

FEMALE PRIESTS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
FLOURISHING AND DIMINISHMENT:
HOW HAS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRST
GENERATION OF 'NORMALLY' ORDAINED FEMALE
PRIESTS BEEN FORMED BY THE INSTITUTIONAL
CULTURE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?

by

SARAH SCHOFIELD

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Abstract

This thesis considers what are the experiences of women ordained in the Church of England and if these are dissonant with the claims of the Church to treat male and female priests equally. It demonstrates the impact of institutional culture on the lives of a sample of thirteen ordained women and discerns conclusions relevant to the Church and institutions with similar stresses between stated aims concerning equality and the grounded reality of their members.

Uniquely amongst research into Church of England clergywomen this small scale project used Asynchronous Electronic Interviews to gather extensive, deeply reflective, qualitative data. The interviews were preceded by a review of institutional documents relating to the historical roots of women's ordination. The documents and interview data were analysed using interpretative methods grounded in a feminist perspective.

Analysis of institutional documents revealed a focus on scarce resource as a motivator for change. Interview data exposed a deeply rooted sense of vocation lived out within a demanding institutional culture. The discussion drew on Lewis Coser (1974) and Sarah Ahmed's (2010-2017) work to demonstrate that the Church of England has created a culture of conviviality that blocks women's full participation and discriminates between women and men's behaviour. The thesis shows how the Church of England has adapted to create new blockages to women's participation through a culture of conviviality.

Of relevance beyond the Church AEI is shown as able to make the practice of research more accessible for both the researched and the researcher. Additional layers are added to Coser's Greedy Institutions model, both the controlling power of false hope in flexible working arrangements and the conferment of honorary awards. These conclusions, as well as those relating to the tone of unspoken norms, are relevant to other Greedy Institutions such as the Armed Forces, Higher Education and Trade Unions. Ahmed's theory that a conceptual institutional norm can undermine concrete commitments to equality is confirmed. Conviviality is proposed as an alternative norm to Ahmed's 'joy' for the specific context of the Church. In conclusion the thesis suggests that identifying the nature of unspoken norms and which members of an institution benefit most from those norms is part of the process of undermining the hold of a Greedy Institution on the most burdened.

Dedication

For the people who died before this got done, my mum, Grandma and Grandad Northall, mother in law Jess (who never understood that this won't qualify me to do anything), photographer and clergy colleague Mark Salmon, Nicola Taylor of the University of Birmingham Academic Writing Advisory Service, and Canon John Atherton. This thesis is submitted 24 years after Canon John told me 'you should start a PhD now or it will never get done'.

To Emmie Lucas (credit as agreed when you were six) for choosing the pseudonym lucky dip names from your classmates, may you all grow up in a world with less 'of the sort of crap women were supposed to put up with', to quote one of my interviewees.

To Clare MacLaren, who along with me was one of the 70 young female ordinands of the late nineties. Thanks for helping me write the questions over tea in a Leeds' cafe thereby disqualifying yourself from taking part.

And above all for Phil, whom I love an awful lot and who sensibly used the weeks and months when this thesis was written to learn the ukulele, cheaper and more useful than a doctorate.

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For many years one of my closest friends has been a civil engineer. Liz and I have whiled away many an hour discussing the similarities and differences between our experiences as women in male dominated professions. A decade ago, over pizza and a film, Liz gave me her 'new favourite quote':

I have a rule of thumb that allows me to judge, when time is pressing and one needs to make a snap judgment, whether or not some sexist bullshit is afoot. Obviously, it's not 100% infallible but by and large it definitely points you in the right direction and it's asking this question; are the men doing it? Are the men worrying about this as well? Is this taking up the men's time? Are the men told not to do this, as it's letting the side down?...

Almost always the answer is no. The boys are not being told they have to be a certain way, they are just getting on with stuff.

(Moran, 2011, p.86)

Moran's words in *How to Be a Woman*, Liz believed, perfectly encompassed the situation for 'women priests' and female engineers. It's not really the right kind of quote for a PhD, I should also confess to not having read the book itself, therefore Moran remains parked into the ante chamber of this thesis. Instead, I have tried, as Sara Ahmed wrote in *Living a Feminist Life* (2017a), 'to acquire the words'. I have tried, using the language of the academy to critique restrictions on ordained women's ministry in the Church of England (Ahmed, 2017a, p.33). I have done so through the raw words of fellow priests and the polished and peer reviewed texts of academics. Despite the tone of what follows, Moran's cri de coeur has never been far from my mind. Thank you to Liz for sharing it with me.

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Chapter One

To be in an institution which has said that it is all right for people to hold office who have the view that women are not able to be priests, is, for me, to be in an institution which appears completely half-hearted in its support for my ministry and for the ministry of other women. (Tracy)

This thesis explores an apparent contradiction in the Church of England's reception of female priests: that women can be fully ordained and yet not permitted to minister fully across the Church. How has this partial affirmation, as expressed by Tracy one of the 13 female priests interviewed by me for this thesis, been experienced by ordained women? What does the apparent persistent formalised discrimination against ordained women reveal about institutional culture within the Church of England?

What prompted this project?

My research question arose from two decades as a priest navigating institutionally sanctioned gender-based discrimination. In part the research was intended to provide emotional catharsis through the creation of my own intellectual space outside the Church. I needed to understand why the restrictions arose and what enables them to persist. Additionally, I intended to explore, sensitively, why female priests appear willingly to accept their partial exclusion. I wanted to share the space I created for myself with sister priests so they could name and process their own experience of ministry using language and analytical frameworks unique to each individual. This project is significantly shaped by qualitative research that draws out these accounts from 13 participating women ordained as priests. In this way I hoped we would feel empowered to make changes where we wished to. These objectives remained throughout but as I progressed I also sought to answer the question, what are the broader implications for all women, and others marginalised from power, of accepting that the Church can restrict the fullness of a divine calling? Is it appropriate that ordained women accept the Church of England's current status quo?

Institutional context

Ordinations of women began in 1994, following a two-thirds majority vote by the Church of England's General Synod in 1992 (see glossary for technical institutional terms and Chapter Two for the stages of historical development). Unlike their male colleagues, ordained using identical rites expressing the same theological understanding of priesthood, women's ministry was restricted from 1994 to 2014 by the *Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993* (1993a). Following the decision to ordain women as bishops in 2014 this particular Act of Synod was replaced by the *Five Guiding Principles* (2014). Each limits the posts into which female priests can be recruited. They prevent women exercising sacramental or leadership roles in parishes which have availed themselves of formal routes to discriminate against female priests. Each are explained in detail in Chapter Two. Clergy and parishes in dioceses with female bishops are able to opt out of their care by requesting a male bishop who does not ordain women. In this

thesis I shortened some of the key terms related to the legislation and episcopal actions arising from it. Following the pattern of Maltby in *The Act of Synod and Theological Seriousness*, an undated article for Women and the Church (WATCH), 'the Act of Synod (1993), or simply the Act of Synod, or Act, shall be taken to mean *Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: Pastoral Arrangements a report by the House of Bishops* which contains the document *Bonds of Peace and Draft Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 (GS 1074)*'. Maltby further explains:

The Act was slightly amended and approved by the November 1993 session of General Synod as the *Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993*. Important background thinking for the Act is to be found in the document *Being in Communion (GS Misc 418, 1993)*.

(Maltby, undated)

Furthermore 'non ordaining bishop' used by General Synod from 2022 for bishops who will not ordain women, although this was not current at the time of my interviews. I will also abbreviate Church of England to Church although with an awareness that the Church of England is far from the entirety of Christ's body.

What is the Church?

The word 'Church' or 'church' appears in this thesis over 850 times, the meaning shifting depending on context and who is using the word. There is no single definition. To use a word I apply to coding later in this thesis, it is a slippery word, perhaps the slipperiest of all those that follow. There are however some broad boundaries around distinct usages; throughout my research I held in my head a threefold understanding of Church/church which I latterly articulated as congregational church, concrete Church and conceptual Church. In its conclusions the thesis is least concerned with congregational church. A congregational church is precisely that, a unique gathered community about which participants had practical rather than philosophical or theological stories to tell. Congregational church experiences are part of the bigger picture that is a woman's experience with the Church as an institution.

The institutional culture explored in this thesis is a dynamic interaction of concrete Church and conceptual Church. Concrete Church consists of formal doctrine and liturgy, as well as policies and guidance produced by General Synod, the House of Bishops, National Church Institutions and the Faith and Order Commission. For example 'the Church agreed that women be ordained as priests' is an expression of concrete Church, the opinion formally expressed in a Synodical decision. Conceptual Church is the idea of Church that a person carries in their head, it can vary from person to person but also can vary within the understanding of an individual. A woman writing 'the Church expects me to be permanently on duty' is referring to the conceptual Church. There are concrete Church policies about working hours and protected time off but clergy, not just those in my study, repeatedly complain about multiple, unending demands. Phrases such as 'the Church wants' point to behavioural expectations that are not formalised or explicitly named. Women in this study are managing the interaction of all three understandings of what Church/church is. The conclusions found in Chapter Eight similarly relate to the conceptual Church but also to the concrete Church that takes the underlying expectations of conceptual Church and strengthens their foundations through policy and resource allocation.

Position within current research

From the post-1992 period, the earliest literature is focused on women's progression to ordination and the reception of their ministry, issues perceived to be unique to women, and the contrast between male and female priests. Books concerning the progression to ordination and the period immediately afterwards explore the development of women's understanding of priesthood and the reactions they encountered, these include Walrond-Skinner (1994), Wakeman (1996), Lynas (1998), Thorne (2000), Rees (2002), Bagilhole (2002) and Jones (2004). After a decade had passed since the first ordinations, literature expanded to consider women's progression into senior roles, referred to by Jones (2014) as 'breaking the stained glass ceiling', these included Barr and Barr (2001), Ogilvy (2014) and the Church's own *Transformations* (2011) report.

A number of writers investigated the different social roles ordaining women brought into the priesthood for the first time. Topics included being a wife, clergy couples and motherhood (Walrond-Skinner, 1998; Archbishops' Council, 2009; Page, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2016; and Percy, 2014). These are considered from the perspective of the suitability of the traditional model of priesthood for women's lives and the impact supposedly feminine traits have on the theology and practice of priesthood. The contrast between men and women is either explored psychologically or philosophically. Psychological research has included comparative stress levels and conflict management styles (Francis, Robbins and Greene have written various articles including 1996, 1999, 2007, 2015 and 2018). Philosophical perspectives have exposed the ideal or normative priest as male. Williams (2008), Jamet-Moreau (2012) and Jagger (2019) used interview data as the basis for a philosophical analysis of the shortcomings ordained women are perceived to have when measured against a male ideal. The focus of social, psychological and philosophical research is on the characteristics and performance of priesthood, rather than how Church culture deals with power and change. These writers consider how women perform priesthood in comparison to male norms whereas I focus on what is demanded of women by the Church and how the gifts of female priests are received.

The institutional self-interest underlying restrictions on women's ministry has not been explored in other literature. Furthermore, research into women's ministry has tended to be either sociological and psychological, or theological and philosophical. In this thesis I blend secular and faith-inspired disciplines, applying two secular critiques of institutional culture: Coser's (1974) *Greedy Institutions* and Ahmed's (2017a) *Feminist Manifesto* to ecclesiology and theology. Some current writing on women's ordination draws on Ahmed but I believe this is the first application of Coser to the Church of England. I also believe this is the first attempt to place women's ordination and the restrictions on their ministry in an institutional context of declining resources. I argue that by simultaneously enabling and restricting women's ministry the Church gained an extra resource whilst sustaining historic patterns of privilege, and traditional models of priesthood and womanhood. Uniquely, I expose how this is especially burdensome for ordained clergy wives.

Additional context and scope

The initial intended extent of this thesis was simply an exploration of the impact of a specific institutional regulation, the Act of Synod 1993, on women. This formal tool of institutional discrimination is possible because, uniquely, amongst those English denominations which ordain women, the Church of England requested the right to bar ordained women from certain areas of ministry. Blackie describes the unusual position of the Church: 'No other institution can claim such provenance or recruit employees on the basis of discerning a transcendental call to serve God whilst being exempt from some laws of the land' (Blackie, 2014, p.20). Over the course of the interviews (2015-2016) whilst the scope broadened from simply the Act of Synod to a critique of informal institutional culture, the overarching focus remained the Church of England rather than an ecumenical or multi-faith context. This change was provoked by the breadth of experience in the interview data and the decision to consecrate women as bishops. The persistence of a single denominational focus stemmed from the unique settlement adopted by the Church of England.

Within what became identified as the interview cohort (see below for detail) women had other characteristics which led to discrimination which this thesis does not seek to explore. The focus is on sex discrimination because, within the Church, sex is the only characteristic which can be legally discriminated against whilst still not being a bar to ordination. Possessing other protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act (2010) may give rise to discrimination but there is no Church legislation allowing congregations to refuse such priests. Lesbian and gay individuals who are not celibate are barred from ordination, married lesbian and gay priests have their licences revoked. Only ordained women receive an institutional 'yes' and 'no' to their ministry. Additionally, adding other identifying protected characteristics to a participant might undermine the anonymity afforded by the use of pseudonyms.

Research question and project design

In the light of the circumstances outlined above, how do women priests experience their vocation? How does the church receive their ministry? What do these insights reveal about the wider patterns of power in the institution? My data comes from 13 of the youngest women at the start of what Jagger refers to as the 'normalising' (2019, p.1) of female priests. As the youngest ordinands after the mass ordinations of deacons in 1994, these women have the longest experience of 'normal' ministry of any female priests. I believe this is the only piece of research to focus on this group.

My research is based on Asynchronous Electronic Interviews (AEI) conducted between 2015 and 2016 using an exchange of emails sustained over two to three weeks each (see Chapter Four). AEI is a flexible model suited to a highly literate but busy group of women. It exploits the fact that interviewees had been trained in reflexive methods at theological college. I believe I am the first person to use this method to interview clergy. My interview questions asked women to tell their personal history from their initial sense of call to the present day. I asked when they considered they had become a priest and how this identity had developed or changed. I asked where women found encouragement and discouragement. What did it feel like to represent the Church and which specific aspects of the Church supported or undermined each woman? Was representing the Church coterminous with representing

Christ? I specifically focused on the regulations and theology surrounding opposition to the ordination of women, asking what was positive and negative for them personally. I did this to challenge my own biases with diverse understandings of ministry that I suspected, and proved to be, less hostile towards restrictions on women's ministry than I was. I then dug deeper into responses about the Act of Synod, asking whether women had concealed their true feelings about the way the Church operates in relation to the ministry of female priests. If they had done, what was the context and why had they felt the need to act in that way? Finally, by asking a question about stole design, I asked women to compare the hopes they remembered having for their ministry at ordination with how they felt now. My interview data allows me to illustrate the variety of ways in which women theologically analyse the context they are in, consider who benefits from restrictions on women's ministry and at what cost to ordained women (all explored in Chapters Five to Eight, and introduced below). All data was then coded according to whether it related to experiences that were a cause of flourishing, diminishment, a mix of both or neither.

My methodology put the opinions of women with lived experience of priesthood before the reactions of Church laity, male priests and those outside the Church to women's ordination but the data gathered is augmented with critical analysis of institutional documents. During and after the interviews I read 100 years' worth of institutional documents to identify the point that the tide turned from opposition to acceptance (Chapter Two). I asked what the themes in the Church's resistance were and how did these change to acceptance. When I interrogated my data I asked what the experience of my participants showed about the Church's institutional priorities. As I read the reports I looked for the trigger points when change became a step closer. I charted the changing view of women, as a threat to the established pattern of order within the Church of England, to one in which they become a resource albeit whilst retaining a sense of threat. In research amongst female clergy, and in first person accounts written by ordained women, I discovered a similar pattern to that in my own interviews: a personally rewarding ministry performed in an unsupportive or actively hostile institutional culture. Seeing how this theme recurs from women's ordination in 1994 onwards helped me form the critique of the relationship between pioneering aspirations and the current reality of women's ministry found in Chapter Eight.

The fact that my research has been supervised within a secular university rather than one of the Church of England's Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) is not accidental. At the outset of the project I was explicit about my conviction that women are intentionally discriminated against. Whilst in relation to the ordination of women the Church is exempt from penalties that might otherwise arise, I believe the treatment of women meets the legal definition of discrimination. Regardless of whether the Church can be prosecuted, female priests receive *less favourable treatment* on the basis of sex, the wording used in the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Equalities Act (2010). I believed, correctly as it turned out, that I would find in secular academia a space in which I could name the restrictions on women's ministry as discrimination without contention. Having existed for so long in a space where I felt I could not use my own language to name the pain I had experienced I did not want to begin by defending my claim that to treat someone less favourably on the ground of sex is discriminatory.

By designing a project that blended analysis of institutional documents, texts written by the pioneers of women's ministry and interview data I was able to identify the institutional factors that inspired, sustained, and as I argue in closing, even regenerate restrictions on women's ministry. I show what women's experiences reveal about the current institutional context in which women are now consecrated bishops (as of 2015).

Key themes arising from the data

The themes that arose during my interviews ultimately formed choices I made about whose work to interact with in depth.

Perspectives on the Act of Synod

In her interviews with long serving 'first career priest(s)', Blackie (2014, p.120) revealed that the Act of Synod was seen as a symptom, rather than a cause, of a discomfort about women's ministry within the Church. My interviewees held the same opinion, extending it to embrace the Five Guiding Principles. The Principles became more widely known due to controversy about an episcopal appointment made during the period of my interviews (see later chapters). I also uncovered a powerfully constraining mistaken retelling of the history of women's ordination based on a false memory that the Act was passed before the General Synod vote. All except one woman believed that accepting the restrictions had been inevitable, the legislation needed to ordain women would not have achieved the required 66% majority in all three houses of General Synod without binding restrictions. My data shows that women inaccurately retell their own history in a way that bolsters the virtue of accepting, rather than resisting, restrictions. This misremembrance leads to a voluntary silencing on the part of women in deference to perceived sacrifices made by pioneers prior to the vote in General Synod.

Women explained that they were aware of 'mission creep' stemming from the Act's implementation. Participants explicitly identified examples of discrimination against ordained women that went unchallenged because they sheltered under the theological cover afforded by the Act. During the analysis and coding process I could see other examples of discrimination, not named by my participants, especially in relation to deployment and salary, that went unchallenged. Understanding the Act of Synod and the Five Guiding Principles as part of the success narrative of women's ministry had far-reaching implications.

Differently burdened

On a micro level, my data revealed that women's one-to-one pastoral ministry and local circumstances could be positive and rewarding but the culture of the Church in which they ministered left them drained, diminished and often unable or unwilling to express their feelings to colleagues. Women sought sanctuary in unpaid or part-time roles and in lower status ministries away from the Church's institutional centre. Women whose status placed them further up in the Church hierarchy appeared to feel increased pressure to conform to institutional norms of behaviour. My data illustrated how the Church of England, as an institution, benefits from the diminishment of female clergy. In particular, I expose the double burden carried by ordained clergy wives and offer previously unexplored insight into how institutions can give the impression of liberating women whilst simultaneously increasing their burden. The apparent escalation of institutional demands on priests who are married to male

priests illustrates how, by blending two established roles - priest and clergy wife - a new demanding way of being priest is created, in which the Church is the primary beneficiary. This is the first thesis to suggest the complicity, unwittingly or otherwise, of ordained clergy husbands in their wives' diminishment by the Church.

Analysing the transcripts shows how women are differently burdened to men, identifying these gendered burdens highlights where institutional self-interest is strongest. The Church resists disruption to normative understandings of what it is to be a priest or clergy wife and protects the structures at the centre. It allows some innovation where it is further from the centre and the innovators receive less reward in terms of status and salary. The data supports the belief amongst campaigners in the 1990s that the Church ordained women as priests only when the resource benefit to the institution outweighed the disruption to historic patterns of male privilege and traditional models of priesthood (see Chapters Three, Seven and Eight). Female priests in my study had less agency and status than their male peers and were less likely to be paid for the hours they worked. The theology undergirding the Act of Synod was woven through both the experience and interpretation of discrimination.

Key discussion themes and conversation partners

The two key themes identified above arose from the data and were grounded in the Church's institutional culture. First women were differently burdened to men, facing the demands of being a woman and a priest within the Church and in a domestic setting. Second, women's full entry into the priesthood had only partially been unblocked and was in the process of being informally re-blocked.

To tackle these twin problems I turned to two key conversation partners, Lewis Coser and Sara Ahmed, hoping to find what Bloor described in her study of journeys to ordination, 'the academic tools to deal with false assumptions'. Without these tools, Bloor continued, 'there is a danger that women will assume the failings of the institution to be personal inadequacies' (Bloor, 2012, p.76). This warning was as important for me as it is for any reader of this thesis. Ever present in the conversations going on in my head were the late-twentieth century campaigners for women's ministry whose aspirations I consider in detail in my concluding chapter. Above my desk was a picture of Maude Royden, campaigner for women's suffrage and ordination, and five of the first women ordained in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America. All of these women were heroes to my teenage self, badge wearing member of the Movement for the Ordination of Women. It would be hard not to acknowledge the imagined conversations between current me and pre 1992 me that have gone on in my head since starting this thesis.

Burdens and blockages

Lewis Coser's (1974) theory of *Greedy Institutions* helped me understand how an institution can informally demand so much of its members and why women experience far higher institutional demand than men. My interviews evidenced that the Church of England met Coser's definition of a Greedy Institution. Women's experience witnessed to unfettered demands by the Church on all her clergy with disproportionately sacrificial expectations of ordained women.

Ahmed's *Living a Feminist Life* (2017a) and *Feminist Killjoys* blog helped me understand why the current system came about and why, and how, it is sustained. Her work prompted me to think more deeply about how the Church managed to change its rules and yet still resist women. She helped me to explore how institutions resist change and the challenges for women who want to speak out. Additionally she pointed me back to the feminist theologians that I read in the late 1980s and early 1990s and forward to the wider impact on women and marginalised people if ordained women continue to accept restrictions. Using Ahmed's work as a lens through which to read my interview data I expose the theological principles underlying formal and informal restrictions on women. Ultimately, I adapt Ahmed's work on joy to propose a challenge to what I define as a repressive 'culture of conviviality'.

Culture of conviviality

I argue that the culture of conviviality has inspired a new understanding of the virtues of conscience, integrity and graciousness. This draws me into a conversation with institutional documents relating to the implementation of the Act of Synod and the Faith and Order Commission (membership of which I resigned to complete this thesis). This new ecclesiology suppresses challenge; women's ministry is understood to be improved not by naming the problems faced by women because of their gender but by staying silent. Restraints on women, rather than restraint on expressions of discrimination is understood by the Church, and many of my participants, to be the only way for women's ordination to be acceptable in the Church. I spend considerable time exploring the implication for female priests, the Church and wider society of the common refrain amongst my participants and my peers, 'We are where we are; what could we have done differently and what outcome would it have had?' (Hayley). I contrast it with the aspiration of the early pioneers of women's ministry for a Church and world transformed. In the final chapter of the thesis I consider whether the hesitancy amongst ordained women to resist the restrictions has wider implications. My conclusions are largely grounded in Ahmed but I also introduce the work of Joan Tronto to give perspective on the comparatively privileged status the ordained women occupy.

A feminist conversation?

Drawing on Ahmed, feminist theologians and other self-declared feminists, raises the question, am I a feminist? I explain in later chapters this is an identity which many female clergy are uncomfortable with, nevertheless my call to priesthood in my teens was inextricably bound up with a feminist identity. The Church, in contrast, did not understand the ordination of women as an issue of equal opportunities and very few of my key conversation partners, my interviewees, identified as feminist. I have not spent time arguing whether one can be both authentically a priest and a feminist because to focus on contesting decisions made by myself and my participants about feminism would draw attention away from the institutional Church. We might become mired in squabbles about personal identity rather than tackling the institution which we all agree is problematic in some way. I am confident in an identity that may come as a disappointment to most of my participants when they read this thesis. In these opening pages I want to thank the 13 women who gave so generously of their time. In Chapter Four I explore my own feminism but I make no absolute claim for what being a feminist is. I do not intend to measure female clergy against a set definition of feminism, neither my own nor anyone else's. I am merely grateful to have shared in a conversation with them. We may

disagree on terminology and look at the Church through a different lens but I treasure them as women whose journey I recognise.

Importance and contribution of this thesis

The conclusions are focused on the specific issue of women's ordination, but the broader themes are a timely challenge to the Church's response to issues becoming apparent to Church leaders as the thesis took shape (2017-2021). In particular, the Church's response to sexual abuse, 'Me Too', 'Black Lives Matter' and clergy wellbeing drew attention to the role of institutional culture as a power for good or ill. This thesis is not about racism or abuse, although I reflect on both to a limited degree in the final chapter. It is not about the wellbeing of male clergy, although I admit my conclusions about ordained clergy wives will have implications for some men. Despite the thesis' very narrow focus, the damaging impact of the culture I identify has relevance across the Church, an institution which, according to the *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse*, is dangerously dominated by 'deference' and 'clericalism' (IICSA, 2020).

This is a small scale study, limited by time and resource. As I demonstrate in my literature review and penultimate chapter the Church has not chosen to resource research into experiences specific to female priests. The smallness of the project does not undermine the validity of the conclusions for this thesis, but they do need testing through a larger project. I would hope my conclusions for the Church and similar institutional structures would prompt further research to establish whether the challenges identified are widespread and if examples of flourishing can suggest good practice that can be replicated. Restrictions on women's ministry are sustained because they benefit the Church rather than enabling women to embrace the fullness of ministry envisaged by feminist theologians and campaigners for women's ordination. They are burdens that women ordained since 1995 have chosen to carry and yet, despite discomfort, female priests seldom appear to analyse what gracious acceptance might imply for the status of those whose burdens are far heavier.

Francke wrote in her book *How to Create a Gender-balanced Workplace* (2019, p.66) 'Fixing the bigger processes, rather than just fixing women, is vital to success'. Critically, examining 'the bigger processes' will hopefully expose how discrimination is woven into the culture of the Church. Comparing the aspirations of the pioneers of women's ministry and my data reveals a far less ambitious understanding amongst my participants of what women's ordination offers. Examination also shows, uncomfortably perhaps for female priests, how not challenging discrimination from a position of relative privilege may have negative implications for others facing far more challenging circumstances. By demonstrating how institutional discrimination operates I expose why it is so persistent and regenerative. My data persuaded me that the Act was not a primary cause of women's diminishment but was an expression of deeper institutional discrimination embedded within an understanding of church and priesthood. I still hope the Church can be remade, the task of remaking the Church is vital because, as Ruether writes:

Theologically speaking, whatever diminishes or denies the full humanity of women must be presumed not to reflect the divine or to reflect the authentic nature of things, or to be the message or work of an authentic redeemer or a community of redemption.

(1983, p.19)

There is a theological imperative for institutional diminishment of female clergy to end; yet if this is to happen my research shows that self-interest and the damaging impact of a culture of conviviality must be exposed.

Chapter Two: Institutional Context

Women's ordination and the importance of history

History matters in the Church. Novelty and innovation are often viewed with suspicion whereas tradition and precedent confer status. Emma Forward (2015), a leading opponent of women's ordination, writing after the consecration of the first female bishops, illustrates this point when she claims that ordaining women was an ill thought out innovation, arrived at without sufficient thought. Forward claims the Church took just 17 years to reach the decision to ordain women as priests in 1992. A hasty process by Church standards which she argues necessarily implies doctrinal error (2015, pp.16ff). Looking more deeply into the archives of the Church illustrates that Forward is either unaware of, or unwilling to acknowledge, the long period of theological reflection that preceded the first ordinations of female priests. A century before Forward's article, the authors of *The Ministry of Women. A Report by a Committee Appointed by His Grace The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* (1919) were instructed to focus solely on historical precedent for authorised ministerial roles for women. They were to disregard contemporary changes in the status of women, 'By your Grace's instruction our investigations have been purely historical in character... the application of our researches to modern problems has not been before us' (1919, p.1). The Church always looks behind it before it moves forward.

The institutional documents of the century since *The Ministry of Women* (1919) give insight into how the Church moved from seeing female priests as a threat to an asset, weighing in the balance possible disruption to the established order against a potential new resource of labour. Tradition and precedence were also important to women who felt called to priesthood. They felt called to an ancient role thus far defined within the Church as exclusively male. According to Bloor these Anglican women were called to an existing expression of ministry and theology, rather than an entirely new model of Christian community (Bloor, 2012, p.28). As Williams (2008) discovered whilst researching women ordained between 1994 and 2006, all the reports leading up to the General Synod vote to ordain women as priests were 'influenced and informed by the norm of the good Christian woman' (2008, pp.121f). The reports, a representative sample of which are considered in subsequent pages are expressions of the concrete Church. They also, according to Williams define 'a hegemonic norm against which the general conception of what is the proper experience of femininity and feminine attributes are measured for both individual men and women as well as for the institutions they inhabit' (ibid.).

Revisiting the history of women's ordination enables us to see the ways in which the institution has perceived women and its fears of the disruption women would bring to the priesthood and the life of the Church in general. We can then trace the course of the consequent exploitation of women's loyalty as the church transitioned from resistance to acceptance. Having identified where the benefit to the institution lay, the Church adapted, absorbing the resources of women and offering as little as possible in return. It did little to change existing

norms of womanhood or priesthood, the price of this conservative adaption was paid by female priests.

Field Bibb (1991) identifies three periods in the history of women's ordination in England; the first predominantly concerns Methodism and covers the period from the first Wesleyan Conference in 1744 to the end of the nineteenth century (1991, p.10). The second period, 1861-1948, covers the introduction of the Deaconess Order in the Church of England and the ordination of, and subsequent resignation of, Florence Li Tim Oi the first Anglican woman to become a priest. (1991, pp.67ff). Within its own worldwide communion the Church of England was not the first to ordain women, regrettably the debates surrounding ordinations of women in Hong Kong and the USA are beyond the scope of this research. The third period, 1968-1991 (ibid., pp.85ff) includes the Church of England beginning its journey towards ordaining women as priests, later than many Free Church denominations (ibid., 1991, p.10) but well ahead of the Roman Catholic Church (ibid., pp.176ff).

It should be noted that Thurlow (2014, pp.485f) criticises Field Bibb's formulation, alluding to some of the Eurocentric and racist elements of the retelling of the story of women's ordination in the Church of England. I acknowledge that I have missed much in the broader history of Anglican women's ordination but my project relates specifically to the impact of the culture of the Church of England on women ordained in England. In Chapter Eight I consider the negative impact of not seeing the circumstances of women's ordination in England as part of a bigger story of women's rights.

Except for the *Book of Common Prayer* the documents reviewed in this chapter are from the latter half of the second period, the third period and the years since the ordination of women. Institutional documents, documents sanctioned or commissioned by The Church or a National Church Institution (NCI) are chosen to demonstrate progression of thought within the Church rather than mark specific chronological moments. Documents are chosen to demonstrate theology in flux rather than marking concrete stages of progression through debates and changes to Church law. The chapter pivots on the transcript of the 1992 debate in which General Synod agreed to ordain women as priests. In the debate we hear all the concerns of the previous seven decades revisited, have very brief glimpses of a radical vision for women's ministry and witness the turn in the tide. Ordination of women shifts from being a threat to being seen as a resource, but a resource that must be carefully managed to assuage the fear of opponents and create minimum disruption in return for maximum benefit.

I have grouped my documents into four sections, underpinning, development, ordination and after ordination. I begin with foundational documents underpinning the authorised Priestly ministry of men and women within the Anglican Church. Second, I explore a representative sample of documents that illustrate the development of the debate between 1917 and 1992 before examining the legal framework created to permit women's ordination and to proscribe the extent of that role. Finally, I turn to guidance concerning women's ministry as it developed and moved onwards beyond women's consecration as bishops.

Underpinning

The 39 Articles of Religion and The Book of Common Prayer

The historic understanding of Anglican priesthood, to which the women of this study felt called, is articulated in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662); in particular the *39 Articles of Religion*, agreed upon in 1563 'for the avoiding of diversities of opinions'. The 39 Articles remain a central part of the legislative framework of the Church, every priest must swear allegiance to them at ordination and licensing to a new role. Articles 23 and 36 require any person preaching or celebrating the sacraments: baptism and Holy Communion, to be authorised, 'It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick (sic) preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same' (1563, Article 23). Parishes may not simply employ any man or woman as their Vicar. Article 23 prevented women ordained elsewhere in the Anglican Communion being more than guest preachers, although legally ordained in their own province they were unable to celebrate communion or pronounce absolution in England (Shaw, 2014, p.43).

In contrast Article 34 offered a potential way to permit change by defining the Church's doctrinal independence from the Roman Catholic Church in certain areas. The potential for theological divergence, already demonstrated by allowing male clergy to marry, was the focus of discussions in the early 20th Century:

Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

(1563, Article 34)

The relevance of Article 34 becomes evident when noting how the 1935 Archbishop's Commission, *The Ministry of Women*, considered it, as did GS104 (GS104, 1972, p.30). These are discussed in the Development section below.

Development: prior to World War Two

The documents that follow are chosen for their illustration of specific aspects of the debate. Initially women's ordination is framed almost entirely as a threat; but from the mid 1960's this threat is increasingly evaluated in the context of a dramatic reduction in the number of men offering themselves for ordination.

The following discussion examines each document via a focus on three things: the context to the document or group of documents, the benefit to the institution of the document's conclusion and the cost/benefit the document presents to women aspiring to ordination or already ordained.

The Ministry of Women. A Report by a Committee Appointed by His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury (1919)

By the time of the Archbishop's report, women were ordained in some English Non-Conformist denominations (see Field Bibb, 1991, p.92 for details of other denominations). As the years progressed 'modern problems' (1919, p.1), discussions about birth control, women's role in parliament and the legal profession, could not fail to touch the State Church but they

were excluded from the report. Calls, for women to be ordained, from Maude Royden, Ursula Roberts and Edith Picton-Turbervill, prominent members of the Church League for Women's Suffrage, (Morgan, 2013, p.783) were not mentioned. The intention of the document was solely to 'Report on the sanctions and restrictions which govern the ministrations of women in the life of the church, and the status and work of deaconesses' (1919, p.1). The archbishops and bishops sensed unrest and dissatisfaction amongst female church goers (1919, p.23) and believed a better theological understanding of the role of the deaconess, coupled with official recognition of women's ministry would put an end to this potential disruption (1919, pp.25-27).

If the badly paid, low status, deaconess role was to be officially affirmed then calls for women to be ordained to the Priesthood must surely come to an end. In every department of modern life, other than the Church, the writers claimed, there were openings for trained and educated women that paid a living wage (1919, pp.23f). The time had therefore come for women in the Church to be given a share in responsibility and status i.e., 'some definite recognition of women's capacity for ministerial office' (1919, pp.23f). Affirmation was to come through the development of a proper understanding, by the Church as a whole, of the history and theology of Deaconess ministry.

Deaconesses were poorly paid and had low status. The Church obtained additional, trained, labour without sacrificing significant amounts of finance or status reserved for men. Notwithstanding these problems, this role of the deaconess should be celebrated as the first authorised ministry for women in the Church.

Encyclical Letter from the Bishops with Resolution and Reports. Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion Holden at Lambeth Palace 1920

The Lambeth Conference is a gathering of all the bishops of the Anglican Communion held approximately every ten years. Reports are non-binding, proposing suggestions for ways forward rather than rewriting doctrine. In 1920 the 252 gathered bishops considered International Relations, Industrial Problems, Development of Provinces, Missionary Problems, the Position of Women, Problems of Marriage, Spiritualism, Christian Science and Theosophy, and Reunion with Other Churches. The Encyclical continues the theme of the 1919 report; women should share in the ministry of the Church 'both in the wider and narrower sense of those words' (1920, p.20) as the Church had undervalued and neglected the gifts of women and thanklessly used their work (1920, p.20). It commended the Order of Deaconesses as a way to utilise the gifts of women for the benefit of the Church whilst reaffirming that no other order of ministry was open to women:

47 That, for the benefit of the Church the Deaconess Order should be formally and canonically restored throughout the Anglican Communion.

48 The Order of Deaconesses is the only branch of ministry for women with Apostolic Authority, the only Order of Ministry that our branch of the Catholic Church should recognise or use.

(1920, pp.39f)

The report protected the status quo without explicitly drawing attention to it. Restricting the role of women avoided the risk that men might shirk their leadership responsibilities 'as they have already done too often in the Church' (1920, pp.100ff).

Ministry as a deaconess was to be for women 'the one and only Order' (1920, p.105). The language alludes to women as a disruptive presence in the Church. In a section referring to 'mature' women addressing mixed audiences about the perils of sexual sin the writers warn that women had power to move men emotionally and might be counterproductive as speakers, 'On strong emotions possible perils wait' (1920, p.100). As well as disrupting the Church, an authorised Church function would damage the nation as a whole. By obscuring women's characteristic function (childbearing), ordination would hasten the 'sinister phenomenon' of the current falling birth rate. This report, underscored by fear, offers nothing new of benefit to English women but as a report of the Anglican Communion it encouraged Provinces without any form of authorised ministry for women to create one.

