Jonathan S. Bullock
FdA BSc MSc

Disunity in society, fractures at home:
Family relating in the context of divisive socio-political issues

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Major Research Project Summary

Section A

A systematic literature review conducted to identify and explore research that has investigated adult intrafamilial relationships and divisive political issues since 2016. Ten papers are included in the review. The studies are critiqued using a mixed-methods risk of bias tool. Findings are collated using narrative synthesis. The synthesis focuses on relational responses—to divisive political issues—the potential reasons for these responses, and their consequences. Review findings are discussed in relation to previous theoretical and empirical literature. Finally, clinical and research implications are presented.

Section B

A grounded theory study to develop an understanding of adult intrafamilial invalidation in the context of social and political change. Brexit and COVID-19 serve as the contextual lens through which the phenomenon was observed. Data from 11 participants and 45 screening questionnaire respondents were analysed as part of the study. A model of family "Rejection of You" experiences is presented outlining foundational and contextual factors that frame the experience, the experience itself, and relational, behavioural, cognitive, and emotional consequences. Findings are discussed in relation to previous theory and previous empirical research. Clinical implications are considered and possible directions for future research are set out.

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Section A: Literature Review

Family relationships in the wake of divisive political issues: A systematic review

Jonathan S. Bullock

Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology

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Abstract

Context. Recent polls suggest most Britons believe the UK is the most divided it has been in generations. Such division has been observed within families as well as in society more generally. To date, no review has been conducted of literature on the impact of divisive political issues on family relationships. This systematic review aimed to address this gap by exploring the extant literature in this area.

Methodology. A systematic literature search retrieved ten eligible papers, comprising seven qualitative and three quantitative descriptive studies.

Results. Nine studies explored family relationships in the context of the 2016 US presidential election and one Brexit. Study quality was found generally satisfactory with some notable methodological limitations. Suggested impacts of divisive political issues on family relationships concerned relational distance and proximity, and aggression and respect. Political ideology difference most often dictated the nature of reported impacts, although established family dynamics and topic salience also were found to play a role. Consequences of reported impacts included learning who, how and when to engage in conversations about divisive political issues and family being experienced as emotionally and relationally taxing.

Implications. Review findings suggest divisive political issues may have profound effects on family relationships. Practitioners may benefit from sensitising themselves to their own political identities and those of their clients. The literature base would likely benefit from a theoretical explication of the observed phenomena and through the broadening of research to other countries, cultures, and groups.

Keywords: family relationships, conflict, polarisation, politics, identity

Family relationships in the wake of divisive political issues: A systematic review

Social scientists have observed that Western society has become increasingly polarised in recent years (Arenas, 2019). Political polarisation as a state is considered "the extent to which opinions on an issue are opposed in relation to some theoretical maximum" (DiMaggio et al., 1996, p. 693). In polarisation literature, a distinction has been made between affective (Iyengar et al., 2012) and attitudinal (Tesser, 1976) polarisation, with the former believed more salient to modern political polarisation. Affective polarisation is considered the differential between feelings towards those who share one's political beliefs and those whose political beliefs are diametrically opposed (Warner et al., 2020). Iyengar et al. (2012) found evaluations of political outgroups have progressively worsened in recent decades, with partisanship representing the most prominent social cleavage in the United States (US; Iyengar et al., 2018), reportedly more so than racial division (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015).

Fitzgerald & Curtis (2012) define political discordance as disagreement about a particular political party, representative, or issue. It has been suggested that such disagreement can become malicious and personal and that people withhold opinions on meaningful issues from those with politically-discordant views for fear of conflict (Cowan & Baldassarri, 2018). Johnson (2002) outlined two distinct subtypes of disagreement that can occur within interpersonal relationships: personal-issue and public-issue arguments. According to these delineations, political discordance constitutes a public-issue argument—an argument concerning topics external to a relationship. Public issue arguments have been reported to predict changes in the health of relationships (Johnson et al., 2011) and individuals (Johnson et al., 2014).

In the United Kingdom (UK), some research suggests affective polarisation and public-issue arguments have become increasingly commonplace since the 2016 EU referendum

(Anderson & Wilson, 2018; Duffy et al., 2019), encouraging the moniker 'Divided Britain'. This framing appears to hold weight, with 50% of the British public believing the UK has never been more divided and only 1 in 10 reporting to have seen more divided times (Juan-Torres et al., 2020). Several issues since 2016 have been associated with affective polarisation, including Brexit, the 2016 US presidential election (hereafter US election), the Black Lives Matter movement, and Scottish Independence (Juan-Torres et al., 2020). For example, nearly one in five respondents to a Mental Health Foundation (2020) poll reported Brexit-related conflict with a family member or partner. In the US, a recent nationwide poll found 77% of Americans believe their country is severely divided (Jones, 2016). Furthermore, 37% of Americans reported experiencing familial relationship strain (Tillman, 2016) following the US election and 7% losing a friendship (Monmouth University Polling Institute, 2016).

Moral foundations theory contends salient political identities form through sensitivity to particular foundations of morality (e.g., fairness/cheating, authority/subversion; Haidt, 2012). Political ideologies are also suggested to align with core facets of human identity—e.g., culture, economics, race, religion (Mason, 2018). Therefore, much can feel at stake in the face of political discord. Furthermore, if one's political identity is closely held, engaging with those with contrary positions can be challenging (Bennett, 2012; Vraga et al., 2015). The higher one's investment, the higher the likelihood of negative emotion, polarisation, and mistrust of the political outgroup (Munro et al., 2010; Warner & Villamil, 2017).

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests humans partition themselves into "us" and "them" groups—or in-groups (those with whom we share important identities) and out-groups (those with essential differences). These collectives are said to contribute to our sense of ourselves and dictate interactions within and between groups (Warner et al., 2020). Research has

suggested these processes operate at a neurobiological level (Molenberghs, 2013), protecting an individual's ingroup-adherent political belief systems through activation of threat-signalling structures (i.e., anterior insula and amygdala; Kaplan et al., 2016).

Families have been considered the most fundamental source of identity and belonging (Warner et al., 2020), "the ultimate ingroup" (Rittenour, 2020, p. 227). People are liable to identify greatly with family members (Soliz & Rittenour, 2012), with whom they often share high levels of political concordance (Zuckerman et al., 2007). Families are believed to be our primary source of political attitude socialisation (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; Rekker et al., 2017). Yet, the modern family is also believed to be the most probable site for in-depth contact with those with contrary social identities and worldviews (Soliz & Rittenour, 2012; Colaner & Soliz, 2020). The Pew Research Center, for example, found only 22% of US adults reported that almost all family members shared their political opinions (Oliphant, 2018), which was closely related to the comfort they felt in expressing political views among family. Warner et al. (2020) suggests this is partly due to the increasing individualisation of young adults' values "in ways that create fractures in collective family values" (p. 3), and cite Pew Research Center (2018) data on intergenerational divides regarding social, financial and environmental policy as evidence. Such within-family difference has been suggested to promote conflict and division, as social identity outgroup affiliation clashes with ingroup family identification (Soliz & Rittenour, 2012), and Harwood (2006) recommends family researchers consider familial relationships from an inter-group perspective.

The significance of conflictual division within families should not be underestimated. Family relations are considered a key source of help and support and for some a gateway to human and cultural capital resources and improved well-being (Schlabach, 2013). Family

systems theory (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) centres the importance of family in the complex interweaving of rules, patterns, and norms created through interrelationships between family members, the coherence of which is maintained through homeostasis (Minuchin et al., 2007). Family connectedness has been shown to play an important protective role in physical and mental health outcomes (Resnick, et al., 1997). For example, in their review of family relationships and well-being, Thomas et al. (2017) found relationships between family members are significant for well-being across the lifespan, and that this significance grows as people age; Priest et al. (2018) found large associations between family variables (emotional climate, support, and relational strain) and biomarker measures of allostatic load; and Chen and Harris (2019) found that positive familial relationships in adolescence are associated with good mental health from early adolescence to midlife.

Given the suggested importance of family relationships in terms of identity, belonging, health, and well-being, and the hypothesised and observed fractures that can occur within families in the context of divisive political issues (DPIs), one would presume this is a well-established field of research. However, family scholars have suggested there is a dearth of research exploring how DPIs affect family relationships (Bayne et al., 2019; Davies, 2021; Johnson et al., 2019; Warner et al., 2020). To the author's knowledge, there has been no review to date examining literature concerning this area. Therefore, this review aimed to critique and synthesise literature concerning the impact of recent DPIs on family relationships. Specifically, it asked the following questions of the literature:

- R^1: How have recent DPIs impacted family relationships (if at all)?
- R^2: What are the perceived reasons for recent DPIs impacting family relationships?
- R^3: What consequences are there (if any) of the impacts of DPIs on family relationships?

Methods

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The scope of the current review was intentionally broad, given the recentness of observed

divisions in the UK and the hypothesised infancy of research in this area. Papers were deemed

eligible if they concerned family relationships in connection with political events since 2016 that

have been considered particularly divisive in the UK. Eligible topics were identified through

large-scale surveys of the British public (e.g., Juan-Torres et al., 2020; $N = 10,385$), and

comprised Brexit, the immigration and free-speech debates, the 2016 US presidential election,

global protests following the murder of George Floyd in the US, and Scottish Independence.

Relationships considered familial included family-of-origin, extended family, romantic

(i.e., marital, common-law, and civil partnership) and close non-typical family relationships (e.g.,

chosen families; Weston, 1991). Relational factors did not need to be the primary focus,

providing they were conceptually distinct from other areas of investigation. No restrictions were

imposed on publication status to mitigate effects of publication bias or the file drawer effect

(Cumming, 2014; Rosenthal, 1979). Empirical papers were considered eligible regardless of

methodology—providing quantitative studies included at least one measure of outcome—to

provide a full picture of the extant literature.

Criteria for exclusion concerned studies that were:

- Untranslated and not written in English, due to resource limitations.

- Published before 2016, to coincide with the EU referendum in the UK.

- Related to COVID-19 or climate change, based on research indicating these topics

  are not as divisive in the UK as commonly believed (e.g., Juan-Torres et al.,

  2020).

Data Sources

Published texts were sourced using Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Google Scholar, Medline, PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Social Policy & Practice, Web of Science Core Collection (Science, Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities, and Emerging Sources Editions). Sources of unpublished texts included OpenGrey.eu.

Search Strategy

Search terms were developed via an initial Google Scholar search and through supervisory discussion. Terms were conceptually related to family (e.g., 'famil*', 'spous*'), relationship (e.g., 'relation*', 'conflict*'), and DPIs (see Appendix A for example search strategy). The strategy was developed to balance sensitivity and specificity (e.g., using proximity operators). Initial searches incorporated the 2016 US presidential election, Brexit, Scottish independence, and the Black Lives Matter movement. However, after accessing Juan-Torres et al.'s (2020) Britain's Choice report, it was agreed to expand the strategy to include search terms relevant to immigration and freedom of speech. Final search run November 2021.

Study Selection

A PRISMA flow diagram (Page, et al., 2021) is displayed in Figure 1 detailing stages of the systematic search (Moher et al., 2009). Ten papers were found eligible for inclusion. Hagan et al. (2018) constituted a "near-miss" paper (Siddaway et al., 2019, p. 760), due to insufficient specificity regarding nature of relationship. Searches produced 131 citations. No additional papers were identified through a reference list hand search of included papers. Retrieved citations were exported to the RefWorks citation management software (Ex Libris, 2021). Twenty-four duplicates were identified —using automation duplication tools and a manual

screen—and removed. Title and abstract screens followed, and full texts of remaining entries

were assessed for eligibility.

Figure 1

PRISMA 2020 Diagram (Page et al., 2021) *Detailing Stages of the Review Search Process*
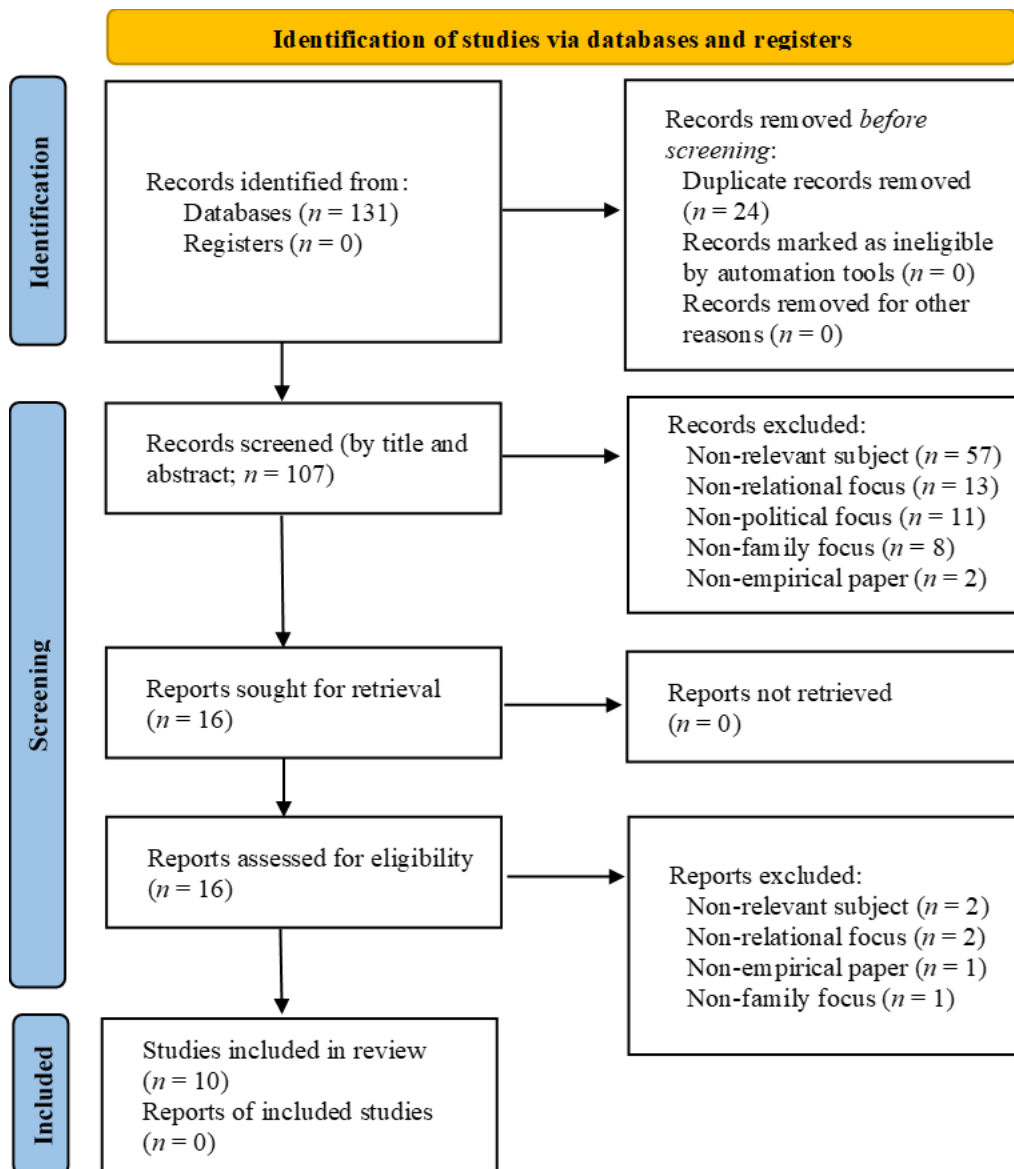
Data Extraction and Risk of Bias

Extracted data are presented in Table 1. Data detailing frequently reported sample demographics were also extracted (Table 2). Study level risk of bias was explored using the Mixed Methods Assessment Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018). The MMAT is a critical appraisal tool designed for systematic mixed study reviews. The tool consists of two screening questions—to determine whether papers are empirical—followed by twenty-five criteria for study appraisal by research design. The qualitative (1.1-1.5) and quantitative descriptive study (4.1-4.5) criteria sets were those relevant for the current review. Qualitative criteria were developed in consideration of Creswell (2013a), Sandelowski (2010), and Schwandt (2015) and quantitative in view of Draugalis et al. (2008) and Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklists (CASP, 2017).

Structure

This systematic review was conducted alongside Bigby's (2014) and Siddaway et al.'s (2019) guidelines concerning systematic review development and evaluation. Key study characteristics across papers are reported first. Research quality is then appraised using Hong et al.'s (2018) MMAT (Version 2018). Following this, findings are narratively synthesised by research question, to tell the story of the findings and to offer context and substance to conclusions drawn (Popay et al., 2006; Xiao and Watson, 2017). Narrative synthesis was also selected to reflect the conceptual breadth of the topic and the heterogeneity of research methodologies. Finally, review findings and clinical implications are discussed and recommendations for future research made.

Table 1

Data Extraction Table

Authors (year), study location	Relevant Aims (Topic)	Study Design	Analysis	N (M age, SD, % white)	Outcomes (measures)	Key findings
Afifi et al. (2020), USA	To examine "impact" (p.3) of voting patterns in the US election on individuals' romantic relationships	Longitudinal	Correlation, t-test, growth curve modelling, SEM	961 (36, 19-74 [range], 75.3%)	Voting differences (na), relationship maintenance (CECS), communal orientation (COS), election-related stress (PSS), conflict (idiosyncratic), relational resilience (RES), relational load (MEBO)	Ongoing reciprocal relationship maintenance predicted less election-related stress***, less conflict***, less relational load***, greater communal orientation***, and greater relational resilience***. Voting differently than one's partner predicted significantly greater perceived stress***, greater relational load***, less communal orientation***, and less relational resilience***. Voting differences negatively impacted communal orientation**, lessening relationship maintenance** and predicting conflict and election-related stress**, which was related to increased relational load and decreased relational resilience** (effect sizes for random or fixed effects nr).
Bayne et al. (2019), USA	To examine "impact" (p. 137) of the US election on relationships with politically different significant others	Semi-structured interview	CQR	16 (38, 13, 75%)	Na	Four overarching domains agreed: a) personal experiences and reactions to the election cycle, b) meaning-making, c) impact on the significant relationship and d) strategies and responses. Impact on relationship categories comprised positive ("joining and maintaining"; minority) and negative ("distancing and tension"; majority) impacts. Strategies and responses included stepping back from the relationship ("turning away"), aggression ("turning against"), relationship integrity maintenance ("turning toward") and seeking alternative outlets and support ("turning elsewhere").
Brown & Keller (2018), USA	To examine "impact" (p. 105) of the US election on GLBTQ individuals interactions with family members	Qualitative survey	Modified constant comparison	96 (35.8, 11.9[a], 89.6%)	Na	Arguments within families followed election and relationships diminished. In response, participants sought out like-minded and supportive friends and family and engaged with communities. Participants reframed disappointment with experiences as a new gauge of whom to avoid.
Davies (2021), UK	To explore experience of Brexit referendum in everyday family relationships	Qualitative interview	Thematic and narrative analysis	31 (nr, 18-72 [range], 80.6%)	Na	Conversations about Brexit were 'rarely easy' (p. 7) and could lead to conflict. It mattered greatly to participants what was thought of them and that their reasons for their opinions were understood. Participants drew on detailed knowledge of others when deciding whether to engage in conversations. Trajectory of conversations followed established family patterns. Avoiding talking about the issue served to protect the relationship.
Gabriele-Black et al. (2021), USA	To examine how the US election "shaped" (p. 107) relationship dynamics of sexual minority adoptive parents	Qualitative longitudinal survey	Content Analysis	50 (47.6, 6.1, 90%)	Na	Distinction made between immediate and extended families. Immediate: a) differences in emotional reaction can lead to tension and distance, regardless of voting differences, b) emotions concerning event can 'boil over' (p. 113) into interactions, c) differing opinions between parents and older children can introduce conflict. Extended: Communication and time spent with family was limited

Authors (year), study location	Relevant Aims	Study Design	Analysis	N (M age, SD, % white)	Outcomes (measures)	Key findings
Gonzalez et al. (2018), USA	To explore GLBTQ narratives regarding family-of-origin in response to the US election	Qualitative survey	Thematic analysis	274 (27.7, 8.9, 79.7%)	Na	Divisions within family-of-origin due to the presidential election, with some cutting off all ties. Political agreement within families led to strengthened relationships. Election promoted an increase in dialogue with family regarding GLBTQ issues and impacts on minority communities more generally.
Johnson et al. (2019), USA	To examine how a public-issue topic may predict family relationships (2016 US election)	Cross-sectional	CFA, linear regression, moderation analysis, mediation analysis	479 (19.8, 1.91, 70.8%)	Political view similarity (idiosyncratic), family communication patterns (RFCP), closeness level (idiosyncratic), election-related stress (PSS), party identification (idiosyncratic)	Higher conversation orientation predicted a more positive perceived effect of political talk on family closeness*** (R^2=.14). View similarity correlated with perceived effect of closeness*** (R^2=.54) and stress after election*** (R^2=-.31), and acted as a weak antagonistic moderator in the relationship between conformity orientation and (positive) effect of conversations on relational closeness*** (R^2=.34).
Pletta et al. (2021), USA	To investigate how the US election "impacted" (p. 2) structure and communication patterns in the family systems of TNB adolescents	Qualitative longitudinal survey & semi-structured interview	Immersion/ crystallization, thematic analysis	60 (17.3, 1.9[b], 83.3%)	Na	Pre-existing relationship dynamics tended to deepen postelection. Political agreement and postelection support fostered increased relational closeness. Political discordance promoted estrangement. Either certain conversations became taboo or communication was severed. 'Alliances and coalitions' (p. 9) were formed within families based on political affiliation and political ideologies.
Riggle et al. (2021), USA	To understand "impacts" (p. 115) of the US election on SMW from racial/racialized groups	Qualitative survey	Modified constant comparison	299 (49.3, 13.3, 54.8%)	Na	Conflict occurred in politically discordant relationships. African American participants reported no election-related conflict, but also no election-related political discordance between family members. Distance in relationship and agreed avoidance of topic evidenced.
Warner et al. (2020), USA	To investigate nature of familial conversations about political differences (2016 US election)	Cross-sectional	SEM	833 (51.2, 15.6, 72.4%)	Family political difference, political animus, supportive communication, respecting divergent values, inappropriate self-disclosure, emphasizing divergent values, shared family identity (all idiosyncratic), communication accommodation (NAC)	Those reporting the greatest political disagreement within family relationships perceived less accommodation communication*** and more (non)accommodating communication*** from family members (effect sizes nar). Participants who reported receiving expressed respect from a family member for having family-divergent political values reported greater shared identity with this family member*** (effect size nar).

Note. SEM = structural equation modelling; US = United States; na = not applicable; CECS = Chronic Emotional Capital Scale (Feeney & Lemay, 2012); COS = Communal Orientation Scale (Afifi et al., 2016); PSS = Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983); RES = Relationship Efficacy Scale (Murray & Holmes, 1997); MEBO = Measure of Experienced Burnout in Organizations (Maslach & Jackson, 1981); nr = not reported; CQR = consensual qualitative research; GLBTQ = gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis; RFCP = Revised Family Communication Patterns (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990); TNB = transgender and/or non-binary; SMW = sexual minority women; nar = not accurately reported; NAC = (Non)accommodative Communication Scale (Colaner et al., 2014).

[a]Age data provided by only 83 participants. [b]Age data only reported for TNB youth and siblings.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < 0.001

Results

Study Characteristics

Included papers were published between 2018 and 2021. Only one paper did not collect and analyse data from the US (Davies, 2021; UK). The remainder all concerned the US election. Davies (2021) explored family relationships in the context of the 2016 EU referendum. No papers were identified examining family relationships in the context of Scottish Independence, the immigration or freedom of speech debates, or the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Sample

This review concerns data from 3,099 participants. A broad range of demographic information was reported across studies (Table 2). All papers reported age and percentage of participants identifying as White (Table 1). Only one study did not provide mean age (Davies, 2021), reporting range instead (18-72). Mean age across remaining studies was 38. In the US studies, 73.2% ($N = 3,068$) of participants identified as White. The next most frequently identified ethnicities were African American (7.9%), Latinx (7.8%), Asian American/Pacific Islander (4.7%) and finally American Indian/Alaskan Native (2%; all $N = 1,742$). Two qualitative studies identified participants as "women"/"men" (Bayne et al., 2019; Davies, 2021) with the remainder referring to gender (women = 61%, $N = 826$). All quantitative studies referred to participants as "females"/"males" (female = 56.1%, $N = 2273$). The other most frequently reported demographic categories were educational attainment and sexual orientation (six studies each), and gender identity and political affiliation (five studies each; Table 1). Five studies concerned gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ) populations. Four studies reported geographic location (Afifi et al., 2020; Brown & Keller, 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; Riggle et al., 2021). Voting patterns were also reported in four studies (Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2019; Pletta et al., 2021). Other demographic categories included household income and

Table 2

Most Frequently Recorded Demographic Information Across Studies (Excluding Age)

	Afifi et al. (2020) N = 961 % (n)	Bayne et al. (2019) N = 16 % (n)	Brown & Keller (2018) N = 96 % (n)	Davies (2021) N = 31 % (n)	Gabriele-Black et al. (2018) N = 50 % (n)	Gonzalez et al. (2018) N = 274 % (n)	Johnson et al. (2019) N = 479 % (n)	Pletta et al. (2021) N = 60 % (n)	Riggle et al. (2021) N = 299 % (n)	Warner et al. (2020) N = 833 % (n)
Race										
Asian	6 (nr)	nr	1 (1)	13 (4)	Nr	1 (4)	7 (33)	6 (4)	0 (0)	5 (40)
Black	8 (nr)	nr	4 (4)	3 (1)	Nr	4 (12)	5 (24)	2 (1)	33 (100)	12 (97)
Hispanic	5 (nr)	nr	2 (2)	0 (0)	Nr	7 (20)	7 (34)	3 (2)	12 (35)	9 (78)
Multiracial	5 (nr)	nr	3 (3)	3 (1)	Nr	4 (12)	nr	2 (1)	0 (0)	nr
Native American	nr	nr	0 (0)	0 (0)	Nr	0.5 (2)	5 (24)	5 (3)	0 (0)	0.6 (5)
White	75 (724)	75 (12)	90 (86)	81 (25)	90 (45)	80 (221)	71 (339)	83 (52)	55 (164)	72 (603)
Gender										
Woman	-	63 (10)	48 (46)	74 (23)	50 (25)	57 (156)	-	45 (29)	94 (281)	-
Man	-	nr	31 (30)	26 (8)	32 (16)	25 (67)	-	46 (30)	1 (4)	-
Other	-	nr	18 (17)	0 (0)	Nr	19 (51)	-	9 (6)	5 (14)	-
Education										
High School/Some College	32 (nr)	-	25 (24)	-	4 (2)	34 (94)	-	7 (2)[a]	31 (93)	-
College Degree	49 (nr)	-	41 (40)	-	36 (18)	36 (100)	-	34 (10)[a]	25 (75)	-
Graduate Degree	19 (nr)	-	33 (32)	-	60 (30)	26 (71)	-	55 (17)[a]	41 (123)	-
Sexual Orientation										
Bisexual	0 (0)	-	21 (20)	-	8 (4)	25 (68)	-	9 (7)	15 (46)	-
Gay/Lesbian[b]	4 (39)	-	51 (49)	-	88 (44)	40 (108)	-	13 (11)	73 (217)	-
Straight	96 (922)	-	mnr	-	0 (0)	3 (7)	-	44 (36)	0 (0)	-
Other[c]	0 (0)	-	27 (27)[d]	-	2 (1)	34 (91)	-	34 (28)	12 (36)	-

	Afifi et al. (2020) $N = 961$ % (n)	Bayne et al. (2019) $N = 16$ % (n)	Brown & Keller (2018) $N = 96$ % (n)	Davies (2021) $N = 31$ % (n)	Gabriele-Black et al. (2018) $N = 50$ % (n)	Gonzalez et al. (2018) $N = 274$ % (n)	Johnson et al. (2019) $N = 479$ % (n)	Pletta et al. (2021) $N = 60$ % (n)	Riggle et al. (2021) $N = 299$ % (n)	Warner et al. (2020) $N = 833$ % (n)
Gender Identity										
Cisgender	-	-	59 (57)	-	82 (41)	75 (207)	-	60 (39)	94 (281)	-
Trans/Trans History	-	-	20 (19)	-	0 (0)	25 (67)	-	31 (20)	1 (4)	-
Other[e]	-	-	18 (17)	-	0 (0)	nr[f]	-	10 (6)	5 (14)	-
Political/Party Affiliation										
Conservative/Republican	-	50 (8)	2 (2)	-	2 (1)	-	56 (268)	3 (2)	-	-
Liberal/Democrat	-	50 (8)	66 (63)	-	92 (46)	-	26 (125)	52 (31)	-	-
Moderate	-	0 (0)	16 (15)	-	0 (0)	-	nr	13 (8)	-	-
Other	-	0 (0)	16 (15)	-	0 (0)	-	nr	nr	-	-

Note. nr = not reported; mnr = measured but not reported.

