

**Exploring working lives through the framework of the
Psychological Contract
A study of Clergy in the Church of England in the 21st Century**

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Abstract

Clergy working in the Church of England are a rich opportunity for research. Their employment situation is anomalous and from the perspective of my own epistemological location in Human Resource Management there is little tradition of exploring the employment relationship within the Church of England. This scenario provided a unique environment for research.

I teach Human Resource Management (HRM) in a university business school. I am also married to a clergyman. The catalyst for the research was bringing together these two different aspects of my life. In my research I use the frameworks of HRM to explore and understand working in the Church of England.

I use the psychological contract, a well established concept in HRM. The psychological contract is a concept that can be used to explore the non-contractual elements of the employment relationship. Initially I explore the employment relationship through a series of group interviews. My research then documents through narrative inquiry the individual working lives of the clergy. I generate insights and understanding of both working in the Church of England in the twenty-first century and the psychological contract.

I explore my own stance in relation to the participants. I come to understand my stance as a 'conversant associate'. I am conversant with their 'world' and inhabit a role that associates me with the clergy while not being fully a member of the group.

My original contribution is in two areas; Human Resources (HR) and the psychological contract and understanding the Church of England. My findings challenge the existing concept of the psychological contract for being too narrow and requiring revision. My participants work in a role and organisation

with a long history. My findings indicate the power of this historical role on the expectations of the contemporary work.

By expanding the scope of the psychological contract my findings challenge existing approaches to teaching and practising HR. HR is currently only identified with the business performance model. My findings indicate that this association is far too limited in scope.

My research documents my participants' perception of change in the Church of England. I report a stable understanding of the relationship and expectations between clergy and senior staff. This finding challenges contemporary understanding of the effect of change on the psychological contract.

By giving voice to the current parish clergy I explore and make a contribution to the Church of England's understanding of working as contemporary parish clergy. The Church of England is on the cusp of reforming its historical employment system, known as freehold. My findings indicate that the clergy's understanding of the past paradoxically strengthens their understanding of contemporary working life and I report a 'narrative of regret'. Clergy perceive that they are unable to fulfil their own expectations.

As indicated above my research contributes to knowledge in two ways: understanding the psychological contract and working in the Church of England. These two areas of original contribution coalesce. Simultaneously I document working life in the Church of England and explore the psychological contract of contemporary clergy.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed Date

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CHAPTER 1

'WORKING' FOR THE CHURCH

Exploring the clergy employment relationship

Clergy working in the Church of England provide a rich opportunity for research, being a long-established and identified working group. However from the perspective of my own epistemological location in Human Resource Management (HRM) there is little tradition of exploring their work. Initially the focus of my research was to explore the employment relationship in the Church of England using the framework of the psychological contract (Herriot and Pemberton 1995, 1996; Rousseau, 1998, 2001). In Figure 1.1, an excerpt from the original research proposal, my reasons for choosing to study the Church of England are explored:

Figure 1.1 An excerpt from the research proposal 2002

The core worker in the Church of England is the priest or clergyman/woman. Traditionally priesthood is viewed as a vocation, rather than a job or career. The role has an underlying ethos of commitment and service (Carr, 1985, 1992; Archbishop's Commission, 1995). The employment relationship is anomalous. Traditionally the majority of clergy have been incumbents, with freehold. Commentators supporting the removal of freehold have suggested that it constrains organisational flexibility and the deployment of human resources (Pettifer, 1996). Grundy (1996), however, suggests it is central to the definition and role of a priest by allowing clergy freedom to develop their own ministry. In recent years there has been an increase in appointments on short-term licences. The extensive use of short term contracts and a perceived lack of commitment to and from the organisation often results in a sense of short termism and a constant concern for developing one's own career and *curriculum vitae* (Handy, 1995; Reichers, 1985). It is unclear whether the change to short term contracts in the Church of England has produced similar trends.

The Church of England

This section will explore the context of 'employment' in the Church of England. My research proposal indicates that the employment relationship is anomalous. In Human Resource Management terms the Church of England does not use conventional contracts. The majority of clergy are freeholders (Archbishop's Council, 2002). Freehold is identified as a system that has evolved over centuries and is the historic norm for parochial ministry in the Church of England providing, full security of tenure up to retirement unless there is a disciplinary case or other uncommon circumstance. It is seen as a 'unique tradition of independence which the English clergy have inherited' (GS1564, 2005, p.16).

Although the historic norm, freehold has not been without review. Leslie Paul was commissioned in 1960 by the Church Assembly and the Central Advisory Council for Ministry to explore and make recommendations about both the payment and deployment of clergy. In 1964 he made 'sixty-two recommendations aimed at using the whole force of the clergy to best advantage within a coherent plan' (Welsby, 1984, p.133). Paul's recommendations were wide ranging and included the deployment of clergy in teams, a national salary structure and regional appointment boards. He recommended that clergy freehold should be changed into a ten year lease hold (Gill, 2003).

Welsby (1984, p.235) identifies 'storms of criticism' surrounding Paul's recommendations. The following quotation from Rev G. L. May (1964) a contemporary cleric, is indicative of the concerns at the time particularly from evangelical clergy:

The Paul Report proposes to replace the freehold by a leasehold which would permit a vicar to remain in his parish for a period of ten years (with the possibility of renewal for a further five). Abuses of the freehold are well known. But Dr Hart [essayist, church historian

and priest] is in no doubt that the proposed alternative is worse. It would lead to the virtual extinction of all but safe central churchmen. When Methodism stank in the nostrils of the Establishment, and its allies the evangelicals were regarded as little better than traitors or quislings within the Church's gates, men like William Grimshaw of Haworth, Henry Venn of Huddersfield and John Berridge of Everton would not have retained their livings except for the freehold.

(May, 1964, p.8)

Welsby (1984, p.235) observes that some clergy who were contemporaries of Paul considered that any change to the freehold and replacement with employment contracts would be the beginnings of 'depriving the parish priest of his necessary independence' and have 'far-reaching consequences for the whole ethos and character of the ministry'.

Further work was carried out in a series of reports spanning a twenty year period including the Morley Report or Partners in Ministry Report (1967), the Terms of Ministry Committee (1972), the Sheffield Report (1974) and the Tiller Report (1983) (Kuhrt, 2001; Welsby, 1984). These reports focused on the effective deployment of clergy. Gill (2003) observes that although most of Paul's recommendations have been put into practice, such as compulsory retirement at 70 and some team deployment, they have been implemented in an ad hoc manner and lack the radical reorganisation that Paul suggested. However the key issue of freehold remained unresolved and as Welsby (1984, p.138) suggests it is evident that in the 1960s and 1970s there was 'deep division on the wisdom of abolishing freehold and patronage'.

Questions continued to be asked about the nature of clergy 'employment' without resolution. In 1992 a Steering Group established by the General Synod reviewed clergy conditions of service and set out general principles to determine conditions of service (Jeffrey, Kuhrt & Pettifer, 2001). It concluded in 1995 'that there was insufficient consensus about the possible abolition of the

freehold to warrant a major exercise' (Jeffrey, Kuhrt & Pettifer, 2001; McClean, June 2003, p.2). Carr (1998, p.12) notes that the debate continued and that changes in society's employment practices have 'stirred questions about the nature of incumbent's employment'. Carr's comments illustrate the situation well. The clergy are not 'employed' in the same way as those to whom they minister. Their employment situation is a mismatch with conventional HR understanding. Bradshaw (1998, p.196) illustrates this point by observing that the use of five year contracts has 'revealed the mismatch of such practice with an ancient traditional community of faith which values the presbyter in the parish as more than a functionary in the hand of a higher line manager who can hire and fire'.

May's and Bradshaw's comments spanning a thirty-four year period, are indicative of the debates and issues that have surrounded the 'employment' status of the clergy. May identifies freehold as central to the ethos of ministry in the Church of England allowing clergy to undertake an independent ministry. Bradshaw widens the debate, revealing the tensions between management practices and working in the Church of England. The clergy appear to perceive their employment conditions as being important to an understanding of their role.

Not all clergy are freeholders. Some clergy are licensed to perform a particular office (GS1527, 2004). Licensed clergy lack the security of tenure provide by freehold and may be 'summarily removed from office' (GS1527, 2004, p.2). However they are not employed and cannot successfully access employment tribunals and other rights afforded to employees.

Clergy are not without any regulation in terms of working conditions. Canon law provides a framework in which clergy carry out their work and provides structure, internal rule and leadership to the Church (Stevick, 1998). Its scope is wide ranging with specific canons to address for example:

- Divine Service and the administration of the sacraments

- Ministers, their ordination, function and charge
- The lay officers of the Church

The responsibilities of the priest are set out in Canon C24 (The Canons of the Church of England, 2006) including that priests should:

- Say morning and evening prayer daily
- Celebrate the Holy Communion on all Sundays
- Instruct the parishioners of the benefice
- Be diligent in visiting the sick

Stevick (1998, p.218), suggests that in the nineteenth century canon law was a 'pervasive defining presence', but since that period it has been given little attention in the training of clergy and 'otherwise well-informed Anglicans may hardly be aware of its existence'. This view is mirrored in the Church of England's own Review of Clergy Terms of Service (GS 1527, 2004, p.38) which notes that 'it is sometimes said that the canons are aspirational rather than prescriptive' and although the canons are binding 'most clergy appear to be unfamiliar' with them. The evidence from my participants concurs with this perspective, as when discussing their 'employment' situation they never referred to canon law.

The Ordination Service (a theme I return to in chapter 7) provides a publically declared and documented role of a priest in the Church of England. Despite the provision of canons and the ordination service, clergy are office holders, they are not employed and do not have an employment contract. The concerns over the Paul Report expressed by May and the continued lack of consensus about the value of the freehold over the following years indicate the contentious nature of the 'employment' status of clergy. My participants consistently respond that they are not employed, and discuss the independent and autonomous nature of their work.

The psychological contract

My research uses the concept of the psychological contract to help explore and understand the working lives of clergy. The psychological contract is a well-established major concept in the understanding and application of HRM in organisations (Herriot and Pemberton, 1995; Rousseau, 1996, 2001, 2003) and is a concept that has high face validity within the HR profession (Guest, 2002). In the psychological contract literature available at the outset of this project and reviewed in chapter 2 it is clear that the psychological contract focuses on exploring individual's expectations of work. It is a concept that came to prominence in the 1990s, a period that is associated with a decline in collective approaches to industrial relations. In chapter 2 I discuss Rousseau's (1990) identification of the psychological contract as an important issue in understanding employee-employer relationships. This relationship has a formal and informal aspect. The formal aspect is embodied in the employment contract. It is a tangible, written document that identifies an employee's rights, responsibilities and duties. The psychological contract is concerned with the informal; the aspects of work that are not explicitly stated within an employment contract. Guest (2002) defines the psychological contract as the perceptions of the mutual expectations of employee and employer towards each other. Daniels (2010) identifies the psychological contract as being distinguishable from the legal contract of employment. She suggests (2010, p.1) that the legal contract will only offer 'a limited and uncertain representation of the reality of the employment relationship'. Daniels's comments appear paradoxical; a legal contract suggests concrete, definable conditions whereas she contends that such a contract is an uncertain representation of reality. Reality in the employment relationship, Guest and Daniels suggest, is better represented through understanding the perceptions between the parties to the employment relationship.

The Church of England and the psychological contract

I discuss in chapter 2 the limited scope of the literature associated with the psychological contract available at the outset of my research. Its credentials were established within the business management community but it had not been explored in other organisational forms, such as volunteers, homeworkers and the clergy.

Although only applied within the business sector the psychological contract is an entirely appropriate framework to explore the relationship between the clergy and the Church of England. As I discuss in chapters 2 and 6 the psychological contract is a lens that can be used to understand the reality of working relationships. My original interest in using the concept to understand the working relationship of clergy was initiated by two factors. Firstly the unusual 'employment' conditions of the clergy. Although canon law provides a legal framework for clergy working, the clergy are office holders rather than employees and many are freeholders. These clergy particularly have 'a measure of independence and security of tenure which far exceeds that of those in almost any other walk of life' (GS1527, 2004). The Church of England is an interesting case to explore because canon law is not understood as an employment contract by the clergy. As illustrated by the comments of May (1964) and Welsby (1984) they perceive themselves to be different from employees and to be autonomous and independent. As the existing literature on the psychological contract describes the relationship between employees and employer the Church of England offers an opportunity to explore the psychological contract in an alternative working environment. From an HR perspective it provides the opportunity to assess the value of an established concept and by exploring working in the Church of England expand the scope of that concept.

Not all clergy are freeholders; some have a licence to particular posts, often with a specified timescale to their appointment. In contrast to freeholders these clergy have very limited rights and 'do not have adequate protection against

possible injustice' (GS1527, 2004, p.24). This provides another aspect to exploring the psychological contract for those carrying out similar work but with a different legal status. It is an opportunity to explore the influence of status on the psychological contract.

Tensions and contextual changes in my research

The use of the psychological contract in my research creates tensions. I question, at times, the credibility of the concept for my research. My satisfaction with it as an apt concept for exploring relationships in any organisation waxes and wanes throughout my research journey and is documented in Chapters 2 and 6. In the light of my findings I am reconciled at the end of my research journey to the value of the psychological contract to my research and for exploring organisational relationships in general.

The Church of England

At the beginning of the research I was able to focus on an employment situation that although subject to review and debate had been relatively static for a long period. There had been debates about the merits of short term contracts and freehold since the 1960s but no decision to remove freehold from the majority of clergy. This provided a stable basis for my research.

Although a familiar topic to clergy at the outset of the research the issue became live as the Church debated the impact of Section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 and the Department of Trade and Industry's discussion document on *Employment Status in Relation to Statutory Employment Rights*. The Review of Clergy Terms of Service reported to General Synod in February 2005. Parliament subsequently approved legislation and from 31st January 2011 the status of office holder will remain but the historic freehold position held by many clergy will begin to disappear and be replaced by common tenure. Under common tenure clergy will not become employees, they will remain as

office holders. However those with common tenure will have the rights conferred by Section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999. The new 'package' will:

- Retain the office holder status of clergy
- Create a common set of terms of service applying to all clergy
- Introduce the new form of 'common tenure', under which appointments would normally be made until retirement age
- Provide legal requirements equivalent to those contained in Section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999
- Provide access to Employment Tribunals to enforce those rights and claim unfair dismissal
- Set out the new Clergy Terms of Service Regulations, which would clarify the rights and responsibilities of clergy
- Require all clergy to participate in ministerial development review schemes
- Establish proper mechanisms to encourage good practice and to foster deeper relations of trust and partnership, including the provision of professional Human Resource advice, appropriate training for bishops and archdeacons and a clear framework for personal development and support
- Include a capability procedure to be invoked if clergy are failing to reach minimum standards

(GS1631, 2006)

The new 'package' will address the anomalies between those clergy with freehold, who have security of tenure and those who are licensed and currently have little security. The group reviewing clergy terms of service rejected the notion that all clergy should become employees (GS1527, 2004) preferring that they should remain office holders 'with the degree of autonomy that implies' (GS1631, 2006, p.1). It is evident that autonomy is perceived by the review group to be an important feature of clergy working. My research findings, discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 9 confirm that the clergy themselves value autonomy and independence.

The maintenance of the office holder status in the introduction of common tenure in 2011 recognises the distinctive nature of working as clergy, a theme

that I return to in later chapters. However the implementation of common tenure recognises that the existing situation is not consistent for all clergy. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York in the foreword to GS 1564 (2005), the second report of the Review of Clergy Terms of Service Group, comment that the group was asked to give priority to considering the position of clergy without freehold.

The Church's decision to bring forward legislation replacing freehold with common tenure concerned me initially in that the stability of the research project was jeopardised. When research is taking place in organisations over a period of time, researchers cannot expect the participants to be unaffected by unexpected influences both within and without the study. The researcher, having acknowledged the changing context, has the opportunity to document the impact of the changes on participants. My research has benefited as the debate at national level and the consultative nature of decision making in the Church of England has increased awareness amongst clergy of the debates surrounding employment issues. At the time of the interviews the legislative process had not been concluded, giving me the opportunity to access the ongoing debate with a group who were increasingly informed and concerned about the impact of the issues on their own status and providing an opportunity to document the situation on the cusp of possible change.

As I discuss at the beginning of this chapter one of my initial reasons for exploring the Church of England was the two different 'employment conditions' operated by the Church of England and the psychological contract of both groups of clergy. I discuss in chapters 4 and 8 my participants' perception of freehold and work status. In the next section I begin to explore a 'watershed' moment in my research and a move toward embracing a working lives approach. I discuss working lives in detail in chapter 5. At the outset of my research the employment conditions of the clergy were paramount to my research. As the research progressed it became apparent that the emphasis was more on exploring individuals' experience of working in the Church of England than the legal aspects of their 'employment conditions'.

Clergy working lives

On the front cover of his book *Working* Terkel (1972) describes his participants as talking about '... what they do all day and how they feel about what they do'. Although the focus at the outset of my research was to explore the employment relationship and the psychological contract in the Church of England, as the research progressed I come to understand my project as sharing a common approach with Terkel. It provides my participants with an opportunity to discuss and document their working lives. My participants, all ordained clergy working in the Church of England, are provided with a voice (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Emihovich, 1995; Goodson, 2001) to talk about what they do and their perception of working in the contemporary Church of England.

Documenting working lives and giving voice to clergy was not the specific agenda for my research at the outset of the project. My focus was firmly on understanding the psychological contract. In my own professional area of the practice and teaching of Human Resource Development (HRD) the notion of the value of the learning process as well as the outcome is vital. Experiential learning theory espoused by Kolb (1974) requires the individual to explore the processes behind their own learning. It is the process of reflection on experience that allows the adult learner to move forward, incorporating new experience into existing schema and developing new concepts and consequently further action. The process we go through affects the outcome we arrive at. Studying for a PhD is inevitably a learning process and develops an individual's skills and knowledge of not only the subject area but the research process itself, moving from unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence to conscious competence and unconscious competence (Howell 1982). Through the process of undertaking this research I have evaluated my own position and explored alternative perspectives. Following reflection on the group interviews I recognised that my work, whilst still exploring the psychological contract, would be more appropriately located in a working lives approach. Chapter 5 explores my reflections on the value of the working lives

approach to my research. Clergy voices are presented and discussed in chapters 4, 7, 8 and 9. In chapter 4 the voices of clergy are heard in discussion with each other. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 present the individual voices of my participants.

My working life

If I were documenting my own working life, I would be recording my work as an academic. I work as a lecturer in HRM at a business school. I teach across a range of HRM and HRD programmes, and in particular specialise in working with part-time students who are also HR practitioners on post-graduate and professional programmes. My perception based on many years experience is that part-time students who are grounded in professional practice are excited and motivated by understanding how academic theories relate to their own working world and will rightly challenge the validity of any theory that they do not perceive will work in their organisation. Whilst this makes for interesting teaching, the students' attitude mirrors my own standpoint. I am interested in exploring if 'my world' of HRM can be of value in faith based organisations.

In the later chapters I refer to the multi-voices of the researcher (Peshkin; 1988) and use the terms academic and researcher self to indicate two of my voices and identify this aspect of my life as 'living with the university'. I identify a third voice in my research; clergy spouse self, identified in the thesis as 'living with the church'. Although I would reject that I share common ground or role with some of the portrayals of clergy wives in literature and popular perception, I am the 'Rector's Wife' (Trollope, 1991). I have 'lived' with the Church of England for over 20 years. In chapters 3, 5 and 11 I discuss my research stance from the perspective of my clergy spouse self.

In my research my different aspects of self are interdependent. My research brings together my academic work and personal life. It is an opportunity to use each perspective to explore and inform the other (Wright-Mills, 1959). In the tradition of interpretative research I view my multi-voices as integral to the

project, providing interest in and access to the organisational context of the research and the academic background to the study.

My research journey

Doing a PhD is far more than the final narrative; it is about learning to do research (Phillips & Pugh, 1987). My thesis documents the research journey; the steps I took and the decisions made to complete my project. I reflect on the process of the research throughout the thesis, and relish and celebrate the process of research as well as the findings. My research was undertaken over an extended period which created opportunities and challenges. My thesis documents a long journey in time and also an extensive intellectual journey taking me beyond the boundaries of my own academic discipline.

In chapter 3 I discuss the initial aims of the research before exploring the influence of my own background teaching HRM on my initial research design. At this point I became dissatisfied with the psychological contract as a valid concept and identify that it is at the time limited in scope. I also began to question the initial research design.

My research journey was broken by a period of ill health lasting from September 2004 to January 2006. Returning to study also required new supervisory arrangements as my original first supervisor had also been on sick leave for over twelve months. The process of reacquainting myself with the research required confrontation with the results of both the literature review and group interviews and created the context for deciding to change to a more appropriate direction. I had become very conscious of the influence of my roots in HRM on the initial research design and the limitations of this on the development of the research. In chapter 5, I explore the value of narrative inquiry and working lives to my research. As previously discussed my background is in HRM and is particularly grounded in work with practitioners. I am not a sociologist; however being led by the findings from the early parts of my research I concluded that

the traditions of sociology provided the most appropriate way to develop my research at this point and I accepted a working lives approach.

Taking such a step was potentially risky. It moved my research beyond exploring the applicability of the psychological contract to faith based organisations into a wider content. The findings from my interviews (see chapters 7, 8 and 9) suggested that there was far more to explore and understand about contemporary working lives in the Church of England than the employment relationship and the applicability of the psychological contract and HRM to faith based organisations. In the tradition of interpretative research (Thomas, 2009) I offer in chapter 10 a narrative about working life for clergy in the contemporary Church of England and some thought provoking interpretations.

Chapter 11 concludes the research journey by reviewing the value of the psychological contract and returning to examine my stance in the research and the fusion between 'living with the university' and 'living with the church'.

I will now move on to consider in chapter 2 the literature associated with the psychological contract that informed my initial research design.

CHAPTER 2

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT – AN HR PERSPECTIVE

As I outlined in chapter 1 my thesis will reflect, relish and celebrate the process and recording of research. A PhD is an opportunity to document and learn about research processes and subject development. The literature discussed in this chapter records and reflects my understanding of the psychological contract at the outset of my research. The psychological contract is a concept that informs HR practice and teaching. It is a concept that as a lecturer in HRM I was conversant with and taught to undergraduate, post-graduate and professional students. The literature discussed in this chapter is the material that was common to the understanding of the psychological contract in the HR community as I commenced the research.

Methodologically, a literature review prior to data collection can be used to provide material that can be explored in data collection. I used the literature explored in this chapter to shape the first stage of my research (see chapter 3 for a full description of the research methodology). Furthermore the findings of the first stage of my research will pose a challenge to the concept of the psychological contract and in particular the limitations of the views of the concept associated with the epistemological position of HR. The purpose of this chapter is to document the conventional literature from this epistemological position.

The psychological contract – empirical research before HRM

Writing from the perspective of the twenty-first century the beginnings of the concept now known as the psychological contract can be identified in research conducted in the 1960s.

Informal work culture

Argyris (1960), in an observational study of groups of workers and supervisors in a manufacturing plant, identified the leadership style of the foremen as passive or understanding and based on a psychological work contract.

The psychological work contract identified by Argyris appears to be based on workers' expectations. The workers had expectations of their supervisors. They expected the foremen to respect their informal work culture. Argyris noted that optimal production was maintained under these conditions and grievances were not raised. The foreman's expectations are not explicitly explored beyond his wish to maintain effective and efficient production. The focus is how production is maintained by respecting the informal work culture.

If the informal work culture and behavioural norms were violated the behaviour of the group changed. For example, when a new control and budgeting system was introduced by senior management the workgroup responded by reducing output. The consequence of the breach of their working norms was to withhold their labour, to 'punish' the organisation. The change in behaviour suggests that the informal culture was a valued component of the group's understanding of work in the organisation. Any change to this resulted in a re-evaluation of the amount of effort and work they were prepared to give to the organisation. The equilibrium of the arrangement between the organisation represented by Senior Management and the work group was disturbed.

The foremen who usually maintained this equilibrium by their 'passive and understanding' supervision had been promoted from within the workgroup. They understood the working norms and by maintaining them, ensured an effective work group. Only when outside intrusion occurred did productivity reduce.

Argyris's work identifies a characteristic that becomes central to the contemporary understanding of the psychological contract: unwritten

expectations. This characteristic will be discussed in more detail in this and subsequent chapters.

Commentary on Argyris's work

Roehling (1997) observes that Argyris's psychological work contract is based on actual understanding and mutual obligations on both sides. This suggests that both the workgroup and the management are aware of the expectations and obligations. They are unwritten but appear to be sufficiently known and understood to inform the pattern of supervision and the relationship between the two parties. Later authors, for example Rousseau (1990), dispute the idea that expectations are mutual and shared and suggest the psychological contract may only be in the mind of one party, the employee. In my own research, explored in chapters 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10, both clergy and senior staff have mutual and shared expectations. In this respect my findings confirm Argyris' early findings.

There is the suggestion here that the psychological contract is more than behaviour that is observable by a researcher, it is a potential lever for those involved in the employment relationship to draw on for the effective maintenance of management/employee relationships and to maximize productivity. Conversely it appears that it is also a potential lever from the employees' perspective to exert control over the work environment. To maintain the equilibrium both parties have to adhere to the unwritten expectations. Herriot and Pemberton (1996) indicate that Argyris viewed the psychological contract as additional to the formal contract. The formal contract establishes the rights and obligations of both parties but it does not indicate anything about how that relationship is to be developed and how productivity is to be maintained. The psychological work contract, described by Argyris, seeks to document how the day-to-day relationship between the two parties is played out.

Argyris's research was undertaken in a manufacturing environment where employees were supervised and productivity easily calculated. It does not discuss whether the psychological work contract can be transferred into other sectors of work where the lines between management and worker are not so distinctly drawn. Argyris did not interview his participants. His findings are based on observation. The expectations that he describes can be tangibly observed. Although Argyris is credited with introducing the concept of the psychological contract, what he observes is not what is now understood as the multi-foci psychological contract, a contract that is implicit and exists at many levels. The findings of Argyris's study identify expectations as being collectively shared by the whole group. It only distinguishes between workers and supervisors. In the light of subsequent research about the concept of the psychological contract, his findings seem to be unrefined and drawn with a broad brush. What is important is that he introduces the concept that the unspoken expectations of individuals affect their behaviour at work.

The implicit, unconscious and individual psychological contract

Levinson, Price, Munden, and Solley (1962, p.21) identified a series of mutual expectations or 'collateral agreements that have bearing on the person-organisation relationship' of which 'the parties to the relationship may only themselves be dimly aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other'. These expectations were described as:

- Largely implicit and unspoken
- Being both unconsciously and consciously held. Unconscious expectations could be concerned with psychological issues, e.g. nurturance, whereas conscious expectations may focus on job performance, reward or security
- Frequently antedating the relationship of the person and the company
- Existing in a lesser proportion between people in work groups and between those groups and the organisation

- From the company's perspective, arising from company values, policies and practices, circumstances in which it operates and includes statements at management meetings
- Dynamic and changing over time because of the changing needs of both parties and interaction between them

The work of Levinson et al (1962, p.21) introduces a different dynamic into the understanding of the psychological contract. They suggest it is 'largely implicit and unspoken' but do not dismiss Argyris's claim that both the parties are aware of it. However they suggest that for the greater part the contract is implicit. There is an implication that its implicit and unspoken nature is significant. Contrary to Argyris, Levinson et al identify the individual rather than the group as having expectations. However their research is based on a large sample of individual interviews investigating the effects of work experience on mental health in a large public sector organisation. Argyris, in contrast, observed group behaviour. The purposes of the research and the methods chosen have an impact on the findings. Argyris was interested in group behaviour, whereas Levinson et al focused on individual experience. The group/individual nature of the psychological contract is a tension that is present in the ongoing research and discussion around the concept of the psychological contract. It is a tension that, if resolved, would provide a rationale for the validity of the concept in developing employee and group commitment in organisations. This debate will be continued within this chapter.

Levinson et al's (1962, p.21) second point that the contract could be '...both unconsciously and consciously held' diverges from Argyris's view that the contract is about actual understanding and includes mutual obligations for both sides. In contrast Levinson et al assert that it could be actually and mutually understood but at the same time it may not be consciously held.

In the early antecedents of the concept of the psychological contract there are inconsistencies in the understanding and definition of what researchers are observing. A concept that is consciously held and understood by both parties is

something very different from an observable concept which is not acknowledged by either party. The difference between the two views of the contract becomes important if an HR position is adopted. HR is an interventionist concept and practice. It does not just seek to explore the employment relationship but to improve it and the organisation's performance. A psychological contract that is observable and understood by all parties, it would seem, is of far more value to a manager wanting to improve performance of the workgroup or individual than a concept that is observable but not consciously held.

Levinson et al suggest that expectations can be held prior to joining the organisation. The expectation, in this case, is more than an understanding about working in a particular group or organisation. It is an expectation that has a wide-ranging remit, an expectation that is about how one should expect to be treated at work in general, regardless of the context.

Argyris's work is focused on the perspective of the work group. Levinson et al take a more individualistic view of the psychological contract. Individuals bring expectations to their workplace based on external experiences. In contrast Argyris depicts a workgroup developing a psychological work contract with supervisors based on work practices within one organisation. It is not about individuals but about group working norms. The workgroup and the relationship between workgroups and the organisation are, to Levinson et al, less significant than the relationship between individuals. The focus of the psychological contract is between individuals and the organisation, represented by company values and management statements.

In the context of studying the employment relationship and HR currently this is an important distinction. HR is perceived largely as managing a relationship between individuals and the organisation. The void in industrial relations created by the decline in trade union influence has been replaced by adopting the term employee relations and a focus on developing the performance and commitment of the individual. In Levinson et al's work the beginnings of the

link between the psychological contract and HR can be seen. It can be identified as a tool that the organisation can utilise for the effective performance of individuals.

Levinson et al suggest that the psychological contract changes over time, which is consistent with Argyris's work. Argyris identifies that it will change if the existing norms are breached. Once the norms are restored the equilibrium between the parties is restored. In the work of Levinson et al there is a greater sense of dynamism. Rather than an equilibrium restored the relationship and expectations are constantly changing over time as a result of the interaction between the parties.

Schein (1965) discusses the interaction between expectations and work behaviour. He suggests that expectations that both the individual has of the organisation and the organisation's of the individual are powerful determinants of behaviour. These expectations are wide, incorporating work effort and reward, rights, privileges and obligations. In his later work (1980) he suggests that the relationship between an organisation and an individual is re-negotiated as each party's needs change through mutual influence and mutual bargaining.

Kotter (1973, p.92) describes the psychological contract as an 'implicit contract between an individual and his organisation' which defines what each party can give and receive. His findings are based on questionnaire responses from recent graduates of management programmes. Participants were asked to identify what they expected to 'give' to their employer, for example conforming to work norms and team work. The themes identified by Argyris, Levinson et al and Schein still appear in this later work. The contract is implicit and Kotter identifies that the relationship is between an individual and an organisation. Echoing the view of Levinson et al, Roehling (1997) suggests that Kotter does not fully explore the relationship between individuals and the organisation. He suggests that Kotter allowed for expectations by employees and the organisation but those expectations were not necessarily mutually shared. If expectations are not mutually shared any sense of an implicit but mutually

agreed and shared contract is removed. When he identified an informal work culture Agyris indicated that the foreman clearly understood and shared the expectations. The concept of the psychological contract for Kotter does not preclude a mismatch in expectations. For many writers the contract is defined as between an individual and an organisation. However the organisation as a collective and defined negotiating entity must be a myth. An organisation is a legal entity and can be defined as part of an explicit written contract but I question whether it can be defined as a party to a mutual understanding. Individuals not organisations negotiate mutual understandings. Writers using the term are inexact and unfocused in using organisation to define one party. It is not sufficiently precise to suggest that the employee has individual expectations and the manager, who is also representing the organisation, has no individual expectations, only those that are merely a conduit for organisational values and norms. Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997) state that Kotter insisted that only individuals within organisations can hold perceptions of obligations, organisations cannot hold perceptions and should not be anthropomorphized. Later writers take up the issue of anthropomorphizing in the context of the psychological contract and organisational voice (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002). Writings, particularly for the practitioner field, often refer to a psychological contract between individuals and the organisation. It is presented as if the organisation has a consistent voice and expectation. The suggestion by Kotter that only individuals can hold perceptions and expectations undermines the concept that organisations have one set of expectations. What is frustrating in the literature of the psychological contract is that the term 'organisation' is so constantly loosely defined, so loose in fact, that later writers have to clarify its meaning.

The psychological contract – empirical research concurrent with the development of HRM

A transition in thinking and a raised profile

The work of Rousseau has been described as 'marking a transition' in the thinking about the psychological contract (Roehling, 1997, p.207). Her work started in the 1980s and continues to be influential. Her dominance in the psychological contract literature in the 1990s and early twenty-first century is reflected in the literature discussed in the remainder of the chapter.

Attributes of the psychological contract

Rousseau (1990) describes the attributes of the psychological contract in organisations as:

- An individual's belief regarding reciprocal obligations
- Being about perceived obligations
- Differing from the general concept of expectations in that they are promissory and reciprocal
- About promises which might not be made explicitly

Rousseau's work establishes a new direction. In previous authors' work the psychological contract has been clearly associated with expectations. General expectations, to Rousseau, differ from the psychological contract as they are general beliefs about the conditions of employment rather than specific and individual promises and obligations. Rousseau declares that it is different from general expectations as it is promissory and reciprocal. An individual employee has a psychological contract when they believe they are obliged to behave or perform in a certain way and they believe that an employer has obligations towards them. Defining a concept as having an element of belief gives it more strength. It has a more powerful effect on behaviour than a general

expectation. Rousseau considers that individuals feel obliged to behave in a certain way. Although they believe that a promise has been made to them, it may not have been explicitly expressed but can be implied.

Rousseau (2003) critiques the work of Meckler, Drake and Levinson (2001). She argues that they see the psychological contract as an agreement between management and the worker. In contrast, Rousseau does not support the notion that the contract is agreed between management and worker. Argyris's work considered early in this chapter recorded that both sides understood the expectations upon them whereas Rousseau places far more emphasis on the individual nature of each contract and the belief that a promise has been made, rather than an agreement reached.

Forming and changing the psychological contract

Rousseau (1996) considers that the antecedents of the psychological contract are initiated by:

- Pre-employment experiences
- Recruitment practices
- An individual's experience through early on-the-job socialisation

She develops these themes in subsequent research. Rousseau (2001) considers that the antecedents of the psychological contract can be best understood by exploring the formation of schema or mental models. Schema is defined as a mental model of conceptually related elements. It develops from past experience and is then used to guide the way new information is organised. Rousseau cites the example of an academic's view of teaching. Some will view management or executive education as part of the role, whilst others would dismiss it as non-scholarly activity. The mental model of teaching, it is suggested, is formed by prior beliefs, for example academic discipline, pre-work training (teacher training) and the emphasis placed on management education when the academic first joined the University. The information

gathered from these elements is incorporated into the mental model. All new information about teaching tends to be interpreted using the original schema. Schema can be linked vertically with individuals drawing on lower level elements to create higher-level meaning. Rousseau again cites the example of the academic. Two separate elements of the schema: teaching PhD students and research are combined to form a higher-level understanding of the academic role. An example of horizontal structure is the belief that an academic has multiple roles. Individuals draw on their schema when forming a psychological contract. Rousseau also suggests that psychological contracts form schema. For example, an individual's belief about promises and obligations leads to a higher-level belief that his/her employment is based on a relationship not a transaction.

Rousseau (2001) notes but does not fully explore that previous occupational identity may be significant for the formation of the psychological contract in new circumstances. She cites the example of the different occupational identities of academics who come from a medical or business background. In the context of my own research, this would suggest that the psychological contract of clergy entering the profession might be influenced by their prior occupation, if any.

Rousseau (1996) suggests in empirical work using recently graduated MBA students that entry to the organisation is a significant point in the formation of the psychological contract. At this point, however, individuals will have incomplete information about the organisation. Rousseau suggests that individuals use their existing schema to enable them to form a contract in a new organisation. The contract is then developed and fine-tuned through social interaction in the new work environment. Similarly managers within organisations ask co-workers about how new workers are settling in. It is not clear if Rousseau sees the management involvement as part of the psychological contract. The socialisation period seems to be significant for the formation of the psychological contract. Rousseau suggests that once an individual's experience is consistent with the beliefs within their schema, then the schema is complete, stable and resists further change.

In terms of changing a psychological contract, Rousseau suggests people need to be motivated to process information which lies outside their schema. She suggests that one of the most effective ways to enable this is to try to help people experience the changes as if they were newcomers into the organisation, for example being interviewed for new jobs or renegotiating terms after a merger.

Rousseau (1996, p.50) discusses ways of changing the psychological contract either by accommodation or transformation. The article appears to be addressed to practising managers rather than an academic audience and concentrates on how 'today's executive must know how successful firms' transform the psychological contract. The discussion in the article is in the context of changing expectations within organisations and, because of the focus on service and quality, the need to change the psychological contract to one of commitment and trust. The psychological contract has become a management tool, something that can be observed and influenced, part of the HR toolkit to enable effective performance.

Change by accommodation can only be achieved where there is a good relationship between company and employees. Where changes are more radical, for example a move from a contract based on loyalty to one based on business results, the change is by transformation; the existing mindset needs to be replaced by new thinking. It is suggested that individuals are not always open to change. They may only be open to change either when they are new to the organisation or when the change is so radical that they are unable to ignore it. Hence the easiest way to change a psychological contract within the organisation is to employ new people. Rousseau suggests that new employees and existing employees therefore often have different psychological contracts.

Organisations constantly change strategy. This constant change undermines members of an organisation's ability to change and then establish a new psychological contract. For successful re-negotiation of a psychological

contract Rousseau suggests members of organisations need to have a strong understanding of the business environment, for example its strategy, market conditions and the nature of the business. She concludes (2001) that workers with different psychological contracts respond differently to organisational change and psychological contract violation. Also violation of the psychological contract produces more intense attitudinal and emotional responses than unmet expectations.

Parties to the contract

Guest and Conway (2002b, p.22) suggest that most researchers agree that the psychological contract is a two-way exchange of perceived promises and obligations, offering their own definition as ‘the perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship – organisational and individual – of the reciprocal promises and obligations implied in the relationship’. However Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997), while discussing and supporting the mutual obligations between employer and employee, state that Rousseau (1990) and Rousseau and Parks (1993) indicate that it is in the mind of the employee only. It is a two-way exchange only in the sense that one party believes that promises have been exchanged and obligations have been created. If Rousseau and Parks’s observation is accepted the employer may have no knowledge of their perceived obligations. Yet it is a concept which has high face-validity with both employers and employees (Pate, Martin and McGoldrick, 2003) suggesting it is valued by both parties. Up to 2003 Rousseau’s work suggests that the psychological contract is in the mind of the employee only. In 2003 Rousseau extends her scope and investigates shared understandings between employee and employer. Her research concentrates on relationships within a research centre, between research staff and the centre directors. Her conclusion is that the terms of the psychological contract that employees believe to be mutual are indeed often shared by the employer. Shared mental models underpin this mutuality. These mental models are more likely to correspond in employers and employees who share the same background, for example education or

academic discipline. In organisations where employees and managers have diverse backgrounds mutuality may be more difficult to achieve.

From industrial to employee relations

Rousseau's (1990) identification of the psychological contract as a key issue in the formation of employee-employer relationships is not only a transition in thinking about the psychological contract it is a transition in its profile and importance in organisational and academic life. Rousseau attributes the increased importance of the psychological contract to the decline of unionisation. A decline in union activity represents a decline in the influence of the formal and explicit contract as a basis for negotiation and industrial relations. Although previous researchers have observed the concept of the psychological contract in workplaces they do not give it such a prominent profile. Industrial relations had previously been characterised by collective negotiation. With a strong union presence the formation of the employee-employer relationship is characterised by collective activity. Employees negotiate about their expectations and management obligations through the union. Without a union presence, organisations relate not to collective groups but to individuals in this new context. The world of industrial relations therefore did not have an appropriate 'lens' through which to view the relationship between employees and the organisation. The psychological contract was available to fill this void.

This raises questions about the value and appropriateness of the new lens, the psychological contract:

- Is it a 'lens' of convenience that can be used opportunely to explore the world of industrial relations post unionisation?
- Because of the reduction in union activity, is there a genuine shift in the employee – employer relationship? Such a shift would require the development of a new set of lenses to explore it

- Have industrial relations previously been two pronged with collective negotiation between the unions and management and the management of individual expectations through the psychological contract existing alongside each other? If this is the case the reduction of union activity exposes the psychological contract as the foremost form of understanding industrial relations.

Concerns about the currency of the concept of the psychological contract

It is important to consider the context in which research is carried out. The late 1980s and 1990s were periods of extensive change in business and organisations and new forms of employee-employer relationships were identified. For example MacNeil (1985) identified new organisational forms which exhibited two types of contract, relational and transactional. The relational contract is an employee-employer relationship based on loyalty and long-term commitment from the employee in return for a long-term career and stable financial reward and employment conditions. A transactional contract is more short term: an employee works hard in the short term with high commitment in return for high reward but no guarantee of a long-term career. The seminal work on HRM by Legge and Storey (1989) was published during this period. HRM is an interventionist and managerially focused model. Legge and Storey (1989) discuss the levers required for effective HRM: identifiable tools are needed to act as levers within an organisation to change, for example, the culture and performance of the organisation. The concept of the psychological contract in this period is identified as one of the levers and tools of HRM. The growth in the importance of the psychological contract runs parallel to a shift in the understanding of how organisations are structured and managed.

Herriot and Pemberton (1995) use the terms new deal/old deal to describe the relational and transactional form of psychological contracts with organisations described by MacNeil (1985). New deal describes the transactional contract based on high commitment in return for high, short-term reward. Old deal is a

relational contract based on an individual giving loyalty in return for a long term and stable career. The use of old/new deal is seen as problematic. According to Marks (2001) their use only relates to a specific time period, and they are merely devices to enable the study of organisational transformation rather than a construct to view relationships within organisations.

Such comments begin to raise doubts about the general applicability of the psychological contract. Is it a concept that was a convenient lens through which to view the changes in organisational life in the 1980s and 1990s? Or is it a concept that came to the forefront because of the organisational changes in that period and through continued research and debate has established itself as a valuable concept through which to explore an individual's relationship with an organisation?

The Church of England does not fit the model of an organisation reconsidering its approach to employee relations post unionisation. It has never embraced or recognised collective representation through union membership. It has introduced some short term contracts but it is questionable whether it has experienced totally the paradigm shifts in organisational life discussed by Herriot and Pemberton (1995).

To have any relevance to organisations beyond businesses in the 1990s and post unionisation the psychological contract needs to be more generally applicable than a device to study organisation transformation in a specific decade.

Parallel confusions

Marks (2001, p.455) argues that there are 'parallel confusions in the fundamental beliefs' that underpin the psychological contract.

Researchers have recognised that it may be inappropriate to describe the psychological contract as being between an individual and the organisation

(Kotter 1973; Marks, 2001; Rousseau 1990). Guest (1998) describes what is meant by the term organisation as the agency problem. Rousseau (1996) states that the exchange agreement is between an individual and the agents of the firm. However the psychological contract in, Rousseau's view, is only in the mind of the employee. The individual's line manager or the HR Manager has been suggested as the person who sends out messages about expectations and obligations and therefore is the agent of the organisation in the psychological contract (Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997). The idea of the organisation speaking with 'one voice' is questioned and it has been suggested that organisations now place a greater emphasis on local job related communication rather than top down (Marchington, Wilkinson, Ackers and Dundon (2001). Non-typical working patterns, such as teleworking and outsourcing, also bring into question the existence of a single psychological contract between an individual and the organisation (Marks 2001). This view is particularly significant for my research in an organisation that is definitely based on non-typical work patterns. Some researchers have suggested that there are many psychological contracts in any organisation. This may question the role of the line or HR Manager as the organisation's agent, suggesting that different parties can assume this role. Research carried out within a University Research Centre, a unit which works autonomously, suggested that it was the Research Director rather than General Managers within the University who were the agents within the contract. Argyris (1960) identified the foreman/worker relationship as significant. The concept can be extended to any relationship, for example patient/therapist, student/teacher (Roehling, 1997). It appears that there is evidence from different researchers that the psychological contract is not just a relationship between employee and organisation, and there is some evidence that it cannot be assumed that the agent of the organisation is the line manager. This idea is extended by Marks (2001) when she suggests that individuals hold psychological contracts with different constituencies at different levels within an organisation, thereby concluding that the single organisational voice concept is outmoded. She identifies the collective agreements within workgroups as the strongest relationship within her multi-foci conceptualisation of the contract.