Report of the Archbishop's Commission on the Ministry of Women 1935

This committee was given a wide brief taking 'account of anything that appeared relevant' and, therefore, tackled the 'difficult and controversial' topic of women's ordination head on (1935, p.1). Although it is the first report to suggest ordaining women as priests could be possible, it opposes the change. As opponents continue to do, the report sought to defend historic links with the Roman Catholic Church, believing that ordaining women would be an act of disloyalty to an already divided Christendom (1935, p.9).

Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938, p.112) passionately argued against the report, drawing attention to the author's own admission that Christ regarded men and women alike (1938, p.5), adding that he drew his disciples from the working classes. Behind what Woolf believed to be a fear of women's ordination (1938, p.114) lay 'The money motive'. To pay women more is to pay men less she argued by comparing a Deaconess earning £150 per annum with the Archbishop of Canterbury earning £15,000. She goes on to describe the bad and vicious motives of restricting women to the role of clergy wives. The system which allows clergymen to lay all worldly cares on their wives is deeply damaging and 'has had its part in putting the whole of our Commonwealth out of gear' (1938, p.117). The report kept women in low or unpaid roles as deaconesses and clergy wives, continuing to keep the vast bulk of the Church's money and status in the hands of men as well as alleviating the burden on male priests through the unremunerated labour of their wives. From the perspective of those who longed to see women's ordination there were grounds for optimism; for the first time the possibility of changing Church teaching to allow women to be ordained was identified in the 34th of the 39 Articles, permitting the Anglican Church to vary from the Roman Catholic Church in Doctrine and Practice (1935, p.30).

The report included the views of Grensted, a psychologist, who could find no weakness in women preventing them becoming priests but in his professional opinion the difficulties lay in the reaction of others. A dissenting statement from the Dean of St Paul's was published as an appendix to the report itself, concluding 'the opening of the full ministry of the Church to women is required by the Christian doctrine of human nature' (1935, p.77). However, he

wrote that he could accept some delay to avoid hurting the feelings of ‘our weaker brethren’ (1935, p.78) This is the first report to see women’s ordination as a doctrinal possibility, and the first to identify that male opposition to women’s ordination may be a more significant barrier than inherent weakness in their sex.

Development: World War Two until the 1970s

There are no documents included from this period although there were developments in women’s ministry. In *The Great Offender: Feminists and the Campaign for the Ordination of Women* (2014), Thurlow draws attention to the claim by Gill, Heeney and Field-Bibb, historians of women’s ordination in the Church of England, that the mid-twentieth century was a quiet period in the development of women’s ministry. Thurlow argues that this overlooks important practical developments, notably the ordination of Li Tim Oi, the Church of England’s response to her ordination, and the appointment of the first female assistant chaplain.

Nevertheless, reports were less common, which Heeney claims reflects the stalling of the movement for women’s ordination ‘in the early 1930s, to regain momentum only with the renewal of militant feminism and the vigorous (but unsuccessful) drive for female ordination in the 1970s’ (quoted in Thurlow, 2014, p.482). Thurlow argues that practical activities continued to carry forward the drive for women’s ordination albeit in a more low-key way. Charting the institutional treatment of women’s ministry solely through official reports commissioned by male clergy presents a version of history in which women’s voices are absent. This is an accurate reflection of the location of all formal ecclesiastical power for most of the twentieth century. Power to shape culture lay entirely in the hands of ordained men, these reports are essential historical context for the current situation of ordained women. Sadly, the lived experience of women in the period prior to women’s ordination is beyond the scope of this thesis but some of the women referenced in the *Voices of Experience*, Chapter Three, bear witness in passing to the informal or unauthorised developments I have been unable to cover.

Development: 1970s until 1992

GS104 Report of the Advisory Council for the Church’s Ministry on the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood 1972

Between 1960 and 1970 the numbers of men being ordained declined by a third. Reiss (2013), in his history of Church clergy recruitment in the twentieth century *The Testing of Vocation*, links this decline to changes in the theology and ecclesiology of the institution:

A reduction by over a third of men being ordained each year was a huge change... But developments in ministry, first with non-stipendiary ministry, then later with the possibility of the ordination of women at least being discussed, indicated a change in ministry was afoot.

(Reiss, 2013, pp.206f)

The theology of women’s role in the Church begins to be driven by scarcity rather than a desire to protect the status quo. The roots of women’s ordination lie in this change as Reiss notes, ‘As with all major changes in an institution, while some saw the whole decade as a disaster, others saw it as a challenge and opportunity’ (ibid., p.207).

In July 1975 General Synod finally affirmed there were no fundamental objections to women being ordained. I have selected GSI04 (1972), which arose out of the fears building throughout the 1960s, as it theologically paved the way to the 1975 vote but also because it includes the voices of women. The report consists of a survey of 150 women involved in professional ministry as well as theological analysis of the present state of opinion about the ordination of women (1972, preface).

With numbers of men offering for ordination in decline, the report's stated purpose was to discover what was 'good for the Church' (1972, p.5). Just as the 1919 report did not draw specific parallels between the Church and reforms in law concerning women's suffrage and access to professional roles, GSI04 refers to the possibility of 'discriminatory attitudes' (192, p.54) existing in the Church as in society but makes no reference to parliamentary legislative changes in the area of gender equality.

This is not a report about equality for women, the writers assure their readers, 'Our answer must not be determined by what is good for women' (1972, p.5). This is the start of the turning of the tide, institutional self-interest is moving in the direction of women's ordination. Rather than bringing disruption, ordained women may provide a valuable source of continuity. The seventh consideration of the official summary of the report prepared for the 1973 July General Synod argues that as a result of increased education and opportunities to exercise skills in the secular world, women 'are now capable as never before of exercising ministry' (1973, p.11). The eleventh consideration explains women's experience of ministry as deaconesses and licensed lay workers shows that they have a 'real role' and the present situation 'hinders the best use of their gifts in the service of the Church and the world' (1973, p.15).

There is concern about the ordination of wives and mothers, especially as the 'on call' hours of a priest are deemed to be more disruptive to family life than those of a medical doctor or any other profession now occupied by women (1973, p.12). This need not be an unsurmountable problem as a solution could be found by married women working in a team ministry or chaplaincy (ibid.). Evidence from denominations that already ordain women suggested where the pattern is to have one church with one clergyperson 'women might find it very difficult to obtain a position unless their Church is very short of manpower' (ibid.). Implicit in this conclusion is the belief that where there are shortages of manpower a female priest may suffice.

In many respects it is a hopeful report for supporters of women's ordination not least because of the significant number of women consulted as part of the process. Through the survey, the authors of GSI04 became concerned that women were placing limitations on themselves (1972, p.77), psychological conditioning repressing women's ability to publicly acknowledge a call to priesthood. This is the first allusion to gender theory in the institutional literature; the authors explaining that just because a woman lacks confidence to articulate a call to priesthood this does not mean God is not calling the Church to ordain women. To illustrate their point they quote one contributor who described herself getting 'in quite a state of conflict and puzzlement' as she struggled with being called to the impossible (1972, p.78).

Acceptance that women will one day be ordained is implicit in GSI04. The summary document prepared for General Synod contains 13 'considerations' all of which reprise well known

concerns about the ordination of women but also all of which contain firm suggestions about how the change could be justified and enacted. For example, the suggestion that the Church look at how other professions had handled the entry of women, proposing female GPs as a good point of comparison (1972, pp.50ff). It also demonstrates an understanding of the psychological situation of women attempting to discern and articulate a calling and is concerned what might happen if this is not addressed. It assures readers that the legal steps that would need to be taken are perfectly possible. Crucially it does not dispute or dismiss the fact that some women feel called to priesthood and urges the Church to press on with considering the next steps:

All would agree that the Church of England cannot give an answer to such questions without a responsible debate. How can the need for time for such a debate be kept in balance with the urgent need to give some answers to those who feel they have experienced a call from God?

(1973, p.17)

GS104 provided the bridge between resistance and acceptance that enabled General Synod to declare in 1975 that it had no theological objections to ordaining women. From this point onwards the focus of discussions becomes not how to prevent women's ordination but how to control it and protect those who will find it uncomfortable.

GS829 The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: A Second Report to the House of Bishops containing within it 1988 GS764 'The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: A Report Commissioned by the House of Bishops 1988'

General Synod resolved there were no fundamental objections to women being ordained as priests in 1975 but it was a further 19 years until the first ordinations. After the optimism of 1975, General Synod voted against beginning to remove the legal barriers in 1978, prompting Una Kroll, who had publicly declared her sense of calling to the priesthood, to shout from the Public Gallery an allusion drawn from Matthew 7:9 'We asked for bread, you gave us a stone' (Ward, p.2014).

To break the impasse, General Synod began to approach the three orders of ministry, bishop, priest and deacon separately. General Synod voted in favour of women's ordination as deacons in 1986. In 1988 GS829, a theological work, and GS764, its companion work of legislative suggestions, separated consideration of female priests and bishops, ceasing all attempts in the twentieth century to permit women's consecration as bishops. By limiting ordained ministries open to women, initially to the diaconate (1986), and then proposing to open up the priesthood (1988) the church kept its resources primarily invested in men. With its new deacons the Church now had more trained and dedicated clergy but by restricting women to the lesser orders of ministry the bulk of the institution's power, status and remuneration remained in the hands of male clergy.

The tone of both GS764 and GS829 echoes earlier reports associating women's ordination with disruption and disunity. Furlong (1998) notes GS764 used the word 'safeguarding' 24 times. This repetition, in her view, made 'the whole project sound bizarre and dangerous' (1988, p.8). The message was simple, women in senior leadership are unsafe, the risk to the

Church from female bishops, claimed GS829, was existential; a female bishop could not be a focus for unity and would undermine collegiality (1988, p.123).

Nevertheless, female priests were now considered worth the risk. In the short term the reports of 1988 did benefit women as General Synod was able to progress to the point where it agreed to open the priesthood to women. However subsequent writers have seen the seeds of long-term damage in these reports; Furlong claims that the legislation inspired by GS829 and GS764 left women undervalued and discriminated against in a Church unaware of their pain and complacently certain that women are 'conveniently disposable' (1998, p.114). Harris and Shaw (2004, p.5) claim that by segregating the 'Orders of Ministry', Bishop, Priest and Deacon, the 'heretical' message sent by the Church was that men are closer to God than women are.

The 2004 *Report of the House of Bishops Working Party on Women in the Episcopate* lamented the lack of theological work in the period leading up to the ordination of women:

there was a prior underlying question which had not been resolved, namely the lack of a corporately accepted Christian anthropology, which might provide the necessary theological understanding of the relationship of men and women in the redeemed community. Without such an understanding, there is little shared basis for decision making.

(2004, 5.4.2)

In this thesis I will argue that the theology and ecclesiology surrounding women's ordination owes more to these unhealthy 'seeds' and the absence of any serious analysis of how the Church understands the role and status of men and women than it does to the positive efforts of a minority to grapple with a new way of being Church.

General Synod Report of Proceedings November 1992

The existential threat of female bishops having been removed; the Church began to prepare the ground for a manageable opening up of the priesthood to women. Church lawyers drafted a Measure that was without prejudice from the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act; any legislation allowing women's ordination would 'safeguard' (GS829,1988, p.1) opponents whilst being immune to secular legal challenge. As Furlong, a campaigner for women's ordination reflected, the ordination of women was never intended to be an affirmation of the full equality of women in the Church, rather the Measure purposely 'unashamedly supported discrimination' (Furlong, 1998, p.1).

The speakers in the General Synod debate provide a glimpse into the mind of the institution, they illustrate how the Church had moved from focusing on what it had to fear from women to what it had to gain from a managed, and limited, opening of Church leadership roles to women.

The arguments in favour of female priests reveal a deep fear about Church decline, women's ordination had found its moment. Ideals of equality had not proven to be sufficient inspiration to open the priesthood to women but the preservation of an institution whose governing body feared extinction was. 'In the mercy of Christ and for the sake of our Church, I ask you: please

test my vocation' (1993b, p.65) asked deacon, now bishop, June Osborne (consecrated Llandaff 15th July 2017). The following three speakers illustrate the transition from threat to resource.

Arguile (1993b, p.70) stated the problem simply, there are not enough men to fill parish posts so the Church should begin to ordain women. In his speech he listed six specific vacant parishes all of which he believed could be filled by female clergy. As well as merely increasing the number of clergy, McLean (1993b, p.47) believed female priests would make evangelism more effective at a time when congregation numbers were declining. Christina Baxter, as the only female principal of a college training women for ordination, will have been aware of the ways in which the Church was already exploiting the talents of female deacons. Female priests, Baxter argued, would provide practical benefits for 'the current missionary situation' (1993b, pp.16ff), and financial benefits because of the new patterns of ministry for which 'they were especially suited'. She does not spell out what these financial benefits might be, but I believe it would be reasonable to assume she is referring to the disproportionate number of women taking on unpaid ministerial roles.

Advocates of women's ordination priests distanced themselves from secular feminism in the debate. Supporters Hope (1993b, pp.60f) and Mclean (1993b, p.47) both explicitly rejected feminism and thereby prefigured what is described by Walsh as a 'strategic disidentification with feminism' in the post-ordination period (2000, p.287). According to Maltby, supporters of women's ordination were denied, but also denied themselves, the language of women's rights (1998, p.55). This strategic distancing is apparent in the transcript of the debate from 1992 and remains in the transcripts of my interviewees.

I argue that rejecting the language of women's equality diminished the sense that women posed an existential threat to the Church. Faced with a body of women who had already demonstrated that they were willing to offer the same ministry as male clergy in return for less reward, the time for women in the priesthood had arrived. Reiss' (2013) data shows that in the years from 1987, when women were first ordained as deacons, until the debate in November 1992 only 59% of those ordained to the permanent diaconate (women) were entering stipendiary ministry. In comparison in the same period of the men ordained to the priesthood 80% would be paid for their ministry (2013, pp.358f).

Women are portrayed as a threat in ways recognisable from earlier reports; speakers outlined fears of financial, theological and pastoral disaster, they claimed mayhem would undermine the governance of the Church (1993b, pp.12, 61f). Unity would be threatened both externally and internally; division between the Church and other denominations would increase, in particular with Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches (1993b, pp.28f, 33f, 42ff, 57). Internally women's ordination would irrevocably divide the Church leading to schism (1993b, pp.42ff, 56). Speakers argued women's ordination could even damage the possibility of salvation, the maleness of a ministerial priesthood 'being essential for the salvation of us all' (1993b, p.35), and break down the divine order of society increasing sexual and marital disarray (1993b, p.60). In my opinion the cost to women here does not come from the burden of these charges which have been laid, in one form or another, for centuries. The costly act was failing to directly challenge them, accepting a form of women's ministry grounded in deference to

existing patterns of order and institutional self-interest rather than a radical refashioning of the role of the priest.

Despite these caveats I still remember that day with thanksgiving. As a young woman I leapt with joy, cracking the ceiling plaster of the flat below as I heard Archbishop Carey announce to a silent General Synod that the motion that women be ordained had passed by a narrow margin. The Church would ordain women as priests.

Ordination

This section covers reports, legislation and guidance relating to female priests published before and after the vote to ordain women as bishops in 2014. Although it includes documents produced in response to the consecration of female bishops it does not consider the documents relating to the specific issue of women in the episcopate. The focus of this chapter is on literature relating to women as priests.

Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993 and Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993

By the time of the first ordinations of female priests any vision of equality there may have been had been significantly diluted by an Act that made provision both for women to be ordained and for their opponents to reject their ministry. Parishes opposed to the change could adopt official Resolutions at their Parochial Church Council (PCC):

‘Resolution A

That this parochial church council would not accept a woman as the minister who presides at or celebrates the Holy Communion or pronounces the Absolution in the parish.

Resolution B

That this parochial church council would not accept a woman as the incumbent or priest-in-charge of the benefice or as a team vicar for the benefice.’

Mayland (1998, p.75) concluded that the Act was possible because, distracted by joy the supporters of women’s ordination acted out of excessive charity. A detailed reflection on the period between the vote and the passing of the Act is contained in the later chapters of this thesis.

First and foremost the Act was drafted to protect the Church from prosecution, written into it were required exemptions from Equalities legislation to make this discrimination within Resolutions A and B lawful. It did not reflect the spirit of change in relation to women’s role in society but resisted it:

‘Without prejudice to section 19 of the [1975 c. 65.] Sex Discrimination Act 1975, nothing in Part II of that Act shall render unlawful sex discrimination against a woman in respect of—

(a) her ordination to the office of priest in the Church of England;

(b) the giving to her of a licence or permission to serve or officiate as such a priest;

(c) her appointment as dean, incumbent, priest-in-charge or team vicar or, in the case of a woman ordained to the office of priest, as assistant curate.’

As well as protecting and affirming discrimination, the opacity of the process allowed a church to hide their specific concerns. Parish Church Councils did not need to say why they wished to pass the Resolution. We simply do not know whether they were motivated by theological concerns such as issues of ecumenical unity or whether, as some of my interviewees suggest, they were concerned about style of worship and the risk of having to share a priest with another parish.

Later writers see the Resolutions as more than the mere necessary evil I understood them to be as a young woman in 1993, and as many of my interviewees continued to see them. The arrangement is described by Thorne as ‘spiritual apartheid’, she claimed it had ‘tarnished the radiance of women's achievement’ and was ‘hampering and diminishing the effectiveness of their ministry’ (2000, pp.122f). For Maltby it was a form of “ritual humiliation... with more than a smidgen of a theology of taint about it’ (2008, Guardian Online).

Bishops were not obliged to ordain women and The Act endeavoured to ensure ‘the integrity of differing beliefs and positions concerning the ordination of women to the priesthood should be mutually recognised and respected’ (1993a). It enshrined the discrimination women’s ordination might have brought to an end.

My interviewees, as we will see later, largely understood the Resolutions as positive, whereas I have come to view them as entirely negative. Retired Archbishop Robert Runcie, speaking in the House of Lords in the year of its publication described the Act of Synod as symptomatic of an illness which had replaced trust and goodwill with flawed logic (Rutherford, 2011, no page number).

Women’s Ministry after Ordination

This final section uses some of the documents produced by the Church to explain how the reality of women in the priesthood should be governed. Both of the documents considered in this section; *the Bonds of Peace (1993)*, and *The Five Guiding Principles: A Resource for Study (2018)*, are expressions of the living out of the decision to ordain women in the Church. They demonstrate how constricting women’s ministry moved from an Act of Synod affirmed in Parliament to the Five Guiding Principles: a voluntarily adopted code of conduct which is not enshrined in an Act. The documents illustrate normative expectations about deference and emotional labour.

Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: Pastoral Arrangements. Report by the House of Bishops. Bonds of Peace. GS1074 General Synod 1993.

Bonds of Peace was an attempt to respond to what Mayland, a leading member of the Movement for the Ordination of Women, believed was a collective sense of shock amongst senior clergy. Mayland’s analysis of the process behind what she described as an ‘Act of Betrayal’ (1998, pp.59-77) is considered in detail in Chapter Eight. In summary, Mayland suspected that after the successful vote in General Synod senior clergy became concerned that allies of leading opponents to the ordination of women in the Ecclesiastical Committee of parliament might create problems when the legislation came to the Houses of Commons and

Lords for approval. This had happened in 1989 when, after lobbying of the Ecclesiastical Committee, a Measure to allow the ordination of a person remarried after divorce was defeated in parliament. Bishops' fears of political resistance and concern for pain felt by traditionalists led to a rejection of the planned code of conduct. The 'Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod that was ultimately drafted, according to Mayland 'went far beyond the limits of charity' (1998, pp.68f). Bonds of Peace did not outline a process for reception but 'a recipe for entrenching opposition and bigotry' attempting to justify intolerable attitudes toward women (1998, p.69). The change demonstrated that the Church would bow to pressure from an 'old boys network' rather than continue along the route envisaged by General Synod.

In Chapter Seven I explore how opposition to women's ordination becomes recast as three new ecclesiological virtues: integrity, graciousness, and conscience. GSI076 gives to opponents the status of conscientious objectors, 'Those who for a variety of reasons cannot conscientiously accept that women may be ordained will continue to hold a legitimate and recognised position within the Church of England' (1993, pp.6f). Opponents to a legitimately developed doctrine are not heretics, they are martyrs.

Existing priests and bishops continue in the positions of power that they previously occupied. GSI074 in particular protects bishops as it requires some women to seek ordination from a bishop other than the one they swore loyalty to as a deacon. The Church retained its existing labour force as well as gaining 1400 new priests. It must be acknowledged that GSI074 claims to be concerned with maintaining the integrity of both positions and, therefore, implicitly supports women's ordination. It is the bishops' attempt to express pastoral care for those who greeted the change with joy and those who experienced pain and sadness (GSI074, 1993, p.5). The focus though is on the pain caused to opponents and minimising the disruption caused to bishops.

Two elements of GSI074 were to cause long-term damage. First, it introduced doubt as to whether General Synod's decision was in fact binding, or whether it was open for review, by describing the Church as now being part of a process of 'discernment' within a much broader and longer process (1993, p.5) involving ecumenical partners. Second the replacement of the planned Code of Conduct with legislation, was acknowledged as unnecessary by the authors of GSI074 'No changes in the law are required' (1993, p.14). Men's calling was unquestioned, women's could be legitimately debated. GSI074 defends the decision to legislate by claiming those of either view would be reassured. Mayland was not reassured. The actions of the bishops, she believed, betrayed the hope of joy over the vote, joy that was about more than ordination:

Joy because it seemed at last that here might be a sense that men and women, made in God's image, might be a true community of equals and that the priesthood of creation given them by God might be reflected in the sacramental priesthood (1998, p.68).

Texts considered in the Voices of Experience Literature Review (Chapter Three), and the contributions of my interviewees, confirmed Mayland's fears. Validating discrimination in some circumstances created a culture open to unchallenged prejudice in other areas of women's

ministry. Chapter Eight compares, in detail, the hopes of Mayland and her peers with the current reality of women's ordination.

The Five Guiding Principles: A Resource for Study. The Faith and Order Commission. 2018

This study guide, rather than the Five Guiding Principles themselves, is the concluding document as it shows the current position of the Church's institutional theology. The Five Guiding Principles themselves were approved by General Synod in 2014 as part of 'Women In The Episcopate: House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests' (GS Misc 1076, 2014). In the forward to the study guide the Chair of FAOC writes that the Commission 'has been aware for some time of requests for a theological commentary on the Five Guiding Principles' (2018, p.7). These had come from people attempting to explain 'the distinctive approach' of the Church to outsiders, and from those training future clergy. A controversial attempt in 2016 to appoint a 'non ordaining' assistant bishop, a male bishop who refuses to ordain women, to the role of Bishop of Sheffield made the task more urgent.

The Five Guiding Principles were an effort to end the debate over women's ordination. By 2018, General Synod was halfway through a quinquennium of debate about human sexuality, as well as attempting to reform Church behaviour in relation to safeguarding and climate change. The institution needed to move on, the study resource was intended to facilitate progress. The second principle, 'Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter' (GS Misc. 1076, 2014, p.2) was clearly some way from fulfilment.

The authors begin by explaining what the Principles themselves are not:

[they are] not, then, merely a 'deal' that allows a truce between campaigners. Nor are they a set of rules that must be observed if sanctions are to be avoided. Nor are they a piece of concise systematic theology outlining the approach the Church of England has taken.

This begs the question; if they are not a truce, or way of governing the situation or a clearly understandable theology, what are they? The study guide itself contributes nothing new, either costly or beneficial to ordained women but it reminds us of the betrayal in 1993 and keeps open the wound of debate. The authors admit that the Principles are not functioning well, that they are not a theological, conciliatory or disciplinary framework. Whilst on one level it is simply a statement of the current position it is also a clever act of dissembling. Through the publication of a study guide, an erroneous impression is given that there was deep theological reflection and divine intent behind this 'one (crucial) part of a package of measures' (2018, p.10)

Far from affirming women's ordination the resource suggests that groups debate:

What can female clergy in the Church of England hope for by way of 'respect' from those who because of theological conviction do not accept certain aspects of their ministry?

What kind of ‘recognition’ might those who do not accept certain aspects of their ministry be able to give them? How different might the issues be in this regard for Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics?

(2018, p.49)

The question over women’s ministry is affirmed as a fit subject for debate. The triumph of the opponents of women’s ordination between 1993 and 2018 has been to portray themselves as in need of protection. This study resource institutionally sanctions the reopening of the debate.

Furlong had concluded in 1998 that the Church was in urgent need of healing in relation to all women, but especially in relation to female priests. ‘It desperately needs to learn to value them and not permit any form of discrimination against them’ (1998, p.115). The Study Resource shows how discrimination has been sustained and developed to constrict each new development in women’s ordained ministry. In 1998, Mayland used the analogy of dangerous waters in relation to the Act of Synod. Collicut (2019), in *What makes mutual flourishing challenging from a theological perspective?*, an unpublished theological reflection produced for the House of Bishops’ Review of the Five Guiding Principles (GS 2226B, 2021) is no more optimistic, ‘I fear that in embracing the Five Guiding Principles the Church of England has therefore, albeit with good intentions, wandered on to very dangerous ground indeed’.

Conclusion

The assertion that this is not about what’s good for women but what is good for the Church (GS104, 1972, p.5) dominated discussions from 1919 onwards. According to Walsh (2000, p.263) fraternal conflict amongst the bishops in whom most status, income, and agency was vested was prevented but at great cost to women. Maltby (1998) and Bloor (2012) showed, and this thesis confirms, that women drew little from the resources of feminism and, where they did, seldom disseminated those resources to the women following them. Women, according to Thorne (2000, p.93), blinded by allegiance to the Church, failed to press on to full equality. Legislation to ordain women legitimating a view of female priests as polluting and making it hard for some of them to use the premodifier ‘woman’ as a mark of pride (Walsh, 2000, p.263).

In 2014, Archbishop Welby, echoed his predecessor Lord Runcie, describing the Church as having replaced love with fear and being in urgent need of reconciliation (Welby, 2014). The institutional documents related to the ordination of women consistently reflect this sense of fear. Female clergy were enabled by scarcity rather than vision, urgent necessity rather than a recognition of worth.

Chapter Three Voices of Experience

Introduction

In this chapter the voices of ordained women are central as they are throughout my thesis. The books and theses considered in this chapter are those which foregrounded the experience of female priests between 1995, the earliest date eligible interviewees were ordained, and 2015 when my interviews started. Although the distinctive contribution of women is considered in books addressing broad themes in ordained ministry, I selected only writing primarily or substantially concerned with women's experience. The term church/Church in this context is most frequently either congregational as it relates to personal experiences, or conceptual when women reflect on how they believe the 'Church' responded to women's ordination. Reading these deeply reflective texts, many of which were written by priests engaged in ministry rather than academics, encouraged my use of a text-based interview format.

Texts by insider and outsider researchers demonstrate a shared conclusion that female priests experience discrimination. There is a discernible trajectory from an approach that focused on employment policy style interventions in the years immediately after the vote to a focus on systemic cultural issues from the early twenty-first century. Writers identify with, or distance themselves from, feminism in a way that appears to suggest a correlation between the author's uncritical use of feminism and distance from a Church readership.

I focused on work grounded in interviews and surveys of female priests and collections of practical reflections written by ordained women. Except for Wakeman (1996) and Rees (2002) authors used surveys and face-to-face interviews to access the experiences and views of female clergy. Each resource is a gathered selection of the voices of female priests, curated to a greater or lesser extent, through critical dialogue with a researcher or editor. This model of multiple voices with a single focus on how female priests flourish or are diminished most closely related to my own work and enabled me to exclude the more distantly related material, notably the following.

- Extended autobiographies of one woman.
- Experiences of female priests in other British denominations or the Anglican Communion.
- Anglican women's experiences as deaconesses and deacons.
- Journalistic writing with a campaigning agenda, where the style is closer to a Sunday supplement. These were the hardest to exclude as I was so often sympathetic to the writers' bias however they lacked the academic rigour and critical distance of the work I ultimately included.
- Resources where gender is not considered to be a substantial aspect of the experience of clergy.
- Material that does not rely on first-hand contributions from female clergy.

There are two questions evident in the writing this chapter covers. In the primary source material from female priests the question is best summarised as *'what am I doing?'*, in the earliest works the question is augmented with *'now I am a priest what am I doing now that I couldn't when I was a deacon?'*. Researchers, editors of compilations, and sometimes interviewees, ask *'how is the Church responding to what I am doing?'*, in the earliest works augmented by the question *'how has the Church changed since women became priests?'*.

Female priests are still a new development for these writers and the Church as a whole. Even at the time of writing this thesis, in the context of Church history they remain a novel innovation. Nearly all current clergy were born before the ordination of women, with the minimum age for ordination set as 24 it would be 2018 before a person baptised by a woman as a newborn baby could become a priest themselves. Except for Page (2010) all the writers in this selection draw attention to the newness of female priests. The question *'what am I doing?'* is often answered with a story of a new way of working or a new perspective that women have brought to the Church since 1994. These perspectives are found most in compilations of writing by ordained women (Wakeman, 1996 and Rees, 2002). The day of the vote itself, November 11th 1992, is referenced in my selection by Lynas (1998, pp.5, 19-21), Thorne (2000, p.1), Rees (2002, pp.3f), Bagilhole (2002, p.73) Jones (2004, pp.1-3) and Williams (2008, p.i). In texts used elsewhere in the thesis Petre (1994), Walsh (2000), Barr and Barr (2001) and Ogilvy (2014) the day of the vote is also a recurrent motif. Some contributors, authors of chapters or interviewees, refer to being present at General Synod in November 1992, either keeping vigil or voting as members.

In the first years after the vote, the fact of this specific change in Canon Law appears to have sustained women in the belief that broader institutional change would follow. It is, therefore, a precious memory to record. Thorne (2000, p.6), writes that as a feminist she sought to preserve the pivotal moment of the first ordinations. In February 1994 there were no female priests in the Church. By the following year there were over 1500. The moment *'must not be lost, forgotten or buried as other pivotal moments for women have been'* (Thorne, 2000, p.3).

The day of the vote is portrayed joyfully as a gateway to institutional change on every occasion it is referenced; but in 2002 Christina Rees, a leading Anglican laywoman, sounded a note of caution. Opening her collection of essays compiled for the tenth anniversary of the General Synod vote Rees noted that within 2 years of the first ordinations the discontinued campaigning group MOW (Movement for the Ordination of Women) had been resurrected as WATCH (Women and the Church). The new body was formed to deal with the bad practice, critical and offensive behaviour, that had quickly begun to flourish in relation to female priests (Rees, 2002, pp.9-10). Rees' book is compiled as a celebration of what women bring to priesthood and was released just after General Synod voted in 2001 to draw up legislation to allow women to be consecrated as bishops. Nevertheless, she is cautious about the future. The provision of *'non ordaining bishops'* (GS2225, 2021) Provincial Episcopal Visitors, sometimes referred to as Flying Bishops, were a *'tacit acknowledgement that the Church of England still colludes with a debased view of women'* (Rees, 2002, p.12).

The voices of women show that despite the transformative potential of the vote, framed as a gateway event for almost all writers, the reality of priesthood for women is a ministry both

formally and informally constrained. The different way in which the priesthood of women is both performed and received compared to men has never been ignored. From the earliest years of women's ordination researchers concerned themselves with questions of discrimination. Within the literature a trend can be discerned from exploring discrimination experienced by female priests in ways comparable with women in other professions, to considering whether the formal and informal institutional values of the Church place ordained women in a unique circumstance.

A review of reflections, surveys and interviews

Wakeman's (1996) *Women Priests: The First Years* is a collection of essays by eight of the first women to be ordained. Written in the 18 months after their ordination the lack of distinctively priestly experience on which to reflect, and the inclusion of comparatively few authors allows for a deeper focus on theology than subsequent texts which are experience led. The contributors have lived through the controversy and are now living with the results; processing the ordination journey, rather than presenting the practicalities of ordained ministry, takes precedence. Of all the books in this chapter it offers the deepest theological reflection.

Baisley (in Wakeman, 1996, pp.95, 97-117), uniquely frames her vocational narrative not as a journey to priesthood but a journey to feminism; 'I was prepared at last, rather late in the day, to look at issues honestly... to call myself a feminist'. Women, she urges, must embrace secular feminism, womenchurch and womenfaith, and work together to find confidence. The absence of women acting as channels of God's grace (celebrating Holy Communion) 'limits, distorts, and subverts the Christian identity of women' (Baisley in Wakeman, 1996, p.107).

Purchas (in Wakeman, 1996, pp.117-136) challenges the Church to work towards formal equal opportunities policies to enable both women and men more effectively to serve the needs of the Church. Baisley concludes that systemic, feminist theological change is needed. Purchas hopes policies can enforce the outworking of the theological change she believes has occurred and was evidenced by the vote in 1992. These essays demonstrate the two conclusions most commonly reached by writers in this section.

Workplace discrimination

Authors at the end of the twentieth century and early twenty first century, the years in which my interviewees were ordained and serving their curacies, focused on issues that might be termed workplace discrimination. These authors are typically outsiders or insiders with an outsider perspective. Brodin (1997) is an employment lawyer and Bagilhole (2002) is a sociologist specialising in work. Two of the books are by ordained women writing from a relevant professional expertise beyond the Church, Walrond-Skinner (1998) as a couples counsellor and Lynas (1998) as a Trade Unionist. Whilst recognising the Church's unique situation the authors approach women's ministry in a way that would be familiar to researchers studying other professions.

Brodin (1997), *Sex Discrimination in Employment within the Church of England*, and Lynas' (1998) *Are Anglican Women Priests Being Bullied and Harassed?* were collaborations with secular organisations used to recording and reporting discrimination in the workplace. Brodin with the Equal Opportunities Commission and Lynas with the Trade Union that represented faith workers at the time, MSF (Manufacturing, Science and Finance, now absorbed into Unite).

Brodin (1997), focuses on statutory employment legislation, an area other writers leave untouched. She is motivated by a legal question; does employment law need amending to protect women? Once recruited are priests treated badly because of their sex? If so, disregarding the exemption in secular legislation, does that treatment fall within the definition of sex discrimination? (Brodin, 1997, p.119). Despite being a legal rather than theological thesis, its rich resource of qualitative data makes it relevant to me.

Brodin acknowledges that many, for and against women's ordination, believed the debate to be about theology rather than equal opportunities. She dissents from this view. Although religions are permitted some freedom to discriminate within the law, Brodin asserts that now women are ordained the matter can be associated with sex discrimination 'albeit at a factual not legal level' (1997, p.185). In her interviews women described not being shortlisted for jobs which were ostensibly open to women, for example, if married to male clergy, job offers might involve a revised stipend dramatically lower than that offered to men and women not married to priests (1997, p.221). Brodin exposed discrimination, that has its origin in legally permissible acts, extending into areas not granted exemptions from anti-discrimination legislation. Posts can be withheld from women on theological grounds but once in post, for example a woman being told she couldn't lead a Remembrance Sunday service, discrimination should be understood as within the purview of legislation.

Brodin surveyed male and female priests, analysing data from 286 fully completed surveys. The responses told her that men reported less discrimination because of their sex, than women. Only 1% of men reported specific incidences of sex discrimination compared to 30% of women. In a few cases men and women did not know if they had suffered discrimination but 96% of men were confident that they had not been discriminated against on grounds of gender compared to just 66% of women. Brodin identified multiple sources of discrimination: colleagues, parishioners, lay officers, clergy wives (she does not specify whether this included clergy wives who were themselves ordained), and senior clergy. She noted that discrimination was often experienced as part of disputes between colleagues (Brodin, 1997, p.145). Job interviews, as opposed to a bishop simply selecting a favoured priest, ostensibly promoted fairness but could only be fair if the process was equitable. Brodin maintained that for women it frequently wasn't (1997, pp.213, 221-2).

Once women were ordained, in Brodin's opinion exemption from discrimination law became unjustifiable (1997, p.254) but this was not a view universally shared by either her female or male interviewees. Her research revealed that attitudes towards the appropriateness of secular sex discrimination legislation in an ecclesiastical context varied from entirely appropriate to 'grotesque' (Brodin, 1997, p.186). She remained convinced of its importance (1997, p.145), concluding that whilst not all aspects of discrimination could be resolved by recourse to law, sex discrimination law is essential. It would provide a remedy against sex discrimination (1997, p.254) and might change attitudes which in turn might improve working conditions, without recourse to law. Removing the exemption would benefit not only female priests but male priests excluded from parishes because they had been ordained with, or worked alongside, a female priest (1997, p.187).

Although focused on the technicalities of the law Brodin did touch upon the theological values underpinning the 1993 Act of Synod. She argued that permitting discrimination on the grounds

of theological conscience, allowed prejudice against female priests, and women in general, to override equality. Women described a culture of exclusion pervading the Church. Brodin felt more attention should be paid to the very specific ways in which the exemption could be legitimately applied. Theology intended to apply only to ordination and recruitment, whether a Bishop must ordain a woman and whether she has a right to apply to a particular parish, was impacting on the entirety of women's working conditions (Brodin, 1997, p.224). Brodin acknowledged that whilst specific examples like those above could potentially be open to a legal challenge it was harder to act against what one respondent described as 'pervasive non-specific sexism' (ibid.).