[a] Caregivers only ($n = 29$). [b] Including 'mostly'. [c] Including queer, pansexual, sapiosexual, asexual, mixed, fluid, and questioning. [d] Includes those who identified as straight. [e] Including non-binary, nonconforming, questioning, genderqueer. [f] 'Other' gender identities included in cisgender/transgender figures.

relationship status (three studies each), and spiritual/religious affiliation and socioeconomic

status (two studies each).

Methodology

Three studies used quantitative methodologies (Afifi et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2019;

Warner et al., 2020) and the rest qualitative. Quantitative designs were solely correlational, with

Johnson et al. (2019) and Warner et al. (2020) using cross-sectional methods and Afifi et al.

(2020) longitudinal. Of the qualitative papers, four employed surveys only (Brown & Keller,

2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021 [longitudinal]; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Riggle et al., 2021), two

interviews only (Bayne et al, 2019 [semi-structured; *M* duration = 1 hr]; Davies, 2021

[unspecified; duration range = 1-2 hrs]), and one both semi-structured interviews and a

longitudinal survey (Pletta et al., 2021; *M* duration = 1 hr).

Outcomes

Outcomes assessed in the correlational studies included political similarity and

difference, family communication, election-related stress, and relational factors (i.e., closeness,

shared identity, conflict, relationship maintenance, and relational resilience and load). All

correlational studies used at least one idiosyncratic measure —either developed within the study

or in previous research—and one (Warner et al., 2020) used only one non-idiosyncratic measure

(nonaccommodative communication; Colaner et al., 2014). Internal consistency scores were

reported—and found acceptable—for all idiosyncratic measures, bar a 'political animus' feeling

thermometer rating scale (Warner et al., 2020). Only one non-idiosyncratic measure was used in

its original form (Relationship Efficacy Scale [Murray & Holmes, 1997]). The remainder were

adapted through item rewording (Chronic Emotional Capital Scale [Feeney & Lemay, 2012];

Perceived Stress Scale [Cohen et al., 1983]), item addition (Chronic Emotional Capital Scale

[Feeney & Lemay, 2012]) and deletion (Communal Orientation Scale [Afifi et al., 2016];

Revised Family Communication Patterns [Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990]), and context

amendments (Measure of Experienced Burnout in Organizations [Maslach & Jackson, 1981]).

All adapted scales were found to have acceptable internal consistency.

Analysis

       Two quantitative studies used modelling analyses. Afifi et al. (2020) employed growth

curve modelling and structural equation modelling (SEM) and Warner et al. (2020) SEM only.

Johnson et al. (2019), adopted linear regression, moderation, and mediation analyses. Of the

qualitative studies, three used thematic analysis (Davies, 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Pletta et

al., 2021). Alongside thematic analysis, Davies (2021) used narrative synthesis and Pletta et al.

(2021) immersion/crystallization (Borkan, 1999)—an approach consisting of reflective cycles of

immersions and emergent "intuitive crystallizations until reportable interpretations are reached"

(pp. 180-181). Two studies reported using modified versions of constant comparison

methodologies (Brown & Keller, 2018 [adapted from Glaser, 1978]; Riggle et al., 2021

[reportedly adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006]). Of the two remaining studies Gabriele-Black

et al., (2021) used content analysis and Bayne et al. (2019) consensual qualitative research

methodology (CQR; Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 2005)—an inductive method of interpretation and

analysis that takes account of context and integrates multiple perspectives through the use of a

research team.

Risk of Bias

       MMAT criterion ratings by study are presented in Table 3. Explanatory guides for

relevant methodological criteria ratings are included in Appendix B, and qualifications on which

Table 3

Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool – Version 18 (Hong et al., 2018) Risk of Bias Criterion Ratings by Methodological Approach

		Afifi et al. (2020)	Bayne et al. (2019)	Brown & Keller (2018)	Davies (2021)	Gabriele-Black et al. (2021)	Gonzalez et al. (2018)	Johnson et al. (2019)	Pletta et al. (2021)	Riggle et al. (2021)	Warner et al. (2020)
Study Design		Longitudinal	Interviews	Qualitative survey	Interviews	Qualitative survey	Qualitative survey	Cross-sectional	Qualitative survey and interviews	Qualitative survey	Cross-sectional
Qualitative											
1.1	Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	-	Y	?	Y	Y	?	-	Y	?	-
1.2	Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	-	Y	N	?	N	Y	-	Y	N	-
1.3	Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	-	Y	N	Y	Y	N	-	Y	N	-
1.4	Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	-
1.5	Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?	-	?	N	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	N	-
Quantitative Descriptive Studies											
4.1	Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	Y
4.2	Is the sample representative of the target population?	?	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	-	Y
4.3	Are the measurements appropriate?	Y	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	-	N
4.4	Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?	?	-	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	?
4.5	Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	Y

ratings were made are detailed in Appendix C—as recommended in Hong et al. (2018). A synthesis of risk of bias findings is outlined below.

Approach

Clear research questions were detailed in four qualitative studies (Bayne et al., 2019; Davies, 2021; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Pletta et al., 2021) from which approach suitability could be determined. In these studies, a qualitative approach was found suitable. Research questions were not clearly articulated in the remaining qualitative studies (Brown & Keller, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Riggle et al., 2021), rendering an appraisal of approach suitability untenable. These studies did, however, provide aims from which lines of enquiry could be identified, although most were too general to specify approach suitability. Aims in six studies (Afifi et al., 2020; Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Pletta et al., 2021; Riggle et al., 2021) refer to impacts or effects of DPIs on relationships. However, no papers used experimental methodologies, so assertions regarding impact could not be conclusively determined. Two studies (Afifi et al., 2020; Pletta et al., 2021) used longitudinal methods, providing some support for conclusions drawn concerning effect. However, the absence of controls moderates this benefit.

Sampling

Sampling strategies in all correlational studies were found relevant to address respective research questions. Though all used nonprobability sampling methods, two studies (Afifi et al., 2020; Warner et al., 2020) used large-scale online recruitment platforms, increasing sample representativeness, and the other (Johnson et al., 2019) justified their sample frame—i.e., college students—based on the ideological individuation found to occur at this developmental stage (Koepke & Denissen, 2012). Only Warner et al.'s (2020) sample was found representative of the

target population (general US population), due to the sample-stratification methods used by their

chosen online recruitment platform (Qualtrics, 2020). Sample sizes in all three correlational

studies were a notable strength, ranging from 479 (Johnson et al., 2019) to 961 (Afifi et al., 2020;

$M = 758$, $SD = 249.67$). Sampling in all qualitative studies appeared appropriate and adequate,

promoting analytic richness (Fossey et al., 2002). Two studies (Gabriele-Black et al., 2021;

Riggle et al., 2021) drew samples from relevant, larger longitudinal or survey studies. The

majority of qualitative studies used online recruitment (Bayne et al., 2019; Brook & Keller,

2018; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Riggle et al., 2021) incorporating population-specific online social

groups and listservs. Davies (2021) used a "door knocking" approach (Davies, 2011, p. 290)—

supplemented by other sampling methods (e.g., snowballing)—to access everyday lived

experiences of Brexit.

There were some notable sample imbalances and omissions across and within studies. In

addition to those listed above, there was a substantial overrepresentation of those with

liberal/Democrat political affiliation (57% versus 23% conservative/Republican; $N = 701$) and

those with a graduate degree (39% versus 32.1% college educated in the US population [US

Census Bureau, 2019]; $N = 1,740$). In the US studies, Hispanic or Latinx (7.8%) and Black or

African Americans (7.9%) were grossly underrepresented (versus 18.5% and 13.4% respectively;

US Census Bureau, 2019). Four US election studies (Afifi, 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Riggle et

al., 2021; Warner et al., 2020) did not report political/party affiliation or voting pattern

proportions and the sole Brexit study (Davies, 2021) did not report Brexit positions.

Methodology

Qualitative data collection methods were found adequate to address the research question

in three qualitative studies (Bayne et al., 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Pletta et al., 2021).

Reasons for the remainder not meeting this methodological quality criterion concerned their limited research question specificity, rendering data collection methods too specific or too vague (Brown & Keller, 2018; Riggle et al., 2021), or a combination of the two (Gabriele-Black et al., 2021). Data collection methods in the remaining study (Davies, 2021) appeared sufficient to address research questions, but interview schedules were not included and the nature of interviews was not explained, making it difficult to appraise. For the quantitative descriptive studies, measures were found appropriate in only one study (Afifi et al., 2020). While variables were clearly defined in the other two (Johnson et al., 2019; Warner et al., 2020) and logically followed study rationales, a number of idiosyncratic measures were used in both studies. Internal consistency scores were provided but no additional validation was undertaken.

Two further strengths found across qualitative studies included the use of research teams and reflexivity. All qualitative studies bar one (Davies, 2021) utilised a research team for data collection and analysis, and members were situated in relation to the data (Patnaik, 2013; Pitard, 2017). In addition, four of these studies explicitly referenced bias and assumption monitoring (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Pletta et al., 2021; Riggle et al., 2021) and one employed two "external experts" for consultation when "methodological issues arose" (Bayne et al., 2019, p. 140). All bar one study (Davies, 2021) also included detailed descriptions of interview or survey questions, with four providing full schedules (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018).

Analysis

Findings were adequately derived from the data in four of the qualitative studies (Bayne et al., 2019; Davies, 2021; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Pletta et al., 2021), with analytic methods found appropriate for stated research questions and data collection methods. Davies' (2021)

thematic and narrative analyses met criterion threshold but no explanation of how the two analyses were synthesised was provided. Three studies commissioned independent auditors for additional quality assurance (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Riggle et al., 2021), and in Brown & Keller (2018), this auditor was blind to study purpose. Two studies reported using "simplified" (Brown & Keller, 2018, p. 108) or "modified" (Riggle et al., 2021, p. 116) constant comparison methodologies—Brown and Keller (2018) citing Glaser (1978) and Riggle et al. (2021) Braun and Clarke (2006)—which are fundamental features of grounded theory approaches (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006). However, neither paper adopted grounded theory methodology or analysis, and Braun and Clarke's (2006) analytic method concerns thematic analysis not constant comparison. A central strength of all qualitative analyses was the substantiation of findings. Each qualitative paper provided comprehensive, rich, and sensitive quotations to qualify findings and grounded result interpretation in the data. Gonzalez et al. (2018) further validated findings by giving participants the opportunity to provide feedback.

Statistical analyses were found appropriate in all quantitative papers and paired well with study research questions—a particular methodological strength. The only other criterion met in all quantitative papers was relevance of sampling strategy to research question. However, no paper provided response or nonresponse data nor information regarding missing data or imputation. This omission is problematic given missing data is a common phenomenon in questionnaire-based surveys (Tsiampalis & Panagiotakos, 2020) and can introduce bias. Furthermore, only one paper (Johnson et al., 2019) reported effect sizes, limiting interpretability of findings in the other two quantitative papers. Warner et al. (2020) included β weights as effect

size indicators. However, further computation would be needed to convert such values into practicable effect sizes for SEM (Gomer et al., 2019; Ziglari, 2017).

Overview of Bias

Hong et al. (2018) disadvise calculating overall scores to assess risk of bias. Instead, they recommend "a more detailed presentation of...ratings of each criterion" (p. 1), provided in Appendix C. Across the literature base, quality was found generally satisfactory, in that risk of bias criteria were more often met than not. Two primary concerns were identified regarding quantitative studies: a lack of nonresponse bias reporting and validation of measures. However, several areas of strength were identified too (e.g., use of online recruitment platforms, large sample sizes, and appropriate statistical analyses), which should commend findings to the reader. The most frequently identified risk of bias issue in the qualitative studies was research question ambiguity. It introduced bias across several criteria in three studies (Brown & Keller, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Riggle et al., 2021). However, interpretation of results was well substantiated by the data across the board, which should increase reader confidence in synthesis interpretability. In addition, management of research bias in all bar one paper (Davies, 2021) was a notable strength and further supports review findings. Several studies discussed the impacts of DPIs on relationships. However, all studies were observational. Therefore, cause-and-effect findings should be treated with caution. Readers are advised to take into consideration that the following synthesis concerns reported impacts and not—necessarily—those that are definitively established.

Synthesis

"Impact" on Family Relationships

The reported relational impacts of DPIs broadly reflected a positive-versus-negative impact framework. This binary was most clearly described in Bayne et al. (2019) through the concepts "joining with or maintaining" (cohesive impacts) and "distancing and tension" (conflictual impacts). Bayne et al. (2019) reported that the majority of their sample described negative consequences. This finding was reflected in the overall composition of papers, in that all studies described negative impacts and only six positive (Bayne et al., 2020; Davies, 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; Pletta et al., 2021; Warner et al., 2020). One paper (Gonzalez et al., 2018) detailed a third possibility—"no change"—a condition of no impact on familial relationships. This possibility was found contingent on four potentialities: 1) pre-existing estrangement, 2) maintenance of pre-existing cohesion, 3) prior agreement not to discuss politics, or 4) non-disclosure of relevant identities. Within the positive-versus-negative binary, there appeared two relational dimensions: respect/aggression and proximity/distance, mapping across cohesive (respect and proximity) and conflictual (aggression and distance) impact domains.

Respect/Aggression. Delineations of aggression were present in three studies (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021). All three included relational escalation in the context of family conversations about DPIs. This was not always related to political difference. Gabriele-Black et al. (2021), for example, described cases where differences in emotional response to Donald Trump's 2016 election involved a "boil[ing] over" (p. 113), with one participant explaining: "*I am so irritable that I have been very angry at times, even at home. That includes yelling at my spouse…not because we differ in our politics, I am just so damn irritable!*" (p. 113). Other cases of aggression—e.g., "fighting, bullying, and borderline

harassment" (Brown & Keller, 2018, p. 113)—however, did appear related to difference of

political opinion: *I wanted to shake him and say "Wake up! Look what's going on. You're part of*

this. You can't be content with this [Donald Trump's election]. You can't just wind up this toy and

let it run across the room and not worry about what it's going to bang into" (Bayne et al. 2019,

p.147). Other forms of aggression were more covert, such as "attempts at relational and political

persuasion" (Bayne et al., p. 147), which ranged from trying to alter others' political beliefs to

posing relationship ultimatums.

 Incidences of respect and understanding were also observed in the literature. Three

studies reported respect-based responses. Davies (2021) observed that some participants with

divergent views on Brexit "*worked to ensure mutual respect of one another's opinions and*

views" (p. 8) and Bayne et al. (2019) that some politically divided couples attempted to

understand the motivations of those who voted differently in the US election. Gonzalez et al.

(2018) described both increased efforts to understand others' positions—"*Other family members*

have risen to the occasion and taken the time to at least listen to my experiences as a trans

person in this country" (p. 76)—and increased respect—"*My nuclear family is conservative*

Christian and until the election, my parents were openly homophobic. Upon seeing the

divisiveness of the current political climate, they have become much more open-minded and

concerned with my well-being as a queer person" (p. 76). Occurrences of respect and

understanding were more often, though, connected with relativity of difference (i.e., the greater

the ideological similarity, the more likely there is to be perceived support and respect; Warner et

al., 2020) as opposed to being a product of the divisive issue itself.

 Proximity/Distance. The shifting proximity of familial relationships in the context of

DPIs appeared key and was reported in all qualitative studies and one quantitative (Johnson et

al., 2019). Papers discussed experiences of both increased closeness (Bayne et al., 2019; Davies, 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018) and increased distance (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Pletta et al., 2021; Riggle et al., 2021). Two papers (Bayne et al, 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2018) reported that DPIs increased frequency of politically-related conversation among families. Gonzalez et al. (2018) described incidences of greater openness to DPI-conversation, with one participant explaining: "*crucial conversations have begun within my immediate family about systemic discrimination against all minority groups…(even within my own family members)*" (p. 76). Similar findings were reported in Bayne et al. (2019), where two participants were quoted believing the 2016 election led to increased discussion ("*it's kind of the first time in forever that we actually discussed the politics of today*"; p. 146) and openness ("*I like that we have an open dialogue and are able to voice our true feelings*"; p. 146).

Other examples of increased familial closeness were linked to a prioritising of family relationship over issue. Davies (2021) found the possibility of conflict among family prompted some participants to greater appreciate the value of the relationship, quoting one Remain voter saying of her Leave-voting brother: "*We could have had a massive falling out, but I think you think, what's the point? . . . At the end of the day, he's my brother and we get on very, very well*" (p. 12). Similar sentiment—of the preeminent importance of relationship—was observed in Bayne et al. (2019): "*Relationships are more important than whatever human being ends up being elected into office. Relationships, in my opinion, with family and friends is much more important than that*" (p. 148).

Relational distance was captured across three different types of experience: restriction of personal information sharing, exclusion, and stepping away from the relationship. Gonzalez et al.

(2018) described feelings of betrayal following the 2016 election and participants "avoid[ing] sharing intimate details of their lives because of the election" (p. 71). Pletta et al. (2021) discussed exclusion in the context of "alliances and coalitions" (p. 9), broadly capturing the duality of connecting and distancing relational impacts. Alliances served to create "subtle networks of support around shared experiences" (Pletta et al., 2021, p. 9), whereas coalitions concerned alignments that promoted exclusion. In one case, decreased communication with one family member led to increasing communication with other members of the family, resulting in a felt experience of intentional exclusion. The "stepping back from [the] relationship" experience (Bayne et al., 2019, p. 146) constituted the most frequently reported relationship-distancing impact across studies, being explicitly referenced in six papers (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Pletta et al., 2021; Riggle et al., 2021).

Relational distance was found to be sudden ("*I immediately unfriended her*"; Riggle et al., 2021, p. 119) or progressive ("*I am talking to my parents and extended family less and less*"; Gonzalez et al., 2018, p. 71); temporary ("*I didn't talk to my father for about 2 weeks. He called me every day for about a week and left voicemails like 'I don't want politics to come between us'*"; Brown & Keller, 2018, p. 113) or more permanent ("*My dad and I do not talk—we had an argument about the election during the summer and have not really talked since*"; Gonzalez et al., 2018); sometimes mutual ("Participants not only cut off ties with [family] members…but they also talked about being cut off by other family members"; Gonzalez et al., 2018, p. 71); and to lie on a spectrum from "limit[ing]…level of communication" (Gabriele-Black et al., 2021, p. 113) to "*cut[ting] ties*" (Brown & Keller, 2018, p. 113). There were cases where relational

distance reportedly led to "total reorganization [sic] of the family system (e.g.,…separation or

divorce)" (Pletta et al., 2021, p.9), as described by one participant in Bayne et al. (2019):

> *My wife turned to me and she said, "If you vote for him, I will leave you" and she is like*
>
> *"I need you to promise me that you will not vote for Donald Trump" and I was like "OK,*
>
> *I think that I can hold up to that promise," but it turned out differently whenever I*
>
> *actually got to the ballot box. (p. 146)*

Reasons for Impact

Reported reasons for impact appeared to concern similarity/agreement versus

difference/disagreement, established family dynamics, and issue importance.

Similarity/agreement versus difference/disagreement was the most frequently identified reason

for reported impacts, being present in all studies. Broadly, similarity/agreement reportedly

support cohesion (Bayne et al., 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; Pletta et al.,

2021), and difference/disagreement tension and strain (as described in all studies). Participants in

Gonzalez et al. (2018), for example, reported relational stress after discovering family members

had voted for Donald Trump—"*My parents both voted for Trump despite claiming they would*

never do anything that works against my best interest…it has been stressful and I would say

there's a lot of strain in the family now" (p. 69). By contrast, Johnson et al. (2019) found view

similarity correlated with perceived effect of political talk on closeness with medium effect (p

< .001, R^2=.54) and operated as an antagonistic moderator between family conformity

orientation and (positive) effect of political conversation on relational closeness (p < .001,

R^2=.34; small effect). Warner et al. (2020) found that expressed respect alongside family-

divergent political values was found to significantly relate to greater shared family identity (p

< .001). An appropriate effect size was not given for this finding. However, authors reported

elsewhere that shared identity scores among this group were "two-thirds of a standard deviation" (Warner et al., 2020, p. 15) higher than groups where divergence-related respect did not feature.

Established family dynamics were reported to partially account for relational impact variation in five studies (Afifi et al., 2020; Davies, 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; Pletta et al., 2021). Davies (2021) provided the most detailed account of this phenomenon, the "embedded nature of familial relationships" (p. 8). For example, intimate knowledge of significant others was found to guide decisions about engaging in DPI discussion, and the extent to which sense was made of family-value-divergent views. Another example in Davies (2021) was of gendered ways of "doing family" (p. 9). Many women in their sample, for example, spoke of using "everyday mothering practices" (p. 9)—e.g., peacekeeping—to avoid conflict. Furthermore, Pletta et al. (2021) found "dynamics of preexisting relationships were often amplified" (p. 8) following divisive socio-political change. Established family dynamics were the most commonly identified reason for suggested relational impact in the correlational studies. Afifi et al. (2020) found that habitual relationship maintenance (through openness, assurances, joint activities etc.; Canary et al., 1993) predicted reduced conflict and relational load, and enhanced communal orientation (all $p < .001$; effect sizes not reported). Johnson et al. (2019) found that higher conversation orientation predicted a more positive (though small) effect of political talk on family closeness ($p < .001$, $R^2=.14$).

The importance of DPIs purportedly related to relational change in five studies (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Davies, 2021; Gabriele-Black, 2021; Gonzalez, 2018). Identity appeared a pertinent factor regarding issue-importance in three studies (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Gonzalez, 2018). Bayne et al. (2019), for example, connected escalation in interpersonal aggression to "how '*political ideals are very closely tied to [...identities]*'

resulting in '*stress and anxiety*'" (p. 147). Other emotions (e.g., anger) also reportedly connected issue importance to suggested relational impacts:

> *We emailed, called, and texted often, and now I've pulled back because I'm angry. I know*
>
> *they know why and it hurts them, but I can't help it.*" [The participant's] anger, stemming
>
> from her feeling "*like some of the people closest to me did not have my family's best*
>
> *interests in mind*" (Gabriele-Black, 2021, p. 113).

Issue importance, and its connection to family relationships, also appeared related to care for what family think of the individual and their beliefs (Davies, 2021; "it mattered greatly that their reasoning was understood" p. 7). The association between family relations and issue-importance was related to protective behaviours concerning one's own and others' well-being ("Her feelings of anger and betrayal caused her to reduce contact with extended family to protect herself, her spouse, and her children"; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021).

Consequences of Impact

Two overarching clusters emerged in the literature regarding suggested consequences of relational impact: 1) knowing who, how, and when to engage (in DPI-based discussion); and 2) family becoming emotionally and relationally taxing. All qualitative study findings included some reference to a 'knowing who, how, and when to engage' consequence. This consequence concerns an enhanced knowledge or discernment regarding who can be engaged in DPI conversations, how that engagement should unfold, and when. For example, five studies described learning whom to avoid talking politics with (Bayne et al., 2019; Davies, 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Pletta et al., 2021; Riggle et al., 2021)—often with the aim of protecting the relationship (Davies, 2021)—four whom to obtain validation from (e.g., other family members or community members with politically convergent views; Bayne et al., 2019; Brown

& Keller, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Pletta et al., 2021), and five whom to avoid completely (Bayne et al., 2019; Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2018; Pletta et al., 2021; Riggle et al., 2021).

Five studies found that family relationships felt increasingly taxing following the described relational impacts (Afifi et al., 2020; Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Gonzalez et al. 2018; Pletta et al., 2021). Findings in Afifi et al. (2020), for example, supported a hypothesised resilience and relational load model, in which increased levels of conflict and consequent election-related stress predicted greater relational load and reduced relational resilience. A qualitative example of the same phenomenon comes from Gonzalez et al. (2018), in which one participant explained: "*It's been hard to balance a relationship and the relationship with my aunt has suffered. She is offended and feels disrespected and I feel attacked so it's hard to communicate*" (p. 71).

Discussion

Summary of Findings

This review identified, critiqued, and synthesised the extant literature on family relationships in the wake of DPIs since 2016. The review aimed to explore, as far as is possible, the impacts these issues had on family relationships, and the consequences of and reasons for them. Seven qualitative papers and three quantitative descriptive studies were identified through a systematic literature search. Nine papers explored perceived impacts of the 2016 US presidential election and one Brexit.