Despite the confusions Pate et al (2003) suggest that the concept of the psychological contract has high face-validity with both employers and employees. It is evident that much of the research, including that of Rousseau, is targeted at the practitioner/manager audience. The psychological contract is perceived as a management tool, something that can be observed and influenced, part of the HR toolkit to enable effective performance.

High face-validity however does not equate to a concept that is valuable in terms of analysing organisations. Both parties may recognise its existence but have little understanding of how it works within the organisation. Guest and Conway (2002b) refute the idea that the concept only has face-validity and identify it as an analytical framework which can be applied at all levels and in all types of organisation. In the context of my research Guest and Conway's comment is encouraging. It disassociates the psychological contract from a mere tool of HRM and suggests that it has a value wider than business success.

The review of the literature surrounding the psychological contract so far provides an ambiguous scenario rather than precise definitions and a clearly identified concept. Themes such as organisational voice, expectations or promises, and whether expectations/promises are mutually held are discussed in the literature. The impression is of a community of researchers searching for a definition of the psychological contract, what it comprises of, how it is formed. Rousseau's work is a barometer and commentary of the 'state of the art'. Periodically she publishes what seems to be a resume of the current understanding of the psychological contract. It is a concept that is the focus of a great deal of debate in the academic literature with ongoing discussions about its formation and applicability at organisational and work group level. Additionally it has gained high face-validity within the practitioner audience and is perceived as part of the HR toolkit to improve organisational performance.

There is evidence that there has been a shift and transformation in organisational structure and in the employee-employer relationship. To replace union activity individuals now relate more directly to their managers and organisations. This relationship is therefore more visible and exposed and a focus for the attention of managers concerned with developing an effective organisation. It is an area for concern for organisations and is given face-validity, ensuring an active research interest in the area and transference of such research to the business community.

Nevertheless the debate about the psychological contract is dynamic and ongoing. This is a subject that has not been conclusively defined; it is not fully incorporated into the body of knowledge about organisational life. The majority of literature discussed in this chapter was published between the mid 1980s and early twenty-first century. This period is also associated with the development of Human Resource Management (HRM). In the seminal work by Legge and Storey (1989) HRM is presented as a model that organisations should adopt to enhance their strategic capability and short and long term success. The psychological contract literature explored in this chapter has emerged from and is closely associated with the HRM perspective.

There are many areas unresolved. One of the weaknesses of the available literature is that it discusses a narrow spectrum of organisations. The message about improving organisational performance is targeted at the business organisation. It does not embrace other organisational forms. Marks (2001) questions the validity of the single psychological contract, thus calling into question the notion of an organisation managing the psychological contract or having a preferred psychological contract. The concept is too simplistic and one-dimensional to capture the complexity of individuals' perceptions and expectations about their work and relationships within it. The more complex and multi-focused contract may however have something to offer in terms of exploring and explaining relationships within an organisation. At this point it is unclear what exactly this offering will be, particularly in the context of working

situations significantly different from those discussed in published articles, for example the working lives of clergy.

Whilst clearly establishing its credentials with the business management community the psychological contract has not been fully explored in the other organisational forms; the teleworker, homeworker, portfolio worker, volunteer and of course the clergy. The psychological contract has entered the consciousness and language of business. There needs to be further work to give the concept greater applicability if it is to become more than simply a device for explaining organisational transformation in the 1980s and 1990s and an HR tool for managing effective performance.

As indicated in the opening of this chapter, in the research timeframe the literature discussed in this chapter is concurrent with my first stage of researching with clergy. Chapter 4 discusses the content of these interviews and the way in which themes emerging from them caused me to look again at the literature on the psychological contract. However, before reporting this I will set out my initial research intentions, methodology and methods. To progress to more considered and defined conclusions the findings of the group interviews will be discussed before returning to review the literature again in chapter 6, with the added insights provided by the study material.

CHAPTER 3

ORIGINAL RESEARCH DESIGN: PROCESSES AND REFLECTIONS

FROM THE EARLY STAGES OF THE RESEARCH

Original research design

Applying to register for a research degree required me to submit a research proposal. At this stage I saw my research as a piece of exploratory work which would focus on the use of qualitative interviews and collect the life world experiences of the clergy. The design was simple, logical and linear. Through a series of interviews, data would be collected targeted at the first research question:

Research Question 1

‘To explore the nature of the psychological contract between the clergy and the Church of England’.

Interviews would focus on what might be termed the ‘building blocks’ of the psychological contract; expectations and promises. I viewed the psychological contract as an overarching idea in which I could explore understanding and experience of work. I did not expect or require the participants to be familiar with the term and I did not envisage exploring overtly with participants the concept of the psychological contract. The material collected from the questions about the ‘building blocks’ of the psychological contract would yield a representation of the individual’s perception of work and their psychological contract.

Through the material generated from the interviews, further public domain documentary research and analysis and interpretation I would aim to answer the remaining research question:

Research Question 2

‘To examine how the differing employment conditions experienced by the clergy affect the psychological contract’.

Complying with the simple and linear nature of the research design the original plan of work outlined two rounds of interviews.

Figure 3.1 Excerpt from the research proposal 2002

The research will concentrate on one diocese to which permission has been granted. X *diocese* is a mix of rural and urban parishes and is not untypical of many dioceses. A profile of the *diocese* will be established by the number of clergy, type of contract, age, length of service, geographical location, to generate a sampling frame from which to select a maximum of 20 interviewees for 2 rounds of interviews. The themes for round 1 will be informed partly by the literature of the psychological contract and will explore broad issues such as reward, relationships with stakeholders, trust, role and career development as well as issues of values and working life.

The first round of interviews would explore the main issues that affect the psychological contract of clergy. They were, after analysis, to provide the context for the second round of more in-depth interviews which would enable me to explore if the issues were pertinent to all groups of clergy.

Undertaking group data collection

Morgan (1996) advocates the use of group interviews in promoting interaction amongst participants. Interaction was essential to the initial data collection, as I wanted the views of a wide range of clergy on their work and the employment relationship. I could have set up specific focus groups to come together to discuss the issue. This would have created a group of committed participants but as they would have needed to acquiesce to my request, a group may have

been constructed from those who had a specific or prior knowledge and interest in the subject. It would have been easier with pre-selected group members to use a sampling frame to include a range of role holders, eg parish clergy, school chaplains and hospital chaplains. Although the group interviews are in one diocese, the use of a sampling frame would entail asking clergy across a widespread area to travel to the group and commit to half a day on the project.

Although I initially envisaged using a sampling frame, the interviews were actually conducted with pre-existing groups rather than with groups purposefully constructed for the research (Bloor, Thomas, Frankland and Robson, 2001). Three group interviews formed the first stage of data collection.

I was invited very soon after registering for a research degree to facilitate a Chapter meeting, and took the opportunity offered. A Chapter is a naturally occurring group of clergy from one geographical area who meet together. Many meetings have a speaker/facilitator to provide input or lead a discussion. The focus of the regular meetings is business, support, education and development. I did not think of the first meeting as part of the research design since it occurred because of a casual conversation between colleagues. I was asked to lead the meeting. It seemed an interesting opportunity which might help progress my research. The first meeting generated useful data and confirmed Chapter meetings as an appropriate group to access. I subsequently attended two other Chapter meetings. I also returned and re-visited the first group to lead another developmental session that was not recorded as part of my research.

Figure 3.2 Dates of interviews

| Interview Schedule | | |
|---------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Interview 1 | Ullathorne | 11 November 2002 |
| Interview 2 | Plumstead | 27 February 2003 |
| Interview 3 | Framley | 26 June 2003 |

The dates of all the interviews were part of a regular schedule of meetings whose membership is open to all clergy who work within a defined geographical area or deanery. Each interview was recorded and a full transcript produced. Attendance by specific clergy was not pre-arranged and it was unknown until I arrived who would form the group at the interview. The interview process formed part of the business of the Chapter and was preceded or followed by other discussions and business. The environment appeared both functional and social and to some extent informal with coffee or lunch taken during the discussion. The interviews were scheduled for an hour but one extended for a longer period.

Access to the second and third Chapters was made available by personal contact. Through the course of his work my husband met the Rural Deans of each Chapter and enquired if they would be interested in taking part. I then followed up the contact and asked to meet with them. I was then invited as the facilitator at each meeting.

The selection of groups to access was opportunistic. It was dependent on a network of contacts. To meet the needs of the group and to therefore gain access I was always the 'speaker' for the morning. I was always prepared to provide a dual role, to collect data but also to provide a valuable experience for the participants to enable them to consider the issues in the context of their own ministry. It was important to make the subject accessible for them; there was a teaching function in the sessions, as well as a research perspective. The groups were hospitable social occasions as well as business meetings. Each group was organised in a different format into which I needed to fit. Two groups had lunch together. The discussion then continued in the informal atmosphere. One group met in a garden. At the end of the group interviews I was able to review the categories of clergy interviewed.

Figure 3.3 Profile of groups

| Ullathorne Chapter (semi-rural/town) | Plumstead Chapter (rural) | Framley Chapter (urban) |
|---|--|---|
| Total participants 7 6 clergy 1 church army officer Clergy included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 freeholders • 1 curate • 1 non stipendiary deacon • 1 part time hospital chaplain • 5 male • 2 female | Total participants 7 7 clergy Clergy included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 freeholders • 1 curate • 1 non stipendiary priest • 1 retired • 4 male • 3 female | Total participants 13 12 clergy 1 lay missionary Clergy included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 freeholders • 11 licence holders • 1 curate • 7 male • 5 female |

The paper in Appendix 1 discusses the choice of research strategy and method. Although the approach is predominantly inductive my prior reading of the literature informed the choice of the themes of the first interview. This is consistent with both Yin (2008) and Cassell and Symon (2004). Yin suggests that in a case study approach the literature review feeds the data collection, allowing insightful questions to be formulated. Cassell and Symon, (2004) advocate that the prior theory may be rudimentary in some case studies or in others propositions may be tested within the case study. Prior theory provided the framework of the psychological contract, identifying the current understanding of the concept and what the main areas for exploration may be. The main areas for exploration were then 'fed' into the data collection as the themes for the first group interview.

Figure 3.4 Themes for interview with Ullathorne Chapter

| Themes | |
|---------------|--|
| Theme 1 | Who do you work for? |
| Theme 2 | Who are the main parties that influence your work? |
| Theme 3 | Who has expectations of you? |
| Theme 4 | What is your role? |
| Theme 5 | How do you measure success and how are you rewarded? |
| Theme 6 | Who do you learn from? |

Each theme was used to generate questions and discussion both with and amongst the group.

The interviews were discursive, with themes being introduced and participants often initially discussing with me but then branching off to discuss with other members of the group. The groups were then almost independent, discussing the ideas and issues as colleagues rather than answering questions for an interviewer. I was conscious that space had been made for the research interview as an agenda item on an existing meeting and therefore it was important not to abuse that goodwill. My introduction outlined the research and indicated that some reflection on the issues may be useful for their own personal development. The removal of the focus from me to a peer group discussion with occasional direction may indicate an acceptance of the value of the discussion to their own work and signalled an engagement with the issues.

Interview – Plumstead Chapter

Three supplementary themes were added after the interview with Ullathorne Chapter in response to both clarifying the purpose of themes 3 and 4 and seeking further data on issues raised within the first interview.

Figure 3.5 Themes for interview with Plumstead Chapter

| | |
|----------|--|
| Theme 1 | Who do you work for? |
| Theme 2 | Who are the main parties that influence your work? |
| Theme 3 | Who has expectations of you? |
| Theme 3a | What expectations do you have of the Church (as an organisation)? |
| Theme 3b | How do differing conditions of service impact on how you define your role? |
| Theme 4 | What is your role? |
| Theme 4a | What motivates you? |

Themes 5 and 6 were removed as they seemed tangential to the discussion in the first interview and disrupted the flow of the interview.

Interview – Framley Chapter

Two further supplementary themes were added for this interview to seek further data about issues discussed within interviews 1 and 2.

Figure 3.6 Themes for interview with Framley Chapter

| | |
|----------|--|
| Theme 1 | Who do you work for? |
| Theme 2 | Who are the main parties that influence your work? |
| Theme 3 | Who has expectations of you? |
| Theme 3a | What expectations do you have of the Church (as an organisation)? |
| Theme 3b | How do differing conditions of service impact on how you define your role? |
| Theme 3c | What are the expectations of the community? |
| Theme 3d | What effect would employed status have on your work/role? |
| Theme 4 | What is your role? |
| Theme 4a | What motivates you? |

Analysis

The themes identified in Figures 3.4 – 3.6 were used to analyse the data. The sub-themes that were developed on an ongoing basis were the focus of much of the data and the resulting analysis reflects their centrality. The analysis of transcripts resulted in three themes, see Figure 3.7. A pictorial representation of each theme was mapped out diagrammatically. The map was used as the basis for writing up the analysis of each theme.

Figure 3.7 Themes from the analysis

| |
|--|
| Codings |
| <u>Diocese</u> – relationships with the central organisation and structure of the Church of England. |
| <u>Freehold/licence</u> – data relating to conditions of service, contract and legal status. |
| <u>Expectations</u> – the expectations of clergy from community and parishioners. |

The analysis of each theme was mapped against the first research question to begin to identify from the interview data the nature of the psychological contract between clergy and the Church of England. A second framing of the data identified the qualities or nature of the psychological contract. Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 2 record the results. Table 1 identifies a number of qualities of the psychological contract that are evident in the relationship between the Church of England and its clergy. Table 2 rephrases the qualities as identifiable outcomes. Although these are the same qualities as in Table 1 the rephrasing gives a different perspective and a potential list of qualities that could be used as the basis for further data collection either by questionnaire or interview.

The results of the group interview analysis will be discussed in chapter 4.

Reflection on the preliminary ideas on research strategy and methods

The following section discusses ideas on research strategy and method in the initial stages of the project. Appendix 1 contains an excerpt from a paper about preliminary ideas on research strategy and method. It was written for discussion at supervisions in September 2002 and debated issues to consider before a firm decision could be made about the direction of the research. As already mentioned the research has developed methodologically during its course. I would assert that the developments in approach and method and subsequent decision are an integral part of the research experience, direction of the project and the outcome. Therefore it is important to document and discuss them to demonstrate how this project has contributed to my understanding of research methodology and the development of the project.

My reflections (see excerpt in Appendix 1) raised a number of issues about research strategy and method which were pertinent at the time. It is a record of my thought processes associated with the design of the research and reflects my developing thinking and understanding, in the context of my research project, of research strategy and method processes. There are a number of

tensions in the discussion about the design of the research that raise issues, some of which are not subsequently pursued in the final design.

The relevance of organisational context is a constant feature in discussions of both the research proposal and the preliminary thoughts about research strategy and method. I claim that the Church of England is, in Yin's terms (2008) revelatory, extreme or unique. As a partial insider there is a danger in the assumption that I have given too much emphasis at this stage to my perception of the organisation's capacity to be revelatory in terms of the knowledge of the psychological contract, without any primary evidence. It is almost an 'educated guess' based on my own experience of the Church, perhaps comparing it to the businesses and universities I have worked in. I am bringing my own experience from life, rather than my academic work, to bear on the research. Whilst this may be considered by some as inappropriate as it is often the role of the researcher in both quantitative and qualitative research to sit as an observer, detached from the research subjects and context, it is not however without precedent. Wright-Mills (1959, p.195) comments that '... the most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community you have chosen to join do not split their work from their lives... they want to use each for the enrichment of the other.' Radnor (2002) discusses research undertaken by educationalists in schools. The context however is not important; her comments could be applied to any profession or context. What is important is that research can take place in social worlds with which we are familiar. She recommends that researchers looking at their own professional practice should consider what stance they should adopt in relation to their research context and key research participants. How I interpret my stance as a researcher within an organisation of which I am a known member, is a theme I shall return to throughout this chapter. I would identify my relationship with the organisation and the participants as an ongoing debate during the process of research, in the decisions made and an issue I constantly returned to and reflected on. At this stage of the research it featured as a constant dialogue in my research diary. I was aware of the tension and the potential of my role to impinge on my findings but as yet had no clarity about my exact stance. The tension and lack of clarity

is consistent with the process of qualitative research. I do not find this tension incompatible with effective research. Woods (1986) describes the first stages of inductive research as messy; working through the research allows the researcher to explore not only the subject but her own role as well (Radnor, 2002). Clarity, in qualitative research, comes with time working with the data.

Prior to the group interviews I considered how to capture the experience of individual clergy and whether I would focus on specific groups of clergy. A number of ideas are put forward in the paper in Appendix 1 as potential approaches to framing the unit of analysis and the dangers of not identifying a defined group to study. The concern around unit of analysis captures the plethora of approaches that could be pursued. My own experience and knowledge of the organisation informed the debate. The difficulty, as someone who has long experience with the organisation, is to recognise one's subjectivity as both a potential benefit and problem to the research. Radnor (2002) discusses subjectivity and the role of the researcher and advocates that it is a positive aspect of the research process. Maxwell (1996) proposes that a researcher who is not involved in the professional world of the participant is cut off from major sources of insight. Glesne (2005) suggests that subjectivity is something to be capitalised on not exorcised. The problem is that prior knowledge may also cut off the researcher from potential insights by attributing meaning without firm evidence. Although Radnor (2002) claims that subjectivity is positive it can only be positive if the researcher is self-aware of her own role in the process and has a clear insight, based on the data collection, of her interaction with the process. The essential issue is not about subjectivity but the ability to recognise inter-subjectivity; the sharing and mutual influencing of social worlds that both the participant and researcher inhabit. Although aware of the many alternatives, I did not make a firm decision at this stage of the research about the unit of analysis. Consistent with the phenomenological, inductive approach I wanted to see if my perceived views based on experience had any worth. Rather than pre-defining the unit of analysis I preferred to collect material from a cross-section of clergy and then make decisions about whether it was important to their perception of the psychological contract to

interview those who held different roles or alternatively to view one role through alternative framings (Bazzanger and Dodier 1997).

Opportunistic research

I began to use opportunistic research in my research diaries to summarise how access was gained to the Chapter meetings. The original intention was to conduct a series of group interviews. The opportunistic nature of gaining access to the Chapters raised questions about the bearing the interview context had on the direction of the research. In my research diary (Appendix 3) I question the impact of the social nature of some of the meetings on my research. It is clear that I consider that I 'have to make do' with the environment I enter. Chapter meetings exist to '... worship and study together, and share mutual support' (Croft and Fisher, 2003, p.3). The groups I attended mirrored this structure. They started with an act of worship or prayers, then moved on to consider administrative issues such as forthcoming events before the speaker's time. It was evident that by attending Chapter meetings I was entering the working lives of the participants. The main purpose of the interviews from my perspective was to gather data. The participants however had a different perspective. The ongoing format of Chapter meetings provides opportunities to engage with different subjects and enable clergy to study together and develop their professional understanding and practice. Croft and Fisher's (2003) definition that Chapters 'study together' was evident throughout the interviews. The participants were active and moved from answering questions to debating amongst themselves with some direction but little need for extensive facilitation. They moved from polite interest at the beginning to working increasingly with the subject matter in the context of their own experience and developing an understanding of it. The long standing developmental and supportive purpose of Chapter meetings enabled the interviews to become more than a simple data gathering exercise. They were a forum for debate about employment conditions and the psychological contract. The material gathered in the interviews was the debate generated amongst the Chapter members.

My initial research design did not envisage such a dynamic format with the focus and control of the interview shared with the group. It assumed a more formal setting, with the interviewer controlling the input and structure. By greater interaction and discussion the material collected was of a group working with a subject and beginning to apply it to their own working lives, yielding material that extended well beyond my own understanding of the psychological contract at that time.

My stance as a researcher

Access to group interviews by invitation was not part of my original research design, but the opportunistic approach created the context to develop the research. As access was facilitated by my husband, potential reluctance and barriers to taking part in the research were removed by my credentials of being married to a clergyman. I discuss the ethical issues associated with my husband's involvement in chapter 5. At the beginning of each interview, in order to establish empathy and understanding with the group, I identified myself as working at the University but also as married to a member of another Chapter.

The remainder of this chapter will explore the interaction between my own profession and that of my husband's and the influence of living with the Church of England on my research and my own stance as a researcher. Figures 3.8 and 3.9 are two reflective accounts I developed to allow myself the opportunity to develop insight about my experiences (Moon 2004) of 'living with the Church of England' and 'living with the University'.

Figure 3.8 A reflective account – ‘living’ with the Church of England 2006

I have often questioned why anyone working in a university business school should study the working habits and conditions of members of the clergy in the Church of England. In exploring why I am undertaking such a study I am constantly drawn to examining my motives by looking at my connections with the subject group. For nearly 20 years I have lived ‘with’ the organisation. My husband was ordained in 1987 and has worked since then in parish ministry. Our journey and story is bound up with the Church of England during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. I live in a Vicarage, a place where work and personal life constantly overlap: I sometimes feel that I leave one work environment at the University at the end of the day and arrive in another as soon as I step out of the car. Do I live in a home or workplace? And when I am at home am I working? My husband does not bring his work home, he lives within it. When questioned about his job, his first reaction is often ‘I don’t have a job, I’m not employed.’ Observing him carry out his role, it often seems like what I would term work. Clergy admittedly are not employed they are office holders and receive a stipend rather than a salary. Whilst agreeing to the factual accuracy of my husband’s view, that clergy are not employed, I began to wonder what difference this made to how he perceived his role and carried it out. Nora Watson in Terkel (1972, p.253), when talking about her father who was a preacher said ‘he showed me it was possible to fuse your life to your work’. I could recognise this view, that life and work were often indistinguishable in some roles. However lingering at the back of my mind was some uneasiness. Often with some frustration I have seen what might be called stereotypical portraits of modern clergy and their wives in the media, views which seem to have more in common with the era of Agatha Christie than anything that seems to be connected with my contemporary life. The model portrayed in the media often shows male clergy and their wives working together, as if both were engaged in the one occupation and preoccupied with the minutiae of parish life. My experience is somewhat removed from this picture. With the exception of periods of maternity leave I have worked either in industry or academic work since 1987. My first thoughts are that the fusion of life to work is not relevant to me; I’m an independent worker whose husband works as a vicar. I’m comfortable with the description, this is how I see myself, or do I? I don’t demur when I’m constantly introduced as Lynn, The Vicar’s Wife, or our Vicar’s wife, although I might silently think I sound like a possession, and my husband never gets introduced as David, our University Lecturer’s husband. While outwardly proclaiming the separation of our two working lives perhaps I do recognise that being married to a Vicar is a role in itself, perhaps I have two roles, a University Lecturer and Vicar’s Wife. Perhaps I change from one role to another as I walk through the door. I’m writing this at home on a Friday morning, during the working week, but so far my thoughts have been intermingled with commiserating with the Chairman of Governors of the local school about their forthcoming Ofsted inspection and discussing the dates of the Church Flower Festival next year. Perhaps the stereotypical portraits have more resonance than I am prepared to admit. Perhaps work and life can’t easily be separated out. Perhaps I have one view of myself at work and a separate view at home. Perhaps I am fused to my husband’s role. Reluctantly I have begun to accept this view and recognise that I accept the role. The idea that I have a number of roles to act out resonates with my personal experience and my understanding of role theory. We do act in different ways according to context and role. Accepting this view was significant for me. It meant that I recognised the role of the clergy as something different to my job. I recognised it as something that the whole family were bound up with.

Figure 3.9 A reflective account - 'living' with the university 2006

Accepting the fusion between my own work and my husband's opened up to me a new opportunity to think about this role and work in the context of my own academic discipline. I am located in the Department of Human Resource Management specialising in Human Resource Development but with interests in other areas within the subject. Much of my work is with part-time students who are personnel and development practitioners. Often my teaching approach is to provide opportunities for the students to reflect on the relationship between academic theory and models and organisational practice. A testing out, or critical review of theory and its relationship with HR practice, looking at the synthesis between the two and the tensions. I find that such an approach both engages the students but also enables them to ground their academic understanding in organisational practice as they can see how the theory is currently, or could be, used in their organisations. It is also an approach which should enable them to see that academic theory and learning should be an integral part of designing effective HR practice. It is not something you forget about after the end of the course. The focus of Human Resource activity is always the organisation. A glance at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's Professional Standards confirmed the centrality of relating theory to the organisation and the learning environment for students is created to enable them to explore HR theory in the context of their own organisations. All this I am comfortable with but there is another sense of uneasiness at the back of my mind. I've never had a student who has worked for a Church, or even a not-for-profit organisation on the post-graduate professional courses. The discussion of the relationship between HR theory and the organisation constantly takes place in the business or public sector. The relationship between a faith organisation and HR theory is not discussed and is not tested by debate, never mind by academic research. An initial search of journals produced nothing in relation to the Church and Human Resources. Does this simply mean, that it is unexplored? Or that HR theory only relates to certain types of organisations?

Bringing the two together

The fusion between work and life is discussed by Wright-Mills (1959).

Scholarship is about making choices about how to live, it is about using your life experience in your intellectual work. This research project provides the vehicle to bring together two essential elements in my life, to overlay and view one part of my life, 'living with the Church of England' with the concepts generated by 'living with the University'. It is both an intellectual and personal journey and in Wright-Mills's terms (1959, p.195) scholarly thinkers do not split their work from their lives they '... use each for the enrichment of the other'.

The relationship between the two areas of my life was a starting point for the research. From an academic perspective it was an opportunity to explore a previously unexplored area and an area of which I had knowledge. As the research progressed the process required me to consider at a deeper and more personal level how these two areas interrelated for me and for the research. I struggled with the ideas. Undertaking the interviews made me realise that being married to a clergyman had more impact than simply gaining access to prospective participants. In the interviews I drew on my long experience of the organisation and living within it as well as on my professional knowledge and expertise. Although the approach seemed entirely appropriate and natural in the interviews, and allowed the collection of rich data, on reflection it made me rather uneasy. I had only envisaged my 'status' as a clergy spouse easing access to the groups. It provided this opportunity, but once in the interviews I accessed this experience to gain credibility and to engage in the process of discussion. It was therefore an unexpected feature of the research, but I was unclear about my position as a researcher in relation to the interview participants.

Radnor (2002) states that a key question for a researcher to consider is the stance you take towards your research context and key research participants. I debated this issue in my research diary (Appendix 3).

I concluded that the term Conversant Associate represented most effectively how I had come to understand my role in relation to the clergy. I have sufficient knowledge and experience to access and be conversant with their 'world' and inhabit a role that associates me with the clergy but I am not fully a member of the group.

In the next chapter I will explore the material from the three group interviews.

CHAPTER 4

GROUP INTERVIEWS

In this chapter I will firstly discuss themes that stemmed from my analysis of the literature on the psychological contract up to that point and then set out further themes which emerged from the group interviews. The language of the themes reflects the concepts used in literature on the psychological contract. For example the literature identifies different 'parties' in the contract, is concerned about how individuals measure their own success and reward and who individuals interact with and learn from. I finished analysing the group interviews in March 2004. The chapter is written in 'real time' recording my approach to research in 2004.

Figure 4.1 Six themes drawn from the literature on the psychological contract which informed questions in the group interviews

| |
|---|
| 1. Who do you work for? |
| 2. Who are the main parties that influence your work? |
| 3. Who has expectations of you? |
| 4. What is your role? |
| 5. How do you measure success and how are you rewarded? |
| 6. Who do you learn from? |

Sources: Kotter 1973; Herriot and Pemberton 1995; Rousseau 1996, 2001, 2003; Guest and Conway 2002a and b.

Figure 4.1 outlines the six themes that informed my interview plan and which were drawn from the literature discussed in chapter 2. The psychological contract literature emphasises the importance of an individual's expectations of

work and so I concentrated on questioning clergy on various aspects of their expectations. As discussed in chapter 3, supplementary themes were added in subsequent interviews in response to seeking further in-depth data on the specific themes associated with the literature of the psychological contract: expectations, motivation and employment conditions, while themes were removed where they became obviously tangential to the discussion developing in the interviews. The original themes and sub-themes from the literature were used for the first framing of the analysis. The first framing indicated that the focus of much of the interviews was not on themes central to the existing psychological contract literature but on sub-themes that reflect the interests and concerns of the participants.

In the second framing of the analysis of the themes it was evident that the participants focused on three, shown in Figure 4.2. After reading the literature I expected that it would be important to explore ‘expectations’ and ‘employment conditions’, (termed freehold and licence in Figure 4.2) The three themes are the areas the participants chose to focus on.

Figure 4.2 Key themes identified by participants

| |
|---|
| <u>Expectations</u> of different parties in the psychological contract |
| <u>Freehold/licence</u> –conditions of service, contract and legal status. |
| <u>Diocese</u> –relationships between Clergy and the central organisation and structure of the Church of England. |

I will introduce each theme with illustrative quotations from the interview transcripts in italics.

Expectations of different parties in the psychological contract

The psychological contract literature explored in chapter 2 identifies expectations between work peers, managers and organisations as central to an understanding of the concept. In the Church of England the parties to the psychological contract are not so easily defined at the outset. However, in the group interviews three parties emerge; parishioners, the wider community and the senior staff of the diocese.

Parishioners

Those who are members or officials of the local church are described by the participants in the interviews as having a variety of expectations, some of which are deemed realistic but most of the discussion around expectations focuses on those that are '*old fashioned*' or '*totally incorrect*'. Examples are provided, such as an expectation that the Vicar will visit '*ten and a half thousand people in my parish*'. Such examples are recognised and agreed with and laughed about by the participants. Participants are not sure '*...how far down the road you go towards fulfilling*' the many expectations people have. Such comments indicate that the clergy recognise that there are numerous ideas amongst parishioners about how they should carry out their role. Clergy are uncertain about the extent to which they should work towards fulfilling them or strike an independent path. The participants face a dilemma and although they reject some expectations as out of date or unrealistic they are evidently a reality within their working lives. The dilemma is described as '*a kind of inherent conflict*' whether to '*let the community dictate what they want, traditionally what they want is cup of tea and a slice of cake and a nice little chat, and see you next month Vicar*'. Such comments are associated, by the participants, as being derived from a previous generation's experience of clergy. Participants suggested that much of what is expected is connected to a 'folk memory' of the role of clergy. This issue seemed to be of particular concern to those working in rural ministry. Of the nine issues raised about parish expectations five originated from the

interview with the rural clergy. This may indicate that expectations do differ within different social contexts, and rural expectations may have a greater link with former ideal memories of clergy role whereas urban or suburban expectations have moved on.

Expectations in urban and suburban areas

Framley Chapter, based in an urban area, discussed parishioners' expectations when clergy are appointed. The parish identifies what they expect from a future incumbent and draws up a parish profile. The process of identifying the profile and involvement in the interview results in parishes being '*...asked to think about exactly what [they] want and who [they] want to interview and this is what [they] expect the person to do.*' There is a sense that parishioners have clear expectations of clergy in urban parishes, a sense that clergy are working for a specific church with an identified agenda or strategy.

The following excerpt from the Framley Chapter interview identifies why the participants perceive their parishioners to have clear expectations:

It has changed from a time when a bishop might have said, that I know you and I know what I want in this parish and I would like to go or I would like you to consider going there. To now much more this job is advertised, this is the parish profile. Most of the profile is what they want their vicar to do, and the people interview. So all that shifts from where most of us came in, to actually now they have to pay for it we've actually been asked to think about exactly what we want and who we want and interview and this is what we expect the person to do.

Over the past decade parishes have been asked to increase their financial contribution to the cost of clergy stipends rather than clergy being supported from the central finances of the Church Commissioners. Interviews with clergy in both suburban and urban Chapters suggested a link between the increased parish financial contribution and the amount of influence the parishioners now

exert on their clergy. The interviewees perceived that parishioners now thought of themselves as the employer since they pay the stipend rather than the traditional role of clergy working within a community, enjoying greater freedom to construct their own role.

In the interviews clergy suggest a second trigger for a change in expectations in some parishes: the role within recruitment and selection. The identification of these aspects is an indication that the clergy have perceived a change in their working lives, that is a change in their psychological contract, brought about by the changing approach to recruitment and selection. They perceive that there are greater expectations placed upon them from their interaction with local parishioners.

Evidence of what clergy perceived as the negative consequences of the changing expectations is provided during the interviews. There are a number of examples of clergy who are *abused by their parishioners and their PCC's.* whose working lives are *'made absolutely hell by carping Church Wardens and difficult PCCs'* and find it difficult to *'seek redress or protection'*.

Expectations in rural areas

In rural areas clergy often work united benefices, a group of parishes which historically have been independent, each with an incumbent, but which now share one incumbent. Clergy in such rural areas suggested that they are expected to act as a 'monarch'. Parishioners *'struggle to accept reality, as for many of them the other parishes do not exist.'* In these situations a participant, supported by the members of the group, identified that the parish was *'struggling to manoeuvre you into being a monarch, certainly in that parish'*. Such expectations had been fulfilled in the past by clergy and are *'... very deep written into their [the parish] psyche.'*

The monarchical expectations create an environment in which the clergy perceive themselves as having sole responsibility. The Church structures

identify the Parochial Church Council (PCC) as sharing responsibility with the clergy for the work within the Church and Parish. The reality for participants is that the PCC is *'looking to me to come up with something.'* Any future plans have to be initiated by the incumbent. New incumbents are not given any idea of how their work should develop but *'you just turn up and suddenly you're expected to produce all these goodies out of the bag'*. The PCC perceived its role as *'not to have a vision, clergy have visions; PCCs are there to make sure visions don't get out of hand.'*

Rural clergy claim that the model of the Church held by many parishes and parishioners is part of a *'corporate memory'*. A participant working in a rural parish links the corporate memory with the resistance from parishioners to taking part in ministry:

There's a corporate memory about baptism for example you can't shift, it is so much written into community mind that it's going to take decades. I mean it's beginning to shift now but it's still a very painful process, still struggle to come to terms with what's happening. [The] PCC are simply not really ready or able to take on the new role of leading ministry in their parishes, they're just not prepared to do it they don't know how to do it, they don't want to do, they're not ready to do it but they can see inevitably it will happen. You hear some people say I know it will happen but I don't want it to happen in my lifetime. It will change but don't tell me about it.

In rural ministry the clergy have expectations placed upon them which they realise are not the expectations of how they, or the Church in general, perceive ministry today. Even though the clergy of rural parishes may reject the outmoded expectations of their parishes such perceptions exist and form the context in which they operate. The rural clergy note that *'the church has got to face up to reality.'* They acknowledge that in the corporate memory of society *'the church was in many ways the social services: when they were desperate they went to the vicarage as the only possible place of salvation.'* However this

role is now provided by other institutions and organisations and the clergyman as *'leader of the community'* is no longer apt. To move parishioners away from the corporate memory is to take them on a *'long, long learning curve'*. In terms of the psychological contract rural clergy are clearly aware of the expectations that parishioners place upon them but recognise that they do not coincide with their own expectations or with the Church's resource available for the role.

The rural clergy bemoan the monarchical expectation which they identify with a traditional role that is no longer workable. The urban clergy bemoan the clearer expectations and pressures they identify with current working practices and greater involvement of parishioners. Both sets of participants can identify expectations but would prefer alternative ones. The rural clergy seek a more contemporary approach, whereas the urban clergy identify what they see as the weaknesses of that approach.

Equal parties?

In all the interviews the participants discuss how they work with their parishioners. They define their work as shared with others, with *'...people on our PCCs and perhaps reader colleagues and others.'* Although the monarchical approach is an evident expectation of some parishioners, the expectation of the clergy is *'it's not my problem it's not your problem it's our problem and we've got to work out how we solve it.'* Clergy do not expect to start work in a new parish with an identified plan. They identify that when selecting a new incumbent parishioners may look for ideal or *'magic solutions'*. The expectation of the clergy is that they don't seek to identify what they term the vision until they have been in post a while. Then, in a new parish *'... you fit in with what's been happening there in terms of services and regular events, and then you decide, it may or may not be in consultation, depending on your style. I suppose any changes you want to make which are affected by prayer and your own experiences and the assessment of the situation you find yourself in; something like that.'*

There is greater discussion about working relationships in the group interviews of the rural and urban Chapters than in the suburban Chapter. The rural clergy indicate that there is a change in the Church's understanding of the role of clergy to perhaps team leader, and it is this role that clergy are now trained for at theological college, although they recognise this contrasts with the parish's expectation of them as monarch. The urban chapter already view themselves as part of a team whereas there is a gap between where the rural clergy want to be, working in teams and the reality of working in rural ministry. The rural clergy identify that their role has changed because of the amalgamation of rural parishes: with *'these huge benefices you can't have the same sort of relationship that most people remember having with a vicar, probably even we can all remember having with a vicar.'*

The reduction in numbers of parish clergy requires the involvement of more lay people. In psychological contract terms the expectations of the clergy have changed. Now they view their role as a partnership with parishioners. However many rural parishioners seem reluctant to embrace this change and to become partners in this respect.

The clergy present a number of recurring ideas about how they perceive expectations placed on them. The groups from different locations record different expectations of them. None of the groups is comfortable with some of the expectations. The rural clergy identify that the expectations of their own church community is outmoded. The clergy from more urban and suburban settings are uncomfortable with expectations from outside the church community.

Expectations of the wider community

The interviews provided examples of how clergy perceive that those outside the Church community have changing expectations of them as clergy. Clergy identify a culture change associated with the expectations of those who come in contact with them through funerals or weddings. In these situations

parishioners perceive themselves as customers. Examples are given of parishioners who *'had a funeral and it wasn't done the way they expected and they wanted the bishop's number so they could complain.'* They provide a number of examples, of which the following are typical, of changing expectations, bespoke requirements and what clergy identify as *'this frightening thing of yes we're paying you and we're going to tell you exactly how you're going to do it':*

A change to take that to the nth degree but a fascinating incident that [name of another participant] is totally aware of with me, where I was rung up by the funeral director and asked to take a funeral service but when I actually spoke to the family they said, well we want you to take the funeral service but you aren't allowed to mention God at all in the service so I very, very politely said I'm awfully sorry but what you need is a humanist to actually come and take the service I can't do that you know and think about blah blah blah it ended up with me taking the funeral service and God getting a good sort of mention.

[Laughter]

I think it is happening more; it is the customer is always right because I had a request for a baptism about six months ago where the father of the child was an atheist and the mother wanted the baptism so the request was to change the words in the baptism service so that he would be comfortable with it.

[Laughter]

The clergy perceive that people now regard them as working for a *'service industry'*. Although this is people's perception, clergy were very uncomfortable with the notion of a service industry and responding to customer demand. The reason for this is not discussed, but they do discuss service in the context of vocation. Their understanding of service however does not equate to the present-day meaning associated with meeting customer expectations. It is

associated with being available and being prepared to work in difficult circumstances.

Clergy differentiate between working with church members and within the local community. In the interviews it emerged that the expectations upon the clergy of those who are members of the Church and the wider community appear complex and interwoven. A participant from a rural parish identifies that the community 'value' the presence of the priest in the community with *'very little understanding of just what the job of a priest is and how much time you give to this or that or the other, but they know that you're there if they need you, they can come and knock on the Vicarage door and you'll sort them out whatever the problem is'*. Another participant in the same Chapter disagrees, suggesting that although the traditional role of the clergy is to be available to the community *'I don't know now how many people really care about it, you may be right, maybe you're right, but I'm not convinced about that. I think it's still true for some people, but my view is that the majority of people now couldn't care less whether we are here or not, but it may be still true.'* Although the participant argues that for many people there is no relationship between clergy and community he nevertheless goes on to discuss how clergy can *win a lot of 'community kudos' by turning up at the pub. I'm not known in the pub, or if you bless the hunt you have the hunt people behind you, they'll think you are a great chap.* He portrays the choice of relationship with the community as a dilemma, *'it's like that choice in Middlemarch between Mr Tyke and Mr Fairbrother I've always thought that's quite an interesting choice to make really. Mr Fairbrother plays snooker and billiards and cards and everyone loves him cos he never upsets anyone, Mr Tyke with his evangelical doctrine and cant and holiness and umm somehow one weaves a path between these two models.'* He recognises the benefits of a relationship with the community but identifies a tension between what the community is comfortable with and how he perceives his role. The following excerpts document his feeling about the conflict of expectations, and its effect on his working out of his role:

I'm trying to resist being controlled by what the community wants of me which is in conflict with what I think I should be doing with my time. If I go with the community then my agenda is set by their demands

[Interviewer] and if you don't go with the community are you saying you basically set your own agenda

well there is a negotiation I think there is a negotiation which goes on which I'm still doing I'm trying to do what [name of participant] saying he's quite right it's really important and I'm trying to do some of that and I'm also trying to do what's [name of participant] is saying which is what we believe the Ordinal [ordination service] says we are to do. The two are not the same there is a definite conflict there and I quote what the [name of former Archdeacon] used to say the country parson's job is to be interested in everything and everyone and to challenge nothing and no one. Now the community says be interested in everything we are doing but don't challenge us at all and what the Lord is saying is go into that community and challenge them with the gospel.

So how do you resolve that? By some kind of compromise and you are constantly trying to work it out and make it... I don't know what the answer is but there is a kind of inherent conflict there unless you let the community dictate.

The dilemma is unresolved for this participant; it is recognised by other members of the group as being a difficult position to hold. The group moves on to a theme previously discussed, how the appointment system where '*the community gets to choose or have a voice in the priest they receive does not result in someone who can be a challenging voice but they get exactly the person they want who is not going to challenge them*'.

Although they do not resolve the complexity of working out their role within the community they do identify that in issues where the community is polarised they feel unable to give '*... an opinion on it, there are too many people on both sides*'. Although some clergy indicate that their communities are not interested,

there is conflicting material which indicates that the clergy's opinion is valued in community issues.

Expectations from the diocese

The clergy suggest they are *'working with'* the diocese, there is a *'sense of connection'* and that connection can be *'as much as you want'*. The clergy have freedom to opt in or out of centralised activity. The diocese provides resources that can be used *'...as much as you want to, and some people are used for their expertise more than others. Again it depends'*. They do not manage but provide information and seem to be *'bombarding me with bits of paper telling me what to do'*. There is a sense of an attempt to *'control what I'm doing. Even if they can't there is a sense of someone trying, even if they don't succeed'*.

In the context of finance and financial management the diocese is a constant feature in all interviews. Although much of the interview material explores the independence of the clergy they suggest that *'the diocese measures success in terms of how much money you've got on the plate on Sundays.'* The clergy do not seem at ease with this approach to financial management. It is seen as a *'tension'* between *'...the inevitable institutional side of things with all the statistics and money and focus on the numbers'*, and the measurement of spiritual growth, the part of the work that *'you will never know at least at this stage in terms of success'*. It is described as a tension, but also as a possible *'complex interrelationship'*. The clergy in the study link financial and spiritual growth: *'we know the giving in this diocese is abysmally low so that we know that the spiritual health must also be not on the up.'* It is not, however, identified as a *'direct correlation'*.