Theological justifications for the Act of Synod (see Chapter Seven) allegedly enshrined the principle of equal respect but without equal treatment it was difficult for women to feel they were respected. Brodin concluded, 'The arbitrary factor of sex is still allowed to influence decision making. Until the law is amended women priests will be denied even this minimal principle of equality' (1997, p.264). I share Brodin's view on the law and regret that her research has not been revisited with the intention of establishing whether women have received equal treatment in all areas where they should have done.

Lynas' *Are Anglican Priests being Bullied and Harassed?* began with her own experiences and observations of abuse and bullying whilst a priest (1998, p.7). Female Anglican clergy are described as 'uniquely vulnerable' because she believed they had no recourse to employment legislation. As Brodin has outlined, this perception is not entirely accurate but Lynas felt the Act of Synod created a culture where female clergy were fearful of speaking out because of limited job security. Lynas does not reflect upon whether this was an intended consequence or not.

The research was funded by the Manufacturing, Science, and Finance Trade Union (MSF) as a way to promote union membership amongst clergy. This compromises the report's objectivity to a degree but in mitigation this bias is clearly owned by the author and publisher allowing the reader to factor this into their analysis. Lynas (1998, p.6) hopes the report will help readers see Trade Union membership as a way of dealing with a situation which not only debilitates women but is an indicator of organisational ill health.

Lynas (1998) found female priests suffering not only discrimination but also bullying and harassment. Amongst her respondents 40% reported receiving verbal abuse, 37% experienced isolation, 23% harassment and 10% physical abuse. In 64% of physical abuse cases, the abuse was at the hands of a clergyman, the report does not consider how many of these abusive male priests were married to the priest they abused.

In common with Brodin (1997) Lynas believed that a secular model can apply to a non-secular institution, arguing that the introduction of diocesan policies would eradicate bullying, harassment and sex discrimination (1998, p.17). Uniquely amongst the priest researchers in this chapter she proposes a secular solution, a code of practice enforceable as a disciplinary matter. Lynas places women's experience first, of value in its own right, rather than simply a sacrifice for the Church. Women, and the Church to which they belong, are intertwined rather than separate entities, hurt felt by ordained women is hurt felt by the Church. Women's ordination should not solely be framed in terms of the damage it has done to unity.

Walrond-Skinner's (1998) *Clergy Marriage Since the Ordination of Women as Priests* covers many of the areas that women in my research identified as significant: the impact of diocesan policies on clergy couples; women embarking on marriage without knowing if ordination would be possible; marriage early in career; giving up work for children; an ordained husband opposed to women's ordination and supportive husbands (1998, pp.163-171).

As she looks ahead from 1998 Walrond-Skinner (1998, p.74) is concerned about the lack of opportunity for young female clergy. In this passage she is writing directly for the women of my cohort, those ordained priest between 1996 and 1999: 'for those who enter ministry in early adulthood it will be important they avoid denying or repressing these personal hopes and ambitions'. The women of her study found their careers came too late; 'part of the price of this generation', she recorded, was that older ordained women, married to priests in particular, felt unable to sacrifice their husband's ministry for their own (Walrond-Skinner, 1998, p.190). In my study most of the married women, despite being young first career priests, placed a husband's career and care of children ahead of their own from the outset of their ministry. There were varying degrees of happiness and unhappiness with this subjugation of professional aspiration for family life. Arriving at priesthood early in adult life is no guarantee of the primacy of a stipendiary priestly career within a woman's life.

This book stands apart from the others in this section as Walrond-Skinner is focused on marriage rather than the Church as an institution potentially under pressure following women's ordination. She has two distinct findings. On the one hand, she concludes that joint clergy couples 'are not inherently more problematic than those of other clergy couples, nor more prone to breakdown' (1998, p.219). Ordaining the wife of a male priest 'has had no deleterious effect on perceptions of family environment', 'no perceptible change seems to have taken place in terms of the cohesiveness of the couples as a result of the ordination of the women in the two groups where the wife was ordained' (1998, p.216).

On the other hand, the results of her psychometric testing suggest that there is a significant difference between female priests married to male priests and those married to laymen:

Women married to non ordained husbands were doing very well in terms of the high degree of egalitarianism that had been achieved in marriages, the strong level of support they were receiving from their husbands, and the solid commitment they showed towards the realisation of their vocation.'

(1998, p.222)

In comparison there was no evidence that joint clergy couples were more egalitarian in their home life, nor that they had brought a greater experience of equality into the workplace through job sharing.

I would like to have seen these conclusions unpacked further but, in this period, only Walrond-Skinner and Page (2010) explored the experience of female priests and their husbands, whether lay or ordained. My research suggested more work could be usefully done in this area to consider the differences between priests married to clergymen and those married to laymen. In my own research, Walrond-Skinner is especially relevant to mothers and married clergy, particularly around job prospects, childcare and sharing household tasks. Her concerns

about unrealistic aspirations for career development amongst ordained young women relate to all those I interviewed. In Chapters Five and Six I explore the relationship between priestly and family responsibilities, including a section focusing on ordained clergy wives.

Bagilhole's (2002) *Women in Non-Traditional Occupations* is most easily understood as a general study of gender discrimination in the workplace. In her book she contrasts the experiences of female priests, engineers, academics and civil servants, finding that all common themes in the wider literature about women at work were represented across each of these non-traditional occupations. Church of England clergy were selected as the latest profession to abolish exclusion whilst retaining vertical segregation (2002, p.71). Bagilhole (2002, p.5) asks 'Are women changed by this environment, becoming more like men around them, or do they change the environment?'

Commonalities across the professions included women entering a non-traditional occupation being highly qualified. Women in these professions were less likely to have partners, less likely to have children if married. They will be doing the major workload of household responsibilities, even if they have partners and families. At work they are doing less well than men in recruitment, selection and promotion, experiencing a 'glass ceiling', are paid less, cluster in low status specialisms and report incidents of harassment and discrimination.

Bagilhole (2002), like Lynas (1998) and Brodin (1994), is convinced that only Equal Opportunities legislation can redeem the situation (Bagilhole, 2002, pp. 148, 191ff), although at no point does she address the exemption to equalities legislation afforded to religious bodies. I hoped she might critique the situation that allows the Church to opt out of gender equality, but she does not. Women have not found effective solutions to discrimination (2002, pp. 132, 164, 191), 'the way to be an academic, an engineer, a manager, or a priest is the way that men do it; the way they have defined and encapsulated it' (2002, p.164).

Even when women penetrate non-traditional occupations, they are marginalised by being channelled into 'appropriate specialisms' (Bagilhole, 2002, p.179). True equality will only be realised when women can completely perform sex atypical work (2002, p.191). Encouragingly for female clergy, when Bagilhole (2002) did find evidence of women performing a job differently to a man, and changing the role as a result, they were mostly priests.

Bagilhole (2002, p.191) concludes that what is needed is 'the threat of the government's big stick', but not interrogating what this means for the Church is a fundamental deficiency in her text making me question just how far she understood her context. Nevertheless, I particularly appreciate her attempt to make gender discrimination a problem for the institution rather than the women. 'We must stop looking for possible deficiencies or deficits in women themselves and see inequality as a problem for the organisations involved, placed fully and squarely on their shoulders' (2002, p.193).

Two points from this study are especially pertinent to the position of the Church since the consecration of female bishops. The General Synod's teaching of mutual flourishing, affirming merit in both women's leadership and women's subservience is entirely at odds with Bagilhole's (2002, p.193) insistence on the need for 'positive action and targets from national legislation'. Targets should be set to collectively and strategically transform 'organisational swamps' rather than rely on women to transform themselves (2002, p.193). Also, a word of

caution lest we become too relaxed following the introduction of female bishops it is 'unlikely that men (or women) winning under the current system will become allies in changing their organisations' (2002, p.193).

Institutional Discrimination

As noted above, ten years after the vote Rees (2002) was raising questions about whether there was something fundamental in the Church's culture. Merely passing the legislation and ordaining women was not appearing to be sufficient to move women into an equal situation with men. In the twenty-first century, writers have increasingly raised questions about the culture of the Church and fundamental beliefs about both priesthood and womanhood.

Thorne's (2000) text is primarily focused on the flourishing of female clergy. Unlike Walrond-Skinner who considers how ordination affects marriage, and Jones (below) who considers how much the ordination of women has disrupted the Church. Thorne sees the promotion of women's wellbeing as an end in its own right. In *Journey to Priesthood*, Thorne argues that the diminishment of women is something that must be challenged. Six years after the ordination of the first female priests, the pain and alienation has not ceased, if the future is to be different; 'it will be essential to compare and contrast the experiences of future women priests with this first, unique and significant cohort' (Thorne, 2000, p.63).

On this data she bases her hypotheses 'HOW WOMEN CAN CHANGE THE CHURCH' (Thorne, 2000, pp.135-141) and 'HOW THE CHURCH CAN CHANGE' (2000, pp.141-146). Her capitalisation reminds me of the clarion calls of suffragette pamphlets. Female clergy themselves need to stay angry (2000, p.135), connected (2000, p.137) and 'involved'. In particular first- and second-generation female clergy need to overcome the divisions that she identified in her interviews. Unlike books that argue for the application of appropriate policies to reduce specific incidents of discrimination, Thorne asserted the Church needed significant attitudinal change (2000, p.141). Structural (2000, p.143) changes were essential, specifically the rescinding of the Act of Synod and the consecration of women as bishops. She concludes with a wide-ranging call for culture change 'let us journey on towards this vision of an inclusive, anti-patriarchal, non-hierarchical Church which is actively engaged in justice seeking and liberation' (2000, p.153).

For Thorne the Church will flourish if women flourish as priests, the wellbeing of women is co-terminus with the flourishing of the Church. Jones will demonstrate a different understanding in which the Church is seen as something that can be disrupted or improved by female priests. Jones argues that it is possible for the Church to flourish whilst women suffer, all other writers in this section take a holistic approach to women's wellbeing and its relationship with the Church. My work is not a deliberate attempt to respond to Thorne (2000) in particular, as I will show later it is not comparable in scope and quantitative method, but it does follow on. In particular, it continues to make women's voices primary and I hope, with Thorne, that 'Women naming their experiences, can help the Church to face its demons of sexism, misogyny and dominance' (2000, p.137).

Rees' (2002) *Voices of this Calling* is a collection of essays about the experience of female priests. They vary in tone between the wholly positive and the despondent. It is a rather jumbled collection with no uniform style or critical reflection, both a strength and a weakness. The overall sense is of women bursting to tell a story. Examples of optimism, grounded in positive personal experiences, are contrasted with concerns about the broader culture of the Church. While it lacks academic depth - most of themes have been explored in more detail in subsequent years - it captures a moment and is a good 'starter' for subsequent work which adds a critically robust analysis of the issues raised by the contributors.

Speaking of ordination 'I can't remember any occasion in my life when I felt so fulfilled' (Clancey in Rees 2002, p.38) and 'At last I came into my own. Priest is what I was meant to be' (Townsend in Rees 2002, p.65). For Pemberton (Rees, 2002, p.160) and Boardman (Rees, 2002, p.99) the Church is now closer to the scriptural ideal of the early church; Percy (Rees, 2002, p.128) rejoices in having changed the Church and Winfield celebrates what she sees as a healing of the whole created order (Rees, 2002, p.103).

At the other extreme Faul doubts whether women will be seen as fully human in the near future (Rees, 2002, p.187), Hudson Willkin (Rees, 2002, p.80) recounts double rejection as a black woman, Shaw (Rees, 2002, p.74) regrets there is no wider focus on equality for all, and Claringbull (Rees, 2002, p.164) expresses disappointment in the next generation of female clergy who she claims don't see or experience discrimination. Wood (Rees, 2000, p.170) ordained priest in 2000, describes the Church as essentially, painfully, androcentric, suggesting not all second-generation female clergy fit Claringbull's description.

Jones' (2004) *Women and Priesthood in the Church of England Ten Years On* aimed to help:

the Church better appreciate the complex nexus of feelings and assumptions that informed beliefs on women's priesting and which ran deeper than any reasoned argument. How is the place of feeling and intuition to be viewed within the realm of theological argument?

(2004, p.80)

He then moves on to consider his central question concerning 'the co-existence project', asking if the Act of Synod will be needed for ever? (2004, p.172).

Whereas Lynas (1998, p.16) argued that the damage borne by women would damage the Church and Thorne portrays women's wellbeing and the Church's wellbeing as coterminous, Jones (2004) believed the Church could flourish even if the female clergy in it did not. He argues for a status quo that will enable women to bear, rather than lose, the burden of co-existence with their opponents. Of his 31 conclusions only 2 relate to female priests specifically; ordained women are largely appreciated and accepted and there is some concern for deployment patterns as women are disproportionately in unpaid roles (2004, p.205). Only one sentence of the report hints that all might not be well for female clergy. Citing Aldridge he acknowledges 'the ideal of selfless service (whilst good in itself) has too often become a method of ignoring legitimate concerns of the servants' (2004, p.140).

Jones' (2004) report is of value to me because it outlines the changing context in which my cohort were living; his data suggests the settlement had resolved uncertainty, not through

unity but through increasing polarisation at each end of the spectrum (2004, p.43). Intermediate opinions were shrinking, replaced by strengthening convictions for or against (2004, pp.43-5). This may help explain the contrasting experiences of affirmation and rejection in my cohort.

His priority is sustaining the institutional resilience he feels he has identified. In the third section of his report (Jones, 2004, pp.169ff) draws on the work of Mary Douglas (1966) and Alan Aldridge (1992, 2002) as he outlines a 'coexistence project' (Jones, 2004, p.172). Here we see the starkest contrast between Thorne and Jones. Whilst Thorne demands change, Jones aspires to a continuation of the status quo. The ordination of women is portrayed without romance or prophetic edge, neither is it a monstrous threat. It is merely something that we can all withstand, mostly like and in the worst case avoid. The diminishment of anyone in the process, not least female clergy, replaced by a concern for an undefined concept of Anglican spiritual resilience (2004, p.212).

The Good Christian Woman and the Experiences of Women as Priests in the Church of England (Williams, 2008) was written at what we now know was a statistical tipping point. Twelve years on from the first ordinations 20% of all priests were female. For the first time more women than men were entering training and this increase would continue. Despite witnessing growth in the number of female clergy Williams, as an insider, had become aware of a whisper of unease (2008, p.34). Williams frames her research as an attempt to understand the 'nuanced and unspoken discomfort' (2008, p.21) that she and other female priests experienced. Female priests have had to find a place in the systems of the Church with little awareness of how the stereotypes of masculine and feminine play out at institutional and individual level.

Williams asserted that the dominant model by which women come to understand themselves as women and believers is 'the good Christian woman' (2008, p.237). In this model of womanhood, the attributes of care, nurture, self-sacrifice, emotionalism, peace-making and peacekeeping are uppermost. The good Christian woman is 'the unquestioned, unacknowledged, indeed unseen influence that has been the base from which the Church has assumed and subsumed women's ministry to the present day, which has lived consequences for the experience of women as priests' (2008, p.237). Williams and I both weave an understanding of historical institutional documents into our research, something not done by other writers considered in this chapter. Understanding the deep roots of institutional resistance to women's ordination helps explain why the Church was so unready to fully embrace the change voted through in 1992.

Many of her interviewees hinted at unease, arising from an internalised ultimate good of a gendered world view (Williams, 2008, pp.34-5). Ordained women are oppressed by the Church's 'hidden masculinist constraint of a patriarchal worldview'. Structures premised on 'Clergyman', Williams' secondary concept (2008, p.247), are inevitably uneasy and uncomfortable for women. In my case I read the historical documents before I interviewed my interviewees, simply because I already owned some of the pre-World War Two reports as well as the full transcript of the 1992 General Synod debate. Over the years, having acquired both in second-hand bookshops, I had read them with fascination and was happy to acquire others to fill in the gaps. Williams turned to the institutional literature after her interviews as a way to understand her data:

As the stories were told I began to question the ways in which the women had come to understand themselves as women and as believers from within the subjectivisation processes at work in the discursive practices of the Church of England. Their stories had a history that went beyond their own personal experiences and were bound up with the narratives and discourses that had formed them from within the history of the Church of England. In order to understand the contemporary context it proved necessary to understand the historical context of women's ministry and journey towards priesthood in the church.

(2008, p.23)

We began in different places but both reached the conclusion that understanding bias in the institutional documents is vital if one is truly to understand how the Church understands women's priesthood.

Using the analogy of a female priest celebrating the Eucharist in the wrong size vestments, Williams' (2008, p.251) acknowledges joy and discomfort can be simultaneous. This provided a coincidental, helpful bridge to my own research question about ideal stole designs. The hegemonic figures of the good Christian woman and the 'Clergyman' are both disciplinary figures and yet also creative spaces of escape and resistance (2008, p.248). Women have not entirely escaped but they have resisted and by appropriating and reinterpreting discourses they have created spaces for women to escape forces that limit them in the private and domestic sphere (2008, p.239). Disappointingly she does not illustrate this claim with lived examples.

Women are the perpetual other (Williams, 2008, p.252). The fact that their ministry continues to be construed as a problem is evidenced by dioceses continuing to make special arrangements for opponents of women's ordination (2008, p.249). Visible changes in the place and role of women mask the hidden constant of a masculinist world view. Williams' conclusions are addressed to both the Church and female priests, 'both the institution and ordained women themselves will need to undertake the project of exposing suppositions, presumptions and prejudices, to in fact refuse to live with the hidden constants that have been at its heart for generations' (2008, p.253).

Page's (2010) *Femininities and Masculinities in the Church of England: A Study Of Priests as Mothers and Male Clergy Spouses* explicitly excluded my cohort, interviewing 'first generation' priests ordained in 1994 and 'second generation' ordained since 2000. This confirms my hypothesis that the women of 1995 – 1999 sit in a complex position, neither true pioneers nor second generation (Page, 2010, p.111). Page identified priests as mothers, and clergy husbands (male clergy spouses) as unexplored areas in an increasingly well researched field (2010, p.2). Territory in which to explore how masculinity and femininity are lived out when engaged within a role not traditionally associated with one's gender (2010, p.12).

As I explored what helped women flourish through my interviews, I was mindful of Page's concern with the perception that the Church is now more equitable: 'there is evidence of the collective memory breaking down, leaving little space with which to make sense of and articulate the ongoing pain experienced' (2010, p.362). The decreasing opportunities to share pain may explain why interviewees valued the experience of being interviewed.

Much of Page's work spoke directly to my concern for flourishing in both domestic and institutional contexts. In the home she described the fragility of the enacted masculinity of clergy husbands, this helped me understand the responses of some married priests (2010, p.348). Several of my interviewees were mothers, and the experience of priest mothers is a specialism of Page. She identified a clash between the traditional constructs of mother and priest. The sacred identity of priest remaining unreconciled with the traditional association of women with pollution, danger and the profane (2010, p.342).

Looking at the institutional context, Page concluded women in senior posts face more containment rather than being freed to lead creatively (2010, p.359). In stark contrast to Jones she described the Church as a place of covert organisational violence, 'Because of its background status, such violation goes unvoiced and is often masked or minimised in the narratives of priests.' (2010, p.364). Uniquely, the Church has 'a sacred licence legitimated through tradition and holy text' which consolidates secular hegemonic masculine forms to the detriment of women (2010, p.367).

In conclusion, thematically speaking the literature in this chapter follows a loop beginning with a vision for cultural change, which may or may not have come to pass with the vote in 1992. It passes through a belief that dissatisfaction with practicalities can be resolved with monitoring and guidelines. Implicit in these texts is the belief that at least, in part, the vote heralded a systemic theological change, practice merely needs to catch up with theology. All writers observe discrimination but in the early years there is a confidence that policies and legislation are the solution to remaining incidences of discrimination. Throughout the literature there are allusions to cultural challenges but these become more clearly stated as the first ordinations become more distant. By the time Williams (2008) and Page (2010) are writing there is no suggestion that the simple adoption of policies will improve the situation for female priests. The practical fact of women's ordination occurred but the cultural change to bring it to the fullness envisaged by Wakeman's (1998) contributors has not come to pass.

Methodology used by other researchers

Whilst reading each book and thesis I paid attention to methodology, this was because it was important to me to find a method that would allow the rich uniqueness of each woman's experience the fullest scope for expression. By choosing to consider the impact of the Act of Synod I was approaching a topic on which I already had a strong opinion, in as far as was possible I wanted to provide my interviewees with a blank canvas to express opinions which might differ from my own. Additionally, as it was 15 to 20 years since each woman had been ordained, I wanted to find a method that captured her maturation and what changes, if any, she believed had occurred in her theological understanding.

Data gathering choices

The texts considered in this chapter use a variety of methods all of which include data gathered directly from female priests. Self funded research relies on smaller samples, for example Williams (2008) and Page (2010) whereas funded researched including Lynas (1998), Thorne (2000) and Jones (2004) include a larger number participants. Data from surveys, questionnaires, interviews and, what I refer to as 'free narrative' material provided as chapters

for collections of essays, is incorporated in different ways with the common aim of reflecting on women's ministry.

Brodin (1997), Lynas (1998) and Bagilhole (2002) rely solely on surveys and questionnaires. There was some space for personal expression in open ended questions but they did not interview their interviewees face-to-face so there was no opportunity to follow up a particular thread or ask for an answer to be unpacked. Of all the texts, these three were closest to workplace studies specifically addressing issues that strayed or might stray into experiences of discrimination that could be responded to through formal complaints. Writings appeared to be gathering data to test against a specific theory, that women suffer discrimination in the workplace, rather than explore the entirety of their experience and examine questions of personal theology.

Walrond-Skinner (1998), Thorne (2000), Jones (2004) and Page (2010) augmented quantitative and qualitative questionnaires and surveys with interviews. Uniquely Walrond-Skinner (1998, p.9) also used psychometric testing and anonymised data from her clinical practice as a psychotherapist. To help me decide what role questionnaires and surveys might play in my group I considered what lay behind the choices these researchers made.

Thorne (2000) gives the clearest contrast to my research; she chose to survey a large number of women in detail, 1547, gathering quantitative data before proceeding to interview a small percentage in more depth. By bringing together detailed quantitative data from a large group before interviewing a comparatively small sample she believes she created 'a threshing floor' where elements of data keep returning to be checked until knowledge and understanding is developed (2000, p.47). She synchronised qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to remove 'an unhelpful dichotomisation' (2000, p.5) The size of her sample, and her synchronised method are designed to produce material that is rich and generalisable (2000, p.48). Her interviews served to illuminate and double check the conclusions arising from her surveys.

I was not wanting to discover general trends in women's experience with which to illustrate my data. These can be readily found in national reports; for example, the Church's *Ministry Statistics*, published annually by the Archbishops' Council, is adapted by WATCH into a yearly *Report on the Developments on Women in Ministry*. The point that female priests are not faring as well as men is well made in statistical data but this data does not allow women to explore why that might be. Also, other than a simple yes or no question it was hard to see how I could ask what women felt about the Act of Synod. If I had used a question like, 'is the Act of Synod a good or bad thing' it would not have exposed the deeply nuanced approaches taken by my interviewees.

Over the period of my research I have learned that by choosing not to use quantitative survey material I have left myself open to criticism that my material is subjective and does not allow for direct comparison with men. It is only a personal perspective but I sense when discussing my research with senior Anglican clergy that it is seen as lacking authority because it does not have survey material or quantitative data. I interpret this as bias towards numbers and charts rather than nuanced and deeply considered personal responses.

'Free narrative', in the form of invitations to contribute to collections of essays could be seen as the opposite extreme to tightly worded surveys. Wakeman's (1996) eight female contributors were all ordained eighteen months before publication. *Voices of This Calling* (Rees, 2002) in comparison has 57 contributions, 49 from women ordained between 1994 and 2000. Rees was intentional in her inclusion of voices from differing areas, ministry contexts, worship traditions and household types. The bulk of the women who contributed were 'those who had been waiting' (2002, p.22) but not all. Within her cohort are some of the young female ordinands of the late 1990s.

The sense of a pouring out of story and the freedom to delve deeply into a particular experience, whether positive or negative, attracted me but I was frustrated by the lack of dialogue between the writer and the editor visible in the text and that there was no gathering together of similarities. I wanted to capture the expansiveness of free narrative alongside engaging with contributors whilst they wrote, before drawing threads of all the pieces together.

Ultimately my process was closest to Williams (2008) in that, when compared to Thorne, we undertook a tiny amount of quantitative analysis; in my case simply gathering year of ordination and age from Crockfords and a simple survey asking women for role title and a self-description. Williams's (2008) interviews were face-to-face and semi-structured. She began her research believing that many women had similar journeys to ordination and beyond, for example many were vicars or many had trained for ministry in similar ways. Therefore, by focusing on just 13 women from one diocese and 'a selection of women elsewhere' she could gain an 'ideal snapshot' applicable to all women's experience of priesthood (2008, p.25).

Thorne notes that a blend of quantitative and qualitative research, especially a multi-method project such as hers with its large quantitative sample, is unusual in feminist dialogue. The logistical and funding demands are seldom available to independent feminist researchers, such as Williams and myself (2000, p.47). Thorne's quantitative data was a significant contribution to the field, proving women had a less positive experience of priesthood compared to men. The data from the Archbishops' Council when analysed by WATCH continues to show women fare less well than men in terms of status and remuneration, this experience is echoed in all subsequent qualitative projects. Whilst it may not be ideal, the absence of a large-scale quantitative sample does not necessarily undermine qualitative projects. Had my data pointed towards dramatically different conclusions to Thorne's and WATCH's I would have been concerned but both Williams and I found the women we interviewed voicing opinions in line with the statistics.

The Voices of Men

I only ever intended to interview women. I was asked 'why not men?' by men throughout the period of my research. I soon learned that I needed to justify my decision. Thorne notes women's voices are usually articulated in comparison to a male world view (2000, p.3) and so the question did not surprise me but it did frustrate me that male experience was felt by some to be necessary to validate women's lives. I intended to put the experiences of women in relation to the Act of Synod at the centre of my research and felt the best way to do this was

to focus on women's experience. Men's ministry could not be formally restricted as women's was; I wanted to focus on those whose ministry was directly restricted by the Act of Synod.

When studying the impact of women's ordination on an institution to which men and women belong, be that marriage (Walrond-Skinner, 1998) or the Church (Jones, 2004) men are included. In others men are included because their responses help illuminate the experiences of women (Thorne, 2000; Page, 2010). The first example, the impact on an institution, does not apply to me as I am exploring the impact of the Church, and to a lesser degree marriage, on female priests rather than their impact on either body. In the second example, after I began to write up my research, I began to believe that male voices could have provided more depth to my analysis, I explain why at the end of this section.

Jones (2004) interviewed male and female priests and laity, as well as bishops who, at the time of his interviews, could only be male. Walrond-Skinner (1998) and Page (2010) both interviewed clergy husbands but to serve different purposes. Walrond-Skinner (1998) was evaluating the impact women's ordination had on the health of a marriage, when one or both partners are ordained. Walrond-Skinner and Jones understood the institutions they focused on as potentially at risk of destabilisation by the introduction of female priests; interviews with men were intended to provide balance. Page, however, is focused on female priests, in particular their gender identity. Men are only included by virtue of their relationship with female priests, all the men fulfil the role of clergy husband, some happen to be ordained, some are not. Their contributions enhance the investigation of women's experience rather than providing balance in an analysis presuming the introduction of female priests to be institutionally disruptive.

Male experience as a direct comparator to women's only features in Brodin. These male voices are essential if she is to test her case that female priests received 'less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex?' (1997, p.119). For my research I believed there could be no direct comparator of the impact of the Act of Synod. Brodin is researching discrimination not created by the Act, whereas I began with the intention of considering the consequences of formal restrictions. Men of whatever sexuality and ethnicity were not, in my opinion, directly affected by the formal institutional position on women's ordination.

For a long time I was content to say that the experience of male clergy was not comparable or relevant to that of women in relation to my topic. As I drew towards the end of my research three things changed my mind. Concerns began to form about the role of ordained clergy husbands which I would have liked to investigate by interviewing the husbands, lay and ordained, of my interviewees. Second, as I wrote up my conclusions about institutional culture, I noted profound resonances with work being published on the experiences of LGBTQ, Global Majority Heritage Anglicans and others experiencing discrimination (see Chapter Eight) within the institutional culture of the Church. Comparing the experience of Global Majority male clergy with that of my sample who were all white (all of those volunteering for interview indicated they were white) would have been of relevance to contemporary debate within the Church.

Thirdly, with the consecration of women as bishops, male clergy began to personally experience some of the rejection women had known for many years. In a speech to General

Synod, about a report of the workings of the Five Guiding Principles, Bishop Christine Hardman commented that the First Principle, that women are truly and lawfully ordained as bishops, was under threat. 'What we are seeing now is not just to do with the ordination of women but those men who are ordained by women bishops' (2021b), men ordained by women, Hardman argued, were experiencing pain and rejection from people who questioned the validity of their ordination. This rejection implied to her a belief that female bishops are not truly bishops as they cannot effectively ordain. Interviewing these men, who experience sex discrimination by association, could bring a valuable fresh perspective on institutional responses to female priests.

The free narrative in Rees includes a small number of male voices telling of the impact on men of the mistreatment of women and adds a valuable extra insight. These chapters show what men observe that women might not, in particular Strudwick's story, of a convent where he was supplied with special cutlery embossed with the word 'Priest', 'presumably so that no lay female lips might contaminate them' (2002, p.55). The stories of the male priests ordained by bishops Christine Hardman, Rachel Treweek, Dame Sarah Mullally and others, as well as those from a world that women might suspect exists but never experience, are lacking from this thesis. I hold to my decision to interview only women but hope that the experiences of men ordained by women and ordained clergy husbands could be gathered at some point.

Feminism

In the following chapter I reflect in depth on my personal engagement with feminism. Initially I planned to assess whether each interviewee was a feminist against a single definition of feminism but my own feminism convinced me that this judgemental approach was neither desirable nor necessary. Instead, I switched to considering how the women I interviewed processed their experiences and whether they claimed feminism played a role in this. Some of my interviewees explicitly defined themselves as feminist, others specifically rejected that definition whilst living lives which observers, including myself, might term feminist. Putting the women who shared their thoughts with me first required me to respect their choices, in this section I consider the self-definition and choices of the writers.

I noted that the closer a writer was to an institutional audience the less likely they were to explicitly identify a role for feminism or argue that they were personally a feminist. In the last of his nine conclusions, Jones explains that most of his interviewees found ordained women 'reassuringly' similar to ordained men, interviewees were relieved that there was no obvious impact of feminism on the Church (2006, p.103). Lynas, in her short review of female clergy's experience of sexual harassment makes no reference to feminism nor does she describe herself as a feminist. In the opening pages of the text, initially commissioned by the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Trades Union, she thanks the Church's Advisory Board for Ministry for its advice on changes that made the report suitable for their consideration. She does not outline these changes but these two reports with an internal audience are the only two not to explicitly refer to feminism.

Rees (2002) and Wakeman (1996) were both writing, and curating the writing of others, for sale to an audience of book buyers interested in women's ordination which one would assume included a large number of Anglicans. Whilst feminist views are expressed in a minority of

contributions to each book I am interested in how Rees and Wakeman, as editors, framed their own feelings about feminism. Wakeman, a priest herself, draws attention to opinions she has heard which describe feminism as a 'worldly agenda' believed to be backed by non-Christians intent on destroying the Church (1996, p.7). One ordained male supporter of women's ordination is quoted warning that people will resist if 'they think its all to do with feminism' (1996, p.24). She does not present her own views as feminist, but she does include Baisley's *Being Realistic about Feminism* (1996, pp.97-116) a passionate chapter advocating for feminist theology to inform the development of women's ministry. Wakeman herself avoids giving a view personally but she alludes to the problematic nature of feminism whilst giving space to an advocate of feminist theology.

In her introduction Rees (2002) foregrounds Christianity over feminist theories and theologies, she acknowledges there are questions about scriptural (2002, p.18) and theological (2008, pp.19f) views of women to which feminist analysis could apply but there is a fundamental prior issue:

Either women are members of the full body of Christ, or they are not. Either women are included in the saving, transforming, liberating, reconciling, work of Jesus Christ or they are not. Either God's Spirit is given equally to women as it is to men, or it is not. The question lingers: Are women fully human in the eyes of the Church?

(Rees 2002, p.21)

Here Rees is performing a radical sleight of hand, she avoids the problematic act of identifying her book as feminist whilst clearly stating that she sees a problem for women at the heart of institutional culture. Recounting a conversation with John Bell, theologian and hymn writer, who suggested the best contribution men could make to women in the Church was to keep quiet for 30 years, Rees sidesteps the debate about feminism and female priests and writes 'let women do the theology for a generation and then see what has changed' (2002, p.29).

Rees and Wakeman's editorial introductions would not present a significant challenge to women who felt reluctant to embrace the explicit language of feminism. This may or may not have been a conscious decision, but I do know that I was concerned how personal beliefs about feminism might adversely influence an ordained readership. Based on personal experience as a member of General Synod and the Archbishops' Council I felt that an overtly feminist analysis would be used by those with power in the Church to dismiss my theories as partisan. It may be that the same thoughts occurred to them, or their publishers when considering their likely audience.

The writers who felt the least need to defend their use of feminism were those most distant from the Church. Brodin cites feminist jurisprudence (1997, pp. 42, 64f) and feminist theories of the philosophy of rights (1997, pp. 48f and 53) whilst Bagilhole (2002) uses feminist theories of family, home and work (2002, p.77), the workplace in relation to Equal Opportunities policies (2002, p.136) and debates about gender sameness and differences (2002, p.188). Bagilhole understands the dilemma the women in her study face; quoting Maddock, she reflects that to be credible women must be accepted and conforming, while to be effective they must be challenging and imaginative (2002, p.188). This may explain why women seeking to have

their work accepted by an institutional readership are those least likely to explicitly identify as feminists.

Walrond-Skinner, a priest and psychologist, explicitly identifies feminism as one of her analytical tools amongst a range of others. In particular, she draws on cultural feminism's view of gender difference and feminist gender theory as it applies to relationship building (1998, pp.44, 82). She identifies five variables for a happy marriage of which one, similarity, is selected from feminist approaches to relationships. Walrond cautiously includes feminism but does so without feeling the need to defend her choice. Thorne (2000), Williams (2008) and Page (2010) are close to the Church but are not writing books to be sold to, or reports for consideration by, the Church's governing bodies. Proximity will have given them an awareness of opinions about feminism, distance may have meant they had less concerns about how their work would be received by Church leaders. Neither Bagilhole nor Brodin specifically identify as Christian, nor do they spend significant time defending their use of feminist theories.

Thorne spends the most time unpacking and defending her choice of feminist theory and advocacy of feminist theology. She devotes two entire chapters to the theological and feminist context of women's ordination and feminist methodology (2000, pp.19ff, 40ff). She understood the need for a defence as her quantitative data demonstrated that 75% of the 1247 women who completed her survey were antipathetic to feminist theology (2000, p.113). Her data revealed a possible contradiction as 64% responded positively to the use of gender inclusive language, amongst younger women (of whom my interviewees would have formed a part) this acceptance rose to 74.1% for young female evangelical clergy and 87.5% for their liberal peers. Thorne interprets this as demonstrating feminism has impacted the younger generation, in an irrevocable way, 'younger women remain immutably committed to expressing and naming women's experience, particularly in relationship to worship' (2000, p.116).

Young women were rejecting the label of feminist whilst naturally working in line with its principles. This rejection, she argued, may have been because the Church had been quick to join a society wide 'backlash' that did not kill feminism but made it an unpopular cause to be identified with (2000, p.112). Six years of women's ordination have shown the Church is not willing to adapt, 'Feminism offers a coherent framework which could enable women to gain support and cope with painfully bitter experiences... but their ambivalence and in some cases antagonism to it is detrimental to their capacity for development' (2000, p.118).

Williams picks up from Thorne the need to challenge a patriarchal agenda in the Church. These three writers are concerned with institutional culture rather than policy changes which they feel would be insufficient. Williams uses French feminists, especially Irigaray, to expose the hegemonic norm of a 'Good Christian woman' (2008, p.2). She agrees with Thorne, as did Page two years later, that women have stepped back from feminism. She argues that were priests feminist they would challenge the theology of episcopal hierarchy rather than merely argue for women's inclusion in it (2008, p.15). Feminism, she argues, is essential if female clergy are to resist the discourses that position them on the margins of the symbolic order. 'The patriarchal theology of the Church of England has encouraged a masculinist worldview which the ordination of women has to date had small influence in changing' (2008, p.41).

Page cites feminist research methods (2010, pp.94ff) and feminist gender theory (2010, pp.16ff) as key elements of her thesis. However, unlike Williams she resists being specific in grounding her work in one particular writer or school of thought. She writes that feminism represents to her 'an overriding concern with inequality and injustice' (ibid., p.95), to Page feminist method is not unified and set but a rich range of choices (ibid., p.133). Postmodern, post structuralist and third-wave feminism are listed by Page as significant influences but she avoids identifying with any one branch of feminism (ibid., p.138). She is the only interviewer to note that some of her interviewees, those holding high level postgraduate qualifications, were well versed in feminism, feminist theology and the history of women's ordination (ibid., p.133). Women who had lived through the pre vote struggles were more likely to be knowledgeable about feminist theology whereas those ordained after 2000 distanced themselves from the identity of well educated priest, even if they had post graduate qualifications. Page felt these newer priests were possibly mildly intimidated by her familiarity with contemporary feminism. My cohort is between Page's first and second generation clergy suggesting a complex relationship with feminism which I discovered to be the case in reality.