The papers reported either positive or negative impacts of DPIs on family relationships. Positive impacts concerned respect and closeness and negative impacts aggression and distance. Interpersonal aggression was most frequently linked to ideological difference—supporting the

underlying principles of affective polarisation (Iyengar et al., 2012)—although this was not

necessarily always the case (i.e., interpersonal aggression could still occur in ideologically

concordant families; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021). The most common form of relational distance

was reportedly "stepping back from [the] relationship" (Bayne et al., 2019, p. 146), which

arguably accounts for Iyengar et al.'s (2018) observation regarding the significance of political

identity to social division. Other forms of distance involved exclusion and restricting the sharing

of personal information, supporting Cowan and Baldassarri's (2018) finding that identity-salient

attitudes are withheld from ideologically divergent others. Examples of respect and closeness

included efforts made by family members to understand and express respect for divergent

political views, increased frequency of political conversation, and a prioritising of the family

relationship—a finding aligned with Warner et al.'s (2020) observation that family constitutes a

fundamental source of identity and belonging.

Agreement versus disagreement (or similarity versus difference) was found the most

frequently reported reason for suggested relational impacts. Political agreement was found to

foster cohesion and disagreement tension and strain. The observed relationship between political

difference/disagreement and relational strain supported Bennett's (2012) and Vraga et al.'s

(2015) observations regarding the challenges of engaging with ideologically-divergent others on

identity-salient political issues. Furthermore, Soliz and Rittenour's (2012) suggestion that within-

family political differences foster conflict and division was also supported by this observed

relationship. Other factors found to contribute to reported relational impacts were the presence of

preexisting family dynamics and issue importance—or the notion that the more identity-salient a

political issue is, the higher the stakes regarding family similarity or difference (Mason, 2018).

The relationship seen in the literature between issue-salience and protective behaviours appeared

consistent with Kaplan et al.'s (2016) finding concerning amygdala and anterior insula activation in response to challenges to previously established political beliefs.

Two overarching consequences of suggested impacts were reported: knowing who, how and when to engage (in DPI conversation) and family becoming emotionally and relationally taxing. Regarding engagement with family DPI conversation, participants across studies discussed learning: a) whom to avoid, b) from whom (and how) to seek validation, and c) with whom one can express one's political views. This last point echoed Pew Research Center findings concerning the ease with which people can express their political views among ideologically-similar or -different family members (Oliphant, 2018).

Strengths and Limitations

This review's primary limitation was the lack of a review team. A single reviewer can increase risk of bias at the screening, selection, and quality appraisal stages (e.g., Gartlehner et al., 2020). Supervisory consultation was used, however, to mitigate these effects during screening and selection. A secondary limitation involved not clarifying with study authors when criterion ratings could not be determined using available data. This limitation resulted from lack of resource, which too could have been addressed through inclusion of a research team. The restriction of papers by political event (i.e., those post-2016) could be considered both a strength (in specificity) and a limitation. Given the review sought to explore family relationships in the wake of DPIs, it might have been beneficial not to restrict by political event. However, such a search strategy would likely have become unwieldy, extending beyond the capacity of this review.

The lack of experimental studies in the extant literature constitutes a further limitation in that no firm conclusions regarding cause-and-effect can be made. Causation might be opposite to

what was assumed or bidirectional, an unmeasured variable might account for observed

associations, or reported impacts may be part of a more complex picture that is difficult to fully

determine. Strengths of the review included its relevance and novelty; high search sensitivity—

e.g., using a broad range of databases and terms; and the use of review quality guidelines to

direct design and execution.

Implications

Findings from the current review suggest DPIs may have profound effects on family

relationships and the individuals within them. Whether UK society is increasingly polarising is

subject to debate (Anderson & Wilson, 2018; Duffy et al., 2019). However, Brexit arguably

demonstrated that ideological schisms may be more complex than traditional conceptualisations

of political division suggest (Juan-Torres et al., 2020) and appear to have significant relational

and mental health implications in the domestic sphere (Liew et al., 2020; Mental Health

Foundation, 2020). Therefore, mental health practitioners should be aware of the impact such

issues may have on service users and their families, the therapeutic alliance and their own

wellbeing. There is a scarcity of theoretical and empirical work that considers the role of political

identity and ideology in the therapeutic relationship (Bayne et al., 2019). The extant literature

regarding this, though, suggests service users may want or need to discuss political identity in

therapy; for some, this is already occurring (Solomonov & Barber, 2018). Additionally, theorists

have suggested that socio-political issues should be a regular feature in therapeutic discussion

(e.g., Almeida et al., 2008).

Practitioners should be cognisant of possible invisible differences held by service users

(Burnham et al., 2008; e.g., political identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic background)—

which may raise the relational significance of identity-salient political issues—and approach

them with due responsiveness and sensitivity. Furthermore, the review suggests familial tension

and strain is common in the context of DPIs. Therefore, when such issues are brought into

therapeutic spaces, these experiences should be normalised. Practitioners should also develop

their awareness of their own political identities and seek supervision regarding personal

interactions with DPIs, to consider potential biases they might bring into the therapeutic space,

particularly given the reported lack of political diversity in psychological professions (Inbar &

Lammers, 2012).

Future Research

Given the surprising infancy of this field of enquiry, many possible avenues exist

regarding future research. The review laid bare two main areas for continued investigation.

Firstly, the current literature base is overwhelmingly Americentric. Of the ten studies identified

for review, only one (Davies, 2021) did not concern the US election. This is unsurprising, given

the reported lengthy history of US polarisation (Duffy et al., 2019; Hunter, 1991). However,

affective polarisation has global relevance (Wagner & Russo, 2021). Brexit, for example, has

been framed as the most divisive issue for generations (Castle, 2019), with profound and long-

lasting relational consequences (Tomlinson, 2019). Therefore, there is an evident need for

research to explore the inter- and intrapersonal impacts of other divisive social and political

issues, such as Brexit.

Secondly, the review made clear the absence of an overarching theory to explain

observed interpersonal impacts of divisive social and political events. The correlational studies

(Afifi et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2019; Warner et al., 2020) applied three different theoretical

frameworks (theory of resilience and relational load, Afifi et al., 2016; family communication

patterns theory, Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006; communication accommodation theory, Giles,

1973) and reported within-study findings to support their respective theoretical bases. However, none sufficiently encapsulated the complex series of experiences reported across studies. Therefore, inductive work should be undertaken to develop an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the observed phenomena.

Finally, although not explored in this review, included studies concerning the US election's perceived impact on GLBTQ individuals and families (Brown & Keller, 2018; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Pletta et al., 2021; Riggle et al., 2021) suggested differential effects of identity-salient political issues on those from minority communities. However, this review identified papers concerning only GLBTQ communities and the general public—with the exception of Riggle et al. (2021) who incorporated a race/racialised group perspective. Therefore, future research would also greatly benefit from an exploration of the issues identified in this review with other groups that may have an identity-based investment in social and political change (e.g., religious minorities, different socio-economic communities).

Conclusions

This review critiqued and synthesised literature concerning divisive political issues and family relationships. The methodological quality of included studies was found generally acceptable. However, the absence of experimental research limited validity of conclusions drawn. Studies suggested relational responses were more often negative than positive, and concerned increased distance/proximity and increased aggression/ respect. Reported reasons for these responses included disparity between ideological similarity and difference/agreement and disagreement, preexisting family dynamics, and issue importance. Consequences of suggested impacts were found to include knowing who, how, and when to engage in DPI conversation and family relationships being experienced as taxing.

Being the first of its kind in this area, the current review contributed to the literature through its synthesis of current findings and by outlining clinical implications. Given the infancy of this literature base, future research should focus on developing a theoretical frame through which to explain observed phenomena and extending research beyond its current Americentric lens.

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Section B: Empirical Paper

"It's a rejection of you": Adult familial invalidation in the context of

social and political change

Jonathan S. Bullock

Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology

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Abstract

Context. Recent significant social and political change events have engendered affective polarisation in the UK and fostered psychological distress. Such events are discussed widely, particularly among families. Invalidating language is increasingly commonplace both in national and family rhetoric. Adult familial invalidation within a social and political change context has not been explored in the extant literature, nor is there an overarching theory to clarify its antecedents or consequences. This study aimed to address these theoretical and empirical gaps.

Methodology. A grounded theory approach was selected to best meet research aims. The final sample comprised 11 participants. All participants discussed invalidations regarding Brexit and four COVID-19.

Findings. The central category of the theory concerned a "Rejection of You" experience—a perceived rejection of the individual themselves, not just disagreement about opinions or actions. Several foundational and contextual factors were found to predicate the experience, increasing likelihood and determining trajectory. Behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and relational consequences were described that lead to the social and political change topic becoming taboo or to an attempt to reopen the conversation.

Discussion. The final grounded theory provides a novel, comprehensive framework for the explication of adult family invalidation experiences in the context of social and political change. Findings suggest validation continue to be a cornerstone of mental health interventions. Future research would benefit from exploring the model in different family and non-family contexts, and from considering invalidation processes in regard to affective polarisation.

Keywords: Invalidation, family, Brexit, COVID-19, polarisation.

"It's a rejection of you": Adult familial invalidation in the context of

social and political change

Interpersonal validation is understood as identification and recognition of the truth inherent in the way others think and feel (Leahy, 2005). It is considered a central component of human experience, particularly in the building and maintaining of relationships (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006; Gilbert & Leahy, 2007). It holds significance in mental health interventions and several theories of psychological distress, such as mentalization theory and treatment. Mentalization concerns the imaginative ability to perceive and comprehend others' behaviour in terms of intentional mental states (Fonagy et al., 1991; Fonagy & Allison, 2012). The capacity to mentalize is intimately linked to a sense of interpersonal safety, coherence of self, affect regulation, and social reciprocity (Fonagy et al., 2002). In mentalization theory, validation is fundamental to both theory (e.g., marked mirroring in infancy; Holmes, 2006) and therapeutic practice (e.g., empathic validation; Bateman & Fonagy, 2004).

Invalidation, conversely, is defined as meeting the expression of subjective experience with trivialisation or punishment (Linehan, 1993). Linehan (1993) suggests invalidation informs an individual their appraisal of their subjective experience is wrong and indicative of socially undesirable characteristics or traits. In Linehan's work, childhood invalidating environments are considered central to the development of 'borderline personality disorder'—defined as a disorder of profound emotional dysregulation and relational instability (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Within invalidating environments, expression of subjective experience can incur "erratic, inappropriate, and extreme responses" (Linehan, 1993, p. 49), involving communications of inaccuracy, misattribution, discouragement of negative affect expression and oversimplification of problem-solving (Musser et al., 2018).

Given the prominence of childhood in the theoretical literature, the majority of empirical research on familial invalidation has focused on this period (Grove & Crowell, 2019). There has been some exploration of adult familial invalidation, though (Reeves et al., 2010). Experimental findings suggest invalidating responses increase negative affect, heart rate, skin conductance (Shenk & Fruzzetti, 2011) and levels of aggression (Herr et al., 2015), and decrease emotional self-efficacy (Witkowski, 2017).

Invalidation experiences are typically considered in isolation of wider social contexts and there is no apparent theoretical framework considering intrafamilial invalidation relative to social and political change (SPC). This is significant; diverse invalidation experiences appear increasingly commonplace in social and political rhetoric, particularly in the context of stark national change (e.g., Brexit or COVID-19). Consistent with reports of division following the 2016 EU referendum (Duffy et al., 2019; Ford & Goodwin, 2017), examples of invalidation can be easily identified within Brexit rhetoric (e.g., "You lost. Get over it', Hockaday, 2019; "Revenge of the Remoaners", Flint, 2019; Leave voters described as "morons or idiots", Cowburn, 2016). While some reports suggest division regarding COVID-19 is not as significant as is generally believed (Juan-Torres et al., 2020), pandemic-related divisions have been reported (e.g., concerning lockdown rules [Bracchi, 2020], mask-wearing [Press Association Reporters, 2021], and social distancing [Johnson et al., 2021]).

These episodes of recent SPC have appeared to have observable consequences for mental health (Liew et al., 2020), with particular implications for public health (Green et al., 2019; Powdthavee et al., 2019). For example, one in three adults report adverse effects of Brexit on their mental health (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 2019). In addition, there is a growing literature base on the mental health implications of COVID-19 (Rajkumar,

2020). Commentators have considered intrapersonal (i.e., uncertainty and anxiety; Hall, 2019; Zanon, 2018) and wider social (e.g., job losses and housing insecurity; Marshall et al., 2020) instigators for such effects, but interpersonal factors—such as division within families—remain unexplored. Green et al. (2019) conducted a health impact assessment on behalf of Public Health Wales following the referendum and reported potential negative impact on families in the form of divisions between those who voted Remain and those who voted Leave.

Social relationships have been found to be a primary factor in health and play a vital role in mitigating consequences of stress (Public Health England and Institute of Health Equity, 2017). Challenges to the integrity of our social relationships (e.g., through invalidation) will likely have implications for prevention in public health. Given the absence of broader societal issues in invalidation theory, the impact of episodes of great national change on subjective wellbeing and mental health, the proliferation of reported invalidation experiences in the context of seismic SPC events such as Brexit and COVID-19, and family division in the wake of such events, there appeared grounds to develop a model of invalidation experiences within families and their psychological impact, within the context of Brexit and COVID-19.

Specifically, to guide theory development, this study aimed to explore the following research questions

R[1]   What is the nature of perceived invalidation in the experience of participants?

R[2]   What precipitates perceived invalidation, as experienced by participants, within their families in the context of Brexit and COVID-19?

R[3]   What is the experienced relational impact, if any, of perceived trivialisation and punishment of subjective experience in the context of Brexit and COVID-19?

R[4]   What are the experienced intrapersonal consequences of perceived trivialisation

and punishment of subjective experience in the context of Brexit and COVID-19?

Methodology

Design

Based on the theoretical and empirical gaps outlined above, and connections to SPC, a

grounded theory (GT) methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006) was selected to best address

emergent research questions. GT has been framed as a "family of methods" (Bryant & Charmaz,

2007; Bryant, 2019) under which various methodologies coexist, encompassing different

approaches and epistemological positions. Common to all GT methods is the process of using

systematically gathered and analysed data to generate and elucidate theory (Tracy, 2020), in

contrast to "logical deduction from *a priori* assumptions" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006, p. 3). It

is an iterative process involving "continuous interplay between analysis and data collection"

(Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). Therefore, in the current project, sampling, data collection,

analysis, and theory development were conducted concurrently throughout.

Epistemology and Guiding Values

In accordance with their ontological assumptions on universal complexity and fluidity,

Strauss and Corbin (1994) and Corbin and Strauss's (2008; 2015) critical realist approach to GT

was chosen as best fit between researcher and method epistemologies. Critical realist approaches

are founded on the assumption that data, whilst reflecting reality, must be interpreted to attempt

to understand that which is observed in the data (Willig, 2012). This study of invalidation

emphasised respect and dignity, appreciating the diversity of people's beliefs and the importance

each person places on their values; compassion, in exploring emotional and psychological

consequences of invalidating experiences; and improving lives, through investigating threats to family relationships.

Public Involvement

Members of the public were involved at several points during project design and implementation. Interested parties were identified by word of mouth, and selected based on their subjective investment in the topic area (e.g., in impact of Brexit and/or COVID-19 on family relationships). They were consulted on areas including focus group (Appendix D) and interview (Appendix E) schedule, recruitment poster, and information sheet development; recruitment avenues; theoretical sampling; and quality assurance (e.g., encouraging self-awareness).

Ethical Considerations

Full ethical approval was granted by the Salomons Ethics Panel on 13 March 2020 (Appendix F) following suggested amendments provided on 4 March 2020 (Appendix G). Particular consideration was given to focus group safety through allocating participants to groups whose members reflected similar political beliefs (e.g., groups specific to Leave or Remain supporters). Given the potential emotional resonance of the subject, in addition to standard ethical practices (e.g., right to withdraw, signposting to support options in briefing and debriefing), a screening questionnaire item was added inviting prospective participants to consider their capacity to engage in discussions of an emotive nature. Two ethics amendments were approved during the project, (1) to use the recruitment material offline, in public spaces (e.g., supermarket notice boards), and (2) to include issues concerning COVID-19 in interview and focus group schedules, given its increasing significance over the course of the research.

Sampling

The aim of sampling in GT, like other qualitative methodologies, is not to obtain a representative sample (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Rather sampling is purposive, identifying data sources that develop understanding of concepts and phenomena (Payne, 2007). The current project began with purposive sampling, focused on recruiting a sample presumed relevant to the research problem (i.e., those whose strong feelings or views about Brexit or COVID-19 have caused conflict among family members). Initial sampling involved circulating recruitment literature (Appendix H) in online social groups—both subject-specific and general interest—identified through Facebook (e.g., "Coronavirus Covid-19 UK Group", "Brexit Newsgroup", "UK Political Discussion"; see Appendix I for full list) and through the social media platforms Twitter and Instagram.

As per Corbin and Strauss (2015), theoretical sampling was then used following the first analytic session—conducted after the initial focus group. Theoretical sampling involves researchers seeking relevant data to develop conceptual properties and dimensions to further the evolving theory (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Examples included amending recruitment literature to appeal more to Leave supporters (Appendix J), recruiting within local interest Facebook groups to increase sample heterogeneity, and using word-of-mouth and snowballing techniques to sample variations in the theory (e.g., topic agreement, different experiences of the core category).

Participants

Of the 239 prospective participants who began the screening questionnaire, 25 met eligibility criteria and provided contact information. Of those, 11 individuals were able and
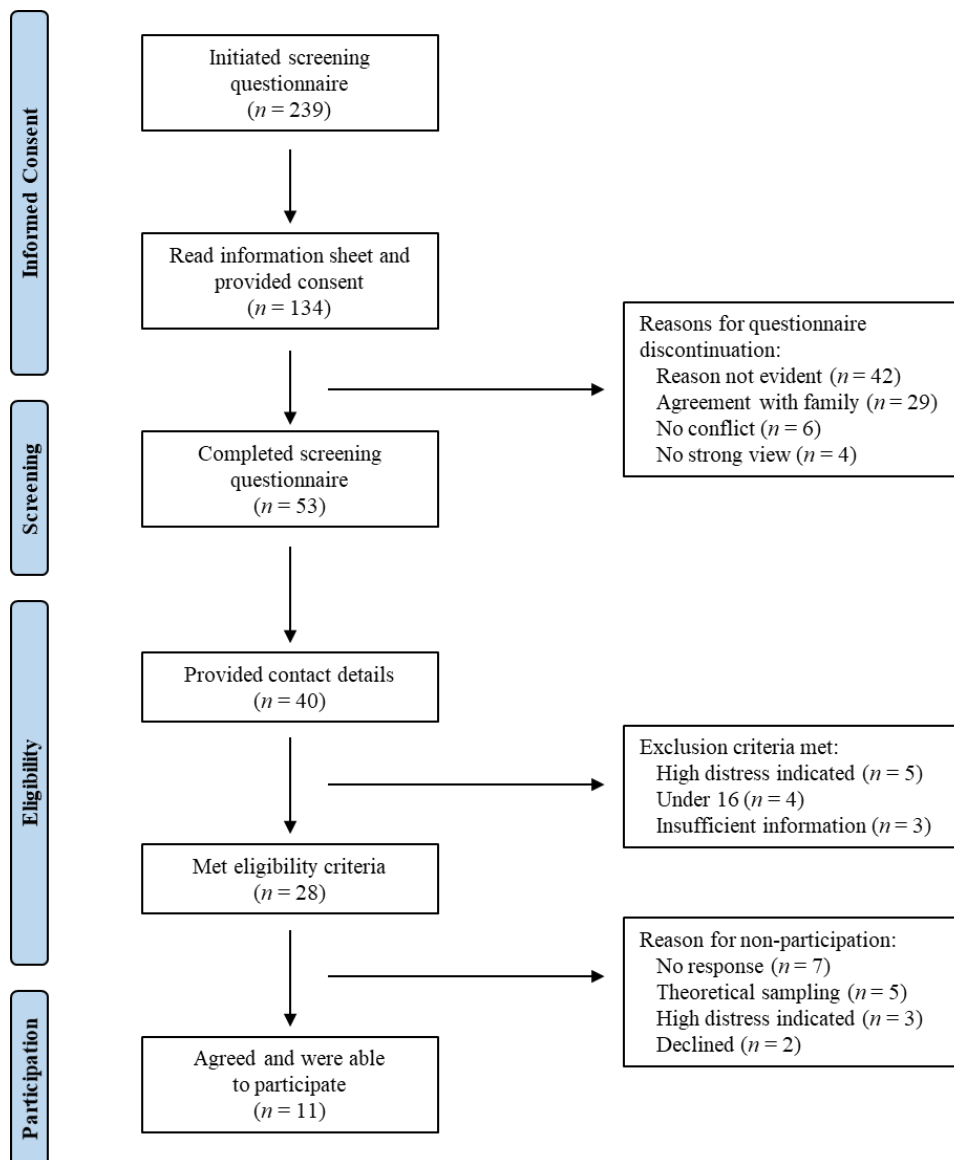
agreed to participate in interviews or a focus group. Figure 1 provides an overview of participant

flow.

Procedure

Prospective participants were referred to an online screening questionnaire (Appendix K),

developed to consider sample demographics and identify eligible participants. Prior to the first

Figure 1.

Study Participant Flow

question, the study information sheet was provided (Appendix L) and respondents were asked to confirm they had read it and were happy to proceed. Respondents were informed they may be contacted following screening if found eligible to participate and given the option of receiving a summary of findings regardless of eligibility. If eligible, participants were invited to attend either a virtual focus group or semi-structured interview. Data collection was conducted virtually using videoconferencing software, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Before taking part, participants were invited to a pre-data-collection meeting, at which important aspects of participation (e.g., rights, confidentiality, data protection) were reiterated. They were given the opportunity to ask questions and were asked to confirm informed consent (Appendix M). Participants were briefed before data collection—reiterating that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without giving reason[1]—and debriefed after—reiterating that contributions could be removed up to two weeks from date of participation and that they could contact the lead researcher with any concerns or queries[2], and providing details of third-sector organisations that could be accessed for emotional support if needed. Data were transcribed two weeks following collection. In the current project, data collection began with a focus group followed by ten semi-structured interviews (*M* duration = 1hr). Other sources of data included descriptions of family conflict submitted via the screening questionnaire and written correspondence with participants (Appendix O).

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[1] Focus group participants were also invited to comment on or add to an established group agreement (Appendix N).
[2] Focus group participants were also informed that they could speak to one of the group facilitators that day, if they had any immediate concerns.

Analysis

  The current project adopted Corbin and Strauss' (2015) framework for the analytic

process. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), although the student researcher craves

direction and structure, there is no one correct method of analysis. Rather, the process should be

approached creatively and flexibly. They do describe, however, three fundamental analytic

structures: "making comparisons, asking questions, and sampling based on evolving theoretical

concepts" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 46). In practical terms, the current project followed the

basic analytic structure described in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Stages of Grounded Theory Analysis
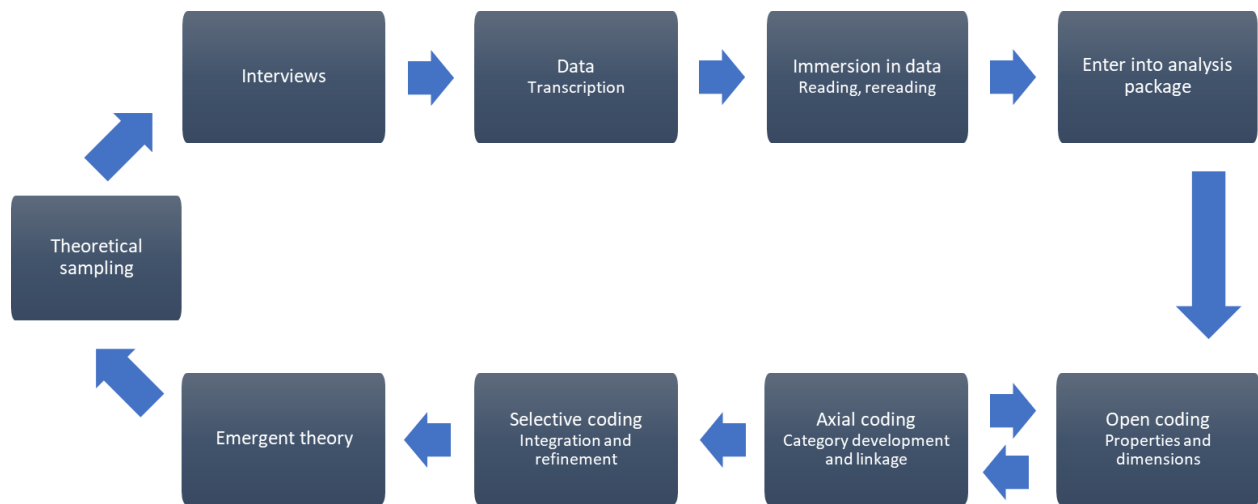
Note. Adapted from Hawker and Kerr (2007)

  After entering focus group data into NVivo (QSR International, 2020), coding was

initiated using microanalysis, or line-by-line analysis. Microanalysis is a form of exploratory and

detailed open coding—usually undertaken in the early stages of analysis but revisited at various

points—to open one's mind to possibilities in the data (Corbin, 2021). This accompanied an

ongoing interchange between open coding (Appendix P)—fracturing data and generating

categories and their properties—and axial coding—systematically reassembling and linking categories and subcategories at a conceptual level. Appendix Q presents an early diagrammatic example of the "fluid and dynamic" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 46) movement between open and axial coding.

Memoing began at project outset and formed a vital part of the analytic process as per GT methodology (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006). Memos are records documenting researcher methodological and analytic movements (Timonen et al., 2018; Appendix R). To ensure ongoing reflexivity—a measure of methodological quality in GT (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021)—reflective memoing (i.e., personal response documentation; Rodgers & Cowles, 1993; Appendix S) was used, supporting both the "making use of life experience" and "waving the red flag"[3] strategies outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2015, p. 115).

The latter processes of theory development were led by what Strauss and Corbin (1994) termed selective coding—advanced coding in Birks and Mills (2015)—and coding for process (Appendix T). These involve theory refinement and integration around a central or core category and the building of variability into the theory through analysing data for "changing and repetitive forms of action–interaction" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 180). A key tool in this process was the conceptual visualisation and arranging of data to consider the complexity of relationships between concepts—i.e., diagramming. Diagramming aided the refinement of both category and subcategory relationships—from basic matrices to more complex internal frameworks (Appendix U)—and, in the latter stages, progressively more detailed conceptual relationships between categories (Appendices V-X).