Whatever the correlation between finance and spiritual growth a changing approach to financial management in the Church of England is identified. Clergy suggest that they will *'rue the day'* that parishes were informed about the exact costs of the clergy as *'it no longer sets us aside'*. Transparency in the

financial costs of the Church, a participant suggests, has changed the relationship between clergy and their parishes. Clergy are measured by how much money is generated. As already discussed, the parish now wants greater influence on who is appointed and what they *'expect the person to do.'* Responsibility for this change in approach is directed at the diocese. Jobs are now advertised and the parish profile details what they *'want their Vicar to do...'* It has changed the relationship with the bishop *'...from a time when a bishop might have said that I know you and I know what I want in this parish and I would like you to go or I would like you to consider going there, to a process of applying for a job and meeting the expectations of parishioner.'*

Expectations of self

In the suburban Chapter the clergy discuss how they are sometimes perceived as managers. The alignment between being a priest and a manager is very uncomfortable for one participant. Parishioners *'see the clergy role as in a senior management position'*. He perceived that *you must function in a way that they want you [as senior managers] to operate*. He suggests that this may be the result of a change in the perception of clergy. His initial introduction of the subject into the discussion results in a long discussion between the participants. They question him about why he rejects the term but neither confirm acceptance nor rejection themselves. The discussion focuses on why *'...he can't bear either'* manager or professional as the clergy role is:

Christ- like. In the role we have I don't think it fits and I don't like professional because it makes me out to be a different class of Christian from everyone else who is a Christian and I'm not.

The participant is a curate, ordained for three years. Other participants suggest that his *'attitude will change when [he is] an incumbent'* and although they *'understand where all this stuff is coming from at you and trying to influence you in a way that you don't want to go is probably what's putting your hackles up'* they counsel against rejecting the idea of management altogether. Although he

agrees that his attitude may have to change he cannot come to terms with others' perception of him as a manager. He identifies it as *'something which is very alien to me something which I have never found is part of my calling not that it isn't. I don't know but I've never felt it before.'*

Although the least experienced priest rejects the idea of being a manager, the more experienced discuss it in the context of the Church. They identify examples of management and managers in other sectors where they work as Chaplains for example *'health service model, the managers are the people who are perceived often to sit in their comfortable offices and tell everyone else what to do while the practitioners are really getting on with the work and interacting with the patients and facing disease, so it has increasingly negative overtones in quite a few circles, management speak.'* The clergy agree there is management in the church; it is no different from other organisations *'except that we say the diocese, that's right, it's the management.'* The sense in which management is used here is that it denotes a separation between practitioners, who undertake the work that is the essence of the organisation, for example nurses and doctors in the NHS, parish clergy in the Church of England. The management are portrayed as a remote body giving directions, with little connection to day-to-day work. The more experienced clergy develop the discussion about their own management role. They discuss in the context of the biblical texts in Matthew Chapter 10 and Luke Chapter 9 where Jesus sends out the 12 disciples to work. They suggest that the words in Matthew and Luke indicate that Jesus had a plan for his disciples that was separate from his own role. *'..he did send them out two by two, he didn't sit at home in his office waiting for them to come back... he models how to do things before he sends them out, he doesn't send them out without modelling it and showing them.'* This priest using the support of a biblical text suggests that management is a credible role for clergy. The clergy reject the term management, either because of lack of experience or their denial that it is part of the role or they reject the definition of management associated with working in other sectors, but are more comfortable with developing the concept in the context of applying it in their own role. They reject the label of manager, but not the skills

associated with it. The participant's discussion about management illuminates the clergy's own expectations of the role because they perceive that their work contrasts sharply with how work is organised in other organisations.

Summary – expectations

- For those working in rural parishes, expectations placed on them are often out of date
- Parishioners' expectations of the clergy often are at odds with diocesan expectations
- The changes in expectation identified by clergy are associated with the changing financial situation and greater involvement by lay people in the selection of clergy
- Most clergy do not associate their role with a service industry, but with service
- Clergy are sometimes expected to be managers. They reject the label of manager but most are comfortable with the role of manager

Analysis of the expectations theme has raised issues that seem unresolved for clergy. They have documented changing expectations upon them from the perspective of their own parish, the community and individual points of contact, (such as those wanting to be married) and the diocese. They explore the impact of changing financial resources. The clergy hold a variety of (sometimes conflicting) responses and understandings of these issues. Their conversations indicate that they are aware of the changing expectations and are still in the process of understanding their role in contemporary society.

In times of change the psychological contract is often renegotiated (Rousseau, 1996, 2001). As the environment changes, individuals within different levels of an organisation review and evaluate their expectations. There is evidence in my interviews of a period of significant change in the Church of England that participants, parishioners and those who represent the diocese are all parties to. By discussing and evaluating changing expectations upon them from both

the diocese and parishioners the participants in my interviews provide a 'snapshot' of the process of the renegotiating the psychological contract by the different parties in the Church of England.

In the following section the discussion moves on from the theme of expectations to explore the employment condition.

Freehold and licence

The employment condition of Anglican clergy is different from most people in employment, particularly those who feature in the existing literature on the psychological contract. Insofar as there is a legal contract of employment for clergy it is divided into two types: those who are freeholders and those who only have a licence. These two areas are part of the employment conditions of the Church of England and at the outset of my research I saw them as valuable areas to explore in terms of the psychological contract because they are so manifestly different from employees in other institutions or companies.

Freehold – independence and protection

The majority of parish clergy and all senior staff, such as bishops, deans and archdeacons 'have freehold'. It is identified as a system that has evolved over centuries and is now the 'historic norm for parochial ministry in the Church of England providing complete security of tenure up to retirement unless there is a disciplinary case or other rare circumstance' (Archbishop's Council, 2002). In an organisation that can clearly trace its history from 1534, and could identify a history in England from Augustine's arrival in England in 597 AD, an historic norm is a firmly established concept in the working lives of the clergy and one that participants are familiar with. Although the historic norm, freehold has been debated in the Church and in 2002 a working group of the Church of England's General Synod was established to review the terms under which the clergy hold office. At the time of the interviews the future of freehold was under review.

From the interviews I was able to identify a number of themes that the clergy associate with freehold. Freehold provides a context in which clergy carry out their work. It can *'equip [me] for the task'*. Without freehold one participant questions whether he could have been successful. He *'insisted upon it I couldn't have done my job without it.'* Freehold, to this participant, is valuable in defining the relationship between himself and his parish. He was being asked to do what had *'seen off three previous incumbents who tried to do what I was being asked to do'*. This participant associates freehold with protection from parishioners. Without it the balance of power is weighted towards the parishioners; freehold redresses the balance. Although the excerpt is about equipping one individual for the task, some of the issues raised by other clergy during the interviews underpin the views expressed here, particularly the link between freehold and freedom, independence, protection and security.

Participants perceive that they are more independent as a freeholder and less subject to influence and pressure from others. The term of office is *'open ended'* with a freeholder but with a licence it is the *'...diocese and others who were determining how long I was going to be there'*. Clergy with freehold have protection from *'...maverick bishops'* or, as the next participant in the interview adds, from *'...maverick congregations'*. Freehold protects clergy *'...rights against people who could abuse [their] position'*, whether it is the bishop or their own congregation. Independence from bishop and parish gives a *'...sense of independence'* and enables clergy to work without *'... always trying to stay on the right side of somebody who you know, be it the churchwardens or the bishop...'* In the Chapter interviews the clergy identify the effect of freehold as being that *'... you can be more prophetic'*. In this context prophetic is associated with the form of prophecy displayed in the Old Testament by such as Jeremiah, who speaks out and challenges the existing order of society. It is a ministry which is *'... challenging or disturbing'* and identified by participants as an approach that *'if you are on a licence...'* people are not going to *'... stand for those ideas'*. There is an association in the mind of the clergy between the possession of freehold and the ability to speak out and challenge.

The balance of power between clergy and the two parties of parish and diocese is a constant focus in the research interviews. Clergy refer to the influence on them of both parish and diocese. In the interview discussions they do not identify themselves as the middle layer in what at first consideration appears to be a hierarchical relationship with parishes and the diocese. The two parties seem to act independently of each other but with potential to influence and control the clergy. Clergy did not indicate that there is interaction or a relationship between the two parties. The lack of a hierarchical relationship between the parties is perhaps reflected by the sense of freedom, autonomy and job security that freeholders describe in the interviews. They can interact, as equals with both parties but can act independently of either or both.

Different perceptions of the value of freehold

Although much of the above discussion views freehold as an enabling feature for independence and security, there are those who disagree. It is suggested by a few participants that freehold *'should disappear'*. The need for protection is challenged and it is proposed that priesthood is about vulnerability. It *'... involves sacrifice and putting ourselves in a vulnerable position.'* Rather than requiring security some clergy argue that they *'haven't got any rights'* and are there to *'serve'*. This participant acknowledges that it is made *'more difficult these days, we've got no protection and that sort of thing and the relationship between parish clergy and the bishop has changed.'* However he intimates that the conversation about security is masking what he sees as the essence of the role. Another perspective is that although clergy have *'...got some greater degree of autonomy especially with freehold'* there is *'almost a line management structure'*. This participant suggests that the clergy have got *'a real dislike of calling it that'* but in reality working in the Church of England is very similar to working, as the participant had previously done, in *'large corporations'*. This view is immediately rejected by others in the group as they begin to raise and discuss issues such as freedom and independence. However this participant raises an interesting point, that the clergy could be

refusing to accept a hierarchical reality which may be being incrementally introduced by the removal of freehold for many clergy. Alternatively the participant who suggests that clergy are not acknowledging reality may have a different perspective on work that has been formed by her previous working life. It is evident from the research that the clergy do not have a singular view of the impact of freehold. This questions whether it will be possible to identify a homogeneous psychological contract for clergy. Clergy have expectations of the organisation, hence a psychological contract exists, but it may not be possible to identify sufficient commonality to generalise and assert the current state of the psychological contract for clergy in the Church of England.

Summary - freehold

In the eyes of the clergy interviewed, having the freehold provides:

- The context to carry out their task.
- Freedom
- Protection
- Autonomy
- Security
- Independence from the bishop
- Independence from the parish
- Independence to pursue a prophetic style of ministry

The first concept, the context to carry out their task, describes the clergy's view of the environment: that freehold creates a context that is expressed by the concepts/issues of autonomy, freedom and independence. These are associated with clergy wanting to create their own working role without undue influence from any other party. The remaining concepts, protection and security, are the obverse: the expectation of safeguards that some clergy require in return for an uncertain and challenging working life.

Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997, p.160) describe the psychological contract as a 'deal' between the employee and the employer. The 'deal' is what the employee is prepared to offer the employer in return for the fulfilment of their expectations. For example, an employee will offer loyalty and commitment in return for a stable career structure and career development. The 'deal' between the clergy and Church of England could be a willingness to develop a bespoke working life in the context of a specific and sometimes challenging parish in return for the security of a long term job, consistent salary and protection from legal action. My group interviews partially support this proposition. However some clergy reject half the 'deal'. They would accept the context of autonomy and independence for clergy but do not perceive the Church of England's part of the deal as to provide security and protection as they consider insecurity and lack of protection a requisite of a role which has service as an underlying value.

Analysis of the freehold has identified that it is a concept that informs the clergy's understanding of their working life but it does not enable the identification of a consistent employment relationship and psychological contract between all clergy and the Church of England.

Licence

Bishops '...institute new incumbents, licence clergy and other office holders' (<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/>). The Church of England distinguishes, when defining the role between the institution of incumbents, who have freehold and licensing other clergy.

Permission to work

In the Chapter interviews the term licence is used to denote that the participant does not '*...work for the church.*' but has a licence '*... from the bishop to work at [the name of the Church]*'. It appears to give permission to act in one situation; to work at a particular church or parish. The link between licence and a rejection of employed status appears only once in the group interviews.

However there are other instances in the interview material of clergy rejecting the idea that they are employed. Licence is a form of permission: it confers on the clergy authority to act in a given church or parish and it is granted by the bishop. In this use of licence, the relationship between the bishop and individual clergy seems to be highlighted. The relationship seems to be with the individual, rather than the church as an organisation: permission is from the bishop and not from the organisation. To illustrate this point a participant contrasts the Church of England's approach to another denomination where '*... the congregation offer the licence as it were*'. This denomination's approach contrasts with the Church of England, where the permission is given by a senior clergyman; in some other denominations, for example the United Reformed Church, permission is granted by the congregation, those with whom the clergy are going to work. This suggests that the impetus for the relationship in the Church of England is between the clergy and their bishop not with the congregation; it could be called hierarchical. This is a significant point in terms of the psychological contract. Much of the traditional literature reviewed in chapter 2 defines a psychological contract between an individual and the organisation, represented by the manager. Although I would propose that psychological contracts exist between many more parties than just employees and managers, it is interesting to note that whilst the clergy claim to value autonomy and independence they do acknowledge a hierarchical aspect in their employment relationship.

Vulnerability and service

If a licence is not renewed, permission is withdrawn by the bishop and clergy do not have authority within that church and parish. In the context of clergy leaving their parish, distinction is made by one participant between licence and contract. He suggests that renewal of licence is different from a contract. It is a similar point to the one discussed earlier in the context of freehold by another participant, that priesthood requires sacrifice and vulnerability. The participant's approach is that clergy '*are there to serve not to dominate*'; they should not expect rights and security, the participant suggesting that '*...people who tend to*

get really uptight about their licence tend to be people who are insecure.' Again it is a rejection of employment and perhaps echoes the idea of permission, discussed above in the section on freehold. Contract perhaps is seen to be an employed status and is rejected. The concept of licence is something different and is something that can be given and revoked by an individual bishop.

This theme of revoking a licence was discussed by one of the groups in the study. Examples were raised where an individual's licence had not been renewed even though they were a few years from retirement, leaving the individual who has worked long term for the church '*...nowhere to live, no job and no one to care for you, nowhere to go*'. This participant made no distinction between contract and licence. The terms were used interchangeably. The direct link with a licence from the bishop is not made, it is not clear whether the participant defines the relationship as with the bishop or an organisation. It is seen in the context of what would be perceived, by secular standards, as poor management skills within the Church. The issue appears to be about security for the clergy and their families. This is reinforced by another member of the group who would be happier '*to be paid a lot more and provide my own house, but I can't ever see that happening. I'd be far happier to go on to a licence or to contract. It's not just you it affects it's your whole family there's all these considerations*'. These examples extend the point made in the section on freehold that worries about licence are about insecurity. Insecurity extends from personal insecurity to include wider issues, such as finance and housing. A sense that the clergy are vulnerable is evident. A counter argument to the earlier participant is that vulnerability is part of the nature of service and the licence or contract reflects that ethos.

Licence and contract are often viewed negatively in the research interviews. Within my research sample there is discussion of how non-freeholders may be vulnerable to removal from office. Whilst none of the participants in the group interviews identified any personal experience of this happening, they are aware of the possibility of being removed and of a recent case which has been reported in the media. A participant discusses how the case has been raised

by an MEP in the European Parliament and suggests the cleric should have been able to renew his contract '*despite what the PCC [Parochial Church Council] or the diocese thought of the matter.*' The time specific nature of the contract and its effect on the whole life of the clergy and their family generates this view. There is a sense of lack of rights for clergy in these situations.

Again this contrasts with the earlier idea of service rather than domination and perhaps also with the idea of an ongoing exploration of vocation and trust. It seems to be argued that fixed term licences and contracts are consistent with the tradition of seeking the will of God in an individual's life and are one tool which can be used to enable clergy to evaluate their ministry and the way forward. The negative examples concentrate on practical and fiscal issues. There seem to be two conflicting groups of values about the use of short term licences evident in the research sample; on the one hand, about service, vocation and trust and on the other, the vulnerability of the individual and family.

One participant had an additional take about security: that the use of short term contracts of 5 years encourages the parish to perceive the clergy as lacking in commitment to working in that place. Although different from others' view it raises a number of similar issues, for example commitment, trust and vulnerability.

What seems evident when the term licence is used by participants is that it exposes a number of values and issues. On the one hand there is the desire for security for the family which conflicts with the idea of short term contracts, yet there is also the idea of service which may conflict with the notion of security. It is unclear what the relationships are between clergy, bishops and parishes when clergy are licensed as opposed to having freehold and to what extent the use of licences supports different parties. From the research interviews different participants have suggested that the licence/contract gives greater influence and power to the bishop or the parish, yet others do not see this as detrimental to the clergy.

Some writers on the psychological contract (Smithson and Lewis, 2000) identify that short term contracts often result in a lack of commitment from employees. My Chapter interviews present a less clear cut picture. There is no evidence that even when poor management is identified there is weaker commitment. The view that vulnerability and insecurity is congruent with the role of clergy undermines the automatic assumption of a link between short term contracts and commitment expounded by the psychological contract literature. The clergy's values and their commitment to them may shelter them from the impact on their working lives of perceived mismanagement from the organisation. If this argument is accurate, the accepted view of the psychological contract and its value in organisational relations is threatened, a point to which I return to when discussing the individual interviews.

Summary – licence

The participants in the study associate the term licence with the following:

- The bishop giving permission to work in a particular situation
- The potential for insecurity
- The creating of a context in which insecurity is accepted as being consistent with the idea of service

Issues of insecurity and service appear in the analysis of both licence and freehold. The participants in the group interviews share common definitions of both licence and freehold but do not share a common perception of their impact on their working lives.

In the interviews participants discuss their relationship with the regional level of the Church of England; the *diocese*. In the following section I will explore participants' perceptions of this relationship.

Diocese

There are 44 dioceses in the Church of England. It is a territorial unit of administration, led by a bishop. The diocese is subdivided into parishes that are grouped into rural [or area] deaneries and arch deaconries (Cross and Livingstone, 2005).

Participants' understandings of diocese

In my interviews participants used the term diocese in a variety of ways. The term is used in a geographical sense to indicate the region in which the clergy are now working or have previously worked, for example *I know we had the discussion down in [name of] diocese. Down there we had a system of what we called responsibility points...*

Diocese is also used to refer to the senior staff, the bishops and archdeacons. A participant has a post to fill and has identified the requirements for the job holder only then to be informed that the 'diocese' has a different perspective. *'I think as [name of participant] pointed out very clearly that's actually adversarial in its way because you've already gone down the line of sorting out what you might need and now the diocese is saying ah yes well you might want that, but we want that, wouldn't it be a lot better if the diocese told us the first time that this is a post that might be possibly re-thought if the right person comes forward'*. The term adversarial is used to describe the relationship between clergy and diocese. It suggests disagreement and opposition. The diocese and clergy are opponents with perhaps differing agendas and perspectives.

Diocese is used in a third way by participating clergy when referring to those who work for the diocese in a variety of posts, who may act as a resource for clergy. Here a participant suggests how the clergy have access to them: *'but you can use the good offices of diocesan personnel as much as you want to and some people are used for their expertise more than others; again it depends'*. The clergy have open access to all resources but choose whose

expertise to use. How and why particular individuals are used is not explored. Perhaps clergy only draw on expertise from the diocese when they are unable to demonstrate that expertise themselves. If this is the case the diocesan personnel would act in an internal consultancy role.

A fourth perspective is that those who are members of the Church of England make up the diocese, in other words it is a collection of people. This is articulated by a participant discussing his parishioners' recent participation in a diocesan conference '*... people who went to the diocesan conference came back full of, it's not them who are the diocese, we are the diocese and I would wholeheartedly endorse that, but just saying they are the diocese somebody remote making a decision that happens to be unpopular with the person making the statement.*' There are tensions in this statement. The participant recognises what the diocese should be, an embodiment of the members of the Church of England in an area, but also identifies them as a remote decision making body. Simultaneously the diocese is a large group of both lay people and clergy and a small group of powerful decision makers.

Parties to the psychological contract - the management?

Clergy identify the senior staff and the diocese as undertaking roles that in many organisations would be viewed as management roles. They are seen as a party to the psychological contract. The senior staff meet with clergy to undertake pastoral review of ministry. Clergy associate pastoral review with management. When asked 'do you feel managed' they initially responded by referring to pastoral review, '*and the bottom line is they want to know how we are doing and they will share that with the other senior clergy and see ways in which we can develop like in our situation or into the future....*'. They are uncertain about the extent to which this is management. A participant asks '*is it more of a line manager or is it more of a consultancy or a bit of both*'. Those with former careers acknowledge that appraisal was a management function, '*when I was in retailing it was certainly line management*', but are uncertain what exactly the relationship is now. The emphasis during pastoral review

appears to be on development, both in the current role and in future positions. The review is between a member of the senior staff and the individual clergy. It is identified as management but with a suggestion that the relationship is different from in other organisations; this difference may be about power within the relationship and to what extent power is distributed within the relationship (French and Raven, 1959).

The debate about the status of the pastoral review of ministry highlights the problems of defining the relationship between the clergy and the diocese. When searching to define the relationship, clergy relate pastoral review of ministry to their experience of work outside the Church. They find that there is not an exact correlation, *'yeah if you didn't do what your line manager said you could be jettisoned but that's not true within the church is it'*, but seem unable to precisely pinpoint and label the relationship between clergy and diocese. The relationship between the senior staff and the clergy is discussed in all interviews in different contexts. Public perception of the relationship between clergy and bishop is discussed. The bishop is often seen as if in a simplistic hierarchical role, *'... people cannot understand why we are not hauled over the coals or moved from our job by a chief executive who it happens is the bishop'*. Their role is perceived by non-clergy as draconian with direct power over the deployment and work of clergy, *'the diocese or the bishop someone just moves you around we're like sort of pawns...'* The participant goes on to comment *'...and I have to say to them it is actually very different from that'*. The relationship in some aspects appears to be different from the common perception. For instance a participant discusses a complaint about booking a marriage reported to the bishop to which the bishop's response was *'I have no jurisdiction in this matter the only thing you can do is to continue the conversation with [the incumbent]'*. The bishop has no legal or managerial authority to intervene. Individual clergy, it seems, are free to make their own decisions. However in the same interview a participant suggests that *'in a vague way do we not have a sort of line manager? It may not be formally set up though the Archdeacon and bishops are effectively line managers'*.

Managed or independent?

Diocese as a decision making group was among clergy definitions noted earlier. Both the diocese as influential decision maker and the diocese as a body without power are evident in the interview material. Both these positions appear to represent reality for the clergy. They are confident that they are independent from the diocese on the one hand but on the other acknowledge that the diocese has influence and power.

One possibility would be to link the possession of freehold to the perception of freedom from episcopal influence. Although the participant who discusses the bishop's lack of jurisdiction is a freeholder and links freehold and independence later in the interview, other non freeholders are still confident of their independent status and do not recognise the relationship between bishops and clergy as having a managerial aspect. The exact relationship between clergy and diocese is complex and the clergy themselves do not seem to share a common understanding.

The lack of common understanding is exemplified in one of the interviews. The participant suggests: *'that to some extent ... how we operate is constrained by the bishop. We may be asked to account for something to the archdeacon, yeah there is a hierarchy it isn't in many ways hugely different from a lot of large companies. We've got some greater degree of autonomy especially with freehold but there is almost a line management structure'*. This participant recognises the autonomy but still views the relationship as a line management structure. She goes on to say *'...and I know the church has got a sort you know of real dislike of calling it that, but I think it works as it did as I worked in large corporations. Really there's not a lot of difference'*. She suggests that the clergy are not recognising reality, which is that they are managed by the bishop but refuse to acknowledge it and claim independence. However this is refuted by other members of the group, who suggest that clergy are not accountable to anyone, they *'are answerable to God rather than to the bishop.'* The reason given for lack of accountability is *'...because we don't actually see the bishop*

that often to check up what we are doing'. From this perspective clergy do not feel managed, not because there is no hierarchy, but because they do not have regular contact with the 'manager'. They appear to work independently and often in isolation. This view is supported by a participant in a different Chapter commenting that *'so at the end of the day if you put me into a nasty corner I will actually tell you I am actually accountable to the bishop in which ever way he believes is the correct way for me to be accountable to him for what I actually do, because I'm only there on his sort of say so...'*. This participant links accountability with the power of appointing clergy. Because the bishop licenses him in the role, he is accountable to him. The day to day remoteness of clergy from the senior staff contributes to some clergy's perception that they are not accountable. (I will return to explore the autonomy and isolation of clergy in the individual interviews). The views of this participant and the use of pastoral review are a counter argument to this, or an indicator of partnership and balance in which both parties have rights and powers.

The discussion about whether the clergy are line managed develops in the interviews into a wider discussion of management. For one participant the issues about *'how we relate to the hierarchy and who we are working for...'* is about making sure *'...that we do feel valued for what we do and supported and appreciated and all of that stuff.'* He intimates that there is change in attitude towards the clergy which he associates with managerialism and *'...it's going to end up a bit more like feeling well we don't really matter when we don't fit any more, and that's a kind of managerial bit which is about seeing this is a problem which they've got to solve rather than these are resources that they've got to value and treasure'*.

There is an indication that the relationship is changing from a caring relationship between bishop and clergy to a managerial one based on the management of resources. That change appears to be resented by the clergy in this case. Management, it seems, is not viewed by this participant as an appropriate approach in the Church.

Other clergy take a different perspective. They suggest that in the Church there are '*...some appalling examples of poor management which really wouldn't be tolerated in secular organisations where people had been hurt and let down*'. Management is not rejected here, it is expected: the issue is the lack of expertise displayed within the Church. Although one participant rejects management and the second appears to embrace it, both are focused on emotions. The first participant mentioned that senior staff need to '*value and treasure*' clergy and the second participant indicated that people have been '*hurt and let down*'. Their concern is for the well-being and care of the clergy. The difference between the participants is that one would see a managerial approach as a solution to the problem rather than the cause of it.

The interviews so far have produced a rich and complex picture; despite the evidence of a hierarchical relationship the clergy do not perceive the relationship to be based on accountability. Although some clergy do not expect, nor would they welcome, any day to day sense of management, they do expect the senior staff to offer pastoral care. Management, to some clergy, cannot be caring: pastoral care seems to be defined as different from management; it appears as a closer, perhaps more personal relationship. Management has negative connotations for some. There is complexity here; clergy value independence, they do not want to be managed on a day to day basis, but they expect to be '*valued and treasured*'. There is no discussion of how this is to be achieved, or whether any of them have experienced an approach which values clergy while simultaneously it does not manage them.

Human resources matters

An area in which the diocese's role is acknowledged is the appointment and licensing of clergy. The Church of England has a system of patronage in parishes. A number of different individuals and organisations have the right to be involved in the appointment of parish clergy. In the diocese of the interview participants the patrons include to name a few, the Dean and Chapter of [name

of Cathedral], the Lord Chancellor, the Master of Corpus Christi College Cambridge and the Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury.

Patronage allows the recognised patrons to present to the bishop the name of a new incumbent. The bishop then grants a licence to that person to officiate in the role. In some cases the bishop is the patron, or shares the patronage with a number of individuals or organisations. There are some parishes where the bishop is not one of the patrons, though he can still refuse to license the individual to work in his diocese.

The clergy recognise the bishop's role in both the appointment and licensing of clergy. Clergy discuss anecdotal evidence of instances where a clergy licence has been withdrawn or not extended, often in the context of '*appalling examples of poor management where licences have been revoked*'. Revoking a licence ends a person's role in a particular parish: they are without a position and need to seek a different role. The clergy do not always seem clear about the exact power of the bishop in these situations. A Church Army officer comments that his licence ends with the words '*the bishop's discretion*'. Similarly a licence is in force '*at the bishop's pleasure*'. In these circumstances the wording of the licence depicts the bishop as having ultimate and arbitrary power over the continuation of the licence. There is uncertainty about how this is implemented. The participant whose licence states that he has a role at the *bishop's discretion* suggests that '*what that means is anybody's guess*'. The second participant muses on how to keep the bishop happy by perhaps sending him '*a bottle of gin occasionally*'. Neither seems perturbed by the situation or disadvantaged personally.

The potential vulnerability of the non-freeholder seems to contrast with the lack of power of bishops to intervene when clergy possess freehold. The power relationship between bishop and clergy appears polarised and dependent on the status of the clergyperson. The bishop appears to have total power to end a licence with licence holders, but no power with a freeholder. This is particularly evident when the period of office of licence holders is reached. Freeholders

have no fixed term, apart from retirement age. The clergy discuss the end of contract time as a significant moment and recognise the power of the bishop in this situation. It is unclear from the interviews whether this inequality of power between bishop and clergy exists during the licence period since there are no examples in my study of clergy clearly expressing such a view. This could indicate that freeholders and licence holders are viewed equally, or at least treated equally, during their time in post. Clergy articulate inequity in the situation of freeholder and licence holder only at the end of a term of a licence. Licence holders did not experience any more day to day management by the diocese than freeholders, nor experience different approaches to management. One participant suggests that as they *'don't take too much notice of what we do on a day to day basis, really in a sense we are answerable to God rather than to the bishop because we don't actually see the bishop that often to check up what we are doing'*.

What consequence the exercise of power to terminate posts has on the psychological contract is not clear. Although there are no personal examples of having a licence revoked, clergy in the study recognise that *'certainly issues concerning freehold do concern many of our colleagues'* and there are indications that some clergy do feel uneasy and insecure when on a licence and some felt the need of the protection of a union. A union is seen as a vehicle *'to protect the freedom and flexibility that is necessary'* to enable clergy to meet the requirements of an individual parish. Unions traditionally represent their members both individually and collectively to management; they act as an intermediary. The participant discussing union membership cites the intervention of a union as *'unfortunate'* but necessary. It is not discussed in any detail in any interviews, although there are clergy who are union members in two of the groups.

Summary – diocese

There is diversity of understanding exhibited in the interviews about the relationship between the diocese and its clergy that requires exploration and

clarification in further research. The Church of England in the working lifetime of many of the clergy has undergone significant change, particularly in financial management. It is in this changing context that the clergy have explored their current understanding of their relationship with the diocese, contrasting it, perhaps, with the approach in operation when they were first ordained. In terms of the issues considered important in the literature on the psychological contract which I summarised at the beginning of this chapter and which informed my questioning of clergy, there is no clear confirmation or refutation of the psychological contract as set out in the literature. Clergy articulate a variety of sometimes inconsistent or conflicting views about issues such as the possession of freehold. Analysis of the theme 'diocese' questions whether a coherent and consistent psychological contract can be assembled for the clergy. The psychological contract may be individual to each cleric. The notion of a psychological contract that is individual to each person within an organisation questions the management literature on the psychological contract (set out in chapter 2) which suggests that it can be used to manage the relationship between the organisation and employees.

Summary

This section will identify the main issues arising from analysis of themes stemming from the psychological contract literature covered in this chapter and consider how these issues could best be explored in my second round of interviews. I will discuss how these issues informed my thinking about the next stage of information gathering.

The Chapter interviews were opportunities for debate and discussion. During the interviews there was no sense of conflict, rather more of a working through of the issues. Although there has been extended debate the clergy, in my interviews, present their relationship with the diocese, their understanding of the impact of possessing the freehold or licence and the expectations upon them with an overriding sense of contradiction and confusion:

- They hold contradictory views on how they should be managed. Some would value more active management, whereas others would prefer to have management replaced with pastoral care
- There is no single consistent view on the impact of possessing the freehold. Freehold is generally identified as providing the context of independence, protection and security
- Some clergy value the security, others see security as inconsistent with Priesthood
- Clergy identify that there have been changes to working in the Church of England. Externally this includes changes in society and its relationship with the Church. In some parishes parishioners have traditional expectations of clergy that they are unwilling to match
- In other situations the shift from traditional expectations to a customer driven culture is also rejected by the clergy as inappropriate.
- Within the Church they perceive a number of changes. There is a greater focus on financial issues and the clergy feel a greater pressure upon them in this respect
- The lay members of the Church have a greater influence on the appointment of clergy and the day to day running of the Church than in the past

These findings demonstrate that although the clergy in my sample are very aware of the changing context in which they work, they have not identified consistently how to define their role in that context. The outcome of the debate is a feeling of uncertainty about their current role and how to define and carry it out.

The clergy are uncertain:

- Whether the community they work within is interested in or accepting of their role
- About how to respond to a customer driven culture and society where people expect individual expectations to be addressed

- About the impact of a financially driven approach on them and their congregations
- About the power relationships between them and their congregations
- About defining their role as a manager
- What expectations the diocese has of them
- Which of the expectations parishioners and the community have of them are appropriate
- About the value of freehold in shaping and carrying out their role

Implications for second round interviews

The psychological contract literature set out in chapter 2 does not provide a straightforward framework to explain these contradictions and uncertainties. In the literature the psychological contract is viewed in a number of ways. Herriot and Pemberton (1996) discuss the new deal/old deal idea to explore the changing perception of work. The old deal is a contract based on loyalty and a relational contract, whereas in the new deal employees have replaced loyalty to organisations with a transactional contract, where high reward is matched to high short term commitment. There is no evidence that clergy have embraced the new deal. The multi-faceted psychological contract as discussed by Rousseau (2003) is more apt, providing the framework for a participant to hold psychological contracts with numerous parties. It offers some help in explaining the contradictions and uncertainty. However the contradictions and uncertainties articulated in the interviews point to each individual priest having a unique psychological contract. This raises questions about the value of the concept of the psychological contract in the Church of England and in other not for profit organisations. In the management literature the psychological contract is presented as a concept that can be managed and unified by the organisation. The evidence from my interviews with clergy does not support this.

The clergy interviewed identify that the Church of England is in a state of change as the result of external and internal factors. The unclear psychological

contract could be partly a result of the impact of this change and the subsequent renegotiation of the contract by the clergy.

At the outset of the research I identified freehold, licence and the anomalous employment conditions experienced by the clergy as important areas for exploration and a potential framework for exploring and explaining the employment relationship between the Church of England and the clergy. At the conclusion of the analysis of the Chapter interviews, freehold, licence and the anomalous employment conditions have been explored. They are still relevant to exploring the employment relationship but their role in this relationship is uncertain. Furthermore there are other issues, such as the financial situation and Church members' and the community's changing expectations, which appear to be more significant to the clergy in identifying their employment relationship and role. The key point here is that the clergy, within their discussions in the interviews, introduced and discussed other topics that were of consequence to them in understanding the relationship between them, the diocese and their communities and parishioners.

The next step in the research process focused on those issues raised by the clergy in the first round of group interviews. These issues were explored with individuals rather than groups. By carrying out individual interviews I intended to explore two areas: the individual's working life and their employment relationship with the Church of England. By exploring the individual's working life, further in-depth material would be obtained about the expectations upon them and how they define and carry out their role. The envisaged outcomes were:

- Documentation of the roles clergy undertake in the twenty-first century
- A review of the impact of changing conditions in society and the Church on the role of the clergy

In addition the literature discussed in chapter 2 suggests that the psychological contract is a work in progress from three perspectives:

- It is inconclusively defined in the existing academic literature
- It is insufficiently explored in organisations and settings outside the business environment
- It is unexplored in the context of my own research, the clergy

Consequently there will be further consideration of the value of the psychological contract when explaining the employment relationship between clergy and the Church of England.

Following the analysis of the group interviews I de-registered for over a year as I suffered a period of ill-health. On my return my original first supervisor was taken ill and was unavailable. Before re-registering and returning to the research I reflected on the condition of the project. By the time I registered again it was evident to me that the period of de-registration was a 'watershed' in the research journey. The next chapter explores the post-watershed methodological journey.

CHAPTER 5

EXPLORING WORKING LIVES

Analysing the three Chapter interviews and confronting the dilemma as to whether it was viable to continue to see the 'psychological contract' as a useful frame for my research led me towards a 'working lives' approach for the next phase. It was not, at this stage, fully explored, but an embryonic idea and an opportunity to explore individuals' experiences. In chapter 3 I noted that the adoption of a working lives approach would liberate the research from the confines of the existing literature on the psychological contract. The term working lives has been associated with the work of writers such as Terkel and Blythe, whom Goodson (2001, p.132) terms 'journalists-cum-sociologists'. Goodson's remarks appear scathing, hinting that the method is not academically credible. This view would be unfair to Goodson whose aim is to explore life history and affirm its value to sociologists. Nevertheless it is essential before firmly committing to a change in focus that it is fully explored and a way forward is identified that is congruent with the context of this research project.

This chapter explores working lives in the context of my research and will discuss both the options I explored and the choices made. My research throughout is conducted in the interpretivist paradigm. The change to a working lives approach did not change the paradigm but enabled me to explore approaches such as narrative inquiry which, although I do not adopt fully, were used to inform the development of my approach to the individual interviews. It discusses the influences of narrative on my interviews, my approach to analysis and frameworks for robust qualitative research. It concludes with a discussion of the ethical issues created by my research.

Working lives and life history methods

Initial research into working lives methods identified such an approach as part of the life history method employed by social scientists. Although I am not a sociologist research should not be confined by boundaries of discipline. However, such boundaries should not be ignored as they provide the framework to understand the approach of a specific discipline. Nevertheless I would be blinkered if I was unable to see beyond the confines of my own discipline's norms of undertaking research. Boundaries should be acknowledged as being real. The reason for crossing them and drawing upon them should be explored and a rationale for the adoption of a multidisciplinary approach should be explicitly identified. I do this in the following paragraphs.

Dollard (1949, p.4) designates life histories as in-depth 'detailed studies of the lives of individuals' while Frank (1979, p.70) points out that they require '...a collaboration involving the consciousness of the investigator as the subject'. These two authors highlight fundamental attributes of the life history method. It is collaboration, a work of more than one person: researcher and participant work together, with the participant regarded as an active peer. It does not necessarily seek to investigate large numbers of individuals with similar experiences but is the '... valid articulation of individual and collective experience' (Errante, 2000, p.16). The collaborative approach and individual nature of a life history has appeal for this project seeking to explore the working lives of clergy. However the term life history does not accord precisely with the aims and context of my research. The aim is not to record a history, it is not an account of an entire career. Terkel in *Working* (1972) does not narrate the entire history of individual workers. His workers discuss both historical and contemporary stories. In the sociological tradition life history denotes a more biographical and historical approach. My work is focused on exploring contemporary working lives. Although life history has appeal and merit for this research it is not an entirely satisfactory approach.

Exploring narrative research

Oral and life history are located in a wider methodological tradition. Casey (1995, p.211) uses the term narrative research as an ‘... overarching category for a variety of contemporary research practices’. She refers to a range of practices, including life writing, personal narratives, oral and life history. Her work is part of a body of literature first published in the 1980s that continues to explore the value of narrative based research (Massey; 1987; Anderson, 1989; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Gilbert, 1994; Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Errante, 2000; Goodson, 2001; Rogan and de Kock, 2005). She describes narrative research as interdisciplinary and drawn on by research based in the ‘professions’ such as education, social work, law and medicine. She does not include business in the list. The link between all the research practices is (1995, p.212) ‘... an interest in the way that human beings make meaning through language’.

Although I do not locate my interviews in the constructionist tradition (Silverman, 2006) and do not undertake an in-depth analysis of language, narrative inquiry has informed my research. Casey explores (1995) the alignment of the rise in the use of narrative with a prevailing interest and preoccupation with self, but rejects the growth of narrative research as a simple response to narcissism. A more compelling reason to engage in narrative research, according to Casey, is to re-introduce human agency. It documents the creative ability of ordinary people and (1995, p.216) ‘... is a way to put shards of experience together, to (re)construct identity, community and tradition’. It is this element of narrative approaches that fits my research subject. I am concerned with understanding my participants’ working lives in the context of the psychological contract.

Webster and Mertova (2007) cite Connelly and Clandinin (1990) as first using the term ‘narrative inquiry’ to describe an approach to teacher education based on personal story telling. Narrative inquiry entails the analysis and criticism of stories we ‘... tell, hear and read in the course of work’. Connelly and Clandinin

(1990) consider that humans are story telling organisms and lead both socially and individually storied lives. By eliciting stories we are able to understand how individuals experience the world. Webster and Mertova (2007) suggest that stories are a road into human consciousness and a rich framework through which researchers can investigate an individual's experience of the world. Stories are the way people make sense of their lives (Webster and Mertova 2007). They do not exist in isolation but are shaped, restructured and retold in the light of events. To capture the human experience it is appropriate to listen to the stories of individuals. Although I did not intentionally use a narrative framework in the initial group interviews there are, nevertheless, numerous examples of clergy recounting stories to the group. Clergy tell stories from their working experience: stories of encounters with parishioners, with the senior staff and with members of the community that illustrate how they experience, interpret and give meaning to their working lives. Similarly my individual interviews do not entirely focus on story-telling. However the change to working lives exposed me to alternative approaches and different traditions which I drew on to inform my understanding of data collection.

The value of giving a voice

Bruner and Amsterdam (2000) claim that the power of narrative accounts is based in its peculiarity: 'people's non-scientific explanations and interpretations of life events are grounded in an attempt to establish a connection between the exceptional and the ordinary'. Clandinin and Connelly (1998) argue that it gives voice to people whose lives are often not recorded. For example Rowlinson and Procter (1999) contend that the value of narrative approaches to business history research is that it gives voice to employees whose experiences are often not recorded in the official documentation of a company. Narrative provides an opportunity to explore the lives of those who contribute significantly to organisations, often at lower levels. Often research is carried out with employees at different levels in organisations but only with the intention of developing theoretical concepts. In contrast narrative inquiry provides a

different perspective; it does not treat employees as a passive research focus, but allows them to record their contribution to the organisation's work thereby disrupting the normal assumptions of what is known by intellectuals (Goodson, 2001). Bell (2005), discussing the value of narrative in exploring chaplains' views on liberation theology, argues that using narrative approaches such as oral history gives voice to alternative and marginalized stories. These stories often challenge the established accounts based on the voice of the researcher.

Webster and Mertova (2007) note that narrative approaches provide an opportunity to engage not with a rendition of human life but with how an individual perceives life. Goodson (2001) comments that it is not concerned with objectivity or search for coherence. It is 'an avenue into human consciousness' (Webster and Mertova, 2007) and about the meaning individuals give to incidents they are involved in. It allows the researcher to probe the 'lived realities of human actors' (Dilorio, 1982; in Anderson, 1989, p.252) and get to the core of the person (Goodson, 2001). It is eclectic by nature, with participants selecting what they see as appropriate to recount. It is the element of accessing 'human consciousness' that has direct relevance to my research as I seek to understand the 'lived reality' of the working lives of the clergy.

The voice of the clergy

Even in an increasingly secularised contemporary society the clergy of the Church of England could not be described, using Rowlinson and Procter's (1999) terms, as marginalized or oppressed. The position of the Church of England as the established church still provides a platform in the media for the views of clergy to be presented. The opinions of senior church figures such as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York are regularly presented and debated. However Carr (1992) identifies within the Church of England two separate establishments. He suggests that the Church has both a 'high' and 'earthed' aspect. The link between Church and State, for example the monarch as supreme governor of the Church and bishops sitting in the House of Lords is

identified as the 'high' aspect of the structure. The 'earthed' aspect is represented by the parish system. Although the 'high' aspect of the Church is regularly represented in the media and those who represent this aspect of the Church, such as the Archbishops, are frequently interviewed, the 'earthed' aspect, those who work in the parish system, is not so widely represented or researched. My research focuses specifically on clergy who work in the parish system. 'Earthed' is an appropriate description for those who participated in the interviews. They are 'grounded' in the day-to-day work of a priest: their experience is ordinary and local. The working lives of contemporary, ordinary, 'earthed' clergy are not the lives 'explored' in most discussions of the Church of England. Terkel's (1972) aim was to explore the working lives of ordinary workers, allowing them, as he stated in the full title of *Working*, to 'talk about what they do all day and how they feel about it'. Similarly my research concentrates on ordinary workers, giving them 'voice' to discuss what they do, how they feel about their working lives and with whom they feel they have a psychological contract. My research is not as open ended as Terkel's as my agenda included exploring the psychological contract, nevertheless within this boundary clergy were free to reflect as they considered appropriate.

Other voices

Voice is a common concern in discussion of qualitative research. Hanrahan and Cooper (2005) observe that there are advantages in not reporting research as though it is a single paradigmatic structure reported by a single voice. The shared nature of research is emphasised in which the voice of both the researcher and the participants should be heard. In presenting a thesis where I have identified my own voice this point is key. The reader does not just access the author's results, analysis and conclusions. They directly access the participants' views as well.

Peshkin (1988) identifies more than one voice for the researcher alone. The researcher, when conducting fieldwork brings two voices: the 'human self', the person we are in everyday situation and the 'researcher self'. My own situation is more complex than Peshkin suggests. I can discern at least two, and more likely four voices; my human self, researcher self, academic self and clergy spouse self.