Conclusion

After the jubilation of the vote in 1992 writers initially focused on policies and employment conditions as a solution to discrimination that had persisted. As time progressed, fundamental institutional culture, resistant to simple policy changes and guidelines, comes to be seen as more of an issue. Writers considered in this chapter who have the least need to appeal to an institutional audience appear to be most likely to use feminism extensively and without more than a minimum amount of defence. The authors I review who explicitly identify as Christian are those most likely to include a substantial defence of feminism.

As a Christian woman and a feminist, I am frustrated by the expectation that I must defend my choice of feminism when my male colleagues publish books and theses with no defence of their patriarchal perspectives. I sympathise with Rees when she resists spending time on a defence of feminism but simply wonders what would take shape if men were silent, focusing on the process and creation of theology by women rather than the label. Although I would refine this, as I imagine Rees would now, to allow a space for the theology of men stifled by the institutional Church.

Nevertheless, to resist explicitly claiming feminism would suggest I am embarrassed or ashamed by this critical tool. It would suggest feminism has no relevance to the contemporary situation of the Church when I believe it does. Thorne's conclusion to her defence of feminism reads, 'Women in the church must view Christianity through the language of feminism and feminism through the language of Christianity' (2000, p.118). I would like the male voices that have dominated the Church to stay silent for 30 years, feminism helps me understand why that is so unlikely to happen.

Chapter Four Methodology

Introduction

My priorities when choosing a method were threefold; foregrounding experiences of women as distinct from both the identity 'Woman priest' or my own perspective on priesthood, the avoidance of unnecessary burdens on interviewees or researcher, and creating a safe and expansive space for reflection. At the centre of my research journey is ontology, my personal worldview (Bennett et al, 2018, p.140). I am a person who has opted into an inherited model of Anglican priesthood but holds that choice in tension with a commitment to feminism. From this perspective I value the traditional oaths and affirmations of ordination which do not differentiate between gender. At the same time through the lens of feminism and lived experience as a priest I question whether the Church truly accepts women as fully embodying the role of priest. My worldview, a dialogue between traditional Anglican ecclesiology, liberal Christianity and feminism provoked an interest in other female priests. How has their experience been shaped by the institutional culture of the Church of England? From my perspective organisational culture played a key role in irradicating attempts to introduce gender equality in the priesthood; what are their perspectives? The research was, and is, an attempt to discover whether other ordained women have the same sense of dissonance.

From my feminist perspective the choice of method needed to foreground women's experience and give them a safe expansive space in which to unpack their experiences, perspectives, and theologies. How do they exist in the space between lived experience and the principles and beliefs that shape their perspective on life? My experience shaped the project but women decided to engage with it based on their own opinion of its use. They related their experiences via their unique worldview and I subsequently overlaid their interpretation with my own. The following passage alludes to one of my questions, a question about the importance of ordination stoles. Factually all of us had stood in a cathedral and been presented with a strip of cloth, a stole to be worn in our liturgical ministry. From my liberal Catholic worldview this piece of cloth is particularly special, from my feminist perspective the giving of it to women as well as men is a significant symbolic expression of gender equality in liturgy. I had the power as researcher to raise this moment to something worthy of data gathering.

My participants responded from their own world view, recounting their own experiences and theological perspectives. At the heart of this is a fact, women and men were all given a strip of cloth but the knowledge gathered from the replies goes beyond that fact. The interview transcripts are subjective but just as the stole is more to me than a strip of fabric the reflections on praxis are more than just words on an electronic page. They are a truth, 13 truths, one from each participant about her understanding of her priesthood in the period of her interview. They do not objectively prove anything but where experiences resonate with my hypothesis, they point to something that I believe needs attending to in more detail. Where their experience challenges my hypothesis I am encouraged to look afresh at the world. Capturing perspectives different to my own needed a method that allowed deeply distinctive responses, gathering these would need good rapport between interviewer and interviewee.

I have a strong memory from my own ordination that symbolises the need for warmth, attentiveness, and space for uniqueness. After a bishop had said the words of ordination an

elderly priest fussed over me and my stole to get the positioning 'just right'. He was attentive to the detail of where the stole lay on my shoulder, conscious of what he thought was right but ultimately he stopped fussing with the words 'I think I'll let you get on with what's right for you'. I chose a method that allowed space for some of the attentiveness of that priest, an intimate space with attention to detail, I tried to be mindful of what was my idea of priesthood whilst at the same time allowing space for women to express what was right for them. The knowledge that results is no more 'true' than a strip of cloth over the shoulder makes one a priest but like a stole it points to deeply significant things beyond the fact of its existence.

David James (2015) in a recorded conference seminar *How to get clear about method, methodology, epistemology and ontology, once and for all* explains that every researcher must choose whether experience be expressed 'categorically', by choosing from several tick boxes, or whether experience is 'lived' and temporal. The researcher who opts for the second choice must decide to spend significant time alongside their participants and this will limit the number of participants with whom they can engage. The research project was self funded alongside whilst working as a parish priest and chaplain, having chosen a time consuming qualitative, interpretative, and feminist methodology it is necessarily small scale in its sample. In the previous chapter I outlined the sample sizes of writers who have previously undertaken work in my field. These ranged from Thorne's 1547 to William's thirteen drawn from a single diocese. This thesis is based on a numerically small sample, thirteen women, twenty percent of the young female ordinands of the late 1990's.

As a feminist I was particularly concerned with women's lived experience of ministry under the Act of Synod for which I believed a qualitative and interpretative approach was best suited. As James warned this approach required significant time to engage with each participant and so the sample was necessarily small scale.

My research is driven by feminist principles, the impact of which on my research is considered later in this chapter. In contrast the bulk of my interviewees were hesitant about embracing feminism. In my interviews and analysis I guarded against subsuming interviewees' experiences and opinions under my own feminist perspective. In *Why I am Not a Feminist*, Crispin (2017) argues that the work of a feminist is not to convert others to her cause but is in 'listening to the wants and needs of women that might differ to our own' (2017, pp.34f). In representing each woman's experience I believe I managed to avoid the 'tendency to look at women who have rejected feminism and decide they must be pitiable' (2017, p.25). As a feminist I made choices to bring women's perspectives to the fore, creating a space in which women could tell their own story, whilst honouring where our critical frameworks diverged.

My feminist commitment allowed early informal conversations with sister priests to guide my decisions about what might be an important topic to consider and where to focus my investigations. Radford (2017) encourages researchers to pay attention to the lived experiences of participants when shaping their methodologies. Her work focuses on people living on the margins, on the edge of society away from the foci of power and wealth. The women I interviewed were not on the edge of society, they were white, middle class and lived in relative financial comfort but they were marginalised from normative models of priesthood and institutional discussions of women's ordination. These early conversations shaped my later choices about who I selected for interview and how I interviewed busy women to minimise

the burdensome impact of participation on their lives. The most significant outcomes of these conversations were the decisions to focus on women in whom relative youth and extensive experience intersected and the choice of an interview method that allowed substantial flexibility for participants. In order to examine complexities of lived experience my interview cohort was ultimately drawn from the youngest of our longest-serving female priests. Women who had reflected on their ministry for many years, who might be reflectively looking ahead with at least 15 years of potentially paid ministry remaining open to them should they want it. They had much to tell us about the Church's understanding of female clergy, priestly motherhood, the role of an ordained clergy wife, sacrificial ministry and expected norms of behaviour.

In Asynchronous Electronic Interviewing (AEI), remote interviewing using an exchange of emails over a number of weeks, I found a method that I believed would minimise the burden of participation and made best use of their reflective gifts. Many of my cohort had caring responsibilities and demanding ministries that made setting time aside difficult. I often sensed and was occasionally straightforwardly told that my interviews were not 'proper' as they were not the classic face to face to prolonged conversation. Radford (2017) writes that research is tied up in existing systems, both the academy and the Church that name what is central and what is marginal. Considering the needs of my participants meant selecting a method that accommodated vocational and domestic demands on their time. Within the Church the desire for stability of an existing patriarchal model is central, the direct impact of that model on female clergy is seen as marginal issue at best, assuming it is seen at all. The experience of those living on the edge of what is deemed central and relevant may be difficult if not impossible for them to express. Given their ages it was likely that they would be mindful of not expressing opinions that would negatively impact on future career choices. I believe my use of AEI is unique in my field; I created an unprecedented expansive, safe space for reflective yet defensive women with many pressures on their time. I began with the assumption that 'proper' interviews must be face-to-face, changing my opinion demonstrated creativity and adaptability. AEI had been proven through use with gay men and others who held views they felt unable to express in conversation to generate material of significant depth. As I will explain I do not believe face-to-face interviews could achieve comparable honesty. In this thesis I extend Sara Ahmed's feminist work in Higher Education to a Church context, work in which she describes the experience of being a person whose identity is 'in question' (2017a, pp.115-134). My data was intentionally gathered away from Church spaces where the identity 'woman priest' is deemed 'inconsistent with the norms of an institution' (2017a, p.125). I believe the methodological approach outlined in detail below is suitable for use with others, lay and ordained, who are 'an incongruity' (ibid.) in the Church, those who are most in need of expansive safe spaces.

This chapter will first consider the implications of being an 'insider' before discussing the distinctive features of interviewing clergy. I will use relevant interview data to illustrate methodological points. I will then explain how I conducted my research, demonstrate the advantages of AEI for this project, and conclude by outlining how I analysed my data. From Chapter Five onwards I concentrate on the findings arising from my interviews. However, prior to that I will use a small number of participants' observations where they pertain to my research methods.

Insider research: Priest and Researcher or Researcher Priest?

This research is deeply embedded within the institution under examination. I belong to the same Church as the women I interviewed and I inhabit the same identity, an identity explored in detail in Chapter Five. We are on one level the same, as ordained women we have a collegiality which brings both strengths and weaknesses.

Initially I understood identity as individual roles that I could switch between, expecting to find the priest part of me could be somehow switched off on research days. This did not prove possible in terms of my self-understanding, as an 'interpretive' project it was impossible to tackle the data from a different perspective depending on whether it was a 'parish day' or a 'thesis day'. The responses rolled around my head continually with interpretation as likely to go on whilst going about my ministry as at my desk. There was also a risk that participants might forget I was not guiding them in self-examination as a priest might do for a retreatant. I chose AEI to mitigate against this risk and reduce the possibility that I might share my own opinions through off the cuff comments. I realised early on that I was unable to 'shed my specific agendas' (Anderson and Jack, 1991, p.16). I acknowledged my agenda arose from a feminist outlook and the practical interpretation was influenced by my entire context rather than simply my part time academic identity, Therefore I attempted to remain alert to how that might affect my interaction with my interviewees.

Cameron and Duce (2013, p.83) remind the ordained researcher, that our conversations are essentially selfish, but it was impossible to entirely switch off my sense of priestly collegiality and service. I attempted to remain attentive to any negative impact arising from my priestly identity and found the time lag between question and answer allowed me to keep my academic identity at the fore. As a researcher priest I recognised the strength and weakness in Reinhartz's (1983, p.167) reflection that friends and peers believe participating in research offers the potential for self-discovery or catharsis. Participants gain personal benefit from time set aside for introspection but it also heightens the risk of overexposure. Mary's comment 'I think the process is helping me work out a few things as I go, but I hope that it's of use to you and your research as well as therapy for me!!' (Mary) illustrates the risk that the boundaries between academia and therapy may blur.

Transcripts also suggested that my desire to create something that would speak to women other than me was possible: 'I would be very interested to read your completed thesis as this concerns my cohort and to read the rest of your research' (Ava). Nevertheless, the safe space needed for women to invest in the research process is fraught with the risk of over disclosure as ultimately the content of academic interviews, unlike material shared with a spiritual director, is intended for a wider audience. Writers who have interviewed women believe over disclosure is especially risky when interviewing friends, McConnell et al. (2009), Cotterill (1992) and Neal and Gordon (2001). The friendly, collegial tone, especially interviewees' comments on the vocational usefulness of participation, alerted me to the possibility of a similar risk amongst people with a vocational collegial identity.

I cannot entirely rule out the possibility that some content will be regretted, even with the option to withdraw material, but there is evidence of awareness and self-protection in the transcripts. Kerstin writes, 'Please know that I am giving you my most honest and private

reflections. I hope the answers are helpful. I am curious about how much our experiences (all those you are interviewing) are overlapping'. Kerstin thereby decided to work at the limits of her honesty to discover what she shared with others. Katie's response also shows an understanding of where to draw the line in managing personal disclosure: 'Don't really want to revisit college too closely - it was a difficult time in many ways'. Even within the confines of a confidential interview women shared information which they asked me not to quote. Each woman was asked to check her entire transcript for anything she wished to redact at the end of the interview period, nothing was redacted although three women asked me to correct any mistakes in their typing before quoting from their text. They understood levels of risk, what can and cannot be realistically concealed, one interviewee sharing a situation to give context to a broader statement asked 'please don't quote that'. I was grateful for this nuanced openness which confirmed to me I had managed to balance risk and openness.

The biggest challenge to my initial belief that priest and researcher could be separate rather than blended identities was the proposed translation of Philip North, a non-ordaining suffragan bishop, to a diocesan role in 2015. I realised how vulnerable my interpretative approach was to this development when I found myself reacting increasingly strongly to stories of historic experience of exclusion or prejudice within my transcripts. I added to my protective boundaries by withdrawing from all social media and avoiding appointments with colleagues opposed to the ordination of women despite previously friendly relationships. This emotional response alerted me to the need to take particular care when rereading transcripts lest I allow my strong feelings to bias my coding. I explain later in this chapter how I attempted to pay close attention to the intentions of my interviewees in their responses.

Overall, research amongst peers, friends and colleagues with whom the researcher has pre-existing relationships, raises the stakes. The 'native' researcher must be especially sensitive when airing what their peers 'may consider dirty laundry' (Jacobs Huey, 2002, p.797). Insider peer research magnifies both strengths and weaknesses; it can create greater potential for both emotional and relational damage but also increases rapport and engagement.

Feminist Priest, Feminist Researcher

According to Sharon Jagger understanding the interaction between the Church and feminism is essential context for any research based on the experience of female priests. Jagger explained that the ongoing debate about women's ordination defines sex and gender relations, "being called" to the ministry becomes entangled with religious discourse that disallows overtly expressed female authority and feminist awakening through a desire to re-balance the highly masculinised nature of Christianity' (2019, p42). I believe what Jagger demonstrates is true for interviewees is also the case for ordained feminist researchers. The Church discourages overt statements of feminism whereas academia requires students to clearly identify the presumptions underlying their research. As a feminist researcher who is also a priest I experienced significant emotional conflict stemming from the conflicting cultures of Church and University.

I concluded my research in the year I celebrated 25 years as a priest, during which time I had spent ten years in some form of Higher Education in addition to five years prior to ordination. Janet Parr (1998) in *Theoretical Voices and Women's Own Voices: The Stories of Mature Women Students* reflects on her own experience of completing a PhD thesis as a mature student after many years as a lecturer, I found resonances of her own story in mine. As a mature student with a pre existing academic theoretical framework and a person who is ostensibly the same as her participants whether 'mature student' or 'woman priest' the shared background can bring a double edged sword both in terms of shared experience and pre existing theoretical framework. The researcher may be more sensitive to participants but she may also shape and silence them, seeing in their story a reflection of her own or organising and presenting data through the established theoretical lens she brings with her. This is why it is especially important to be attentive to the unique experiences of participants, being grounded in their experience rather than my own and also be honest about the epistemological preconceptions I bring with me. My professional context, beginning as a feminist ordinand in 1995 brings with it baggage that makes defending my epistemological perspective tiresome and even painful, nevertheless my academic context requires it.

I was helped by James' (2015) who uses the analogy of an iceberg when describing the presentation of method, methodology, epistemology, and ontology in a PhD thesis. Whilst methods and methodology may be visible above the waterline, epistemology and ontology often lie hidden. James cautions the academic writer, as with an iceberg so much of what is unseen in a thesis is difficult and dangerous. In my case I had embraced feminism as a child through involvement in the peace movement, at university I studied feminist theology with joy but it was only upon arrival at theological college that I discovered that to many in the Church what lay below the waterline of my faith was difficult and dangerous. Over the years defending my commitment to feminism has been inextricably linked with defending my existence as a priest. In approaching academic questions of epistemology and ontology, I found the need to defend my choice of feminism triggered uncomfortable emotions and memories of verbal abuse associated with my priesthood. It was not something I wanted to do in what I hoped would be an affirming and creative intellectual space. I was not embarrassed or uncomfortable with feminism, I am simply tired and through this research I realised I have been damaged by the need to constantly defend principles that I feel are fully consistent with my faith. However, according to James, the iceberg is not just concealed difficulty and danger it is also concealed beauty. I had initially interpreted questions about feminist epistemology and ontology as threats because in the Church they so often are, but if taken as an opportunity to reveal something beautiful below the surface of my research they are less threatening. Revealing the beauty of feminism rather than alerting the reader to a perilous ideology that lies below my work is a far more attractive concept and does not trigger painful memories.

What does it mean to believe that I can be both authentically a priest within the Church of England and a feminist? Can someone who has willingly accepted the status offered to female priests within the Church of England, *as it is currently*, be legitimately considered a feminist? Maruska (2017) claims that for feminists 'critical, intersubjective ontology leads to a belief

that the world we have created can in fact be remade'. If I am a feminist, according to Maruska, my priorities should be lessening the shackles of power relations, emancipation, and transformation. I believe I can legitimately claim they are but my conviction does not mean adopting a single definition of feminism that is shared by fellow researchers or sister priests. Kwok (1994) believes that theologians and priests find it easier 'to talk about the liberation of the poor and marginalized than about the liberation of women', not simply because men struggle with the conversation but because of the diversity of opinion amongst women (1995, p.63). Even where women are committed to a broadly similar vision, as I believe is the case with ordained women, they may have widely differing goals and strategies relating to the realisation of that vision. Differing strategies in relation to the enactment of women's priesthood may explain the varied approaches to identifying with feminism amongst my participants. This is why it was so important to foreground the uniqueness of each individual's voice before looking for any overlapping perspectives.

Serene Jones' *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology* (2000, p.3ff) gives a simple definition of what feminist theorising consists of; work which may be written or conversational that demonstrates a commitment to a struggle against oppression. Feminism is a theory which seeks action, action which will improve the lives of women. Jones writes that women's lives have often been ignored as a subject of critical reflection and feminists have a sense of urgency related to present day harms to women. The Act of Synod and the Five Guiding Principles have never previously been considered solely from the perspective of their impact on ordained women. The decision to do so arose from a personal suspicion that the implementation of women's ordination was done in a way that harmed ordained women. It is a feminist decision to put my research energies in a place where I believe it is needed, what Jones and other feminists would describe as a 'preferential option' for female priests.

By writing from my own feminist standpoint I make no absolute claim for what being a feminist is. Even amongst women who identify as feminist within a particular field of professional practice there can be diversity. Ernst and Maguire's *Living with the Sphinx* a collection of essays written by self identifying feminist psychoanalysts within one small practice revealed different understandings of what women meant when they described themselves as feminist therapists (1987, p.1). Likewise there is no one definition of being a feminist priest. Nor did I intend to measure female clergy against a set definition of feminism, neither my own or anyone else's. Writing from a Roman Catholic perspective in *Beyond Anger* Osiek (1986) argues that should a woman come to awareness that she is in a patriarchal church, once she has decided to remain rather than leave her reaction may differ from other women who have been on the same journey of realisation. My interview data will reveal that all participants identified where sexism impacted their life within the Church. Women who remain in a Church they know to be sexist can adopt marginalist, symbolist, revisionist, loyalist or liberationist responses to their awareness of a normatively masculine church as 'alternatives', 'positions' or 'ways of coping' (1987, p.43). I made a decision not to label the perspective of any of the women I interviewed but my own outlook would certainly align most closely with liberationist. The liberationist perspective was described by Osiek as the 'one to watch', 26 years on her confidence that liberationist perspectives on women's position in the Church were in the ascendancy looks misplaced.

Even my personal feminist standpoint has varied over the period of my research. These changing perspectives confirm Maruska's assertion 'there can be no one "feminist standpoint," not even for an individual researcher as she travels through time and space, and the context changes'. Slee (2004) describes this as researching with an emancipatory intention and Opie (1992) draws attention to the potential for work from a feminist standpoint to destabilise existing power structures. I am a feminist precisely because I believe the Church can be remade, because I believe destabilising the Church as it is could be creative rather than destructive. Although I remain, for the time being in an established historic pattern of ministry, my personal theology has been shaped by women who wanted to radically remake the Church, including Daly, Fiorenza, Ruether, and the women and men associated with the Movement for the Ordination of Women and the St Hilda's Community. For me the task of remaking the Church and society is vital because, as Ruether writes, 'Theologically speaking, whatever diminishes or denies the full humanity of women must be presumed not to reflect the divine or to reflect the authentic nature of things, or to be the message or work of an authentic redeemer or a community of redemption.' (1983:19). As a feminist researcher and a feminist priest with a liberationist perspective I believe there is a theological imperative for the institutional diminishment of female clergy and all women to end.

The question of staying or going, whether one can be authentically feminist and remain within a patriarchal church is something I have been asked by people inside and outside the Church throughout my research. More significantly it is a question I have been in constant dialogue with, this led to decisions over the course of my research to step away from national roles in the Church of England's theology and governance. In 2018 I left parish ministry for Higher Education chaplaincy where the status of women in the workplace is not affected by formal institutional restrictions. This dialogue is part of the feminist process of reflexivity, I am aware that my research began from my own discomfort with the Church, and acknowledge that at its conclusion I am more uncomfortable. Recognising where I stand in the debate reveals to others something that they may believe is difficult, or dangerous, or beautiful about who I am. In recognising my position I am, in Bonnie Miller McLemore's words, refusing the 'pretence of objectivity' and violating theological decorum (cited in Radford, 2017:128). However disruptive it may be to established Anglican patterns of theology feminism prompts me to be honest about myself whilst resisting the temptation to impose labels on my participants.

My first act as a feminist researcher was simply believing that the question I wanted to answer was worth asking, resisting what Radford (2017) describes as the erasing of experience which is deemed as not relevant to central concerns. In her book *Women's Faith Development* Slee (2004) describes the rise of feminist methodology within the social sciences. Constructivist research she explains does not merely add women as a subject that is a topic of interest but is research by and for women (2004, p.44). In my literature review I considered reports examining the implementation of the Act of Synod and the Five Guiding Principles but these reports were guided by men and included the experiences of ordained women as just one of the subjects of relevance to their topic. The benchmark of what constituted good theology was what troubles established patterns of Church the least. My

work raises the status of women's experience of ministry and takes their personal journeys seriously even where that threatens possible disruption. Women's experience is of worth, exploring how women's experience has been formed by the Church's institutional culture is a valuable exercise in itself.

With limited time I decided not to do a comparative study of male clergy, whose experience is well researched and who were not impacted by the Act of Synod in the same way as women. I own this decision to 'screen[ing] out' (Radford, 2017:124) male voices as one of my feminist decisions, it will have reduced the complexity of perspectives but I believe it necessarily amplifies the voices of women, As Cameron and Duce (2013) caution in *Ministry and Mission: A Companion* qualitative interviews are time consuming, without significant funding this will limit the number of participants. Every man interviewed would have meant one fewer woman in an already small sample. This decision to exclude men from my sample does not lessen its relevance, the Church may be understood to be normatively male but the reality is a laity and clergy who are male, female and non-binary. My own life experience and my pre-existing commitment to feminism made me especially vulnerable to interpreting my data using my experience and so I adopted a grounded theory approach. Parr (1998, p.91) had made the same decision in her work with mature students to ensure she was attentive to their voices and avoided presupposing their situations. In this way she discovered experiences that had not occurred to her, in my case these were the perspectives of ordained women married to priests (see subsequent chapters). The absence of male participants limits the range of experiences but it does not invalidate the data of the women I interviewed nor make my conclusions less worthy of consideration.

It can also be argued that my research was not only small scale in numbers but also small scale in focus, smaller in scope than some of the collections of essays I critique in the literature review. I have not revisited the arguments for and against women's ordination nor will I propose alternative models of priesthood or Church. I have not explored topics such as motherhood, marriage, ageing, sexuality and disability in depth despite all of these impacting the lived experience of my participants. I have chosen to limit my research to the intersection of institutional restrictions on women's priesthood and the lived experience of female priests, some of whom may be mothers, married, gay or disabled, all are ageing. In the course of my research restrictions on women's ministry changed from the Act of Synod to the Five Guiding Principles. In the month before submitting the completed thesis the campaign group WATCH finally changed its policy and began to campaign against the Five Guiding Principles. The limited scale and scope within a changing theological landscape does not undermine the validity of the conclusions, as Cross, Radford and O'Donnell explain (2021) 'the role of practical theology is always to be time-bound, and to consider the specificities of the current time'. With them I hope my work may 'interrupt existing cultural, political, and theological meanings that are already in circulation, particularly those that further entrench inequalities' (ibid).

My work was not fully consistent with the feminist principle of interactivity and collaboration. Although my questions were formed through conversation with sister priests and my participants were given the opportunity to change or redact their responses before coding I have not offered right of reply before submitting my thesis. James (2015) in his

consideration of ontology asks 'does it matter if your participants agree with your research?', he believes it is romantic to say that they should. 'Matter' is a challenging word for me, my dual identity as a priest and an academic brings a contradictory answer. On an academic level it does not matter to me that my interviewees might disagree with me, but on a collegial level it does. One principle of feminist research is the use of non oppressive methods which are mindful to the risk that research might cause pain. Whilst writing I have been as conscious of the risk that my conclusions might cause distress, perhaps a sense of betrayal, as I was when asking the interview questions. Two issues strongly mitigated against more interactivity and collaboration, these were confidentiality and culture. In a highly networked organisation such as the Church any focus group style activity would undermine the confidentiality of participants very quickly. Secondly the very culture I was trying to explore, one in which women self silence and govern their behaviour in line with perceived norms of good priesthood might encourage women to revise their initial responses to fit in with what they felt they should have said.

As well as preventing harm feminist research can proactively create safe space for women which allow silences to be broken. In Rothwell's (2013) *Breaking Silence, Researching with Women to Find a Voice*, she writes that a women only conversation is necessary 'to explore women's perceptions of how their experiences have been received by Church and God'. Women only spaces 'helps faith to flourish in women and women to flourish in faith, thus creating possibilities for empowerment and transformation' (2013:132). My thesis is a conversation amongst women, it was a frustration that anonymity meant that the participants could not speak with each other but I have tried to bring their responses into a dialogue with each other as well as me. Slee (2004, 49), citing Opie (1992), draws attention to the therapeutic value of research and the possibility that participants may be empowered by the opportunity to reflect and reevaluate their lives. The therapeutic value of participating in my research was referred to in replies but I have not returned to the women to see if there was any impact beyond the interviews. This is because although my sample is small I was interested in a broader conclusion that would have relevance beyond the lives of individual women. If participation was of therapeutic value I am pleased but as I explain later in this chapter my purpose was not that of a therapist, nor a spiritual director.

It is for the reader to decide whether the feminist perspective that lies beneath this research is difficult, dangerous or beautiful, perhaps it has the possibility to be all three. For me the most liberating aspect of this chapter has been facing the demons of what happens when a feminist priest identifies as such. I am tired of responding to personal abuse, weary of being 'the devil in a skirt' as two of my fellow curates branded me in all seriousness in the nineties. Understanding honesty about epistemology and ontology as revealing something beautiful has been incredibly helpful. Within secular academia hesitancy by women of faith to articulate a feminist methodology, despite clearly working within one, may arise from a nervousness of being seen to be feminist. It may also, as in my case, stem from the fatigue that arises after decades of defending oneself to a faith community and a desire to move on.

Characteristics of clergy interviews

Reflexive yet defensive

As well as considering my own position I also took time to examine the experience of other people who had researched clergy, both insider and outsider researchers. In my choice of method, I wanted to find something that would avoid as many as possible of the pitfalls identified by those who had gone before me. As a feminist I wanted to know whether there were issues specific to interviews with female clergy.

Writers identified something I recognised from my own experience, clergy are willing interviewees in research. As a colleague commented when hearing about my plans ‘clergy love a survey’, they engage well with both quantitative and qualitative research requests. Clergy are also highly reflexive having begun structured reflection on practice during theological training, with the intention that they continue once ordained. This makes qualitative research amongst clergy relatively straightforward. Many clergy are highly academically qualified and able researchers themselves. According to Crockford’s Clerical Directory, of the original 29 women who volunteered to be interviewed, 26 hold degrees, 14 of these at postgraduate level. As with Aldridge’s clergy some of my interviewees saw a link between my research aims and their ministerial aims (Aldridge, 1995, p.118). In each interview I felt as if I was opening a window on a process already underway rather than starting a woman on a new journey.

Regrettably, with enthusiasm and reflexivity comes defensiveness, years of public ministry makes clergy particularly adept at defending themselves from internal and external questioning. Information is both pre-processed and pre-packaged before being shared. Whilst Borland (1991) claims that trying to access unprocessed narrative in any interview is impossible, clergy, I believe, are especially resistant to offering narrative that has not first been mulled over, analysed and packaged for public consumption. Whether to encourage others or to protect themselves throughout their ministry all clergy become familiar with the telling and retelling of their call narratives, Bloor (2012, p.104) notes that these take on the tone of polished stories. To get beyond this defence we must seek to understand where it arises and how to mitigate against it. The researcher who wishes to encourage honesty, especially an ordained researcher, must do all she can to reassure interviewees of the anonymity and lack of judgement in the process. I will expand on my technique for rapport building and reassurance later in this chapter.

Understanding the Same Language

The Church has a unique formal, and informal, language. Navigating the formal language of ‘installation’, ‘faculty permission’ and a host of other terms is relatively straightforward with the aid of a glossary (see Appendix A). The informal language, layers of meaning beneath seemingly innocuous words, presents a greater challenge to the outsider. Many of the most emotive alternative meanings to everyday words relate to my area of research, for example ‘traditionalist’ commonly indicates opposition to women’s ordination, ‘integrity’ is used to explain rejection of the ministry of ordained women. Not only could I understand what was said but by displaying ‘communicative competence’ I, according to Jacobs-Huey, sanctioned my identity as a researcher and peer (2002, p.794). In short, I *speak clergy* and this saved time, established rapport, made it easier to avoid offense, and helped women feel more comfortable.

I was less likely to frame my questions using language and concepts which they might believe to be 'unseemly' (Fichter, 1961, p.172).

Distinctive features when interviewing female clergy

The literature suggested that confidence, self-worth and fear of judgement would be particularly prevalent in interviews with female clergy. Whilst interviewing female clergy in the early years after the opening up of the diaconate and priesthood, Treasure (1991, p.3) and Aldridge (1995, p.121) found interviewees effusive in their thanks and surprised that their opinions were of interest. Aldridge found he had to reassure all his clergywomen, but never his clergymen, that their opinions were valuable. Female deacons interviewed face-to-face by Treasure, were alarmed when they saw their transcript of responses given, 'quietly, thoughtfully and in private' (1991, p.3). In retrospect Treasure's contributors believed that expressing their inner feelings was arrogant and disquieting.

Women in my study did not express surprise at my interest. They could see the value in what we were creating together but they were repeatedly concerned about the clarity of their replies. Note, for example, references to 'rambling' in the following two transcript comments: 'I suppose that is what formation is all about. Being forged in the crucible of God's church *and* the Church of England. Sorry. I'm rambling' (Hayley). 'Here are the next set of answers. Rather rambling once again' (Selena). Choosing an extended interview format allowed me to repeatedly affirm the writing style of my interviewees. I attempted to affirm interviewees, responding to Mary after she apologised about providing a lengthy response about sources of encouragement, 'Thank you again, excess encouragement is always welcome so please don't worry about that. Likewise in a sense there is no "off piste" all thoughts are welcome'. Mary's response reads: 'Here is my latest "reflection"- I fear you may regret saying it's OK to go off piste- I think I'm rambling again!'. The affirmation was initially prompted by care for the interviewees, over time, I realised it also resulted in better data. By allowing Mary to follow lines of thought of her own choosing we came to areas that the straightjacket of a standard survey format would not uncover. It allowed Mary to bring issues of concern to her rather than simply responding to the subjects I raised.

Self-silencing or an inability to put feelings into words with clarity was a feature of data gathered from ordained women. Writing after a decade of women's priestly ministry, Williams, a fellow insider researcher (2008, p.i) found women were more confident about participating in research than Treasure and Aldridge had done. However, despite a willingness to take part they were equally uncomfortable with vocalising what she describes as dis-ease with the institution. Four years later Bloor (2012, p.61) had the same experience when trying to get women to speak more openly. Thorne (2000) and Hoge and Wenger (2005) discovered a lack of clarity in their one-off face-to-face interviews or surveys with female clergy. Thorne describes her interview transcripts as cacophonous and confused. She sensed a 'self-harming, blind (sic) allegiance to the church', with the interviews leaving the reader unclear about the motivations of the individuals themselves (2000, p.93). In their US based study of female clergy who had left their jobs Hoge and Wenger (2005, pp. 37,45) discovered many women were unable to express why they had resigned. Their information was 'brief and vague' and the

written questionnaires suggested 'information withheld'. Williams (2008, p.137) found that both interviewee and researcher struggled to put their true feelings into questions and answers. I identified that I would need a method that gave me more time than previous researchers in which to find the right questions.

Previous writers suggested three possible reasons a woman might have for a lack of clarity and a reticence to express inner thoughts; fear of judgement, concern about the impact on her future and fear of disciplinary measures. Reflecting on her experience of interviewing clergy for a doctoral thesis Bloor quotes Grace Jantzen (Bloor, 2012, p.61) who asserted clergy are defensive because of the ever-present fear of being judged to be unorthodox. As I will explore in more detail throughout this thesis, the way in which female clergy express opinions about those opposed to their ordination is a focus of contested orthodoxy. Clergy also fear judgement if they express what the secular world would describe as career aspirations. Clergy, Fichter believes, develop strategies both individually and institutionally to foreground serving God in any discussion of personal ambition:

The professional religious functionary does not have the incentives, and is not supposed to have the motives, of the typical careerist in other occupational structures', it is not seemly to be motivated by 'psychic income' 'status pay' or the award of social prestige.

(1961, p.172)

Fichter is writing about male clergy, in later chapters I will show how women are held to the same standard but judged more harshly when they fall short.

For stipendiary clergy, ordination has the distinctive features of a career: training, promotion, role changes, salary, etc. whether articulated as such or not. As a career, it is dependent on the goodwill of those who make appointments in the same way other professions are. Peyton, researching clergy resilience, acknowledged that his role as an archdeacon (2009, pp.219-20) may have affected his interviews (2009, pp.219-20). He attempted to reassure interviewees that he would not 'damage their careers by indiscretions to senior colleagues' (2009, p.197). I also note Bloor's suggestion that the fear of damaging consequences arising from the attention of senior staff may be a feature of extended time in the institution. Bloor's research suggested that those new to ministry hope for attention from senior staff seeing it as an opportunity to enhance their career (2012, pp.110, 112).

The gender of my interviewees may have heightened their wariness of bishops and archdeacons; Greene and Robbins (2015, p.410) believed the female priests they interviewed were encouraged by their academic independence and distance from senior clergy. My interviewees, easily identifiable and with many years of service, may feel especially at risk from the attention of senior staff. Clergy disciplinary measures reach far beyond the workplace and are applicable to paid and unpaid staff, for chaplains employed by secular institutions the Clergy Disciplinary Measure (2015) sits alongside, rather than replacing, the disciplinary framework of their employer. There is no distinction between professional and private life.

10.1 The clergy are called to an exemplary standard of moral behaviour. This goes beyond what is legally acceptable: a distinction can be made between what is legal and

what is morally acceptable. There is no separation between the public and home life of the clergy: at all times and in all places, they should manifest the highest standards of personal conduct.

(Guidelines for Professional Conduct of the Clergy, 2015, p.13).

Only one woman openly identified as lesbian but there may well have been more. Fletcher's (1990) finding that gay clergy were 'necessarily clandestine' remains the case for clergy in physical same-sex relationships today. Identification of a physically consummated same sex-relationship could cost a priest her job and, for those in tied housing, her home. It was difficult to create a safe space for lesbians who may have been in my cohort; within the climate of the Church at the time of the research this was unsurprising.

The experience of being easily identifiable was something women already understood before their interview. They came with both professional and personal distinctiveness, in some cases individuals stand out even within this small group. During pre-interview conversations one woman explained she replied to anonymous diocesan surveys by writing 'I am the only one'. Given the risks, perceived or real, I knew that assuring anonymity would be essential if women were to drop some of their professional defences. My interviewees are especially challenging to anonymise because of their demographic distinctiveness. The average age of a female clergy priest in the Church at the time was 54 (stipendiary incumbents) 60 (Non-Stipendiary Ministers). The average age of interviewees was 48 (data supplied by Church of England Research and Statistics staff). This combination of relative youth with prolonged experience, an average of 21 years for the 12 still working as priests makes them even less typical. Furthermore, women remain rare in senior posts and specific types of ministry. Beyond professional distinctiveness, personal and family circumstances referenced in interviews gave potentially identifying context. Former clergy from this group are especially vulnerable as they are a small subset of an already distinctive group.