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[3] Explicitly flagging indicators of bias (e.g., certainty)

As the study progressed, validation interviews were organised with participants to check the sense and utility of the emerging theory against the understandings of those subject to the "contexts from which the insights [were] derived" (Bryant, 2017, p. 102). This involved establishing whether assumptions resonated and whether important elements felt absent.

Saturation

Glaser and Strauss suggest coding ends when "no additional data are being found whereby the [researcher] can develop properties or relationships of note" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006, p. 61)—theoretical saturation. GT commentators assert that saturation is often misunderstood as a measure of systematic completion (Bryant, 2019). Dey (1999) suggested an alternate framing, theoretical sufficiency, which suggests data collection ends when categories can tolerate new data without requiring significant expansion or adjustment. This understanding guided the end-point of data collection in the current project.

Quality Assurance

In addition to the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) qualitative studies checklist (CASP, 2018), Corbin and Strauss' (2008) nine conditions for research quality were used to establish an adequate level of GT methodological quality throughout. Strategies undertaken to ensure quality according to these criteria are detailed in Table 1.

Dissemination

A summary of project findings (Appendix Y) will be distributed to respondents who registered an interest in receiving one. The final paper will be circulated to participants. The empirical paper will be prepared for publication in *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Table 1.

Corbin and Strauss' (2008) Conditions for Quality Assurance in Qualitative Research

Condition	Description	Strategies
1. Methodological consistency	Following methodology using relevant procedures as designed	Careful and continuous study of Strauss and Corbin (1994) and Corbin and Strauss (2008; 2015) and other GT texts (e.g., Bryant, 2017; Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss 1967/2006)
2. Clarity of purpose	Clear whether aim of research is description or theory building	Review of extant literature pre-study-design, establishing lack of overarching "grand theory" on research topic
3. Self-awareness	Awareness of biases and assumptions	Bracketing interview conducted prior to data collection, use of reflective memoing throughout research process, acknowledgement of closeness of topic in supervision, and conversations with public involvement consultants regarding personal resonances
4. Training	Training in qualitative research	Research undertaken as part of doctoral training, three GT-specific training sessions
5. Sensitivity	Sensitivity for the topic and ability to "step into the shoes of participants"	Drawing on life experience concerning Brexit/COVID-19 and family conflict to sensitise to data, close following of topics in news and on social media
6. Diligence	Willingness to work hard	Emersion in data over extended period, broad use of techniques to deepen connection to data and analysis (e.g., microanalysis, systematic comparison)
7. Creativity	Willingness to relax and get into touch with the creative self	Use of atypical techniques in pursuit of deepening understanding of data (e.g., word-clouding codes, creative writing, and drawing)
8. Methodological awareness	Awareness of implications of decisions throughout process	Dedicated use of analytic and reflective memoing to record thoughts, reflections, considerations, decisions, and ideas
9. Desire to undertake research	Doing research for its own sake	Selection of topic based on longstanding interest and connection to subject matter and seeking supervision that enabled me to undertake this research in particular

Results

This section begins with situating the sample (Elliot et al., 1999)—descriptions of participants and contextually relevant information. An overview of the final model is then presented, followed by details of categories and subcategories and their development. Finally, there will be a brief description of validation processes.

Situating the Sample

Of the 11 participants, five identified as female, seven as Remain supporters and nine as White British. All 11 participants identified as cisgender and 10 as straight, with one participant preferring not to disclose sexual orientation. All participants had experienced having their subjective experience regarding Brexit misunderstood or made light of, and four discussed similar experiences concerning COVID-19. Further information is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2.

Sample Descriptions and Contextually Relevant Information

Name[a]	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Nationality	Country of Residence	Relevant Topic	Brexit Position	Family Member(s)[b]
Dorothy	67	Female	White British	English	England	Brexit	Remain	Sister
Keith	65	Male	White British	English	England	Brexit/ COVID	Remain	Son
Olive	38	Female	White British	English	Luxembourg	Brexit/ COVID	Remain	Family of origin
Lydia	59	Female	White British	Welsh	Wales	Brexit	Remain	Brother
Eloise	48	Female	White Other	Canadian and French	England	Brexit	Remain	Partner
Matthew	35	Male	White British	English	England	Brexit	Remain	Father
Kathy	59	Female	White Other	Scottish	Greece	Brexit	Remain	Brother, father, mother
John	72	Male	White British	English	England	Brexit	Leave	Wife
Elliot	58	Male	White British	English	England	Brexit/ COVID	Leave	Ex-wife, sister
Duncan	54	Male	White British	Northern Irish	England	Brexit	Leave	Father, brothers
Simon	59	Male	White British	English	England	Brexit/ COVID	Leave	Ex-wife, daughter

Note. [a] Pseudonyms have been used to protect confidentiality. [b]Family member(s) with whom participant experienced conflict.

Intrafamilial Invalidation in the Context of SPC

A diagrammatic representation of the theory is presented in Figure 3, illustrating

structures and processes of—what became known as—"Rejection of You" experiences in the

context of SPC. The model broadly describes five interlinking domains—foundations, context,

nature of the experience, consequences of the experience, and alternatives—and the relationships

between and within them. In the text, illustrative quotes are italicised with the respective

participant indicated in brackets. In vivo codes are those contained within quotation marks.

Quotes illustrative of subcategories and properties are displayed in Appendix Z.

Established Qualities

The entire model is enclosed by factors that provide a foundation to the "Rejection of

You" experience [John], the Established Qualities category. All participants spoke of

fundamentals of themselves and their families that grounded their experiences. These

fundamentals pertained to Temperament and Family Dynamics subcategories. Properties

concerning Temperament included core aspects of the self (e.g., "never hold[ing] grudges"),

coping styles (e.g., "clamming up"), and awareness (i.e., sense of self). Examples of

temperaments that bore relevance included a cutting off from emotional experience when faced

with distressing emotions (i.e., "clamming up")—[John] "*I think clamming up in a way that I've

always dealt with that sort of situation, that I withdraw from it rather than plunge further in and

risk even more hurt, dismissal, etc.*"—and the extent to which individuals have control over

emotional expression—[Simon] "*it was how well you were able to put your case across and

listen to the other person's case and not show them that, you know, it was having any negative

impact on your feelings*". For Family Dynamics, participants spoke about relational quality

([Kathy] "*So, you know, we are, as I say, we're quite a volatile family*"), intrafamilial
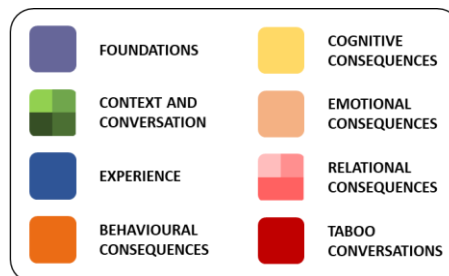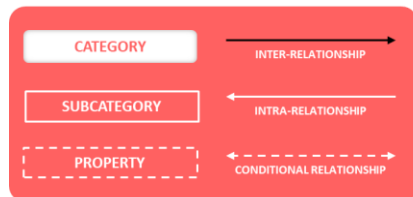
Figure 3.

Grounded theory of "Rejection of You" Experiences in the Context of Social and Political Change
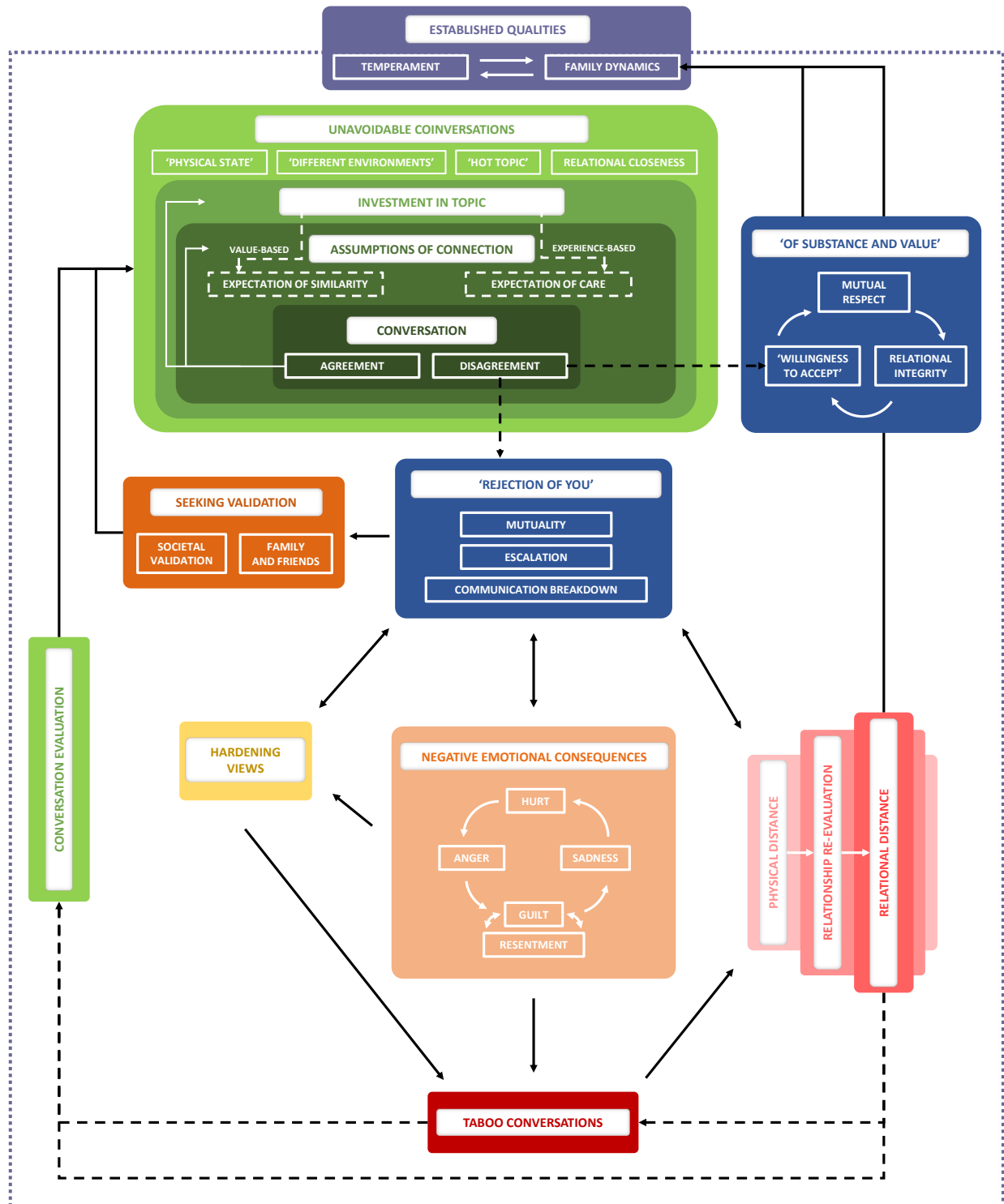
evaluations ([Matthew] "*I think that the realization that I've come to is that quite a lot my family are just actually quite racist, deep down*") and family histories—of relational breakdown, for example—as articulated by Kathy:

> *And there's no way I could have attended the funeral. I was in Scotland and the funeral was in [England]. I could not have gone. So he put the phone down on me. And we never spoke for two years.*

Data suggested that several properties could pertain to both subcategories, suggesting an interrelatedness between individual temperament and family dynamic. For example, "clamming up" was not just an individual trait but belonged to family dynamics too ([Olive] "*my family is one where you don't talk it out after, you just act like nothing happened. So, you know, you go down in an hour and we're all friends again*").

Context and Conversation

Unavoidable Conversations

The Unavoidable Conversations category appeared the highest level of context for family SPC conversations. Subcategories ("Physical State", "Different Environments", "Hot Topic", Relational Closeness) described factors that influenced SPC conversation likelihood and trajectory. For example, the presence of alcohol ("Physical State"; under the influence) could affect both the probability of SPC conversation occurring ([Kathy] "*it was Christmas night, and shall we say I'd had, a few, one or two sherries*") and influence its course ([Elliot] "*Well actually yeah, the alcohol switches off the ability to think rationally and you just go to fight or flight response*"). Other contextual determinants included "Different Environments"—i.e., the conversation's physical context ([Simon] "*Typically, it's been in the car when we're all going to see family or friends…that's when the discussions typically would start up*")—and the topic's

salience within society (i.e., "Hot Topic"; [Lydia] "*I think, you know, right at the start it was a hot topic, it was discussed a lot at work. People were excited to talk about it and very passionate*"). Regarding the subcategory Relational Closeness, it appeared the closer the relationship, the more meaningful the "Rejection of You" experience felt to participants ([John] "*I think probably arguments with people who are close to you, in your personal life, are probably…have more impact and are more... you know, if someone doesn't agree with you, you feel it more strongly*").

Investment in Topic

Investment in the SPC topic also appeared a contextual determinant of conversation likelihood and trajectory. However, its significance and persistence over time suggested Investment in Topic was a category in its own right. Participants spoke of myriad reasons for high topic investment, clustering across two groupings: value-based and experience-based investments. Several participants spoke about both value- and experience-based investments. Value-based investment concerned issue characteristics that resonated deeply with participant values (e.g., following rules and protecting family, [Elliot] "*The, the fact that I've been here playing by the rules, protecting my family, our family. And yet, she will go off and obviously break the rules and then come back and potentially spread the virus*"). Experience-based investment was determined by the SPC issue's impact on personal circumstances ([Kathy] "*As I say, I'm an immigrant here. My boyfriend's an immigrant in [Country] as well*").

Assumptions of Connection

This final contextual category involved underlying Assumptions of Connection held by participants. Concerning SPC, these appeared conditionally related to the value- and experience-based investments detailed above. Value-based investments connected to an expectation that

family members would hold similar views ([Duncan] "*And I thought that being anti-EU…was utterly compatible with our [Country values]. But his reaction was the complete opposite of what I expected and I really couldn't fathom it*") and experience-based investments to an expectation that family would offer care ([Eloise] "*…this is actually how I'm personally being impacted by this. And the people I care about the most and who should care about me the most are telling me it's just my imagination*").

Conversation

The contextual categories discussed above appeared to set the stage for the SPC conversation. Two conditional subcategories appeared related to the Conversation category, Agreement ([Simon] "*But certainly my eldest son, who was old enough to vote…he was more in tune, in line with my beliefs*") and Disagreement ([John] "*Certainly in politics we are poles apart*"). With agreement, it appeared the model would return to and inform Assumptions of Connection ([Olive] "*a lot of my friends, we would stop at…expecting similarity because people tend to hang out with like-minded people*") and Investment in Topic ([Olive] "*So they're in my same kind of echo chamber…we're all in the same boat together with the same concerns*"). In other words, it appeared that, when family members agreed, expectations of similarity and care were upheld and topic investment redoubled. Disagreement appeared to act as a gateway to the "Rejection of You" experience. However, there seemed conditions under which this progression might be interrupted (explored below in Alternatives).

Core Category: "Rejection of You"

"Rejection of You" emerged as the fulcrum of the theory and was considered the model's central category (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). It represented the bidirectional perception that family members were not just rejecting a participant's opinion, but also them as people.

[John] *If it's someone close to you, I suspect you probably feel that, it's… it's a rejection of you as well as those points of view. Which it may not be, but it gives that impression, probably on both sides.*

It appeared in all accounts and represented a shift from mere disagreement to something "*more personal*" [Elliot] as if there were "*something deficient or defective*" [Duncan] about participants. Data suggested "Rejection of You" experiences comprise properties of dismissal, belittlement, trivialisation, misattribution, and punishment. Participants articulated a common trajectory, through subcategories of Mutuality—i.e., the enactment of reciprocal "Rejection of You" experiences (as opposed to rejector/rejectee dyadic encounters; [John] "*I suppose on both sides, people being dismissive of the other person's opinions: not ascribing any value to them, not wanting to consider them*")—Escalation ([Kathy] "*'He went from zero to 60 in two seconds', he said, 'it escalated so, so quickly'*"), and Communication Breakdown ([Keith] "*I have to slam the phone down or pull the plug out*"). Participants generally intimated that others instigated the "Rejection of You" experience. Although, this was not clear in all cases.

There appeared a temporal relationship between subcategories. The initial perceived "Rejection of You" experience seems to provoke the recipient to dismiss/belittle/trivialise the subjective experience of the other, prompting an Escalation in the "*heat*" [Olive] of the conversation and likelihood of Communication Breakdown. A full list of core category subcategories and properties is included in Table 3.

Table 3.

"Rejection of you" Category and Subcategories with Properties and Substantiating Text

Category/ Subcategory	Property	Illustrative example
"Rejection of You" (C)	"Dismiss my concerns"	Elliot: "…she would try to trivialise it quite a lot during those times and "oh, he doesn't know what he's talking about, there's no way the British are going to vote for Brexit."
	"Belittled…is the word"	John: "Belittled, I suppose, is the word that comes to mind that. That, um, my opinions were considered of little value and little substance. And they weren't worth considering. Even if only to… to argue against them or reject them on some sort of grounds that I could understand why, rather than just rejecting them out of hand."
	"Try to trivialise it'	Kathy: "It's from other people because it's not trivial to me. I mean, the issue of immigration is obviously not trivial, but it was trivialized and my feelings were trivialized."
	"Because you're a…"	Simon: "…so that was a bit annoying, being told, sometimes, you know, being kind of told that what I was saying was just was racist or whatever it might be on the basis that I'd spent more time seeking to understand the realities of the situation.
	Punishment	Duncan: "And effectively, he said not a penny more, [laughs] because I'm not I'm not paying you[a] to devote all this time to politics that I fundamentally disagree with."
Mutuality (SC)	"Fingers in ears"	Screening questionnaire: "During any discussion relating to these issues my views are dismissed as wrong, stupid or invalid and I am refused any opportunity to explain them."
	Mirrored experience	Lydia: "But I'm not sure how he came to his decision or his viewpoint and I missed that. Because I see him usually on a weekly basis. I didn't see the signs, kind of thing. And I bet he's thinking the same about me."
	Multiple occasions	Matthew: "So when I talk to my dad, it's just, it's always… one of the reasons I stopped trying to talk about it is because it's always the same arguments…It's kind of just, just, um yeah, it's just very repetitive and or dismissive."
Escalation (SC)	"No basis"	Keith: "…if someone talks about injecting a chip into you through a needle and you say it's impossible, that can immediately escalate because the person's got no basis for saying that."
	"Intent to harm"	Kathy: "As I said, he was dismissive and I'm sure he was doing it on purpose, actually…yeah, there was an intent to harm. You know, I really do feel that."
	Feeling wound up	Eloise: "You know, it's not, it's like this, this kind of thing is happening at the national level, you know or you know, "yes, yes there's a hostile environment, but it's not meant for immigrants like you". If I hear that phrase one more time I'm gonna flip out."
	"Get some else riled up"	Eloise: "But at the time, it was like, it was almost like he was trying to inflame me to, what's the word I'm looking for, because he knows which buttons, buttons to press."
	Personal attacks	Elliot: "So actually dismissing me possibly as a "nutter", which is one of the other things that came up occasionally."
Communication Breakdown (SC)	Non-verbal communication	Simon: "She would be kind of like… her body language would be…she'd have…her arms would be folded, she would be, you know, and it would be kind of very much, you know, "you shouldn't be doing that. You should know better…you know, you should be…""
	"Last straw"	Kathy: "So, this this thing about the graduation, although it isn't Brexit-related, it was… That was it. I'd had enough. So, I just put the phone down."

Category/ Subcategory	Property	Illustrative example
	"Ending in tears"	Olive: "…for me it always ends in tears. It ends up with me going to a bedroom, even if it's not the house that I'm staying in. Going to a bedroom, ending in tears…"

Note. ᵃThis participant was being financially supported by his parents in his political career.

Consequences

Behavioural Consequences

Seeking Validation.

Participants reported reaching out to others, following the "Rejection of You" experience, seeking the validation seemingly absent in the SPC conversation ([Eloise] "*So, 'I've had this experience. I'm not sure what to do here'. And I talk to my partner, I talk to my boss, I talk.*"). Seeking Validation appeared a positive outcome of the experience, in that participants found the similarity and care they had been hoping to receive initially. Some participants, however, described others' validation-seeking behaviours as hurtful, leaving them with feelings of isolation and otherness ([John] "*my wife goes and visits them and they can, they can reinforce what each other thinks. That leaves me out of it a bit*". Participants spoke of accessing two general, alternative sources of validation: large groups (Societal Validation) and others outside the "Rejection of You" experience ([Other] Family and Friends). Seeking Validation appeared the only consequences category with a unidirectional relationship with "Rejection of You", in that participants' validation-seeking behaviours occurred following the event and often without the knowledge of the other party(ies).

Cognitive Consequences

Hardening Views.

[John] *I suspect it's probably a bit of bloody-mindedness. When someone rejects [your views] like that, you tend to cling to them protectively…[in the face of] adversity,*

animosity, dismissal. But, I don't think the core beliefs that led me to those decisions have

changed.

All participants reported that "Rejection of You" experiences either did not change their

beliefs or "*entrenched them even more*" [Kathy], supporting a Hardening Views category. This

was reported to occur both in the moment and over time. When views hardened during the

experience, there appeared an increasing likelihood participants would then dismiss or trivialise

their conversational partner's point of view, feeding back into the "Rejection of You" interaction.

There were two cognitive processes through which views appeared to harden and these are

represented in the properties of "*dwell[ing] on*" the event [Simon] and the "*concretising*" of

views [Lydia]. Hardening Views also appeared to possess a relational component in that mutual

view hardening resulted in "*polarised*" positions [Keith] and opinions being "*pushed into the*

background" and "*simmer[ing] on the back burner*" [John].

Emotional Consequences

Negative Emotional Consequences.

Multiple experiences of Negative Emotional Consequences threaded through participant

accounts. Subcategories of Negative Emotional Consequences broadly constituted emotion states

consequent of the "Rejection of You" experience, namely Anger, Guilt, Hurt, Resentment,

Sadness, and Shock. The analysis suggested a sequential and cyclical relationship between these

states. The cycle appears to start with Shock, Hurt, and Anger—initially occurring during the

event—and then proceed through Guilt, Resentment, and Sadness—typically felt over time,

following the experience. Participants spoke additionally of oscillation between Guilt and

Resentment in the aftermath of the experience. As with Hardening Views, it appeared emotions

experienced during the conversation feed back into the "Rejection of You" experience—i.e.,

when an individual feels hurt or angered during the experience they are more likely to belittle or

punish their conversational partner, for example. Kathy described the sequential and cyclical

nature of this process in its totality in her interview:

> *[16:10] I was absolutely flabbergasted. Flabbergasted and hurt… [11:32] But then, for*
>
> *them to hold that opinion and then to be dismissive of how I feel, it made me incredibly*
>
> *angry. [43:42] I felt really guilty for telling him that. And, you know, so there was a bit of*
>
> *guilt involved. And then, but I'm thinking. "But hang on". So the more I thought about it,*
>
> *it just went over and over and over and thinking, "I know I'm… my position. He might*
>
> *not like it, but he doesn't have the right to dismiss what I feel, out of hand", you know.*
>
> *[12:09] So incredibly angry [in] the moment, incredibly sad after what's happened.*
>
> *[34:12] And, and there's a hurt there, there's a definite hurt there. And I don't know how*
>
> *that could be resolved.*

The analysis further indicated that Negative Emotional Consequences have a

unidirectional relationship with Hardening Views—painful emotions made participants'

"*viewpoint[s] stronger*" [Olive]—and Relational Re-evaluation—adding weight to re-evaluations

that later occur.

Relational Consequences

Relational consequences of the "Rejection of You" experience are encapsulated within

three interrelated categories: Physical Distance, Relationship Re-evaluation, and Relational

Distance. While the data suggested the categories exist in isolation and relate non-linearly over

time, an initial temporal relationship between them was also indicated. That is, the experience

initiates a physical distance, which promotes re-evaluation, in turn dictating relational distance.

Relational consequences of the "Rejection of You" experience also appear to feed back into

Family Dynamics ([John] "*the gloss started to wear off and I think that may well have been some cracks and the disagreements over Brexit in particular probably made a big difference there*"). A detailed diagram of relational consequences is presented in Figure 4.

Physical Distance.

Physical Distance concerns the physical or geographical distance between parties to the "Rejection of You" experience. Awareness of Physical Distance can begin before the SPC conversation, through "*exit strategy*" [Simon] planning. During the experience, it can aid de-escalation ([Olive] "*It ends up with me going to a bedroom, even if it's not the house that I'm staying in...you go down in an hour and we're all friends again*") and be an opportunity to "*let the dust settle*" [Duncan]. "Let[ting] the dust settle" apparently could also occur after the experience, along with a chance to "*reflect a bit*" [Lydia]. Distance itself seemingly varies dimensionally from having "*nowhere to run*" [Olive] to large "*geographic...distance*" [Kathy], with varying degrees of isolation being felt. Kathy, for example, reported feeling "*totally cut out*".

Relationship Re-evaluation.