My human self and my researcher self are intertwined. In chapter 3 I explored the fusion between my work as an academic and my life. In relation to the interview participants I called myself as a researcher a Conversant Associate. My 'human self' and my 'researcher self' are closely associated. Although I went to the first round of interviews considering I was presenting my 'researcher self', in reality it was my 'human self' or perhaps my 'clergy spouse self' that enabled access to the group. The 'researcher self', tells the 'story' of the research and the analysis. The 'academic self' tells the story from the Business and HRM perspective. The 'human self' tells the 'story' of the interaction between the participants and me in the research. The 'clergy spouse self', provides me with sufficient knowledge and experience to access the 'world' of the clergy while not fully being a member of the group.

At the beginning of my research, without labelling them formally, I recognised and accepted that I could draw on a number of different 'voices'. I accepted the 'researcher and academic self' as part of the initial design of the project. The 'clergy spouse self' became apparent as part of the 'human self' when analysing the first round of interviews. I viewed the 'clergy spouse self' as potentially problematic in a research design still dominated by what I perceived as traditional methods. However, drawing on the traditions of narrative research provides a rationale for giving each aspect of 'self' a voice that can be articulated and recognised as making diverse contributions to the research process.

Undertaking qualitative interviews

The next section outlines my approach to the conduct and analysis of the individual interviews.

Silverman (2006) identifies three types of individual interviews:

- Structured
- Semi-structured
- Open-ended

Silverman criticises qualitative researchers for their unquestioning use of open-ended interviews. He cites Bryne, who states that 'open ended interviews with flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretation of events, understandings, experiences and opinions' (in Silverman, 2006, p.114). For Silverman the criticism revolves around the understanding of 'better access'. He suggests that the favourability of open-ended interviews is only valid when compared to the use of the survey techniques favoured in the positivist tradition and qualitative researchers ought to consider a wider range of interview strategies.

My original research designed envisaged carrying out interviews in a semi-structured approach. At the outset of my research I was wholly concentrating on the psychological contract. Therefore semi-structured interviews and pre-determined themes from the literature were entirely appropriate. Whilst still exploring the psychological contract I moved to understanding my research as exploring the working lives of participants through the lens of the psychological contract. This subtle change of emphasis required a similar response in the approach to interviewing.

I drew from the traditions of narrative inquiry in terms of understanding the value of life history and voice in qualitative research and considered embracing

wholeheartedly a narrative inquiry approach. This would have enabled me to record working lives in great detail. However, despite the focus on working lives I did not abandon the psychological contract as a concept that underpinned my research. Conducting semi-structured interviews using the themes of the literature would have firmly placed the psychological contract at the forefront of my interviews. However, I needed to balance the influences of working lives and the psychological contract; for this reason, in a continuum describing the range between semi-structured and open-ended interviews, I would place my interviews in the open-ended section of the range. As I discuss in chapter 7 my interviews used the themes from the group interviews and literature as a starting point but allowed each participant to explore what they perceived to be important in their working lives. Themes are explored in more detail in the next section and in chapter 7.

Interview themes

My open-ended interviews explore the working lives of clergy within the framework of the psychological contract. The framework is loose; it guides rather than constrains the interviews. It enables the interviews to focus on a specific aspect of the participants' working life; for example the expectations upon them. The group interviews identified the following themes that require further investigation. They are issues that were raised within the group situations, but are often personal and therefore need investigation in a one-to-one interview rather than in a group. The themes are outlined below as statements. The clergy:

- Perceive sacrifice and vulnerability as central to an understanding of priesthood
- Value the autonomous nature of their role
- Value and expect the pastoral support of senior staff
- Identify a substantial period of change in the Church of England, its relationship to society and its financial stability

- Perceive a range of expectations upon them from parishioners and other community members
- Are not predominantly concerned about work status and security

The individual interviews focus on these statements. They are not presented in statement form to suggest that they are to be tested, but as a guide to help me introduce themes to the individual participants. The statements are headings for the interview guide and signposts to enable the participants to understand the area to be explored. The interviews, in common with other qualitative research, collected accounts relating to specific themes. This is not a return to deductive research but an approach that is consistent with the evolutionary nature of my project. The initial group interviews identified themes, themes that resonated with and appeared common to members of the group. They were worthy of discussion by interaction with other members of the group, they were of interest to all the participants. The next round of interviews seeks to discuss these themes. Participants are asked for examples and illustrations from their work. These stories enable participants to reveal how the themes are evidenced in day-to-day work.

Coding and presenting my research

Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.27) suggest that ‘important analytical work lies in establishing and thinking about links between codes, data categories and concepts’. They refer to the work of Miles and Huberman (1994, in Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p.27) who suggest that coding allows the researcher to ‘identify meaningful data and set the stage for interpreting and drawing conclusions’.

In analysing my material I used two approaches to coding. I coded the interviews using the themes that I considered need further investigation from the Chapter interviews and literature (see Figure 7.1). The analysis of these themes is discussed in chapters 7, 8 and 9. I then coded the emergent themes from the individual interviews. The analysis of these themes is explored in chapter 10.

Thomas (2009, p.198) suggests that 'the basic analytical method of the interpretative researcher is constant comparison' and from applying this method a researcher 'emerges with themes that summarise or capture the content of your data'. I used this approach with network analysis (Thomas 2009) to allow me to explore how the participants understood their working lives.

Once analysed, findings have to be presented to the reader. Qualitative research can be presented in many ways. Frank (1979, p.76), early in the literature on narrative approaches, comments that when no analysis is attached to the text then the material is presented to be understood on its own terms. He suggests that this approach is only relevant in life histories when in the '...natural attitude of readers towards biography the reader already has a sense of how to understand another person'. In most cases the reader needs further information: there needs to be evaluation and interpretation. In this situation the voice of the researcher sits above the text (Czarniawska, 1998). Watson (2006) suggests that researchers need to provide 'thick' description (Geertz 1973) when presenting narrative. The reader requires the narrative to detail context and characters. In an article investigating voice and silence in a rural construction company Fletcher and Watson (2007) present the narrative interspersed with a commentary, with final analysis in the context of theoretical constructs at the end of the article. Vasquez (2007) uses a similar technique. She introduced narrative with 'thick' description of the context of the narrative and the character, to give the reader signposts to access the narrative data. This is followed by a short section of narrative, followed by analysis and commentary. Although I stepped away from wholeheartedly embracing narrative inquiry my approach to the presentation of my findings was informed by the traditions of narrative and I provided a description of the participants and context of the interview.

Thomas (2009) comments that it is nonsense in the presentation of interpretative research to separate data gathering from analysis. Research in

the applied social science, he suggests, is messy and involves 'a knotty intertwining of ideas about ideas, facts and person' (Thomas, 2009, p.227). My research in chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 intertwines the findings, analysis and discussion. I do not firstly present findings and then provide a discussion: the analysis being juxtaposed closely with the material on which it is based provides the readers with a direct connection with the material. The readers can verify for themselves the source of the comments and in Huberman's (1995) terms have an opportunity to confirm the honesty of the analysis. Consequently, chapters 7, 8 and 9 and 10 present the reader with a narrative; they are not left to undertake the interpretation and draw their own conclusions. A pen portrait of each participant is presented early in chapter 7. Throughout the four chapters analysis is juxtaposed with excerpts from the interviews to enable the reader to understand the origins and grounding of the analysis and the basis for evaluation and interpretation.

Frameworks for robust qualitative research

Massey (1987) suggests that when comparing qualitative and quantitative research, one's strengths is the other's weakness. Quantitative methods produce reliable data for statistical analysis and generalisation but in doing this lose, '... historical depth, richness of context and the intuitive appeal of real life' Massey (1987, p.1504). Rist (in Anderson 1989, p.250) goes further, to argue that researchers should break out of the 'conceptual cul-de-sac of quantitative methods'. Thomas (2009, p.83) suggests that positioning qualitative research against quantitative research is 'unwelcome opposition'.

Those familiar with and supportive of qualitative approaches do not deny its weakness in terms of the traditional interpretations of validity and reliability and argue that such constructs have to be redefined for their type of research. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) urge researchers not to 'squeeze' the language of narrative into a language created for other types and forms of research. Much of the criticism of qualitative research is bound up in this issue. Those associated with qualitative research have felt the need to defend the approach

in terms of its capacity to provide valid and reliable research findings that can be generalised (Baxter and Eyles 1997). Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p.7) firmly refute the need to engage with such issues, echoing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) assertion that generalisation '... should be given up as a goal of inquiry'.

Webster and Mertova (2007, p.4) claim that the purpose is not to '... produce conclusions of certainty but aims for its findings to be 'well grounded' and 'supportable'. They suggest that this is a departure from quantitative methods that have a narrow concept of validity and reliability, depending on formal systems and empirical rigour. Silverman (2000, p.121) concurs, suggesting that it is '... better to celebrate the particularity of your data'. Trustworthiness is a key theme for authors to ensure that findings are dependable. Polkinghorne, (1988); Huberman, (1995); and Bruner and Amsterdam; (2000, p.30) develop further understandings of ensuring qualitative research is robust and claim that the material '... will be true enough if it rings true'. Those advocating such approaches do not deny the need to develop criteria to judge the soundness of the data, but vigorously defend the independence of qualitative research as a separate research tradition from quantitative methods, which should not be judged by the same criteria. It does not aim to create 'conclusive knowledge' (Mello, 2002, p.232) but is engaged in exploring personal experience. It probes the '...lived reality of human actors' in order to generate insights and seek understanding and is interested in the way individuals '... narrate their lives, not how they should' (Dilorio 1982, in Anderson, 1989, p.252).

Baxter and Eyles (1997), writing about undertaking qualitative research in social geography and developing rigour in interview analysis, criticise qualitative researchers for concentrating more on what criteria should not be used to evaluate their work; (i.e. criteria associated with quantitative research) than developing an appropriate framework to evaluate their own approach. They consider Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework, based on four criteria - credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability - an appropriate model for qualitative research.

Credibility, or the authentic representation of experience, can be enhanced by using some of a range of strategies and practices such as persistent observation, purposeful sampling, member checking and peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). For research to be considered credible the researcher must represent the experience of the groups or individuals studied in such a way that it is understood by what Baxter and Eyles (1997) call the scientific community, although the term academic community would be preferable. The use of purposeful sampling enables the researcher to gather information-rich cases whilst recognising that a sample design needs to be flexible and will evolve as the study develops. Persistent observation, constantly refocusing on the areas that are really pertinent to the study, again gives credibility, as does returning the narrative to the participants for checking.

Baxter and Eyles (1997) suggest that qualitative researchers are less interested in transferability than credibility as the experiences and meanings recorded are assumed to be bounded by time, the setting of the study and the individual participants. This contradicts Huberman's (1995) view on transferability; however Huberman was debating the need for generalisation rather than transferability in isolation. Baxter and Eyles suggest that generalisable conclusions are very rare with qualitative research. Although meanings that apply to small sub groups may be common and can be transferred and may be meaningful to larger groups, qualitative researchers do not often make claims about transferability. What is important to Baxter and Eyles is that a researcher provides data that allows for transferability rather than demonstrating it. For example, 'thick description' of methodological and interpretive strategy will enable a subsequent researcher to determine the relevance of a past study to their specific context (Geertz 1973).

Dependability, or the minimisation of idiosyncratic interpretation, is another 'hallmark' of rigorous qualitative research. It is to be obtained by rigour in the strategies used to collect and analyse data using approaches such as member checking and verbatim recording of data. Dependability, like credibility is ensured by allowing others to access the data.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that confirmability is about the degree to which findings are determined by the respondents not by the motivation or interests of the researcher. Researchers therefore need to account for their interests and motivations by demonstrating how they have affected their interpretations. Apart from the use of methods already described to ensure credibility and dependability, confirmability requires an audit trail of decisions and self evaluation on the part of the researcher. Huberman (1995) considers that honesty, authenticity and truthfulness are central to undertaking rigorous qualitative research. In terms of truthfulness Huberman suggests that the researching and reporting of stories should resonate with the researcher as plausible. Ethical issues go beyond honesty and truthfulness in presentation. A researcher should also consider the rights of the participant and whether they may be harmed by participating in the research, an issue I return to at the end of the chapter. Authenticity is achieved through providing sufficient context to enable a reader to be convinced that the narrative is presented in a coherent and authentic manner.

Embedding credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in my research

My research focuses on the individual, diverse and subjective experience of clergy to understand how they experience their work, rather than conclusively developing an unassailable position identifying a series of key factors in the psychological contract of clergy. The findings may not be generalised, and Anderson (1989) suggests that it is not always possible to form conclusive principles from these specific instances. They could be transferable in Webster and Mertova's (2007) definition of transferability - providing a sufficient base to allow another researcher aiming to apply the findings in another context the ability to make comparisons between the contexts.

Adopting Lincoln and Guba's four criteria, together with the work of other authors discussed above, provided me with a framework to make decisions and consider and evaluate the robustness of my approach to research.

Credibility

To aid credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocate that researchers undertake purposeful sampling. In my first round of interviews participants, with the exception of two lay workers, are all ordained clergy who undertake a role that requires them to be 'in holy orders'. The participants in the group interviews were members of naturally occurring groups – three deanery Chapters representing diverse geographical areas: semi-rural/town, rural and urban. The themes relating to the psychological contract identified through analysing the group interviews suggested that further insights could be developed by exploring them with a purposive sample.

Discussion in group interviews suggested that work location (urban, semi-rural and rural) had some impact on the expectations upon clergy: in subsequent interviews a sample from each area would be beneficial to understanding the working lives of clergy in different settings. The categories of age and length of service were also chosen to enable an exploration of how clergy with greater or less experience construct their working lives. The work status held by clergy was perceived to be a valuable theme for the initial research design and interviews. The group interviews explored the issue and I identified it as one for further exploration with individuals.

Gender was not explored in the group interviews or in their analysis, beyond commenting on the number of male/female participants in each group. The role of women in the priesthood is, however, still a contemporary issue within the Church, with women not expecting to be ordained to the episcopate until 2013 at the earliest, so gender could fruitfully be explored more fully in one-to-one interviews.

The group interviews were all carried out within one diocese. Participants in the individual interviews are from a number of dioceses in the Church of England. The sample for individual interview contains three individuals who took part in the group interviews and five being interviewed for the first time who came to the research project without any knowledge of the debate in the group situation. Participants were examples of differing:

- Work location
- Age
- Length of service
- Work status
- Gender

There is a clear rationale for the selection of each participant. They were selected for individual interview as examples of a particular type of role or location. The selection of exemplars demonstrates the 'thread' of my thought and decision making process from the literature review and analysis of the group interviews to the individual interviews.

By exploring common themes with participants who represented different aspects of the same role, insights into common understandings can be developed. For example, issues such as rural/urban location could be explored in more depth. Participants are listed in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Participants

| Fictional Name | Role | Inter-viewed in group interviews? | Work location | Date of birth | Date ordained | Gender | Work status |
|-----------------------|------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Frances | Deacon | Yes | Semi-rural parish | 1944 | 1985 1987 | Female | Non-stipendiary |
| Geoff | Incumbent | Yes | Town parish | 1950 | 1975 | Male | Freehold |
| John | Incumbent | Yes | Town parish | 1951 | 1980 | Male | Freehold |
| Michael | Incumbent | No | Urban parish | 1951 | 1975 | Male | Freehold |
| Mortimer | Incumbent | No | Semi-rural parish | 1958 | 1987 | Male | Freehold |
| Septimus | Priest in Charge | No | Rural parish | 1980 | 2005 | Male | Licensed |
| Benedict | Assistant Curate | No | Semi-rural parish | 1971 | 2007 | Male | Licensed |
| Germaine | Senior Manager | No | Minister in secular employment | 1961 | 2001 | Female | Permission to officiate |

With one exception participants are currently working in a parish role. The exception, a minister in secular employment, was chosen to explore whether clergy undertaking ‘earthed’ work outside parish ministry share understandings of work with those in parish ministry. None of the participants hold senior roles in the diocese; two hold the position of Rural Dean alongside their parish responsibilities. Rural Deans chair Chapter Meetings and the Deanery Synod. The Chapter clergy are normally asked by the bishop of the diocese who they wish to nominate for the role. They hold the position for three years and normally receive no extra salary.

There is a danger, in choosing particular exemplars, that I could be accused of constructing a framework that could be likened to a quantitative research sample whilst throughout the chapter constructing an argument that qualitative research is not concerned with quantitative rigour. Exemplars are not about a tightly constructed sampling framework. They are groupings that help analyse participants’ stories and construct a narrative that includes examples of the variety of perspectives already noted from analysing Chapter interviews. The purposeful sample approach adopted for the individual interviews enhances the

credibility of the Chapter interviews. The group interviews generated themes that required further in depth exploration. Some themes are manifest in the exemplars chosen for the individual interviews, for example location and status. The move from a naturally occurring sample to a purposeful sample is a conscious decision and is consistent with the evolutionary nature of qualitative research.

Credibility is enhanced by what Lincoln and Guba (1985) label persistent observation: the researcher constantly returns to specific themes. An interview guide enabled me to be persistent, to ensure that every participant considered each theme. Once interviews were transcribed and analysed the participants were involved in checking the narrative for representativeness and trustworthiness.

Transferability

Although some authors claim (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) that transferability is not a specific aim of qualitative research, others such as Huberman (1995) consider it is important since it replaces generalisation as an aim for qualitative research. Transferability is enabled if future researchers are able to access the findings and use the approach in future studies. This aspect of my research was facilitated by using what Geertz (1973) describes as 'thick' description. The reader will be helped to 'enter' the participant's world. Biographical portraits are provided.

Dependability

Qualitative research should be dependable. The reader should be able to have trust in the processes of the research and the integrity of the narrative that is produced from the research process. In my research dependability has been enhanced by a verbatim recording of all interviews. At the analysis stage I could access the participant's actual words rather than just my notes. Although recording can be intrusive and has to be handled sensitively with appropriate

negotiation with the participant, note taking is also intrusive. By making notes in the interview, the interviewer is already intruding on the participant's stories; they are carrying out an initial analysis. The 'rich' content of the accounts is lost and the narrative is not accessing the original words. I returned the script and narrative to the participant for them to confirm or challenge my analysis, thereby enhancing the dependability of my account.

Confirmability

Confirmability is Lincoln and Guba's (1985) final criterion. It depends on the account or narrative representing the respondents and the environment of the inquiry rather than the researcher's biases and perspectives. Techniques such as involving participants in reviewing narrative enable a researcher to be confident that the analysis is not based merely on their own perspective but dependably reflects the participant's accounts. Consideration of my own stance as a researcher is articulated in chapter 3. In the presentation to the reader of the narrative the researcher needs to be able to articulate the different voices within the narrative. As previously discussed I have four 'voices' that can potentially speak in the final narrative: 'human self', 'researcher self', 'academic self' and 'clergy spouse self'. In chapter 3 I conceptualise my voices into those associated with 'living with the University' and those associated with 'living with the Church of England. (I will return to discuss both realities of my own 'living' in the final chapter). In addition the participants' voices must be heard. Mello (2002) suggests that the transcripts should be viewed transactionally, looking at the intentions of the participants as well as the stories in a symbolic analysis. However Mello's approach does not fully address the issue of voice in my project where voice is a central issue, a driving force behind the initial interest in the topic that emerged as an area for reflection and debate after undertaking the group interviews. The concept of voice in my research is not just about presenting the final narrative. Voice is a feature earlier in the research stage: it is a 'lens' through which to view the analysis and to ensure that the final narrative reflects the views of the participants. The concept of a 'lens' also helps me explore the many 'selves'

that I bring to my research. Like a single ray of light being dispersed into many colours through a prism, I appear to have one voice but must acknowledge that my voice consists of many parts. I needed to be overtly conscious of my multi-voices during the analysis stage to ensure that it is the participant's voice that is represented and I reflect and articulate the impact of my multi-voices on the research in chapter 11.

Ethical issues

Undertaking research with human actors always provides the researcher with decision and dilemmas. The following section outlines and discusses how I planned for and addressed the ethical issues that were apparent during my research. My research was conducted within the framework of the University of Gloucestershire's Principles and Procedures for Research Ethics which are informed by the codes of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and British Sociological Association (BSA). These documents did not 'provide a set of recipes for resolving ethical choices or dilemmas' (British Sociological Association, 2002) but gave me a set of principles and values to inform my own choices.

Responsibilities toward research participants

My research does not involve people who are vulnerable or under 18. Nevertheless any research with people requires the researcher to confront the ethical issues involved. The responsibilities of the researcher towards the research participants are set out clearly in the University's Research Ethics Handbook (2008) where it is stipulated that the 'physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants should not be detrimentally affected by the research'. This handbook and the codes of BERA and the BSA discuss informed consent and all conclude that as far as possible research should be based on 'the freely given informed consent of those under study' (University of Gloucestershire, 2008). The Research Ethics Handbook

describes the basis for giving informed consent as requiring the researcher to provide participants with information about:

- The aims and nature of the research
- The reasons for undertaking the research and how the results are to be disseminated
- The power relationship between the participants and the researcher
- The anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of data
- Guarding against harmful consequences of the research for participants

I addressed these issues before, during and following both group and individual interviews. As I discuss in chapter 3, in the group interviews my role was both speaker as well as researcher. The initial contact between me and the group was by e-mail arranging the event with the Rural Dean. In terms of ethics I used the same process with the individual interviews, explaining my suggested procedures to ensure confidentiality. At the group interviews I discussed the issues with the whole group and each participant was given the opportunity to question me and object to the recording and use of their data. The research proposal discussed in chapter 3 identified that the research would be conducted in one diocese. I carried out three group interviews with three different Chapters in this diocese. As I was attending official meetings in a diocese I gained written permission from the diocesan bishop to carry out the interviews but did not reveal to him which Chapters I would interview. I was questioned at one Chapter meeting before the interview about the relationship between the research and the diocese and whether the outcome would be reported to the bishop. I did not, nor was expected to report back, requesting permission was a courtesy measure and there was no further contact between myself and the diocesan bishop. In the thesis I do not name the diocese where the Chapter interviews were carried out.

In this chapter I have outlined my change of research interest to a concern with working lives and a focus on the individual experience of each participant. I conducted the individual interviews across three dioceses to gain a better

geographical spread and also from an ethical point of view to widen the location of the participants to ensure a greater sense of anonymity. I do not reveal the name of any of the dioceses. As the interviews focused on individual experience and, as revealed in this thesis, clergy are very independent, having freedom to decide their own work schedule, I did not consider it necessary to ask permission from the diocesan bishop before contacting clergy. In my initial e-mail contact with potential participants in the individual interviews I outlined the aims of the research, both in the context of the psychological contract and its relationship to the clergy and the contribution of the interviews to my PhD. The issues of recording of data, confidentiality and anonymity were introduced and I explained that participants had the right not to be recorded, any recording would be securely held in one place and not on a computer with multi-user access. They would have full access to transcripts or notes to confirm that the material was authentic. All the participants confirmed their agreement at the outset of the research by e-mail. Consent is not a one off event, and participants should be given an opportunity to assess their consent during the research. At the outset of the interview I discussed with each participant again how confidentiality and anonymity would be ensured, offering the opportunity for them to discuss specific issues.

Analysing and writing up material compels researchers to face up to a further set of ethical issues. Anonymity is established by giving fictitious names to Chapters and individuals involved in these interviews. However even with alternative names participants could be identified through contextual material inserted into the text of the thesis. Participants often refer to biographical details, naming the place and parish they worked in or mentioning specific members of senior staff, signalling the diocese in which the interview took place. Careful editing is needed to ensure that participants cannot be traced. In chapters 4 and 7 – 10 I use square brackets to indicate that I have inserted information into the text, and removed the actual name, for example [name of village] or [name of former archdeacon]. I have discussed earlier in this chapter how readers should be given as far as possible access to the participants' direct words to demonstrate that the material presented is representative of the

participants. Whilst fulfilling the requirements for robust, accessible research I needed to guard against revealing so much of an individual's interview at any one time that a participant could be identified, particularly by someone who knew them well. I reviewed excerpts from the interviews to ensure each participant's anonymity and where at all possible 'cut' the excerpt to maintain anonymity without compromising the meaning of the narrative.

Responsibilities toward self

The BSA (2002) note, that researchers face potential risks to their own safety, and such issues should be considered when designing research in order to reduce such risks. Most of my group and individual interviews were carried out in the home of the participants, potentially placing me in a vulnerable position. However, as I discuss in chapter 7, a vicarage is both a home and a work environment. Most interviews took place in the study, the working part of the house. Where the interview was in the sitting room, other members of the family were also in the house at the same time. From my own experience, knowledge and personal living situation, lone working and minimising the safety risk is an issue which clergy discuss and in which they receive training and guidance. They are accustomed to minimising the risk to themselves and to visitors. Given my own experience of living in a vicarage, I did not consider, therefore, that interviewing clergy in the home was a significant risk to my own safety.

Living with the church

Throughout my thesis I discuss the relationship between my research and my husband's work as a clergyman. In chapter 3 I discuss the opportunistic approach to identifying appropriate Chapters to interview and how my husband, through the course of his work, enquired if other Rural Deans would be interested in taking part. Beyond this initial contact he had no role in the group interviews and no role at all in arranging the individual interviews. The lack of

contact between my husband and my research participants minimised any ethical conflict between his role and my research.

However my involvement in the Church of England is deeper than being a spouse of one of its workers. I am a practising member of a church; I live with and in the Church of England on a daily basis. There is some potential for ethical dilemmas when interviewing in this context. I am a researcher but also a member of the organisation I am researching. If sensitive issues were raised, for example about familiar difficult cases, there could be a potential for conflict of interest between my roles as a researcher and the spouse of a clergyman. Reflexivity and constantly reviewing one's own role in the research is central to qualitative research. I presented myself at each interview as working at the University of Gloucestershire, as a PhD student and clergy spouse. I did not hide any of the three roles. I considered it important for participants to understand my own background and how I interacted with the research project at different levels so that participants were fully informed of who they were in discussion with and for what purpose.

Before I report the findings from my second round of interviews I return in chapter 6 to the literature associated with the psychological contract to provide an updated summary of writing on the subject which was unavailable when the group interviews were undertaken but had since become available, either at the point of undertaking the second round of interviews or subsequently when I was analysing those interviews. I critically examine the relationship between the psychological contract in the light of my analysis of the group interviews. Relevant elements of the updated literature review together with insights from analysing the group interviews, set out in this chapter, then inform the subject matter of the individual interviews.

CHAPTER 6

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT REVISITED

The initial review of literature on the psychological contract discussed in chapter 2 indicated my dissatisfaction with its inability to provide a precise definition of the concept of the psychological contract and any insight into its relevance to the clergy of the Church of England, but concluded that there was sufficient congruence between the literature and my research objectives to underpin the group interviews.

This chapter now turns to consider further developments in the literature associated with the psychological contract in order to seek clarification and satisfaction with the concept and its relevance to the second stage of the research project. I will focus on literature that has become relevant to the research as a result of analysis of the Chapter interviews plus work that develops the concept and application of the psychological contract beyond the business world, mainly since 2003 when my group interviews took place. The literature summarised below discusses a concern which I introduced in chapter 2 about the limited scope of previous published work about the psychological contract.

Revisiting the key themes

I conclude in chapter 2 that the concept of the psychological contract is insufficiently explored in organisations and settings outside the business environment. Studying an extreme and unique organisation (Yin 2008) as I do affords the opportunity to reveal how relevant the concept is to alternative contexts and whether it can be affirmed as having wider applicability or is revealed as narrow in its relevance. The literature reviewed in chapter 2 does not touch upon how the psychological contract relates to such a unique organisation as the Church of England that is at the opposite end of the scale to most business organisations.

The epistemological position of the psychological contract

The epistemological position of the review of literature explored earlier reflects the view of the psychological contract within the HR community as a '... major analytical device in propagating and explaining HRM' (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006, p.113). Although the HR perspective was a pertinent starting point for the research design, and reflected my own work of teaching management and Human Resource Management, it was only a starting point for the research design and the initial stages of the research. Undertaking the first literature search initially supported my epistemological position. The early work of Argyris, Schein and Kotter in the 1960s and 1970s on the psychological contract explored the interaction between individuals and organisations. They provided definitions of the psychological contract that were not harnessed to models of business success and individual improvement. Rousseau's (2003, 2004) ideas provide more precision in defining the concept. She identifies the concept as a key issue in the formation of the employee-employer relationship post unionisation. It was a new 'lens' through which to view a new organisational world. Her work is strongly grounded in the business organisation, and concentrates on the employer-employee relationship. It is focused on explaining a 'new world' of industrial relations, as it moves into the newly defined subject area for HR of employee relations. Nevertheless by being so strongly rooted in exploring HR and employee relations, her work also challenged the link between my research and the psychological contract and whether what I was discovering from the Chapter interviews with clergy could be linked to concepts in the psychological contract.

The literature associated with the concept of the psychological contract has developed since the review of literature that informed the first round of interviews. This chapter will explore literature not available at the time when the research was originally designed nor part of the established body of literature used within HRM. It will explore the literature to:

- Identify and discuss developments
- Reflect on the initial epistemological position and its relevance to the ongoing nature of the research
- Focus on the developing literature about contexts other than business
- Explore how a refreshed understanding of the literature will inform my next round of interviews

The concept of the psychological contract – developments in the literature

Questioning the value of the psychological contract

Cullinane and Dundon (2006) review the history of the concept of the psychological contract, providing an initial introduction to pertinent questions about it. Their work will be the focus of the next section, offering the opportunity to revisit the existing literature with a more critical and refreshed eye. They recognise that contextual factors associated with the decline of traditional industrial relations cultivated exploration of the concept of psychological contract and fuelled further research. Cullinane and Dundon (2006, p.114) cite the psychological contract as an ‘... appealing, ‘alternative’ paradigm [to traditional employee relations] for studying people at work’. There is a sense of disquiet in Cullinane and Dundon’s work. They acknowledge that the concept is often recognised as a ‘germane conceptual lens that fits with the changing contours and pressures emanating from global economies and shifting employment patterns’ (2006, p.115). They acknowledge that there is a growing body of literature associated with the concept and that it is useful in exploring the subjective aspects of people management beyond the limited context of the legal contract. However they conclude that despite this widespread interest there ‘... remains no one or accepted universal definition’ (2006, p.115). They highlight the different schools of thought engaged with the concept. Rousseau (2003) for example emphasises the importance of reciprocal mutuality, others (Anderson and Schalk 1998; Guest 1998), the centrality of expectations. To Rousseau the concept is about an individual’s

sense of obligations rather than expectations. Unfulfilled obligations, to Rousseau, are likely to be more damaging to an individual's commitment to an organisation than unfulfilled expectations. Cullinane and Dundon criticise Rousseau for giving organisations an 'anthropomorphic identify' and not recognising the psychological contract of those individuals representing the employers.

The impact of authors being at variance about the concept has significance beyond academic debate. A concept that cannot be defined with certainty is difficult to work with. It is more difficult to recognise in organisations, as a researcher cannot be certain about what is being observed. The sense of disquiet in Cullinane and Dundon's work, and an exploration of the foundations for this disquiet, leads to the conclusion that there is a fundamental barrier to the acceptance of the concept of the psychological contract as a valid concept. If the validity of the concept is not confirmed it is questionable whether it can be used as a credible and consistent framework to explore and understand organisational life and relationships.

Once they have destroyed the concept as not having a unified and agreed definition, Cullinane and Dundon suggest that the concept is not the germane and wide ranging lens to review relationships in organisations that many authors have cited but is infact only a limited and myopic lens. Because of the unsatisfactory and inconclusive meaning of the concept, research into how organisations can develop and maintain effective psychological contracts '... may be pursuing a lost cause in search of an organisational chimera' (2006, p.117). To these authors pursuing the concept of the psychological contract using existing literature and definitions is a wild and unrealistic dream. Cullinane and Dundon published their research in 2006, after my initial literature review and first round of interviews had been completed.

At face value their pejorative analysis could be seen to undermine the foundations and credibility of my research. However I already had my own seeds of doubt about the value of a concept that was inconclusively defined.

Cullinane and Dundon provide support for the conclusion that I had come to in chapter 2. Their analysis provides a platform from which to explore and redefine the concept and a freedom to engage with the material to generate a more balanced understanding of the concept.

They observe that because of the conflicting definitions researchers are not measuring a consistent construct. It has never been my purpose to attempt to measure the psychological contract, but rather to explore its relevance to a specific organisational setting. Therefore Cullinane and Dundon's concerns about the validity of measurement are not damaging to my understanding. However they identify the concept as one that is bounded by its identification with a specific economic context and consequently a changing world of work. It is this theme that is more significant for my research project and will be subject to further discussion later in the chapter. Before looking at contextual issues I will discuss in more detail developments of the theoretical issues associated with definitions of the psychological contract.

The perceived role of managers in the psychological contract

Guest (2004) debates the role of managers in the psychological contract, suggesting that employees often report that managers communicate poorly, or change expectations and because of poor communication will redefine their expectations and the promises they are able to fulfil. Due to these unrealistic expectations employees do not realign their expectations with changing external conditions. Consequently management are perceived to have 'failed to live up to their side of the deal' (Bunderson, 2001, p.718). Cullinane and Dundon (2006) indicate that there is an imbalance of power in a psychological contract with management holding more power and having more opportunity than employees to communicate their expectations. Godard (2004) states that the concept of the psychological contract is flawed, as it is based on a false premise of mutual trust. He suggests that under a capitalist system employee interests are always subordinate to those of the employer. A fierce competitive environment and the need to remain competitive will result in decisions that

have a negative impact upon employees. For this reason Godard disputes whether the concept has a role in explaining contemporary employee relations. He does not explore the concept in other employment sectors, or in those such as the Church of England with non-standard terms of employment. The focus in the literature on the role of management in the psychological contract indicates that the concept is firmly associated in mainstream HR thinking with exploring and influencing the relationship between managers and employees. It is seen as a potential tool for those managers who understand the concept to exert influence over employees.

Cullinane and Dundon (2006) observe that much of the psychological contract literature does not question or challenge assumptions about the structure of society and the market. There is a dominant capitalist ideology whilst the concept is presented as an equal two-way exchange between employees and managers, with both sides constructing their own sense of obligations and expectations. The context in which the concept is perceived as valuable is one dimensional and created by the values of wider society, corporate values and the managerialist agenda. It is not an equal relationship with both parties bringing expectations based on their own values, but is bounded and confined within the restricted values that dominate and remain unchallenged in a market-based view of the world.

The analysis poses a stern challenge to the validity of the psychological contract. Cullinane and Dundon go beyond identifying a gap in the literature to suggesting that the fundamental requirements of the psychological contract: trust, commitment and social exchange of expectations and promises, are not the basis of exchange in a capitalist society. This argument challenges the entire concept. It questions whether the concept has value in business, never mind in alternative settings. Cullinane and Dundon cite Keenoy (1997) to support their argument that interest in the psychological contract, particularly from a practitioner perspective, is derived from its normative and ideological appeal rather than any particular grounding in empirical reality. The concept that some authors have cited as a framework for understanding and interpreting

contemporary employee relations does not equate to reality. It appears as a convenient device to enable managers to influence the employee and impose the management view in a post-unionised organisation. Cullinane and Dundon are highly critical of the existing literature on the psychological contract, castigating authors for '... an unquestioning assumption about the scale and so-called inevitability ' of the impact of the changes in capitalism and consequently organisations since the mid 1980s (2006, p.123). They recognise that such changes have occurred but disagree that these have resulted in a paradigm shift occurring within capitalism in the past twenty years. Existing literature has failed to scrutinise the scale of changes and to analyse the exact impact of them on the concept of the psychological contract. Cullinane and Dundon conclude the psychological contract remains very popular, having an ideological appeal based around its '...feel good and feel powerful message.' (2006, p.124). However this ideological appeal is not a sound foundation on which to base management and organisational theory and practice. To them the proliferation of literature around the concept has resulted in a manufactured orthodoxy that '... obscures rather than illuminates the fundamental questions surrounding the employment relationship' (2006, p.124). They identify that '...much of the rhetoric of the new employment relationship and the actual nature of work in contemporary society continue to move in opposite directions'.

The Church of England is not an organisation that is necessarily concerned with or will reflect the impact of changes in capitalism and organisations. Although the views of Cullinane and Dundon are valuable in providing a critique of the strongly held views of the psychological contract held in the HR community, they are less useful in understanding the value of the psychological contract in the Church of England as they do not move on to explore the concept outside the dominant capitalist ideology. As recorded in chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, the obsession in the current literature with using a narrowly defined view of organisation and location of the contract with HR practice limits the applications and value of the concept. The converse view of Cullinane and Dundon's criticisms that trust and commitment are not the basis of exchange in a capitalist society suggests that the concept may be valuable in organisations

where relationships are perceived to be based on trust and commitment rather than managerial power.

Re-affirming the value of the psychological contract

Cullinane and Dundon's work is a damning critique of the concept that my research was initially based upon, but does not negate the value of my research. I would identify parallels with my own journey of understanding and the journey of this research in Cullinane and Dundon's work. Epistemologically the research design emerged from HRM, a body of knowledge that I would identify as firmly committed to advocating the paradigm shift of which Cullinane and Dundon are so critical. HRM, in fact, is the offspring of such a shift. HRM emerged as a concept and model to enable organisations to manage their human resources and ensure maximum performance. Having exposed, admitted and accepted the limitations of one's own profession and associated body of knowledge there follows a freedom to explore the employment relationship unfettered by the constraints of the HR profession. It generates a freedom and licence to think beyond the conventional wisdom and move beyond a 'manufactured orthodoxy'.

The chapter so far has used Cullinane and Dundon's work as a framework. Although the outcome of their work is compelling it would be unwise to accept its arguments without consideration of other contemporary work on the psychological contract. Their work is targeted at the academic audience. It is a critique of academic work rather than a report of fieldwork. It challenges the status quo without setting a plan for future research. The next section will review further literature that challenges the dominant HR position associated with the concept.

Literature concerned with professionals

There are a number of authors publishing in the twenty-first century who have widened the discussion of the psychological contract beyond the

manager/employee relationship to discuss professional employees. The relevance of the psychological contract to parties in an organisation beyond the manager and employee is a crucial aspect of my research. Parish clergy are not employed and my Chapter interviews indicate that clergy are at best ambivalent about being perceived as managers. Literature that considers professionals, even in the context of an employing organisation, has more congruence and applicability with clergy than that focusing merely on the manager/employee relationship.

O'Donohue and Nelson (2007) define professions as having the following attributes:

- A systematic and abstract body of knowledge expressed in a language only fully known to members of the profession
- A claim to autonomy in the application of their knowledge and resistance to interference from those who are less well qualified
- Maintenance of a professional body concerned with minimum qualification standards for entry
- A commitment to a code of ethics or practice that places community interests and those of the profession above self
- Ability to claim a monopoly of professional expertise and claim authority over, whilst sharing responsibility with, less skilled clients

They suggest that professionals conceptualise organisations differently from general employees or managers. The professional schema conceptualises organisations as a system focused on professional goals, commitment to service and of benefit to the community and common good. The management schema is very different. It conceptualises an organisation as a system designed to achieve common goals in an efficient and co-ordinated manner. This distinction demonstrates the polarised view of work that professionals may have from their managers. The manager seeks to fulfil organisational goals; the professional seeks to deliver a service for the common good.

Changing expectations for professionals

Swales (2003) identifies divinity along with medicine and law as one, of the earliest professions. Contemporary professions are categorised by Swales into three broad groups:

- The independent/liberal professional, such as lawyers and architects
- Organisational professionals, e.g. general managers
- Those who rely on a highly specialised knowledge base, e.g. accountants and scientists

Beyond citing clergy as one of the earliest professions Swales does not specifically discuss clergy. Although his paper concentrates on the third group, those with a highly specialised knowledge base, he nevertheless raises points that are worthy of note regarding all professionals in general. He argues that the development of a market focus and consequently the strengthening of the role of line management in many organisations is a threat to the autonomy of the professional. The traditional vocabulary of the professional is threatened by the '...persistent rhetoric regarding customer service [and] quality management' (2003, p.135). Management now take a higher profile in managing the work of professionals. Hanlon (1998) argues that there has been a shift from the traditional role of the professional to commercial professionalism where the role is dominated by the need to be more accountable to the public, assume responsibility for the work of others and act entrepreneurially. This, coupled with increasing consumer knowledge and tendency to question authority, has resulted in a change to the '... classic view of professionals providing services to an ignorant client base' (Swales, 2003, p.137).

The change from personnel to the strategic and business focused employee relations and HR is also cited by Swales as shifting the relationship between the organisation and its professionals to one that is relational, based on loyalty in return for freedom to build an external career reputation. Swales does not challenge the validity of the relational contract. He concludes that the traditional view of professionalism has been challenged and reconfigured to embrace a

greater focus on commercialism but does not discuss if this reconfiguration has resulted in a reconfigured psychological contract.

Professional and administrative ideology

Bunderson (2001) discusses how work ideologies shape the psychological contracts of professional employees, and in particular doctors. He identifies the relationship between professional employees and their employing organisation as problematic because '... it is enacted within an ideologically pluralistic work setting' (2001, p.717). Professional employees are challenging for managers and management scholars (Bunderson 2001) because for professionals there are two forms of work and of work ideology. Administrative ideology comprises an internal bureaucratic system role and an external market enterprise role. Professional ideology has an internal professional group role and an external community servant role.

Bunderson aligns the different roles of the professional and administrative ideology with the transactional and relational psychological contracts discussed in the earlier literature (Rousseau and Park, 1993; Herriot and Pemberton, 1995). Unlike a transactional contract a relational contract engages one's sense of self. As my research is looking at those who have a vocation and whose work engages 'one's sense of self', the alignment with the transactional and relational psychological contracts is superficially appealing. However dividing psychological contracts into two categories, transactional and relational, has been criticised as being too simplistic as the terms transactional and relational psychological contracts are associated with explaining the changing view of work in the 1990s, particularly in the financial sectors. The terms offer little help in exploring the complexities of the relationships within many organisations.

It is surprising that Bunderson uses these terms when investigating a complex organisation with differing ideologies. It is a contradiction to explore complexity

by using a simplistic framework. Despite criticisms, however, there is value in Bunderson's work: he progresses the discussion about the psychological contract beyond the business sector. The earlier psychological contract work tends to have a simplistic view of the contract as being between employees and organisations which Bunderson exposes as inadequate. A simple contract between employer and organisation does not reflect the reality and complexity within organisations. By discussing administrative and professional ideology Bunderson begins to undermine the simplistic view of the concept of the psychological contract and therefore begins a search to determine the relevance of the concept in alternative contexts.

Bunderson maintains that for professional employees both administrative and professional work ideologies shape the psychological contract. He focuses on three areas:

- A breach of the administrative element of the psychological contract is positively associated with thoughts of leaving the organisation. Breaches of the professional element of the contract do not lead to such thoughts
- A breach of the professional elements of the contract have a negative association with organisational commitment and productivity. If an organisation is fulfilling the expectations of the professional element of the contract, loyalty is developed and the employee will exceed client/patient demand. When an organisation does not fulfil these expectations these contributions are withheld
- Breaches of the administrative element of the contract have a stronger impact on job satisfaction than breaches of the professional element

Bunderson concludes that existing research assumes that each employee has a unique contract with the organisation. He observes that for professional employees the employment relationship is embedded within a broader ideological and institutional context and to understand the psychological context of professionals it is important to understand how the '...employment

relationship (micro social structure) is informed by particular institutions and associated ideologies (the macro social structure)' (2001, p.719).

Bunderson suggests that for his findings to be generalised research should be carried out across other professional settings. My research provides one such professional setting in which to explore the concept of the psychological contract and to further explore the influence of ideologies on the concept. His work also provides a validation of my conclusion in chapter 2 that the concept is insufficiently researched outside the business sector. Bunderson's value to this project is his focus on professional employees and it is this aspect that requires further investigation.

Ideological aspects of the psychological contract

Bunderson's (2001) work has added an extra dimension, the ideologically-infused contract, to the concept of the psychological contract. Thompson and Bunderson (2003) argue that psychological contracts that deliver ideological rewards can be a strong inducement for employees to develop commitment to the organisation.