Anyone wishing to open the window on the ongoing reflections of such an identifiable and defensive group must first establish trust, something that is simpler in a small scale, qualitative project where participant and researcher can develop a personal relationship. The researcher must help interviewees to find a language in which to share some of the stories which are not part of their public pre-processed and pre-packaged narrative. Feminist research principles focus on creating spaces in which women's stories can be articulated without the need for pre packaging. Hopefully within a feminist research context participant and researcher are able to interpret experiences with less reference to masculine norms of what is good and proper opinion and practice. In the next sections I will explain how I selected my interviewees and built a methodology to deepen relationships and respond to the challenges I have explored above and remove some of the packaging from clergy stories.

Data Gathering

Selection

Using Crockfords' Clerical Directory and the Church Times Gazette I created a list of 552 women ordained between 1995 and 1999 which I then refined to include only the youngest

ordinands in the sample, those who began training aged 29 or under. Even this cohort ,young ordinands who were largely ‘first career’ clergy’, and whose experience was the closest to the normal route taken by generations of young men, was too large. Time and resources available to me meant I would need to refine them into a small scale yet still varied sample from a list that included: women who had left the Church and post holders of all types except for Archbishop and Cathedral Dean.

Using details from Crockfords and internet searches I was able to send an introductory letter (Appendix C) asking for an email address to 96% of the women in my eligible sample. A link to a simple, secure, online survey (Appendix D) was sent to the 37 women who provided an email address. Of the 29 women who were sent the link, 78% completed the survey. My survey included basic practical questions and a space for women to self-define; question three was simply ‘My description of me’. This open-ended question was inspired by Aldridge’s (1995, p.122) observation that clergy do not like to be pigeonholed. This was also an expression of my feminist decision to place women’s voices ahead of any set of standard questions. Had I chosen to create my own ‘tickboxes’ these would have only reflected my sense of what was important about a woman’s identity rather than what she thought was important to share or conceal. For example, it would not have occurred to me to ask about whether children were born to an interviewee or adopted by her, or the sexuality or gender identity of children. These details were all offered by prospective interviewees illustrating the importance of allowing self-definition. Starting in this way allowed me to gather unique insights into the women from the outset, guided by their priorities rather than my own.

Williams described her interviewees as having broadly similar journeys but I was conscious that even amongst my relatively small group of female peers from theological college there was a wide range of experience since ordination. ‘Women priests’ are often referred to en masse whereas ‘men priests’ is a phrase seldom heard, I wanted to reveal the full spectrum of roles and beliefs within the category woman priest as far as I could within a small scale project. Therefore, I designed my survey to gather preliminary information which would enable me to select interviewees who provided maximum variety. I used Maximum Variation Purposeful Sampling (Patton, 1990, p.172), a technique especially suited to small groups as it exposes diversity in small samples that might initially be seen as heterogenous (see Appendix D). I wanted to resist the expectations of concluding all ‘women priests are...’. When reviewing literature concerning women’s ordination, I noted that perceived strengths and weakness of ordained women, e.g. more empathetic than men, more disruptive to unity than men, are frequently defined in contrast to the supposedly normative male priest. Additionally, I wished to reduce the risk that I understood my interviewees primarily as variations of my own experience and to give each woman space to offer perspectives that were not feminist. In this way, as a feminist and fellow priest, I believed I would better understand the uniqueness of each woman.

To reduce the number of interviewees but maintain variety, I sorted the responses by age, selecting the youngest 16 women. As these 16 were mostly parish priests, I increased the variation in roles whilst retaining the focus on youth by reintroducing the youngest women holding clergy roles less commonly found in my sample. Despite much similarity within the cohort, for example all the contributors chose to identify as white, I established a diverse final

group from information provided about marital status (married, single, divorced were all mentioned), sexuality, nationality, disability and details of dependents. Where several women were grouped around a single age when starting college, for example 26 years old, I used diversity to further refine who to select. Thirteen of the sixteen women committed to being interviewed. The vast majority of outcomes after ordination are represented, from senior staff to assistants, part time, full time, paid, unpaid and retired/resigned.

Method: Asynchronous Electronic Interviewing

Based on my personal experience I sensed it might be a challenge to get beneath the clerical façade, this had been confirmed by my preparatory reading. In designing and conducting interviews I drew on what I learnt about drawing clergy into reflective conversations whilst working as a mentor and theological educator with clergy and ordinands. This is a further example, in addition to the preliminary informal questions of how I allowed experience of my research context to inform my choice of methodology (see Radford above)

Clergy occupy a public role, privacy, where it can be found, is precious. As shown above previous researchers had struggled with clerical interviewees. Aldridge, an outsider, had faced expert clerical self-regulation, finding that his interviewees knew how to manage face-to-face interviews, thereby potentially undermining a deeply reflexive engagement (Aldridge 1995, p.121). Williams, an insider, found face-to-face interviews were undermined by collegiality; even with previously unknown priests conversations slipped off course. Interviews ‘took on aspects of a social occasion... fuelled with tea or coffee, often cake... and on one occasion liberal quantities of whiskey provided by my generous host interviewee’ (2008, p.32). Whether by being guarded or overly familiar, clergy know how to deflect questions. In the light of this guardedness, I wanted to try something new for clergy research that would tackle defensiveness and self-silencing in a space where women felt safe and in control of their data. My interviewees were highly reflexive and literate, two factors that drew me to the idea of written interviews over an extended period of time.

Looking at options used by researchers in other fields I settled upon Asynchronous Electronic Interviewing (AEI) as best suited to my qualitative and interpretative approach. AEI is essentially an exchange of emails, structured around several questions asked singly or at the most in pairs. It generates its own transcript and follows a similar pattern of stages with each interview. In comparison with traditional face-to-face interviews, whether in person or via video call, rapport building has the potential to be especially challenging in AEI as it lacks the ‘bandwidth’ obtained through beneficial visual cues and hospitality interactions, such as offering a cup of tea (Mann and Stewart, 2000, pp.14, 127; Bampton and Cowton, 2002). Knowing that if I was to break through clerical defensiveness I would need to invest in rapport building I had a conversation with each interviewee in advance of the AEI process, this step was suggested by Morgan and Symon (2004, p.26) and Willis (2011, p.151). Focusing on rapport enabled me to build the trust women had in me, they then made good use of the extended format to reflect deeply and tackle difficult subjects. This confirmed my decision to conduct a small scale study rather than skimp on relationship building.

The calls and my notes afterwards followed a set pattern (Appendices D and E) covering process, my motivation, anonymity, confidentiality and reflexive issues for me. We also

confirmed the date of the interview period was something convenient for us both. The conversations took place over a 2-week period, lasting between 8 and 20 minutes. As the gap between conversation and interview was between 1 and 9 months, grouping all the initial calls together allowed a swift response to a woman's agreement to be interviewed even if the actual interview was much later. The depth of relationship when we came to interview did not seem to be adversely affected by the length of wait after conversation. When we commenced the formal interview period social cues may have been absent in AEI (Joinson, 2001, p.178) but the fact that none of my interviewees withdrew leads me to conclude I successfully explained what they should expect and established rapport.

Removing myself from the physical presence of my interviewee may seem counter intuitive for a researcher hoping to unlock deeply held, but seldom expressed, opinions but AEI is proven to be suited to groups who do not normally voice the full strength of their feelings. As a feminist I wanted to prioritise the insights and experiences of my participants, bringing them to the attention of others. Personally, I was convinced many of their words would be meaningful beyond their individual context. According to Willis, AEI provides a way of gathering 'silenced and invisible' voices (Willis, 2011, p.153). I hoped to undo at least some self-silencing and expose more emotion. With Bloor (2012, p.61), I wondered what other words and feelings might lie behind the controlled answers I heard in day-to-day discourse in mixed groups of clergy.

Prolonged interaction added depth and context to initial responses. Interviewees revisited past ministry, discussed the present and reflected on their hopes and fears for the future. Unlike surveys and face-to-face interviews, AEI is not a single event, the prolonged process gave my highly reflective interviewees time to unpack their experiences. The extended format also gave me more time to find the right words, provoking women to deeper thought. Willis (2001, p.52) found that by using online research tools contributions were lengthier and more in depth than by other methods. The time delay enhanced the autonomy of subjects in controlling what they shared, as there was ample room for reflection.

Researchers in the past considered the life of a typical male priest when scheduling their interviews, face-to-face interviews require a time when children are elsewhere and household tasks are complete. Women are disproportionately responsible for childcare and housework, a face-to-face interview places an additional burden on a priest's time. The transcripts revealed that women were fitting their answers around childcare, household tasks and dog walking. A visit from me would have disrupted all these things. Peyton (2009, pp.156, 452), by claiming 'to get inside clergy one must get inside the vicarage', implies I compromised my effectiveness by not visiting women at home. I dispute this, not least because only three women had vicarages (in total only five were in tied housing of any form) but also because my method meant women could gather material along the way. This is one example of a researcher judging from a normative male perspective: female clergy are less likely to serve in incumbent roles and more often are in unpaid or chaplaincy roles that do not come with tied housing.

The continual enhancement of answers, through refinement and additional materials, is a strength of AEI. Peyton's interviewees may have occasionally added depth to their answers by gathering material from elsewhere prior to interview (2009, p.227) but when he left the

research period closed. In my interviews, journal entries, letters, and training materials were all referred to and in one case scanned and emailed to me. Links were provided to relevant articles and books were recommended. Women could illustrate past feelings or give depth to an answer on a subject upon which they had already reflected by including weblinks to articles and poems that related to their answers. Zulifikar concludes that written responses to questions in many formats allow interviewees to delve more deeply into feeling and use their 'inner voice' (2014, pp.379-381). According to Bampton and Cowton (2002) a specific strength of AEI is that it allows this process of gathering additional material to be ongoing throughout the exchange. The moment of instant response may be lost but we have been enabled to look back through a series of moments in a woman's life, either by the woman sharing these resources with me or by framing her answer in the light of revisiting earlier thoughts. As Selena put it, we hear their younger selves in each transcript.

The three-week period gave me more insight into my interviewees' lives, establishing a deeper bond. I allowed interviewees to choose a time to answer that suited them personally and to integrate that with work and home. Holidays, major religious festivals (a quiet time for the academic chaplains and a busy time for parish clergy) and life events, were all features of the scheduling considerations. These transcript comments give glimpses into the lives of my interviewees, 'Here's the next set of responses. A bit rambly, for which apologies. I'm off to watch the end of Harry Potter with the boys...'. 'Sorry this has taken some time to respond to - I've had several situations blow up at once this week!... If we need to go on a little longer in the conversation because of my pause this week I'm happy to do that'. Whilst conducting the interviews, a series of exchanges rather than 'an interview' as a single event I came to agree with Mann and Stewart (2000), Bampton and Cowton (2002) and Morgan and Symon (2004) that AEI requires skills different to those which sustain a single, face-to-face interview. I exploited my interviewees' reflexive, analytical abilities, gathering far more than a two-hour snapshot of their thinking on a single day. AEI gifts time to think to researcher and interviewees by intentionally facilitating deeper reflexivity than a one-off face-to-face interview (Salmons, 2012, p.xvii).

After initial opening questions, following the style of Bampton and Cowton (2002), questions were sent in small groups. In contrast to an open survey where second tier questions are standardised, in AEI responses to first answers can be unique to individual interviewees. Unlike a survey the order can be changed and unlike a face-to-face interview two questions can be asked at once without overloading the interviewee. On the one occasion I did change the order of the questions it allowed me to follow a passion that I could see building in Mary's early responses. The resulting material was deeply reflective. Emails, like conversations, can follow passions through a speedy stream of consciousness exchange as described by Morgan and Symon (2004, p.30) or they can be deeply reflexive as above, detailed in Salmons (2012) and McInroy (2016). I experienced both. Morgan and Symon (2004, p.32) have proposed AEI, with its combination of chatty emails and extensive reflections, as a new form of oral-text exchange; a hybrid of written and oral communication, neither inferior nor superior to face-to-face interviewing, merely different. Bampton and Cowton (2002) believe that AEI, despite the absence of the rich data that can come from a spontaneous response, is simply different

rather than inferior. It can lack immediate emotional reaction but allows the interviewee more control and can encourage deeper self-analysis.

AEI does allow for a 'packaging' of answers in comparison to face-to-face interviews where the response is more instant but I was not intending to catch my interviewees unawares. The lack of typographical errors, the absence of emoticons and text speak, replies frequently sent as Word attachments, all suggest careful reflection between question and answer. In our pre-interview conversations, a number of women mentioned telling the story of their vocational journey as part of their ministry whether in sermons or as part of mentoring and training of people considering ordination. My interviews demonstrated that interviewees prided themselves on responding with what they believe to be appropriate restraint when in conversation about women's ministry. With some groups of people AEI might lead to a packaging of answers that would be more candid if given as an immediate response. However I was interviewing women who I believe are exceptionally adept at instantly packaging their answers. In working in the way I did I hoped to create a space where women would grow into a relationship with me where they felt safe to remove the packaging that they might otherwise default to.

I agree with Bampton and Cowton (2002) that a carefully crafted written reply is no less valid, it is merely different. Email is less immediate, it can discourage off the cuff pre-processed answers on subjects familiar to female priests. The face-to-face interview risks gathering these pre-processed answers, recording the things that we say in public rather than our 'most honest and private reflections' (Kerstin). I do not know if my interviewees laughed or cried but nor will a face-to-face interviewer know whether women wept or rejoiced after she left or in the days preparing for the interview. I may not have eye-witness evidence of emotion, but I do have evidence of deep thought. I wanted to get beyond the spontaneous responses female clergy give to issues of discrimination and move to somewhere deeper, AEI allowed me to do so.

The controversy surrounding Bishop Philip North gave me the perfect case study for which AEI was especially suited. I was able to return to women who had completed their three-week period of interview to ask if they would be willing to respond to an additional question. Three agreed and one declined. Had I travelled to conduct face-to-face interviews time and resources would have been unlikely to stretch to a second visit with updated questions. Where interviews were ongoing we could engage with the unfolding national news story but interviewees who had completed their contributions could also be invited to add a reflection on what had happened. It is a method more suited to a situation which requires flexibility and reactivity.

From the outset I focused on making sure the interview process ended well, especially as painful topics might have been raised. Morgan and Symon had made separate phone calls and sent emails specifically to say thank you (2004). Willis contracted with interviewees to have a post-interview phone conversation (2011, p.151). Agreeing with these writers that a good ending is as important as a good beginning I chose to express this with my question structure and post-interview follow up. The last question, in all bar one case, was about the design of each woman's ordination stole. This lifted the final phase of the interview into a different place

reflecting about art, grand themes and often a memory of a happy ordination day. As the interviews progressed, I saw the value in lifting our eyes to the bigger picture as a concluding stage. I concluded every interview with a thankful chatty email, sent the transcript for checking and then sent a second email of thanks.

Rapport: a case study of the general weaknesses and strengths of AEI

As mentioned above, rapport-building was crucial if I was to build and sustain relationships without face-to-face communication. In the following paragraphs I examine rapport-building in AEI in detail.

The depth provided by the tone in which something is said, and the face of the person saying it, are the most obvious and immediate losses for a sighted and hearing researcher in a text-based interview. Despite the loss of aural and visual clues, Joinson (2001, p.190) claims that self-disclosure can be greater using text-based 'Computer Mediated Communication'. The researcher might not be able to give an encouraging smile but neither can they give a frown, or a badly suppressed look of disapproval. Whilst not present in the room the benefits presumed to be part of visible emotional response may well still feature in the texts of AEI. Without visual clues it was definitely harder for me to discern distress or anger on the part of the interviewee (Mann and Stewart, 2000, p.141, Bampton and Cowton, 2002). Attending to the emotional state of interviewees required careful attention on my part to the text but also the pattern of sending. If replies become noticeably more or less frequent or are sent at unexpected hours of the day or night this may indicate distress. The written format does make hiding distress easier but this can be a benefit, as it was for me, should the researcher experience distress herself. In two of the interviews I was shocked and saddened by the women's descriptions of their husbands' lack of support for their ministry. In a face-to-face interview I would have found this hard to conceal, in a defensive sample, sympathy and sadness from the interviewer could have been misconstrued as judgement resulting in a lessening of rapport.

As AEI relies on text to communicate reassurance and warmth, the existing empathetic limitations are potentially compounded by the uncertainty created by online silence. It is difficult for both interviewee and interviewer to know the reason for delay in an email exchange (Mann and Stewart, 2000, p.143; Bampton and Cowton, 2002). For this reason, I included protocols about reminder emails in my agreement with my interviewees. I would not need to guess whether I should send a reminder email or not, I would send one as a matter of course after an agreed time. These emails were polite, friendly, and always enquired after the interviewee's wellbeing. To compensate for the lack of audible or visible clues I remained alert to signs that the conversation had reached its natural end, keeping the topic of ending or continuing live at every stage. This was done by providing a clear outline of the shape of the interview period given at the start, reinforced with prompts about structure along the way. I gave gentle reminders that ending the interview was ok and made additional checks when interviews overran, as typified in this comment from me:

We have reached the end of our time now but there's one last question. I will send it and you can decide whether to answer it or not, it's a little different to the rest. If you

would rather call it a day now I will send you the whole transcript for you to check through at your leisure over the next 8 weeks. If you would like to try the question I'll send it after the next answer.

I did not want women to feel neglected, let down or confused during the process, not least because such feelings were so often part of their experience of the Church. Part of the rapport-building process was making sure our relationship respected the limits of women's energy and did not trespass on their personal time more than they were comfortable with.

My research investigated how the Church overlooked the reality of women's experience, therefore, it was important that I did not miss the valuable points they were making. To ensure attentiveness to emotional content, as well as technical detail I read every response at least three times before replying. It is possible for researchers and interviewees to become adept at communicating emotion with words, skilful phrasing of questions can communicate nuance (Mann and Stewart, 2000, pp.140-142). The warm tone and thankfulness of some of the responses, in many cases from total strangers reassured me. 'Thank you for the opportunity for taking part in this exercise' (Selena) 'All the best with the ongoing research. Thanks for the thought-provoking questions!' (Emily). In paying close attention to the content of each response I consolidated the rapport I had begun to build.

Williams identifies the dominant paradigm for women as the ideal of 'the good Christian woman'. In her thesis female priests are further constrained by the paradigmatic male clergyman, the primary model of ministry for the Church. Women who are priests do not fit either paradigm and, therefore, they did not voice their true feelings (2008, p.i). As a strength claimed by practitioners of all forms of text-based Computer Mediated Communication is the willingness of individuals to expose, rather than hide, thoughts and feelings considered undesirable in their social context (Mann and Stewart, 2000; Joinson, 2001; Bampton and Cowton, 2002; McInroy, 2016). I hoped by using AEI I would be able to push beyond the barriers discovered by Williams (2008). Williams built social rapport in her interviews but she had not completely succeeded in establishing reflective rapport. AEI removed some of the pleasurable conventions of hospitality but retained a sense of warmth by creating a relationship akin to that of 'pen pals'. I found this model of research relationship was harder to knock off course than a conversation over tea and cake.

Engagement with the researcher as an individual and the process of research also builds rapport. AEI offers the opportunity for interviewees to feel more in control of the process and have the same access to their data as the researcher (Mann and Stewart, 2000, p.41). Morgan and Symon also conclude that time and self-disclosure positively influence relationship formation (2004), potentially drawing out usually unarticulated opinions. As we spent weeks exchanging emails, the women got to know me better and settled into a routine of trading questions and answers. The extended period within AEI allowed for subjects to be revisited and explored in more depth, it gave interviewees time to reframe the questions for themselves.

Willis' claim that AEI is a powerful mode for amplifying voices of those made marginal by others (2001, p.153) led to me choosing it for this research. The depth of women's responses and their willingness to share feelings with which they felt uncomfortable or were unable to

share in Church contexts bore out his claim. I chose AEI as I believed it was a method that would tackle the defensiveness of clergy and exploit the reflective abilities of a highly literate group. I was motivated by my feminist principles that women have as much control as possible over their role in the research and not be burdened by my demands. Within the gentle framework of my questions I hoped women would be able to follow trains of thought of their own choosing. In a Church that demands female clergy sacrifice privacy, personal time, and even honesty about the challenges of their situation I wanted to create a space which did not demand more of them than was necessary nor require them to restrain the strength of their feelings.

Other strengths of AEI

My feminist principles make me a committed environmentalist, AEI has a significantly lower carbon footprint than face-to-face interviews. The initial cohort lived on 4 continents and in every part of England. By choosing AEI none of these women were off limits to me. Interviews were conducted over geographic distances and three time zones. The final year of my writing has seen Computer Mediated Communication become the norm, so much so that I have had to insert the phrase 'text-based' in the first draft of this to clarify that the writers I refer to are not discussing video interviews. As the pandemic continues, AEI offers great possibilities for safe interviewing as well as being more accessible to those with physical and economic restrictions whether those be related to travel or sufficient internet bandwidth for video calls. Face-to-face interviews require resources often unavailable to women: freedom to travel without constraint, time available between other roles. Radford's conclusions (2017) validate this choice of method as positive decision to respond the lived experience of my participants rather than be driven by what is seen as correct academic interviewing. AEI is inclusive of both interviewee and interviewer. I was mindful of my own limits and avoided forcing myself into what a 'proper' researcher should do. Just as normative clergy are able bodied white men, so is the normative academic. As an epileptic woman in a part-time job my own physical and economic limitations would have made traveling to face-to-face interviews difficult. I was not prepared to succumb to what I was told was the normal way of doing things. In developing this model, led by the lived experiences of my participants as well as my own I hope I have provided a model for other self-funded disabled academics.

Final reflection on why I chose AEI

AEI seemed to break down some of the caution noted by other interviewers, despite being conducted at a distance. This unique research space is created by, 'The intensity of a single person-to-person interaction, combined with the potential liberation from being judged' (Boshier in Mann and Stewart, 2000, p.128). Having established a one-to-one relationship in a space free from judgement, the format allowed the interviewee extensive scope for reflection and re-evaluation. My experience of successful relationship building with clergy, a notoriously defensive group, offers a model for others. As previous AEI with clergy have proved impossible to identify, I hope that in the future it may become a useful tool for researchers working amongst clergy. In particular, for my literate, reflexive, unique women, AEI gave us a space in which we could grow a relationship that resulted in detailed responses over which each woman had significant control.

Data Analysis

Having collated the rich resource of data into one place I needed to consider how I would analyse and interpret it. An interpretivist methodology asks participants about their experience of a specific context. In my case interviewees were asked about the experience of being a priest in the Church of England. They were not specifically asked 'what is it like to be a female priest' but the absence of male priests from the sample resulted in data purely from women's perspectives. In my coding I sought to draw out examples illustrating how each participant's gender had influenced her experience of priesthood. Cameron and Duce (2013, p.30ff) associate interpretivist with a social constructivist epistemology. Interviews and coding are approached without a normative expectation, in my case whilst I was aware of my own experience and performance of priesthood I did not expect others to align with it. I do not judge participants, or at least I have tried hard not to, against my personal 'normative basis for discerning the right action' (2013, p.32).

Elsewhere in this chapter I explain the resource reasons behind the size of my sample. Whilst a sample of thirteen women could be accused of lacking wider relevance. Small studies, according Schoot and Miočević (2020), play a valuable role across the social, behavioural, and medical sciences, as well as psychology, epidemiology, marketing, and economics. Where resources are limited, or participants hard to access or retain, small studies play a valuable role in exploring marginalised experiences and provoking further work. Roberts (2016) argues that her small scale study of looked after children highlighted previously overlooked considerations, bringing increased attention to a previously under researched area. In relation to quantitative research Schoot and Miočević (2020) warn that insistence on a large sample size 'may leave the "true" research questions unanswered', I believe the same is true for qualitative research. Deferring research, until those with resources to commission a study decide to do so, will be unlikely to benefit those whose experience may prompt uncomfortable questions for funders. Rouse (2011) argues that potential weaknesses in a small study should not be seen as definitively undermining its conclusions but serve as a robust challenge for further research to compare and contrast the research sample with a wider population.

The knowledge revealed during coding of this small scale sample does not attempt to make a definitive statement about the experience of all female priests. When I was coding my data I was not looking for the 'answer' that related to all females priests but attempting to reveal the uniqueness and commonality grounded in each transcript. Cameron and Duce encourage the researcher to both zoom in and zoom out, to pay attention to the detail whilst not losing sight of the big picture, small samples are ideal for this dual focus. Size restrictions allowed me to zoom in to the detail of each woman's life both at the time of interview and in analysis. When zooming out I could see where women's experience overlapped within the small group and where they differed; patient, painstaking coding was vital to this. The data I have gathered, in common with small studies, comes from a previously overlooked perspective. I have gathered women priests' detailed private reflections on the institutional restrictions on their ministry. The data may be limited but that does not mean it is flawed.

I followed the advice of Cameron and Duce and took advice from researchers with more experience in interviewing clergy through conversations at conferences and in research

committee meetings. These researchers experienced in analysing data from clergy suggested using Nvivo but eventually I settled on manual coding. In my case, personal circumstances and preferences elbowed out the wisdom of my peers. Forced to make a pragmatic decision based on personal circumstances I accidentally, and fruitfully, resorted to more creative methods. The freedom to do so was one of the beneficial features of a small sample. Many of the tables used to focus my thoughts were created from wide ranging chapter plans painted in watercolours on A1 paper; soon my transcripts were coded in colour, covered with scribbles, doodles and highlights.

A transcript was read silently 3 times, without notetaking, in a single sitting. Reading the transcripts took on the pattern of the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*, a way of approaching Scripture that entails multiple readings. Reading again, and again, before coming to any firm decision about meaning the reader moves from a straightforward linear view of events and looks for meaning behind them. Gouvêa's description of *Lectio Divina* fitted my approach to the transcripts perfectly:

We are not dealing with stages in the sense of a hop, skip and a jump. A better example would be a piece of music which grows in beauty as the different themes inter-twine or perhaps the image of a dance.

(Gouvêa, translated Lester 1996, edited Bergstrom-Allan 2016, p.11)

In this way I learned something of the dance at the heart of my interviewees' lives rather than their CVs or histories, as a result I engaged more fully with my interviewees.

Highlighting began on the 4th and 5th readings, identifying words and phrases from different women that could be gathered around 1 of 17 interim themes. This phase was inspired by, although not identical to, Basit's (2003) model for manual coding, in which statements are coded into themes. The themes arose from the issues and experiences arising in the transcripts, for example, as a number of women referred to an early sense of calling I created the interim theme 'young'. 'Moment' became an interim theme as I noted women valuing specific occasions when they had felt a strong sense of divine call or challenge. 'Direct affirmation' was a collection of quotes about occasions on which women had been explicitly affirmed, whether this was a good or bad experience was reflected in the ranking process described below.

Once divided into interim themes the gathered phrases were compiled in a spreadsheet, each separate quotation labelled with the appropriate woman's code number and one, or occasionally two, of the thematic interim codes. All the themes arose from the transcripts rather than being formed in advance. After thematically coding my data I ranked each statement according to how much it reflected an experience of flourishing or diminishment. I now took inspiration from Saldana's (2016, pp.86ff) description of magnitude coding and ranked each statement according to how much it reflected an experience of flourishing or diminishment. My transcripts are all heavily nuanced and this needed to be reflected in the coding, I made this possible by using five magnitude codes rather than Saldana's three.

After ranking the interim coded data I gathered all the data around decisive themes, preserving the reference to its interim code. Basit had condensed her medium-sized group into six

decisive themes whereas I settled for four, *Calling*, *The Effects of the Act of Synod*, *Mutual Recognition* and *The Language of Anger*. I initially found it hard to settle to what felt like a rather clinical and limiting way of understanding a complex and nuanced set of transcripts. Over time I understood I was not reducing the transcripts but shaping them so the insight they provided could be best used. The coding helped me see patterns and similarities but also highlighted where opinions or experiences were unique or unusual.

Each of the four decisive themes, consisted of a number of interim coding categories. Deciding where data would finally 'belong' was by no means straightforward (see Appendix F). In the case of every decisive theme, interim themes went back and forth as to where they belonged as part the 'intense conversation' (Ely, et al., quoted in Basit, 2003, p.144) between me and my data. Unlike Basit I did not find the process 'arduous' (2003, p.143) as I only had a small number of interviewees. I did, however, find it a 'slippery' process; in Basit's words coding is 'dynamic, intuitive and creative' (2003, p.143) and as I worked quotes slipped back and forth between themes.

In some cases the link between the quote and coding is made explicit by the interviewee, in other cases the coding of a theme into a decisive theme was inspired by where it came in a longer section. Was it in a section about the specifics of a vocational journey? In which case it is about *Calling*. Or is it about a specific incident of personal growth as part of her ministry? In which case *Flourishing Workplace* fits better. Even though there would be merit in the quote finally appearing in both sections I needed to make the data manageable for my analysis and exposition. A very small number of statements were coded twice, as the negative and positive elements in the statement could not be disentangled. Katie's description of being honest with friends about her disagreement with the Church's doctrine of marriage was coded as 2 and 4, reflecting her happiness that she was honest amongst friends and diminishment for her discomfort with Church teaching.

I was initially surprised by the sense of distancing that came when I applied pseudonyms. On the whole this was a good thing as it helped me focus on commonalities and differences across the group but I struggled with a feeling that the lessening of rapport was pastorally inappropriate. The women would not be aware of my change in relationship with their words and yet I felt I remained in a living relationship with them through the transcripts. Five of the women remained visible to me through networks and social media. Over the years I was happy when some women developed in line with the aspirations they expressed in their texts and saddened when they moved deeper into something that was causing them pain. In one case a woman took on a role that she had vociferously claimed to reject, reminding me of the transient nature of opinions and plans. All the stories are unfinished, I regret not being able to return to my interviewees but realise if I did the story or, remembering the *Lectio Divina*, the dance would keep whirling on after the next interview.

Conclusion

Whenever I have considered abandoning this project my first thought has always been it would be a betrayal of the women I interviewed. As a priest I work with the mindset that what has been named as sacred, be that consecrated bread and wine, vestments, religious texts, should not be lightly thrown away. Whilst not sacred scripture I came to see the transcripts as

immensely precious and generous offerings. If anything the small scale of the project made the thirteen individual interpretations of priesthood feel even more precious. A qualitative approach rather than a larger quantitative study allowed for depth and nuance, feminism made me attentive to the context in which both participants and I interpreted our experiences of Church. One of my participants had explained that, for her, items can become sacred beyond ecclesiastically sanctioned understandings of the sacred. This was certainly the case for the relationship I had with my small collection of qualitative interpretations of lived experience, each gathered whilst centralising women's experience of priesthood when addressing the institutional culture of the Church. Lectio Divina, the scriptural reading technique I had felt resonances of whilst coding is traditionally used for sifting through the thoughts committed to paper by men. Slee (2016) I discovered after I had independently reached this conclusion makes the same point, describing women's experience as holy ground. The holiness of the research territory connecting 'the profound sense of vocation and mission which many feminist theological researchers express in relation to their research' (206, 17). From my perspective using a technique similar to the ancient practice of Lectio Divina for the words of contemporary women felt like an expression of care and respect for their wisdom. I read expecting to learn from them rather than argue with them. My feminist approach created a space in which women could honestly interpret their experiences and articulate their opinions even if those opinions differed from my own. The transcripts represent more than their immediate physical, worldly presence and I have realised that the data my interviewees gifted to me has joined my mental collection of sacred things.

Chapter Five: Calling

Introduction

This chapter reflects upon the memories my interviewees have of their initial sense of call and how understanding their role in theological terms first motivated them and continues to sustain them. The space afforded by asynchronous electronic interviews (AEI) allowed for expansive reflection drawing out varied and nuanced theological interpretations illustrated by practical expressions of what it means to be uniquely called. Although it is a small study even in a handful of responses similarity and uniqueness is discernible. Preceding chapters demonstrate women's ordination was at least partly a carefully managed response to the declining numbers of priests as the Church attempted to reap maximum reward from women's labour whilst ensuring minimum disruption to historic patterns of privilege. Subsequent chapters will demonstrate how the institution has controlled women's entry into the priesthood to create maximum benefit from their ministry at minimum cost to the Church and how women have understood and responded to formal and informal restrictions on their ministry. This chapter forms a bridge between my consideration of institutional and personal understandings of women's priesthood.

Clergy frequently interpret their work, often described as 'ministry', as a response to a divine call but it is also a call from the Church. Congregations gathered at the ordinations of my interviewees will have been asked, 'Is it your will that they should be ordained?' (Alternative Service Book, 1980, p.358). Assuming the gathered church agreed God had called the ordinands male and female candidates were asked collectively; 'Do you believe, so far as you know your own heart, that God has called you to the office and work of a priest in his Church?' (ibid., 356). Liturgy amplifies Church teaching that ordination is a marriage of the Church's recognition of an individual's call and the ordinand's own sense of call. Katie summarised the process in her personal reflection: 'the will of the Church is greater than the will of the individual. In other words, at ordination, "my vocation" is not simply wanting to be a priest, but the Church wanting it too'. At neither selection nor ordination does the Church delineate between male and female; men and women are ordained to the same priesthood using the same liturgy whether in an all-male ceremony or one involving women. I will argue later in the thesis that the Act of Synod and Five Guiding Principles (see Chapter Two Institutional Context) undermine the absolute 'yes' from the Church given to women at ordination. This chapter explores how my interviewees understand that unconditional call regardless of the gendered restrictions that constrain the subsequent expression of that calling.

Calling and Identity

In Chapter Four I explained how I coded my interview transcripts into themes. It should come as no surprise that in this study of personal experiences of priesthood, issues of identity and calling are amongst the largest coded categories. The 'who' a woman believes herself to be features twice as often as the practicalities of what she did. Initially I used 'Calling' as an interim code applied to specific, significant experiences that had informed a woman's choice of direction, 79 quotes were gathered around this code. Far more material, 144 passages, was coded as 'identity' which I defined as 'Priesthood as who a person is rather than what she is qualified to do'. When choosing the final title for the overall thematic code containing calling and identity I expanded 'Calling' to encompass all the interim codes on this theme. My

interviewees frequently used this word to describe their identity demonstrating that calling is understood to be integral and continuous rather than the incident-based time-limited definition I had initially applied to the word. Calling is more than simply an inclination to enter a particular profession or incidents that have occurred along the way; it is about the fundamental identity of every aspect of a priest's life. It is who they believe they are, not what they do. In this chapter I examine how women identify with the Anglican understanding of priesthood, their sense of divine affirmation, how they grew into the identity of a priest and the constraints on that identity. I will show how women have been able to flourish and what they wish to say about God.

The Anglican understanding of priesthood developed in the sixteenth century in contrast to contemporary Roman Catholic and some Protestant teaching. Bradshaw (1971) shows that the newly formed Church of England rejected the Roman Catholic view that ordination performed an ontological change, according to Bradshaw Cranmer explained that 'there is no more promise of God that grace be given in the committing of ecclesiastical office, than in the committing of civil office' (Cranmer in Bradshaw, 1971, p.9). Bicknell (2007) argues that the Church also rejected the Anabaptist belief that an individual sense of a calling to ministry was sufficient, (Bicknell, 2007, p.321). He argues this was because Anglicans valued order, the Anabaptist view that 'an internal call to the ministry dispensed a man from the need of external authorisation whatever' could only lead to ecclesiastical anarchy (ibid.). In the Anglican tradition, however strongly a woman feels called to priesthood, outer affirmation of the inner call is integral not just to her identity but the fact of being a priest. Women and men are not transformed into priests solely by ordination, which is why the story of their calling is crucial, but nor have they simply adopted the identity of priesthood for themselves, however strong their gifts. Candidates have discerned and chosen to follow a 'call' to become Anglican priests in response the Church has chosen them for training and ultimately ordination. The culmination of this journey, the liturgical experience of ordination, is a significant feature in my interviewees' understanding of their identity.

Interviewees did not solely identify as priests. Rather another large interim code gathered into the thematic code of calling was 'household'. Household might be understood as family but could extend to pets, parents not resident with the priest, and friends. The word was chosen over 'family' or 'networks', because priests are instructed to 'strive to fashion your own life and that of your household according to the way of Christ?' (ASB, 1980. p.358). Priesthood as who one is, rather than what one does, makes priestly identity inseparable from household relationships. Significantly for many of my interviewees they occupied other identities which could also be described as who one is rather than what one does. In particular, mothers and ordained clergy wives wove these roles together as vocations which were sometimes complementary and at other times a source of conflict.

The fact that the women interviewees focus on priesthood as identity rather than a job means they experience objections to their priesthood on a deeply personal level. As Liz explained, for men, debates about women's ordination and consecration are only arguments; for women already ordained 'this is a challenge to our personal calling and integrity' (Liz). In her autobiographical reflection on leaving the Church of England Dawn describes 'general' opposition as impossible to disentangle from 'personal slur' (2013, p.54). Twenty-three years

on from the first ordinations the Church's Faith and Order Commission acknowledged that despite opening up all orders of ministry to women, pain caused by the ambiguous recognition of women's calling remained:

The language sometimes used in this context is that of 'recognizing' other people's orders or 'recognizing me as a priest'. A straightforward and overt contradiction between how I see myself and how you see me in any human relationship is hard to navigate, and potentially a source of great pain. There is no simple way to close the gap here so the tension vanishes.