Physical Distance offered participants an opportunity to re-evaluate the relationship. The possibility of re-evaluation during the "Rejection of You" experience also appeared present ([Elliot] "*there's definitely an element of, you know, 'crikey, how can it possibly have got to this point?'*"), supporting a possible bidirectional relationship between relational consequences and the experience. The core process of Relationship Re-evaluation appeared the weighing up between subjective importance of the topic ([Kathy] "*it shone a light on what he really feels about something that's very important to me*") and of the relationship ([Simon] "*And whatever*

Figure 4

An Exploded-View Diagram of Relational Consequences of the Model, Detailing Conditions, Action/Interactions and Consequences
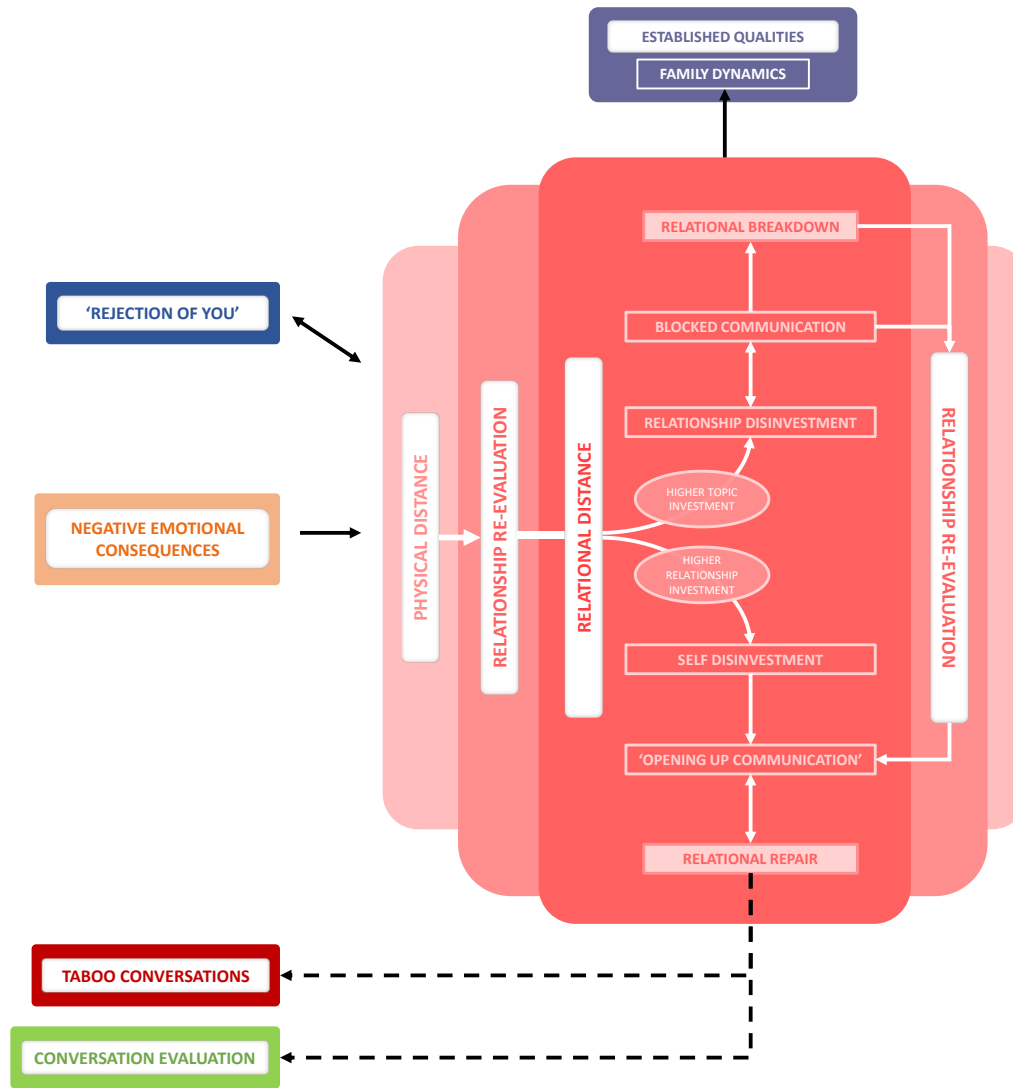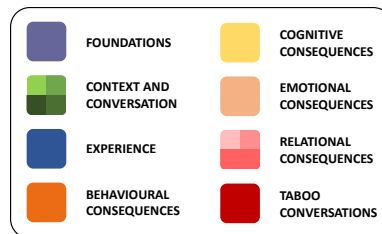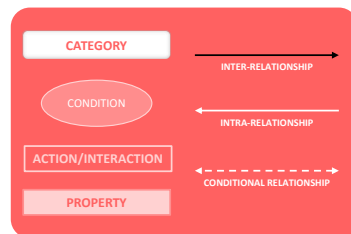
our opinions on this wasn't going to cause any serious issue between us because of our, our, you know, love for each other and our affection was far bigger than anything like this."). Data suggested the relative balance between these investments informs the conditional/consequential matrix that determines Relational Distance, discussed below.

Relational Distance.

From participant accounts, it appeared resolution of the Relational Re-evaluation dictates progression through one of two pathways of action/interactions and consequences. If during re-evaluation an individual concludes their investment in the SPC topic is greater than the perceived value of the family relationship (Condition: higher topic investment), then a relationship disinvestment action/interaction appears to occur (Condition: disinvestment; [Olive] "*They're probably people that I wouldn't choose as friends…I just kind of don't enjoy spending time with my family*"). Following this pathway, relationship disinvestment then promotes a blocked communication action/interaction, whereby the individual chooses not to re-establish communication with the family member(s) (Condition: communication; [Kathy] "*I could have picked up the phone. I could have apologized. But then I thought, 'what the hell have I got to apologize for?' I don't have anything to apologize for*"). There appears the possibility of oscillation between these two action/interactions. That is, participants spoke of disinvesting in the relationship, not reaching out to reconnect, and then further disinvesting in the relationship when no attempt from the other side emerged to re-establish communication. Relational breakdown appears a possible ultimate consequence of this trajectory, where individuals believe there is "*no choice but to break contact*" [screening questionnaire].

Conversely, if the relationship is considered more important than the SPC topic (Condition: higher relationship investment), an alternative pathway seemingly develops. First, a self-

disinvestment action/interaction occurs ([Duncan] "*The good situation that I have described now has only come about because I have effectively had to back down, give up what I loved, and eat humble pie*"). Following this, there is the opportunity for an opening up communication action/interaction whereby communication channels are re-established ([Elliot] "*And, actually at that point, take stock, go back and have a chat about flowers or something in two weeks' time and get back into the relationship*"). The ensuing consequence then appears to be relational repair ([Duncan] "*So, you know, I've done what he required, but he's also been very good to me in many ways. So, in fact, my relationship with my father is better now than it's ever been*"). As with relationship disinvestment and blocked communication, there appears a circular relationship between opening up communication and relational repair. The more communication is opened, the greater the repair; the greater the repair, the more likely communication will remain open.

In Table 4, the conditional/consequential matrix is presented using quotes from only two participants (Eloise and Simon) to illustrate the two potential pathways.

Table 4.

Relational Distance Category Conditions, Action/interactions, and Substantiating Text

Condition (Cn)/ Consequence (Cq)	Action/ interaction	Illustrative example
Disinvestment (Cn)	Relationship disinvestment	Eloise: "And I stopped including my partner in a lot of those decisions and plan making. If the time comes and I have to leave, if he wants to come with me, great."
	Self-disinvestment	Simon: "But there's certain things I disagree with on. But I wouldn't…I'd never raise them. So I'm quite compliant, because he's 93, you know, and I don't want to fall out with my dad."
Communication (Cn)	Blocked communication	Eloise: "I will say that one of the things that I… one are the positives of the pandemic has been to be able to avoid these situations entirely."
	Opening up communication	Simon: "So, you know, I…you don't get that same opportunity just to go and…have a laugh about it afterwards…it's something that could, they could dwell on because I don't speak to them again for another several days or longer."
Relational breakdown (Cq)		Eloise: "I think it's, it's, it's like an unrecoverable error in the sense that once that's happened, it's, it's, it's cataclysmic. You can't… I don't see a way past those differences."

Condition (Cn)/ Consequence (Cq)	Action/ interaction	Illustrative example
Relational repair (Cq)		Simon: "It's like I say, with my ex-wife, you know, I couldn't hold…never hold grudges…And I, within a few minutes, I'll be going over and trying to give her a hug."

Participants reported the possibility of moving between conditional pathways, namely from the relationship disinvestment/blocked communication/relational breakdown pathway to relational repair ([John] "*Because it seems to me that, you know, you can sort of move up and down those routes there…there are repair pathways in the relational breakdown direction*"). This appeared particularly relevant to blocked communication and relational breakdown. The influence of time can seemingly prompt further Relationship Re-evaluation, from which opening up communication and relational repair become possible.

Taboo Conversations

The category Taboo Conversations, cited in all participant accounts, represented a possible resting point of the "Rejection of You" experience. Taboo Conversations concerned agreements between family members—both "*unspoken*" [Matthew] and explicit—never to discuss the SPC topic. Protection appeared the primary function of making conversations taboo ([Matthew] "*We don't talk about it anymore. Just for the sake of our relationship*"). It seemed to possess four essential properties: cognitive self-protection (i.e., topic becomes taboo to protect cognitive coherence; [Lydia] "*we just don't mention it. He's clear about my views and I'm clear and I respect his views. But we'll never agree on that topic*"), emotional self-protection ([Matthew] "*for whatever reason it gets heated, you know, so we just don't really talk about it*"), protecting the other ([Lydia] "*he was very, very, very cross and I've never seen him like that before, and I knew it was something that we would find very difficult to talk about after his visit*")

and relationship protection ([Keith] "*we've not discussed the subject now for months and…we get on fantastically*"). For some, Taboo Conversations meant agreeing "*just never to discuss it*" [Keith]; for others, broaching "*banned subjects*" [Elliot] again was possible.

Alternatives

The final two categories concern potential alternative pathways within the model. Conversation Evaluation seemingly occurs when renewed attempts to broach the SPC conversation are made, following either Taboo Conversations or relational repair. The "*Of Substance and Value*" [John] category appeared a possible alternative to the "Rejection of You" experience (from Disagreement), providing a route towards acceptance, "*mutual respect*" [Kathy], and relational integrity.

Conversation Evaluation

Participants spoke of attempts following the "Rejection of You" experience to discuss the SPC topic with family again. The primary aims of this appeared to be to "*have [the] conversation…at a deeper level*", "*sharing more about*" oneself [Lydia]; to allow for the possibility of conversation where disagreement exists; and to have "*good proper discussion…rather than just wait till everyone's so fired up that they go to war over the issue*" [Elliot]. This re-attempt could occur either before the conversation becomes taboo or after. In both cases, there would reportedly be a "*mini evaluation*" [Lydia] to determine conversation appropriateness and safety for both parties. Conversation Evaluation appeared to have properties pertaining to nature and content. Nature involved evaluation speed ([Lydia) "*how we quickly weigh up*") and level of consciousness ([Lydia] "*…almost at a subconscious level*"). Content involved participants making evaluations of their mind-state, the mind-state of others, and suitability of location for the renewed attempt.

"Of Substance and Value"

Through experiences identified via theoretical sampling, data suggested an alternative route from Disagreement that didn't lead to a "Rejection of You" experience. This was conceptualised as the "*Of Substance and Value*" category. "Of Substance and Value" subcategories appeared to relate sequentially in a cyclical pattern. If during the SPC conversation Disagreement occurs and one or more parties demonstrate a "*Willingness to Accept*", then a burgeoning "Mutual Respect" can emerge, with consequent increased Relational Integrity. "Mutual Respect" here concerns a reciprocity whereby "*everybody…respect[s] each other's*" subjective experience [Olive]. Participants suggested this could be demonstrated through an appreciation of the other ([Kathy] "*I think I respect him immensely. I think he's done great things in his life*"), including differences between parties ([Simon] "*the fact that I have my views, I think she finds it quite endearing and I find it quite endearing that they have different views as well*"), which consequently can foster symbiotic validation (i.e., an iterative process of validation between conversation participants). The final subcategory, Relational Integrity, denotes relational strength and connectedness ([Simon] "*our, you know, love for each other and our affection was far bigger than anything like this*"), seemingly bolstered by repeated demonstrations of "Willingness to Accept" and "Mutual Respect". Through this experience, participants reported finding unexpected similarity:

> [Simon] *You know, my daughter, you know, she was going through all this education. She wanted to show me that she was capable and she was, you know, emphatic and she was able to, to listen and to respond. And I guess the same for me. You know, I wanted to show her that I wasn't going to lose my head and start ranting and couldn't cope with criticism or an opposing view.*

Through this alternative route, stronger Relational Integrity appeared to increase the likelihood of a "Willingness to Accept", beginning the cycle again.

Model Validation

Validation in GT involves returning to study contributors to obtain "confirmation that the outcome is suitable and acceptable" (Bryant, 2017, p. 102). To meet this quality criterion, five validation interviews were conducted to gather feedback on subjective resonance of the emerging theory and to determine whether important elements were missing from the model. In addition, the theory was discussed with a public involvement consultant. Feedback on model resonance was positive, participants spoke of the theory being "*very reflective of the different steps [and] phases*" of what they had "*been through*" [Lydia], explaining that it "*all resonate[d]*" [Keith] and "*makes sense*" [John]. Participants did not identify disconnect with any part of the model ([Keith] "*...honestly, there was nothing I picked up there which is not relevant*" and provided helpful guidance regarding potential developments, particularly concerning movement between conditional Relational Distance pathways ([John] "*I can certainly empathise with [relational] distance blocked communication, but...there are elements that I recognise in the lower pathway as well*") and re-attempts at the SPC conversation ([Elliot] "*I mean, there are alternative routes, of course....they don't always have to come back to taboo conversations*"). Furthermore, participants acknowledged the model's applicability across different SPC topics ([Olive] "*Thinking of other hot topics at the moment...it applies to how seriously people take the pandemic and you know, everything else, political views. Yeah. I think it's, um, it's a model that can be used literally for any topic*") and in non-familial relationships ([Lydia] "*I think there are a lot of similarities because I can see this model fitting in with one group of friends that I have as well*").

Discussion

This study concerned the development of a grounded theory of adult intrafamilial invalidation during SPC conversations, specifically regarding Brexit and COVID-19. The central experience described was of a perceived "Rejection of You"—a subjective understanding that something inherent is rejected by family; not just one's subjective experience. It was found this experience emerges from SPC conversation grounded in certain foundational and contextual factors: Family Dynamics and Temperament (foundational); Relational Closeness, "Physical State", conversation setting and societal topic significance; subjective topic investment; and Assumptions of Connection (contextual). Several perceived intra- and interpersonal consequences of the experience were found, including behavioural (Seeking Validation elsewhere), cognitive (Hardening Views), emotional (cyclical negative emotion states), and relational (an initial Physical Distance, a Relationship Re-evaluation, and then a conditional Relational Distance) consequences. The experience was found to result in the SPC topic becoming taboo or in one or more parties attempting to discuss the topic again, following a "pros and cons" evaluation. Feedback from validation interviews suggested the theory was resonant and that it had applicability to other contexts, situations, and groups.

Findings supported the theorised interrelatedness between temperament and family dynamics described in Thomas and Chess' (1968; 1985) work on temperament—that is the "goodness of fit" (Thomas & Chess, 1968, p. 49) between individual and environment that informed Linehan's (1993) biosocial theory of the development of borderline personality disorder. Several aspects of the grounded theory resonate with Fonagy et al.'s (1991) theory of mentalization. Failures of mentalizing in the context of attachment system activation (Luyten & Fonagy, 2015), for example, reflect processes described in the Escalation subcategory of the

"Rejection of You" experience and the Relational Closeness contextual subcategory. Similarly,

Assumptions of Connection may connect with the concept of psychic equivalence (Fonagy,

1995)—a prementalising state involving the collapse of "differentiation between…internal and

external reality" (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006, p. 7), which precedes a belief that "identity itself is

under attack" (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004, p. 96), most often resulting from intense emotional or

interpersonal stress (Fonagy & Allison, 2012). The current research also extends invalidation

theory beyond the confines of childhood (Linehan, 1993), suggesting that the impacts of familial

"Rejection of You" experiences bear relevance in other stages of the lifespan.

Strengths and Limitations

To the author's knowledge, this study represents the first of its kind in several respects:

the first to explore adult intrafamilial invalidation in the context of SPC, the first GT of adult

family invalidation experiences, and the first to explore Brexit and family invalidation. Several

limitations, however, should be considered alongside finding interpretation.

Firstly, while the aim of GT isn't generalisability or sample representativeness (Corbin &

Strauss, 2015), the sample's relative homogeneity may have affected theory richness and its

transferability. For example, all participants identified as White European, and several key family

relational dimensions have been found to vary cross-culturally (e.g., familism; Falzarano et al.,

2021), potentially restricting the applicability of findings to other ethnic groups.

Secondly, an emphasis on thoughts, behaviours and emotions in the focus group schedule

may have imposed a cognitive behavioural frame on the emergent theory, potentially diluting the

theory's grounding in the data. However, questions about relational dimensions (e.g., "How did

the experience impact your relationships?") may have mitigated this effect. Also, the emerging

significance of systemic factors during theory development may contraindicate this theoretical bias.

Finally, sampling was undertaken four to five years after the 2016 EU referendum, primarily using social media groups. Prospective participants presumably had, therefore, a high level of subject interest to have been exposed to recruitment literature through active participation in subject-specific online social groups. This consequently may have introduced sampling bias and overweighted the significance of topic investment in the analysis. However, recruitment literature was published in a large cross-section of different special- and general-interest groups, a strength of the study. Also, the study utilised additional sampling techniques (e.g., word-of-mouth and snowballing) and the theoretical sampling method, which may have moderated this effect.

Other notable strengths included a robust process of theory validation, the inclusion of additional data sources in the analysis (i.e., qualitative screening questionnaire responses and written correspondence with participants), regular liaison with public involvement consultants, and a wide range of family relationships being represented in the sample.

Clinical Implications

The context of this grounded theory of adult intrafamilial invalidation was SPC. The theory suggests invalidations in this context precipitate distressing intra- and interpersonal experiences, meaningfully connected to topic investment. The mental health effects of SPC are reportedly often brought into therapy (Chappet, 2019). However, the extent to which interactions between SPC and family invalidation are addressed therapeutically is not clear. Consequently, it is recommended that family factors are considered and explored when distress concerning SPC is raised in mental health settings.

Interventions could involve, for example, guiding individuals and families towards identified helpful interpersonal strategies during SPC conversations (e.g., opening up communication, fostering curiosity, promoting "Willingness to Accept" and "Mutual Respect"). However, care should also be taken to normalise and validate alternative strategies when these are felt necessary (e.g., establishing Physical or Relational Distance from invalidating others, or Seeking Validation elsewhere).

Additionally, given the suggested relationship between family "Rejection of You" experiences and unhelpful cognitive, emotional and relational processes, it appears important that clinicians attend to operant validation/invalidation processes and "goodness of fit" (Thomas & Chess, 1968, p. 49) when facilitating family interventions, particularly in the context of SPC. In systemic interventions, this could include locating opportunities for intrafamilial connection and validation within difference. Such an intervention could include, for example, questions such as:

- "where do your (family member)'s values/experiences and your values/experiences meet?"

- "how are these meetings of minds communicated between you?"

- "when have you noticed your values/experiences reflected in the (politically discordant) perspective?"

- "how about when your (family member)'s values/ experiences have been reflected in your perspective?"

- "what experiences have informed your (family member)'s (politically discordant) perspective?"

When working with systems, practitioners should stay alert for opportunities to encourage ways of disagreeing well by locating "Of Substance and Value" interactions, drawing attention to them, and supporting their application to areas more prone to invalidating exchange (e.g., disagreement regarding SPC).

While this GT concerns familial invalidation, findings broadly support the importance of validation across relationships. "Rejection of You" experiences appear to increase relational strain and promote cognitive rigidity and negative cycles of emotion. Conversely, "Of Substance and Value" experiences appear to support Relational Integrity. The application of these findings could extend beyond the confines of individual or microsystem practice to organisational, locality, or macrosystem work (Dalton et al., 2007). For example, organisational level interventions could involve raising awareness in educational institutions of "Rejection of You" experiences in the acquisition of knowledge (e.g., dismissing cultural knowledges in favour of predetermined wisdoms) and potential accompanying unintended consequences (e.g., Hardening Views and Relational Distance). Macrosystem interventions could involve working with social movements to support "Of Substance and Value" interactions with ideologically opposed groups to promote openness to mutual understanding. Similarly, such interventions could include work with governments on the communication of health and social policy in a way that connects and validates people's diverse experiences, as opposed to promoting cognitive rigidity, disengagement and distance.

Finally, processes of validation are fundamentally important therapeutically in establishing trust, safety, and openness to change. They should continue to be incorporated into healthcare interventions, both at the practitioner level—in sensitivity to subjective experience and acceptance of lived experience—and the service planning level—in supporting

implementation of validation-focused, evidence-based interventions (e.g., mentalization-based treatment, dialectical behavior therapy, and narrative therapy [Bateman & Fonagy, 2004; Linehan, 1993; White & Epston, 1990]).

Future Research

Future research could elaborate this study further by exploring the theory in different family and non-family contexts—e.g., by investigating the theorised structures and processes in non-typical family configurations (e.g., 'chosen families'; Weston, 1997), among families considered to have high expressed emotion (Brown & Rutter, 1966), in collectivist cultures, or in non-family relationships (e.g., friendship groups, work environments). It would likely be beneficial to examine the theory among groups that meet threshold for a mental health or personality disorder diagnosis, to further explore its clinical relevance and utility in psychotherapeutic interventions.

Given the predominance of literature on childhood familial invalidation, exploring connections between "Rejection of You" experiences in childhood and those in adulthood might be useful—e.g., whether childhood invalidation experiences differentially impact similar invalidations in adulthood. Also, as social and cultural divisions have widened in the UK since the 2016 EU referendum (Duffy et al., 2019)—particularly concerning identity-based affective polarisation (Hobolt et al., 2021)—it would behove future studies to consider invalidation processes in polarisation research.

Conclusion

Recent significant social and political events have engendered affective polarisation and resulted in diverse invalidation experiences across society and within families. Invalidation, or "Rejection of You", experiences between adult family members in this context appear to be

significant, mutually-felt events that—through a process of escalation—have broad and enduring intra- and inter-personal effects. In line with previous literature, "Rejection of You" experiences were found to comprise dismissal, belittlement, trivialisation, misattribution and punishment. Conversations from which such experiences emerge appear to be grounded in a number of constitutional, familial, and situation-specific contextual factors that draw parallels with existing theories of psychological development.

Consequences of "Rejection of You" experiences were found to have emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and relational components: individuals experience a negative cycle of emotions, their views harden, they seek validation from others, and they undertake a re-evaluation of the family relationship, determining whether there will be relational repair or breakdown. In the event of relationship continuation, individuals may re-attempt to broach the SPC topic or an agreement is made—either explicitly or implicitly—not to discuss it. If in a conversation about the issue, one or more parties express a "Willingness to Accept" others' subjective experience, there is the possibility of an emergent "Mutual Respect" which can foster Relational Integrity and lead parties to believe they are considered "Of Substance and Value".

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Section C: Appendices

Appendix A

Example Search Strategy – OVID Database

APA PsycInfo <1806 to November Week 1 2021>

APA PsycArticles Full Text

Ovid MEDLINE(R) and Epub Ahead of Print, In-Process, In-Data-Review & Other Non-Indexed Citations, Daily and Versions(R) <1946 to November 3, 2021>

Social Policy and Practice <202110>

#	Searches	Results
1	((partner* adj2 relation*) or (partner* adj2 divi*) or (partner* adj2 fight*) or (partner* adj2 argu*) or (partner* adj2 discord*) or (partner* adj2 disput*) or (partner* adj2 invalid*) or (partner* adj2 conflict*) or (partner* adj2 connect*) or (partner* adj2 hostil*) or (partner* adj2 cohes*) or (partner* adj2 function*)).af.	18475
2	((marital adj relation*) or (marital adj divi*) or (marital adj fight*) or (marital adj argu*) or (marital adj discord*) or (marital adj disput*) or (marital adj invalid*) or (marital adj conflict*) or (marital adj connect*) or (marital adj hostil*) or (marital adj cohes*) or (marital adj function*)).af.	30100
3	((kin adj2 relation*) or (kin adj2 divi*) or (kin adj2 fight*) or (kin adj2 argu*) or (kin adj2 discord*) or (kin adj2 disput*) or (kin adj2 invalid*) or (kin adj2 conflict*) or (kin adj2 connect*) or (kin adj2 hostil*) or (kin adj2 cohes*) or (kin adj2 function*)).af.	1413
4	((spous* adj2 relation*) or (spous* adj2 divi*) or (spous* adj2 fight*) or (spous* adj2 argu*) or (spous* adj2 discord*) or (spous* adj2 disput*) or (spous* adj2 invalid*) or (spous* adj2 conflict*) or (spous* adj2 connect*) or (spous* adj2 hostil*) or (spous* adj2 cohes*) or (spous* adj2 function*)).af.	6054
5	((famil* adj2 relation*) or (famil* adj2 divi*) or (famil* adj2 fight*) or (famil* adj2 argu*) or (famil* adj2 discord*) or (famil* adj2 disput*) or (famil* adj2 invalid*) or (famil* adj2 conflict*) or (famil* adj2 connect*) or (famil* adj2 hostil*) or (famil* adj2 cohes*) or (famil* adj2 function*)).af.	171857
6	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5	204878
7	(Brexit or ((euro* adj1 vot*) or (EU adj1 vot*) or ("2016" adj vot*)) or ((euro* adj1 referendum) or (EU adj1 referendum) or ("2016" adj referendum))).ab. or (Brexit or ((euro* adj1 vot*) or (EU adj1 vot*) or ("2016" adj vot*)) or ((euro* adj1 referendum) or (EU adj1 referendum) or ("2016" adj referendum))).ti.	703

8	(migrant* or migrat* or immigrant* or immigrat* or refugee* or (freedom adj2 movement)).ab. or (migrant* or migrat* or immigrant* or immigrat* or refugee* or (freedom adj2 movement)).ti.	323487
9	((free adj speech) or censor* or (cancel adj culture) or cancel* or (freedom adj2 speech)).ab. or ((free adj speech) or censor* or (cancel adj culture) or cancel* or (freedom adj2 speech)).ti.	32509
10	7 or 8 or 9	356292
11	((United adj Kingdom) or UK or (Great adj Britain) or Britain or (British adj Isles) or England or Scotland or Wales or (Northern adj Ireland)).mp.	512648
12	10 and 11	8542
13	(("2016" adj1 election) or (US adj election) or (presidential adj election) or (trump adj2 clinton)).ab. or (("2016" adj1 election) or (US adj election) or (presidential adj election) or (trump adj2 clinton)).ti.	1470
14	(black lives matter or all lives matter or blue lives matter or George Floyd or BLM).ab. or (black lives matter or all lives matter or blue lives matter or George Floyd or BLM).ti.	3584
15	((Scottish adj1 independen*) or (Scotland adj1 independent*)).ab. or ((Scottish adj1 independen*) or (Scotland adj1 independent*)).ti.	49
16	12 or 13 or 14 or 15	13625
17	6 and 16	248
18	limit 17 to english language	223
19	limit 18 to yr="2016 -Current"	99
20	remove duplicates from 19	91

Note. af = all fields; adj2 = within two words either side; adj = directly adjacent; adj1 = within one word either side; ab = abstract; ti = title; yr = year.