O'Donohue and Nelson (2007, p.547) extend Bunderson's study by exploring whether there is '...evidence of an ideological component' in the psychological contract of professionals by undertaking qualitative interviews with registered nurses in one Australian hospital. It is targeted at the professional as well as the academic audience. They do not debate the origins or validity of the concept, merely stating that it is '... widely used to interpret and understand the dynamics of the employee-organisation relationship' (2007, p.548). They acknowledge that the adequacy and reliability of the transactional/relational framework has been the subject of debate but reaffirm the value of the framework, citing Anderson and Schalk's (1998, p.548) work on the transactional/relational as a significant contribution to '...our understanding of how and why individuals respond to change in the employment relationship'.

Discussion of the transactional/relational framework is unsatisfactory since the issue is not debated in any detail. O'Donohue and Nelson cite Thompson and Bunderson's (2003) conclusions that the framework '... may be inadequate for understanding the psychological contracts of employees who conceptualise work and their relationship to the organisation from an ideological perspective' (2007, p.548).

Interviewees identified the core elements of the nurses' professional ideology. O'Donohue and Nelson conclude from the interview data and questionnaires that all interviewees have a '... strong professional affiliation' (2007, p.554). The psychological contract of the nurses is '... best understood by reference to an ideological currency' (2007, p.554). The nurses expected the organisation to demonstrate commitment and support for their professional competence. When the organisation failed to deliver on this expectation, the psychological contract was changed. The authors recognise that the methodology is limited in that all the interviews are located in one hospital but suggest that the research has '... presented evidence of an ideological component in the psychological contracts of professional employees'. They conclude that the presence of an ideological component questions the two-dimensional transactional/relational framework for understanding and describing the psychological contract of professionals (2007, p.554).

Similar themes are explored in a concurrent article which focused on knowledge workers (O'Donohue, Sheehan, Hecker and Holland, 2007). The authors really 'nail their colours to the mast' and identify the transactional and relational contract as the foundation classifications' (2007, p.74) identified by Rousseau and supported by a consensus in the literature. These foundations have been developed, according to O'Donohue et al, by Burr and Thompson (2002) identifying a transpersonal perspective that recognises the connectivity of people and organisations to something outside themselves' (2007, p.74). Transactional contracts could be described as 'what's in it for me'? Relational ones as 'what's in it for me and the organisation'? Transpersonal goes beyond both of these to 'what's in it for the community, the environment, what

opportunity for compassion and care is available?’ Individuals who have a transpersonal aspect to their psychological contract have much wider expectations of the organisation.

The focus of O’Donahue et al’s paper is knowledge workers at a scientific research institute. They take Drucker’s (1999) definition of knowledge workers as those having a high level of expertise, owning the means of production in knowledge based organisations, having responsibility and autonomy for their own work and being able to determine the focus of that work. Donohue et al suggest that there has been little empirical work about knowledge workers in relation to the employment relationship. They identify the key factors of the scientists’ psychological contract as:

- Professional autonomy
- Responsibility
- A commitment to the wider knowledge base outside the organisation
- A need to make a contribution to the body of knowledge

They conclude that the scientist’s psychological contract cannot be ‘... within the relational/transactional characterization of the contract’ (2007, p.80) and that the loyalty of knowledge workers is targeted at their own profession and careers rather than at the organisation.

The literature on the psychological contract discussed in chapter 2 defined employees as a homogeneous group. The work of Bunderson and O’Donohue highlights that defining one party to the contract as an employee is imprecise and not adequate to describe some groups working within organisations.

Organisations now have a third type of expectation to consider to ensure the commitment and effectiveness of their professional employees. In addition to any of the transactional and relational elements they need to consider the expectations of the individual in the context of their wider profession. Breaches of these aspects have impact on the effectiveness of the organisation.

O'Donohue and Bunderson's research does not suggest that those with an ideologically infused psychological contract are without expectations of their employing organisation nor that employers can ignore professionals' expectations. It signifies a shift in what employers should concern themselves with if they have ambitions to develop an effective psychological contract between themselves and professional workers.

By adding the ideologically infused element to the psychological contract the work of O'Donohue and Bunderson et al now provides an extended framework in which to explore the psychological contract in my research. My research is outside this narrowly defined boundary. The value of Bunderson's and others' work is in identifying that the psychological contract has value in exploring the relationship in organisations of many different types of worker.

Diverse contracts and career forms

Several authors have presented a convincing case that the concept of the psychological contract has been bounded by the confines of the business sector. Bunderson and O'Donohue et al widened the literature to include professionals employed within organisations. Professionals are not the only sub group within organisations. Within one organisation individuals can be employed on temporary contracts, part time or perceive themselves to have boundaryless or protean careers.

Boundaryless and protean careers

I will now turn to literature that more closely reflects the types of career that clergy in the first round of interviews described and discussed. A boundaryless career is independent of organisational boundaries (Granrose and Baccili, 2006). A protean career is 'self determined, driven by personal values rather than organisational rewards and serving the whole person, family and life purpose' (Hall 2004). The person, rather than the organisation, is in charge of such a career, with the main success criteria being psychological success

rather than position or salary (Hall, 1976 cited in Granrose and Baccili, 2006, p.74).

Granrose and Baccili (2006) sought to establish whether definitions of the psychological contract include boundaryless or protean careers. Prior to their work, little research had been undertaken exploring this aspect of the contract. Guest (2004) identified that a third of workers employed on temporary contracts chose temporary work by choice, but did not look specifically at the psychological contract. Granrose and Baccili's (2006, p.166) hypothesise that '... those who adopt different psychological contracts might have different expectations of what the organisation should provide'. Their findings appear inconclusive. Those with protean careers expected opportunities for development and a work schedule that enabled them to develop in other areas of their lives. The hypothesis that non delivery on these expectations would result in reduced organisational commitment was not demonstrated. However when such obligations were not fulfilled those with boundaryless or protean careers tended to leave the organisation. Those with boundaryless and protean careers did demonstrate greater commitment to individual managers than to the wider organisation. Granrose and Baccili conclude that the role of the manager to individuals who perceive themselves as having protean careers is significant and organisations should provide managers with greater support to manage such workers.

Granrose and Baccili's results underline how the psychological contract can be enacted and interpreted in diverse ways. There is some evidence that the protean worker has different expectations from the traditional worker. The professional again differs from the organisational employee. As the research on the concept of the psychological contract focuses to consider particular types of employment and understandings of career and work the variety of psychological contracts and expectations widens. The key point for further exploration is that an individual's status and role may be significant in determining their psychological contract with the organisation. In chapter 2 the concept of the psychological contract was described as a lens through which to review employment relationships within an organisation. Looking through the lens of

the psychological contract at the many groups now identified within organisations it is becoming apparent that the 'landscape' seen is not uniform.

Work Status

The lens will now be widened to encompass literature that views the psychological contract from the perspective of those on fixed term contracts and volunteer and faith based work.

The research of Mauno, Kinnenu, Makikangas and Natti (2005) concentrated on permanent and fixed term employees whose jobs were insecure. They hypothesised that those on fixed term contracts would display less negative attitudes toward the work and organisation when faced with job insecurity than permanent employees in the same situation. The findings confirm this hypothesis.

It is unsurprising that this hypothesis was confirmed. Previous studies (McDonald and Makin, 2000; Chirumbolo, Hellgren, deWitte and Naswall, 2003) indicate that surveys of non-permanent employees do not report reduced organisational commitment or job satisfaction. There are a number of arguments put forward to explain this finding. Non-permanent employees may show greater commitment as they are trying to impress the organisation in order to secure a permanent position. Alternatively, job insecurity is an integral part of temporary employment and consequently their work attitude is not unduly affected. For some employees temporary and fixed term work is a conscious choice.

Mauno et al do not discuss protean careers. The later work of Granrose and Baccili (2006) concludes that those with protean careers do not display diminished organisation commitment compared with permanent employees, but are more likely to leave the organisation if opportunities for training and personal development are not provided. At first glance Granrose and Baccili's findings appear to contradict those of Mauno et al. However Granrose and Baccili do not discuss job insecurity. They focus on opportunities for development and training. A protean career is a conscious choice and

development and training is an integral motivator. Conscious choice may be the key to understanding why non-permanent employees do not display the same reaction to psychological contract violation as permanent employees. The fixed term worker may have chosen this form of work and consequently his/her work attitude is not so affected when job security is removed. The protean worker has established distinct priorities: training, development, and other life priorities. When these expectations are not fulfilled the protean worker moves on. In both groups moving on is an expectation of the type of contract undertaken. The priorities of non-permanent and protean workers are different from permanent staff because they have made a conscious choice to accept insecurity.

The psychological contract in faith based organisations

I now turn to research literature that has direct relevance to my focus on clergy.

Netting, O'Connor, Thomas and Yancey (2005) undertook research in faith based social services programmes. Although they allude to the psychological contract and provide some insight into issues within faith based organisations their discussion of the concept is limited. They use Rousseau's schemas to explain, how in faith based social service programmes, people's psychological contracts will be influenced by their prior experience of religious organisations and their personal beliefs. They focus on the volunteer/paid worker dynamic and suggest that in faith based organisation volunteering is so embedded that it is the role of the paid, professional staff that is least understood. Clergy, Netting et al (2005, p.184) suggest, have a '... unique authoritative relationship with other paid staff and lay volunteers'. Frustratingly they merely state this without further comment or discussion.

They focus on role theory, discussing in detail the different roles played by volunteers and paid staff. The research used a grounded theory approach. Across the interviews and the eleven organisations it is evident that volunteers and paid employees undertake multiple tasks '... doing what works by whoever is available within the context of a particular program's mission and faith tradition' (Netting et al, 2005, p.202). Multiple and undefined roles, they

suggest, are accepted because the individual's identity is associated with the faith rather than defined by the role. The individual, volunteer or paid, is defined by being a member of a faith community, rather than the job title they possess. Netting et al (2005, p.198) observed that in the traditional literature an individual's psychological contract is always with the '... person responsible for program operation'. They do not say to which literature they are referring although their conclusion can be supported by the work of Rousseau and others who suggest that individuals have contracts with individual managers. Netting et al (2005, p.198) comment that for those who work in faith based programmes, the '...psychological contracts held may not always be solely with the person responsible for program operation, instead they may be theological, congregational and faith community contracts in which participating in acts of service becomes a driving force'.

Netting et al's conclusions are interesting in the context of my research project. They conclude that the blurring and overlapping of roles counts less than the '...need and mission at hand and the faith-based nature of the work appears to be a recruiting and sustaining tool for both paid staff and volunteer' (2005, p.202). They state that '...what we have found seems to contradict much of what has been taught in professional [business] schools about establishing boundaries and expected organisational behaviour'. For this reason they suggest that there should be a '...thorough consideration of the psychological (or theological) contracts that stakeholders have in being part of a service mission performed under the auspices of a faith tradition' (2005, p.202).

Netting et al's work is the first evidence within the body of literature associated with the psychological contract of faith based organisations being worthy of further research. Although their work does not provide a satisfactory or in-depth discussion of the concept of the psychological contract in faith based work, and particularly for paid workers, it does introduce a faith based dimension to the discussion of the concept.

The work on protean, fixed term and faith based organisations substantiates the debate started in this chapter, that the 'landscape' of the psychological contract

is not uniform and supports my own research in suggesting that the concept has validity in many organisational types.

The aim of this chapter was to explore the concept of the psychological contract through a refreshed understanding in the light of the passage of time and analysis of the first stage of my research. In summary the exploration has:

- Identified the concept of the psychological contract as a 'myopic lens' and a wild unobtainable dream
- Suggested that the interests of employees are always secondary to the organisation, hence there is an imbalance of power in relationships between employees and managers
- Linked the concept of the psychological contract with a market and capitalist view of organisations and work
- Termed the psychological concept as traditionally presented as a 'manufactured orthodoxy' that obscures rather than illuminates the employment relationship
- Identified the ideologically infused contract as an addition to the transactional and relational contracts
- Explored in what ways the traditional perception of the concept of the psychological contract relates to professional and temporary workers
- Acknowledged that those who work in faith-based organisations may have psychological contracts that are theologically, congregationally and faith based

My earlier literature review concluded that the concept of the psychological contract was inconclusively defined in the existing academic literature and insufficiently explored in organisations and settings outside the business environment. This second literature review moves forward the discussion of both issues. The limitations of existing definitions have been further explored and an additional element, the ideologically infused contract, has been introduced. Alternative contexts have also been investigated, again with new

insights developed into the impact of the organisational context and type on the range of psychological contracts developed.

The literature discussed earlier in this chapter initially found the concept of the psychological contract to be limited and possibly erroneous. Although this appeared a compelling argument, examining the psychological contracts of professionals in other forms of employment and faith based organisations has re-instated the concept. The concept has been reborn as a relevant, but now more complex one in which to explore the many forms of the employment relationship within a variety of organisations.

The psychological contract - themes for further exploration

The remainder of the chapter will review the conclusions, from my analysis of the Chapter interviews, to further consider the value of the concept of the psychological contract in explaining the employment relationship between clergy and the Church of England and to identify further areas for research. Illustrative examples from the data will be used to introduce the key themes that require further exploration. These are:

- Autonomy
- Different work statuses
- Ideologically based psychological contracts
- Contextual change in the Church of England
- Multi-layered contracts

Autonomy

Further consideration of the literature has not removed the central place of expectations and promises to an understanding of the psychological contract. Clergy expectations of senior staff take several forms. They are confident that they are independent from the diocese and have complete autonomy to make

decisions within the boundaries of their own parish without influence from the senior staff. One illustrative example is when a participant discusses a complaint about a marriage ceremony. He reports the bishop's response as '*I have no jurisdiction in this matter the only thing you can do is to continue the conversation with [the incumbent]*'. The expectation of being an autonomous worker within the Church is a common theme in the interviews. Such full independence from the organisation is not identified in the work of Thompson and Bunderson (2003) and Swailes (2003). They discuss professionals who, despite being directly accountable to the organisation, display their primary loyalty to their profession and their own careers. It is as if they have two parallel careers, one with the organisation and another with their profession. It is not clear from my interviews if this is the case for clergy. What is clear is that clergy do not expect the senior staff to be able to intervene with management authority in decisions they have made in their own parish, they expect to be autonomous. Workers with such evident autonomy do not feature in the literature of the psychological contract; the literature focuses on those who should relate directly to the organisation but display alternative foci of loyalty.

Despite asserting their autonomy clergy have many expectations of the senior staff including to '*value and treasure staff*' and to make sure clergy are '*valued for what we do and supported and appreciated*'. In the interviews comments such as these are associated with negative examples, where it is perceived that clergy have not received such pastoral care. At face value it seems inconsistent that workers who have and defend their autonomy also have expectations of high levels of support from the organisation. The literature is generally supportive of this inconsistency. Granrose and Baccilli (2006) identified that those with protean careers had expectations of organisations and management, despite taking a conscious choice to pursue an alternative career form. They expected opportunities for development. O'Donohue et al (2007) identify that professional autonomy is a key factor in the knowledge workers' psychological contract.

It is not the primary aim of my research to measure either the psychological contract of the clergy or the impact of violation. It is more fundamental and aims to identify whether the concept has validity for exploring the employment relationship in a faith based organisation and for those who have anomalous employment circumstances. By exploring the autonomous nature of working in the Church of England, further information will be available to enable consideration of the relevance of the psychological contract to this group of workers. It will enable further understanding of how clergy work and whether clergy mirror the behaviour of other professionals identified in the literature. This will contribute to understanding the relevance of the concept of the psychological contract to the clergy.

Different work statuses

Ellis (2007) concludes that work status impacts on how the psychological contract develops. The clergy whom I interviewed do not all share the same status. In chapter 4 I conclude that those who are freeholders and licence holders share common definitions of both licence and freehold but do not share a common perception of their impact on their working lives. For example, some freeholders perceive freehold as crucial to their work. For others it is less significant. For some, security is inconsistent with priesthood. The first round of interviews took place in groups but issues such as the expectation of security and protection are personal. The group discussion did not generate any personal accounts of where individuals felt insecure and their expectations had not been met, yet they could quote many examples of others who had been in this situation. Further exploration in individual interviews of security may elicit a clearer picture of the clergy's perception of insecurity and its contribution to their psychological contract.

Mauno et al's work (2005) investigated organisations in which there was a real threat of job insecurity. They conclude that temporary workers do not display a negative attitude towards work when faced by job insecurity, but perceive it to be part of the risk of taking on temporary work. Clergy in the group interviews

did not report that their roles are under threat. However there are different work statuses, with some participants possessing freehold. The licence holders however do not present as less committed about their work. Again this in an area for further consideration. The literature has raised the issue of work status as a legitimate concern. The impact of work status was part of the initial research development of the psychological contract. Further exploration would provide clarification of the importance of work status to clergy's expectations.

Ideologically based psychological contracts

The development of the concept of the psychological contract to include an ideological element has been explored earlier in this chapter. My initial research did not use the phrase ideological but focused on exploring the role of personal values and beliefs in determining the psychological contract. The body of literature discussed in this chapter has suggested that traditional definitions of the psychological contract are limited and do not provide an adequate framework to explore the employment relationship particularly for individuals with alternative employment forms, including volunteers, professionals and faith-based. Bunderson (2001) suggests that the traditional research into the psychological contract assumes that each individual employee has a unique contract with one organisation. He questions the uniqueness of the relationship, arguing that for professional employees the employment relationship is also rooted in a broad ideological and institutional context. I did not explore the ideological element of the psychological contract but there is some evidence from my first interviews that it merits further exploration. Participants indicate that priesthood requires sacrifice and vulnerability; it is an ongoing exploration of vocation and trust. Some participants deny the need for job security, safeguard and protection. These values stem from an understanding of the role of a priest, an understanding that it is wider than a relationship with the senior staff and the organisation, the Church of England. It is akin to one element of the definition of 'professional' established by O'Donohue and Nelson (2007, p.549), a commitment to a practice that '... places community interests and those of the profession above self'. While the

first round of interviews did not explore this issue, the individual interviews will. The ideological element of the psychological contract now established in the recent literature requires further research to understand more clearly the relationship between the individual priest and the Church of England.

Contextual change in the Church of England and the psychological contract

The concept of the psychological contract is criticised as being associated only with a dominant capitalist ideology (Cullinane and Dundon 2006) and for reflecting the employment relationship in the 1990s and post-unionisation. The key point in these arguments is that the concept is associated with explanation of specific changes in organisations in a defined period in organisational life. The critics suggest that once this period has passed the concept may have less validity. Recent work using the concept in new contexts has to some extent mitigated the criticism.

What is interesting for my research is the association of a change in the psychological contract with a fundamental shift in how organisations view the employment relationship. There is evidence from the group interviews that the clergy acknowledge that the Church of England has undergone a fundamental change. The clergy perceive a much greater focus on financial management and suggest that clergy will '*rue the day*' that parishes were told the precise cost of paying clergy stipends and pensions as it '*no longer sets us aside*'. This quotation points to a change in the relationship between clergy, the parish and the Church of England. Relationships between clergy and the diocese are described as '*adversarial*'. The change in recruitment procedures is also cited as evidence of a change from an approach in which clergy were asked to consider taking on a new parish by the bishop to a '*... process of applying for a job and meeting the expectations of parishioners*'. Clergy also identify changes in society as having an impact on the relationship between themselves and parishioners and the community. A further round of interviews will provide opportunities to explore the significance of these changes to the relationship between clergy and the Church. Although the link between the concept of the

psychological contract and a specific time of change in organisation has been viewed as a criticism, further interviews could provide evidence of whether the psychological contract is a beneficial lens which an organisation can use to view the consequence of such changes on its workers. The literature seems to assume that the changes in organisations took place in the 1990s; the paradigm shift is complete. Whilst this is the case for many businesses, the Church of England's cycle is not necessarily in tandem with the cycles of business. The Church of England may be undergoing its own paradigm shift. Further data collection is an opportunity to identify the changes and their consequences for clergy.

Multi-layered contracts

There is considerable evidence in my interviews of clergy identifying parishioners' expectations as incorrect, out of date and unrealistic. Rather than revisit specific cases, the important point is that the interviews identified both the clergy's own expectations and the expectations of them. Although the clergy would reject their role as a manager, in many instances the expectations placed upon them by parishioners and the community casts them in such a role. In the literature reviewed, the organisational representative of the organisation is often an individual manager. Anthropomorphising the organisation and assuming psychological contracts are between individuals and an organisation has been criticised. The interviews provide evidence that the clergy fulfil the role of organisational representative for parishioners and the community. The aim of this research is not to explore the psychological contract of parishioners. It is about the relationship between clergy and the organisation, the Church of England. Nevertheless in the group interviews it is evident that the clergy also represent the organisation (Church of England) to many parishioners. It is this evidence of a multi-layered and complex psychological contract that is worthy of further research. Cullinane and Dundon (2006) attack Rousseau for not recognising the psychological aspect of the individual managers who represent the employer's side of the contract. It is this idea that would benefit from further exploration. Because of the independent and autonomous status of clergy they

may be in a pivotal role, representing the organisation to parishioners and forming a relationship with the organisation as a priest. Netting et al (2005) state that the paid worker in voluntary organisations has been researched the least, whereas the role of volunteers has attracted much attention. They also identify the relationship between clergy and other paid workers and volunteers to be unique and authoritarian. The relationship between the clergy and other parties is again worth further investigation in order to establish the nature of the relationship between the many parties to the psychological contract.

In my earlier literature review (chapter 2) I concluded that the concept of the psychological contract was established but still work in progress. Since that time progress has been made in terms of further clarification of its definition and its application to alternative organisational settings. These developments have been covered in this chapter, together with ways in which concepts associated with the psychological contract can inform the next round of (individual) interviews with clergy. This second literature review has identified further areas for exploration in individual interviews to which current literature still has not provided adequate answers.

Chapter 7 reports my plans for the individual interviews, summarises the interview questions and presents the participants' perceptions of role.

CHAPTER 7

THE WORKING LIVES OF CLERGY: ROLE

Interviews – plans and themes

This and the two following chapters will concentrate on clergy perceptions of their working lives, drawing on eight individual interviews. The interview questions were based on six issues drawn from my analysis of the group interviews (chapter 4), and informed by issues arising from the review of recent literature (chapter 6). These issues can be summarised in the following six statements. The clergy:

- Perceive a range of expectations upon them from parishioners and other community members
- Are not always concerned about work status and security
- Perceive sacrifice and vulnerability as central to an understanding of priesthood
- Value the autonomous nature of their role
- Value and expect the pastoral support of senior staff
- Identify a substantial period of change in the Church of England, its relationship to society and its financial stability

These statements are a device for summarising succinctly the main issues to be framed and transferred to the setting of the individual interviews for consideration by individual interview participants. Individual participants were not presented with the full statement, but were given the key issue in an open-ended format: for example, I would introduce the idea by a phrase such as 'in the group interviews the group discussed change in the Church of England'. My aim was to encourage each participant to consider how a specific issue related to their own working life. The participant was entirely free to interpret the key idea and its meaning in the context of their own working life.

Figure 7.1 Themes for further exploration

| Theme | Meaning |
|--|---|
| 1. Role | Narrative relating to the specific role undertaken by the participant |
| 2. Expectations | Narrative relating to the expectations participants perceived others held of them |
| 3. Work status | Narrative relating to conditions of service, contract and legal status |
| 4. Change in Church of England | Narrative relating to changes the participants had observed whilst working in the Church of England |
| 5. Change in relationship between Church and society | Narrative relating to changes the participants have observed in the relationship between Church and wider society |
| 6. Autonomy | Narrative relating to the participants' views on the scope and autonomy of their working lives |
| 7. Relationship with senior staff | Narrative relating to the participants' relationship with senior staff in the diocese |
| 8. Sacrifice and vulnerability | Narrative relating to participants' perceptions of how these values infuse their working life |

With the exception of 'change' and 'role' the themes that are discussed with the individuals reflect statements that framed the findings from the group interviews. I considered it vital to analyse the participants' understanding of their own work and role, as it must be central to each working life. Role is discussed first, reflecting its central position to the research. After analysing the group interviews 'change' was identified in the framing statement as relating to both society and the financial situation in the Church of England. I wanted to separate out narrative that discussed internal change in the Church of England and narrative that focused on change in the Church's external relationships when it came to analysing the individual interviews, (see 4 and 5 above).

Process of Interviewing

When I made the interview appointment I asked for an hour with each participant and I was always conscious that I should not take up much more. The participants were generous with their time. No one refused to take part or suggested during the interview that they had limited time. Interviews were carried out in homes, many in the vicarage, a home and office provided by the Church of England.

The individual interviews were exploratory using the themes that had emerged from the group interviews and literature review as a starting point. Each interview started with collecting biographical details, such as age and number and types of positions the participant had carried out for the Church of England. I then asked the participant to describe their role. From that point onwards I intervened in the conversation to clarify points, and to maintain the conversation by responding to points the participants had raised. The interviews were informal and conversational, with one topic leading naturally to another. If I was unable to introduce a particular theme as it was incompatible with the 'flow' of the conversation I did not artificially change course to ensure I covered every theme. I allowed the participant opportunity to explore what they perceived as important in their working lives. If, for example, a participant did not introduce the idea of work status, and there was not an appropriate opportunity to steer the conversation to discuss it, I allowed the interview to continue and conclude without reference to it as it did not seem to be important to him/her in understanding their working life. I guided the participant into areas adjacent to the current topic, rather than making radical changes in direction, or asked a question to create the opportunity for the participant to develop a theme. If a participant introduced a theme naturally without my prompt, for example many participants discussed change in the Church of England without me introducing the idea, I let the participant continue. The participants' stories and observations were more important to me than ensuring that I covered in detail every theme in Figure 7.1. To enter the participants' world I considered it vital they were able to introduce material that seemed relevant and important to them not merely to

answer an agenda that was totally prescribed. The themes that emerged from the group interviews were in most cases, but not all, of interest or relevance to the participants and produced discussion, observations and stories. However in some cases they did not seem to have a resonance with the participant or to fit in with the natural direction of the conversation. These cases are described separately later in this chapter and chapters 8 and 9.

Individual interviews – stance, access and description

In chapter 3 I identified my role in relation to the clergy in the group interviews by the term conversant associate. I have sufficient knowledge and experience to access their 'world' and inhabit a role that associates me with the clergy but I am not fully a member of the group. In the individual interviews the participants did not attempt to explain, or interpret their working lives for me as they may have done for an outsider. This is consistent with my understanding of my stance as a conversant associate, however it could create complacency as I am so familiar with the language that I am unable to analyse it and make it accessible for those who are less conversant with the Church of England.

Synthesis between intellectual work and other life experience is suggested by Wright-Mills (1959); epistemologically and professionally I am aligned with business and HR. By viewing the interview material through my life experience as a conversant associate and my intellectual life within HR and business I am able to use one stance to question the assumptions of the other. I made a verbatim recording and produced a full transcript of each of the eight interviews to enable access and analysis and the opportunity for turning the participant's world into a narrative. It is not only the narrative from the interviews that allows access but a wider understanding of the background and working life of each participant.

Resonance between themes and participants

The transcripts were initially analysed using the themes outlined in Figure 7.1 earlier in this chapter.

Figure 7.2 shows which themes each participant discussed. For example all the participants discussed ‘expectations’, whereas the theme ‘change in the relationship between the Church of England and society’ was not discussed by Germaine and Septimus.

Figure 7.2 Themes discussed by participants

| Theme Name | Role | Expectations | Change: Church of England | Change in Society | Autonomy | Senior Staff | Sacrifice/ Vulnerability | Work status |
|---------------|------|--------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Geoff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| John | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Frances | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 |
| Michael | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mortimer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Germaine | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Benedict | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Septimus | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ |

✓ = Theme discussed by participant

0 = Theme not discussed by participant

Although it is tempting to concentrate on the gaps in the Figure 7.2, what is more interesting is the paucity of gaps; that despite a conversational and unstructured approach most participants engaged at length with the themes raised in the group interviews. The themes that ‘travelled’ from the group interviews to inform the individual interviews were of interest and resonated with the participants’ understanding of their own working lives.

The interviews were conducted in the midst of the participants' working and personal life; there were often interruptions from callers at the door, the telephone or family members. The atmosphere was informal and conversational; I was always offered tea or coffee before we turned to discuss the interview themes. The descriptions below contain domestic details, with the aim of providing the reader a 'picture' of the interview context and how the interview progressed. Geertz (1973) suggests that transferability, enabling the reader to understand the application of the research to other contexts, is enhanced if 'thick' description is provided so that a reader can access the world of the participant and understand the context of the research interviews. As the intention of this chapter is to provide the reader access to the participants' world I will draw a pen portrait of each participant. The portrait concentrates on the context of the individual's work and the environment and style of the interview. Each participant has been given a pseudonym to ensure their anonymity and to permit ease of identification by the reader. References to geographical locations or other individuals which would enable participants to be identified have been removed.

All the participants work for the Church of England. Working is often associated with monetary reward. The working lives recorded in the individual interviews are more diverse; they include both those who are paid and those whose funding is from other work. Some are fully funded, and work full time in a parish role. Others, although ordained, are self-funding or non-stipendiary, sometimes working in other occupations as well as for the Church of England. Identifying whether individuals are funded or not is important to my research as it enables consideration of the level and intensity of the working life; the centrality in an individual's life of the working element associated with the Church of England.

Those who took part in both group and individual interviews

Geoff

Geoff is 59, male and has been working for the Church of England for thirty-four years. He works full time and his work is funded by the Church of England. All his work has been in parishes within the Church of England and he has worked in several diocese. He has freehold and has been in his current post for eight years. He works in a town.

The individual interview took place in the study at his home at 2 pm. The house is owned by the Church of England and is both his home and office. We sat opposite each other, at a conversational distance, with a coffee table between us. The interview started with refreshments and was interrupted by two different callers. The recorded interview lasted 50 minutes.

The interview contains eight stories: most were concentrated in the second half of the interview. Throughout Geoff provides considered, concise, focused and self-contained responses to questions in the early stages of the interview. The reflection and commentary is reduced in the latter stages and replaced by stories from his working life.

John

John is 58, male and has been working for the Church of England for twenty-nine years. He has worked in parishes and in chaplaincy roles in public sector organisations. He also worked for several years in a role that did not require him to be ordained during which time he was also a self-funded minister. He has worked in several diocese. His current position is as a Team Rector and licence holder in a town; he has been in post four years and is full-time and funded by the Church of England.

The individual interview took place in the sitting room of his home at midday. The house is both home and office and is owned by the Church of England. The room used for the interview was large and we sat some distance apart. The interview was uninterrupted and lasted 50 minutes.

The interview contains eight stories distributed throughout the interview which are extensive and wide ranging. The style of the interview was conversational, with John giving opinions, illustrated by stories from his working life. John provides extensive background context to the interrelationship between his personal and working life, discussing personal difficulties in order to frame the decisions he has made about his working life. He discusses issues in the wider church and society as well as reflecting on the themes of the questions.

Frances

Frances is 65 and female. She has worked for the Church of England for twenty-five years. She has always been self-supporting and has worked in two parishes in the same diocese. She has occupied her current role in a semi-rural parish for 18 years. She is ordained as a deacon but is not a priest.

The individual interview took place in my home. The recorded element lasted 61 minutes and was uninterrupted. There are two stories in the narrative. Frances weaves anecdotes from her working life into the discussion, discussing her role and its context extensively but does not illustrate her reflections and comments with many specific stories. Her stories are generalised, drawing on her experience of working life. She provides a commentary on her work and the relationship between the church and society in one specific place.

Those who took part only in individual interviews

Michael

Michael is 58 and male. He is a full time priest, has been working for the Church of England for thirty-four years and his work is funded. He works in an urban parish and is Team Rector of a team ministry and Rector of a parish. He has been in post nine years. He is a licence holder. He has a wider role outside his parish as Rural Dean. In his time in the Church of England he has worked in parishes, as a chaplain and in a diocesan role in several dioceses.

The interview took place in the sitting room of Michael's house at 4 pm and the recorded interview lasted 49 minutes. The house is owned by the Church of England and is his home and office. The interview was preceded by tea and biscuits and interrupted on one occasion by Michael needing to speak to his child and providing further refreshments. The room was large with Michael sitting some distance away. The pace and style of the responses are considered and reflective. He illustrates his discussion with one extended story. Michael uses examples from his work to illustrate his points; these are not stories (i.e events that he has experienced himself) but are generalised narrative/tales that draw on his working experience or on hypothetical instances that if he was in a specific situation he would expect the dialogue to proceed in a particular way and the actors in the story to behave and respond in the specified manner.

Mortimer

Mortimer is 50 and male. He has worked for the Church of England for twenty-two years; his work is full time and funded. All his working life has been in parishes and he has worked in several dioceses. He currently works in a semi-rural parish and has wider responsibilities as Rural Dean. He is a freeholder. He has been in his current post for three and a half years.

The interview took place in his study. His home is owned by the Church of England and is both home and office. We sat in adjacent chairs. The interview lasted 57 minutes, with one interruption. There are four stories in the narrative which are used to illustrate points which are then reflected upon and the issues discussed more widely. Mortimer discusses his working life in detail, particularly the relationship between his work and society. He does not always illustrate the points with specific examples, but uses generalised experiences of stories drawn from his working life as illustrations. They are not specific incidents, but observations based on many experiences across a working life.

Germaine

Germaine is 48 and female and has been working for the Church of England for eight years. She is a senior manager in a private sector organisation. She is also ordained and is defined as a Minister in Secular Employment. As a minister she is self-supporting; she has worked in two different diocese. She worked in full time, paid ministry for three years before returning to secular employment. She currently carries out work in a number of parishes and churches but is not licensed to a specific parish.

The interview took place at her house. The recorded element was 54 minutes. The interview was interrupted several times to discuss with a number of workmen working in the house and provide refreshments. The style of the interview was informal and conversational. There are seven stories distributed throughout the interview. Germaine recalls specific events to illustrate her observations and comments. She discusses generally and then illustrates the point with an incident from her own working life.

Benedict

Benedict is 38, male and has been working for the Church of England for two years. He is full time and funded. He works in a semi rural parish. He is in a training post and is an Assistant Curate. He has been in post for less than two

years; he has worked in one diocese. Before ordination he worked in the voluntary and faith sectors.

The interview took place in the sitting room of his house at 2 pm and the recorded interview lasted 66 minutes. The house is owned by the Church of England and is his home and office. The interview was preceded by him making coffee and ten minutes general conversation in the kitchen. It was interrupted once to attend to his sick dog. The sitting room was small, with Benedict sitting on an adjacent chair. The style of the interview was conversational and relaxed. It concluded initially after fifty-five minutes, but restarted when he introduced further material. There are twelve stories in the narrative. Throughout the interview he illustrates his points with stories from his life. Interspersed with the stories are reflection and comment.

Septimus

Septimus is 29 and male. He works full-time and is funded. He has been working for the Church of England for four years and has worked in one diocese. His work is divided into two areas; he works in a rural parish and has a diocesan based post for two days per week located in the central office of [name] diocese. He is a licence holder, has been in his current post for two and a half months and his title is Priest in Charge. Before ordination he was a student.

The recorded interview lasted 65 minutes and began at 10.30 am. It was interrupted several times, to answer the door and also to attend to a leaking pipe outside the house. He made coffee before the interview commenced. The interview took place in the study of his house. The room was small and narrow and we sat in adjacent chairs. The house is owned by the Church of England and is his home and office for the parish element of his role. He has an office in [name of city] where he is based two days per week.

There are seven stories in the narrative, interspersed with responses to questions and commentary. As the interview proceeds Septimus becomes more relaxed and his responses longer. The interview was completed when he suggested that there is another story he thinks it would be interesting and relevant for me to hear and the interview recommenced.

Exploring working lives – role

Before taking any role as clergy in the Church of England, men and women are ordained. The words of the ordination service express what the Church publicly declares to be the role of the priest:

Priests are to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord; they are to teach and to admonish and they are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season. They are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death.

(Common Worship, 2000).

At the individual interview stage, my interest is focused on the working lives of the clergy, on the enactment by individual clergy of their own understanding of the generic role. In chapter 4 I envisaged one of the outcomes of the interviews with individuals as the documentation of the roles clergy undertake in the twenty-first century. The next section documents how the participants in my individual interviews perceive their role.

When first asked what they see as their role clergy describe what they do on a day-to-day basis. Benedict, for example, starts by emphasizing the stages of ordination that he is working through, uses the term ‘trade’ and then corrects himself by challenging the use of trade by describing it as a vocation. *‘I’m in training still but going through the diaconate and priesthood and learning you know the trade really in that sense, but of course it’s a vocation’*. He then proceeds to describe tasks he undertakes and his responsibilities, *‘but I’ve been*

learning how to take funerals, baptisms, weddings, learning the mechanisms of parish life but also being given specific project based work such as I'm heading up, looking into employing, starting a fresh expression [non traditional approach to being a Church] and employing a children and families worker.'

Michael intersperses describing the context of his work with a description of day-to-day tasks:

As parish rector, rector of [name of church] a parish of about 9000 people with a church is quite busy, with things going on most days, services most days, it's got a eucharistic tradition so most of the services are communion services, it's got a strong choral tradition with a choir, the parish its self, we have some light industry [name of company] we have eight schools, two are Roman Catholic, one's a college so I get involved there with some of those schools to different degrees, I'm a governor on two, we have quite a lot of elderly people, we have some nursing homes and there is quite a strong community care in the church, there is that kind of element, within the parish there is [name] hospice, I don't have a lot to do with them, they use me as a resource and they use the church as a resource. Also going back to schools, one of the schools is a special need school, it is not one of the schools I'm a Governor at but they do come to church quite a bit. There's all the schools' work, visiting the sick, the hospital, it's got a chaplain but part of it's in my parish and just by proximity you get more involved in hospital chaplaincy and visiting. I'm sure that there are 101 things I've forgotten about, there are too many meetings, being a parish priest.

Role is more than a list of tasks; when asked all the clergy in my interviews distinguish when asked between tasks and role. Those who when asked about role respond at first with tasks move on to consider the purpose of their working lives, rather than the tasks they undertake.

Core aspects of the role - caring

There is a consistent thread throughout my interviews of clergy presenting their role as being involved in caring. John describes his primary role as to '*preach the gospel, administer the sacraments and visit the sick.*' Frances states that '*this is the deacon and priest thing you are caring for the people in the church and beyond and that is what I feel I am there for.*' Mortimer describes his role as:

Pastor, leader, teacher of the church communities I'm charged with being responsible for. I think it means being available to people being alongside people who are in some sort of adversity, for example sickness bereavement when a personal crisis inflicts their life, so its being available being alongside being there to support people in their walk with God, in their Christian life, being available to them as counsellor, support, confidante.

Looking at the quotation above from Michael, he cites work with the elderly, nursing homes, and community care. Care, pastoral work, visiting the sick is central to the understanding of role. John acknowledged that by stating that the role was to '*preach the gospel, administer the sacrament and visit the sick, I knew when I said it that you were getting the stock answer but I do, I would say it is my core thing.*'

He refers to a stock answer as it reflects the declaration of priesthood from the Ordination Service described at the beginning of the section. The '*core thing*' identified by John mirrors the publicly declared and documented role of a priest in the Church of England. Caring is a value represented in the vows taken at the beginning of working as a priest. It is a value that is consistently perceived both by clergy with very little working experience and those with extensive experience as a primary aspect of their role.

Core aspects of the role - preaching and teaching

Caring is one aspect of the documented role. Another is *'to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord; they are to teach and to admonish'* and *'they are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season.'* (Common Worship, 2000). Three participants respond when asked about their role by identifying preaching and teaching as a primary aspect. Mortimer perceives his role to be *'pastor, leader, teacher of church communities'*. Teaching, to him is:

About enabling people to understand what God is saying to them so that they can apply it to their life and hopefully their lives can become Christ like and they can be, more sanctification can develop within them and they have an understanding of what Christianity might be saying about a given situation, and they can apply it to their own personal life. So they can understand what God is saying to them. God primarily speaks to us through the Bible, through the word of God so it is applying that.

Mortimer locates his role in the church community. Geoff explains his role as *'about being a leader of people and part of that is preaching and mentoring'* members of the church community. John cites *'preach the gospel'* as a core part of his role, discusses visiting the sick and administering the sacraments in detail but does not discuss preaching the gospel in such detail. He does reaffirm at the end of his thoughts about role that *'certainly those are the three things'*. Unlike Mortimer and Geoff he does not locate his role within the church community. Michael, Benedict, Septimus, Frances and Germaine do not refer to preaching and teaching the church community as a primary role although Septimus notes that he teaches other clergy in his part time role outside the parish work.

Geoff and Mortimer use the word leader to describe their role. It is not used by the other six participants.

Geoff:

I suppose you are actually leading a group of people following the way of Christ and serving the community where they find themselves in their day time job and also serving the community in the church, see it very much in a leadership role which will involve teaching.

Mortimer reflects on leadership in the following terms:

Yes in the Church well you have a position of leadership in the sense that you lead the PCC [Parochial Church Council], and you seek to inspire and encourage them to seek a vision for what God wants for their church in that particular place, so leading, it is not always about leading being out at the front saying you must follow me, it can be about getting people fired up about an idea or a project.

So, encouraging?

Yes it can be. It is getting people to think this is a good idea and going with it. And sometimes it is more out front but I suppose my personality is such that I am more of the former.

Enabler?

Yes getting people to want to do it themselves because at the end of the day it is their Church not just my church.

For both Geoff and Mortimer leadership is about enabling other members of the church community to carry out their role.

An explicit or psychological contract?

In the extracts discussed so far the participants clearly identify specific elements of their role that originate from the publicly declared role of the priest. The Church of England does not employ priests; they are office holders, without the defined job descriptions and the legally explicit contract that most of us would expect from our employers. Yet there is an official and documented role in the publically declared words and vows of the Ordination Service. It is not a legal contract of employment but it is an explicit declaration of a role that is identifiable in the working lives of the participants. The documented and public nature of induction into the role through ordination provides clergy with an explicit definition of the role, without a defined legal contract of employment. As the role is declared in the ordination service, clergy do have an explicit documented definition of their role, 'a job description' to guide how they act out their working lives. They make their ordination vows and publicly must '*make the declarations put to [them]*' (Common Worship, 2000). Such vows are not legally binding but they seem to form a common understanding about the working life of a priest, the role to be carried out and the values they must uphold. Doctors, when newly qualified take the Hippocratic Oath. Similarly this is not an employment contract but a long standing statement of values and behaviours expected from all members of that profession.

Bunderson's research (2001) on the ideological psychological contract in the medical profession was discussed in chapter 6. He observes that for professional employees the employment relationship is embedded within a broader ideological and institutional context and to understand the psychological context of professionals it is important to understand how the '...employment relationship (micro social structure) is informed by particular institutions and associated ideologies (the macro social structure)' (2001, p.719). He explores why professionals may not have loyalty to the employing organisation and concludes that the psychological contract with the profession, or the ideological contract, has greater influence than any contract with the organisation. Both medics and clergy declare vows about how they will conduct

their professional lives. The findings of my research are consistent with Bunderson's claim that professionals have loyalties outside the immediate employing organisation.

However for clergy it is not so simple. The Church of England is the organisation that both declares and administers the vows and is the 'employer' of the priest. In Bunderson's terms the Church of England is engaged with both forms of work ideology. It represents the administrative ideology as 'employer' and the professional ideology as upholder and administrator of the vows. Bunderson's work helps us to understand why clergy working lives are shaped by ordination vows. However though it is tempting to place the Church of England into Bunderson's framework it refuses to quite 'fit' the mould because it fulfils aspects of both work ideologies. It is not clear however if individual clergy distinguish between the Church in administrative ideology form and the Church in professional ideology form or give greater credence to the professional ideology than the administrative.

The literature associated with the traditional definition of the psychological contract (Herriot and Pemberton, 1996; Rousseau, 1995, 2001, 2003) distinguishes between the legally enforceable explicit contract and the psychological contract. In the case of the clergy, as there is no legal contract it could be assumed that there is only a psychological contract between the Church of England and its clergy. However my participants use the ordination vows to provide a framework to direct their working lives. A job description and contract are specific to a particular organisation and role. The ordination vows set out the role regardless of the context. They are generic, with the individual priest left to interpret how they are to be operationalised in a specific geographical place.