(FAOC, 2017, p.20)

FAOC describes ordained ministry as simultaneously 'ecclesial, public and personal' (2017, p.21). The serving priests that I interviewed remain convinced of their personal sense of call, public resistance to women's ordination may be much reduced but the ecclesial affirmation of women's identity as priests remains tenuous at best. The transcripts reveal that all the serving priests, no matter what constraints and restrictions they face, understand their identity to be divinely affirmed and radically different to a job. Opposition to women's ordination is 'deeply, inwardly uncomfortable' (Georgia) rather than simply a negative opinion about a career choice. Whilst a woman might have a contract and a salary for a particular priestly role, being a priest was no more a job than her identity as a wife or mother. Priesthood was integral to who she was and objections to her priesthood were rejections of her personhood.

Calling as Divine Affirmation

There is no straightforward definition of how one experiences being 'called' by God that arises from my transcripts. One woman's confirmatory evidence of calling may be entirely at odds with that of a contemporary. It can be evidenced in a momentary flash, or by a nagging feeling over years. Grouping interim codes together, and rereading the data thematically, helped me begin to step back from individual women's biographical uniqueness and become aware of what they shared. On the surface the story of calling, what, where, and how can be easily retold but the depth of the concept is 'hard to articulate because it is so often a mystical experience beyond words' (Mary). To make plain some of this mystery I chose to integrate reflections on ordination stoles; as I will demonstrate in a later section, 'Becoming an Anglican priest', talking through choices about stoles allowed women to articulate the ground of their calling. Women clearly understood God as calling them to ordination. Having become a priest each woman continued to try and understand her work as an ongoing call rather than focus on the single event of ordination.

Calling as an all-pervasive theological lens can be understood in relation to individual decisions, and the entirety of a person's life. Ava, like many others, experiences calling as both long and short term; priesthood was/is 'an idea that would not go away' woven through with 'ding moment(s)'. Rachael recounts a vision of her future, 'as I walked home from work, I asked myself (for the first time) 'what I would do if I gave up my current work'. There was an instant picture in my mind of me in a cassock and a certainty that I would be ordained priest— one of those 'from outside one's self' kind of moments'. (Rachael) Calling was experienced slowly; 'a gradual realization and sharing with friends and family a path they had either not heard of nor were expecting to encounter' (Selina). It could also be sudden 'sleeping on someone's sofa in London, I had a moment of calling. I asked out loud "what am I going to do with my life" and

heard a response very clearly “you know what you’re going to do and you’ve always known” (Kerstin). Indeed, many interviewees had been making choices informed by an understanding of calling since childhood, ‘It was normal to me to feel that God had a purpose for me and for my life. It began as a calling to be a missionary doctor when I was still at primary school. As I grew older I felt that a. science wasn’t my thing and b. God’s calling for me was to be ordained in the C of E’ (Hayley). Katie, Mary, Selena and Hayley all refer to feeling called under the age of 11, Ava at 15. A strong sense of call in childhood was not always easy; ‘I wasn’t really a normal child’ (Mary), ‘At school a few peers used to joke about my faith’ (Selena). Confirmation of the Holy Spirit was, and is, felt tangibly by women at all stages of their journey.

Priests affirm at their ordination that God has led them to the commitment they are about to undertake, and these women explained this as ‘becoming a priest’ rather than taking on a new job. In Chapter Four I demonstrated clergy discomfort with the language of employment and professional development and interviewees confirmed this; vocation to priesthood is understood to be divinely inspired not a ‘career path’ (Mary). Issues of salary, role descriptions, or working hours are described as secondary to the core question of identity. Only one interviewee compared the selection process to a job application. ‘The call to priesthood is sometimes held to be this mystical, esoteric call, but honestly, my call was a hunch that I would like the job and I could make a decent go of it’ (Kerstin). In common with her peers as she moved on to describe how her ministry had been sustained during challenging times she adopted the language of call, ‘I have faith and hope that God has used me for God’s purposes and nothing is lost in Christ and that the path I am leading is the right one.’ Describing the moment she decided to offer for ordination she wrote:

I was in the midst of working with at-risk young people and in the midst of despair of trying to figure out where there was any hope – I realized that my source of hope was firmly entrenched in my faith, a faith that got me through the deep and profound grief of losing my father at the age of 14, feeling abandoned by my mother who crumpled under the profound grief and loss of losing her husband, among many other dysfunctional aspects of my family life and hardships.

Words such as career and job are rarely used by interviewees but Kerstin illustrates it is possible to talk about a profound sense of divine purpose using secular terminology. Despite referring to ‘finding employment’ and using the word ‘career’ more frequently than anyone else Kerstin always returns to the language of faith as the ground of her motivation.

Jasmine, the only interviewee to have resigned as a priest, underscores the importance of belief in a divine call over all other challenging factors. Without a conviction that her work was a response to a divine call she was unable, or felt no need, to navigate the other challenges facing her in the Church. ‘Most people assume that I am not a priest because of my sexuality. I explain that it is more to do with my atheism’. A call from God should not be resisted: nervous women must step up to the challenge. Lily entered training intending to remain a deacon, not believing women should be priests: it was God who made her change of heart ‘non-negotiable’ (Lily). In situations where women have lacked confidence, their faith in a divine call sustains them. Understanding priesthood as a calling rather than a profession means it is not limited to a job one might be paid to do but affects every area of life. Kerstin wrote of

wrestling with imposter syndrome that 'I sort of thought I was a fake the weekend before my ordination. I was at my ordination retreat and really having second doubts' (Kerstin), nevertheless she was ordained, 'reminded of that evangelical expression "God does not call the worthy, God makes worthy the called"' (Kerstin). Understanding themselves to be deferring to God appears to empower women to move forward despite lack of self-belief.

Rachael describes her first reaction to a sense of call as 'Utterly ridiculous! Shy, reserved, academic, not exactly the classic view of a "people person"' (Rachael) and yet she had 'a certainty that I would be ordained priest' (Rachael). Kerstin explained that she understands the strength to do this as a divine gift, 'I was granted a quiet charism at ordination that meant I was up for the job regardless of my personal feelings or inadequacies'. For Selena ordination has, on occasions, created areas of tension in her home, friendships and professional life; quoting a prayer of Charles de Foucauld she explained that these difficulties are all part of the divine calling: 'Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all'. Challenges are easier to bear with the belief that choices are not personal but divinely compelled, the theological lens of calling allows any candidate to believe a faithful God will make up their shortcomings.

Feeling underqualified and yet persisting because of God's faithfulness is a repeated theme of the call narratives. Selena refers to this encouragement as given to her in a card from her parents, 'I know the plans I have for you' (Jeremiah 29:11). Two-way commitment is essential to calling. Just as the women are faithful to God so God will be faithful to them; this is especially important in challenging times. Lily, for example, was sustained and ultimately moved to flourish by her conviction that God was faithfully leading her. The relationship between priest and God is reciprocal. After leaving a previous challenging role Lily planned to remain in her current context believing she would be sustained simply by the fact of her calling: 'This time God has made it clear that he wanted me in this place and that he was going to support me through'. Over a period of months 'God built up my confidence and taught me a great deal about reliance on him'. Katie encapsulates how a focus on divine affirmation strengthens her priestly calling, something 'that was and is based as much as possible as where I feel God is calling me to be rather than outside recognition'. In these passages women focus on divine rather than ecclesiastical affirmation to sustain them in their role.

Women have interpreted faithfulness to mean that God will not call them to a situation that is not right for them. Ava wrote of marrying a fellow ordinand, 'I was a little bit worried as to how we would make our ministries work together; a wonderful tutor at college told us that "God does not call us to incompatibilities"'. Words of immense wisdom that I have clung to for almost 20 years'. In Ava's case she was able to use this theological formula to interpret the intransigence of her diocese in finding her a paid post, and the offer of an opportunity to work for no pay, as a sign of God honouring her faithfulness. This situation demonstrates the risk that when God is uncritically understood as part of every specific development in a person's ministry the Church avoids critique for the terms and conditions it applies to each role. I will explore in Chapter Six how the Church has benefitted from women primarily focusing on priesthood as a divinely-affirmed identity. Considerations of the terms and conditions of the roles that are encompassed within that identity, questions of 'career' are set aside without explaining why God has no interest in whether women are equitably treated.

Becoming an Anglican priest

The women I interviewed believed they were called by God to become Anglican priests. Ministry had been served predominately in the Church of England but also in the wider Anglican Communion. On the occasions women had an ecumenical ministry they remained licensed as an Anglican clergy person owing allegiance to a bishop. Divine calling, priestly identity and church membership are woven together throughout their replies. Central to nearly all call narratives, who the interviewees believe themselves to be and how they belong to the order of priesthood, is the act of eucharistic presidency. Women have grown into priesthood by presiding at communion (Rachael); 'It is the act of presiding which defines priesthood for me' (Tracy), 'behind the altar I became a priest' (Katie). Other significant, identity affirming activities, included, anointing the dying (Emily), giving a blessing (Emily) acting as advocate (Hayley), being known as Reverend in a context where this was contentious (Selena). Giving outward shape to the inner call through ordination led to wholeness – 'children in particular began to respond to me in positive ways they had not before (which, I suspect, was to do with beginning to develop a greater confidence in who I am, and am meant to be)' (Rachael). For my interviewees the process of becoming and being a priest involved performative acts, physical activities and the responses of others, activities and interactions, confirming the rightness of their inner sense of call.

One very specific performative act of ordination is being vested with a stole. From 1994 the wearing of this ancient vestment around the neck, rather than over the shoulder as deacon, was the clearest physical marker that women were now priests (see Appendix I for illustration). This rite of passage inspired a series of questions that sought to unlock memories about interviewees' initial understanding of what it would mean to be a priest. The 'stole question' was intended to serve as a leaping off point to allow women to compare their memories of what they hoped for from their ministry with their current perspective. It was asked last to create space for an uplifting end to conversations which had on occasions visited some bleaker moments in each woman's life. Mary commented that the 'tangibility' of the question was a 'helpful' way into the question of what was theologically significant to her when she was preparing for ordination. Her ordination stole physically expressed what was otherwise intangible, 'what was theologically most important to me'. Through the stoles women were able to engage with past, present and future ministry. As Katie warns, the reflections are inevitably hindsight but that is true of all the material I gathered and I believe 'the stole questions' generated especially creative answers. According to Mary the theological motivations behind her stole still run 'deep in my bones' suggesting the stole allows her to compare and contrast then and now. A reflection from Selena explains the bridge between the past and present that I was hoping would stimulate rich replies about past and present calling:

As I was at an ordination the other day I was reminded how there is something powerful about being clothed as a Deacon and Priest and wearing mine now, is more than a memory of a joyful day, but a reconnect with the vows of ordination and prompts prayers of gratitude for those who helped nurture me for the day I first wore it. Wearing a stole, both this one and others was to become an unexpected reminder

for me as I kiss its cross and place the stole around my neck, that I am reminded that I go out in his name – not mine. (Selena)

I have not found any research into the process of stole design so Selena's assertion that female ordinands in the 1990s were especially creative has not been tested. Nevertheless, my own observations tally with hers and I also believe holds true for subsequent generations of clergywomen. The stoles of the women I interviewed provided a window to past motivations whilst being part of their present ministry.

Stole choices are very personal as, unlike the ordination rite itself, designs are not mandated by dioceses. The colour of an ordination stole is stipulated (usually white but sometimes red) but the design is not. Interviewees repeatedly explained, in Emily's words 'I wanted the stole to say something about me'. Mary wrote, 'I wanted to express something through the stole' (Mary), Jasmine's stole was 'not explicitly to do with ministry, as in ministering to other people. It was more to do with my own contemplative journey'. Selena's design 'echoes where I come from and what I believe', Hayley began her reply writing 'I really felt I needed to respond to this question as it is very pertinent for me', she concluded with 'I could tell you about my other stoles too as they all have a story...'. On the occasions where women have a simple stole (Georgia, Rachael, Tracy, Kerstin), they made or have subsequently discerned an expression of personal theology in the absence of design:

it reflects a very practical approach to ministry that still pertains as well as my preference for simple liturgy, relatively unadorned and free from gimmicks... I would say I have grown nearer to the (perhaps unconsciously chosen) plain simplicity of my original stole and my present and future ministry is more deliberately as space of setting self aside to create room for the other (Rachael).

The act of wearing a stole as a priest is profoundly traditional, inherited from generations of male priests. Through the giving of a stole the Church visually signals women are the same kind of priest as men. The descriptions of how stoles were chosen, designed, made, even down to the types of material used, woven through subsequent paragraphs reveal female priests to understand themselves to be both inheritors of the Anglican tradition and uniquely called in their own right. The stoles indicate that women accepted the same calling as men and show the values, experiences and communities each believed, and in many cases still believes, she should embody as a priest.

Of the thirteen women six said they would not change the theological imagery on their stoles, Rachael stressing that her stole symbolised her theological convictions 'more profoundly now' (Rachael) a belief echoed by Mary, others simply saying they would do the same thing. Two women said they would consider adding to their existing stoles symbols to reflect their development, broken chains in Ava's case reflecting her current role 'when I look back' she wrote 'I feel that God has always been calling me to this ministry'. Selena hypothesised that she would add 'key places, milestones, events or people that have shaped my ministry' showing the importance of context on shaping ministry. Nevertheless, she ultimately concludes, like six of her peers, that 'she wouldn't change it. Of the six women who would change, five would do so to add ministerial and contextual experiences only one because she felt her vision for priesthood was initially 'rose tinted'. Her new stole would be more 'realistic' about how she

could serve God and bring people to Christ, it would be more 'in tune' with 'what He is doing and where He is'. This change suggests she felt her initial design was out of tune with the reality of priesthood. Twelve out of the thirteen women affirm continuity with their initial interpretation of their own calling as made tangible in stole form. The stoles are, therefore, a rich part of their current understanding of calling.

Sacramental ministry and that associated with Rites of Passage is when a stole is most often worn, presiding on these occasions was frequently cited as a key means of embodying priesthood. 'The longer I have been ordained, the more the sacramental ministry has grown on me' wrote Kerstin; Katie, Mary, Tracy, Kerstin and Rachael reflected on the importance of developing their calling through regular celebration of the Eucharist; 'Even after doing this almost every week (and sometimes several times a week) for over 18 years I am still awed by the power this gives me and the impact it can have - not power and impact that is about what I do but how Christ acts, through me, to reach others' (Mary). The central liturgical acts of priesthood, celebrating the Eucharist and absolution, are fundamental to the identity of these women. Sacramental acts and other physical expressions of priesthood such as ministry at the time of death are simultaneously the focus of opponents' objections to women's ordination and at the heart of individual priests' identity.

As well as looking for validation of their own call they hope that through their actions they can affirm the rightness of the calling of other women to be priests. Katie, Mary, Selena, Tracy, Kerstin, Hayley, Emily, and Ava all recounted incidents where the individual actions of one woman converted an opponent to acceptance of all female priests. Mary felt she had a 'tiresome' responsibility to be visible when serving as part of a large team of senior clergy. However draining she felt it was the right course of action, only feeling able to step back from time to time when a second woman joined the team. Women felt that their individual ministry impacted on all ordained Anglican women; 'I worked with one Rector who said to me that he felt pretty ambivalent about women's ministry. However, during the 7 years that we worked together, he became a real supporter. This was partly because he witnessed my ministry and realised that I was up to the job' (Tracy). Tracy's colleague ultimately recognized her vocation and through that experience recognized the vocation of other women called to ministry. Sacramental ministry and the passing of years has enabled the women I interviewed to truly believe they are priests. Although they may have convinced themselves, as long as the normative image of an Anglican priest remains a white man, women, and men who differ from the standard, will find it harder to convince the Church of the authenticity of their priestly identity.

Constraints on the vocational identities of women who are priests

Although my interviewees were confident in their own call, after five centuries of an all-male Anglican priesthood the priestly identity of women, they knew, would take time to become normalised in the minds of observers. The idea of the essential 'rightness' of a male priest existed even in the minds of my participants. Alongside this normative understanding of a 'proper vicar' domestic identities and persistent expectations on vicars' wives constrained a personal sense of priesthood before it could flourish fully. Throughout the interviews women remarked on the relative newness of women's ordination and their sense that both individual church members and the Church as an institution were still adapting to female priests. Georgia

regarded the years between women's ordination as priests and their consecration as bishops as having positively contributed to the acceptance of female clergy amongst worshippers, 'it has given time for many to get beyond their initial reaction, experience women in ministry and realise we don't have horns and a tail' (Georgia). Liz remarked that stepping into a challenging new role was made hard because the accepted models of senior leadership were less likely to be envisaged as female. Her recently acquired post was the 'Steepest learning curve yet! No blueprint for this role...particularly as a woman.' Williams' research led her to conclude that despite women's ordination priesthood was still institutionally 'intuited to be masculine' (2008, p.35). Being a woman may not make a difference to the practicalities of a woman's service of ordination but in the execution of their priesthood women were constrained by the dominant expectation that a priest should be male.

Public expectations include a sense of how a priest should look and sound, Hayley recounted an early example of being exposed to public scrutiny:

I think it was also inevitable that being stared at was probably far more common in 1996/7 than it is now! Living in London and going through railway stations in crowds could be especially unnerving, though usually more so for any travelling companion than for me, once I'd become used to it. We were so unusual weren't we?! (Hayley)

Even my interviewees were not immune to an inner sense of the rightness of masculinity. Hayley found herself not enjoying an early experience of female eucharistic presidency because of the tone of the celebrant's voice: 'it helped me to understand that for many people difficulty with women's ministry wouldn't be based in theology or tradition at all, but rather in it not feeling/sounding right'. Appearance also mattered, Selena wrote of her clothing and jewellery choices 'I am conscious of what I wear – not to draw attention to myself in the sanctuary' (Selena). Page (2013) describes this as dressing to 'appease', her interviews with female priests revealed 'women can find that their clothing choices come under increased scrutiny and can be used as a determinant of whether women can convincingly enact a professional and sacred identity' (Page, 2013). In her essay 'Why is that priest singing in a woman's voice?' Winkett (2010) argues that there is an underlying conviction, the outward expression of calling – the performance of the role is expected to be masculine. There is a 'visceral assumption that 'priest' and 'woman's voice' are somehow mutually exclusive' (Winkett, 2010). Ordained women simply fail to pass the basic test of looking or sounding like a priest.

Conversations about stoles helped me think more deeply about how the full expression of all that a woman brings to her ministry is constrained and how any other fundamental identities, in particular concurrent vocations as wives and/or mother are both constrained and constraining. As the following paragraphs will show, women are expected to publicly downplay their commitments to significant domestic roles whilst still being vulnerable to judgements about their performance of these identities. Along with retaining male priesthood as the norm, the powerful identities of mother and wife, most powerfully 'vicar's wife' continue to exist in much the same way as they did before women's ordination. Women, therefore, can find themselves failing to fit within expected norms as a priest and also falling short of the benchmarks set for good wives and mothers. For ordained women who are wives and mothers

this can feel alienating and demanding and those who are not can be judged as failing or having free time which by rights belongs to their congregation (see Chapter Six for detail).

Women sense that their priestly identity and their public and private decisions about parenting and marriage risk being judged as not fitting with the inherited model of the male married vicar with children. Katie expressed this well when she wrote that as a priest and mother she 'never felt encouraged to be me'. When multiple identities compound on one woman, what the typical priest looks like, how the typical clergy wife should behave, how a clergy family should care for its children, a heavier burden falls on a female priest as she disappoints multiple identity expectations.

Ordination stoles showed the networks and additional identities that underpinned each woman's journey to priesthood. The specific vocation of priesthood is grounded in a wide range of other places but one relationship in particular, daughter and mother, featured profoundly in the transcripts. The role of mothers and grandmothers in stole design and production or purchase is frequent and varied; fathers, siblings and husbands are never mentioned as co-creators. Stoles are often acquired as a set of four, white, purple, red and green leading to a wider range of stories than simply the stole worn by each woman when she was ordained. Mary's green stole was bought by her grandmother (as was mine), Katie's and Hayley's stoles were designed and made in partnership with their mothers, Hayley wrote, 'I mentioned before how close my Mother and I were, especially in relation to my spiritual and vocational journey... When I was to be ordained it seemed natural to me that my Mother would help me design my ember card and my stole'. Emily's stole was designed by a friend of her mother to 'represent all I was bringing' (Emily). Hayley's stole most strongly reflects the mother daughter relationship as the designs repeat details embroidered by her mother on her childhood dresses. Although Kerstin describes a very straightforward process she was nevertheless accompanied by her mother 'literally my mother and I walked into Wippells about a week before my ordination and they opened a drawer and I chose one'. Friends of their mothers', and mothers of friends also feature as Jasmine's stoles were gifted to her by the woman who would later become her mother-in-law. Tracy's stole was designed by her on the advice of someone she describes as the 'mother of a friend'. Mothers are a significant feature of the networks that have allowed women to grow their sense of vocation.

The families that set the women on their journey remain significant in transcripts whereas family created after ordination appeared to be off limits for stole design in later ministry. The mother-child relationship in which the priest is mother rather than daughter is strikingly absent from suggested future stole designs. Designs for new stoles, for example, Katie, Emily and Hayley have imagery that grounds them in their family heritage but not their newer family. At the time of interview Emily was in the process of commissioning a new stole that would reflect her family heritage, her original stole having become threadbare. Hayley wrote 'I began to consider asking my mum if – arthritis permitting – she might create me a replacement to mark my 20th anniversary' (of ordination). She'd most recently done applique and embroidery for my son when he was born' (Hayley) but her mother died suddenly after she had this thought. She continues:

Last year, early 2016, one of my parishioners came to see me. She and couple of others had been speaking with me about my ordination anniversary the previous autumn and I'd told them of my thoughts and plans, and how I never got to ask my mother about it. This parishioner had lost her husband the previous year and I had administered the Last Rites for him. She wanted to pay for a replacement stole. She left me to focus on the design but suggested I might include 'rosemary for remembrance' (Hayley).

Despite the fact that the two decades women were writing about had included marriage for almost all interviewees, and motherhood for most, this was never represented on a stole. The mother-daughter collaboration between ordinands and their own mothers or other mature women was not inverted in this next phase to include the priest's own child or younger women. Family created by marriage and childbirth is not alluded to in thread and fabric at the altar.

In ordination stoles this lack of reference to life as a mother or wife is understandable, women were closer in time to the family of their childhood, 'I had no idea at that point of what the impact of marriage, family, etc would be on my ministry' (interviewee). However, when asked 'if you were designing a stole for your current ministry what would it include?' no one suggested including references to being a mother or a wife. Whether consciously or subconsciously, whilst sharing the Church's sacraments women make visible their inheritance from mothers and grandmothers but constrain expressions of their post ordination identity as mothers or wives. The exclusion of motherhood and marriage from conversations about future stole design would not be so striking were mothers and grandmothers not so prevalent in ordination stoles. Both roles are portrayed by the Church as fundamental vocations. Concurrent vocations are represented in designs for future stoles but it is only those of priest musician, priest interpreter, priest educator, or priest chaplain, that are made tangible. Whether a parent or a partner the primary identity visible to a congregation is priest.

Nine of the women I interviewed were both priests and mothers. Two, Ava and Tracy, described motherhood in the same terms as their calling to priesthood, all stressed the importance of motherhood in their lives. For Ava motherhood and marriage were her primary callings, Tracy described it as theologically on a par with priesthood. Others may not have specifically articulated motherhood as a calling but like priesthood it was clearly a significant aspect of their identity. Whatever language they used all witnessed to tensions between these two demanding roles, needing to sacrifice to make space for their parenting and ministry. When both parents are ordained the whole family is embedded in theological and cultural norms about clergy parenting, women occupying both roles are more heavily burdened by expectations than male clergy parents. Tracy explained the tension faced by priests who are mothers:

A lot of the church's traditional teachings on priesthood seem to be about the constant and never-ending availability of the priest towards her/his parishioners; there is a lot of talk about self-sacrifice; of holding the people in one's heart etc. A lot of the church's traditional teachings on motherhood seem to be about the constant and never-ending availability of the mother towards her children; there is a lot of talk about self-sacrifice; of holding one's children constantly in one's heart etc. (Tracy).

Ordained clergy wives, a female priest with an ordained husband, are responsible for the successful performance of their own ministry but also that of their husband. Where there are children they must be a good mother and support their husband to become a good dad. Kerstin, an ordained clergy wife described 'the mental load of parenthood' as '100% my responsibility' she went on to specifically observe that this is the same for all wives who are one half a 'clergy couple'. Thorne (2000) and Page (2013) found the same gendered expectations of parenthood, expectations that forced ordained mothers into a significantly more demanding role than ordained fathers. Page analyses her data by referring back to Thorne:

Thorne argues that motherhood and priesthood are perceived anomalously, for both spheres are remarkably alike, being framed in a discourse of unconditional availability and sacrifice. This is not the case for fatherhood – a role which has clear boundaries, often maintained by the services of a mother/wife. For mothers to excel in one role may be linked to underperformance in another role, for example, reading the child a bedtime story and then experiencing a parishioner interruption – the vicar is available to both church and child, but in such a situation, where does the mother's priority lie?

(2013, p.62)

Priests who are mothers are expected to tack together two callings, each historically identified as all-consuming by both the Catholic and Protestant churches. They must bear the burdens of normative expectations for each role and deal with the constraining impact of one role on the complete performance of another.

The failure to adapt inherited normative roles, in particular a failure to challenge ordained clergy husbands, forms a key part of my later analysis in Chapter Six. I will not prefigure those arguments in detail but I believe the intersection of ordained wife and ordained husband reveals most clearly the constraints normative institutional assumptions place on ordained women. The eventual opening up of the priesthood to women appears motivated by institutional concerns about scarce resources rather than a sense of justice and equality. Women are fully ordained but only partially able to inhabit the identity of a role still expected to be male. Whether she carries the burdens of a good wife or is a single woman assumed to have a wife at home taking care of household tasks these ancient expectations restrict women's day-to-day ministry. Other fundamental vocations, wife and mother, as well as those less lauded by the Church, such as friend and partner, are constrained by the demands of priesthood. Motherhood and marriage in turn constrain the performance of priestly vocation as multiple traditional identities intersect.

Belonging and growing

A Priest in the Church of England

Despite the constraints on their identity women saw themselves as belonging within the Church's historic understanding of priesthood. References to belonging to the priesthood as expressed in the commitments made at ordination recurred throughout the transcripts, and the wearing of a stole or a clerical collar after ordination further confirmed this sense of inheriting the Anglican tradition. Katie describes the embroidery on her stole as demonstrating

that she is 'keeping faith with Anglican distinctiveness' (Katie), it is a phrase that could be applied to many of the interviewees' contributions. The words of the Ordinal, the first principles of what the Church understands as the role of a priest, were a source of affirmation and inspiration. Emily replied to a question about encouragement with the words 'the Ordinal always encourages me and brings me back'. Reflecting on the early stages of considering ordination, Selena described the words of the Ordinal as 'formative'. Most of the women enthusiastically embraced the tradition of liturgical vestments. Even the more cautious, who disliked the idea of 'notable' stoles (Rachael) or special clothes for worship lest they implied 'ordained ministry as being something special, and let's face it, better than lay ministry' (Tracy) wore vestments and clerical shirts. The conception of priesthood embodied by the women I interviewed is profoundly grounded in what it means to be an Anglican priest liturgically, theologically and visually.

The stoles are not radical expressions of feminist theology or an entirely new way of understanding priesthood but draw heavily on traditional imagery. Multiple examples of crosses, lilies, the Trinity, the crown of Christ, grapes, thorns, and Alpha and Omega are referred to albeit in some cases with a very distinctive twist which makes it impossible to describe many stoles without compromising anonymity. According to Selena, stole designs illustrate how the stole was understood by women in particular 'to be a very personal expression of one's faith at a time when some peers also didn't believe in wearing anything other than a scarf or could only consider a more traditional design' (Selena). Selena believes this blend of inherited tradition with personal expression was much more common amongst women, my personal observations lead me to agree with her. Design choices such as Katie's decision to include a copy of a cross given to her in childhood, a cross which reflected her family heritage, is one of many examples of designs that combine orthodox Christian symbolism with personal journey. The stoles express a belief that women feel that they are called to be part of the traditional succession of priesthood. However, as I will explain later in the process of their creation and the images they display, the stoles show that priesthood is also understood as telling old truths in new ways and pointing to a wider community forming and influencing their priestly identities.

The Ordinal and ordination vows were cited as useful both for personal reflection as well as part of the Ministerial Development Review, in operation in most dioceses, 'I find the ordinal affirming which is why I appreciate the MDR (Ministerial Development Review) process (and its predecessors) that forces me to reflect on my ministry in the light of the words of the ordinal every year' (Mary). Collegial use of the vows was also important, in every diocese clergy are invited to renew their promises once a year in The Chrism Mass an act of corporate renewal during Holy Week. For Emily, this corporate re-affirmation of calling was essential to her ongoing flourishing: 'I think in some way I lost my way when I was working part time and wasn't often getting to Maundy Thursday when most priests revisit the ordinal'. Hayley describes the time that she felt most detached from her identity as a priest, as one in which she wasn't able to celebrate communion or attend the diocesan Chrism Mass. Keeping these core values of priesthood present in one's mind affirms to women that they belong to an ancient and shared understanding of priesthood.

It was important for women to feel fully part of the Church, especially at times of personal doubt:

I suppose the idea of a “priesthood of all believers” and of the various “giftedness” of the “body of Christ” have sustained me both because they stopped me thinking I needed to be omniscient(!) and because they deliberately hold me (and everyone else) in a glorious interconnected mutual dependency – we need each other’ (Rachael).

The Chrism Mass gives the impression of glorious interconnectivity as male and female priests stand side by side to restate that they are called, whilst the congregation gathered in the cathedral, bishops, deacons and laity reaffirm that calling. As a case study, however, the Chrism Mass also shows the limits of that interconnectivity. Alternative Chrism Masses are held for male priests who do not wish to assent to female priests reaffirming their priesthood. These services are led by a non-ordaining bishop, neither female priests, nor male priests ordained by a woman or by a man who has ordained women are invited to renew their vows in these services. In 2015 there were sixteen alternative Chrism Masses, seven in cathedrals. The purpose of these services, the organisers explained in a response to a complaint from WATCH to the ombudsman appointed to oversee the Five Guiding Principles, is to reduce the pain caused by women’s ordination:

Any pain the masses cause to clergy women and others is ‘a cause of concern’ but the underlying pain results from ‘the decision to ordain women as bishops and priests while recognising that their ministry cannot be received by all in our church’.

(Mawer, 2015, p.4)

The existence of these services demonstrates that the institutional Church has never truly fully embraced women’s priesthood in the same way as she regards men’s priesthood. Women’s devotion to the Ordinal and their loyalty to the Church’s liturgical traditions is not reciprocated with unconditional acceptance. Women feel intrinsically Anglican but this loyalty is not unconditionally reciprocated even at moments of renewal such as Chrism Masses. In Canon Law there may be no such thing as a ‘woman priest’ or ‘man priest’, priests are priests, but in Church life male and female priests are received very differently.

Growing into Priesthood

Although women were confident they became a priest at the moment of ordination, growth into the role, in Church terms coming to inhabit the identity, took time. During selection and training candidates are required to demonstrate that they have the potential to develop not simply skills or opinions but ‘dispositions lived out through being immersed deeply in a wide variety of lived contexts and relationships, all of which shape our living and calling’ (Church of England, 2022, p.2). No priest is expected to be the finished article at ordination. My interviewees explained that the passage of time, performing the rites and rituals of priesthood, networks of support and context all influenced their growth into the role.

Twelve of my interviewees have been priests, paid or unpaid, for half of their life. Each woman had lived almost the entirety of her adult life as a priest or ordinand. The simple fact of time passing was named as significant, in part related to simply learning skills but, far more, growing

into the role – ‘becoming’. The shape of a calling is honed over years, Rachael explained that it took five years to grow into her first role as a parish priest and a further two to three to grow into her next role. Priesthood is not understood as a job they get good at but a person they become:

I have now been ordained over two decades, I have had several occasions where I feel like, ‘wow this really is me, a priest’. It’s who I am – nearly half my life I have been at this. I have experience and confidence to do this job in a way that was not present in the early years. It’s just who I am and I am okay with that. (Kerstin).

The designs suggested for new stoles gave testimony to the variety of networks and experiences that had blossomed through years of ministry and kept these women grounded in their call. These could be specific, as two women included an emblem of a parish or diocese in which they had served, but more usually were thematic. Women attempted to represent communities in which they have served and been nurtured in through the decades since ordination, imagery reflected ministry in cities and in the countryside, amongst specific marginalised communities, musicians, language groups, and particular professions. A prolonged period of time as a priest had given women more and more places in which to anchor that calling.

After the technical skills of ecclesiastical ceremonies, Eucharistic presidency, Last Rites, Baptism, etc. were learnt, repeating these rituals moved women beyond doing the things priests do to inhabiting the role of priest. Performative acts of priesthood, their own actions and the responses of others confirmed their call. In particular, as Mary wrote, the importance of celebrating Communion:

A priestly call to represent Christ - which is what I still feel honoured to do at the altar when I celebrate the Eucharist - which is not about the church as denomination/institution but something about the church as mystical body, rooted and grounded in Christ which has called me and ordained me as a priest.

Over two decades of celebrating the Eucharist the Church has remained equivocal about the calling embraced and sustained by 12 of the 13 women I interviewed. It may be coincidental but I noted that none of the traditional symbols for ecclesial body of the Church such as the Chi-Rho, Icthus, or crossed keys were mentioned as featuring on stoles. Instead designs most frequently alluded to networks of support, families, non-ecclesiastical ministry contexts, and linguistic and professional communities. In such a small study and without the possibility to explore this observation further I will not extrapolate too much from it but on each re-reading of the data it stood out more. Women were ‘sent’ by churches and yet the vast majority of networks of support referenced in designs were non-ecclesial communities.

The transcripts identify the spiritual, familial and social networks of support women have drawn upon to sustain their conviction that God has called them. In some cases these resources, visualised in the threads of each stole and expressed in their written answers, have sustained them when almost all self-belief is lost. The stoles add depth to the written descriptions of experience produced in response to earlier questions. They give tangible testimony to what Keith describes as the ‘supplementary dimensions’ that come from working

out vocation (Keith, 2017, pp.161-2). The 'supplementary dimensions' provided by experience allowed belief in calling to be nurtured, retained, and in some cases expanded amongst these women despite the apparent reticence of the Church to welcome their full potential. Friends, occasionally local church communities, pre-ordination professional colleagues, are all referenced in ordination stoles as tangible evidence of the ways in which a personal sense of call is externally affirmed. Stoles gifted later in ministry by people who have witnessed a woman's ministry are especially treasured:

I guess in retrospect I have always hoped that vestments were about the Church and God and timeless symbols of our faith and not a billboard for my predilections. At my last parish the altar guild gave me a festival stole ... with a personal dedication ... It was quite a surprise and I was touched to the depths of my soul. That is the kind of stole I want to wear (Emily).

Context also made a difference, within Chapters and Deaneries it appeared to be somewhat of a lottery as to whether women found themselves in a context of affirmation or not. Hayley, Tracy and Selena described how they valued recognition of identity by secular colleagues and friends outside the Church. Interviewees believed that where their ministry had involved work in community organisations, such as schools, then what matters is the effectiveness of one's work, not whether one is male or female. 'The gender just didn't really figure. Being an effective chaplain absolutely did' (Hayley). Tracy, after a difficult parish post experiencing frequent gender discrimination moved to ministry in a secular school 'where the issue of my gender was considered a gift and not a liability. I had 6 very happy years there... I felt loved, affirmed, even smart'. It was not simply the flexibility of ministry on the margins that benefited her but the secular context of the work.

Recognition of identity appeared to be less contentious in secular settings. Selena, who worked in a secular professional setting whilst serving as a non-stipendiary priest found resources in her workplace colleagues to sustain her inner sense of calling. Her calling, which had created tension in her church and home life, was affirmed by a secular colleague. The colleague who was 'not at all political or very involved in the church - but interested', began 'insisting on using my title and being perplexed that I couldn't. "But that's who you are". I think this arose from his previous position as a..., although retired he had a sense of 'once an x always an x'.

What mattered was not how she was doing the job of priest but that she was a priest. Selena wrote 'priesthood is more integral to self and not an "add on"... Being a priest is not a part/ spare time/ separate activity'. Tracy felt she was affirmed by people she met in a secular context despite the Church rather than because of it:

I feel that when I am with people who wouldn't describe themselves as church-goers, I am not representing the Church of England to them as such because they don't really understand what that is! I'm more of a 'God person' in their eyes, rather than a 'Church of England' person. For many of them, belief in God receives their respect but the Church itself is often seen as rather boring and irrelevant.