Appendix B

Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (Version 18; Hong et al., 2018) Qualitative and Quantitative Descriptive Study

Methodological Quality Criteria

1. Qualitative studies	Methodological quality criteria
"Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2013b, p. 3). Common qualitative research approaches include (this list if not exhaustive): **Ethnography** The aim of the study is to describe and interpret the shared cultural behaviour of a group of individuals. **Phenomenology** The study focuses on the subjective experiences and interpretations of a phenomenon encountered by individuals. **Narrative research** The study analyses life experiences of an individual or a group. **Grounded theory** Generation of theory from data in the process of conducting research (data collection occurs first). **Case study** In-depth exploration and/or explanation of issues intrinsic to a particular case. A case can be anything from a decision-making process, to a person, an organization, or a country. **Qualitative description** There is no specific methodology, but a qualitative data collection and analysis, e.g., in-depth interviews or focus groups, and hybrid thematic analysis (inductive and deductive).	1.1. Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question? Explanations The qualitative approach used in a study (see non-exhaustive list on the left side of this table) should be appropriate for the research question and problem. For example, the use of a grounded theory approach should address the development of a theory and ethnography should study human cultures and societies. This criterion was considered important to add in the MMAT since there is only one category of criteria for qualitative studies (compared to three for quantitative studies). 1.2. Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question? Explanations This criterion is related to data collection method, including data sources (e.g., archives, documents), used to address the research question. To judge this criterion, consider whether the method of data collection (e.g., in depth interviews and/or group interviews, and/or observations) and the form of the data (e.g., tape recording, video material, diary, photo, and/or field notes) are adequate. Also, clear justifications are needed when data collection methods are modified during the study. 1.3. Are the findings adequately derived from the data? Explanations This criterion is related to the data analysis used. Several data analysis methods have been developed and their use depends on the research question and qualitative approach. For example, open, axial and selective coding is often associated with grounded theory, and within- and cross-case analysis is often seen in case study. 1.4. Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data? Explanations The interpretation of results should be supported by the data collected. For example, the quotes provided to justify the themes should be adequate. 1.5. Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation? Explanations There should be clear links between data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation.

4. Quantitative descriptive studies	Methodological quality criteria

Quantitative descriptive studies are "concerned with and designed only to describe the existing distribution of variables without much regard to causal relationships or other hypotheses" (Porta et al., 2014, p. 72). They are used to monitoring the population, planning, and generating hypothesis (Grimes and Schulz, 2002).

Common designs include the following single-group studies (this list if not exhaustive):

Incidence or prevalence study without comparison group
In a defined population at one particular time, what is happening in a population, e.g., frequencies of factors (importance of problems), is described (portrayed).

Survey
"Research method by which information is gathered by asking people questions on a specific topic and the data collection procedure is standardized and well defined." (Bennett et al., 2011, p. 3).

Case series
A collection of individuals with similar characteristics are used to describe an outcome.

Case report
An individual or a group with a unique/unusual outcome is described in detail.

4.1. Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?

Explanations
Sampling strategy refers to the way the sample was selected. There are two main categories of sampling strategies: probability sampling (involve random selection) and non-probability sampling. Depending on the research question, probability sampling might be preferable. Nonprobability sampling does not provide equal chance of being selected. To judge this criterion, consider whether the source of sample is relevant to the target population; a clear justification of the sample frame used is provided; or the sampling procedure is adequate.

4.2. Is the sample representative of the target population?

Explanations
There should be a match between respondents and the target population. Indicators of representativeness include: clear description of the target population and of the sample (such as respective sizes and inclusion and exclusion criteria), reasons why certain eligible individuals chose not to participate, and any attempts to achieve a sample of participants that represents the target population.

4.3. Are the measurements appropriate?

Explanations
Indicators of appropriate measurements include: the variables are clearly defined and accurately measured, the measurements are justified and appropriate for answering the research question; the measurements reflect what they are supposed to measure; validated and reliability tested measures of the outcome of interest are used, variables are measured using 'gold standard', or questionnaires are pre-tested prior to data collection.

4.4. Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?

Explanations
Nonresponse bias consists of "an error of nonobservation reflecting an unsuccessful attempt to obtain the desired information from an eligible unit." (Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, 2001, p. 6). To judge this criterion, consider whether the respondents and nonrespondents are different on the variable of interest. This information might not always be reported in a paper. Some indicators of low nonresponse bias can be considered such as a low nonresponse rate, reasons for nonresponse (e.g., noncontacts vs. refusals), and statistical compensation for nonresponse (e.g., imputation).

The nonresponse bias is might not be pertinent for case series and case report. This criterion could be adapted. For instance, complete data on the cases might be important to consider in these designs.

4.5. Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?

Explanations
The statistical analyses used should be clearly stated and justified in order to judge if they are appropriate for the design and research question, and if any problems with data analysis limited the interpretation of the results.

Appendix C

Evaluations Informing Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (Version 18; Hong et al. 2018) Criterion Ratings

Methodological quality criteria	Evidence for criteria ratings						
Qualitative	Bayne et al. (2019)	Brown & Keller (2018)	Davies (2021)	Gabriele-Black et al. (2021)`	Gonzalez et al. (2018)	Pletta et al. (2021)	Riggle et al. (2021)
1.1 Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	Two research questions concerned how significant relationships have been affected by US election[a] and how relational change was experienced and responded to by participants, qualitative approach therefore suitable	General aims of the study ("examine thoughts [on US election]...impact [on well-being] and...interactions" p. 105) are given as opposed to clear research questions. Aims of study could theoretically be met using qualitative approach, although but also be met using quantitative methodologies	Four research questions sought to explore how Brexit was experienced in everyday family relationships, how it was discussed, how boundaries around political conversations are negotiated and how (dis)agreement has affected relationships. Qualitative approach appropriate for these lines of enquiry	Three research questions concerning how SM adoptive parents responded emotionally to US election, how relationships with family members were shaped by these responses, and coping with/seeking to overcome stigmas exacerbated by the election. Qualitative approach appears suitable to answer research questions	Several questions posed in literature review indicating how research should be guided. Not clearly identified as research questions. Qualitative approach, however, potentially appropriate for research-guiding questions	Study poses one overarching research question for the study: "how [has] the [US election]impacted the health and well-being of families with TNB adolescents in New England" (p. 2). Qualitative approach suitable approach	Research question not clearly specified, however, general aim to further "understanding of how macro-level political events impact SMW with racial minority/racialized identities" (p. 115) described
1.2 Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	1-hr semi-structured interviews consisting of open-ended questions, listed by authors. Research team jointly agreed when to end data collection when reaching category saturation. No during-study modifications noted	As research questions were unclear and specified aims broad, the qualitative survey approach appears too restrictive to adequately meet study aims. Process of developing survey and addressing researcher bias documented, but justification for areas of investigation unclear	1-2-hr interviews were used to gather data to address research questions, which would in theory provide sufficient depth. However, nature of interviews not specified, nor were interview schedules provided making it difficult to assess data collection methods. Data collections not reported to have been modified during study	Generally, the data collection method chosen was appropriate to the research questions. However, survey questions appeared both too specific (asking detailed questions not clearly related to research questions) and not sufficiently sensitive (e.g., no questions regarding extended family relationships)	One question was analysed from a larger data set concerning how relationship with family-of-origin has been affected by US election. This broadly is suitable for all questions posed in literature review	2-hr data collection sessions comprising 1-hr semi-structured interview and 1-hr electronic survey. Sample interview questions from schedule provided. Methods appear adequate to address research question	Researchers used qualitative survey methodology to meet study aim. Nine open-ended questions are detailed which broadly address the aim, however, the specificity of the questions are not represented in the research question

Methodological quality criteria	Evidence for criteria ratings						
Qualitative	Bayne et al. (2019)	Brown & Keller (2018)	Davies (2021)	Gabriele-Black et al. (2021)`	Gonzalez et al. (2018)	Pletta et al. (2021)	Riggle et al. (2021)
1.3 Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	Data analysis followed CQR procedures (Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 2005). Analysis process described in detail. As per CQR, research team used to mitigate researcher bias and ensure multiple meanings in data considered. External auditor employed.	Brown & Keller (2018) report using a "simplified… constant comparison method" (p. 108) based on Glaser's (1978) work, elaborating Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory approach. Stated aims do not allude to theory development and findings are descriptive.	Thematic and narrative analyses used to elucidate findings, which appear appropriate to the data collection methods (i.e., in-depth interview). Unclear how thematic and narrative analyses synthesised to generate reported findings	Evidence provided supporting the appropriateness of data analysis strategy (content analysis) for data collection methods (open-ended qualitative survey). Survey included closed-ended questions, however, their analysis is not reported	Thematic analysis appears broadly appropriate for research questions, however, aim of study concerns "exploration of…narratives" (p. 64) so narrative analysis would likely have been more apt	Analysis utilised immersion/crystallizat ion (Borkan, 1999) and Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. Process comprehensively described and findings appear adequately derived from data	Authors suggest analysis adopts a "modified constant comparison approach" (p. 116) using Braun & Clarke (2006). However, this text does not describe such an approach separate from grounded theory, which this research is not
1.4 Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	Quotes appear to provide evidence of categories and subcategories identified in the analysis.	Interpretation of data is clearly substantiated by quotes, providing a rich and useful description of the data.	Detailed participant accounts are provided to substantiate findings and quotes clearly connect justify themes	Substantiating quotations included after each reported finding and situated in pertinent demographic information	Data clearly substantiated by quotes. Every theme and subtheme paired with an introductory illustrative quote.	Table detailing illustrative quotes for each subtheme, evidencing interpretation	Authors provide detailed illustrative quotes to evidence themes that emerged from the data

Methodological quality criteria	Evidence for criteria ratings						
Qualitative	Bayne et al. (2019)	Brown & Keller (2018)	Davies (2021)	Gabriele-Black et al. (2021)`	Gonzalez et al. (2018)	Pletta et al. (2021)	Riggle et al. (2021)
1.5 Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?	Clear links between data collection, analysis, and interpretation, guided by Hill (and colleagues; Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 2005). Demographic information is undetailed. Only majority demographics reported, making it difficult to assess appropriateness of data sources.	Attempts are made to connect data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation and there is a clear and comprehensive description of the sample. However, there is a clear lack of coherence between study components	There is a coherence between data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation, with links between elements of the research provided throughout the paper	Research questions clearly used to guide data sources, analysis and interpretation, through repeated revisiting throughout paper. Only query is regarding survey questions schedule, but not sufficiently problematic to impede coherence	Clear coherence from qualitative data sources through to data collection, analysis and interpretation. Results and discussion reported concurrently enhancing flow and connections between analysis and interpretation	Methods section clearly describes and draws coherent connections between data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation. Comprehensive description of the sample situates interpretation in data collection and analysis	There is some measure of coherence between data sources (a detailed overview of the sample is provided) and interpretation, however, connections through data collection and analysis are less clear
Quantitative Descriptive Studies	Afifi et al. (2020)		Johnson et al. (2019)		Warner et al. (2020)		
4.1 Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?	Authors used Amazon's crowdsourcing platform Mechanical Turk (MTurk; Amazon, 2018), arguably constituting convenience (nonprobability) sampling (Chandler, 2017). Probability sampling would likely have been more appropriate, given the conceptual breadth of the research question. However, the method has been found more representative than other convenience sampling methods (Gerlich et al., 2018) and viable when a general population sample is needed, as was the case in Afifi et al. (2020)		While the sample isn't representative of the general US population--all college students from a single 'red' state--it is arguably relevant to the target population. Justification is provided for the sample frame, in that individuals tend to individuate ideologically from family in young adulthood (McAdams, 1993). However, this appears a post-hoc rationale. Generally, though, the sampling strategy appears adequate for the research question		Sampling strategy uses nonprobability sampling, but through an online platform (Qualtrics, 2020) drawing participants from "over 20 actively managed market research panels" (p. 9), which can be considered an appropriate strategy for stated research questions.		

Methodological quality criteria	Evidence for criteria ratings		
Quantitative Descriptive Studies	Afifi et al. (2020)	Johnson et al. (2019)	Warner et al. (2020)
4.2 Is the sample representative of the target population?	Evidence is conflicting regarding whether or not Amazon's MTurk platform produces representative samples (Chandler et al., 2019; Gerlich et al., 2018). The sample is described clearly but differs from the US general population regarding sex, race, political affiliation, and political affiliation	The sample cannot be said to be representative of the target population, based on the sampling strategy and consequent age of participants. Sample appeared representative concerning sex but not race, or political affiliation. No demographic information on sexual orientation or gender identity provided	Sample drawn from larger US election survey study, which contracted Qualtrics (2020) to recruit participants. Qualtrics (2021) report quote-stratified sampling methods provide representative samples that mirror country-specific census data. Authors note attrition from first wave led to a sample that was "more male...older...and whiter" (p. 9) than quota targets in first wave sampling, although still comparatively representative of the general US population.
4.3 Are the measurements appropriate?	Variables are clearly defined and measured using established validated measures. Cronbach's alpha scores are provided for all measures. Measures appear appropriate for research question	Variables are clearly defined and follow on well from study rationales. Study uses a combination of pre-validated and idiosyncratic measures. Measures of internal consistency given for all measures, however no further validation for idiosyncratic measures.	Variables are clearly defined and connected to research questions. All bar one measure used idiosyncratic to study. Internal consistency scores provided for all bar one measure (a feeling thermometer of political animus), but no additional validation methods used.
4.4 Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?	No information on nonresponse provided, therefore assessment could not be made	Nonresponse information provided for demographic information. No data given for non-respondents to primary measures	No data on nonresponse given and, consequently, no assessment could be made of nonresponse bias.
4.5 Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?	The two primary statistical analyses (growth curve modelling and SEM) are clearly appropriate to answer the research question--to test two hypothesised models-- and for the methodology used	Study used regression, moderation, and mediation analyses which appear appropriate to answer research questions posed (i.e., prediction- and moderation-based hypotheses/research questions)	Structural equation modelling appears to be an adequate analysis strategy to answer the research question (considering the structural relationship between variables of interest) and consequent hypotheses.

Note. US = United States of America; SM = sexual minority; TNB = transgender and/or non-binary; hr = hour

[a]2016 US presidential election

Appendix D

Focus Group Schedule

Check everyone is comfortable and in a private space. Brief check that everyone is clear about purpose of study and that they can withdraw at any time. Setting ground rules. Any questions before recorder switched on?

Question 1: <u>Would one of you</u> like to tell us about a time when you said or did something in relation to Brexit or COVID-19 that you felt strongly about (or that you held dearly) and a family member trivialised it or punished or ridiculed you in some way for expressing it?

Potential prompts: "What happened next?", "Could you tell me more about that?", "Do other people have similar experiences?"

Question 2: How did you feel during and after the event?

Potential prompts: Perhaps consider particular groups of emotions (anger, sadness, joy, guilt, shame, pride etc.). Might consider related bodily sensations as a gateway to felt experience. Could think about a timeline of experiences.

Question 3: What did you do during and after that conversation/event/argument – use participant's own words)?

Potential prompts: Perhaps consider groupings of behaviours (e.g., what they did, what they said, how they did/said things afterwards) and different domains of behaviours (e.g., towards themselves, towards their family member, towards others who may have been present at the time).

Question 4: How did the experience impact how you think/thought about what you said or did?

Potential prompts: Perhaps consider specific thoughts that occurred to the individual (about themselves, about people present/the family member/non-present others). Also, could consider processes (e.g., impact on memory, attention, rumination etc.).

Question 5: How did the experience impact your relationships?

Potential prompts: Perhaps prompt for different relationships related to event and belief (family member, others present, people related to the feeling/belief/action) Consider how they feel when they are around that person and whether it has meant they behave differently around them or not. If so, how?

Question 6: Do you recall any positive outcomes of the experience?

Potential prompts: Possibly explore at the time of the event and later. Consider what they ascribe that positive consequence to.

Question 7: How did the experience end?

Potential prompts: Do you feel the experience was resolved in the end or does it feel like it's still ongoing? If so, how? If not, what occurred instead? What is the situation like now?

Question 8: Anything further that has occurred to people that I haven't specifically asked about?

Switch off recording

Question 9: Anyone want to say how that was to take part or ask questions before we finish?

Debrief:

1. *Is there anything people would like to say anything about the experience of taking part in the group discussion.*

2. *You can request that your contributions to group discussion be removed from the data up to two weeks from the date of participating.*

3. *You can contact the lead researcher following the group discussion with any concerns or queries you may have.*

4. *You will be sent details of third-sector organisations that can provide emotional support in the event you wish to talk further about what you have spoken about today (e.g., The Samaritans and Mind).*

5. *If you have any immediate concerns, you can speak to one of the group facilitators after the end of the group.*

6. *You may be approached by the lead researcher to see whether you would be happy to take part in another part of the study (e.g., in a 1:1 interview).*

Appendix E

Initial Interview Schedule

Check they understand purpose. Remind participant of experience disclosed on questionnaire or experience discussed in focus group and ask whether they want to focus on that experience or a different one within their family. Any questions before recorder switched on?

Recorder switched on.

Question 1: What do you feel occurred in the run-up to the experience that allowed the experience to happen?

Potential prompts: How had your feelings, beliefs and actions developed? What do you believe informs your family member's feelings, beliefs and actions? What had happened the day, week, month before?

Question 2: What was your relationship with this family member like before this event?

Potential prompts: Other experiences that were similar? How have other discussions been experienced?

Question 3: What are relationships like among other members of your family?

Potential prompts: How was this experience similar to other experiences in your family? How did it differ? Between family members and between participant and other family members.

Question 4: How did this experience compare with experiences of trivialisation or punishment of feelings, beliefs or actions from people not in your family?

Potential prompts: What was similar? Different? Who were the other people and what is/was your relationship like with them?

Question 5: What has happened since that last experience?

Potential prompts: Have things felt better, the same, worse? How have you coped? What if anything has helped?

Question 6: Was there anything you felt unable to speak about in the focus group that you would like to elaborate on further here?

Potential prompts: Is there anything you think makes your experience different from others in the focus group? What was the experience of the focus group for you?

Switch off recording. Any questions or concerns participant may have?

Debrief:

1. *Is there anything you would like to say about the experience of taking part in the interview.*

2. *You can request that your interview be removed from the data up to two weeks from today's date.*

3. *Remind of third-sector organisations that can provide emotional support in the event you wish to talk further about what you have spoken about today (e.g., The Samaritans and Mind).*

4. *You may be approached by the lead researcher to see whether you would be happy to take part in another part of the study (e.g., in a 1:1 interview)*

Appendix F

Ethical Approval in Principle

This has been removed from the electronic copy.

Appendix G

Confirmation of Full Ethics Approval

This has been removed from the electronic copy.

Appendix H

Purposive Sampling Recruitment Poster

Appendix I

Facebook Groups for Recruitment

Facebook groups accessed for recruitment during project

Facebook Group Names	
Brent COVID-19 Mutual Aid	Make Friends: UK Only
Brexit & Politics in the New Decade (formerly Brexit Without Tears)	Newham Covid-19 Mutual Aid
Brexit, Great Britain & Beyond: The Right Way Forward	Politics in the UK
Brexit Insider	Reclaim Brixton Group
Brexit Means Brexit	Reunite EU - British European Rejoiners
British & American Politics	School of Political Science
Coronavirus Covid-19 and Long-Covid UK Group	Scots 4 Brexit
Coronavirus UK	Sensible Politics Debate
Covid-19 UK and World Wide	Southwark Covid-19 Mutual Aid
Covid-19 UK Support Group	The Heart of British Politics
Cross-Party Politics	The Brexit Club
Hackney Wick Locals	The Very Brexit Problems Club
Harrow Online Community	UK Parliament Debate
I Voted to Leave the EU - Brexit and Other Political Discussions	UK Political Discussion
Lambeth Covid-19 Mutual Aid	WeAreEU (formerly We Are #StopBrexit)
SE6 SE13 Lewisham & Catford Community	We are the 17.4 Million
Little Miss Brexit	Newham Covid-19 Mutual Aid
London UK	Willesden Green Community Group

Note. Permission was sought from Facebook group administrators prior to posting to publish recruitment literature.

Appendix J

Theoretical Sampling Recruitment Poster Example

Appendix K

Screening Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in taking part in a study exploring the impact of having one's ideas, feelings and actions challenged by one or more family members in the context of Brexit or the coronavirus situation. Please complete the following questionnaire and return to j.s.bullock1378@canterbury.ac.uk.

Please read the following information sheet about the study. Afterwards, there will be a short questionnaire to help us determine whether you are eligible to take part in the study.

The questionnaire will help me to access perspectives of people from all walks of life and a range of views and experiences. A limited number of participants are required the group discussion and interviews. Therefore, you may or may not be invited to participate in the study. All information in the questionnaire will be stored securely and only used anonymously in the study report.

Name: _____   Email: _____

Gender: _____   Ethnicity: _____

Nationality: _____   Age: _____

1. Are you aged 16 or over?[4]

Yes   ❏   No   ❏

2. Do you have a view about Brexit or coronavirus that feels important to you? This might be about the situation itself, or about a feeling/belief you have or an action you have taken as a result of the situation (e.g., Brexit – believing EU immigration is good/bad for the country; coronavirus – taking the view that national lockdown was necessary/excessive.)

Yes   ❏   No   ❏

3. Does this view differ from one or more members of your family?

Yes   ❏   No   ❏

4. If yes, in discussion with this/these family member(s), how well do you think your feelings and beliefs about Brexit or coronavirus (or actions taken as a result of your feelings/beliefs) were understood as being well-founded and meaningful?

Not at all   ❏   Somewhat   ❏   Mostly   ❏   Completely   ❏

5. Could you please provide brief details of the experience below:

_____
_____

_____

[4] If no, prospective participant was redirected to page thanking them for their interest and explaining that they needed to be over the age of 16 to take part.

6. Do you feel that discussing your experience of having views, feelings or actions misunderstood, made light of, or punished by members of your family would cause you distress?

Not at all ❏   Somewhat ❏   Mostly ❏   Completely ❏

If you answered mostly or completely to the above question, you might wish to reconsider taking part in the study or arrange to speak with someone you trust following group discussion or interview.

6. If you are not invited to participate in an interview or group discussion, would you be interested in receiving a summary of the findings of the study?

Yes ❏   No ❏

If you have any queries or concerns regarding the above please contact the lead researcher Jonathan Bullock (j.s.bullock1378@canterbury.ac.uk). If you feel the questionnaire has caused you any distress, you can access support through the Samaritans (www.samaritans.org; Telephone: 116 123) or Mind (www.mind.org.uk).

Appendix L

Participant Information Sheet

Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology
One Meadow Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2YG
www.canterbury.ac.uk/appliedpsychology

Information about the research

Research project title: Developing a theory of the impact of having one's ideas, feelings and actions challenged by families in the context of Brexit or coronavirus.

Hello. My name is Jonathan Bullock and I am a trainee clinical psychologist at Canterbury Christ Church University. I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. The study is being supervised by Dr Sue Holttum, Senior Lecturer at Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology, Canterbury Christ Church University, and Dr Emily Turton, Highly Specialised Clinical Psychologist at Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.

Talk to others about the study if you wish. Part 1 tells you the purpose of this study and what will happen to you if you take part. Part 2 gives you more detailed information about the conduct of the study.

You will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Part 1

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of the study is to look at the impact of someone having their feelings, beliefs or actions misunderstood, made light of, or punished by family members. We want to develop a better understanding of the impact of this experience.

Why have I been invited?
You have been invited to take part as someone who may hold opinions or feelings about Brexit or coronavirus that are opposite to those of a family member. We are looking for 16 participants to take part in the study.

Do I have to take part?
No. It is up to you to whether to join the study. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason. You can also ask for your interview or contributions to group discussions to be removed from the data (up to two weeks from the date of participating). This would not affect any of your statutory rights.

What will happen to me if I take part?
- You will be asked first to complete a short screening questionnaire; this will help me determine whether you are able to take part in the study.

- If you are invited to take part in the study, it would involve joining a virtual group discussion using an online videocall programme called Zoom. You would not need to have Zoom on your computer – it just involves being sent a link so you can join the meeting.
- Group discussions will be around 1 hour and 30 minutes in length and will involve up to eight people.
- They will be led by two group facilitators, the lead researcher and another trainee clinical psychologist.
- Providing sufficient number of participants are able to engage in group discussions, groups will be arranged so group members share similar views on either Brexit or coronavirus (as identified through the short screening questionnaire).
- You would be asked to think about a time when you felt your feelings, beliefs or actions regarding Brexit or coronavirus were misunderstood or made light of by a member of your family, or when making these known led to some punishment by a family member, and how you feel this impacted you.
- In the group, you would not be asked to share any feelings, beliefs or actions you do not feel comfortable sharing.
- You may also be asked whether you are happy to attend an additional video-call interview.
- This would be just you and an interviewer and would be arranged at your convenience.
- Interviews will be around 45 minutes.
- Both interviews and group discussions would be recorded and then a transcript of the recording would be written up.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
It is possible that previous experiences of having your feelings, beliefs or actions misunderstood, made light of, or punished may have had a negative emotional impact on you. Remembering and discussing these experiences may have a similar emotional impact. Please feel free to discuss with someone you trust whether you want to take part and how it might affect you.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
We cannot promise the study will help you but the information we get from this study will help understand the impact for people of having their emotions, beliefs and actions misunderstood, made light of, or punished by significant people in their life.

Part 2

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?
- If you decide you don't want to carry on with the study, we would like to be able to use what you've said up to the point you decided not to continue.
- However, you may ask for the data collected to be removed from the study *up to two weeks following the date of your participation in a group discussion or interview*.
- If you decided this, the recording of the interview and any transcription would be deleted.
- If you decided you didn't want what you'd said in the group included, your contributions to the group would not be written up, but the recording would be kept until the other group members" contributions had been written up. At this point, the recording would be deleted.

Concerns and Complaints
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to me, and I will do my best to address your concerns. You can contact me by leaving a message on the 24-hour voicemail phone number 01227 927070. Please leave a contact number and say that the message is for me, Jonathan Bullock, and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can contact me via email at j.s.bullock1378@canterbury.ac.uk.

If you aren't happy with the response and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting Dr Fergal Jones, Clinical Psychology Programme Research Director, Salomons Institute for Applied

Psychology. His email is fergal.jones@canterbury.ac.uk.

Will information from or about me from taking part in the study be kept confidential?
Yes. All information that is collected from or about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information written up will have personal identifiers removed so that you cannot be recognised. The following information is about protecting your information throughout the study:

- Data from group discussions and interviews will be collected and stored on a laptop and will be uploaded to Office 365 OneDrive and deleted from the device.
- Recordings and written material will be stored securely in Office 365 OneDrive. You can find information on Office 365's security standards at https://support.office.com/en-us/article/How-OneDrive-safeguards-your-data-in-the-cloud-23c6ea94-3608-48d7-8bf0-80e142edd1e1
- Written material would be stored separately from anything that might identify you to ensure anonymity. A different name would be used in the final written piece to promote confidentiality. Group discussion participants would need to agree that things said in the group discussion stay confidential.
- Anonymised data will be retained for a period of 10 years. This is based on advice given by the Medical Research Council. After this time, the data will be securely disposed of.
- The only time when I would need to pass on information from you to a third party would be if, as a result of something you told me, I were to become concerned about your safety or the safety of someone else.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results will be written up in a report submitted to Salomons Institute for Psychology as part of the assessment of my doctoral training. The report will also be prepared to be submitted to a research journal for publication. Quotes from group discussions and interviews may be included in reports or presentations but would be fully anonymised. If you wanted a copy of the report, I would send an electronic copy after it's accepted by the university.