I have suggested that ordination vows may substitute for clergy the explicit legal contract aspect of the employment relationship described in the psychological contract literature. An alternative perspective is that the ordination service acts not as an explicit contract but as any organisational document, providing the

individual with messages about the organisation and its values and expected norms of behaviours beyond those of the explicit legal contract. The publicly declared role of the priest may not be a overt legal contract but an aspect of developing the psychological contract between the Church of England and its clergy. I refute this argument as the literature traditionally associated with the psychological contract is focused only on business and on organisations with standard employment contracts.

Exploring an uncertain and imprecise role

Not all the participants consistently demonstrate such clarity in relating their working lives to the ordination vows, but reflect more widely with fewer specified elements. The following series of extended extracts is presented to give the opportunity to access the participant's complete response when asked about their own role.

Michael:

It's the sort of question that I think I would answer differently at different stages of my working life. The contents of the answer might be the same but the order I would put them might change, and it might even change from today to tomorrow. I mean if it doesn't sound too vague as a first stab or too pious, it is a kind of embodying Christ in the community, well that does sound pious, it is incarnational, it's theological, it's to do with being a visible representative presence of what the gospel stands for in and with the community and that's a two way thing. And I think community is important and our church is about to celebrate its centenary and we are using that as an opportunity to say to ourselves there was a reason a hundred years ago why the church was built here, and it clearly had a raison d'être, it related to its community, it was here rather than anywhere else and after a hundred years you just take these things as given. We can't say what are we here for, for the next hundred years, short of that, but it is important to say why is there a church here

and what are we here to do for the next say ten years. If it's just to do with worship, and so on in a city like [name] you could close one church and people could walk without difficulty to the next one, or even to the cathedral. I mean they would resent it and many people wouldn't, but you don't need all the churches and therefore you have got to say well, Lord how do you justify this one in this place, that was built a hundred years ago, it's not really fit for purpose, so we need to find out what purposes we want it for.

The participant discusses a number of issues. He suggests that his role is representative, a visible symbol of the values of Church. The second aspect is about exploring the purpose for a specific church in a specified place.

Septimus:

I don't know that I've got an answer or that my answer might be different in six months time. My primary role now, two and half months in, is to get to know my people and my villages, and to discover what I can do to continue the spiritual flourishing of the people of these villages and until I do that, anything I do is going to be based on what I think is best for them. I think I am about, I think I stand by that phrase it is the spiritual flourishing.

Septimus has only been in post for a few months. Like Michael he observes that his role may change over time. He uses the word 'discover', echoing that exploratory nature of the role identified by Michael and he wants '*to continue the spiritual flourishing of the people of these villages*'. He is focused on a particular geographical place. Similarly Michael explored how his role is 'acted out' in the context of his current parish. Both participants move beyond the generic, publicly declared role of the ordination service to explore how the working life is enacted in one particular location. Their working lives are a continuing exploration of how to embody and enact being a priest in the current working context. The enactment of a working life is the visible outcome of a

relationship between a priest and the environment. The psychological contract literature (Rousseau, 2001, 2003) claims that new members of organisations form a psychological contract with the new organisation in the first few months of working. The new psychological contract is influenced by many factors, an individual's past experience of work, values and educational experience. The schema is used to evaluate their new experience of work and informs expectations and the new psychological contract. Michael and Septimus use their generic understanding of the role, developed by past experience and training, to evaluate their current situation and evolve a working life in the new context.

Germaine:

I think it is about being in the midst of the muddle. Something about, I can't completely articulate it yet, and I'm not sure I ever will but it is something about being publicly a minister, a priest in the kind of environment that most other people find themselves in and trying to explore what that means, to be fully human what does that mean, what does it mean to be a Christian and giving people permission to question that, how well I am modelling it perhaps and all that kind of stuff.

Germaine is a senior manager in the private sector. She struggles fully to articulate her role as a priest. Her role is about being a priest in a place, *'the kind of environment that most other people find themselves in'*, the secular workplace. It is also about providing a model for others to observe and question. Like Michael and Septimus she is concerned about her role in the context of a defined place. Her 'place' is not the parish, but the workplace. She is exploring how the generic role of a priest can be enacted in an alternative context to the other seven participants.

Frances:

Not entirely sure of it myself. Little bits of everything, trying to fill in gaps where they are needed, I keep saying although it is taking a long time to work, part of my role is in a sense to stop having a role. All the things I get involved in, quite a lot, no one is indispensable obviously, but I think quite a lot I do in the long term would be better if they were done by the congregation but historically it has worked out, it has been helpful for me. For example I am the PCC secretary which has been useful for a time but in the long term it should be someone else who will need to do that. It happens that I am as good a person to do that as anybody at the moment so it is reasonable to do it, there is so much, there is so much overlap actually, I mean a lot of what priests can do a deacon can, there is a lot of overlap in the sense, for example, of encouraging the gifts of everybody. Again historically some of the things I've got involved in like organising the cleaning rota I'd only be delighted to pass it on, there are several things like that, then I think do I have to retire and somebody will have to do it. But on the other hand the nature of the congregation and we only have the one church warden it's meant trying to kind of work as a team, try and get as many people involved as possible and that we seem able to do. And this has been one of my roles has been to try and involve people as far as I can, as any priest would want to do as well but as an NSM [self funding] and a Deacon I can focus on that. I mean [name of incumbent] has so much else to do that he just wouldn't have time to do, he has two parishes, one much bigger than [name of church where Frances works], he just wouldn't have time to do. [name of church warden] for example a good church warden in that regard in that he is involved in the village community, there are things that [he] is doing, like getting the names of the readers for the carol service, [name of church warden] is doing that, and he has got good links, and I think the part of my role has been and continues to be building links, and making links.

Frances is a deacon. She decided not to become a priest. She reflects on how her status enables her to focus on certain tasks within the context of her working life. She describes the place she works in and how her role has evolved in this context. Again there is an exploratory and evolutionary feel to how she understands her role. It is contingent on the context of ministry and therefore cannot be defined except within the context of the place she works in. This is further illustrated by the following excerpt from later in the interview when she is discussing expectations:

He used to be my reviewer and I remember talking to him and he said that you are like an old fashioned vicar, for example [name of cleric] was Vicar of [name of village], just [name of village] and whilst you know I haven't had the energy that he had it is more that kind of a role. It is more about being around perhaps in a way many clergy would still like to be, and it is probably has bearings on people's expectations. And I'm sure people are understanding now that if a vicar has six different parishes he can't be there like Mr so and so in the 1920s who knew every man woman and child in the village. And of course life has changed, the church has far less bearing on life than in those days, but I can go to the toddlers most weeks and help and that grew out of the monthly coffee morning in the village hall and out of that came the present toddler group which is a village group and I remember from my own times going to a group, and people came to make coffee, and through that I have made so many links in the village and got to know so many families and seen them grow up through the school and that is the sort of thing that clergy, that might not have necessarily gone to the toddler group it might have been their wives, you can really get to know people.

Frances is self-supporting, she identifies that she undertakes a role that is no longer carried out by those who work full time and are funded. She has freedom and flexibility to define her role without the constraints she perceives are experienced by other clergy.

Role – conclusion

There are two distinct threads in the participants' responses to the theme of role. Some clearly identify specific tasks, for instance preaching and teaching, that link with the generic and official, documented role of the priest. Others explore how their working lives enact the documented role. The role, to them, is organic and evolves in the context of the place they work in. Working life is a response to the needs that they identify in a specific church, community or workplace. The two distinct responses are not necessarily contradictory. They are responses to the question 'what do you see as your role' made at different levels. The first response is at a macro level, exploring the working life of the clergy in general, without reference to a specific place. The second thread explores the working life in context. It is the 'working out' for the individual of the meaning of the publicly defined, official Church of England role. The second thread presents working lives that are bespoke, defined and honed by and to match the work context, in many cases a parish.

The next chapter will continue exploring working lives by considering expectations and work status.

CHAPTER 8

THE WORKING LIVES OF CLERGY: EXPECTATIONS AND WORK STATUS

This chapter will focus on the second and third issues outlined in Figure 7.1, expectations and work status. With role (discussed in chapter 7), the three issues are threads that run through the research project and are important in bringing together the literature on the psychological contract and my interview material.

Exploring working lives – expectations

It is clear from my findings that the ordination service has some ‘contractual’ power. It helps clergy to understand, define and work out their role. It is a reference point. The power of place in defining the role of individual clergy emerges from the narratives. The documented ordination service provides a strong framework in which clergy can understand the essential generic elements of the role and it will become clear that they understand and work out their role in the context of a specified place.

In terms of the two aspects of the employment relationship, the explicit legal contract and implicit psychological contract, once ordained and working in a specified context and place clergy have no explicit or documented role beyond the ordination service. What is left is what in the language of HR would be called the psychological contract, the implicit, unstated element in which individuals perceive the relationship between themselves and the organisation in terms of implicit expectations.

Almost half of every interview is taken up with expectations with the transcript of every participant providing a wealth of material. The following section will present core themes about expectations from the narratives.

Historic and contemporary expectations

Clergy who perceive there are few current expectations

The Church of England is an organisation that has been present in English society for over five hundred years. Michael comments that *'even today any parish in the Church of England has historic expectations'*. The influence of the long history of the organisation on expectations of current clergy is a theme that consistently runs throughout my interviews, as Michael illustrates:

If I can illustrate it with an observation, when I was first ordained, and certainly for the first few years, I was in a traditional Anglican parish; we did a lot of visiting, door to door visiting. Just casual dropping in, I was able, had the time and found it interesting and important to knock on people's doors. If I saw a house that had changed hands then I would knock on the door as soon as they had unpacked and say welcome and people never minded that and it was almost as if, some appreciated it, when they opened the door and I was standing there with a dog collar on almost nobody needed to ask why I was there, so the expectation was that if they really didn't know what a vicar did, it was quite normal for someone in a dog collar knocking on doors and saying hello. There was an understanding although many couldn't articulate it, it was understood and many of them would invite me in and we would have a chat.

He articulates what he perceives as an unwritten expectation in the community when he was first ordained. He does not use the five hundred year history of the Church of England to illustrate how expectations have changed, but draws on the recent past, the historical record of his own working life. People in the community thirty years ago expected clergy to be present. He contrasts it with current expectations:

But now in parishes including this one, there is a complete bafflement, if I was just to knock on a door, which I do occasionally cold calling, they

would, you can tell on their face, they think if you have knocked on our door you must be going to give me something, invite me to something, most people don't even have that expectation, why would he be there? And I think that is very different.

Michael presents what he perceives now as the expectations of a defined group, the community or the people in his parish, by contrasting it with the past. The community had a common implicit understanding of the role of the clergy, an understanding that has disappeared.

John tells a similar story about how people have lost a common understanding of the role of clergy:

Going back to being a parson, that has completely changed. I can't have expectations of people and they don't have expectations of me at all because I am irrelevant. Talking recently about [name of church] might close, people like churchwardens have said well we have failed to do this, we have failed to do that, and I say all this talk about failure is inappropriate, because you seem to think we have failed to get people to choose church, you are not on the list, yeah, you are not on the radar, there is nothing you can do to change this, it used to be shall I go to church, wash the car, play golf those kind of things, now it's let's go shopping, or go to work, or watch the kids play football, or whatever it is, every class is doing it. So life in the parish has changed dramatically in that sense and it is easy to slip in the old world and feel bad about this one, and you have to keep reminding yourself its not like that. This isn't what is going on, stop hitting yourself with a stick, it's very challenging.

Other participants bring up similar stories from their own past working lives to illustrate current expectations on them and to suggest that the community has few or no expectations of them.

Clergy who perceive there are current expectations of them

Septimus discusses expectations of him in the community:

Here [in the parish] there is a visiting culture and I went to do some visiting on Christmas Eve and I went to someone who I hadn't visited before and her opening line was 'I was wondering when you would get to me'. Yes, so there is expectation from the wider community that I will visit and be interested in their lives.

Septimus gives a different narrative of expectations from John and others. He identifies that the community has perceivable expectations of him. He carries on to discuss how he responds to these expectations:

Obviously each village expects that I will do a lot of visiting in their village and there are some villages I haven't done any visiting at all because I just haven't had the time because effectively I have two week days here, Mondays and Wednesdays, and no secretarial assistance so it just isn't going to happen anyway however much I would like it to.

He then considers the working lives of his predecessors:

I was talking to one of the previous vicars two or three weeks ago and he was saying when he was full time, he was the last full time vicar here, he was saying he would spend a day in each village. He would go at half past eight up to [name of village,] ring the bell, say matins, visit all morning, pop into the post office, there's just no way I can do that sort of thing.

How long ago was that?

Well the previous vicar was here 10 years and he didn't have that sort of pattern. We are talking about 15, 20 years ago but still well within the

memory of the community. Again I was talking to a chap in [name of village] who can remember a vicar who did the same thing; he used to go and say evening prayer, lock the church, walk back up through the village, always pop in, have a cup of tea, have a chat and that's a model I would love to do but there is no possibility of it.

The story is about contemporary expectations upon the participant. He sets the discussion in both the present and the past. The community expects him to visit; he aspires to fulfil the expectation but is constrained by the exigencies of his working life. Unlike Michael, who draws on his own experience, Septimus has only been working as a priest for four years, so he accesses parishioners' experience of former clergy working lives to illustrate the changes in the working context.

Twenty years ago two full time clergy would have been working in his two parishes; he works part-time in a parish and part-time in another role. The expectations the community have of him are not based on his own working life but on an historical experience, on working lives that were completed at least fifteen years ago. His stories contrast with other participants. Michael, John and others use the stories to illustrate the lack of expectation, John identifying that his role is irrelevant to most people. Septimus's story indicates that there are current expectations of him by the community which are not based on the reality of his working life but on the experience that communities have of the working lives of the clergy in the past.

In the literature associated with the psychological contract the most powerful influence on an individual's expectations is the immediate work group and an individual's background and past experiences of work (Rousseau, 2002, 2003). The stories in this section do not portray the expectations of an intimate work group, but record the expectations of an amorphous wider group: the community, people who live in the parish. It is a record of a psychological contract not between named individuals but between a role and a defined group. The expectations, or in some case lack of expectations, are of clergy in

general, not of Michael, Septimus or any other specific participant; expectations and a psychological contract that have been developed from an understanding of a role that has been present in society for hundreds of year, physically present in parishes throughout England and in fictional literature. Some participants now record that the expectations and therefore the psychological contract no longer exists between English communities and the Church of England.

Expectations in secular organisations

Three of the participants have worked as chaplains to organisations outside the Church of England or are Ministers in Secular Employment. I will term these organisations as secular, in that they do not specifically have a stated religious ethos or purpose. Two of the three participants discuss the expectation of them in organisations outside the Church of England. Michael discusses his role when he worked as a polytechnic chaplain. In the narrative presented earlier in the chapter Michael identifies his role as '*embodying Christ in the community*', and continues with this theme in the context of working as a chaplain:

How that works out because you try to be a visible presence of Christ, pointer all those sorts of things, how you would do that in a polytechnic is going to be very different, an interesting thing about that, I am now going back twenty five years. There were virtually no expectations from the institution, in fact the institution didn't appoint me, the diocese offered me to them. In fact the poly wouldn't have been able to write a job description or have any great expectations at all so it was an opportunity to think how will I do it.

When working as a chaplain Michael moved from being identified with a parish or a church. As the polytechnic had no expectations, he was free to create his own role. What is not clear is whether the Church of England had expectations of him. His role as '*a visible presence of Christ*' or '*embodying Christ in the community*' remains unchanged in the secular institution and is not context

specific. He has a clear understanding of his own purpose and the freedom to interpret how the role should be carried out in each situation. As discussed earlier Bunderson (2001) identifies professional employees as challenging for both managers and management scholars, exposing the complexity in the relationship between professionals, their profession and professional values and the employing organisation. Michael was a professional working within an organisation. His narrative does not suggest tension or conflict between the organisation and the profession. The organisation is presented as being unconcerned about how Michael defined and carried out his role: there is no obvious evidence of a psychological contract between the organisation and the individual. *'Being a visible presence of Christ'* is a generic role for priests; Michael identifies it as being a consistent role regardless of context.

Germaine is a Minister in Secular Employment who sees her secular workplace as the focus for her ministry. She is a manager for the organisation and is not employed as a chaplain. She comments on the expectations upon her of the secular workplace and outlines her relationship with the organisation:

It is quite interesting in this organisation because the managing director is a practising Catholic and is very interested in the whole kind of idea of priests in the workplace.

Can I follow that up? I'm interested in expectations.

They don't have any expectations of me in the sense they expect me to do things, they expect me to be able to answer their questions that I can't always do. This organisation is incredibly intelligent, very highly qualified people and some of the questions they ask are actually very challenging and I have to be on my mettle and do far more research than in a parish, they don't expect anything by right, that is different from what I might offer and I try to offer a pastoral approach that makes me available and acceptable and try to challenge the ways of being. For example the company is doing some work revisiting its values and some of the work I was involved in was challenging and sort of what are our ethics, what are

the moral things and trying to push them on that I see part of my role that voice of actually are we doing the right thing, is this the thing to do.

Michael and Germaine both suggest that when working in a secular organisation the individual priests must create their own approach to working life. The organisation does not define the role for them. The community in the workplace do not carry with them into the workplace the expectations they have perhaps developed of parochial clergy. Germaine follows discussion of expectations of her work as a Minister in Secular Employment by contrasting it with expectations when she worked full time in a parish. The following extract provides the opportunity to access an individual's entire comments about expectations:

You have started to contrast between your MSE work and in the parish, what sort of expectations did people have of you in the parish?

I think people had a picture of this thing called the curate, this a slight aside but it is important. When I was a curate I had a period of illness, part of the trigger for that was that I felt I had lost my identity, because I had to be this amorphous thing called the curate who was always there to give to other people and didn't need anything back who was always kind and caring and didn't have any of those human foibles that everybody has, who fulfilled what people expected a priest to be like, everybody had different expectations of that, whether it was whether you should be very prim and proper, or whether terribly pious.

How did they communicate this?

It is just in the way people treat you, one of the things I remember was going to do a funeral visit, being shown in, she was an older lady and being kind of sat in this throne-like chair in their lounge which had a table put by the side with a beautiful lace doily on and out came this plate of

Marks and Spencer's biscuits which had clearly been bought specially and were put on the doily by the side of me so no one else could eat them, then 'would you like a cup of tea Vicar, yes that would be lovely' and I could hear them in the kitchen, 'give the Vicar the bone china cup', and it was that kind of thing that you are somehow different and sometimes that is useful but sometimes it dehumanises you and there is none of that in ministry in secular employment because people don't see you first as the person with the dog collar so it is much more integrated, it is much more holistic I suppose and I feel more comfortable with it and I can be me and me happens to be a priest like somebody might happen to be a doctor, and that has certain implications for how I behave.

The expectations of a curate were not appropriate for your calling?

Some of them were, they expected [you] to be at their beck and call 24 hours a day every day, they expected it was my life rather than a job.

Do you think that is difficult?

I think it is an interesting debate about how you understand vocation. They expected me to be available to give to them but not to need anything back and although I was working with people all the time they were always asking things from me and they didn't consider that I needed support as well. They expected me to be always strong, always available, always able to hold them up and not to need some of those things myself. I remember the first year of my curacy we were having a slave auction at my church, my Vicar hadn't come across these before and said okay you can do the notice to tell people about what this is and I remember getting up in the church and saying I want you to imagine me dressed in black leather and holding a whip, and I can remember seeing people's faces, now I wouldn't say that now, I was my first year and I was a very new curate, but it just really brought home to me that people saw me as a-sexual, that my sexuality needed to be behind, well behind a

curtain and that was all part of the identity of the curate, not personal identity and I found this very difficult.

At the end of the excerpt Germaine distinguishes between personal identity and identity as a curate. The expectations she discusses throughout the excerpt are concerned with expectations of someone carrying out a particular role, that of curate.

In contrast to some other participants it is evident that Germaine, like Septimus, perceived that parishioners had very clear expectations of her in the role as curate; they were generic, rather than specific to an individual, or a response to their approach to her working life. Her rejection of the expectations is what makes Germaine stand out: she refers to the generic expectations as 'dehumanising'. She recognises that they are very evident but rejects them. Her parishioners had expectations; they had a psychological contract with the role of the curate. In the language of the psychological contract Germaine considered such generic expectations to violate her own expectations of working as a priest. She is far more comfortable with creating her own role as a priest within the environment of the secular organisation. Germaine is moving outside the expectations and psychological contract based on the historic role of clergy in English society into a working life without pre-existing expectations. She is free to explore and develop a distinctive and possibly unique approach to working life unencumbered by the constraints of the historical role and expectations.

Expectations of groups within the community

Benedict discusses the expectations of him when a community he works in faced a specific crisis and he visited the headquarters of the Local Authority:

When I walked into the council offices, and I thought I don't know what I am doing here, you walk into a scene of devastation in terms of hundreds of people evacuated, and all of that and they saw the collar said ah right,

and ushered me straight through and people wanted to talk and even those the top guy just wanted to talk and there was no question that I wouldn't listen.

His story about being welcomed at the council offices suggests there is an expectation from the community and an understanding of the role of clergy in the community. Benedict continues the narrative:

You talked about the Church still having a place in society?

I think it has probably changed, perhaps one way is describing it, in the old days you almost were assigned a civic role in society where as in this day and age you have to earn it a bit more and I like that you can't just take it for granted it, you can't just waltz into anything but even at the same, even at the council there are some very strong atheists there are civic service but they still welcome you, there are still opportunities. And the same in schools as well, once you can get a foot hold in you can prove what you have to offer, whether it be RE lessons or just sitting down helping teachers hear children read. Or whatever and they you agree more involvement. Yes there is a still a welcome for the Church.

He uses the word *welcome* to describe the relationship between the clergy and the institutions within the Community for instance, the local council or schools. Frances uses a similar phrase, *'there is a welcome for the church'*. A welcome and an expectation are not the same; expectation implies a far stronger relationship. Benedict asserts that *'you can't just take it for granted'*; expectations can be taken for granted, they are developed from shared history and understanding and they are not normally negotiated in the short term. The experiences of Benedict provide a mixed view; it is unclear from his account whether the community does have expectations of clergy.

Benedict discusses his work with schools. Many other participants when asked to consider expectations from the community relate stories and examples about

working with schools or other institutions within the parish. Geoff discusses the difficulties of being present in the community because of his pressure of work:

I think it is more difficult today to be visible within the community mainly because the pressure of work, it is more difficult to be out knocking on the doors which I used to do when I was a curate and even in [name of town] than you can do today, there was more opportunity but we are trying to redress that balance.

Whilst recognising the difficulty of maintaining a visible presence in the community he does, in the context of expectations of the community, discuss his relationship with schools. He is often unable to attend Governor meetings because of other commitments causing 'one member of my governing body asking the head teacher why is he on the governing body because he never turns up'. Geoff identifies his role as:

I'm kind of chaplain to the school, chaplain to the kids, chaplain to the families, so the head tells this chap this is what Geoff does, he is involved in assemblies, goes and sees families when they are in need, I'd much rather be doing that than sitting two hours in a meeting.

Michael responds to the prompt 'what about the community, does the community have any expectations?' by discussing the schools' expectations:

Well schools do; we have one primary school that is a church school, other primary schools in the parish and I'm a governor at one of them, a community governor, and schools still do, and any school will ring up at any time and say can I go in and do assembly, quite often can I host a visit from the school to church, and I know that is because it fits in with their curriculum, and there is the expectation that that is one of the things I am for and the church is for. I think there is strong expectation there.

He then discusses other identifiable groups that have expectations:

There is still quite a strong expectation that people who are elderly, alone and ill, themselves ring up the church and ask for visit and support, or someone else will ring up on their behalf so that still goes on and there are more people in an urban parish I know fewer and can cover few but that is still quite a strong expectation, of every vicarage I have lived in of possibly this one more than any other because it is on a main road that homeless, itinerant, impoverished people will knock on the door and always be helped and that's not an insignificant part. We had it more in [name of city] because we were near the prison, and there was a pub between the prison and us and when they had been released and spent, we were the next place. And genuine hardship cases we have often had.

The groups identified by Michael are all people who are in need and have expectations of clergy. There are other such examples in my interviews. For example Frances discusses how the church has been a focus when a baby died in her parish.

Mortimer articulates what he sees as the reasons for such expectations:

You can't get away from the public face, you are dealing with a specific section of the public those that come to the church you are responsible for, and you are dealing with the wider public because the Church of England has always had this kind of idea that notionally that it ministers to every person in a particular geographical parish it is a pretty vague notion as there are thousands of people in a parish. It is the availability business.

What do you mean by the availability?

Well you are there aren't you, if someone rings up as often happens, and says that my father/mother/ husband, whatever, has died, I'd like you to

take the funeral. The Church of England has always worked on the basis that you are available to do that for those particular people even though you have never met them.

He explores the relationship between the Church of England and a defined geographical area. Others in this section have discussed the expectations held by the wider community whereas Mortimer views expectations from a different perspective, that of the clergy and the Church of England. The Church of England, he suggests, expects to work with and be available to the community. The Ordination Service states that deacons and priests are to 'serve the community in which they are set' (Common Worship, 2000). Again a participant draws on the publicly declared role from the ordination service to explain how his working life is constructed. Clergy are 'set' and work for the benefit of a specific community.

The narratives discussed above do not provide a single understanding of expectations of the clergy within the community, or of the clergy's understanding of those expectations. Some can identify groups in society who have defined expectations. At the same time they articulate that they are irrelevant to society and their role is not understood.

The preceding discussion has focused on the participants' perceptions of what the wider community expects. In some cases the term community is used loosely. It is unclear whether the participants are discussing the wider community or a more narrow section. The two are intertwined in their minds. The participants could be discussing the expectations of members of the wider community in which they are 'set' or expectations of individuals they meet regularly who attend services.

Church members' expectations

The participants also present narratives that mention specifically the expectations of church members.

In the following excerpt Germaine articulates the expectations she perceives the church members had of her:

They expected me to be available to give to them but not to need anything back and although I was working with people all the time they were always asking things from me and they didn't consider that I needed support as well, they expected me to be always strong, always available, always able to hold them up and not to need some of those things myself.

The expectations expressed here are of the role rather than the individual who holds the role. They are general and seem focused on an expectation of how clergy should behave and work. Michael discusses the same issue of the expectation of availability with contrasting comments:

I think I have been lucky, you know the horror stories you hear that I've been expected to be superman available around the clock, I don't think I have actually found that, if I was letting someone down, and they rang and I wasn't in, it would highlight in them that they did have an expectation, but I don't think most parishioners think I've got to be totally and absolutely available and always kind and generous, in fact I am debunking what I think is often a myth, but the myth does have some truth in it.

Other participants present stories and opinions that clearly are related to expectations of themselves in the context of their working life. Septimus discusses at length the expectations of his church members in his rural parish. He presents a different story about the expectations of church members. The

source of the expectations of parishioners is multifaceted and based on a number of issues. Place is one basis of expectation; *'each village has a different expectation'*. He perceives expectations based on the previous role holders *'I think I'm measured against the previous incumbent, he was incredibly popular, here ten years which is the longest they have had a vicar in a long time'*. As he has other roles outside the parish his own working life is different from the previous incumbent, yet *'there is clearly an expectation that I am going to be around more than I will be, they are not used to having someone who is not in the parish two days a week, and that's taking a lot of re-iterating'*. His own personal circumstances and his age create expectations of how he will work and what will be his priorities: *'there is also a fear that because he is young he will want to make everything young and trendy and happy-clappy and do away with Evensong'*.

Septimus describes his own expectations of himself as *'an old fashioned priest'* before articulating what impact this has on his work life:

I'm an Anglo-Catholic which brings with it a certain set of expectations about what the priest does I suppose. The priest is there to say his prayers, to care for the community, to celebrate the sacraments, that whole sacramental thing of bringing the kingdom into existence in a place, helping a community bring the kingdom in through social action and all that sort of stuff, I grew up in a semi rural parish so I saw a traditional model there, so I have a very traditional model of priesthood and part of my internal conflict is that I realise I can't possibly do that model, it's not going to work, its not going to work because I'm spread too thinly.

He observes earlier in the interview that his parishioners' expectations are based on a role that can no longer exist and are therefore unrealistic. His expectations of himself also seem to be based on this model. He acknowledges that he cannot fulfil his own expectations and the inner conflict

that causes. He has a psychological contract with the historic role of the priest that he cannot fulfil.

Frances, a self-funded Deacon, describes her role as *'more about being around perhaps in a way many clergy would still like to be, and it probably has bearing on people's expectations.'* She recognises that she is able to construct a role that full time and paid Clergy cannot. People expect to see her in the village, to be accessible and available. By describing her role as 'like an old fashioned vicar' she acknowledges the changes that have occurred in the working lives of those who work full time for and are paid by the Church of England which contrast with the uniqueness of her own position.

Three participants describe the expectations of church members in terms of tasks and leadership; church members expect the clergy to do certain tasks. Michael encapsulates church members' expectations as *'Well I'm sure they have expectation that I would be there to lead worship and to give some kind of vision or steer, whatever that is.'* He goes on to explore how church members may interpret and subvert those expectations, providing through his reflection access to how he experiences his working life:

People don't always know what they mean by vision and I think if you were to ask most of the articulate ones, they would say leadership but they wouldn't be able to agree on what leadership means and I think that is inevitable and you get some, fortunately few, and I would think from an anglo catholic background when it suits them like to call you father, and think that father should set a lead and tell people what to do, they mean father should tell other people what they think they should do. So there is that expectation, from their own personal history which they don't actually have themselves today, they don't really want a despot who knows best and nobody thinks I'm always right.

Geoff describes very clearly what people expect of him:

Clear leadership, giving the church direction, giving the church a good example, giving a role model, living out the life of Christ, inspire people, encourage people who are perhaps struggling, being a support to people who are going through a rough patch, to be a fun person. Well they get it whether they want it or not.

The expectations he describes so precisely are based not on his perceptions, but on the profile of the role prepared for advertising the post he took up: the profile indicated *'that they wanted leadership, they wanted teaching, they wanted direction, they wanted a vision'*. Geoff articulates expectations that are based on an explicit written statement, not an implicit psychological contract.

Mortimer also discusses the parish profile but suggests that it does not provide explicit, precise guidelines, *'so no one ever comes to you and says this is what we want you to do, a parish puts together a profile that says this is what we want but a lot of them are fairly general things they want a preacher a pastor, lead worship and get on with young people, they are often very general in their expectations and requirements of you.'* He receives feedback at the end of services and *'can only guess by when they say that was a good service that must be what they want.'* He concludes that *'no one ever comes to you and says this is what we want you to do'*.

Apart from Geoff, who can present explicit instructions based on the parish profile, the participants clearly articulate an understanding of church members' expectations. They describe a psychological contract between themselves and their parishioners which is not consistent and it is at times identified as unrealistic. The narrative surrounding the theme 'expectation' provides a rich and complex depiction of the expectations of clergy working lives.

Summary and conclusions

To provide a summary of the findings and to help understand their richness and complexity, Figures 8.1 – 8.4 depict each participant’s understanding of the expectations upon them.

Figure 8.1 Expectations in secular organisations

| Name | Expectations | No Expectations |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Michael | 0 | ✓ |
| Germaine | 0 | ✓ |
| Geoff | Not discussed | Not discussed |
| John | Not discussed | Not discussed |
| Frances | Not discussed | Not discussed |
| Mortimer | Not discussed | Not discussed |
| Benedict | Not discussed | Not discussed |
| Septimus | Not discussed | Not discussed |

Notes:

✓ = the participant identified with the theme

0 = the participant did not identify with the theme

Not discussed = the participant did not discuss the theme

Only two participants discuss experience of working as clergy outside the Church of England. Both consider that secular organisations have no expectations.

Figure 8.2 Historic and Contemporary Expectations

| Name | Historically community had expectations | Contemporary community has expectations |
|-------------|---|---|
| Geoff | ✓ | ✓ |
| John | ✓ | 0 |
| Michael | ✓ | 0 |
| Frances | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mortimer | ✓ | ✓ |
| Germaine | ✓ | ✓ |
| Benedict | ✓ | ✓ |
| Septimus | ✓ | ✓ |

Figure 8.2 shows that all participants suggest that historically the wider community had expectations of the clergy. With the exception of John and Michael the remainder of participants indicate that contemporary society still has some expectations.

Figure 8.3 Expectations of groups within the community

| Name | Expectations | No Expectations |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Geoff | ✓ | 0 |
| Frances | ✓ | 0 |
| Mortimer | ✓ | 0 |
| Germaine | ✓ | 0 |
| Septimus | ✓ | 0 |
| Benedict | ✓ | ✓ |
| Michael | ✓ | ✓ |
| John | 0 | ✓ |

In Figure 8.3 John, Michael and Benedict indicate that the community has no expectations. John is consistent throughout the interview that there are no expectations from contemporary society and from the community. Michael and Benedict however are not so consistent. Michael, as seen in Figure 8.2, indicates that contemporary society and the community have no expectations. Benedict suggests firstly that the contemporary community, like the historic

community, does have expectations, but then later indicates that the community does not have any expectations. Yet they both identify specific expectations of them from the community. On one hand these two participants indicate that they feel irrelevant to the community, with no expectations of them and on the other that there are highly defined expectations. Despite the contradictions in some participants' responses, only John considers that the community has no expectations of clergy. The clergy may articulate that they are less relevant or have a changed role but they consistently narrate that in their working lives there is a contract between themselves and the community.

Figure 8.4 Church members' expectations

| Name | Expectations | No Expectations |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Geoff | ✓ | 0 |
| John | ✓ | 0 |
| Frances | ✓ | 0 |
| Michael | ✓ | 0 |
| Mortimer | ✓ | 0 |
| Germaine | ✓ | 0 |
| Benedict | ✓ | 0 |
| Septimus | ✓ | 0 |

It is clear from my findings that clergy consider there is a contract with identifiable expectations between Church members and themselves.

This section has documented expectations upon clergy from the communities they work in. Although there is diversity in the scope of expectations, the clergy in my individual interviews can articulate expectations of them with ease. They are aware of them and how they impinge on their working lives. They can perceive a relationship between themselves and the context in which they work.

The literature of the psychological contract does not discuss expectations between communities and individuals. It confines itself to those within the employment relationship. None of the expectations explored in this section

come within the boundaries of an employment relationship. Church members are not employees, nor do they employ individual clergy. Despite having no formal employment relationship individuals are able to describe what can be called a psychological contract between themselves and not the organisation they work for, the Church of England, but with the organisations and the individuals they work with in the local Church and in the community.

The psychological contract literature tends to be bounded within the confines of a conventional organisation. The expectations and psychological contract that I explored in this section is not bounded by the traditional organisation where expectations are between members of the same organisation. To understand the expectations on the working lives of clergy the concept of an organisation must be expanded. Traditionally a psychological contract is between an individual, work colleagues and managers within a single organisation. To remain a useful device for analysing relationships in individual clergy working lives the boundaries of the concept of the psychological contract has to be expanded to at least include the parish, (a theme I will return to in chapter 9). This would enable the concept to be used to analyse the relationships and expectations that impinge on clergy working lives.

Exploring working lives – work status

The relationship between the clergy's anomalous employment conditions and the psychological contract was an early theme in my research. Asking individual clergy about this will enable me to provide an answer to one of my research questions: 'to examine how the differing employment conditions experienced by the clergy affect the psychological contract'. This section will focus on contractual and employment issues in relation to clergy terms and conditions and work status in order to present the participants' thoughts on these issues.

Views about work status from full-time parish clergy

Participants readily recount the historical employment conditions of the clergy and recognise them as giving material privilege that resulted in clergy staying 'in post until they were in the 80s partly because they had not enough pension and nowhere to live'. Before the introduction of compulsory retirement at 70 clergy were able to stay in post all their lives. The participants record that they do not regret the removal of this element of clergy working lives. They recognise that elderly clergy were often not working fulltime. The excerpt from Geoff is a record of typical views:

They stayed like that, and let's face it once they had turned seventy most of them weren't doing a full week's work or a full day's work as they weren't capable of it.

The guy in [name of town] had been there forty odd years, he was eighty six. The sad thing was that when he went there he caused it to really motor, I gather but as time went on, it dipped down and it went into the wilderness completely, which is very sad.

Even though clergy must now retire at 70 the majority of clergy are still freeholders. Fifty percent of my participants are freeholders. The next section records the participants' views on freehold in contemporary working lives.

Michael explains what he perceives are the effects of the freehold:

I can look at certain places in the diocese, I won't name them, but it is perfectly obvious that that person, that vicar is in trouble, in the wrong job, he is wrong for it, they are giving him a hard time and something is wrong and then I have an expectation that the hierarchy will notice it and be able to do something or if as a rural dean I bring it to their notice there is a hope they will do something about it, and sometimes there is a disappointment. But they still, almost beggars belief, well the structure

includes the freehold and I quite understand that it is impossible to go to somebody and just sack them because they are inept but sometimes it seems they can't do anything, I can't accept that.

Michael does not value freehold for his own working life. He *'didn't bat an eyelid when I gave that up, didn't worry me at all'*. He does not display any anxiety or insecurity about his status or role and never expects that people would *'think I was doing it so badly that people would want to shift me'*. His perception is about how it disables the organisation and where the freehold prevents intervention and is *'used as a bit of an excuse'*.

Other clergy value the protection freehold affords them. Mortimer does not think *'I'm necessarily happy to get rid of it; I said 99% of the time there might be a time that it is important'*.

He defines situations where it might be important, when he might want to speak out without fear of threats, but he has never been in such a situation, *'this is all hypothetical so I can't prove one way or the other, it's my perception'*. John gives value to the freehold and *'... regrets its passing'*. He thinks *'it is important that we are not employees but holders of offices'*. He questions the changes that will be brought in through the move to common tenure, the greater centralisation in the Church of England and the use of business models:

And I mean at one time it was expected that a new incumbent had the right to give all the curates notice; that can't be right. Rightly so, so I do recognise what it means for the people who don't have freehold but my concern is what is it all about and I don't trust the actual, I think what's going on in, it's the business model. We have these bloody posters at Christmas [from the central Church of England] I can't believe, who do these people think they are?

The views expressed so far about work status are solely from those who are employed fulltime as parish clergy. The next section will introduce the

comments of those who either work part time in the parish situation or are self-supporting.

Views about work status from part-time and self-funded parish clergy: Septimus, Frances and Germaine

Septimus works both as a parish priest and has a wider role in the diocese. He is *'licensed separately for the [parish] job and for the [name of role] job'*.

His working life encompasses two roles for the same organisation, yet the employment conditions are vastly different and the working context and level of supervision differ. In one-third of his role he *'is line managed by the [name of department], paid for by the diocese and falls within Ministerial review, an appraisal and that sort of thing'* and in two-thirds he is *'effectively on [his] own'*. He does not have freehold in his parish role but he perceives himself to be independent and unsupervised, to be *'self-employed and office holder as priest in charge of a parish'*. He seems to work in two parallel worlds. Michael is blasé about the form of licence and Septimus does not seem over concerned about the inconsistencies.

Two of the participants are self-supporting. Frances did not discuss employment conditions or freehold when I interviewed her. Germaine is a Minister in Secular Employment (MSE). She sees a *'very distinct difference between MSE and NSM [Non Stipendiary Minister]'*. When asked about the difference she concludes that:

The difference is that as an MSE I see the focus of my ministry as the workplace for me, an NSM the focus of your ministry is unpaid in the parish and they are very different for me. They licensed me as a curate on an NSM licence.

In contrast to Septimus and Michael, Germaine has strong feelings about the form of licence. Being licensed as an NSM rather than MSE:

Doesn't acknowledge what I think my call is about, it says to me, what it says [is] ministry is about ministering in the parish, that is important for me but the focus for me is definitely the workplace and I have more significant conversations and ministerial kind of events in my workplace than I do anywhere else.

In contrast to the views of the full-time paid clergy, the type of licence seems significant for Germaine: it defines her understanding of her work and the relationship between herself and the context in which she works.

At the time of interview Germaine was not licensed to a specific parish post, but acted as a locum working where required. She suggests that because she is not working in a specific parish the diocese currently have no expectations of her and that because her working life does not '*fall into something that is focused in a parish, they don't know how to deal with it. They can't cope with it. Doesn't fit into a neat box*'. She concludes that there are personal consequences for her working life '*because I'm not licensed to a particular church, you just don't fit in*'.

She identifies that working lives that do not fit easily into the historical working pattern for clergy are problematic for the Church of England. Without Germaine's narrative, it would have been tempting to suggest that the type of licence, the legal contract between the Church of England and individual priests, has limited relevance. Those with and without freehold display similar ideas about the impact of *work status* on working life. Septimus, a non-freeholder, sees his work as free flowing; Mortimer, a freeholder, considers freehold is important but only hypothetically. John has an almost nostalgic attachment to the '*Trollope days*'. All this suggests that type of licence is possibly not a major influence on clergy working lives. Yet Germaine's comments contradict this view; she sees the type of licence as very significant to her, it seems symbolic to defining her role and her working life. As a Minister in Secular Employment she is attempting to develop a new form of working life.

Her comments suggest that the Church of England, whilst expecting and encouraging individuals to embrace this new form of working life, is not fulfilling the individuals' expectations of a working life within the Church of England.

In chapter 8 I have explored two central themes to my research project that I drew specifically from the literature on the psychological contract. The next chapter looks at issues that emerged in the first round of interviews and which I asked individual interviewees about.

CHAPTER 9

THE WORKING LIVES OF CLERGY: CHANGE, AUTONOMY, STAFF RELATIONSHIPS AND SACRIFICE

This chapter will focus and present the stories and discussions pertinent to the remaining five themes outlined in Figure 9.1 that emerged from Chapter interviews and which were followed up individually.

Figure 9.1 Themes to be discussed in chapter 9

| Theme | Meaning |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Change – Church of England | Narrative relating to changes the participants had observed whilst working in the Church of England |
| Change - Church and society | Narrative relating to changes the participants have observed in the relationship between Church and wider society |
| Autonomy | Narrative relating to the participants' views on the scope and autonomy of their working lives |
| Relationship with senior staff | Narrative relating to the participants' relationship with senior staff in the diocese |
| Sacrifice and vulnerability | Narrative relating to participants' perceptions of how these values infuse their working life |

Figure 9.2 Themes each participant discussed

| Theme Name | Work status | Change C of E | Change Society | Autonomy | Senior Staff | Sacrifice/ Vulnerability |
|---------------|--|------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Geoff | Full time Parish and Funded | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| John | Full time Parish and Funded | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Michael | Full time Parish and Funded | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mortimer | Full time Parish and Funded | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Benedict | Full time Parish and Funded | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Germaine | Full time Secular employment and Self-funded | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Frances | Part time Parish and Self-funded | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Septimus | Full time Dual role and Funded | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ | 0 |

✓ = Theme discussed

0 = Theme not discussed

Six participants discussed every theme whilst two, Germaine and Septimus, did not cover every theme that emerged in the group interviews. Those who covered every theme are all working full-time in parishes. Germaine works part time and is self-funded; Septimus has both a parish and diocesan role.

Change in the Church of England

All the participants discuss change in the Church of England. The longer serving participants discuss and reflect on changes they have themselves experienced and the effect on their own working lives. Those with a shorter working life and less experience of the changes are still conversant with these changes. They draw on their own experiences of the Church of England since childhood or others' understandings to illustrate the discussion.

Changing patterns of working life

Even though Septimus has only worked for the Church of England for four years he discusses his inner conflict generated by being unable to fulfil the traditional model of priesthood. Michael reflects on his working pattern 30 years ago and contrasts it with his working life now. Geoff comments that he is too busy to do visiting (as he would have done in the past). The catalyst for the changing patterns of working lives is what is termed by participants as pastoral re-organisation in both the long and short term. To illustrate, Mortimer is the vicar of two churches; if the research had been carried out in the mid 1980s there would have been a full time person for each area. John did work with another colleague but he left in 2008 and is not to be replaced. Septimus works part-time in seven villages; 15 years ago, two full time clergy would have been working in the same area. Michael articulates his perception of the impact of the changes:

You know there is a pain involved for people and people become insecure if they are about to lose the vicar, or think they will, they look round and think well there are only thirty of us they will close us down.