Although women and men come to inhabit the role of priest through repeated sacramental and liturgical acts interactions in secular contexts can bolster this identity. For a woman the

secular context can provide valuable straightforward affirmation that is hard to guarantee within her Church.

What do women wish to communicate theologically?

The questions about stole design asked women to consider both past and present, what was their ordination stole design and what would a stole designed for her current ministry look like. The initial designs of stoles give a sense of what was theologically precious to women at the start of their ministry, the beliefs from which their calling had grown. The suggestion of a new stole allowed them to review theologically where they are now. Two clear themes emerged that I focus on in this section; faith, in particular their understanding of God, and context.

Ordination stoles will always tend towards optimistic theological themes because they are white for the seasons of Christmas and Easter or red for the season of Pentecost. When old and new stoles are contrasted, the theological themes remain broadly similar, what is added tends to be references to context and experience. Where there is theological change it is a move towards theology that is more mysterious rather than specific, Emily articulates this most clearly contrasting her old stole with a new one being made:

I've chosen this one because it is a little abstract in some ways and that's what I like. It represents for me my faith journey that started out when I was a teenager as rather box like and has got more abstract as time has gone on... I feel my faith journey, and therefore in many ways my ministry is getting greyer and more blurred and in some way I wanted to depict that (Emily).

In her new stole Emily is also incorporating a representation of her childhood home, a place where she still feels a sense of belonging. This blending, marrying expansive theological concepts such as incarnation, inclusivity, and the vastness of divinity expressed in creation with references to home, belonging and community is repeated across all the transcripts and made tangible in all the stole choices. Women's priesthood as lived out by my interviewees is grounded in the incarnation and community but inspired and nurtured by the infinity of God. In old and new stoles there are very few images that call to mind specific traditional sacramental priestly ministry or represent the formal institution of the Church.

When representing a woman's understanding of God the stoles illustrate the importance of relationality, in particular a personal relationship with God. For Lily this is represented by a visualisation of the verse 'I trust in the loving kindness of God', Emily wrote that her new stole will symbolise 'having got much more into the whole concept of a relational God' through her ministry. Although some women use Trinitarian symbols to express relationality it is most often alluded to through incarnational theology, images associated with the death and resurrection of Christ, clear references to incidents in his life and the parables he told. On the stoles God 'speaks to us in ways we can understand' (Ava). Mary explains the importance of representing God in the world, 'God is so interested in creation that God participates in it... If God shares human existence then human life is precious and every person is precious to God' (Mary). This incarnational theology leads to a commitment to the people living in shadows (Selena), those who are left behind (Ava), ministry amongst those with limited resources (Katie), and an inclusive vision of the love of God, 'If God is with us, simply because

of love, then there are no hoops to jump through, no tests to pass, to claim God's love and attention' (Mary). Alongside this intimacy, 'smallness' in Mary's words is 'bigness' (Mary), a God 'who is infinite and eternal, incarnate yet transcendent' (Ava). Three interviewees refer to plain stoles which for them symbolise leaving space for the fullness of God. The mystery and infinity of God is secondary to the incarnation in the designs but by its nature the inexpressible breadth and depth of divinity is hard to visualise in thread. These are mainstream theological concepts rather than radical feminist interpretations, although inclusivity and openness are referred to the symbols are firmly in the inherited tradition of Anglican theology. In their stoles women most often emphasise a theology of priesthood that is rooted in a relationship with Jesus, this is underscored with intentionally abstract or inclusive symbolism suggesting an open community.

Another illustration of the inheritance of Anglican theological values is the importance of place and community. Representation on a stole represents a hallowing of a place or people from which they were called or are called to. This context, be it place or people is precious to both the woman and to God. In *Parish: An Anglican Theology of Place* (Rumsey, 2017) Rumsey wrote 'The Anglican covenant with place is 'instinctive' and 'given' (2017, p.67). He argues that the Church is 'of England' not because it is grounded in national identity but because it is rooted in locality (ibid., p.181). Priests who make a deliberate attempt to relate their vestments to geographic community, are in this Anglican tradition of locality. Selena wrote that her stole 'related to the parish and the city life that was home. This was deliberate' (Selena). Other references to home include local flowers, geographic features, home nations, hometowns, colleges attended, and places that have had a significant impact as a place of retreat or hospitality. Katie reflected that on a later stole she had sought to capture her adopted hometown as a place to live, 'with its humour and culture and straight speaking and pride of history and diversity' and a place to minister 'there is much less crap than I've encountered anywhere in the CofE – I hope to stay here... a strong sense of place'. The stoles show how women value community, affirmation, and a sense of belonging, and also their continuity with centuries of priestly vocation enmeshed with geography. I would like to return to stole design with further research. In *Space, Place and Gender* (Massey, 1994), heavily drawn upon by Rumsey, Massey wrote that the gendering of space, 'both reflects and has effects back on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood' (1994, p.186). I would like to discuss with women whether the distinctive ways in which women appear to approach vestment design are attempts to challenge inherited gendering of liturgical space.

What does the design and use of stoles reveal about women's sense of belonging and freedom?

The ministries where women find belonging represented on later stoles (whether real or imagined) are on the margins of the Church in chaplaincy and with the excluded. Katie uses the phrase 'working with scraps' as a practical description of the materials her stoles were made with and a metaphor for her ministry as a chaplain. When contrasted with transcripts which described past or current work in chaplaincy, women who had been or were in senior roles expressed less of a sense of affirmation. Women explained that whilst in senior roles they felt the need to be more cautious, to constrain the fullness of who they were and what they believed. As women became more senior they felt there was less scope for them to use

their ordination stoles, or to be seen as individuals because of the pressure to represent all women. Mary wrote that in a cathedral all the clergy had to 'match' so she could not wear her own stole, additionally she had to be visible which she found 'wearisome' despite agreeing with the motivation behind raising the profile of the lone woman. Georgia changed stoles to avoid standing out once she took on a senior role. Ultimately Mary felt she needed to step down from a senior role to reconnect with her calling and creativity. Katie, whilst affirmed by selection for a senior leaders training programme, chose not to pursue senior posts once she had completed it: 'I didn't feel called to move on and still lots to be done in present role'. It would be wrong to draw too many conclusions from such limited research but in general those on the fringes of the institution, in chaplaincy, religious orders and small parishes are those most able to wear their own decisions about vestments and most likely to feel fulfilled.

The Church was often perceived by interviewees as too rigid in its understanding of calling and development. Hayley, who would go on to become a chaplain, reflected:

It's strange because looking back I think the fact that as I was being selected the debate was continuing to rage (or at least simmer), it became very much about function and not about a state of being. "What can't you do?" seemed to be more important to the world at large than "what can you do?", and nothing at all to do with "who will you become?"

Mary expressed her frustration that conversations about potential and flourishing were 'steeped in the language of hierarchy and promotion'. In *Moving to the Margins*, Susan Shipp (2004) concluded for both male and female priests becoming a chaplain was a choice that led to the edge, it was 'a step away from the centre of church life' (2004, p.161). Chaplaincy was a rugged road but one that blew open narrower understandings of what priesthood was about and where who a woman was, and what she might become was more important than what she was (ibid., p.161). Stepping away from, or avoiding altogether, high status posts, appears to free women from rigid expectations. The normative definitions of priesthood hold less sway the further one is from the centre of power.

Women have grown in happiness and fulfilment on the edges, be it a part-time post which 'means that I can "hide" in a quiet corner and rethink how I best use the gifts that God has given me' (Mary), or as a chaplain 'Chaplains often speak of being on the margins... lots of discouragement and dismissal... but also a place of growth and development and faith' (Katie). Women appear to be more likely to personally flourish in inverse proportion to their proximity to the institutional centre. Encouragement to be fully who God has called them to be has come in intimate spheres, from friends, family, occasionally colleagues, in acts of kindness and affirmation from individuals. Mary is typical of all the interviewees, her calling is encouraged by helping others find theirs:

Always, always, the people among whom I have ministered. Those people who, over the years, have told me (directly or indirectly) that what I have done has helped them towards God a little more – that's been the most significant thing.

Conversely women point to clergy chapters, staff teams, and synods as places where they feel least at ease. These contexts appear most likely to need women to monitor what they say,

how they appear, or even justify their presence. For women in contexts where they felt constrained or diminished by the opinions of others, unconstrained opportunities to reconnect with their calling were significant. Retreats and quiet days, Chrism Masses, Ministerial Development Reviews, opportunities to renew their vows or reconnect with the Ordinal where it is not necessary to make concessions to opponents are important. These precious occasions along with supportive communities and networks, and the physical acts of performing priesthood are the unconstrained moments in which women experience what it is to fully inhabit their priestly identity. Affirmation is most likely to be found when women do not need to restrain themselves or defend their identity.

Conclusion

Vocationally the women I interviewed were given the same start as their male peers, they offered, were tested, formed, retested and finally publicly affirmed in their calling by ordination. Despite this, it is apparent women never seem to experience a sense of true belonging. All the women who remain as priests appear to have come to a point where they confidently inhabit the role of priest but the Church appears less confident that these experienced priests fully belong at its heart. They are priests whose identity is in question, whereas men are not (something I will explore more fully in the final chapter). Liz explained:

The Act of Synod... seemed to be saying that all men called to be priests were ok. Those who accepted women's ministry and those who didn't. Their calling was not in question. However, women priests were not ok whatever your tradition.

As the Church's own Faith and Order Commission, has admitted, there remains for female clergy a 'straightforward and overt contradiction' between how female clergy see themselves and how others see us (FAOC, 2017, p.20). This dissonance has not defeated the women I interviewed, although they have been constantly pushed back on their own emotional, theological and spiritual resources, they persist; believing 'The One who calls you is faithful' (Thessalonians 5:24) even if the Church is not. Many have found space to be the priests they truly are, whether creating these opportunities for themselves or being supported to do so by allies inside, but mostly outside the Church. Enacting their priesthood through ritual and pastoral ministry has affirmed their identity as priests despite the ambiguous response of the Church.

The overarching reality of priesthood for women is institutional ambiguity about their priestly identity, the damage arising from this is compounded by unaltered expectations of the roles of wives, especially clergy wives, and mothers. Female priests believe they are worthy inheritors of the distinctive identity of Anglican priest. However, the continued normative understanding of this role as male, the ecclesiastical rules restricting women's ministry, and the rigid model of ministry at the heart of the Church hierarchy means women are more likely to find affirmation in marginal roles. Put simply they belong less the closer they get to the heart of institutional power. Their sense that the role of priest belongs to them is found more strongly in the response of people found outside the Church, ministries tangentially related to Diocesan structures such as chaplaincy and the lowest ecclesiastical level, the parish. Relationships with individuals, family, 'cell groups', friends, and secular peers in vocational contexts outside the Church were among the many ways women had first understood and

then developed and sustained belief in their own calling. Women believe they are called to follow in the footsteps of Christ through ordination, their confidence in this call and the confidence of many around them is not repaid with unconstrained institutional affirmation of ordained women. Simply expressed, they do not belong in the same way as their male peers.

Chapter Six

Why is it harder for women? The double demands of two Greedy Institutions

This chapter will demonstrate how female priests in the fieldwork cohort are diminished by the gendered expectations of two 'omnivorous' (Coser, 1974, p.4) institutions: the family and the Church. Using my fieldwork data I will demonstrate disproportionate burdening of female priests and illustrate the sacrifices they make. I will identify how experiences of role stress and overload restrict women's ability to flourish at home and at work. Using Lewis Coser's definition of a Greedy Institution (Coser, 1974) I will demonstrate how this double damage occurs, asserting with confidence that female priests face challenges their male peers do not.

Lewis Coser's Greedy Institutions

Lewis Coser (1913-2003) was an American sociologist, a left-wing Jewish political activist who fled Nazi Germany in 1933, arriving in America (via Paris) in 1941. In his autobiography he describes himself as participating 'inside' sociology but feeling like an outsider in professional terms as he never totally committed to any one discipline (Coser, 1993, p.1). He worked closely with Rose Laub, a leading sociologist, and also his wife.

Coser considered three types of greedy institutions, 'greedy rulers', 'greedy families' and 'greedy collectives', exploring the lives of eunuchs, household servants, women in families, Jesuit monks and members of religious cults. A Greedy Institution seeks exclusive and undivided loyalty from its members (1974, p.4); by appearing highly desirable to interviewees, component individuals are encouraged to weaken their ties with other institutions or persons (1974, p.6). The 'greedy family' has direct relevance for women in my study. Coser applies the 'greedy collective' to smaller religious groups, religious orders within a larger Church or millenarian cults. Writers, including Segal (1986) and Franzway (2000) have demonstrated that larger bodies, Trade Unions and the Armed Forces can also take on characteristics of Greedy Collectives. Writers who have used Coser's model have used the broader term Greedy Institution rather than the specific types. The military, Trade Unions, universities and, as I will demonstrate, the Church have both the characteristics of familial relations 'greedy family' and an ideological commitment to a shared philosophy 'greedy collective'. Coser's broad hypothesis has proven itself easily adaptable to other institutions without the need for nuanced definitions. I believe this thesis is the first attempt to argue that the Church is a Greedy Institution, ensnaring and devouring those who choose to join with nonphysical mechanisms rather than locks and fences (Coser, 1993, p.10).

Ordinarily individuals are involved in many institutions, such as work, leisure pursuits, and family; for these 'segmental engagements' (1974, p.3) to work well no single institution should demand exclusive loyalty. The individual should rarely find themselves having to say no as 'the concomitant patterns of normative priorities assign claims for loyalty in such a way that little choice has to be made by the individuals concerned' (1974, p.3). Coser illustrates this with the example of a person working agreed hours that are 'legitimately owed to his employer' making

it possible for 'him' to have 'family or other non-occupational association' (1974, p.2). By contrast omnivorous greedy institutions require members to become so 'fully and totally committed to them that they become unavailable for alternative lines of action' (1974, p.8).

Coser has been criticised for his idealism and optimistic view of the impact on women of technological advances in the home. He believed that legal limits on working hours would thwart institutional greed, domestic service would decline and the roles of men and women in the family would soon even out because of labour-saving devices. A contemporary review drew attention to these weaknesses suggesting more work needed to be done on 'the psychological roots of total allegiance' and 'the social structural conditions which enable greedy institutions to function' (Meyer, 1975, p.1496). Meyer also argued that 'it would be worthwhile to see a more extensive and more systematic examination of greedy institutions' (ibid.). Psychology is beyond my field of expertise, but I note the above and believe that the psychological roots of women's allegiance to the Church would benefit from investigation.

In this thesis I have focused on social structural conditions, in the work of Coser and subsequent writers who have extended his hypotheses to other social situations I have found two key points of relevance.

First, working women sit within two greedy institutions (Coser, 1974, pp.89-100).

The greedy family does not totally preclude work outside the home but 'serves as a bar to outside occupational involvements which confer status and prestige, and hence, may alter the power constellations within the confines of the greedy family' (1974, p.95). Men and women may both suffer through membership of a workplace greedy institution, but on women the greedy family uniquely exerts a far higher toll in 'psychic stress and emotional disturbance' (1974, p.99):

Conflicts experienced by professional women who have a family do not simply result from participation in two different activity systems whose claims on the allocations are incompatible. They derive from the fact that the values underlying these claims are contradictory.

(1974, pp.91-2)

Women are expected to be as committed to their profession as a man whilst 'normatively required to give priority to their family' (1974, p.92).

Second, Coser's hypothesis is adaptable. Researchers have shown the relevance of the greedy institution model to other institutions, including: the military (Segal 1986, Vuga and Juvan, 2013), Trades Unions (Franzway, 2000), hospitals and banking (Burchielli, et al., 2008), policing (Peterson and Uhnno, 2012), public administration (Mackay and Rhodes, 2013), the internet (De Campo, 2013), universities (Sullivan, 2014) and digital technology (Sullivan, 2014).

I will demonstrate that the Church also fits the definition of a Greedy Institution. It does this by voraciously seeking an 'exclusive and undivided loyalty' (Franzway, 2000, p.259) from men and women.

I will then demonstrate how clergy women suffer *double* demands. As professional women they are victims of two greedy institutions, that of their professional environment, and the family. The more a woman sacrifices the more tightly she is bound Coser argues (1974, p.91). The contradictory, competitive claims of family and priesthood become stronger the deeper one goes into each greedy institution. Mary's description of motherhood combined with a senior post demonstrates the conflicting demands of both institutions:

I complicated matters myself by having a baby, 14 months into post. Given that I was in a senior post, which had been vacant for a long period, I took only two months off for maternity leave. This was entirely my decision. It was a mad decision, but was the right thing to do at the time... I saw candidates in the evenings and in his sleep times. I did paperwork while he napped. It was ridiculous but, with only two exceptions, I always managed to meet candidates and curates at the time I said I would and gave them my full attention.

Despite linking this period of intense loyalty to two institutions, family and the Church, to a subsequent emotional and physical breakdown, Mary, in hindsight, says that it was the 'right thing to do'. I believe that an application of Coser's hypothesis demonstrates that this is precisely the problem: costly effects of belonging to a greedy collective are readily justified and minimised.

Greedy Church? Applying Coser's Hypothesis

Male and female clergy are negatively affected by the boundaryless demands of priesthood. The Church displays many of the characteristics of a greedy institution, overstepping boundaries between the different segments of an individual's life, whether work, leisure, home, public or private. The Church exerts pressures, practically and ideologically, to encourage individuals to voluntarily weaken their ties with individuals and institutions outside the greedy institution.

I have divided the concept of greedy institution into *ideological markers*, beliefs, expectations, and values, and *practical markers*, including patterns of work and leisure, where people live, and activities that must be performed. An individual is confined by both ideological and practical mechanisms.

Ideological

Value-based Commitments: In ideological terms Franzway's study of Trade Unions as greedy institutions comes closest to the situation for clergy. Union activism 'demands not only a commitment to do the job well but a commitment to a particular set of values' (2014, p.259). Positively, as with clergy, Trade Union officials can act on their principles, develop a range of skills and have a relative degree of autonomy. Negatively as a role which is values based the work has no limits as there is always more than can be done in the furtherance of the union's aims.

Vocational Commitments: As greedy institutions with practical similarities, the Church and the United States Armed Forces also share ideological similarities. Segal wrote that service in the army should not be a job, joining the military should be understood as a life and not an

occupation (1986, p.34). Having joined, it is difficult to define exactly what the role of an individual soldier is as role obligations are diffuse (1986, p.12). As with the military, service in the Church is understood as a life not an occupation (Segal, 1986, p.34). Peyton and Gattrell (2013, p.52) believe, 'The ordination of a priest disciplines and governs body and soul during every waking hour from the moment of ordination, until death'. They demonstrate that some clergy find joy in serving God through ministry in the Church, but others describe their situation in a way that points to Coser's claims about the power of greedy institutions. Clergy described themselves as 'trapped' by ordination promises; happy or sad, they understood themselves 'bound for life' (2013, p.55), there 'was no opt out' (2013, p.53). Some of the clergy Peyton interviewed 'represented themselves as captives – imprisoned by, and shackled to, the ordinal promises they had made' (2013, p.55).

Conformity to the Collective: De Campo critiques the ideology of tech giants Facebook, Google and Wikipedia, claiming they value a coherent and homogenous collective identity over the individual worker or contributor (2013, p.982). De Campo points to similarities with religious groups who, when confronted with an individual dissenting voice, demand conformity. Theologian Martin Percy argues that the process of diminishing an individual within the Church collective is maintained by those in power through patterns of accepted behaviour rather than rules, 'the form and patterning of manners has normally been established by those in power, so that consciously and unconsciously their privileges are maintained' (2010, p.147). The greediness of the Church relies on what Lewis–Anthony (2010, pp.55ff) describes as the 'cult of nice' to survive. Clergy are not, according to Savage (2006) like Jesus who was 'assertive, sometimes acerbic' (2006, p.23) instead 'Clergy are expected to be nice. This softens the impact of hierarchy, while preserving it.' (2006, p.22)

Clergy must, as with De Campo's Google staff and Franzway's Trade Unionists, be committed to the ideals and accepted patterns of behaviour of their institution. De Campo explains that if we are to discern where the roots of greediness lie we must focus on power differentials within institutions which make 'totalistic' claims on time and energy (2013, p.982) According to Percy (2010, p.149) the Church's ideals are niceness, and politeness, in Coser's terminology the padlocks and chains of a greedy institution. Male and female clergy with strong feelings are disenfranchised and marginalised. The dominant ecclesiology prizes gentleness, portraying love as disinterested and detached rather than passionate and partisan. It stresses self-sacrifice over self-worth (2010, pp.147ff). In this way the Church diminishes any individual sense of self. True Christian love, Percy asserts, stresses mutuality but 'this is not possible without a sense that the self is worth something' (2010, p.149). A greedy institution requires individuals to find value in the whole rather than in the self.

Writers exploring the experiences of parish clergy describe a situation in tune with Coser's hypothesis that greedy institutions constrain and confine individuals without physical barriers. Lewis-Anthony (2010, p.62), describes the situation for both male and female clergy as 'A combination of subconscious processes and externally imposed, but never conclusively defined conformity, leads to the clergy always being on best behaviour'. Sara Savage wrote that this sense of needing to fit in can lead to the 'erosion of the freedom to be an authentic self' (2006, p.27). Ideologically the Church conforms to the definition of a greedy institution by

encouraging loyalty to Church over personal life and opinions. This will be explored in Chapters Seven and Eight when I show how institutional understandings of what is virtuous behaviour impact expectations concerning how women should express their priesthood.

Practical

In practical terms Segal's (1986) study of the US military as a greedy institution relates most directly to the logistical mechanisms through which clergy are constrained. As with the Church, the military does not fit the extremes of Coser's examples (the days of eunuchs are long gone for example) but 'it fits well enough' (Segal, 1986, p.12).

Key practical or physical identifiers of a greedy institution common to the military and the Church include; a blurred work/home space where place of occupation is not separated from place of residence (1986, p.12). Experience of location disruption, a presumption of geographic mobility disrupts established support networks for the individual and family members. Whilst they are not involuntarily deployed, unlike the military and Methodist clergy, changing jobs almost always means the whole household moves rather than one individual having their commute altered.

Surveillance is another feature of the greedy institution common to the Church and the armed forces. Clergy and military families are expected to behave in certain ways, learning 'that their behaviour is under scrutiny' and that there is a normative prescription to which military families should conform (1986, p.22), 'Conflict between the military requirements and family needs is avoided when the family adapts to military demands' (1986, p.24). Likewise, ordination vows require a priest to manage their family in line with Church expectations. The vicarage is described by Peyton and Gattrell as 'a location of surveillance', clergy and their families 'are obliged to live under the eagle eye of the local congregation' (2013, pp.61ff). As with the military, homes are not personal, different clergy occupants come and go and are always essentially outsiders unable to put down roots outside the institution. Clergy in roles that do not come with a vicarage but demand significant visibility in public and representative roles, such as hospital or armed forces chaplaincy, also experience the strains that come with surveillance, 'A key feature of this panopticism is the total blurring of the distinctions between work and home, public and private, body and soul; endurance is based on acceptance that this is so' (ibid., p.63).

Greedy institutions expect free labour and Segal noted family members engaging in voluntary activities on behalf of the greedy institution (1986, p.24). Military and clergy families are well experienced at running fêtes, playschemes and other good works. There is pressure to appear busy, according to Sullivan's study of universities, greedy institutions take over 'more and more of the lifespace' of their members and 'eat up their entire lives' until being busy becomes a badge of honour (2014, p.2). Busyness equals status, 'visible busyness can serve to signal one's place in the hierarchy' (2014, p.2). Ronni Lamont identifies the same habits amongst the clergy; chapter meetings are competitive places, 'where clergy find it very hard to be honest about their work' (2011, p.64).

The blurring of work and home time, an absence of clearly defined working times within a greedy institution suggests the possibility of flexibility. Whilst potentially attractive flexibility can become a burden if there are no boundaries as to when one owes allegiance to the institution and when a person is on their own time (Franzway, 2000, p.264). Coser believed in the importance of defined working hours, ideally established in law, to allow an individual to healthily manage the different segments of their life (1974, pp.2-3). Greedy institutions define all time as belonging to them. In terms of the Church, Savage (2006, p.28) warns that all clergy risk role overload as there are no fixed hours, they are seldom off duty. Parish posts are counted in days rather than hours, full time is understood to be six days a week, whereas a half time post is four days. As I know from experience a half time post is regularly a forty-hour-a-week role. This flexibility benefits the Church but has a negative impact on clergy morale 'Clergy cannot find affirmation in completing the task because the task of the Good Shepherd can never be completed' (Lewis-Anthony, 2010, p.63).

Practically, the Church functions as a greedy institution. It demands all clergy be constantly available to, politely and nicely, perform an endless list of poorly defined tasks. As Lewis-Anthony puts it contemporary clergy are required to be 'omni present, omni competent, omni affirming' at all hours of day and night (2010, p.47). It is difficult at times for men, nevertheless, as Coser will inspire us to see; it is harder for women. The practicalities of ministry are burdensome for all priests but women are additionally constrained by institutional expectations of womanhood and a normative definition of priesthood which does not fully encompass both genders. Chapter Seven will explore how women interpret this experience.

Greedy Family

Frame and Shehan (2005) produced guidance for career counsellors working with young women considering becoming clergywomen, based on interviews conducted with ordained women in American Protestant churches. Their conclusion is damning. Career counsellors should help women prepare for a career that was difficult, if not impossible:

Realities of life in the professional religious ministry extract a great price from clergywomen. They must combat sexism, resistance to their leadership, intrusiveness of work into personal time, low salaries, stress and fatigue, the impossibility of expectations built into a two person career, and often a disappointing career trajectory.

(2005, p.17)

Coser's hypothesis of the greedy family explains this potentially insurmountable role conflict; although headed by a man, the traditional American family of the 1960s and 1970s was maintained by his wife who 'is expected to devote most of her time, as well as her emotional energies to their family' (1974, p.89). For all women the family is a greedy institution, even when women accepted their unequal status and did not seek to enter the workplace in a professional capacity it still exerted a high toll in 'psychic stress and emotional disturbance' (1974, p.99). Where women entered the professional workplace, the toll became higher. The demands of the two institutions, a collective and a family each demanding total devotion,

conflict. A healthy segmental society structure, which reduces the need for an individual to say no (1974, p.3), is now swamped not just by one greedy institution but two. Women are judged, and judge themselves, as failing in both realms.

The writers above provide the stepping stones towards confirming female clergy face double difficulties arising from what is understood to be normative behaviour for women. Ordained women live in the impact zone between two greedy institutions.

Serving Two Greedy Institutions/Collectives

Ideological Issues

Franzway demonstrated that female Trade Unionists carried the expectations of their caring private role into the public sphere in large part because of society's understanding of the role of women, but to a lesser degree through choice. Female Trade Union officials choose to express their role in a way that draws on strengths believed to be integral to their gender, although this can be costly, 'The emotional costs are balanced against the passions of commitment' (2000, p.265). Surveying a range of literature (1989 to 2004) about the perceived ministry styles of female clergy, Robbins (2007) concluded that women are perceived, and perceive themselves, to minister differently to male clergy. Regardless of whether they are mothers or not women expect, and are expected to, mother. Female clergy are expected, by society and by themselves, to display the behaviour normatively assumed to be appropriate to their gender at home and at work (Shehan and Frame, 2005, Robbins 2007, Robbins and Greene 2017). Clergywomen with or without children of their own, acknowledged they have deployed stereotypical maternal behaviour as a way of overcoming opposition to their leadership (Shehan and Frame, 2004, p.370). Women without a husband or children to care for at home are understood to have more capacity to mother their congregations as they 'are presumed to be available at all times' (Shehan and Frame 2004, p.372).

At worst, a female priest's church and her domestic circumstances will both demand completely satisfying normative performances of mothering. Women in the greedy workplace face more extensive challenges than men because of normative expectations of what women should do in the private realm. Female clergy carry a greater burden than male colleagues, the same is true for female soldiers, trade unionists and academics.

Practical Issues

The ideological expectations of the institutions have practical consequences at home and at work. These are positive for men and negative for women. For example, male Trade Union officials rely on women for support in both private and public realms. The greedy family and the greedy workplace both expect women to take care of the wellbeing of men in a way that is not reciprocated (Franzway, 2000, p.259). The workplace greedy institution expects women to extend their caring role to male colleagues by 'motherly' (2000, p.266) behaviour, regardless of whether they are actual mothers:

In the face of these complexities, the ways women undertake emotional labour is neither fixed nor static. A memorable image from my research: an industrial officer who had already worked long hours at the union office stands in her nightclothes in

her cold hallway at midnight attempting to comfort a distraught member, a frequent event.

Segal (1986, p.14) describes the demands of the greedy family as a spectrum, although generally more demanding for women, in certain circumstances men do feel the strain of this greedy institution, particularly when sole parenting, after the birth of a child, or in a new marriage. Coser, Segal explains, believes the greater weight of demands fall to women rather than men. Women 'typically... have the cultural mandate to give primary allegiance to their families' (1974, p.92). In the situations where women in my study were parents none of the fathers were described as having made a substantive change to their working pattern to adapt to the arrival of a new child. Of the women married to clergy in my study all bar one interviewee was the one to make sacrifices in pay, status or working conditions. According to Walrond-Skinner ordained clergy wives are judged against both the standard expected of a full-time priest, and that of a full-time clergy wife (1998, pp.51f). These two significant expectations as well as others, such as styles of dress (Page), and tone or pitch of voice (Winkett) mean that women are judged to a significantly higher standard than men.

The practical challenges of serving two omnivorous institutions are enormous. Frame and Shehan demonstrate the role of a protestant clergy person as essentially a two-person career predicated on the existence of a clergy wife (2005, p.17), just as Woolf had described it (1938, pp.114-117) (see Chapter Two). Clergywomen interviewed by Frame and Shehan described balancing the demands of ministry and family: 'It is a never ending, every day, all the time struggle that may yet fail' (2004, p.369). The practical impact of a seven day a week, 24 hours a day greedy profession that is considered to be a sacred calling, collides almost to the point of destruction, with a greedy family.

Jamet Moreau, interviewing female priests in 2012 concluded that the figure of the clergy wife remained the dominant identity for women married to priests. She believed the wives of priests assisted their husband, taking care of all earthly tasks in the same way that the wives of Heredi, Ultra Orthodox Jews both work and take care of children to allow their husbands to dedicate themselves to learning the Torah and worshipping God (2012, p.175). Jamet Moreau quotes Vivienne Faul, a former cathedral dean and now bishop, 'The institution in general is designed for men with supportive wives at home'.

Frame and Shehan (2004; 2005) identify the main role stressor for female clergy as needing to say no. For example, for many of my participants the presumption that Church Council meetings are automatically in the evening frequently means a choice between the role of mother or priest. If the pattern of meetings varied, or was established by negotiation, the number of circumstances requiring a no would be reduced. This coincides with Coser's conviction that a healthy society is structured in a way that individuals rarely have to say no. He suggests clearly defined job contracts which limit work hours are one way to undermine institutional greed. Female priests need to choose between saying no to the expectations of family or Church, or burden themselves still further by saying yes to both. Hosting Church meetings at home allows clergy to monitor children whilst working, blurring the boundaries of work and home. Robbins and Greene (2017, p.897) found that the practical outworking of this is that most of the female clergy they interviewed seldom took time off. Robbins and

Francis (2014, p.270) identified that of the 867 women they interviewed 46% felt drained by fulfilling their ministry, with 41% of the whole sample feeling irritated and fatigued every day.

As well as the physical role overload of never-ending tasks women are scrutinized and appraised in a way their male colleagues are not. Acceptance is won by conforming to expected norms (Bagilhole, 2003, p.373) of the greedy institutions. Page has demonstrated that these norms extend to opinions about how female clergy should dress, her 17 interviewees illustrating how women's appropriation of the normatively male garments associated with priesthood has created tensions. She wrote, 'Dress functioned as a key test in women's integration into the organization, often operating as a constraining and exclusionary mechanism' (2013, p.1). Women in ordained roles are 'scrutinized' to a degree not experienced by their male colleagues whose physical appearance fits the normative model of a priest (2014, p.296). She concludes female clergy made practical choices about their clothes to appease different audiences within the Church (2014, p.304). Men's integration into the Church is not constrained by the same expectations.

Segal, based on observations of female soldiers, observes 'they may be more institutionally committed than men, because women are socialized to subjugate their individual goals to group goals' (1986, p.33). Has the Church succeeded in diminishing women by manipulating their maternal strengths? Do women sacrifice for the Church because we believe we should subjugate ourselves to the group goal more than men do? These questions support Meyer's criticism of Coser (see above) that more work needs to be done on the psychological factors at work in Greedy Institutions. Franzway's warning for the Trade Unions is appropriate to the Church, both greedy institutions, incorporate 'ideals and possibilities as well as contradictory dilemmas and problems'; as 'union women' and clergy women tackle these, they play a very important part in the survival of their institutions (2000, p.267)

In the following section I will use evidence from my interviews to show how female clergy are ideologically constrained and practically burdened by dual institutional greed. The threefold ideology of service, below, to both collective and family maximises voluntary compliance. *Vocational commitments* mean that priesthood is understood as a life not a job, *value based commitments* imply there is no limit to the role and dual *conformity to the collective* demands full allegiance to Church and family simultaneously. Where there is less time owed to the family collective, for example single, childless women, spare time is due to the Church.

The ideology of family, simultaneously demands commitment from women and where the husband is also ordained the Church and family experience a 'win-win' as the woman sacrifices herself for her family, her ministry and her husband's ministry.

Using interview data to illustrate how women in my study were constrained by an ideology of service

Vocational based commitments

Being a priest is 'being' rather than 'doing' according to Rachael. Selena wrote priesthood is 'integral to self and not an add on'. Once ordained priesthood is not dependent on having a role, paid or otherwise, 'Although a person may give up his or her orders and cease from practicing as a priest, that person remains a priest. The will of the Church is greater than the

will of the individual' (Mary). Jasmine, having lost her faith and left the Church is 'aware that others do consider me to be a priest and have the understanding that because of the laying on of hands and apostolic succession, etc. that "once a priest always a priest"'.

Anglican priesthood is a social identity rather than an occupation (Kriener, Hollensbe and Sheep, 2006). Rachael delineates between 'tangible functions' granted her by ordination, such as Eucharistic presidency, and 'less tangible indications that I was inhabiting a different kind of space'. These less tangible indications included children responding to her more confidently. Rachael echoes Church teaching, that 'ordained ministry is holy, set apart for its particular calling'. As Coser explains, greedy institutions must symbolically separate their members from the wider world; seen through Coser's lens priests are ensnared at ordination.

Value based commitments

Having set her priests apart the Church puts them to work. Priesthood may be a state of being but practical expressions of ministry, the tasks that must be done, vary. Negative and defensive language was used to describe how practical activities were governed. Rachael described a journey of surrender towards a 'self-emptying priesthood'. Ava created defence strategies at ordination 'I was not going to let my ministry devour every part of my life'. All the women operated somewhere along the spectrum from surrender to attempts at defence, most experienced defeat at some point.

As referred to above, the work of the Good Shepherd never ends (Lewis-Anthony, 2010, p.63). The opening of the liturgy of ordination describes the tasks of a priest:

With all God's people, they are to tell the story of God's love. They are to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith. They ought to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God. They are to preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. They are to bless the people in God's name. They are to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need. They are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death. Guided by the spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

(Archbishops' Council, 2007, p.37)

I know from experience that this list does not lend itself to boundaries and a sense of completion, it is also grounded in an expectation that the priest will work for Church unity. Promoting ecclesiastical unity is a key element in what it is to be a priest.

Women reported an expectation that they be available to the Church at all times but with no clear description of the tasks they should be available for. In the evening, Ava, Mary and Tracy's family time is demanded by the Church. During the day Selena, with a full-time job alongside her unpaid clergy role, was expected to attend training in her salaried hours.

Interviewees reported feeling a pressure 'to carry it all' (Emily) whilst never clearly defining what 'it all' is. Tracy feels 'drained and demotivated' by being 'the sole motivator and the one who comes up with all the ideas'. As volunteers resigned 'exhausted' from key roles their tasks became additional work for Lily:

Despite the fact I knew in my head it was not my fault they were standing down I nevertheless felt the size and weight of the job on my shoulders. This was not at all healthy for me, in fact the sense of loneliness mixed with stress caused me to become ill.

Liz describes her responsibilities as 'a mixture which are hard to hold together in a strategic way', she is lonely and summarises her role as the provider of 'encouragement and enthusiasm'.

Most of the women I interviewed bore multiple roles each with endless task lists, in addition to the demands of their own priesthood they were expected to bear the weight of tasks assigned to them as wives and mothers. In the case of ordained clergy wives (as I will demonstrate later in this chapter), they were expected to sustain not only their own priesthood but their husband's.

Conformity to the greedy collective

Female clergy are, according to Georgia, 'valued up to a point'. She did not feel that male senior clergy took seriously women's hope that they would be valued equally with male peers. Liz reflected male senior clergy had not understood, nor did they seek to understand, what it felt like to be 'working in a church that has got around the equal opportunities act'. The model of priesthood and episcopacy is long established and male; female clergy were to be accommodated rather than celebrated. Ordained women must conform to the old model of Church rather than transform it into something new. Katie experienced 'Rigid church structures trying to fit me in a category they can understand'. Mary wrote 'that I appear to 'fit' easily into the institution' but her gifts have only been partially used as the structure of the Church means 'the opportunities to use the other gifts I have for the Church have been fewer and further between'.