Who is sponsoring and funding the research?
The research is sponsored and funded by Canterbury Christ Church University.

Who has reviewed the study?
All research in the NHS is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given approval by The Salomons Ethics Panel, Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology, Canterbury Christ Church University.

Further information and contact details
Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you would like to speak to me and find out more about the study of have questions about it answered, you can leave a message for me on a 24-hour voicemail phone line at 01227 927070. Please say that the message is for me, Jonathan Bullock, and leave a contact number so that I can get back to you. Alternatively, you can contact me via email at j.s.bullock1378@canterbury.ac.uk.

Date: 27th March 2020
Version number: 3

Appendix M

Informed Consent Form

Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology
One Meadow Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2YG

Ethics approval number:
Version number: 3
Participant Identification number for this study:

CONSENT FORM
Title of Project: Developing a theory of the impact of having one's ideas, feelings and actions
misunderstood, made light of, or punished by families in the context of Brexit or coronavirus.
Name of Researcher: Jonathan Bullock

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated...27/3/20.............
(version 3) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask
questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time
without giving any reason.

3. I understand that I can request for my group discussion and interview data to be removed
from the study two weeks from date of participation without giving any reason.

4. I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by the lead supervisor,
Dr Sue Holttum. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.

5. I agree that anonymous quotes from my interview and other anonymous data may be used
in published reports of the study findings.

6. I agree for my anonymous data (stored securely) to be used in further research studies on
similar topics. This may be conducted by a different research team. This is an optional item of
the agreement and will not impact your ability to take part in the study.

7. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant_____ Date_____

Signature _____

Name of Person taking consent _____ Date_____

Signature _____

Appendix N

Focus Group Agreement

Safety

- You are free to leave the focus group at any point without giving a reason. One of the two facilitators will contact you to check in with you following the focus group.

Respect

- Please show respect to fellow group members. This could be by:

    o Not speaking over one other

    o Not using offensive or discriminatory language

    o Recognising that others may have different opinions to your own

    o Allowing people to have their own opinions, even though they may differ from yours.

Mobile phones

- Please turn mobile phones to silent and do not use them in group.

- If you are expecting an important call, please let a facilitator know.

Confidentiality

- You are welcome to discuss details of the study. However, please do not discuss others" contributions outside the group discussion or identify known members of the group to others.

- If we have concerns about your or others" safety, we may have to break confidentiality but will try to discuss this with you beforehand.

Appendix O

Sample Written Correspondence

This has been removed from the electronic copy.

Appendix P

Coded Manuscript Example

*Coded extract with memos from an early open/axial coding session of the focus group transcript.*

This has been removed from the electronic copy.

Appendix Q

Example of Communication Between Open and Axial Coding

Diagram displaying early categories and subcategories generated through open coding, clustered and linked conceptually through axial coding and memoing. Font size represents relative coding density.
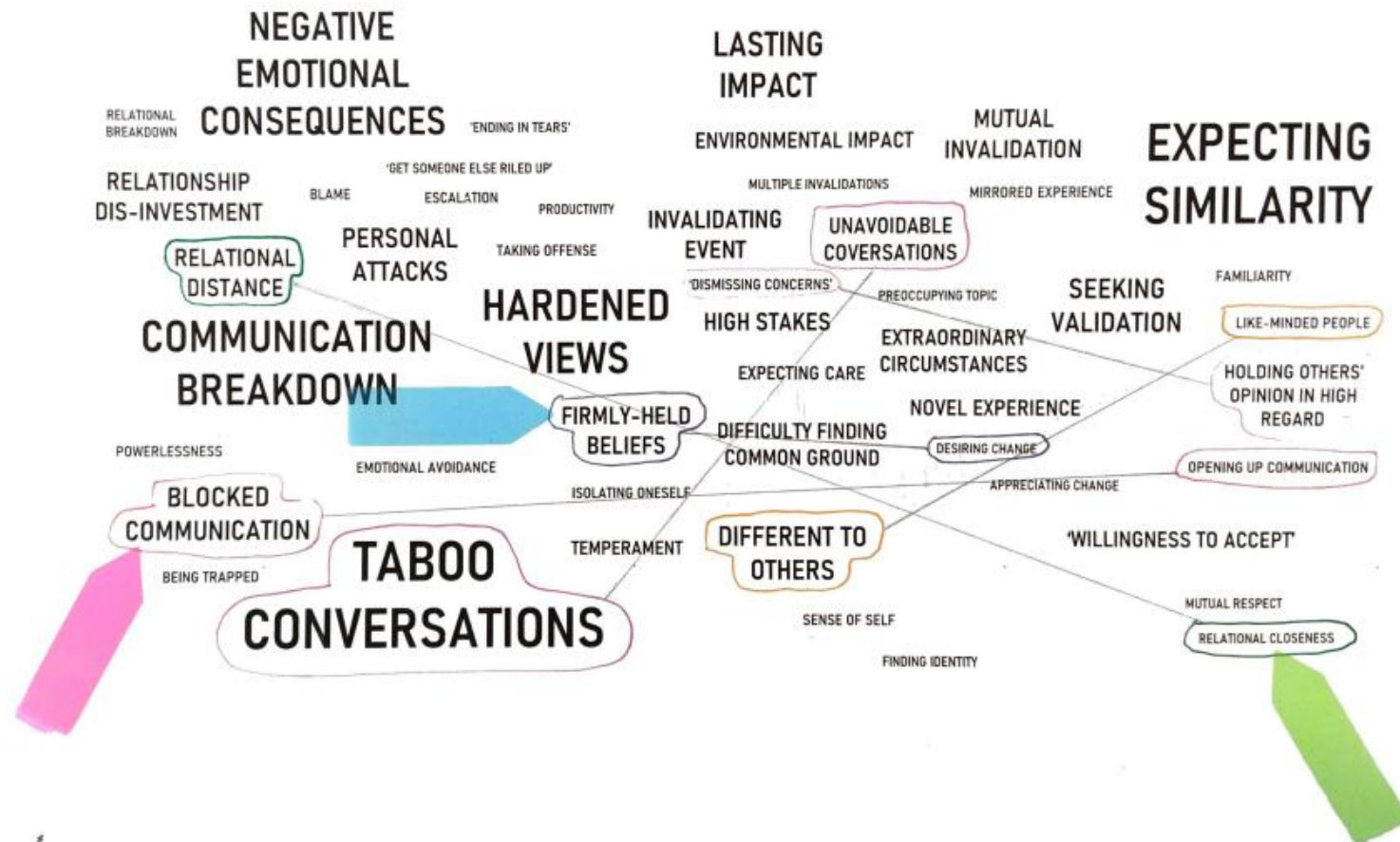
Appendix R

Analytic Memo Example

Back and forth experience

26/02/21 - Interview1JG - 03:50

"And what makes it doubly ironic is our great great grandparents were [European nationality] originally, and they came over and I said, [brother], but you're from you're from immigrants. I said, I'm an immigrant in [European country]. I said, I don't understand your way of thinking. And he said, well, you know, and then he started trying to justify what he just said. And I couldn't, I could not, I couldn't get that out of my head that he'd try to justify the Leave vote by saying that he understood the problem about the immigration. And I don't know if that was me being a bit sort of, what shall we say? We say nippy in Scotland, oversensitive, hypersensitive, maybe. You know, I don't know. But I really took it quite badly. And, and it was Christmas night. And shall we say I'd had, a few, one or two sherries, and I just ended up telling him to drop dead. I was just so angry. Angry, angry, angry at this, you know, he has made racist jokes before and I know we all are racist to a certain extent, but he, he seems to… he… it just showed me that he is, he is of that ilk as well. That's the way his mind worked. And it was unbelievable. Unbelievable. So I haven't spoken to him since then, basically."

The participant provides us with an overview of <u>movement through the invalidating conversation</u> that started with "*chatting*" where the subject "*drifted*" "*down the road*" of politics. Her brother said "*I know you're a Scottish nationalist*", in a "*derogatory way*", (**concept "tone"?**) and then the conversation moved to Brexit. There is a sense of the information heard from her brother being "*unbelievable*" to her. Unbelievable seems to mean something that cannot be fathomed or integrated into consciousness, the psyche. She cannot "*get her head*" around his

way of justifying his belief that Leave might have appealed to some voters due to concerns about immigration. The participant moves quickly from "*concerns about immigration*" to "*racism*" and appears to presume synonymity. She also holds an awareness of the possibility of sensitivity - framed here as "*oversensitivity*" and "*hypersensitivity*", this gives us a possible <u>subcategory of sensitivity</u>, with the <u>property of level</u>, which can vary dimensionally between high ("*hyper*") sensitivity to presumably low sensitivity. In this passage, sensitivity is alluded to as a state, the participant was possibly "*being a bit nippy*" at the time, versus being a "*nippy*" person. There is possibly a <u>property of duration of sensitivity</u> (varying dimensionally from transient to established). **How does sensitivity relate to the category of temperament? What would being a "*nippy*" person mean to the participant versus the state of "*being a bit nippy*"?** Earlier, the participant talks about their own <u>historical connection to immigration through their great, great grandparents</u>. This appears to have a significance to the participant, which <u>might account for the establishment of this sensitivity</u>. There is also the <u>concept of alcohol</u>, which appears to exert some influence over the escalation seen later in the description - it appears that it was the "*one or two sherries*" that enabled her to tell her brother to "*drop dead*". **If the participant had not had consumed the alcohol, would it have escalated to this point?** Alcohol consumption has itself several <u>properties, including amount, context, type</u>. The emotional precipitant to this utterance was anger, the participant was "*so, angry*", "*angry, angry, angry*" and she relates this to her realisation that her brother is "*of that ilk as well*", that ilk presumably being racist. Her brother becomes very one-dimensional at this point and his mind becomes one-tracked. "*Ilk*" is a concept we could perhaps connect to "kind" or "type". **Does this imply otherness, separateness, a community, a group, rigid positions, group membership?** The result of this is relational breakdown: "*I haven't spoken to him since then*".

28/02/21 - Interview1JG - 07:44

"JG: [He said,] *"it was almost like he was ready, ready for this. And it was almost like he was,*

he'd primed himself previously". And I said, "no, I don't think so". He said,"he went

from zero to sixty in two seconds". He said, "it escalated so, so quickly".

"JB: *And can you can remember the point which went from zero to sixty? What was being said*

around that time?

"JG: *As soon as he mentioned the, the immigration, immigrants. And I said, excuse my French*

just now, I said "are you fucking kidding me?""

In this small excerpt, there is indication of the <u>mutuality concept</u> that has come up several

times in the data. A sense that both sides are invalidating each other, or at least, when this occurs

there is <u>escalation and conflict</u>. The participant's boyfriend reports that her brother went from

"*zero to sixty*", when the question of when this happened is put to the participant, she recounts

her own zero to sixty moment which culminates in her "*are you fucking kidding me?*" comment.

15/05/21 - Interview2MF - 3:32

"MF   *Yes. Well essentially, I quoted a number of background facts, I suppose, information that*

I'd researched, most of it from an EU website. And it was actually dismissed with

contempt, as "I suppose you read that in a far right…um…blog somewhere" or words to

that effect.

"JB   *OK, and…*

"MF   *A lot of it actually came from mein herr Verhofstadt's own pages."*

This is an interesting passage and I wonder if it speaks to something sequential in the

process of mutual dismissals. **Might sequential "rejections of you" be a <u>more accurate</u>**

category than "mutual rejections"? Although the first could be <u>subsumed into the second</u>.

Here the participant briefly recounts an invalidating experience. His well-researched views were

"*dismissed with contempt*" as being the result of reading from a "*far-right…blog*", which itself

appears to have <u>two processes in one phrase</u>: 1) his views must be extreme and associated with a

socially undesirable group that has connotations with violence, hate, fascism, oppression etc.;

and 2) the views come from a "*blog*" instead of a peer reviewed or academically sound

publication. In vivo, very quickly after this, the participant has his own go at the other side of the

argument, Gus Verhofstadt becomes "*mein herr Verhofstadt*". This interestingly has remarkable

similarity to the "*<u>rejection</u>*" existing in this participant's memory. Now the other side of the coin

is far-right, comparable with Hitler in the Third Reich. **Does this indicate that one invalidation**

leads to another as possibly a counter-balancing, possibly a defence? If it is a defence, are

there other defences that are not seen in the data? Or are there but haven't been picked

up? <u>Sequential "rejections of you" may have greater density as construct term than mutual</u>

<u>invalidations because it suggests a temporal element.</u> **How is the initial invalidation instigated**

I wonder, in this sequential process?
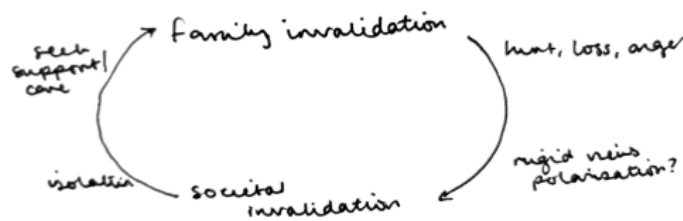
Appendix S

Reflective Memo Examples

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Appendix T

Selective Coding Example
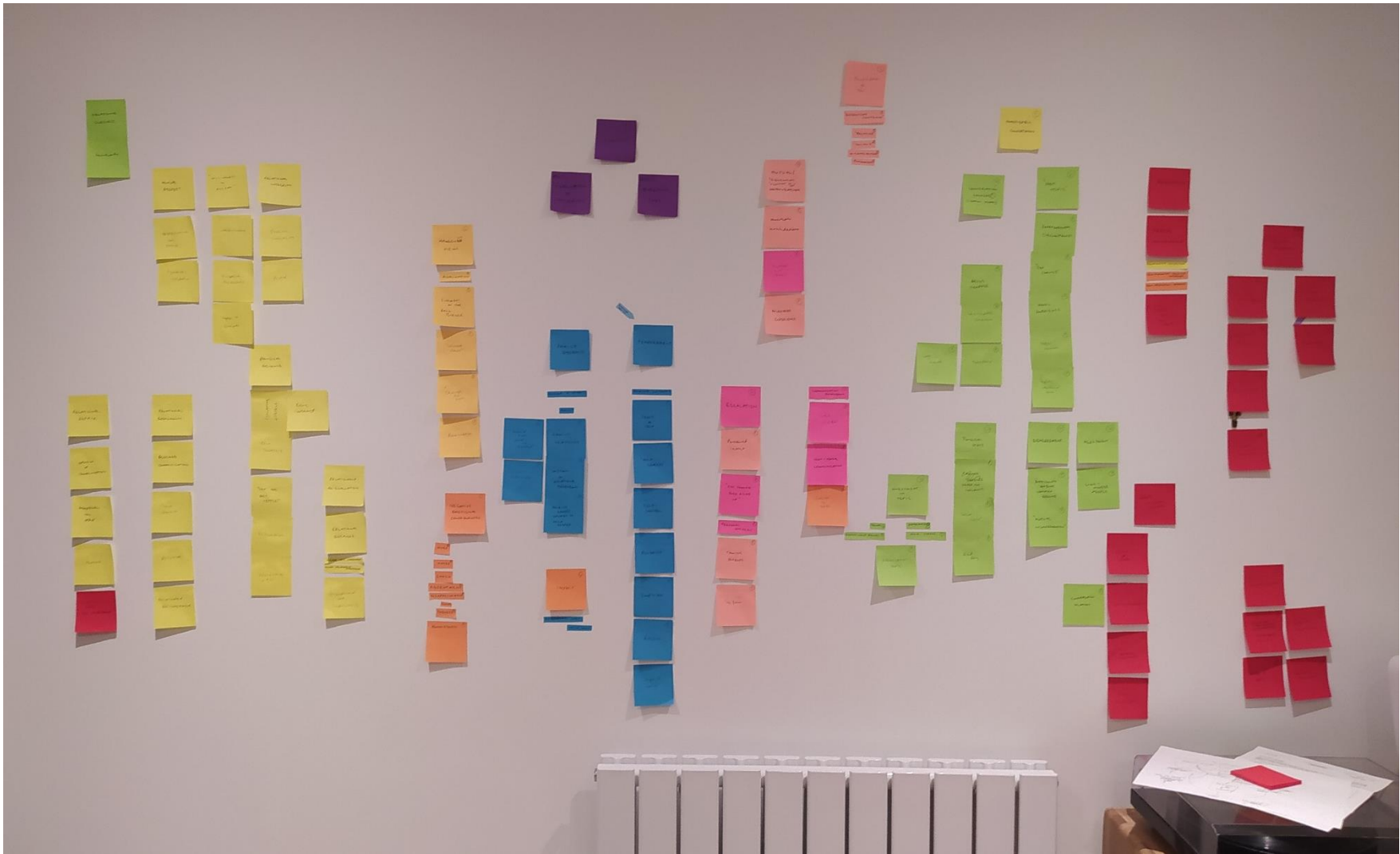
Appendix U

Early Diagrammatic Frameworks
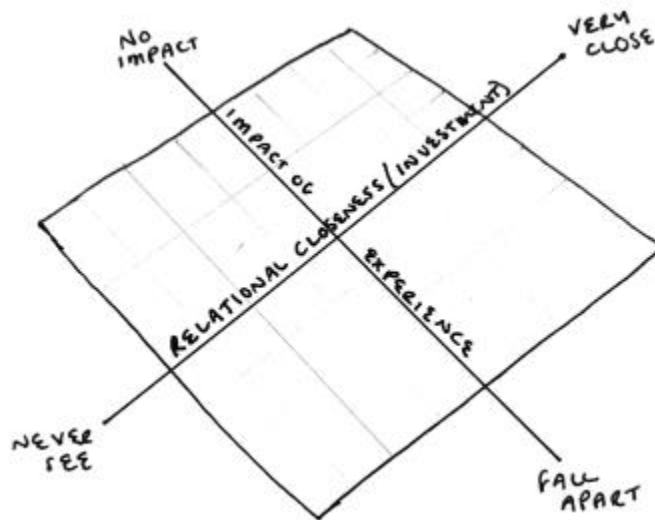
Appendix V

Initial Diagram of Model Framework
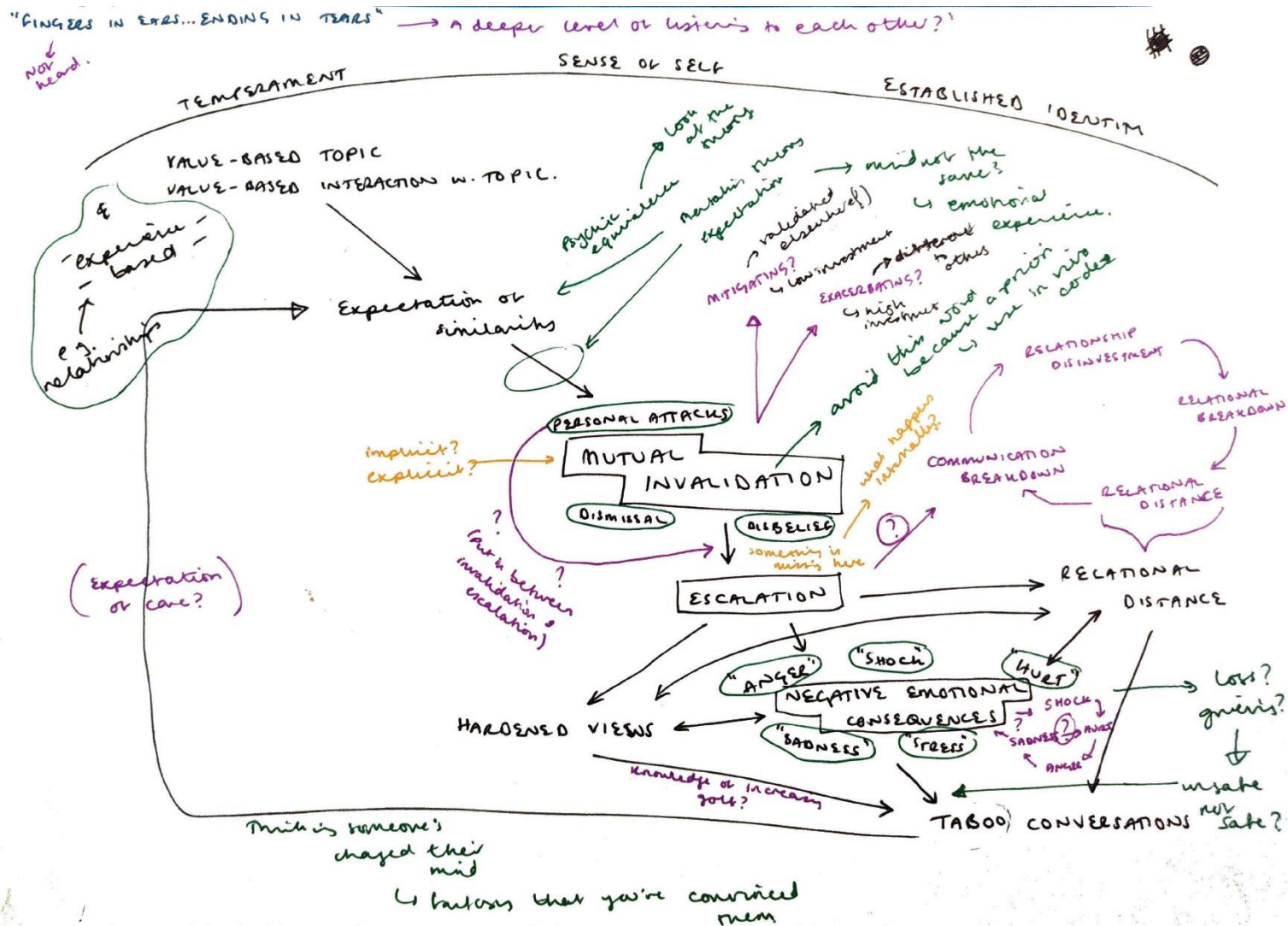
Appendix W

Refined Model Framework

Appendix X

Final Validation Interviews Framework
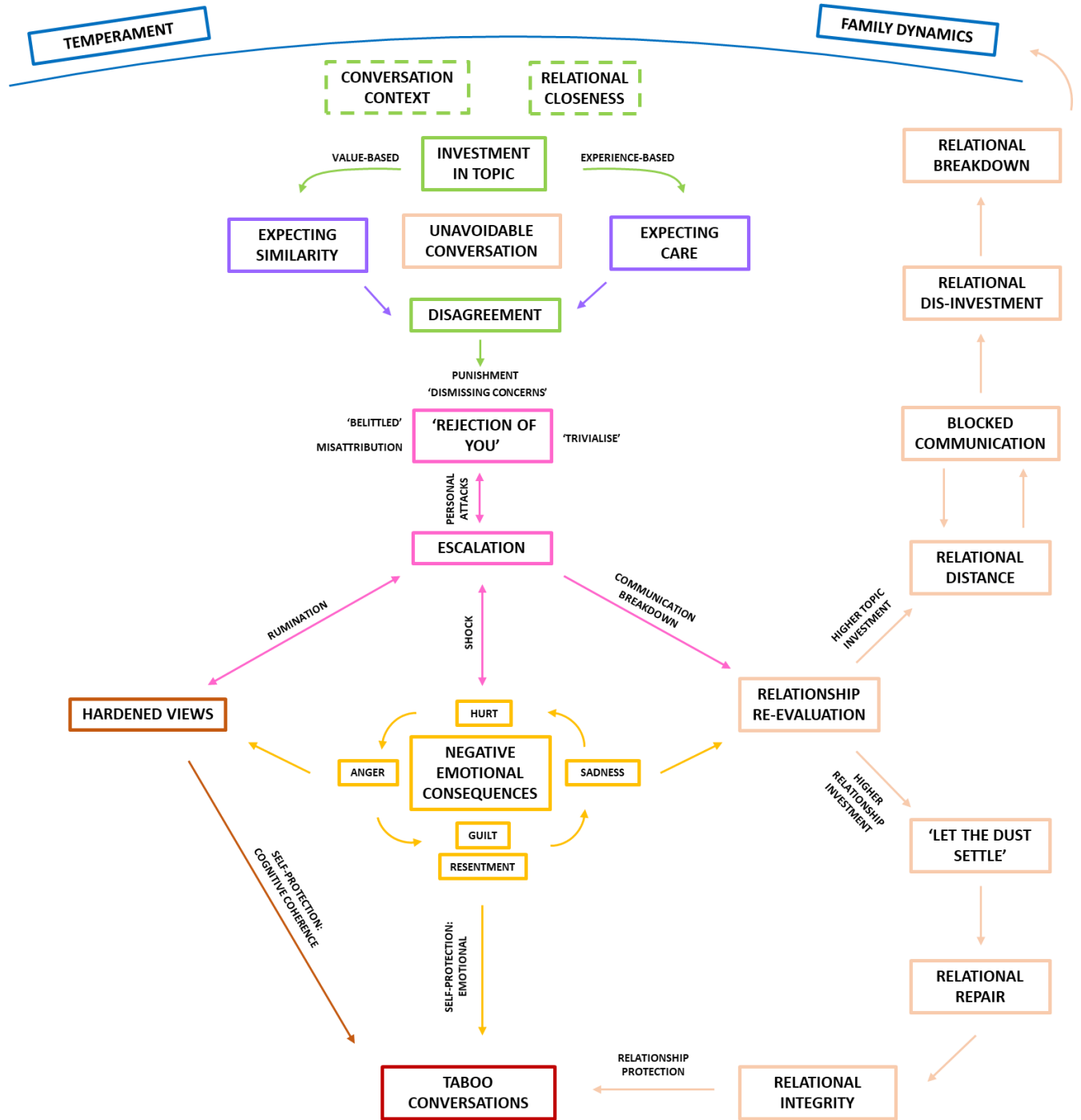
Appendix Y

Summary of Findings/Feedback to Ethics Committee

"REJECTION OF YOU":
INVALIDATIONS AMONG
ADULT FAMILIES IN THE
CONTEXT OF SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL CHANGE

Jonathan Bullock
Main Researcher

Drs Sue Holttum & Emily Turton
Supervising Researchers

November 2021

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

BACKGROUND

"If it's someone close to you, I suspect you probably feel that it's… it's a rejection of you as well as those points of view. Which it may not be, but it gives that impression, probably on both sides."