There are fears like that and there have been for ages actually, though I think that fear is accelerating.

Michael discusses the impact of change on church members. Other participants focus on the impact of pastoral reorganisation for their own working lives; for example Septimus outlines how he is unable to fulfil both his own and other people's expectations:

Each village expects that I will do a lot of visiting in their village and there are some villages I haven't done any visiting at all because I just haven't had the time because effectively I have two week days here, Mondays and Wednesdays, and no secretarial assistance so it just isn't going to happen in any way how I would like it to.

Whilst reflecting on her own role visiting and being available in the village Frances concludes that working life would be very different if she were paid and full time. *'If I was a stipendiary priest, you wouldn't have time, you really wouldn't, you would probably have half a dozen parishes. In the length of service I have got I would have half a dozen parishes, you just couldn't do it'.*

The participants and their parishioners are very conscious that they have lived and worked and continue to live and work in a period of change in the Church of England. All participants recount what they perceive to have been a typical working life before these changes. The participants' discussion about the working lives of their predecessors gives them a point of reference to compare and measure their own working lives. There have been changes to their working lives and changes to their expectations, a key element of the psychological contract. The Church of England now expects clergy to work concurrently across a number of parishes. Whilst knowing the changing pattern of deployment clergy still understand, and at best expect to carry out, the traditional role or at least yearn for that role. Their own expectations have not always adjusted to the new organisational requirements and restraints. Similarly parishioners' and church members' expectations have not adjusted to

the new role: they often expect a model of working life based on a different resource base and consequently feel their expectations are not met.

Changing patterns of finance

Reflecting on historical working lives and exploring their current role many participants discuss the financial situation of the Church of England. I asked Mortimer if the Church of England had changed in the twenty-one years he has worked as a priest. He responded by saying *'it has changed in lots of ways, it's changed in size, it's changed in number of clergy around, it's changed in its funding [and] financial situation radically to such an extent that I guess that it is teetering on the verge of viability in lots of places and lots of situations, which I guess 20 years ago that no one would have conceived of'*. He then moved on to consider how this impinges on his working life:

I don't think it affects your working life in the sense that you are conscious that when you sit down at your desk in the morning, you are conscious that you have got to do this or that or the other. I don't think it works in that obvious way: you have a task to complete, kind of strategy. I think what it does is sort of affects your subconscious and it allows doubts to creep in about what you are doing and whether it is valued and the struggle the congregation has in order to maintain the church and you are part of that and at times it can be seen as not exactly a burden but it can drag you back. That is the best way I can describe it.

He continues on the same theme when asked if it affected him personally:

Yes at a more subconscious level it isn't something you think about every day because sometime there is lots of things you are doing and you don't think about it, but sometimes you have reports and those type of documents that the church produces and it becomes apparent. Or, for instance, the discussion of pastoral re-organisation you are aware of the situation and it becomes like a drag. It seems to take up quite lot of your

thought and time of your church as to how it is going to fund ourselves, Church council meetings can be often quite taken up with how can we fund ourselves, how can we pay for ourselves what we have got to pay, so it does take up some of your thinking.

Is it something you expected 21 years ago?

No I didn't, I think back to 21 years ago and I think back to the size of the quota or whatever we called it in those days that we paid from a largest church compared to what we are expected to pay from our smaller church nowadays and in fact the smaller of my two churches, I've got a sneaking feeling is paying more than my training parish was paying twenty one years ago and they are not remotely similar in size.

He indicates that more of his working time is spent with financial matters. It consumes him in a manner that he did not envisage when he embarked on his working life. I asked him if the expectations of church members had changed:

I don't think it has in my personal experience or rarely has it been sort of personalised, but just occasionally you get people complaining that they have to pay the parish share and then of course they want to know what it is used to paid for and you explain that most of it, 75%, 80% probably goes towards paying for the clergy. The fact that they are moaning about paying, I don't know that they have made necessarily this conclusion, but you could interpret does make you feel well aren't you satisfied with me? I've never asked that question outright because I know what sort of answer I will get. You would get an apology and 'oh no [name] that wasn't what we meant at all [name]', but actually that is the logical conclusion of what you are saying , One person did once come to me after a meeting and said I must have found that quite awkward as that was about your salary, so there are some people who do sometimes make that conclusion.

The themes raised by Mortimer are echoed in other interviews. Michael tells an almost identical story, not in the context of his own work but stories that he had been told by other clergy:

I do think that many clergy feel there is an expectation on them to pay the bills, I am very fortunate in this parish I don't think there is an expectation on me to produce the money but there have been other parishes that I have been and seen it elsewhere, where it is not expected but there is a kind of well I don't know who else will do it if it isn't you. And that can be difficult also because most of the money they are raising for the share is for the clergy, I do recognise that it's a strain, you hesitate to justify why you are always raising money, because the biggest justification is to pay for you, and when they complain, I mean most people in church are not complaining about their vicar, they forget that the share pays their vicar and they have a damn good moan about what do we get for this, and the diocese is squandering our resources etc etc, and you can't help sitting there listening to this and thinking but if you believe that, if you believe that you are not getting value for money then you are demeaning my worth. So it is this business are you expecting me to raise the money and it is largely for me, and at the moment I see that more in my colleagues than in me but there is an annual feeling of great discomfort when the next quota is announced, and everybody groans and says this is shocking. If you say that, you are really saying you don't want to pay for me.

In the stories of Mortimer and Michael, both long serving priests and Rural Deans, there is a sense of unease. Changes in the church have contributed to Mortimer beginning to question the value and worth of his own working life to church members in the contemporary Church of England. Michael's story is about others he knows. He suggests it is a common story: *'many clergy feel there is an expectation on them to pay the bills'*. There is a sense that the impact of financial change is widespread and has impinged on many working lives.

Change affects other groups in the Church of England. Michael and Mortimer provide insights into the thinking of church members as they come to grips with increased financial demands and with changing expectations of them. I have not interviewed any lay members of the Church and I only have the views of the clergy about how they perceive the changes. The changes documented in the extracts about finance indicate that the relationship between the clergy and church members has been de-stabilised by greater financial pressure. This relationship has also been de-stabilised and changed by pastoral re-organisation, with parishioners' expectations still based on outmoded models of working lives.

New forms of working lives

The Minister in Secular Employment, Germaine, is tangible evidence of changes in the Church of England. She is engaged in a new form of working life outside the parish system. When I asked her about changes in the Church of England she was critical:

I suppose my expectation is, it might be a stupid one, that the Church of England changes more quickly than it does, if they are going to use a lot of rhetoric about different patterns of ministry, financially self support and other ways of being church that don't centre around a church building and a parish then they need to do something about the infrastructure, because from my perspective everything is set up for people who are stipendiary people in parishes, married people in parishes.

The use of '*rhetoric*' suggests that she perceives that there is no substance to the changes designed to enable individuals to pursue new forms of working life. She suggests that '*there are some people who are beginning to think about other ways of doing things but my experience of them is that they are the mavericks*'. The consequences of new forms of working have not been adopted

by the mainstream, who are '*staying in [a] cosy corner*' with unchanging infrastructure.

Less critically Geoff, when asked about pioneer ministry [non-traditional approaches to being a church], describes working with a colleague, a pioneer minister in the first year the Church of England had developed this work: '*it's about developing it ourselves, because nobody knows, you are stepping out into the unknown because you don't know how it will emerge*'. Geoff accepts that the structure does not exist, and that he is largely unsupported.

Germaine and Geoff are in a different position from other participants. Both are working, or moving into working in a different and new way. Their expectations of the Church of England differ from those of parish clergy. Germaine displays a greater dependence on the Church and expects the church to provide new forms of working with appropriate structures and support. Geoff is more independent, content to pioneer without any structure or safety net. Geoff and Germaine differ in their experiences and length of service in the Church of England. Geoff has worked for the Church of England full time for 34 years. For most of the seven years that Germaine has worked for the Church she has been self-funded and working in a secular organisation. Geoff is highly experienced in the working norms of the Church of England, whereas Germaine is grounded and experienced in working outside its boundaries.

The literature of the psychological contract recognises that individuals will have different contracts based on their past working experience. They will bring such experience and use it to evaluate the new working context. Germaine may evaluate her working life using her experience of secular organisational life. The Church of England does not match her expectations developed from experience in another world.

All participants are enacting their working lives during a period of change. The Church of England is redefining the role of the clergy in the light of its changing circumstances. Participants such as Septimus bear the cost of the redefinition. They understand the historical expectation and can feel its legacy on a daily basis in the unrealistic expectations of parishioners. Yet they also understand

the context and reason for change. They are the tangible representatives of the Church of England to their communities and parishioners, supporting and leading their church members into this new 'world' with renegotiated expectations for all parties.

Change, the church and society

All the participants except Germaine present material and stories related to the theme of change in the relationship between the Church of England and society. Those presented below are indicative of the type of observations made.

Frances, who like Germaine is self-supporting, tells of her understanding of some of changes in the village that she works in her role as '*an old fashioned vicar*'. She identifies that the Church has '*less bearing on life*' and then moves on to discuss how she sees it currently having bearing on the life in the village:

Certainly in [name of village] very few get baptised, there is some variation in cultural tradition, maybe even in some areas of the [location] they may not come to church but they still want their children to be baptised. Nevertheless they are happy to have me around.

You say the village has changed

I think when I first came, there was more of the remnant of old [name of village], people who were born and bred in the village, who remember it when there were seventeen shops. Have you read the Nine Tailors?

Yes

You know that kind of village church feeling, there was a certain element of that, a remnant of that when I first went. Some of it not so good I think, some was fine and there were one or two elements of that not easy

to handle. But there is very little of that now, there are some people who come who have grown up in the village but on the other hand [name of churchwarden and wife] have been there a long time so has [name] so there are people who have been there a long time.

Do they feel a sense of community with the church?

Difficult to know actually, some do certainly, the school still use the church to some extent. We had the baby's funeral earlier in the year and that was the village at its best, they had so much loving support. So in some ways I think it does and the fact that we have been able to raise money for all these different appeals, from unexpected people, it still does matter to people.

John tells a different story about the changes in wider society. He suggests that going to church *'is not on the radar'* for most people so *'life in the parish has changed dramatically in that sense and it is easy to slip in the old world and feel bad about this one'*. To him, the Church of England does not *'matter to people'*. It did matter in the *'old world'* but now society has changed. Other participants express similar views. They describe society as *de-churched* or *secularised*.

Michael contrasts the church in a village with his present urban setting. He suggests that *'the church itself in a village is still visible and central although people don't necessarily want to have anything to do with it'*. In contrast in his urban parish, *'I mean here people can and do get on with their lives without reference to the church very easily and gradually over a fairly short period of time it has got to the stage where they no longer have any expectations of us at all'*. Michael identifies that geographical context is the main factor in how society relates to the Church.

There are many different aspects to the relationship between the Church and wider society. John and others divide their own long working lives into two

'worlds'. They worked in the '*old world*' where the church mattered to society and now work in the '*new world*' where it is perceived as irrelevant. Frances and Michael are not so clear. They associate the strength of the relationship between the Church of England and society with the context of their working lives. There is a stronger or even unchanged relationship in villages but a weaker relationship in an urban setting.

Autonomy

In chapter 4 I noted that the working environment of parish clergy is characterised by the themes of autonomy, freedom and independence. I shall now re-visit these themes in turn in the light of individual interviews.

Septimus contrasts his diocesan role with his role in a parish. In his diocesan role he has three objectives '*that I am supposed to have met by the end of this month and criteria we are going to measure them and there is the possibility that my line manager will say you haven't met these criteria*'. In contrast it does feel to him:

Very different from the free floating life of a parish priest where you have basically got to do something fundamentally out of order for anyone to even notice you. I could be sacrificing sheep over there in the church and no one would know, I could be doing it for years and no one would know.

Two thirds of his time is spent as a parish priest and he identifies it as being '*effectively self employed and office holder as priest in charge of a parish*'.

John reflects on changes in the Church and the reasons for autonomy:

Those Trollope days weren't all bad there was some good stuff there. And the idea that everything has to be done with competitive interview and job descriptions is dodgy, for it fails to see that ultimately we are about relationship and not about jobs. And patrons as well, the freehold

gave you some autonomy, so forget about sinecures, the freehold does actually protect you from dodgy bishops and other people, it protects you from everyone, it also gives you some responsibilities. I mean you can have the freehold of the church, you can't put an extension on it, convert it into flats or put a loft in: it's all responsibility and no freedom as far as the building is concerned, but you do have considerable freedom in that it takes a hell of a lot to get you out and I think that is right and patrons are about protecting you from bishops who want to recreate a diocese in their own image. So you don't get a catholic bishop who comes in and wants everything to be like that, very good thing, there were safety valves, there were anachronistic things that went on around that, but nevertheless I really do value those things in the Church of England and I regret them passing and I think it is important that we are not employees but holders of office.

The autonomy he discusses gives him protection from what he sees as the potential malign influence of others. In the next excerpt he reflects on the history of the Church of England:

You can't actually rally the Church of England round because it doesn't have one voice and as I have said before it is its greatest strength and its greatest weakness and I wouldn't change that for the world. I think it's marvellous, it's a rum old being, it's got this incredible history and created for all sorts of reasons. I mean the whole Henry VIII thing is so far from the truth, did you watch the Tudors? well it got, I was fascinated, it got better and better, and it did show that the Reformation was not about Henry and his wives, but Henry and his wives were what people who wanted to reform the Church of England used as a way of making it happen. That isn't the way, it isn't told in the schools is it? Let's encourage him to fall out with Rome, do it, do it, go on, that's what happened. Fantastic stuff, wouldn't like to have lived then, it was scary, wouldn't have kept your head would you? But nevertheless right from those early days there has been this thing that authority rests in several

places and we keep a balance. This isn't the Church of Rome you can't tell me to up sticks and go to Guatemala or somewhere, it is not like that.

The influences on his working life John is describing can be traced back to the Reformation, more than 600 years ago. He can place himself as a direct descendant of others who have carried out similar working lives throughout six centuries. For John autonomy is part of the historical and contemporary working conditions of the Church of England. He refers to Trollope and the fictional diocese of Barchester. Trollope describes and perhaps parodies the clerical working life but nevertheless John's reference to it indicates the public and documented nature of clergy working lives in English society.

At no point in their individual interviews do parish clergy perceive themselves as managed or accountable. *'Free floating'*, as used by Septimus, is an apt description. Mortimer responds to a question about who he works for with the following:

Do I work for the parish? In one sense you do, because you have been charged for having a responsibility for that particular Christian group, not in the sense that you have to put a time sheet in at the end of the month. Saying I have done x funerals and y services not in the way you would if you worked for Kwikfit.

Do you feel accountable to them?

I don't feel accountable in the sense that you would have to say at the end of the month I have visited 14 people and taken sick communion to 12, I wouldn't want to be responsible accountable to them because I've never been in this situation and it's all hypothetical. If you have a congregation that got into the situation of denying some fundamental Christian truth you wouldn't want to be accountable to them because you would want to be speaking out about that particular issue.

He defends the need for autonomy and the working environment it generates:

Yes you know that you have that autonomy. My feeling is that if things are working as they should be where you are working with the church enabling them to do the things I mentioned at the beginning you shouldn't need to exert that autonomy. I regard it as the sort of thing that is the bottom line, the fall back position, the last position, on a day to day basis not at all.

None of the participants question the value of autonomy to their own working lives. Many of the participants reflect on the historical context and question what they see as the excessive autonomy that clergy have enjoyed in the past, describing it as an inappropriate '*material privilege*'. For example, Benedict says:

I understand what freehold was for my Dad as an incumbent but I think sometimes you know that made people very lazy and I think it made them too secure and too safe and I think people who stayed in a place say twenty years I never thought that by and large I never thought that was a good thing: it can be too comfortable.

Benedict's father was a parish priest. He contrasts his own and his father's experience suggesting that '*for my Dad he has seen as he has retired that things are a lot better. He felt more isolated and there is so many more team ministries these days and there are inbuilt structures there that help*'. He does not discuss autonomy in great detail or suggest that the clergy do not work autonomously but suggests that there has been a general improvement in the working lives of clergy.

My participants recognise that clergy in the Church of England have always had autonomy in their working lives. Whilst some aspects have been reduced, elements remain. They do not seem to question the appropriateness of this current autonomy but tend to identify it as an important contextual factor that enables them to have effective working lives.

Relationship with senior staff

Unlike other aspects of the interviews, there are few contradictions or tensions in their discussion of the relationship between clergy and the senior staff. All the clergy expect the senior staff to be supportive and available to them when required. Geoff states his expectations very precisely:

I expect support, I expect encouragement, I expect people to have an interest in what I am doing, I expect an ear for counsel if it's necessary and I expect fairly speedy accessibility when it's important. In a particular emergency I would expect that to happen pretty promptly. I mean it's not always feasible, but I would expect it and I can honestly say that it's never been a problem, it's been fantastic.

John recalls an example of this care: *'I had a very encouraging conversation with bishop [name] about himself because he's been very good about keeping in touch while I've been ill, and it happened to be my turn to see him recently and he booked me an extra session in the diary to do things to do the pastoral thing with me'.*

Mortimer suggests:

Yes I expect pastoral care, I mean they can't be knocking on your door every day, you've got to stand on your own two feet, just like in a church you can't be with them all the time you have got to get on with it, its back to this availability business. If I had a crisis then I would be able to ring the bishop and say 'help bishop' and I would hope and expect that he would say 'I will come and see you', come and see me what can we do, that's what I mean by it, and there's also a certain expectation that there is some encouragement.

Germaine expects care but does not feel she has received it:

None, in fact it took me six months after I had left [name of Church] and I had no longer had a specific licence to a church, it took me six months to get them to realise that I wasn't retired and I would like [to receive] the mailing from the diocese because they had assumed that because I was 'permission to officiate' [not working at a specific church] I was retired. And I even got a form through from the diocese, now you are retired what would you like to offer cover, that sort of thing and I don't get invited to things, I don't get invited to the clergy day, I don't get invited to the conference. Not been invited to anything because I'm not licensed to a parish.

It seems what you are saying is that the parish is the central point.

I feel that I don't exist to the diocese, it took [name of bishop] even when I was licensed to [name of church] 18 months to meet me and he only met me because I asked. He had written to me in my first six months, well not just to me, written to all curates in the first six months, it had Rosemary this, James that and then it had XX [surname of interviewee] he hadn't even bothered to find out my Christian name: to me that generally underlined the approach of the Church of England to ministries who don't fall into something that is focused in a parish.

The participant is a Minister in Secular Employment and does not work in a parish. She perceives her minority status as the source of the treatment she has received. Her views are different from the thoughts and reflections of the other participants in my interviews who share very similar expectations of senior staff and report that these expectations have always been met.

Sacrifice and vulnerability

In the interviews clergy respond to my introduction of statements about the concepts of sacrifice and vulnerability. They recognise the terms, the linkage

with their values and working lives and readily recount stories and reflections about how these concepts are enacted in their own working lives.

Modelling a working life

Participants articulated how the values of sacrifice and vulnerability are enacted in their working lives. Mortimer thinks *'in some senses it is about being vulnerable and being sacrificial'*. He illustrates how these values are worked out in his life by drawing on biblical material: *'Jesus said specifically in Mark 10:45 'the son of man didn't come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many'*. He moves on to explain why this is important to him:

In any kind of ministry it is about modelling your ministry on Christ, if that is what Jesus said there has to be some vulnerability in Christian ministry, and I don't just mean ordained people have to be vulnerable, anybody has to be vulnerable if you are taking those commands of Christ seriously, you can look at John 13, Philippians 2, 5-11, it's all there, the idea of vulnerability.

Although he confirms the importance of vulnerability to his working life, he uses service to describe how vulnerability is enacted on a daily basis: *'I wouldn't use the word vulnerable; I would use the word serving and giving'*. He illustrates with what he says are trivial examples: *'sometimes things are demanded of you at a time that isn't convenient for you; people ring up at half past eight not at quarter past nine when you are at your desk: that's trivial, that's the serving and giving side of things'*. He seems to contradict himself slightly by reaffirming the *'idea of vulnerability has got to be central to all Christian ministry'*. His central notion is the role of clergy is to *'serve and give [their] life'*. The use of biblical references to illustrate how clergy model their role is a common response amongst other participants. Benedict states that *'I think vulnerability is very important on all levels of priesthood because of the cross really and the sacrifice of God, Psalm 51'*. He questions whether clergy should feel totally comfortable and secure: *'I think you need to feel comfortable enough but not so*

comfortable that you lose the edge'. In a story about how he had a potential grievance about his treatment at an interview, Geoff recounts that, despite having a case, he evaluated his options by considering *'who's going to win, Christ ain't going to win, and that's always at the top thing. So I think is Christ going to win, if not I'm not going to do it'*. He places his own interests below those demanded by the 'model' for his working life.

Personal sacrifice and vulnerability

Mortimer associates vulnerability with serving and giving. Benedict describes it as *'giving that hurts'*. Frances describes the role of a deacon as a *'serving role'*, but goes on to recognise putting such values into practice is complex and even serving and giving has limits:

Some of the ideas are about the idea of servant?

But on the other hand not a doormat, I think there is a lot more understanding of how you relate to people, professionally if you are a professional counsellor there is all sorts of training about boundaries, in that kind of area there is valuable training that people didn't have in the old days. Knowing yourself is important, forgiveness is a very important aspect that can come in to it; it is about getting a balance because also you shouldn't be sacrificing family. It is a very complex area but if you try and do too much then problems arise.

Reflection on the complexities of carrying out the role in practice draws out difficulties and dilemmas faced by individual clergy. A number of participants share stories about their own experience of vulnerability.

Some in the group interviews have talked about vulnerability as part of priesthood. Germaine says:

I think vulnerability is part of, an important part of it for me, the model of wounded healer, that I think there for me there is the question mark of how much your congregation would allow that and to be part of the image they have, it takes quite a lot of energy to challenge a different expectation and to be vulnerable in the face of people who expect you not to be.

Like previous participants she refers to a biblical model; 'wounded healer'. Unlike the participants discussed so far she explores the difficulty and challenges of living out vulnerability in her daily working life by challenging conventional expectations. She suggests that vulnerability is an outcome of challenge. John also relates a story about challenge. The story recounts a meeting that took place, and how in the meeting John defended the proposition that part of the clergy's role is to provide challenge and alternatives to established norms:

I think really going to back to that thing about business models, and [name] has just come to be bishop [diocese] and [name] clearly was, well it took quite some time to fill the vacancy, the first people they approached turned it down. Eventually [name] took it on and he seems to have been sold an idea that is was a poisoned chalice and he came with this agenda to sort out gay clergy in the diocese, and the moment he started doing this there was a furore, not just from the gay clergy, but generally, how dare you do this, you are talking about some of the finest clergy in the diocese and there has always been that in the diocese, and [name] deanery just invited him to come and listen to us and he came along and we used to have a Eucharist, a cooked breakfast together and then a meeting, take a whole morning, it was very good. He didn't come to the breakfast he just turned up for the meeting, he turns up slightly late, come in apologising saying I've just been in the radio car doing Thought for the Day, blah, blah, blah and he then proceeds to talk at us about how busy he is and how he thinks we should be busy as well. I said it seems to me that we are called to be a prophetic community and

we need to find another way another way from the busy, busy business model and the world desperately needs another way and he looked across to me, and basically he said 'it wasn't for clergy in leafy suburbs to talk about prophetic ministry.

John feels that one aspect of his working life is to provide an alternative perspective, to question and challenge. The stories from Germaine and John are about making themselves vulnerable by speaking out and by modelling an alternative working life to the one expected by contemporary society.

Benedict discusses the tangible nature of vulnerability when he offered himself for selection for the priesthood '*as an ordinand, and running up to being an ordinand at selection you make yourself very, very vulnerable, and I felt that very strongly that my life and that of [wife], we make ourselves personally vulnerable, at every single level all of my life was taken apart, it was examined, it was, every level is rightly examined and even through ordination as a deacon you still feel very vulnerable*'. He identifies it as an accepted part of working as a priest and explores how he felt vulnerable before going on to acknowledge that although vulnerable he has also felt supported:

And there is still an extent to which that now I'm priested, its not that I have arrived but I have placed my trust and at another level even as a youth worker and a child of the vicarage I have been treated very, very well.

Sacrificial lives - finance

The participants discuss financial sacrifice. They do not suggest that their sacrifice has been tangible, but often contrast the present with the privilege enjoyed by clergy in the past:

Michael:

Actually giving a lazy person a meal ticket is not happening. The example of the priest is to be vulnerable, I don't think it should be any more secure than their parishioners and it used to be, on a different planet. They maybe didn't get much money of course, but some did they would be in rich livings, in a huge house and doing nothing for the last 20 years of their life. Some of these people were saints who worked their fingers to the bone. They weren't all. I think it was a kind of privilege, a material privilege and it was inappropriate and I'm glad we haven't got that now, but you see if someone is these days we are in a recession so people are facing redundancy but they are not going to look at me and think if I've got such an easy deal, they don't know so it's not exactly, we don't know if we are giving them a public example, but if we were and in the days when people did understand that vicars were untouchable then I think it was terrible.

Benedict discusses his own financial position: *'I know a stipend is not meant to be a wage it is for you to carry out your ministerial functions without having to work'*. He introduces the commonly known view that clergy are not paid but have a stipend so that they do not need to work. Although this may appear flippant, it is an interesting concept. The stipend frees clergy from other work to allow them to be available to serve others. Despite receiving what by average UK earnings would be considered to be a low wage he has *'no grounds to complain'*.

Similarly Mortimer does not consider that clergy who have been working for the church for some time are being asked to sacrifice financial security: *'it's not like I've gone from being director of ICI and gone from £500,000 to £20,000'*. Although others may perceive that the clergy live sacrificial lives, sacrificial living is not an idea that seems to greatly concern the clergy who participated in my interviews.

The concepts of sacrifice and vulnerability are embedded in the working lives of my interviewees. It is a theme that is addressed by every participant except the newly-in-post Septimus. In their stories and observations participants draw on biblical material to illustrate their understanding of living sacrificial and vulnerable working lives. The expectations of the participants, that core concept from the psychological contract, are very evident. Sacrifice and vulnerability is a theme that makes visible the core expectations of clergy about their working lives. They expect to serve others, to make financial sacrifice and by offering themselves for ordination and working lives in the Church of England expect to experience vulnerability.

Traditional and alternative working lives

The themes discussed in this chapter emerged from the literature review and the three group interviews with pre-existing, non-selective groups. 25 participants took part in the group interviews, of which three were self-funded and one worked as a part-time hospital chaplain. The remaining 21 were all full time and funded. The themes that emerged from the group interviews are most likely to be the views and perceptions of the full time clergy.

In the individual interviews the full time clergy respond and discuss every theme. The themes resonated with the fulltime clergy who easily respond to the statements and provide a range of insights. Not all the themes resonate so closely with those participants with alternative working lives. As previously discussed in chapter 5, my research focuses specifically on clergy whose work is 'earthed' within the parish system, giving them a 'voice' to discuss what they do and how they feel about it. The discovery that those working outside the parish system may not find the themes equally relevant to them or respond so well to the themes is not a weakness in the research, but an indicator that the research themes are meaningful to the core group for this project, the parish clergy. Those with clergy status but alternative working lives may well have different expectations of work and different expectations of the organisation. However these are outside the boundaries of my current research project. The

inclusion of those with non-standard working lives serves to illuminate the relationship between the main actors in my research project: parish clergy and the Church of England. However those with non-standard working lives are a rich seam for further research as they represent a new and developing ways of 'being in the Church'.

An emerging psychological contract?

The stories presented by the participants in the individual interviews enable, as Anderson (1989) suggests, insights to be generated about how the clergy narrate their working lives. Figure 9.3 records by theme where there are differences in response between participants and those themes where participants record similar opinions.

Figure 9.3 Participant responses to five themes

| Theme | Change Church of England | Change Society | Autonomy | Senior Staff | Sacrifice/ Vulnerability |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| All participants hold similar views | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Participants hold diverse views | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

Regardless of work status or context of work participants interviewed individually hold similar views about the themes of autonomy, senior staff and sacrifice and vulnerability. The views are more diverse when considering change in both the church and its relationship with society and work status.

The clergy in my interviews narrate a very clear understanding of how the themes of sacrifice/vulnerability, autonomy and relationships with senior staff

are enacted in their own working lives. The narrative associated with these three themes suggests that the clergy have a common understanding of the values that underpin a working life based on service: they are autonomous yet display precision in articulating the areas that define the relationship with the senior staff. The long history of the Church of England has enabled the values of a clerical working life to be developed and passed on over many centuries. Each participant takes on the long standing values of the clerical working life and enacts it, using the words of the ordination service, in '*the community in which they are set*' (Common Worship, 2000).

Change in both the church and its relationship with society are the themes that explore the shifting and developing aspect of clergy working lives. This is where the clergy narrate how their working lives have evolved in the recent past and continue to evolve in response to the changing context of the Church of England. They explore the difficulties of enacting a working life in contemporary society. The working life of the clergy can be traced through history; it is one that has historical expectations from society and with unchanging values of service and autonomy. When considering the two themes associated with change, the clergy are articulating how the historical working life of the clergy is performed in the contemporary Church of England and society. When considering these themes the clergy are exploring the enactment today of what they see as the historical psychological contract. They are beginning to understand and articulate a new and emerging psychological contract for clergy in the Church of England brought about by changes in society and within the Church.

Chapter 10 will explore the new emerging understanding of working in the Church of England.

CHAPTER 10

A NARRATIVE OF REGRET

The purpose of this chapter is to portray a narrative of contemporary working life in the Church of England by focusing on nine themes that emerged from my analysis of the individual interview material. The themes are listed below and are set out in more detail in Appendix 4.

1. A working life embedded in history
2. The influence of freehold on historical and contemporary working lives
3. Perceptions of community and societal understanding of working life
4. Perceptions of giving support and care in working life
5. Relationships within working life
6. Working life in a place
7. Perceptions of activity and workload
8. Financing working life
9. Role - the working life identified

1 A working life embedded in history

The influence of the long history of the Church of England is a theme that constantly runs throughout my interviews. Irrespective of age or experience, seven of the eight participants access the historical working lives of others to illustrate their own contemporary working life. Even recently ordained clergy perceive that they understand how clergy working lives in the past were constructed. The historical working life seems to be a reference point for them to evaluate their own work. As it is of such central importance to the individual participants it will be used as a lens in this chapter to help understand the narrative of contemporary clergy working lives.

The literature associated with the psychological contract suggests that individuals' expectations are rooted in their own personal history and past

experience. My participants draw on their own personal history. However there is another perspective in my material as they draw on wider material about working lives in the past. Some mention '*Trollope days*', drawing on well known fictional literature. Others draw on generic understanding of working lives in the past, without specific personal example. Contemporary clergy are part of an occupation with a long and documented past in English society. By considering past working lives they draw on a collective memory of previous working lives to draw attention to the conditions of their own contemporary situation.

Only Germaine, the self-funded minister in secular employment (MSE) does not reflect on the historical role. She is actively pursuing an alternative working life. There is no historical role for ministers in secular employment. She does not have access in her role to a common historical understanding of clerical life, unlike parish clergy. She describes other MSEs who she knows as '*mavericks*': she perceives them as not conforming and standing separate from others who work in parishes.

Materially privileged

The stories that participants tell about past working lives are used to elucidate how their own working lives contrast with the historical pattern. The contemporary clergy suggest that there is no longer '*inappropriate material privilege*' and perceive that current approaches with less superficial material privilege are more compatible with the values of service, sacrifice and vulnerability which underlie their own working lives.

The participants are comfortable with the material benefit currently received. Clergy are provided with a house, stipend, and pension and, like most employees, no longer work beyond retirement age. No participant in my individual interviews suggested that such provisions are incompatible with a life of service and sacrifice. Benedict suggests that conditions have improved for clergy since his father worked in the Church of England. He feels he has been '*treated well*', supported, challenged but affirmed. The clergy portray a working

life that they understand to be concerned with sacrifice and service but have what they perceive to be relevant support and material provision.

Isolated, autonomous, supported

During my interviews the clergy seem to maintain at least one element of this historic privilege: the conditions in which to create and develop their own working life.

The isolation experienced in historical working lives was a theme that emerged from my individual interviews. Historically the participants perceive that clergy were '*more isolated*' but independent. The participants do not discuss how, historically, clergy were isolated. They are portrayed as being intimately involved in one community '*knowing every man woman and child in the village*', yet also to have little support to be '*on their own*' and had '*really terrible times*'. The participants suggest that historically the clergy were grounded in a community, but isolated from other clergy and the Church of England.

Perceptions of isolation, autonomous working and support in contemporary working life

Contemporary clergy other than Germaine report feeling secure and supported. In Herriot and Pemberton's (1996) language of the psychological contract they articulate a constant set of expectations and a 'deal' that the organisation understands and meets. The majority of clergy in my interviews describe a working life where they may question their value to the world beyond the Church of England but their role is consistently understood, valued and supported by the representatives of the organisation.

Although they perceive historical working lives to be isolated they do not use that term for their own working lives. The participants see themselves as independent, with a '*free-flowing life*', where there is no issue of accountability or managerial constraints. They do not feel accountable to the church

community and expect support rather than being managed by the senior staff. Participants suggest that part of their role is about '*finding out what God wants in this place*'. Participants are free to develop into new forms of ministry, to '*step out into the unknown*', without knowing '*how [the role] will emerge*'.

It would seem that clergy in my study see their working lives as being no less independent and autonomous than their predecessors but as having greater access to sources of support than their earlier counterparts.

2 The influence of freehold on historical and contemporary working lives

As already discussed participants perceive that the existence of freehold historically created privilege, isolation and security.

The contemporary influence of freehold on parish working lives

Although some regret the abolition of the freehold that will take place over the next few years, participants who work in parish ministry do not feel personally concerned or significantly threatened by its removal and do not seem concerned about their job security.

Whether an individual cleric is or is not personally a freeholder is not important. Freehold is still a powerful influence in their working lives. It is clear from my findings that contemporary working lives are enacted within the historical legacy of freehold: clergy act and work independently without supervision. Their working lives are defined in the context of the geographical place whether they are holders of the living or licensed in another legal way. It is the freehold that has historically created this independent way of working and its legacy still remains. The clergy declare that they work in very different conditions from those experienced by their predecessors yet, despite many of the historical conditions being removed, act as if the conditions are still in place.

Contracts for those with working lives outside the parish boundary

Germaine, the self-funded minister in secular employment, does not see value in herself as working in the same *'free-flowing'* manner. She articulates her frustration with the Church of England and cites it as the *'worst employer I have ever worked for'*. She seems to interpret her working life in the Church of England through the 'lens' of her work in other organisations. The Church does not conform to what she sees as normal working practice. Septimus suggests that he is only *'line managed'* in his diocesan role and autonomous in his working life in the parish. He does not see this split approach as inappropriate, merely acknowledges that it exists.

The experiences of Septimus and Germaine suggest that autonomy is not a state that necessarily underpins all clergy working lives. It seems to be specifically in the minds of those whose working lives are enacted in a parish. Parish ministry is the traditional work that the majority of clergy undertake and is the work that is the focus of this research. My findings indicate that in a parish clergy expect to be autonomous and are treated as such, whereas if they work in other contexts, including where they are employed by a diocese, they expect to be treated as an employee. Clergy do not seem to perceive any contradiction in these two scenarios. As in the psychological contract literature new situations and working lives are evaluated in the context of previous experience. I would have expected that clergy working as 'employees' would draw on their understanding of the historical and contemporary role of clergy and still expect to be treated as autonomous workers. In Bunderson's (2001) terms, I would have expected the ideological contract to be more compelling in forming expectations than the contract with the employing organisation. Many of the participants value their autonomy in a parish working life but the views of Germaine and Septimus suggest that this autonomy is confined to the traditional working life in a parish. The influence of the ideological psychological contract seems to be confined to parish working lives. The influence of the historical working role is very strong but limited in scope. It is contextually

bounded and not necessarily associated with a working life as a priest in alternative contexts.

3 Perceptions of community and societal understanding of working life

Historically a working life understood by society

In chapter 9 I explored changes in the relationship between church and society. The participants report that historically society understood the working lives of clergy who held a position in the community and wider society that was recognised and not contested. John describes this as the '*old world*' for the Church of England, a 'world' that no longer exists.

A contemporary working life that is accessed but not understood

When participants contrast their perceptions of historical conditions they talk about working in a de-churched society that no longer understands or values the role. The '*old world*' understood the Church but it is alien to the 'new world'. Nevertheless there is evidence in my interviews that the same group who perceive themselves as alien and outmoded in the 'new world' also indicate that they are valued and welcomed in this 'new world', particularly by identified groups such as schools and hospitals.

Although there is a narrative of welcome, there is also the narrative of a changed and uninterested world. Those participants who have been ordained for many years document the changes that have occurred in their own working lives. What is clear from my findings is that the participants believe that the relationship between the clergy and the community they work in has changed. The context of their present working lives is unrecognisable from when some of them started their working life and they perceive that wider society has rejected its value. In the language of the psychological contract there is evidence in my

findings that there has been a change of expectations from both the clergy and society.

I use the language of the psychological contract; however I question whether those who expound its value could be similarly evangelical about its merits for the Church of England. The Church of England often flippantly refers to itself as the only organisation that exists for the benefit of non-members, illustrating the point that its clergy perhaps do not perceive themselves as working for an organisation. Their primary relationships and focus are external rather than internal to the organisation. In the context of my research it is the expectations of the external environment, the community, that seem important to the participants, rather than, to use the words of Herriot and Pemberton (1996), the 'deal' between the individual and the organisation.

The literature of the psychological contract identifies that when the organisation violates an individual's psychological contract the individual re-adjusts their perception of the organisation and work effort. In the case of my research it is not the organisation that has violated the psychological contract but those who the clergy seek to serve: the community. The participants perceive that the community as a whole has rejected the psychological contract between itself and clergy.

It is easy just to suggest that changing patterns in and secularisation of society have resulted in this change, a situation to which many participants allude to. However some participants suggest that the Church of England has violated the contract between itself and society. Many comment that they no longer have time to visit or work in one community for extended periods of time. Septimus in particular articulates his '*internal conflict*' when he is unable to fulfil the traditional role and expectations. He perceives himself violating both his own and the community's expectations of clergy. My findings suggest that whilst some communities are reported as having no expectations others still have very clear expectations. However these expectations cannot be met by current working patterns in the Church of England.

The participants condemn the former working practice of a vicar remaining for a long time in one place. However it is the expectations created by this very scenario that linger in the mind of some communities and which contemporary clergy cannot meet. In the group interviews one participant suggested that the folk memory of English society is very long and powerful. Some communities do not just have a folk memory but a folk psychological contract that directs their expectations of contemporary clergy and how they think clergy should relate to their community.

My findings support a redefinition of the psychological contract; it has value in that it can be used to understand the relationships in clergy working lives. However the concept needs to be expanded to include relationships such as the community and parties other than employees, managers and work teams to have credibility in exploring working lives whose key relationships are outside the confines of a standard organisation.

4 Perceptions of giving support and care in working life

Pastoring and care is portrayed as the '*core thing*' and is a consistent aspect of the role for both historical and contemporary working lives.

Pastoral care in historical working lives

The historical working life was often based in one geographical location, for '*twenty years or more*' and, although the contemporary clergy identified this as inappropriate, it has been seen earlier in the chapter that they perceive clergy historically to have been a key figure who provided consistent pastoral care in their communities.

Pastoral care in contemporary working lives

The participants' own expectations are that they should care and should visit but they are unable to do so due to time and resource constraints. Yet at the same time the participants cite many examples of how they undertake pastoral care and visiting. In comparison to the historical working life the contemporary clergy perceive that they '*do not do enough visiting*'. It is a regret, they want to do more. A number of participants suggest that they have discussed '*starting visiting again*' or, although it is difficult '*because of pressure of work it is difficult to be out knocking on doors which I used to do when I was a curate*', they are '*trying to redress the balance*.' There is a narrative of regret and guilt presented, that they are unable to fulfil what they perceived to be a '*core thing*'.

Clergy articulate what, in an ideal world, would be the key aspects of their working lives. In chapter 7 I explored how the vows taken in the ordination service, substantively unchanged since the Reformation, provide a framework to direct their working lives. The clergy's narrative is not about any insecurity or confusion in expectations of the role but about the struggle to carry out the role in contemporary society. The stories the clergy tell present the difficulties about enacting that part of their role.

The clergy in my interviews perceive that historically clergy were not constrained by such problems, though I interpret their reflections as meaning it is not so much employment conditions of the past that contemporary clergy crave as to work in a society that understood and valued clerical working lives.

Internal conflict and frustration are constantly reiterated in the clergy narratives. By comparing their current capacity to provide the service to their perception of the past they illuminate an important issue for them. They perceive that they are unable to deliver a key aspect of their own understanding of the role. Using the language of the psychological contract they perceive that they have violated the contract with communities and regret being unable to meet the expectations that still exist.

5 Relationships within working life

Much of the interview material explores relationships.

Historical perceptions of relationships in working lives

The interviews clearly demonstrate that participants perceive that clergy in the past knew individuals well.

Contemporary perceptions of relationships in working lives

Contemporary clergy perceive that their working lives have moved from a series of one-to-one relationships within a whole community to working with distinct groups within the community. In the context of the psychological contract the relationship between individuals and groups or organisations is contested. Early work on the psychological contract (Argyris 1960) describes the contract between an individual and a group. Other work, by Marchington, Wilkinson, Ackers and Dundon (2004), on organisational voice suggests that as organisations are incapable of speaking with a consistent voice consequently a psychological contract can only be between individuals. Describing a psychological contract between an individual and an organisation is considered to be inappropriate or a convenient label that has face validity within the practitioner management literature but little substance. My findings suggest that there is another way to see this. In my interviews individual participants frequently describe, in some detail, the expectations of distinct groups such as the community, schools and parishioners and record the impact of them on their working lives. They perceive groups as having real and tangible expectations.

6 Working life in a place

Place in historical working lives

The discussion so far makes it clear that contemporary clergy perceive that historically clergy were 'rooted' in one place and free to develop working lives.

Place in contemporary working lives

Contemporary working lives demonstrate a similar pattern. Despite narrating that they work in a secularised and de-churched place, they still identify with that place and define their working life within it. When discussing the wider community participants 'hold' the discussion in the context of their own relationship with the community they work in. Participants are grounded in carrying out their role in relationship to the specific geographical location of their own parish. When asked about their role, participants respond by saying not that I am vicar of a particular church but I am vicar of [name of parish or benefice] as well; vicar of a geographical place. The task of the clergy is narrated as '*finding out what God wants in this place*'.

The participants narrate their frustrations with their inability, because of reduced resources, to execute the same role in their geographical place as those working in the past. Nevertheless despite the re-organisation and grouping together of parishes, and fewer clergy the role is not redefined. They still perceive that their focus for working life is the expanded geographical place.

7 Perceptions of activity and workload

Perceptions of historical activity

Historically participants suggest that some clergy were lazy, and protected by the freehold.

Perceptions of contemporary activity

The clergy tell two different stories about contemporary 'busyness'. Firstly they bemoan the impact of their busyness on carrying out what they perceive to be their core role of caring. Their perception is that contemporary clergy are busier than their predecessors. They record that the contemporary clergy working life is constrained by insufficient time to visit, concerned with financial management and meetings.

Secondly, and in contrast to their first perception, they suggest that being seen as being busy is an inappropriate model of working for clergy. John suggests it is a model that is associated with the business world and should be challenged. Michael wants to be available for people; he considers it a *'shame if people don't bother the vicar because they think he or she is too busy'*. Mortimer suggests that being available is part of working in a sacrificial manner.

When considering pastoral care I discussed the idea that the clergy present a narrative of regret. Rejection of a model from the business world and affirmation that clergy should follow an alternative model is another aspect of the narrative of regret. The participants believe that they should be available; they should present a working life that differs from the norms of the business world. However part of the narrative of contemporary clergy working lives is that they are unable to fulfil their own expectations and they conform to a working life modelled on the business world. Their own working lives are often not enacted in line with their own perceptions and understandings of the purpose of clergy working lives.

