County and Sherwood County, Pennsylvania

Project title:

Traditional Communities in the Modern World

Please initial each box

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the researcher of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. My questions have been answered. ☐
- I agree to comply with the requirements of the study as outlined to me to the best of my abilities. ☐
- I agree for my anonymised data to be used for this study. ☐
- I give consent for interviews to be audio recorded (please delete as applicable). Yes/No
- I give consent to anonymous verbatim quotations being used in the PhD thesis and publications relating to this research. ☐
- I understand that all project data will be held for at least 6 years and all research data for at least 10 years in accordance with University of Surrey policy and that my personal data is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998). ☐
- I understand that all data collected during the study, may be looked at for monitoring and auditing purposes by authorised individuals from the University of Surrey, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my anonymised records. ☐
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision, without prejudice and without my legal rights being affected. ☐
- I understand that my personal data will be withdrawn immediately following my request to withdraw from this research and that all personal data will be destroyed. ☐
- I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating voluntarily in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation. ☐

Name of participant (BLOCK CAPITALS) ....

Signature of participant ....

Date.......................

Name of researcher (BLOCK CAPITALS) ....

Signature of researcher ....

Date..............

Appendix Four: Participant Consent Form - Jewish Community, London

Project title:

Traditional Communities in the Modern World

Please initial each box

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. My questions have been answered.
- I agree to comply with the requirements of the study as outlined to me to the best of my abilities.
- I agree for my anonymised data to be used for this study.
- I give consent for interviews to be audio recorded (please delete as applicable). Yes/No
- I give consent to anonymous verbatim quotations being used in the PhD thesis and publications relating to this research.
- I understand that all project data will be held for at least 6 years and all research data for at least 10 years in accordance with University of Surrey policy and that my personal data is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998).
- I understand that all data collected during the study, may be looked at for monitoring and auditing purposes by authorised individuals from the University of Surrey, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my anonymised records.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision, without prejudice and without my legal rights being affected.
- I understand that my data will be withdrawn immediately following my request to withdraw from this research and that all personal data will be destroyed.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating voluntarily in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation.

Name of participant (BLOCK CAPITALS) …………………………………………………………………………

Signature of participant ………………………………………………………………………………………….

Date……………………

Name of researcher (BLOCK CAPITALS) ……………..……………………………

Signature of researcher ………………………………………………………………

Date………………………

Appendix Five: Interview Participants

Name	Case Study	Field Site Amish	Gender	Age	More info	Interview Location
Katie	Amish	SC	f	30s	Parent,	Home
Annie	Amish	SC	f	70s	Marker worker, grandparent	Market
Rebecca	Amish	HC	f	50s	Writer, parent	Phone (recorded)
Eliza	Amish	SC	f	18	Market worker, youth leader	Market
Lydia	Amish	HC	f	40s	Tourist business, parent, twinned with Jewish community in NY	Home
Grace	Amish	SC	f	70s	Marker worker, grandparent	Market
Ruth	Amish	HC	f	80s	Cooks meals for tourists, great-grandparent	Home (meal)
Eve	Amish	HC	f	40s	Amish craft ship owner, parent	Shop
Sarah	Amish	HC	f	60s	Quilt shop owner, grandparent	Shop
Esther	Amish	HC	f	70s	Local crafter, grandparent	Home (meal)
Annie	Amish	HC	f	60s	Parent,	Home
Mandy	Amish	HC	f	20s	Local shop worker	Shop
Sarah-Jane	Amish	HC	f	70s	Engaged in communal and tourist networks, tourist business, grandparent	Home and local locations
Naomi	Amish	SC	f	60s	Looks after local woman, lost her husband, step-grandparent	Home
Gaby	Amish	SC	f	60s	Marker worker, grandparent	Market
Beth	Amish	SC	F	50s	Former Amish, ended interview early	Local community centre
Caleb	Amish	SC	M	30s	Organic farmer, parent	Home/tour of farm
Amos	Amish	SC	M	50s	Craft worker, bishop, parent	Shop
Daniel	Amish	HC	M	30s	Former Amish	Phone (recorded)
Jonah	Amish	HC	M	50s	Shop owner, engaged in community work and non-Amish community, grandparent	Phone (recorded) and market
Abram	Amish	HC	M	40s	Tourist business owner, parent	Shop
Peter	Amish	HC	M	70s	Farmer, local historian, grandparent	Farm
Abe	Amish	HC	M	20s	Peter's son, youth leader	Farm
John	Amish	HC	M	60s	Farmer and tourist business owner, widowed, local historian, grandparent	Home and farm
Joanne	Jewish		F	50s	Founding member, still involved, professional	Phone

Janice	Jewish		F	40s	Founding member, very involved, professional	Community centre
Laura	Jewish		F	40s	Founding member, very involved, professional, parent	Phone
Estie	Jewish		F	30s	Former early member, community worker, parent	Skype
Abby	Jewish		f	40s	Former early member, community leader, parent	Skype
Emma	Jewish		f	40s	Semi-involved member, joined in recent years, parent	Phone
Ilana	Jewish		f	30s	Very involved, joined in recent years, professional parent	Phone
Miriam	Jewish		f	40s	Semi-involved member, joined in recent years, community worker, parent	Phone
Hannah	Jewish		f	40s	Founding member, very involved, professional, parent	Phone and community centre
Olivia	Jewish		f	20s	Occasionally involved, recent member and convert	Phone
Danielle	Jewish		f	30s	Former semi-involved member, educationalist, moved away	Phone
Tali	Jewish		f	70s	Semi-involved medium-term member, grandaparent, retired	Phone
Simon	Jewish		m	50s	Very involved, long-term member, professional	Phone
Joseph	Jewish		m	20s	Former occasionally involved member, LGBT, professional	Phone
Adam	Jewish		m	40s	Founding member, very involved, professional, parent	Phone
Benjamin	Jewish		m	40s	Long-term very involved member, community worker, parent	Home
Joseph	Jewish		M	30s	Very involved medium-term member, professional, parent	Phone
Gerry	Jewish		M	60s	Semi-involved medium-term member, artist	Phone
Richard	Jewish		M	40s	Occasionally involved, medium-term member, professional, parent	Phone
David	Jewish		M	40s	Increasingly-involved medium-term member, community worker, parent	Phone
Jaden	Jewish		M	20s	New member, increasingly involved, excluded by former community	Phone