Large scale social and political events of recent years—such as Brexit, the 2016 US Presidential election and COVID-19—have encouraged an identity-based polarisation in the UK and have been found to affect mental health and psychological distress. These issues are widely discussed, particularly among families, and this has been found to potentially lead to fundamental disagreement and conflict.

This study aimed to investigate this issue in more depth among adult family members, specifically looking at the issue of invalidation, i.e., the trivialization or punishment of people's subjective experience. Invalidation is important. It has been found to increase negative emotion, heart rate, and levels of aggression, and frequent invalidation in childhood has been linked to the development of mental health difficulties.

APPROACH

There is not a theory that explains family invalidation in adulthood in the context of social and political change. So, this research used an approach called grounded theory to develop a theoretical model through interviews, focus groups and written contributions, so we can better understand these kinds of experiences.

You are receiving this because you participated in the study and expressed an interest in receiving a summary of findings.

THE THEORY

A diagram of the final theory is included on the final page of this summary. You may find it helpful to have a look at the model as you go through the study findings on the next page.
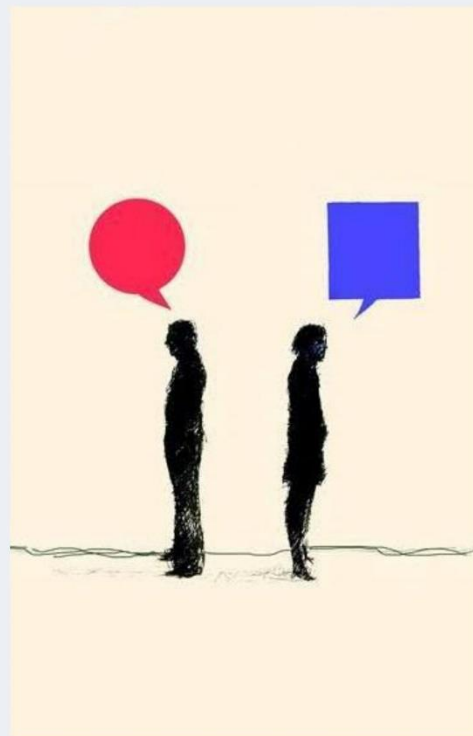
FINDINGS

The experience of adult family invalidation in the context of social and political change (named as a *"Rejection of You"* Experience; RYE) appears related to two *established qualities* that are present before the issue arises: *temperament* and *family dynamics*.

For RYEs to occur, certain important factors seem to need to be in place. For example, the issue has to be a *"hot topic"* (e.g., everyone is talking about it). Where the *conversation takes place*, our *physical/mental state* beforehand, and *how close we are* with our family member(s) also play a role. Of particular importance is *how invested we are* in the topic. If our investment is based on our *values* it seems we enter family conversations *expecting views to be similar*. If our investment is based on our *experiences*, we appear to *expect our family to offer care*.

"It became very personal. It was as if there was something deficient or defective about me for supporting Brexit."

The RYE seems to have three core parts, it is a *mutual experience* in that both parties typically appear to invalidate each other, it tends to *escalate* in severity, and there appears then to be a *communication breakdown*. Following these experiences, certain consequences seem to occur:
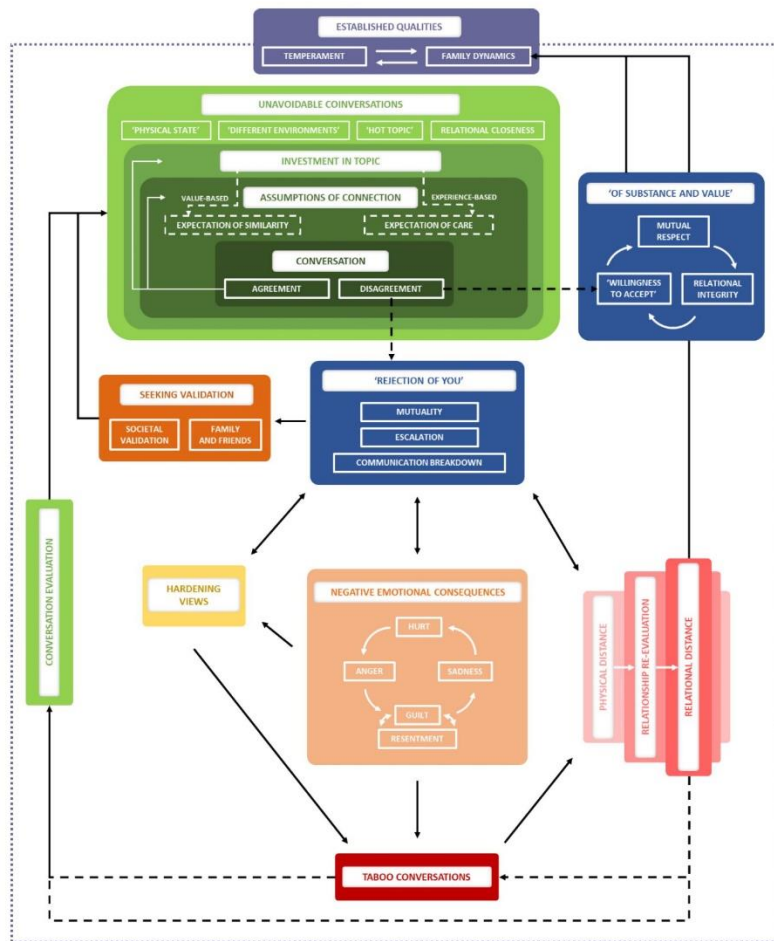
- We seem to *seek validation* from others for what we believe, feel, or do, either from other family members or in wider social groups.
- Our views and opinions appear to *harden,* become more firmly held and immovable.
- We appear to initially be shocked and then have a cycle of *negative emotions*: *hurt*, *anger*, *guilt* and *resentment*, *sadness* and then hurt again.
- Immediately afterwards, it appears that a *physical distance* occurs in which a *relationship re-evaluation* takes place. If on balance the relationship feels more important to us, we move towards *repairing the relationship*. If the issue feels more important though, we can move towards *relationship breakdown*, although there are opportunities to re-evaluate again and move towards repair.

If relationship repair occurs, it's likely that the *topic becomes taboo* as a way to protect ourselves and the relationship. However, people can reattempt to have the conversation, which can lead to more validating experiences where we feel '*of substance and value*'.

THANKS

Thank you so much for your participation. Please do contact me via email should you wish to discuss findings in more detail (j.s.bullock1378@canterbury.ac.uk).

Key:

Appendix Z

Categories, Subcategories, and Properties of the Grounded Theory

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
Established Qualities		
Temperament	"Clamming up"	Duncan: "And so I've just had to, you know, take all that bitter disappointment and put it in a box and put it to one side and get on with the rest of my life."
	"Never hold grudges"	Simon: "I never got you know, we never had a blazing row. And I, within a few minutes, I'll be going over and trying to give her a hug. She might not reciprocate, but, I mean, I just couldn't hol…I don't hold on to things, you know, particularly."
	Sense of self	Kathy: "And I'm very strident when it comes to my views, you know, and it's not the best, you know, it's not the best way to win hearts…"
	Self-control	Simon: "…but, you know, the game was really more…the satisfying thing was being able to kind of smile through it and put your case and not let the other…and not get too upset about the other person's perspective, if that makes sense."
	"Polemics"	Elliot: "Now, does that sound like being a troublemaker? No, I like lively debate. Polemics rather than anything else."
	"Suspicion"	John: "Probably suspicion…[that I was] trying to change her views. Trying to change her views or justify mine."
	"Patience"	Keith: "…the willingness to stay with a discussion in the hope of a resolution as opposed to chucking the towel in."
	"Style of coping"	Lydia: "I was thinking of the impact of an individual's style of coping with difficult situations—and this would include coping with difficult conversations. So for example, somebody being very emotional in the way they respond to discussions relating to certain topics…"
Family Dynamics	Different to others	Duncan: "I have a brother who, who lives in the [area] of England and he's quite liberal compared with, with me, and he would have you know, he would have bought into the sort of pre…pro-EU establishment narrative and I had a brother in, back home in [country] and and he seemed to regard UKIP as the scum of the earth."
	"Teasing"	Elliot: "But on the other hand, if you've had quite a good relationship over the years, you feel able to tease. And she's certainly done that to me at various points and I've done it to her."
	"Volatile family"	Duncan: "I have two brothers and they're very different, but I think they both agreed on that. One in a more suave way and the other in a more forthright way, shall I, shall I say? That made, it involved a few choice expletives…"
	Previous relational breakdown	Kathy: "My mother has a brother who she's never spoken to for 60 years, we don't even know if he's alive or dead."
	Opinion of others	Lydia: "My mum was quite shaken, because she, she thinks a lot of my brother, his views and opinions. He's always a very considered person. So he always, you know, he's very, very well read."
	Open wounds	Elliot: "Well, it [having 'psychological problems'] was a bit of a sort of a wound that could be scratched, if the language isn't so carefully phrased."

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
Unavoidable Conversations		
"Physical State"	Under the influence	Elliot: "So, it's getting the balance right between constructive argument, teasing or upsetting. And after a few glasses of a nice red or something, you can possibly…the boundaries drop a bit, on both sides."
	"Night's sleep"	Keith: "Someone like me, you know, your temper can be shorter for reasons completely unconnected—you may not have slept well—and you're not prepared, you're not so prepared to put the effort in just to calm things down."
	"Bad day"	Keith: "…in other words, this is going to get worse if people perhaps haven't, haven't slept well or had a bad day."
"Different environments"	Unescapable closeness	John: "So, it does mean that three of us are stuck in a house. And, you know, things can get a bit tetchy at times, especially with, um, with home schooling as well."
	Being trapped	Olive: "For me, I have nowhere to run because I have to wait for my plane home."
	"Territory"	Lydia: "So for example, if I was in my sister's house, it was something definitely we couldn't talk about because, you know, I was on her territory, really."
	"Who is around"	Lydia: "And if my brother was there, that would make it really hard."
"Hot Topic"	Extraordinary circumstances	Keith: "…if they have a Brexit discussion it breaks down into a shouting match within about a couple of minutes. I've never seen that before. Even in days of extreme left and right wing politics 40, 50 years ago, that was rarely occurring . So that is, that's been extremely unusual to me."
	"Sea change"	John: "But, umm, I mean the political climate in this country seems to have changed an awful lot in the last 10, 15 years. Now, ideas that would be fairly moderate 10 years ago are suddenly things that are being dismissed out of hand."
	Pervasiveness	Lydia: "Well you couldn't kind of go anywhere without hearing something about Brexit?"
	Taboo positions	Simon: "And this, that and the other, the density of the population in this country, and you can't hold that view, you can't say, seemingly you can't say, but, you know, if we controlled immigration…you can't, you can't…"
	"Highly emotional area"	Dorothy: "I'm just going to say my granddaughter, she's 19, she's going to university and she is angry. She is angry that her future. As part, as a European has been taken from her and she didn't get the opportunity to vote."
Relational closeness	Familiarity	Kathy: "But at the time, it was like, it was almost like he was trying to inflame me to, what's the word I'm looking for, because he knows which buttons, buttons to press."
	Quality	Duncan: "…but despite that, he has been prepared to put it in a box and consign it to the past, and we do have a really excellent relationship in every other way…"
	Time spent together	Simon: "Yeah, I suppose, with my immediate family, I see them all the time. They know me, warts and all."
Investment in Topic		
	Values	Kathy: "So, you know, and this bigotry, I can't, I can't bear it. I just cannot bear it. So, I think it's, it's a bit of a, it's one of my things that I, I, I hate unfairness and I hate ignorance."
	Experiences	Eloise: "You feel sad because you're kinda sitting there going, "this is my experience. This is what I'm, you know, this is actually how I'm personally being impacted by this.""

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
(Investment in Topic)	Firmly-held beliefs	Dorothy: "And, it's not…I'm not, I'm not going to change my views on being part of Europe. So it won't matter what the sister or anybody else said."
	High stakes	Screening questionnaire: "…the biggest most dramatic family bust up came whilst we had to shield because our [child] is on the highly vulnerable list and [my family] were out breaking the lockdown rules…"
Assumptions of Connection		
	Expectation of similarity	Kathy: "And I just couldn't believe somebody who… we've both had more or less the same upbringing, although he went to a really crap university and I went to a good one, so, I'm making light of it here, but I couldn't believe that, although he voted remain, he could understand because of immigration."
	Expectation of care	Elliot: "And so I've, I've played by the rules in that way. But my sister has completely blocked out any potential visits. And I certainly felt rather hurt by that because she was the one person I could have formed a bubble with."
Conversation	Depth	Lydia: "But if we just casually met each other out, went shopping or having a coffee or something—so in a much lighter way—it could, you know, I could comment. They could comment. We wouldn't go too deep. In fact, a much lighter, jokey type of conversation about it."
	"Open the conversation"	Lydia: "Yeah, I guess it's about kind of, the words that you choose the narrative around the topic and how you open the conversation"
	Heat	Olive: "And I think it's going to be the same for the Leavers as well that we can't change each other's mind. And as a result, every conversation is heated."
	"Probe & tease"	Elliot: "The dust has settled a bit, and you come back to the same topic, almost from a different angle. Um, you know, you're never going to change the other person's mind. I know my sister's a loony, she knows I'm a loony, um, on this of topic. Um, and therefore you can gently tease around the edges."
	Humour	Simon: "Whereas, with us, I suppose I'm quite pleased the fact that, with my immediate family, I can talk about it, we can have a laugh about it, and it hasn't caused any conflict."
Agreement	"Like-minded"	Dorothy: Some of my colleagues in my work are Remainers. I choose to discuss it with them because they're like minded and we agree. You know that, none, neither of us is going to get angry or annoyed and you can have a relaxed conversation about it. So I picked people who have the same view as me."
	"Echo chamber"	Olive: "You only have a certain amount of time to spend with friends, so then you choose your favourites. So they're in my same kind of echo chamber. Um, so there's not disagreement over any topic, really, even the pandemic, you know, we're all in the same boat together with the same concerns. So yeah, my, my echo chamber is quite nice."
Disagreement	Difficulty finding common ground	Kathy: "And what makes it doubly ironic is our great great grandparents were Italian originally, and they came over and I said, [brother], but you're from you're from immigrants. I said, I'm an immigrant in [European country]. I said, I don't understand your way of thinking. And he said, well, you know, and then he started trying to justify what he just said."
	"Mutual incomprehension"	Duncan: "But so my dad, he was just horrified. And, you know, when there"s…when there's no meeting of minds at all and when someone just doesn't disagree, but is utterly aghast, you know, there was mutual incomprehension, so there's no real basis for a conversation then."

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
"Of Substance and Value"		
"Willingness to Accept"	Understanding	Simon: "I mean, one of my, my youngest sister, one of her boys—she got [number] boys—he's been working all round the world recently and he's very, very strongly pro-stay, you know, pro…which I understand, he's done languages at university…"
	Accepting differences	Simon: "You know, one of the reasons it is fascinating because in the same family, in different generations, you get different perspectives"
	"Agree to disagree"	Elliot: "We accept there are differences. Um, you know, you can take the piss out of each other over it, but we've got to the point where—sorry, excuse my language, um—where we've got to the point where we can discuss it and agree that we disagree."
"Mutual Respect"	Appreciating the other	Lydia: "I'd like to say that I'm actually quite, in some sense, quite pleased to see my brother being so articulate and, and vocal about his opinion, despite it's, you know, it's not the opinion that I agree with"
	Symbiotic validation	Simon: "And even if they're different to their fathers, you know, or their mothers, you know, they, they feel entitled and validated to hold those views. So, I quite like that, you know."
Relational Integrity	Finding similarity	Kathy: "Yeah, and, and she's, she's tenacious[b]. You know, she hangs on in there. She,, you know… "I'm your mother and I'm the only mother you're going to have". You know, she's of that philosophy. And you can't help but love her."
	Play	Elliot: "I sent her an anniversary mug of the 31st January, as a sort of wind up. And she sent me a video back of her placing it in the bin, sort of thing, you know, it's it can be that level of teasing. So, you know, there's no there's no problem there."
"Rejection of You"		
	"Dismiss my concerns"	Elliot: "…she would try to trivialise it quite a lot during those times and "oh, he doesn't know what he's talking about, there's no way the British are going to vote for Brexit."
	"Belittled…is the word"	John: "Belittled, I suppose, is the word that comes to mind that. That, um, my opinions were considered of little value and little substance. And they weren't worth considering. Even if only to… to argue against them or reject them on some sort of grounds that I could understand why, rather than just rejecting them out of hand."
	"Try to trivialise it'	Kathy: "It's from other people because it's not trivial to me. I mean, the issue of immigration is obviously not trivial, but it was trivialized and my feelings were trivialized."
	"Because you're a…"	Simon: "…so that was a bit annoying, being told, sometimes, you know, being kind of told that what I was saying was just was racist or whatever it might be on the basis that I'd spent more time seeking to understand the realities of the situation.
	Punishment	Duncan: "And effectively, he said not a penny more, [laughs] because I'm not I'm not paying you[a] to devote all this time to politics that I fundamentally disagree with."
Mutuality	"Fingers in ears"	Screening questionnaire: "During any discussion relating to these issues my views are dismissed as wrong, stupid or invalid and I am refused any opportunity to explain them."

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
(Mutuality)	Mirrored experience	Lydia: "But I'm not sure how he came to his decision or his viewpoint and I missed that. Because I see him usually on a weekly basis. I didn't see the signs, kind of thing. And I bet he's thinking the same about me."
	Multiple occasions	Matthew: "So when I talk to my dad, it's just, it's always… one of the reasons I stopped trying to talk about it is because it's always the same arguments…It's kind of just, just, um yeah, it's just very repetitive and or dismissive."
Escalation	"No basis"	Keith: "…if someone talks about injecting a chip into you through a needle and you say it's impossible, that can immediately escalate because the person's got no basis for saying that."
	"Intent to harm"	Kathy: "As I said, he was dismissive and I'm sure he was doing it on purpose, actually…yeah, there was an intent to harm. You know, I really do feel that."
	Feeling wound up	Eloise: "You know, it's not, it's like this, this kind of thing is happening at the national level, you know or you know, "yes, yes there's a hostile environment, but it's not meant for immigrants like you". If I hear that phrase one more time I'm gonna flip out."
	"Get some else riled up"	Eloise: "But at the time, it was like, it was almost like he was trying to inflame me to, what's the word I'm looking for, because he knows which buttons, buttons to press."
	Personal attacks	Elliot: "So actually dismissing me possibly as a "nutter", which is one of the other things that came up occasionally."
Communication Breakdown	Non-verbal communication	Simon: "She would be kind of like… her body language would be…she'd have…her arms would be folded, she would be, you know, and it would be kind of very much, you know, "you shouldn't be doing that. You should know better…you know, you should be…"""
	"Last straw"	Kathy: "So, this this thing about the graduation, although it isn't Brexit-related, it was… That was it. I'd had enough. So, I just put the phone down."
	"Ending in tears"	Olive: "…for me it always ends in tears. It ends up with me going to a bedroom, even if it's not the house that I'm staying in. Going to a bedroom, ending in tears…"

Seeking Validation

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
Societal Validation	Size	Elliot: "Um, I think what I was probably thinking to myself was, you know, there are 17.4 million people who felt that way. You know, in this particular small group, I may be the only one that's not true of the country as a whole."
	Weighting	Simon: I knew that my view was validated, she knew her view was validated, because 50, 49 percent of the population agreed with her, and 51 percent of the population agree with me."
	Locating groups	Duncan: "…after the [year] general election my dad effectively made me promise to give up all political involvement, and I did. I run that [name] [social media] group."
(Other) Family and Friends	"Become closer"	Kathy: "…but we've become incredibly close, you know, because of this. And I shared his wife's pregnancy, actually, you know, he told me all about her pregnancy. And, so I had this sort of vicarious experience of, you know, this. And it was really, really nice and, you know… So that's brought us closer together."
	"Reality check"	Lydia: "I remember very, very well after he left, I phoned my son. I phoned my daughter. I had to kind of get my, you know, my emotions out and get somebody to kind of, just a bit of a reality, a reality check. Am I kind of, have I misunderstood something? What's going on?"

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
((Other) Family and Friends)	Re-found identity	Kathy: "And… he calls me Sis, although I was never there as a sister for him because I was grown up. So, I think because I'm the only relative… I'm the only sibling that talks to him. And we have such a laugh, you know, we really have a good time."
Hardening Views		
	No change (so far)	Keith: "Whatever anybody says, whatever may happen, it may change again in five years, and all be different. We'll see. But for now, no."
	"Concrete views"	Lydia: "I did kind of, you know…try and get a little bit deeper into the conversation with my brother, but then I realised it, it was quite hard to do it because he was quite concrete in his views, as possibly he saw me as being concrete."
	'Dwell on'	Kathy: "So the more I thought about it, it just went over and over and over and thinking, I know I'm… my position. He might not like it, but he doesn't have the right to dismiss what I feel, out of hand, you know."
	Polarisation	Keith: "Oh, by the way, in terms of this investigation, she was convinced it would overturn the result. That's how polarised people's views are. It is completely out of the question that a couple of votes in one state is going to change something as major as the US election, even if there were some."
	"Simmers on the back burner"	Elliot: "Yeah, we, we try not to… to talk about those sorts of things. That does, only gets both of us very annoyed about it. So that's something that sort of gets pushed into the background and simmers on the back burner, as it were."
Negative Emotional Consequences		
	Shock	Lydia: "But I was totally shocked when I heard my brother and also that the raised voice and the passion. That's what really shook me. Really."
	Hurt	John: "I think because you've shared a lot of time, effort and energy in building up that relationship, that, it hurts probably more to see it being not exactly broken, but cracks appearing in it…"
	Anger	Elliot: "And they would be having quite a decent debate. And then she'd go flash because I was "talking nonsense" and "it didn't reflect what the British thought" and [growl speaks] etc. And that could generate an angry response, almost a, yeah, psychotic response [from her]…"
	Guilt	Kathy: "It was… oh, the more I thought about it… I just kept going over and over and over it and I felt guilty."
	Resentment	Elliot: "'Gosh, they're so smart. They think…' Well, you almost have a slightly aggressive view 'Gosh, they must be blooming idiots as well, if they're not willing to listen'"
	Sadness	Duncan: "So, you know, it was so unexpected and devastating to be met with that response. It made me really sad."
Physical Distance		
	"Exit strategy"	Simon: "When you're in the home environment, obviously, you've got the option of an exit strategy. You can walk away. And so if one party is getting particularly heated, you can just, just vent that frustration by just, just leaving the room. In a car you're in a slightly different environment…"

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
(Physical Distance)	De-escalation	Keith: "…this has happened before and on previous occasions I've walked out of the room."
	"Let the dust settle"	Duncan: "So it wasn't…you see, I'm over here and they were over there. So if you don't pick up the phone, you don't have to talk about it. So, I think it was wise on both…on everybody's part to let the dust settle."
	Distance	Kathy: "…but because there's such a distance between us geographically and we were never a close family anyway, so I'm not sitting here brooding over the loss of a of a sibling."
	Isolation	Elliot: "I mean, I've been, as a single parent, I've been very much cut off and I've not been able to find a support bubble because the rest of my friends and my sister—we'll come onto that—have got family nearby. So they form their support bubble with Mum or Gran or someone like that. Whereas I'm here…"
Relationship Re-evaluation		
	Conditionality	Simon: "So, but again, she does it with love. I think that might be the, you know, the difference. My daughter, you know, she kind of loves me unconditionally. I love her unconditionally."
	Weighing up	
	Higher topic investment	Olive: "I think for me, it makes me question my entire family, to be honest, and my relationship with my family and whether I would like to spend time with my family more than I do now."
	Higher relationship investment	Lydia: "You know, with my brother, I really value our relationship as brother and sister. And it really outweighs any discussions about, you know, Brexit or anything else."
	"True character"	Elliot: "And, the behaviour became more prevalent after we'd been together for a while, and it was possibly the first time I saw that sort of reaction, was the Brexit type debate."
	"Reflecting a bit'	Lydia: "…you go back and you reflect on the discussion and 'could I have handled that conversation slightly differently? Could I have chosen my words more carefully?'"
	"Know better"	Kathy: "But he's travelled the world. He's lived in [South East Asia Country], [Middle East Country]. He's lived all over the place. So it's not like he's, you know, somebody who's never left the street they were born on. He's a well-travelled man".
	"Betrayal"	Lydia: "And then just reminding them that, you know, our [family member] is from Greece and, you know, all the things around there and the issues was referring to [Family member] and then the kind of the sense of disbelief and betrayal, I think, in a sense."
Relational Distance		See conditions, action/interactions and consequences in main text.
Taboo Conversations		
	(Un)spoken agreement	Matthew: "We're sort of more amicable now and have this sort of agreement to just, sort of, not really mention it, but, you know an unspoken agreement to not mention it."
	Protection	Matthew: "We don't talk about it anymore. Just for the sake of our relationship"

Category Subcategory	Property *Condition*	Illustrative example
(**Taboo Conversation**s)	Duration	Dorothy: "My sister is a Brexiteer and we can't discuss it at all, because we'll just going to have a massive fallout. I asked her once why she voted to leave. Well, she said something like, so we can have our own laws. And I thought we have already. We've never spoken about it since. And that was right after the vote."
Conversation Evaluation		
	Self-mind-state	Kathy: "And you can't… I can't. I have to sit there and bite my tongue. And I had to sit there and bite my tongue about Brexit."
	Other mind state	Elliot: "I mean, she can go from completely fine at one moment to, when things aren't going in a way that she's able to control or agree with, then a very angry response could burst out. And so there was always an element of tiptoeing around, especially in the family discussions…"
	Speed	Lydia: "So that quick pros and cons evaluation that we might do prior to starting the conversation as to whether this person might "react" in a certain way."
	Consciousness	John: "…I don't know whether those are necessarily conscious decisions or whether they are even stages that have to occur…"
	Conversation location	Elliot: "Whereas it's when people throw up an emotional barrier or become aggressive that it becomes more difficult. And that's possibly one argument for not having these discussions around a kitchen table, sort of thing, dining room table."

Note. [a]This participant was being financially supported by his parents in his political career. [b]This participant very much showed the quality of tenacity, which couldn't be captured in a single quote.

Appendix AA

End of Study Report Email

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Appendix AB

Frontiers in Psychology Author Guidelines

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