The clergy know that at one level their working lives have changed. They narrate these changes and the consequential change in the volume and focus of work. However they are still caught in a working world in which the changes in working lives are, in the context of the history of the Church of England, relatively recent and working lives of predecessors are sufficiently understood

and documented both by themselves and society to act as a device against which contemporary clergy understand and measure themselves.

8 Financing working life

Perceptions of involvement in finance in the past

When discussing the historical working life no participant considers that their predecessors were engaged in financial management beyond that of personal wealth.

Perceptions of current involvement in finance

In contrast all the participants who work full-time and are funded by the Church of England discuss the financial management aspects of their working lives. There is a general awareness and perception amongst my participants that increasing engagement in financial issues has changed the working life of clergy.

Contemporary parish clergy perceive that intense engagement with financial matters is a relatively new aspect of clergy working lives: participants such as Mortimer and Michael who have been working in the Church of England for over twenty years did not expect this to be a core element of their working life when they began to work in the Church. They perceive it to be a new role, with new expectations and challenges. The requirement for church communities to raise sufficient finance to fund the cost of full time clergy places their working lives under pressure. They question whether they are personally valued and the focus on finances impinges on how they perceive the relationship between themselves and the church community. Those participants in my interviews who are self-funded do not discuss financial issues. It is not part of their working life in the Church and they recognise they do not have these pressures. So those with the 'newest' roles are free to create an '*old fashioned role*' without

the constraints identified on the working lives of the full-time clergy imposed by working in more than one parish and the focus on financial issues.

The participants who work full time accept the financial aspects of the role, but appear uncomfortable with and regret the change. They do not directly challenge its relevance or appropriateness but regret they have to undertake it. In the language of the psychological contract this is a change for those who have been working for over 20 years in expectations of the relationship between the individual worker and the organisation. The psychological contract literature uses the term violation to denote how individuals change their behaviour when an organisation is deemed to breach the psychological contract. A common reaction to a breach of expectations would be for an individual to display less commitment and loyalty to the organisation. There is no evidence of such an extreme reaction in my findings. The clergy accept the change in their working lives, but display feelings of regret and anxiety. It is the impact of the changing role on their own internal expectations of a clerical working life that is more significant to them than the simple breach in expectations.

9 Perceptions of role in historical and contemporary working lives

Much of the material in this chapter has focused on the tensions in the participants' narratives about carrying out what they perceive to be the generic task of caring in the context of their own contemporary working lives and workplace.

Clergy suggest that either in their own working lives or by observing the working lives of others they can record many changes in the Church of England, yet I have concluded earlier in the chapter that it is questionable whether the working lives of clergy have changed significantly. They exhibit the same independence and autonomy as their predecessors; they aim to fulfil the same role in the community, to '*embody Christ in the community*'.

They perceive a change in role. It would be more appropriate to describe the change as a change in scope and in the acceptance of the role within the community. The context historically for working lives was one parish. All the participants in my interviews work across a number of parishes. The role has remained relatively unchanged, but the geographical place has grown. My findings suggest that the participants have no problem understanding or articulating their role. The more significant issue to them is enacting their own perceptions of what they perceive clergy working lives ought to be in this new enlarged geographical place.

I have used the concept of a narrative of regret to encapsulate my findings when the perceptions of the contemporary role are compared to the historical role. Despite feeling supported by the organisation, clergy provide a narrative of regret about their inability to fulfil to their satisfaction some of what they see as the core role.

My participants have identified that the Church of England is in a period of change. At the time of writing common tenure will be introduced and the historical working practices of freehold will be abolished over a period years. The changing financial situation has created change in working lives. Using the historical working life as a device to analyse the contemporary one has enabled participants to articulate their perceptions of the changes. Change was not part of the original research design but it emerged as a theme in the group interviews and resonated with the participants in the individual interviews. What has emerged is a narrative about trying to undertake an unchanging and long-standing role in a changing context. The narrative that emerges from this chapter is that clergy perceive that they are unable to undertake this role. By comparing clergy's perception of the contemporary role with their perceptions of the historical role my findings are that there is regret amongst the clergy.

In the final chapter I will discuss the contribution my research has made to the understanding of both the psychological contract and working in the Church of England.

CHAPTER 11

UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT AND WORKING FOR THE CHURCH

The employment relationship and psychological contract

Defining the employment relationship

In the initial stages of the research I focused on my research questions: exploring the employment relationship in the Church of England using the framework of the psychological contract and examining how the differing employment conditions experienced by the clergy affect that contract.

It became evident from the group interviews that my initial preoccupation with work status, in Church of England terms whether clergy possessed freehold or not, was only one aspect of the employment relationship. Other themes that shed light on the employment relationship emerged, such as autonomy, service, sacrifice and change.

These themes were not featured in the traditional literature of the employment relationship and the psychological contract but were germane to working as clergy and needed more in-depth research with individuals to enable me to understand the employment relationship in the organisation. I achieved an in-depth understanding by changing to a working lives approach and in a series of individual interviews explored how the participants enacted and understood their own working lives.

However it is questionable whether I now understand the employment relationship as the same construct which I used in the initial stages of the research. In the literature of HR it is used in a broad brush manner to discuss how organisations 'contract' with their employees and the tools they can use to help them maximise the output of the employment relationship. My focus on

working lives did not shed light on an employment relationship of this nature. My study discovered a wholly different relationship in which the main actors, the clergy, were more concerned with the relationship between themselves and the communities they worked within than with their own relationship as 'employees' with the Church of England.

The concept of the employment relationship defined by the literature of the psychological contract was too over simplified to describe the relationships in the working lives of clergy. It is a useful umbrella term, but my research findings indicate that the clergy have numerous, rich and diverse working relationships. My findings suggest that parish clergy do not present a conventional employment relationship. The clergy have an employment relationship with the senior staff of the Church of England, the volunteers who work in churches, other clergy and members of the community, to name a few. If I had investigated only the employment relationship as defined by the HR community I would have restricted my research to studying the relationship between the senior staff and clergy. My research has enabled me to explore what might be better termed the working relationship between clergy and those they interact with in their working lives.

The value of the psychological contract to my research

I have used the psychological contract as a concept to explore the interaction between clergy and the many groups and individuals they identify they work with. Throughout my thesis I have discussed the relationship between my research findings and the concept of the psychological contract. I suggested that its importance to the research had waxed and waned (see chapter 1). In chapter 2 I conclude that the psychological contract is a concept that has entered the consciousness and language of business. Chapter 6 moves the discussion on. I cite Cullinane and Dundon's work (2006) as a 'damning critique' of the concept discussed in chapter 2. Their critique led me to question whether the psychological contract should be abandoned as an underpinning concept for my research. However the literature explored in chapter 6 identified

how the concept could be used to help explore and understand the working lives of clergy. The work of Bunderson (2001) and others introduces an ideological aspect to the concept of the psychological contract: the concept begins to evolve and develop, to accommodate those with ideologies distinct from the organisations they work within and to be used to explore those who work autonomously. It provides sufficient verification of the continued value of the concept to the research.

Cullinane and Dundon (2006) argue that the psychological contract is a limited and myopic lens and suggest that trying to use the concept to research how organisations can develop and maintain an effective psychological contract is a lost cause and unrealistic dream. However their comments miss the point. Despite criticising the link between the psychological contract and capitalist ideology, by suggesting that organisations should even use the concept to develop and maintain relationships within organisations they firmly identify the psychological contract as a management tool.

My research, though, liberates the concept from being a mere management tool. It rejects the association with management tools but accepts the concept as a lens. The purpose of a lens is to allow an individual to view whatever the lens focuses on. In my research the focus is the working lives of clergy. The lens I have chosen to view working lives through is the psychological contract. My main purpose is not to recommend how the Church of England can develop and maintain an effective psychological contract or the provision of a neat data set that measures clergy's psychological contract. I am not pursuing a deductive hypothesis driven agenda that seeks to identify a model that senior staff in the Church of England can use to maintain and develop an effective psychological contract. I am using the lens of the psychological contract to view and provide enlightenment about the working lives of clergy.

Lenses can work in two ways; to examine and to reflect back. I have used the psychological contract as a lens to examine the working lives of clergy; by examining their working lives ideas have been reflected back on to the lens of

the psychological contract. Ideas have been generated that can be used to re-evaluate the established understanding of the concept of the psychological contract in the light of my research findings. It is these ideas that will now be considered.

Psychological contracts and change in the Church of England

The literature of the psychological contract would suggest that organisations with common expectations operate in stable environments in which they are not experiencing substantial change. My findings suggest that this is not the case in the Church of England. Discussion of change in the Church of England is a common feature of my interviews. My findings suggest that despite undergoing intense change the employment relationship between the organisation and the clergy is stable and uncontested from the HR or psychological contract perspective.

This is a very surprising finding. My research indicates disparity between the literature of HR and my case study of the Church of England. If clergy mirrored the behaviour of employees explored by research in other organisations I would expect them to display reduced loyalty to the organisation or a withdrawal of commitment. There is no evidence that parish clergy do so. My findings bring into question the accepted understanding of the effects of change on the psychological contract.

The literature is concerned with employees whereas my research participants are office holders. At the outset I had thought this contractual difference from most employees would be highly significant to clergy's psychological contract. My research suggests that this is not the case. It is not the legal situation that is of consequence but clergy's psychological contract with the senior members of the organisation. Chapters 8 and 9 both discuss the uncontested nature of the expectations from individual clergy of senior staff: they expect to be supported. The relationship of support between senior staff and more junior clergy may help to explain why the psychological contract is unchanged despite my findings

suggesting that the Church of England is in a period of significant change. Clergy in parish work do not perceive it or expect it to be a managerial relationship. It is a relationship based on trust and support. In contrast those ordained but not working in parishes, like Germaine, may have different perceptions. Further research with those in such roles would enable further insights to be developed.

As discussed in chapter 6 Bunderson (2001) and others have defined professionals as a group with an ideological component to their psychological contract. The difference from my findings is that Bunderson identifies that the individual professional employee and the organisation are in conflict; an ideological contract is in conflict with the administrative and bureaucratic aims of the managers and organisation. In my research the individuals offer criticisms but do not display any form of conflict between themselves and the senior staff. Professionals are seen as a distinct group within an organisation being managed by others outside the profession. In the Church of England the clergy and the senior staff share the same profession. They are all ordained firstly as deacons, then as priests and for the senior staff as bishops. They have common understanding and expectations of the role; professionals are 'managed' or in the case of the Church of England, pastored and supported by fellow professionals. My findings do not dispute those of Bunderson, but they do bring a new facet to the concept of the psychological contract. They tackle the professional and ideological psychological contract in a different environment, where both parties to the contract are in agreement about the aims of the organisation.

My findings indicate that there is a psychological contract between individual clergy and individual members of the senior staff. It confirms the soundness of the concept of the psychological contract in understanding the relationship but the psychological contract expressed is different from that recorded in business organisations. This should not be a surprise. It is an underpinning feature of the research that the Church of England is in Yin's (2008) terms an 'extreme organisation'.

A psychological contract that differs from business is only surprising if the epistemological position of HR and employee relations is adopted. Conflict is engrained in the study of industrial and employee relations. It is the study between workers of any category, including professionals, and a management focused organisation. Despite the contemporary stance on employee relations being concerned with co-operation between management and worker, if the emphasis on co-operation is de-constructed it assumes that there are two parties to the relationship, worker and management. This relationship can be adversarial or co-operative. The findings from the perspective of the parish clergy is that the relationship is not conflictual and is unaffected by significant change in the Church of England. My findings suggest that the current understanding of the psychological contract is bounded in its constant assumption about the nature of relationships within organisations. The concept has been criticised as being consistently associated with a capitalist ideology. My findings confirm this criticism but do not negate the value of the concept. It is clear from my findings that it does have value in alternative contexts to the business organisation. However exploration of the concept in the alternative context of the Church of England has resulted in questioning a fundamental aspect of the concept: that individuals re-negotiate the contract in times of violation and change. This appears only to be valid if it is accepted that 'workers' and 'managers' are by definition in conflict and do not share a similar stance.

These findings do however further undermine the concept as a valuable management tool, able to deliver standard responses to maintaining an effective contract. It suggests that the psychological contract is contextually and environmentally dependent. Each organisation may use the lens of the psychological contract to examine the relationships within an organisation, but it is questionable whether solutions derived from one organisational sector can be transferred easily to another.

The concept has been criticised as only being associated with capitalist ideology. Whilst I would accept that this is a valid criticism of much of the research already carried out, I would refute that it is inherent to the entire concept. It is the limited scope of the research that has confined the concept to a capitalist ideology, not the limited scope of the concept. My research has enabled the value of the concept to be considered outside the confines of capitalist ideology and its value re-assessed.

Psychological contract: parties and relationships

In the literature associated with the psychological contract and organisational voice (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002) the notion that groups, particularly organisations, can be a party to a contract is totally undermined and discredited. Despite this, it is still an often used approach in research and writing on the psychological contract.

The participants in both my group and individual interviews frame their discussion of expectations by reference to groups. They discuss for example the expectations of the community or church members. Expectations are presented as if each group has unified expectations; it speaks with one voice. My research has not investigated the voice and expectations of specific groups, although this would be possible to undertake in further research. What is important is that the participants perceive that groups have very similar expectations about the working lives of clergy.

My findings raise questions about how the psychological contract should be conceived. Critics of the concept suggest that the psychological contract is so specific to each individual that it has very limited value in terms of analysing relationships in organisations or providing a useful tool to help develop effective employee relations. The practitioner literature does not dwell on who constitutes an organisation, but assumes that organisations can have common and communicable expectations. My findings give credence to the discredited practitioner view. Individuals can perceive that groups speak with a united

voice. If this is the case the psychological contract is a valuable tool to help individuals consider how they relate to specific groups. It is a framework through which they can consider expectations, and their impact on their own working lives.

When individuals understand their working lives in the context of groups it is unsurprising that they perceive groups as having expectations of them. This does not undermine my findings but highlights the value of the concept of the psychological contract for individuals working in any organisation. My findings suggest that the concept has wider value for those with autonomous working lives such as the clergy and could also be valuable to other autonomous workers such as management consultants. The concept provides an individual with a framework in which to focus on and understand the relationship between themselves and groups they regularly work with. The psychological contract is liberated from the constraints of organisational life.

This may initially appear to be a basic suggestion, but in the 'life' of the psychological contract it is a significant step. It allows the psychological contract to become a concept that can be used to analyse any form of working relationship. In most organisations the psychological contract is used to denote and draw attention to expectations that do not form part of the legal, explicit contract. I am suggesting that the concept also can be used to help understand relationships where there is no legal employment contract. The clergy in my interviews already match this scenario; they are autonomous office holders, without an employment contract. However the core component of the psychological contract, expectations, provided a useful framework through which to view their working lives. This framework can now be developed for other individuals to view the expectations and the psychological contract between themselves and groups they work with. The psychological contract is not coupled to the legal contract; it is an independent entity that exists even when no legal contract is made. Its association with a legal contract is one of contrast. In the context of HR the use of the term psychological contract highlights the limitations of the legal contract and provokes a discussion about

why an individual does not reference the legal contract to determine behaviour in the workplace.

Historical psychological contract

Rousseau (2004) observes that an individual's psychological contract is derived partially from their own past experience such as working experience and education. My research confirms that individual clergy do draw on their own past experience. However the influence of former experience goes beyond informing an individuals' psychological contract. The clergy in my study use their perception of former working lives to articulate the contemporary life and regret they can no longer achieve elements of the historical working life. Despite narrating some mixed messages about the details of former working lives, the significant point is that the clergy constantly draw on it. The professions' perceptions of its contemporary position are rooted in its understanding of the profession in history. This aspect of the psychological contract is not explored in the existing literature about professionals and the psychological contract.

The uniqueness of my research findings is wider than just exploring the working lives of contemporary clergy. My findings have identified that expectations can be generated about work from generic historical perceptions of the role. This is a step on from Rousseau (2004), who focuses on how workers develop diverse and individual expectations. My findings allocate to predecessors in the role a more powerful and influential position on contemporary working lives than the existing literature on the psychological contract has explored or even envisaged.

The participants perceive that the Church is going through a period of change. Additionally in the timeframe of my research project the Church of England has moved towards abandoning the historical working conditions by replacing freehold with common tenure. As the literature of the psychological contract is silent about the power of the historical working life of the contemporary

psychological contract in times of change it is unknown whether this phenomenon can be transferred into other organisational settings with a long history, such as education or medicine, or is a specific feature of working in the Church of England. Only further research into these occupations would clarify this question.

As discussed in chapter 9, the participants perceive that in the past the role of clergy was understood by society, through personal experience and depictions in literature and other media. The contemporary clergy in the Church of England know, understand and share in this traditional knowledge. Nowhere in the psychological contract literature is the power of history on the expectations of contemporary workers in a profession explored.

Psychological contract areas for future exploration

This chapter has outlined how my study has challenged the existing understanding of the psychological contract. Although there are clear implications of my research findings for the understanding of the psychological contract, my research has also raised issues that would benefit from further exploration. The section below outlines areas where there is opportunity for work to be carried out in the future to enable further understanding of the psychological contract and HR to be developed:

1. My research has concentrated on exploring the perception of one group, the clergy. It is evident from the narratives of my participants that there are other parties to the psychological contract in the Church of England. Further exploratory work could be undertaken with other parties for example the perception of the senior staff and parishioners could be explored. Such research would enable the multi-faceted contract of the Church of England evidenced in my research to be more fully explored and documented.

2. By studying the psychological contract of parishioners a further contribution could be made to the understanding of the psychological contract. Parishioners are volunteers. Netting et al (2005) alluded to the psychological contract of volunteers but did not fully explore it. Further research in this area would explore how useful the concept of the psychological contract is in understanding and managing organisations that contain a large volunteer workforce.
3. My research suggests that, surprisingly, in organisations where managers and workers perceive themselves as undertaking the same roles, or in the words of the ordination service (Common Worship, 2000) 'share the oversight of the church', changes in the organisation do not always result in renegotiation. Further work would need to be carried out with other groups and organisations to explore whether this is a unique feature of the Church of England, or faith based organisations in general, or whether it can be generalised outside the faith organisations.
4. The contemporary clergy in my study interpret their working lives in the light of their understanding of historical working lives. There is opportunity for further research to explore whether the power of the historical working life is always important for clergy or it has more significance to clergy when they are in the midst of re-interpreting and redefining their role in the context of organisational and societal change.
5. Clergy are not the only long standing profession. Teachers, academics and medics amongst others can claim a long history. It is unknown whether individuals in these professions interpret their current role in the light of former working lives, or whether it is a feature merely of one profession. Further research with other professionals would provide additional material and insight into this issue. It would enable evidence to be generated about the importance of historical patterns of working on contemporary workers facing times of change.

6. This issue could be further explored by studying workers outside the professions who perceive themselves to be in a long tradition of working in specific industry that has experienced change, for example railway workers or the Royal Mail. The legacy of the historical workforce on contemporary working could be explored and contributions made to our understanding of the contemporary employment relationship.
7. Bunderson (2001) concentrates on the psychological contract of professionals within organisations that are managed by managers outside the profession. In my study the clergy and the senior staff share a common profession. Further research which concentrated on professions or even individuals who were managed by fellow professionals would enable insight to be generated about the psychological contract where both sides to the relationship, in the terms of employee relations, workers and managers, share a common professional understanding and stance.

Living with the university and the Church of England

Throughout this research I have drawn on the work of Wright-Mills (1959) when exploring the fusion between life experience and intellectual work. I have described the research project as both an intellectual and personal journey that brought together two essential elements in my life. The final section of my thesis will return to explore the impact of my research on these two elements.

Implications for my teaching

When teaching HR I am striving to enable individual practitioners to not only engage and understand theoretical concepts but also integrate theoretical concepts into their own organisational experience and develop innovative, competent practice relevant to their own organisational situation.

By liberating the psychological contract from the business world my findings give the concept of the psychological contract greater validity in both the academic and practitioner 'world'. It enables the concept to be used as a lens to view relationships in forms of organisation beyond the profit sector. My research enables those who are teaching HR to meet the needs of a wider range of students.

However the findings are a challenge to the established HR community and profession. My current role as Director of Studies for The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) programmes at the University and professionally as a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD brings me into constant contact with the professional standards and ethos of CIPD. The language of the profession is business driven. For example the CIPD (2010) suggest that HR practitioners need a deep understanding of the business, and through the use of their unique insights are able to drive business performance through the creation and delivery of HR strategy and solutions.

There is constant reinforcement that HR is concerned with business and business performance. Paradoxically for an HR profession, the CIPD does not adopt a diverse approach: despite managing diversity being a core element of its standards, it does not embrace a diverse understanding of organisation but restricts the profession to the business sector. My findings and my own experience of HR practice and HR practitioners through teaching and consultancy represent HR in a much wider framework than that espoused by the CIPD. It is in this wider framework that I envisage that my findings are situated. In the light of my findings it would not be unreasonable to suggest to the CIPD, the guardian of the HR professional standards in the UK, that their understanding of how and where the concepts of HR can be applied is too narrow. In terms of teaching, it creates an opportunity to extensively critique the established and accepted positions of HR. My findings challenge the basic assumptions of where HR can be delivered. It liberates HR from its 'marriage' with business performance and enables alternative organisations to explore

how the concepts associated with HR might relate to their specific context and circumstances.

My findings challenge the HR practitioner community to re-examine and reframe the tenets of HR to embrace a more diverse language in which to articulate the value of HR to all organisations. I shall be using the insights generated by my research to underpin my teaching of both the psychological contract and wider HR. My findings made it clear that there is a 'voice' to be heard that casts an alternative perspective on organisational relationships other than the strategic performance driven model. This 'voice' could be used during teaching to allow students to critique HR practice and theory from an alternative perspective.

Reflections on moving to use a working lives approach

Terkel (1972) subtitles his book *Working* as 'people talking about what they do all day and how they feel about what they do'. My research imitated this ideal, in that it explored what clergy do. In *Working* the participants tell stories about what they do on a day to day basis. In my interviews my focus is not just on the day to day tasks but, as I described in chapter 7, the purpose of the individual's working life. Terkel's approach is to let the stories stand alone and without comment. Each participant, in Terkel's work, is celebrated for his/her own unique working life. There is no attempt to construct a narrative from the interviews or to consider the working lives of the participants through any conceptual framework. Terkel presents portraits of individuals. My approach diverges from his at this point. In chapter 7 a 'pen portrait' of each participant is provided, but the portrait is not the end point of the research. Through the analysis of each interview the reflections and stories of the participants are made into a narrative. My findings go beyond individual working lives to produce an account that offers insights into contemporary working lives in the Church of England. Casey (1995, p.216) describes narrative inquiry as 'a way to put shards of experience together, to construct identity'. My research has taken the 'shards' from the working lives of the participants to construct a 'portrait' of working life for current clergy.

A portrait of contemporary working lives is not the end point of the research. The working lives approach is further adapted to allow the interview material to be reviewed through the lens of the psychological contract. The aim of Terkel's interviews is to portray people's feeling about their work. My research allows the participants to present their feelings about the day to day task and the wider purpose of their work, but it also has a further dimension it explores working lives through the specific framework or lens of the psychological contract.

Personal reflections on the research journey

In chapter 3 I explored what it means to undertake research for a PhD. Philips and Pugh (1987) suggest that by doing a PhD, a researcher is able to demonstrate that they have 'learned how to carry out research to a professional standard. In chapter 5 I state that sociology is not my discipline, epistemologically I align both myself and this research project with business. Yet the research journey has moved into the areas of methodology traditionally associated with sociology. I described in chapter 10 the clergy's narrative of regret. Methodologically speaking I underwent a narrative of regret. At the beginning of the research I was prepared to embrace a methodological approach that fitted with the dominant position taken by research within my own business school. Chapter 3 outlines the research design and makes it clear that, although the research is qualitative, it does not consider approaches and methods beyond those used by the students I often supervise. The language of the research proposal articulates a compact, rational approach to the research designed to deliver against the stated objectives. Moving towards the working lives approach opened up for exploration approaches to research such as life and oral history. It allowed me to journey into what, for me, was uncharted water. I do not claim that business research has not made use of such approaches in the past, just that they were not part of the usual toolkit used in the HR department of the Business School. Adopting working lives allowed me to explore the use of such methods.

Undertaking the research through working lives provided me with new insights and understanding about the concept of the psychological contract. Working lives provides an alternative framing of HR, allowing a researcher to place the human actors in the interviews at the centre of the research. The actors, in my case the clergy, are given a voice. Although this is a common understanding of narrative inquiry it is a significant departure point for research into HR. As discussed throughout this thesis, HR is primarily concerned with the performance of the organisation. It is concerned with measuring the effectiveness of human capital and the strategic performance of the organisation. The literature of the psychological contract is often associated with considering how an effective contract can be developed for the benefit of the organisation. Using the working lives approach requires the focus to move from the organisational level to the individual. The key actors in narrative are, as explored in chapter 5, the voices of those who are not often heard (Rowlinson and Procter 1999). Working lives requires that HR 'listens' to the voices of individuals.

At the end of my research journey I shall be returning into the business field as a teacher and researcher, returning to 'living with the University'. I shall be taking back my methodological experiences beyond the 'boundary wall' into the HR world. In the post research phase my liberation from the epistemology often associated with HR has now to be reconsidered. I continue to teach HR: encouraging part-time students who are practising HR practitioners to become reflective practitioners and adopt the principles and approaches of CPD is central to my work as an academic. My teaching, however, cannot ignore the findings from my own research. It is not credible either as a researcher or an HR professional working in the field of Learning and Development to draw on the traditions of sociological research but then refuse to reflect on these traditions and adapt one's own practice accordingly. My own practice in terms of teaching and supervision, therefore, must absorb narrative inquiry into the 'toolkit' of methods available to my own students. This may seem very obvious but it is a challenge to the conservative and defined approaches to research often adopted within the confines of the HR profession.

Areas for further exploration

Like Terkel's work (1972), my research has allowed the 'voice' of individuals in organisations to be heard. Further research exploring HR with organisations could be conducted using the narrative approach. By allowing an in-depth exploration of the 'voice' of individuals within an organisation a potential stream of research that takes an alternative perspective on the performance dominant culture of HR would be opened up.

The next section will examine the aspect of the research concerned with 'living' with the Church of England and will review my own stance during the research process before discussing the contribution of my research to the understanding of the contemporary Church of England

Conversant associate

In chapter 3 I explore my stance in relation to the participants, concluding that the term 'conversant associate' is most appropriate. I am sufficiently conversant with the Church of England to understand and be accepted in the group situations. I could not however be termed a participant as I am not a full member. There is a long tradition of participant based research, both in observation and interviewing (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994).

The fusion between my academic and personal life is central to my research. The acceptance of the stance of conversant associate recognised that my stance was uncommon, and represented the centrality of 'living' with the Church of England to my research project. Yet it was also a threatening stance to take. Adopting the stance of conversant associate potentially severed the link between my academic and personal life and placed me firmly with the Church of England. The participants recognised me as part of the Church of England. I have consistently argued, using the work of Wright-Mills (1959), that there should be a fusion between the intellectual and personal life. The conversant

associate threatened the balance between the two parts of my life. At the analysis stage my academic self had to be reinstated to ensure credible and valid research findings.

Earlier in this chapter I discuss the contribution of my findings to the concept of the psychological contract. To ensure the credibility of this claim the impact of the stance of conversant associate on the research needs to be explored. I have already discussed using the lens of the psychological contract to view the interview material to inform understanding of the concept of the psychological contract. I used a second lens during the analysis and the construction of the narrative. This lens examined the narrative to ensure that the material presented in Chapters 7 – 10 are accessible to both the reader and the wider academic community outside the Church of England. At a superficial level it was concerned with jargon and terminology, using square brackets to provide further clarification or interpretations. At a deeper level, one part of the framing used in the analysis was to what extent are my conclusions based on my conversant associate stance? I was constantly mindful that during the analysis I should take several framings of the interview material: firstly to interpret through the stance of the conversant associate, and secondly to interpret through the stance of the researcher and academic. The realisation of the conversant associate stance after analysing the group interviews was a valuable insight but taking the stance uncritically in the individual interviews had the potential to compromise the narrative and the credibility and value of the research findings.

Documenting the contemporary Church of England

I have identified the contribution of my research to the understanding of the psychological contract and teaching HR. My research has resulted in further areas of contribution. My findings give voice to the parish clergy of the contemporary Church of England. The findings are a 'snapshot' of clerical working live in the early twenty-first century. As such my study make a

contribution to the Church's own understanding of its 'employees' and has highlighted areas that would benefit from further research.

Areas for further exploration

1. The clergy perceive that the Church is on the cusp of change. The Church of England is introducing common tenure, a move that will provide all clergy with consistent employment rights. Further research on clerical working lives undertaken after the introduction of common tenure in a few years time would enable an understanding of the impact of common tenure and changing work status on both the clergy and the Church to be developed. For example my findings suggest that clergy perceive that they currently 'share' a role with the senior staff. The introduction of common tenure may change this historical relationship. Further longitudinal research would enable this issue to be explored.
2. The influence of the historical working life on contemporary clergy is well documented in this thesis. I have used the term 'narrative of regret' to describe how clergy perceive they are no longer able to fulfil what they perceive to be their key task. As an HR and Learning and Development specialist and practitioner the 'narrative of regret' suggests to me that there is a mismatch between clergy expectations of the work and the reality of contemporary working lives in the Church of England. The 'narrative of regret' is expressed by those who have recently been trained and ordained, as well as by those who have been working for some years. There is opportunity for further research to explore this issue and to further understand the influence of the historical role and also the role of training in developing an individual's understanding of the core aspects of the contemporary role.

3. Much of the research concerns the working experience of clergy in parish work. It is evident from my findings that Germaine, who is what is termed a self-funded minister in secular employment (MSE) and who works as a senior manager in a secular organisation, narrates a different working life from those participants working full time in a parish. By being an outlier, the uniformity in the perception of the core task of parish clergy is confirmed. Germaine represents new working patterns that have already been introduced into the Church of England. She is self-funded, she is a priest but works outside the organisation as well. She perceives that the Church of England has authorised new forms of working but has not adapted its practices. Germaine is the only participant in my interviews to be a Minister in Secular Employment. My research concentrated on what I have described as the 'earthed' clergy working in parishes. If I wanted to stray outside the boundary of business into empirical theology, further investigation of those with working lives in the Church of England but outside parish ministry would enable the documentation of new and diverse forms of working in the Church of England.

4. My findings indicate that the parish clergy constantly draw on the historical psychological contract to inform their understanding of their own work. From the limited evidence of Germaine's comments it is apparent that clergy in new forms of working lives do not have access to a common understanding of work developed over hundreds of years. Germaine and others are potentially developing a new psychological contract, differentiated from the historical one. Given that my research makes it clear that the historical working life is still a powerful influence on the working lives of contemporary parish clergy, Germaine's experiences suggest an area of research that moves away from parish clergy to explore working as ministers in secular employment and other forms of working outside the parish system, for example those who work as hospital or school chaplains. Further research would enable a greater understanding of the scope of the influence of the historical working life in the Church of England in its many manifestations.

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Appendix 1- An excerpt from a paper on some preliminary ideas on research strategy and method, September 2002

Yin (1994) observes that the nature of the research questions is a guide to what research strategies and methods are available for the researcher to use. The research questions are wide ranging, they ask the researcher to explore, to examine, to understand. The research is not testing a preconceived hypothesis, such as when clergy hold free hold status they demonstrate a more positive psychological contract. The psychological contract for the clergy is unmapped. I am trying to discover what it is and then perhaps map it on to pre-existing understandings or question whether the concept of the psychological contract is relevant to atypical workers.

The focus of this study is clergy within one organisation, the Church of England. It is a study of a relationship between the clergy and the organisation. Yin (1994) suggests that a case study approach can be used for exploration, description and explanation. It is used when a contemporary phenomenon is studied within a real-life context, particularly when the researcher believes the context to be pertinent to the focus of the study. In this study the context is central to the research question. There is a fit between Yin's precursors for case study research and this study. The study aims to explore the relationship, through the psychological contract, between individuals and an organisation. The organisational context is crucial to the study. However the focus of the study is not the Church of England and all clergy. There is a danger that insufficient definition of the unit of analysis in a case study will result in the collection of too much data. There are a number of options available when framing the unit of analysis. The research will concentrate on no more than two dioceses, with a significant concentration on X Diocese. Nevertheless there are a range of positions occupied by clergy. An analysis of the biographical details of two hundred clergy produced 49 different roles (Crockfords 2002). To avoid collecting too much data the number of roles to be studied should be defined. One option would be to study clergy who carry out the most common role of

parish priest. However the type of role may be significant to the understanding of the psychological contract. For example clergy who work directly for the central organisation of the Church of England, or are school or industrial chaplains may have a different experience and understanding of the relationship between their role and organisation from those who work remote from the centre in parish contexts. Context may be significant to the study on a macro and micro level. The Church of England may be a unique case study, and on a micro level differing roles with the Church of England may be significant to the understanding of the psychological contract. The organisation, represented perhaps by senior management, may have a distinct understanding of the psychological contract. It may be important within a case to study different stakeholders. The stakeholders discussed so far are all clergy. An alternative perspective would be to study one phenomenon, through different framings or spheres of action (Bazzanger and Dodier, 1997). The unit of analysis could be the relationship between parish clergy and the organisation but the understanding of that relationship could be viewed from the perspective of, for example, church members, elected officials or other community stakeholders. This approach would change the emphasis from what do the clergy understand as the psychological contract to what are the expectations and contract between individual clergy and their parish.

Although the case study appears to be the most appropriate strategy there are weaknesses in taking this approach. It is questionable whether a case focused on a single organisation can produce significant research results. Phillips and Pugh (1987) state that doctoral research requires a contribution to the understanding, explanation and analysis of a topic, not just a description of what is happening. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) suggest doctoral research into management should ideally contribute at least one of the following: new knowledge, new theories and ideas or use new methods. In a multi-case study there are opportunities to develop hypotheses based on different contexts and it has been suggested that a researcher is more likely to be able to generalise their findings from a multi rather than a single case study. However Yin (1994) defends the value of a single case when the case is

extreme, unique or revelatory. The literature review carried out so far demonstrates that there is little work on the psychological contract carried out beyond for-profit organisations. Therefore the Church of England appears to be an unexplored case in the context of the psychological contract.

The case study method is an opportunity to derive a rich understanding of the context of the research (Morris and Wood, cited by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The study aims to explore the views and feelings of individuals. A phenomenological or qualitative approach is used when a researcher wants to study views rather than things (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002).

Organisations are not a defined reality (Silverman, 2000); they are constantly influenced and re-negotiated by individuals and groups within them. The roles we carry out are similarly influenced by our negotiations with peers and the structures in which we work. If organisations are changing constantly and are not experienced in the same way by each individual, the research strategy and methods need to be able to capture the experience of the individual. A key step will be to define the roles to be studied. If the focus was on looking at parish clergy but viewed through different framings (parishioners, community groups etc), one approach would be to carry out observational fieldwork. It could be in compacted or intermittent mode (Woods and Jeffrey, 2002): either remaining on a research site almost permanently for a period or time or revisiting the site at specific times, dependent on the focus of the study. This approach could generate data about what is happening, which would give a rich picture of the life experience of clergy and the individuals with whom they interact. There are limitations, in the context of this study, to this approach. The focus would be narrow, on perhaps three or four clergy. It would be difficult from this data to answer question one, what is the psychological contract, as the focus of the study would be too narrow. It would, however, generate data on how clergy's role is viewed by different stakeholders and perhaps the influence specific stakeholders have on an individual's role.

To understand the relationship between 'employer' and 'employee' data needs to be generated from both sides of the relationship. There may be an opportunity to use a limited amount of observation to generate this data. One approach could be to observe a number of meetings, for example senior staff meetings or chapter meetings over a period of time. This may generate data towards answering the question 'what is the psychological contract'. It would give snapshots of how different parties understood that relationship.

One definition of a case study is when triangulation occurs through the convergence of multi-sources of evidence (Yin, 1994). Observations are one option but they allow little opportunity to gather individual's thoughts or probe an individual's views. Interviewing participants would enable an in-depth description of the 'life-world' of an individual (Yin, 1994) to be gathered. Again defining the focus of the study is key to who should be interviewed but individuals from both sides of the relationship seem to have a contribution to make to the understanding of the psychological contract. Exploration of a number of job roles would seem to contribute to answering these questions.

Documentary evidence can provide a further source of data. Cassell and Symon (1994) suggest that looking at organisational documents from a specific period enables researchers to understand how attitudes within an organisation have been shaped by events. Looking at documentary evidence in the public domain, for example General Synod Reports, may provide data on how the Church of England's understanding of management and the employment relationship has changed over a number of years. Silverman (2000) believes that if researchers want to understand how organisations and the people within them work, documentation can not be ignored. Because of its democratic government through the General Synod, many documents are in the public domain and would provide an official and public representation of the Church of England and a source of data. Another alternative could be to look at the documentation sent from the employer to individual clergy or in church newspapers. Using documentation would enable the same themes to be traced

through interview and documentary data and allow a comparison between espoused theory and theory in use within the organisation.

There is some discussion in the texts about the relationship between existing theory and case study research. Yin (2008) states that it benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions, suggesting that case study research is removed from the grounded, inductive approach which forms the basis of much qualitative research. However Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) offer a different insight, suggesting that data collected in a case study can be used for explanation building which is akin to the grounded theory approach. Cassell and Symon, (1994) advocate that the prior theory may only be rudimentary in some case studies, yet in others propositions may be tested within the case study. The research proposal (RD1) put forward that the Church of England was an alternative context in which to explore the psychological contract, that the project was an exploratory study and would, therefore, use a predominantly phenomenological approach. This appears to contradict Yin's (2008) understanding of case study research. However, to Yin the literature review feeds the data collection by allowing the researcher to generate sharper and more insightful questions. There seems to be greater congruence between a phenomenological approach to research and the case study strategy than first appeared. Prior theory can act as a guide for the data collection, rather than a proposition to be tested. The research context and questions partially mirror the dilemmas about the role of prior theory discussed. The psychological contract is a well documented phenomenon, but not in the context of churches. Any research in this area can draw on pre-existing theory to explore the psychological contract within this new context, yet it has the potential to be theory building. Woods (1986) suggests that research is in two stages, stage one being inductive and grounded, whereas stage two moves on to the testing of hypothesis generated by the research. This study may move between the two stages.

I have tried to put an argument to support the use of a case study involving multi-methods as a possible approach to looking at the research questions. This

approach is not without problems. The validity of qualitative research is often questioned however the use of multi-methods allows a researcher to generate multiple aspects of a phenomenon (Silverman, 2000) and can increase the validity of the study. Feeding back and checking with participants in the research or with other researchers can also enhance the validity of the data. Qualitative research is often viewed as subjective by those of the positivist tradition. However research in organisations, involving human beings, cannot take place in a social vacuum (Cassell and Symon, 1994). The researcher can never be fully independent of the social context of the research. This is particularly true for my own study where I am a member of the organisation to be studied, somewhat supportive of its beliefs and, through being married to a clergyman, aware of at least one person's view on the psychological contract. Part of the motivation to start this study is summed up by Dalton (1964, in Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002) whose research grew out of his 'confusions and irritations' with his own organisation. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that researchers should not be afraid to draw on their own experiences.

Appendix 2 - Essential qualities of the psychological contract

Table 1

What are the essential qualities of the relationship between the clergy and the Church of England?

Working towards Research Objective 1 – What is the nature of the psychological contract between clergy and the Church of England?

| Essential qualities of the psychological contract between clergy and senior staff/diocese (Axis 1) | Essential qualities of the psychological contract between clergy and parishioners (Axis 2) |
|---|---|
| 1 Employment Status | 1 Geographical |
| 2 Service | 2 Commitment |
| 3 Insecurity | 3 Conflict |
| 4 Independence | 4 Power over job security |
| 5 Vulnerability | 5 Influence |
| 6 Sacrifice | 6 Control over licence |
| 7 Support | 7 Vulnerability |
| 8 Infrequent | 8 Misperception |
| 9 Accountable | 9 Management control |
| 10 Value | 10 Unrealistic |
| 11 Appoint | 11 Monarchical |
| 12 Resource provision | 12 Clergy is the manager |
| 13 Financial control | 13 Parishioners are the employer/managers |
| | 14 A possessive relationship |
| | 15 A team relationship |

Table 2

Another way of looking at it – the relationship between clergy and the Church of England is based on

| The relationship between clergy and the Church of England is based on: | The relationship between clergy and parishioners is based on: |
|---|--|
| 1 Employment status | 1 A geographical role |
| 2 Values of service | 2 Commitment to parish |
| 3 Insecurity | 3 Conflict with parishioners |
| 4 Independence of clergy | 4 Parishioners having power over job security |
| 5 Vulnerability of clergy | 5 Parishioners having influence |
| 6 Sacrifice of clergy | 6 Parishioners having control over licence |
| 7 Support of senior staff | 7 Vulnerability of clergy |
| 8 Infrequent contact with senior staff | 8 Misperception of clergy by the public/parishioners |
| 9 Accountable to senior staff | 9 Parishioners having management control |
| 10 Valued and cared for by senior staff | 10 Parishioners having unrealistic expectations |
| 11 Appointed by senior staff | 11 The clergy act as a monarch |
| 12 The resources provided by the diocese | 12 The Clergy are managers |
| 13 Financial constraints derived from the diocese. | 13 The Parishioners are the employer/managers |
| | 14 Parishioners are possessive |
| | 15 Clergy and parishioners work as a team relationship |

Appendix 3 - Research diary entry

“4th February 2004

Need to make some decisions where to take this, revisited research objectives, 3 not relevant – it’s not about values. What is the nature of the psychological contract between the clergy and the C of E? How do the different decisions affect the psychological contract?

May be two key aspects want to explore further. 1 parish – clergy – diocese. One - what is the psychological contract? Two the formal contract does it create a different relationship, how does one affect the other. Need to consider best how to explore themes and the links between them.

24th March 2004

I’m not sure what I have found out is just about the psychological contract, it is more about power and influence? Discussed with [name of supervisor] either need a broad definition of psychological contract or move away from it.

5th June 2003

Look at my role during lunch section of interview, if changed, does their perception of me change? Opportunistic researcher – 3rd interview bring your own sandwiches. How will this affect role, a meal a social event. Probably more likely relaxed setting for discussion/fellowship on a regular basis – culture of the organisation.

10 June 2003

Opportunistic research I ask to meet with Chapter then I fit in with their existing format, eg bring your own lunch and existing arrangements. I have to make do with existing focus for discussion and thought, not a specially convened meeting. Need to read Middlemarch.

4th August 2006

Comments on Radnor's key questions:

- 1 What stance – what am I, knowledgeable or experienced member of the organisation – what? Knowledgeable associate. Collins Eng Dictionary describes associate as to connect in, to mix socially, to be involved with because of shared views, a companion/friend.
- 2 Collins Dictionary describes knowledgeable – intelligent or well informed. Therefore my stance is knowledgeable associate, or if I put knowledgeable in the Thesaurus it would be better to be called acquainted with, associate, familiar conversant associate.
- 3 Dictionary definition of conversant = having knowledge or experience of. This is probably me – I do have both of these. I'm conversant with clergy, live with one, conversant/experience of life culture, associate – involved with, shared views.
- 4 I'm the conversant associate – not knowing well but know enough to interpret, make contact.

Appendix 4

Emerging themes from my analysis of the individual interviews

| Theme Name | A working life embedded in history | The influence of freehold on historical and contemporary working lives | Perceptions of community and societal understanding of working life | Perceptions of giving support and care in working life | Relationships within working life | Working life in a place | Perceptions of activity and workload | Financing working life | Role The working life identified |
|---------------|------------------------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Geoff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| John | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Michael | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mortimer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Benedict | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Septimus | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Frances | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | ✓ |
| Germaine | 0 | ✓ | 0 | 0 | ✓ | 0 | ✓ | 0 | ✓ |

✓ = theme discussed by participant

0 = theme not discussed by participant

Every participant except the self-funded and part-time clergy, Germaine and Frances discussed all nine themes.