The greedy institutional nature of the Church relies on women self-regulating their behaviour to remain as good members of the collective. Women in my study do this by positively framing their decisions not to speak honestly about their feeling as politeness and restraint. Good conversations are 'courteous' (Rachael), and logical rather than emotional (Georgia). Bishops opposed to women's ordination are 'deserving of my respect' (Mary) and where issues of personal pain cannot be avoided they should be raised 'In a more private context' (Georgia) than public ministry.

Women avoided ascribing blame to the Church, either in general, or to specific persons. 'I'm not sure it's the Church's fault that I struggle. It is just how it is' (Mary). Responding to a question about a fierce debate following the nomination of Philip North to the See of Sheffield Ava wrote 'I feel for Philip North caught up in all of this as I am sure he is not a bad person'.

Women create alternative discourses for situations which could be understood to demonstrate sexism. Compromises are interpreted as victories, reductions in income or

status as claiming freedom or space for creativity. Kerstin's vicar and church council did not respond when she complained that she was being stalked and abused by a woman opposed to her ministry. At breaking point she asked the Area Dean to intervene 'He told the vicar and the pcc that her license from our parish absolutely had to be revoked, and he offered in return for her to become a lay reader for the deanery'. This resolution left the behaviour of the woman unsanctioned and the Area Dean with an extra Reader to lead services in his jurisdiction. As with Ava's decision to work without stipend the man proposing the solution gains material benefit for himself in the form of free labour, without challenging the sexist behaviour at the root of the problem.

Women also bore Church discrimination towards other aspects of their personhood without comment. Katie wrote of non-gender-based prejudice, 'Mostly I've hidden my feelings – my default reaction in all sorts of things, not just this' (Katie). Tracy believed Church leaders do not welcome honesty from women, 'I have never concealed my true feelings about the way the Church of England operates in relation to its female priests and I do sometimes feel that certain people in the hierarchy have not appreciated this'. Self-silencing for the good of the Church is a common theme.

How is confinement with a greedy collective practically experienced?

My data shows that women's loyalty to the Church has cost them income, freedom of movement, prestige and physical and mental health. This is exacerbated where women have children, even more so where they are married to a male priest. From the practical indicators of greedy institutions listed earlier in Chapter Three are particularly evident in the replies of interviewees: location disruption, free labour and surveillance.

Location Disruption, further exacerbated by being part of a clergy couple

Many clergy are required to live in tied housing, taking the job usually means taking the house whether, as in the case of my interviewees, it is too cold, has difficult neighbours, or is in any other way undesirable. For women married to male clergy in my study it has meant taking their husband's house with little reference to their own needs. With very few options to move jobs without moving house women were separated from established support networks. Obligated to live in her husband's vicarage one woman was unable to make a home at a midpoint she had identified where she and her husband could have travelled to their jobs and her parents travelled to provide childcare. Faced with uncomfortable living situations in cases due to neighbours strongly opposed to women's ordination, women were reticent about raising their concerns:

my tutor wanted to put a comment in my report as to how much I was looking forward to being away from the strains of the college and the negativity of some about women's ministry – but I asked him not to for fear people would think that the problem was in me, rather than in the situation I was in. (unattributed to avoid identification)

The women married to male priests whose role came with housing all chose to locate themselves within their husband's vicarage. No one mentioned successfully asking their diocese to compromise by providing midway housing enabling a short commute for each priest rather than a long one for the woman and no commute for the man. For one woman living in her clergy husband's tied housing when her marriage broke down meant she and her child

automatically lost their home. Ava was not only expected to commute but she was refused an office base:

I was offered a parish in Barchester following my priesting. The parish was OK; a little further away than I was happy with but I was prepared to give it a go. However I insisted that I was given a proper base to work from in the parish... I wanted to ensure that I had a base I could work from and rest in as the Diocese would only pay for one round trip from home (which would take 30 minutes each way). A base was not forthcoming and the vicar, who was not happy with my 'stubbornness', suggested I look elsewhere.

The greedy family always wins for these women as the Church colludes with the ideology that expects sacrifice for the woman rather than compromise by husband and Church. 'Moved to follow husband' (Katie) is a pattern repeated by three women. Georgia hopes to manipulate the expectation to her advantage; a move to follow her ordained husband will free her from unsuitable diocesan housing without raising the subject of her own need for a home in which she feels happy, 'I'd hoped that my husband would get a Vicar's job quickly so we could move'.

Free Labour

Women appear to do more work for less money, particularly if they are married to priests. Ten of the thirteen women disclosed that they were, or had been, married. Nine of these were mothers, five were ordained clergy wives. Women made choices that benefitted the Church and their families at a cost to themselves. Where women have been married to clergy the benefit to the Church is increased. Tension arises least in the transcripts where women have lay husbands or only one of the married couple is a parish priest. Women married to priests fared especially poorly as in the 1990s many dioceses refused to pay ordained wives of male priests, 'We ended up in that diocese because at the time they were one of a few who offered to pay both of us a full stipend and to give us separate curacies' (Tracy). Four women ordained at the same time as their husbands were only considered for roles after their husband was established in his. This involved commuting, reduced pay and taking posts that they might not have otherwise considered. Ava, after finding the single post her diocese was prepared to offer unsatisfactory, worked without payment in her husband's curacy parish. Not only was the Diocese of Barchester spared the cost of an office and mileage for Ava, by being intransigent it was spared an entire stipend.

Ava who takes a lower status in the Church, having set aside the possibility of payment and incumbency, is happy in the life she created with her husband. She believes that her relative comfort with the institutional Church is helped by never having been an incumbent and explains that her husband is 'in the church' and she is not. Ava's outsider status has profited the Church as she has given years of free, highly trained, labour. The other transcript which contains little of sacrifice is Georgia's, her clergy husband is in a lower status incumbent's role, she does not specify if this is paid or not. In this small sample the stress of two people experiencing institutional greed in the same collective appears to be reduced by one or other of the spouses taking a career back seat.

Full-time remuneration was seen as a threat to autonomy and family life by some interviewees. Mary, a mother married to a layman, wrote, 'I work, in theory three days a week (including

Sunday). In practice, this is rarely the case and I'm usually working more than that, but I reserve the right to say no to things'. Katie, Tracy, and Kerstin, all admitted to trading income and status for 'the right to say no'. Mary struggled for four years, at great cost to her health to singlehandedly perform a role that 'was, at the very least, a 1.5 post', after she left and a man was appointed the role became two posts. Emily, with two young children at home negotiated a post advertised as full-time to two-thirds time but, only the stipend reduced.

Not only did the Church save money it also left the bulk of the Church's reserves of status in the hands of men. In an organisation with a relatively flat pay structure, status is a significant aspect of remuneration: Status is indicated by extra titles, honoured places in clergy processions, permission to wear special clothes, such as the purple shirt of a bishop and more desirable clergy houses – in some cases even palaces come with the job. Talented women sacrifice status, the Church benefits from their years of experience but they remain in junior roles. This seems to be most acute amongst priests married to male priests, with the exception of one all the 'clergy wives' have taken lower status Church roles than their husbands. Traditional markers of respect accorded to male clergy are lost; in Selena's case she found people referred to her husband as reverend but not her. Kerstin has 'had people treat me like my job is a hobby', having served in prestigious roles she spent six years working as 'curate/assistant' to her husband, 'this was certainly where my career took a turn'. Tracy, with three postgraduate qualifications, has prioritised geographical convenience for her husband's ministry over professional status and advancement for herself.

Surveillance

Interviewees felt under surveillance both professionally and personally. Professionally judged by 'the hierarchy' (Tracy), facing 'the constant pressure to put bums on seats as the only measure of success' (Rachael). Rachael, Mary and Tracy feeling diocesan and national Church leaders judge but 'don't really understand'. The perceived judgement of the wider community weighed heavily on some 'the whole village wanted to have their say about the life of the church because it was their church – even though they never came' (Lily), 'sometimes it is hard to be the face of the church because people project so much on to you' (Kerstin).

Projections against which female clergy are judged also came in the form of expected modes of interaction, dress and homelife. Tracy felt that people governed their behaviour based on their expectations of her responses. Selena was criticised for having her hair 'cut like a man' and in turn criticises fellow female clergy for wearing 'jewellery and clanging bangles'. Judgements about homelife are based on perceived norms for women in the home 'assumptions about gender and parenting projected onto my husband and I for many years' (Selena). Where women are evaluated against the ideals of wife/mother and priest they have experience role stress, 'I can be a 'good' priest or a 'good' mother but I can't be both' (Tracy). As I explain below where female clergy live alone it is expected that the time not taken up with caring responsibilities be deployed to her ministry context.

Double damage

I have been unable to find another writer who has applied Coser's model to the Church. For that reason, I have demonstrated at length how the 'greedy collective' definition fits the Church. Although issues of family are used above to confirm that the Church is a greedy

institution, this section delves more deeply into the greedy family rather than the greedy collective. I will specifically explain how the Church, as a greedy collective, interacts with the greedy family to the mutual benefit of both institutions and the detriment of women. Further research is needed in this area. Despite the smallness of my sample, role stress relating to the status of ordained clergy wife, active in ministry and married to a male priest, stood out in a way that surprised me. In all but one case it brought significant stress when compared to single priests or those married to laymen. Topics might include; What is the experience of ordained clergy husbands in roles comparatively junior to their wives? My data suggests that role stress is lessened by a woman being senior to her husband, or her ordained husband being non stipendiary whilst she is stipendiary, but the sample is far too small to do anything other than suggest further research. Is ministry and marriage simply 'easier' for women because their lay husbands take on the role of clergy wife with all the negative demands it brings? What are the expectations on female clergy in Civil Partnerships, whether one or both is ordained? In both of these cases my research points to further research rather than offering definitive answers but it does echo the conclusions of Page's (2010) research.

In comparison to Ava (above), Kerstin, Katie, Selena and Tracy expressed some unhappiness with the significant personal sacrifices they had made, benefitting the Church and their families. Selena resigned from her job to enable her ordained husband to take up a prestigious post. At the time of the interview she did not have a paid role, and because of local concerns about women's ordination could not have a voluntary role in her husband's church. Ordained clergy wives Kerstin, Katie and Tracy have supported their families by sacrificing opportunities, status and income. Kerstin struggled with the demands of her dual roles explaining at one point she 'felt like I was going to dissolve under the pressure – I had to say to my husband that if he wants me to keep my job (and the bonus of my income and benefits) that he cannot always assume that I can pick up the domestic pieces'. Their husbands can focus on their work as priests unencumbered by most of the tasks of family life. As ordained clergy wives Kerstin, Katie and Tracy took on childcare, homecare and priestly tasks with little or no material reward. As a single mother Katie is solely responsible for childcare, she does this by sacrificing a full-time salary. Her family burden has increased whilst her income has decreased.

Kerstin is the most explicit about the pain of subordinating her own aspirations to her husband's and family's needs. She has not been able to proactively find a job that she really wants but has needed to 'fit in', allowing jobs to 'find me'. Her husband consistently put his own career above her own, 'My husband has said over and over – 'I will just apply for this job, and the next time you get to choose first.' Something that never happened. There was always another bigger job that he wanted and I followed along'. The Church sees her husband 'as the serious career cleric' but Kerstin believes his career is built on her sacrifice, writing that her husband:

'expects his wife's schedule to be the flexible one where she will drop everything to make sure the family is taken care of... I would say being a mother, for all of the wonderful gifts that has brought me, it has meant that the prestigious jobs have gone to my husband, and I have had to fit in.

The greedy collective of the Church presumes family life as the norm, absence of family is simply seen as time that the Church can rightfully claim as its own. Frame and Shehan's (2004) research showed:

Single women had particular challenges because, without a husband and children, they were presumed to be available all of the time. Moreover, they struggled to have a private life and to foster intimate relationships because they perceived themselves to be living in a fish bowl.

Lily and Liz, both single, are the only two interviewees to describe themselves as being lonely or having experienced loneliness. Liz describes a period of ministry 'driven by the diary' whereas married women and those with children experience role stress as multiple conflicting demands. Lily and Liz are drained by the impact of a single, demanding, diary. Greedy institutions erode external connections, the only exception being a link between the greedy collective and the greedy family.

For all the burdens family brings, those with the kind of family recognised as appropriate by the Church are able to deploy the demands of home life as a way to partially subdue the greedy behaviour of the Church. As with the expectations about location that Georgia hoped to exploit, expectations of parenting priorities were used by Mary to leave her job without being judged. Despite identifying, early in her post, the unrealistic level of work expected and a culture that frustrated her, she did not feel she could simply 'walk away' neither did she feel her unhappiness was being understood:

The escape route came via my son... If no one in the church hierarchy seemed to understand my anxiety about the direction the institution was travelling when I gently articulated it, everyone understood my need to be at the school gate.

Single women find it harder to establish a place they can step away from the demands of the Church. However demanding and complex the greedy family allows respite from the greedy collective, the Church, as evidenced by the warmth with which some women speak of children and husbands.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that the Church fits Coser's definition of a greedy institution, adding to the number of institutions to which his theory has been expanded since his death. It is a useful model when trying to understand the Church, appropriate as ordained women chose to opt into a restrictive situation rather than being explicitly coerced or confined. Coser also helps us grasp the compounded impact of expectations on women as a family members as well as workers. From this analysis I was able to identify potential stresses placed on ordained clergy wives and confirm real-life examples through the responses of my interviewees.

Training for women in the Church has focused on increasing their ability to cope in the Church as it is. Development has been focused on self-improvement within the existing model of Church. Coser helps diagnose an institutional problem, it is not women that need fixing whether by 'upskilling' or confidence building but the institutional culture that needs changing.

In the next chapter I explore how my interviewees have theorised the gender-based discrimination they have experienced and how they feel they should behave. This involves an examination of Church culture and some of the theological presumptions underlying the position of female clergy. Having framed the Church as a greedy institution and considered how my interviewees respond to its demands and expectations I will then introduce the work of Sara Ahmed as a tool to expose blockages to change.

Chapter Seven

The Interpretation and Justification of Discrimination

The previous chapter shows how the Church shares many of the features of a Greedy Institution prevalent in other organisations. The Church is not unique in having different expectations of women compared to men, Rachael observed that in many organisations 'A woman behaving in exactly the same pattern as a male colleague is labelled "aggressive", rather than "assertive", because women are expected (supposed to) adopt different behavioural norms'. Franzway concluded her examination of Australian Trade Unionism by reflecting that very few public institutions meet feminist criteria in leadership and, therefore, Trade Unions were no worse than other institutions (2000, p.261). This is not true for the Church with its unique decision to legislate for permissible discrimination alongside opening up opportunities. From a personal perspective it is certainly possible to take some comfort in the fact that a significant number of the challenges women face in one greedy institution are replicated in another. Female priests may be able to find allies amongst our sisters in the military, higher education and other greedy institutions. We can share learning about how situations have improved but that must not distract from the unique aspect of the Church, in which authorised discrimination is being nurtured and expanded.

In this chapter I will use examples from my interviews to illustrate the unique experiences of discrimination which the Act of Synod enabled. Coser stresses that membership of a greedy institution is voluntary, one chooses to join and remains bound through social expectations and perceived benefits. Having chosen to join, the more one gives to a greedy institution the closer a person is bound to it. In this chapter, building on references to Lewis-Anthony and Percy in the previous chapter I identify precisely what is the binding culture infusing the greedy Church at all levels. I will introduce the concept of a culture of conviviality before defining three ecclesiastical virtues, graciousness, integrity and conscience, which I argue arise from the culture, are shaped by it, and serve to sustain it. In Chapter Eight I will explore voluntary compliance with that culture and illustrate the nurturing and expansion of authorised discrimination. By interpreting their actions as in accordance with these virtues members of a greedy Church can see positive value in discriminatory practices towards female clergy.

In this chapter I draw heavily on the work of Sara Ahmed as I seek to understand the culture of the Church and where the blockages might lie for women seeking equality with men. Ahmed is a feminist, as am I, something that sets us apart from the majority of my interviewees. Having previously referred to discomfort with feminism amongst many female clergy this chapter examines the opinions about feminism held by the women I interviewed. I examine how they experience discrimination, the ways in which they process that experience, and the role feminism plays in their personal understanding.

Experiences of Exclusion

Women interviewed by Brodin in the late 1990s identified the dominant features of sex discrimination against female clergy. Brodin's evidence demonstrated that discrimination was subtle rather than blatant, predominantly informal especially through the influence of consciously and sub-consciously discriminatory networks and revealed that the Church was

fundamentally male oriented. Women were expected to 'join the boys' if they were going to be accepted (1997, pp.185f). The same pattern was discernible in the transcripts of my interviewees.

Theoretically the purpose of the Act, and subsequently the Five Guiding Principles, was simply to close certain posts to women and prevent female priests performing the liturgical acts of absolution, Eucharistic consecration and blessing in parishes which adopted one, or both, of the resolutions within the Act. Although Rachael describes her experience of the Act of Synod as simply 'there were jobs in the back of the Church Times that I could not apply for', from my perspective as I read the complete set of transcripts in one sitting, there was evidence that the Act of Synod had unofficially morphed into something that restricted women's ministry in other respects.

It is only fair to recognise that for some of my interviewees the Act of Synod was seen as a radically liberating piece of Church governance. Ava is clearest on the benefits of the Act of Synod as a force for good:

The great positive of the Act of Synod is that it has enabled all people to respond to God's calling and fully explore their vocation without obstacles and regardless of their gender. The other great positive is that it gives the church more integrity when it is trying to speak out on issues of equality and social justice. It's hard to do that and be taken seriously when inequality and injustice is inherent in the institution. Obviously the church is still battling with these issues with regard to sexuality but I feel it is in a better position than it was pre-1993.

I will argue that 'inequality and injustice' remains 'inherent in the institution' in relation to gender. It should be acknowledged that the same can be argued in relation to sexuality, ethnicity, disability, and other issues, but these are outside the scope of this research. However, putting the voices of the women alongside my own hypothesis, I need to represent the dichotomy amongst female priests. There is a glass half full and a glass half empty theology of the Act and the Principles, ranging from more than half full to almost drained to the dregs. I will explore why this might be in Chapter Eight but in this chapter I have drawn out from my data two striking side effects of the 'mission creep' that I feel point towards a glass more than half empty, the theology of taint and fractured collegiality.

Mission Creep: An apparent theology of taint

The Society of St Wilfred and St Hilda, established in 2010 to represent the interests of clergy and congregations opposed to the ordination of women denies the existence of a 'theology of taint'. Such a theology is understood to mean that the involvement of a woman in the celebration of Holy Communion, or a bishop who has ordained women in the consecration of a new male bishop, contaminates the rite. Using the example of an episcopal ordination the Society explains that restricting the moment of consecration to non-ordaining bishops is to 'guard the teaching and unity' of the 'Church catholic... and not because of any so-called 'doctrine of taint'' (The Society, undated, p.6). This restriction is maintained despite the claim in *A Catholic Life in the Church of England: A Statement of Policy and Pastoral Guidance by the Council of Bishops of The Society* that co-consecrators 'cannot be said to make the ordination of the bishop concerned, or the orders of those who he ordains, invalid' (ibid.).

Selena wrote that the early years of her ministry ‘was the time where the language associated with women ordained priest was that of contamination’. Ordination and the celebration of communion are physical acts in which it is possible for more than one priest to participate simultaneously. The logistics of who participates liturgically or not is managed in a very similar way to preventing the spread of a physical illness. It is acceptable to be in the same Church or singing the same hymns, what matters is physical proximity and touch. The importance of touch was highlighted during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020-21. Installations to new ministries for already ordained priests and ordinations both require public affirmations from a gathered congregation but only ordinations require physical contact. Installations went ahead on Zoom but ordinations were delayed until the physical element was made possible by the lifting of requirements for social distancing.

Liturgical distancing has much in common with the social distancing enforced to prevent transmission of disease. By raising their hands at the prayer of consecration or placing them on the shoulder of a fellow priest in a scrum of clergy gathered around a man or woman at the moment of ordination, many male and female clergy participate in the ministry of female priests and bishops. Physical actions are the benchmark of whether a priest who is not leading the service has shared in ordinations and occasions of Eucharistic concelebration. Selena believed this fear of cross contamination continues to reduce the number of services that are concelebrations of communion, something that saddens her. Selena also lamented the exclusion of female priests from the altar of the Anglo Catholic shrine at Walsingham, although respecting what she saw as a compassionate apology for any offence caused, ‘I was moved by the humility of the Guardian at Walsingham saying “we take this position (no women at the altar) in good faith. In years to come we may find we got it wrong”’. If, as the Society claims to believe, a female priest or bishop ministering as a con celebrant cannot invalidate the rite it is hard to understand their absolute exclusion.

‘Structural gymnastics’, the careful management of who does and does not participate in physical demonstrations of collegiality (Jagger, 2019, p.85), has been a factor in the ministry of my interviewees since their ordination. Jagger argues that this ringfencing is now a normalised part of day-to-day ministry for women and certainly both her interviewees and mine witnessed to its persistence as a ‘quasi-doctrine’ (ibid., p.64). In Liz’s case the bishop who had diaconally ordained her requested that a neighbouring bishop conduct her presbyteral ordination. Her own bishop attended but did not physically engage with the ordination, whilst liturgically distanced he was safeguarded from ordaining a woman. He took what The Society now refers to as his ‘duty as [a] catholic bishop(s) to follow the safest course in respect of the sacraments’ (The Society, undated, p.4).

The significance of touch is highlighted in Hayley’s account of a retired priest in her team who refused to attend her ordination, ‘I’d asked the team clergy to lay hands on me. He felt he couldn’t do that, and he didn’t want to be present and not lay hands on me. That, for him, would have given a divided message to our congregation and community. So he wouldn’t come.’ On some occasions at the ordination of men, ordained women are asked to stand aside. Hayley’s contribution paints a vivid picture of one such experience:

I was invited to the ordination of a chap who'd done a placement in the team. He was ordained in London diocese. During his retreat he rang his boyfriend to say that I needed to know that the bishop had warned he would not have any women in the chancel to lay hands on the candidates. This was so that others would not be offended or hurt. However, we were to robe and to sit with our colleagues. That was fine; it wasn't my show after all. I went with my male colleagues. There were just two women robing, and the other lady was unknown to me. We were seated in a large block at the front of the church. I think we probably took up 6 rows with the candidates seated in front of us. During the hymn before the ordination the clergy filed out. The bishop looked down into the congregation and shook his head as if he weren't happy, but the ordination continued. As the hymn finished I grabbed the other lady by the shoulder and she came and sat beside me. As I was about 3 rows back this meant there was this sea of empty pews around us. At the peace everyone came to greet us, most with tears, visibly upset. It was not an uplifting occasion! And afterwards the bishop sent word to us, via our newly ordained friends to say that this had not been his intention. He'd wanted us to go into the sanctuary and stand with everyone else. But he'd not done anything about it...

Male colleagues, themselves willing to work alongside female priests, sought to protect people who did not accept women's ministry from accidentally attending Eucharists led by women. Kerstin's training incumbent rang a congregation member to warn him whenever she would be celebrating communion. Hayley's cathedral reserved bread and wine blessed by a man for distribution to opponents attending services led by a woman. This one simple act led her to feel the cathedral, but also the diocese and local community, were 'closed' to her.

Kerstin describes this focus on the wellbeing of opponents during her curacy with anger, 'This was the kind of crap you were expected to shoulder as a woman – and the institutional church – because it wanted to respect both integrities was ill equipped to challenge this kind of behaviour'. Many of the situations that occurred in women's curacies around the turn of the century continue. For example, supplying public information about the gender of officiating clergy in churches which have not formally voted to restrict women's ministry remains contentious. Selena wrote 'It is sad that some churches still feel they should not publish the service rota so congregations can't find out in order to pick and choose what they attend according to which priest is presiding'. In 2018 a member of the public complained that Wakefield Cathedral did not include names on their list of services meaning he was unable to identify in advance the gender of celebrants. The Dean of Wakefield had declined his request for a list of the times that women would be celebrating communion on the grounds that the cathedral wished to stress the Eucharist, rather than the person celebrating it, was central (Fittall, 2019, p.4). A review of the complaint by Ombudsman William Fittall concluded that cathedrals had a duty of care to avoid causing pain (2019, p.38). It would be painful for a worshipper to arrive and discover that a woman would be celebrating communion, no mention is made of possible pain felt by female clergy who live with this decision.

Jagger (2019) describes the rejection of male bishops who have ordained women and the exclusion of women from some liturgical acts as part of a 'pollution-fixated narrative' which 'requires women priests to accept that they are disruptive to Church structure and the

personal consciences of some male clergy' (2019, p.86). Eglantine Jamet-Moreau, a non-Anglican who interviewed 40 female priests for a French academic publication in 2012, concluded that 'the idea of women's impurity and their seduction' is still a fundamental part of the debate concerning women's ordination (2012, p.171). Female priests are not merely teaching about God, they are through the performance of sacramental acts acting 'as the depository and the mediator of the divine grace' (2012, p.171). Whatever is written by opponents of women's ordination Jagger, Jamet-Moreau and I, as well as many of the women we interviewed, believed a theology of taint is implicit in the lived experience of liturgical distancing.

Mission Creep: Fractured Collegiality

Women also wrote about the strain the Act of Synod placed on collegiality within deaneries and dioceses. The Act provided 'an institutional way of dealing with the situation of people not wanting to come into contact with female priests' (Mary). Loneliness and isolation at clergy gatherings was often mentioned as an issue. Katie wrote that she was saddened by, 'the number of people (mostly but not exclusively men) who still think it is acceptable not to regard a woman as a priest - I'm not entirely sure how they do regard me - but the Act of Synod enables them to ignore my existence'. However good relationships initially feel, discovering that a person is opposed to the ordination of women damages the situation for Katie irretrievably:

I can meet and chat with new colleagues, become friendly - and then suddenly discover they are actually, personally, opposed to the ordination of women (the vote on women bishops at diocesan synod was a bit of an eye opener - x is generally such a pro women diocese!) - and this discovery changes the friendship irretrievably.

Where the situation is reversed and a woman knows the beliefs of a male priest before they know the individual, men needed to go out of their way if women were to feel valued. Emily writes of feeling 'on the edge' and isolated, 'Although these people (chapter colleagues opposed) have not been directly rude they have not gone out of their way to make chapter a welcoming place'. She has had to 'work hard to maintain a gracious stance'. The emotional burden of simply being a woman in a traditionally male space has not appeared to be acknowledged by male peers in the same space, for example in a cathedral chapter or diocesan senior staff. This lack of acknowledgement of women's stress is also felt to extend to the Church's leadership. Writing from the perspective of academia Bagilhole and Goode identify that women enter the working environment with significantly more challenges than men:

They face questions, usually unvoiced but still tangible, such as, 'Do women have what it takes to do this job?' For men, on the other hand, entry is perceived as 'natural'. Ironically, as a consequence of the academic patriarchal system, studies have shown that younger men felt able to ask for help from powerful superiors (Martin, 1996). They expect and assume this help as a right, whereas women are fearful of exposing what would be perceived as a weakness, and are therefore keen to succeed 'in their own right' to prove their worth.

(2001, p.174)

In the early years of their ministry women found themselves in clergy teams where their immediate colleagues rejected their ministry. Kerstin described a colleague who would not support her, nor renew his ordination vows alongside his parish colleagues, but was still willing to allow her to support him:

Fred was team vicar in our team. He was a member of Forward in Faith. He did not come to my ordination and didn't like to concelebrate with 'us women'. He was perfectly happy for me to cover his leave once priested and help out at the school where he was a governor. On Maundy Thursday he went to Chrism mass in Y; not with us at X Cathedral

Georgia and Ava drew attention to regional variation, describing how in some areas blocks of parishes opposed to the ordination of women formed. In other areas it is possible to spend years without being reminded of opposition before moving leads to a rude awakening. Ava describes parishes opposed to the ordination of women as disrupting the normal pattern of clergy collegiality, 'In my last Deanery... 2 churches are Forward in Faith and they exist as ghettos in the church community. There is no chance for them to learn and grow and they have also become a barrier to mission'. Having moved to a new post one woman found herself required to live and work in close proximity to an advocate for churches opposed to women's ministry. Adapted to preserve anonymity, she wrote:

I have found the last few months particularly taxing - not having been reminded of those who don't accept women as church leaders for many years', the individual was 'friendly' but he 'oppose(s) my orders, so I have found it deeply, inwardly uncomfortable.

Georgia and Liz are both experienced in senior leadership in the Church, neither believes that ordained men, whether supportive or not, nor the Church more widely, have taken full account of the personal cost to women of the current situation. In clergy teams male colleagues underestimate how even relatively senior women can feel marginalised and even excluded. Writing after women began to be consecrated as bishops Liz explained:

I don't think many ordained men have understood or have really sought to understand what it has felt like to be a woman priest or bishop, working in a church which has got around the equal opportunities act. To be talked about, debated about and then worked around (whilst in the 'room'). (adapted)

Liz and Georgia believe that by seeing both views as equally valid, that women can be and should not be priests, true collegiality becomes impossible. Jagger refers to this as the 'liminality' and 'marginality' of female priests who despite going through the ritual of ordination remain on the threshold of priesthood, denied the full inclusion offered to men (2019, p.64). Ordained women can be legitimately 'named as not priests', simultaneously priests in their own understanding and non-priests in the understanding of the Church (ibid., 63f). Georgia uses a scientific metaphor for this theological problem:

I have a logical problem with it - isn't it about time we take the lid off the Schrodinger's Cat's box. For now women clergy are in the position of being priests and not being priests at the same time - but we can't be both, yet that is how we are treated.

In Chapter Eight I will further explore what it is to be ‘made’ a priest and to be deemed to correctly inhabit the qualities of priesthood.

How did my interviewees process their experiences of discrimination?

Jagger and Jamet Moreau both analyse taint and fractured collegiality using a feminist interpretation of purity taboos. No one in my cohort, not even those interviewees who described themselves as feminist, approached the issue in such a directly critical way. Nevertheless, no one in the study claimed that the Church was without sexism. They all believed their situation differed negatively to that of male priests, with questions about discrimination and lack of affirmation answered readily with both examples and theories. These ranged from Katie’s theory that discrimination (whether sexism or on other characteristics) could be ‘well meaning’, to Mary who believed some opponents of women’s ordination are motivated by ‘hideous sexism’ (Mary’s comment is explored in detail later in this chapter).

Ava described conversations with conservative male ordinands whom she knew believed her unfit to lead a church, as something she appreciated. She was able to identify that gender was the basis of their belief that women should not be appointed to leadership roles but asserts that what matters is ‘not the views people hold but how they hold them’. Ava explains that she personally ‘has faced very little discrimination through being a female’ and did not reflect in her responses on how the views of her conservative peers may have affected other women. Hayley, who had been the first female chaplain in a large secular institution, identified positive discrimination; believing she was offered more opportunities because she was a woman. Having quizzed her manager about his motivations when asking her to give an interview for publication, she decided they were based on gender:

In the end he said something about me bringing a ‘fresh perspective’. Apart from being prepared to say honestly that it had been bloody hard work, the only fresh thing I brought was not being a man. We didn’t get to that specific level of conversation; it remained nuanced. But I said no. I think I said though that I wanted to leave it behind; I didn’t say ‘you’re just asking me because I’m a woman and that’s just daft’.

Women are aware that their gender has an impact on how they are treated, both positively and negatively, but they focused in their responses on how they accepted discrimination when it happens. Affirmative action on the grounds of gender was not welcomed. Hayley resented affirmative action based on sex just as Rachael resented being celebrated by her Archdeacon as the first female incumbent in a deanery. Rachael described his pride in her achievement as ‘irritating’ and wished she could have been inducted into her parish without comment. Rachael did not articulate a need to change the framework around women’s ministry but like Ava believes ‘Mutual respect for each other’s differences and each other’s manifest abilities goes a long way to building bridges’ (Rachael).

Rachael saw continuing parallels with the secular world, from her own early years of ministry to recent experience supporting young women in training. She observed there was ‘a more general misinterpretation of the way women have to be assertive in male-dominated environments’ rather than anything unique to the Church. According to Rachael the Church

was no worse than a comparable organisation and yet interviewees acknowledged that the Act of Synod made discrimination easier. The 'unspoken reality' (Emily) of the Act of Synod according to many women, is the creation of a culture of acceptable sexism. The terms of the Resolutions within the Act of Synod were clear, women could be excluded from all sacramental ministry or ministry as a church leader but only in the parishes in which they were passed. Churches which did not pass the Resolutions did not have permission to discriminate based on sex.

Despite this clarity women experienced unchallenged discrimination from parishes not covered by the Act. Emily had been asked to apply for the rectorship of a large evangelical church which had not passed the Resolutions. The rector of a neighbouring parish, which had passed the resolutions, had a role in the appointment although it was not solely his decision to make. Despite being asked to apply and advised that she was one of the strongest candidates she was not shortlisted, 'Everyone "knew" why they had chosen not to shortlist a single woman even though the job was for a parish that hadn't passed any resolutions'. She was left carrying a burden of pain and anger, 'That was a tough one to deal with and I have to work hard to let it go even now several years later'. Georgia had a senior role which gave her a broad view across a diocese, her transcript demonstrated that Emily's experience is replicated. In Georgia's area of ministry, larger churches that haven't petitioned for alternative oversight (the current phrase that has replaced adopting the resolutions) only appoint men.

As well as church situations beyond the scope of the Resolutions being managed as if they were in place, one interviewee experienced parishes applying the Resolutions in church schools. Describing how she had applied for non-parochial roles which did not include a liturgical ministry she wrote, 'it became quite apparent I could not be considered for some of these schools as they were Forward in Faith parishes and was therefore discouraged from putting in further applications'. Even in parishes where women's ministry was embraced women were still asked to step aside in situations where there was no provision for their legitimate exclusion. Ava, for example, described undertakers specifically requesting male priests. Mary describes the Act of Synod as legitimating sexism by allowing it to be recast as 'conscience', the Act has 'demeaned our humanity' and 'allowed the Bible to be used as a weapon'. Rachael, despite claiming in one answer the only impact on her was to restrict the posts she could apply for, in another answer wrote that the Resolutions created a climate in which models of Biblical male headship can acceptably be used to justify misogyny. The Act 'legitimises adverse discrimination' (Georgia) and gives nonresolution parishes 'permission to discriminate' (Tracy).

Emily's experience led her to theorise that many churches claiming to support women's ordination simply want a male priest. Ordinarily they should not act in a discriminatory way but by passing the Resolutions they were not penalised. Georgia, who is heavily involved in recruitment to parish roles wrote that the theology behind the Act of Synod and Mutual Flourishing 'legitimises adverse discrimination directly, and allows other situations where discrimination is less easily challenged'. In a situation where a parish without permission to discriminate does so anyway it is 'harder to challenge in a church which holds that two opposing views are equally valid' (Georgia).

My evidence, therefore, showed clearly that the Act of Synod was not causing women to flourish. Whilst there were strongly expressed feelings of both affirmation and diminishment across all areas of ministry, in the areas that were coded as fully or partly diminishing the Act of Synod featured disproportionately as a cause of diminishment. Overall 45% of all responses were coded as fully or mostly experiences of flourishing. In contrast, only 21% of responses related to the Act of Synod were coded as fully or mostly an experience of flourishing. In general, 44% of experiences were fully or partially diminishing but when the Act of Synod was specifically considered this rose to 60%. Evidence cited in Chapter Eight suggests the Five Guiding Principles which replaced the Act of Synod result in the same mission creep and diminishment.

Using feminism to respond to experiences of discrimination

Interviewees' attitudes to feminism

All the women who took part in my project theorised that the Act of Synod exacerbated sex discrimination, making it easier not harder to discriminate against a woman. Unlike me most did not adopt a specifically feminist critique in response to this situation. As someone who has drawn deeply on feminist theory and theology I wanted to understand why my sister clergy did not share my views.

Only Tracy and Kerstin explicitly named themselves as feminist. Katie referred to drawing on liberation theology whilst Mary and Jasmine expressed views aligned with feminism but did not explicitly refer to feminist theology as a resource. Tracy identified resources for her ministry in feminist theology rather than mainstream church teaching or networks, 'Rosemary Radford-Ruether, Mary Grey and Sallie McFague have been important in demonstrating how Feminist Theology can be both critical and creative in its response to the patriarchal tradition'. She interacts with feminist theology on the deepest of levels:

Janet Morley and her liturgies provide more creative ways and ideas for leading services; Bonnie Miller-McLemore's book, *Also a Mother* was crucial for me in trying to create my own understanding of priesthood and motherhood as was Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*. When I read both those books it was as if someone was actually speaking what I was actually experiencing and thinking.

Tracy found feminist theology fitted with her performance of her ministry whereas the theology associated with the historic male priesthood did not, 'There have been lots of feminist theologians but I do find the traditional understandings of priesthood very different to the realities of my own life and ministry'.

Mary and Jasmine considered women's ordination from an equal rights perspective, as a 'self evident piece of justice' (Mary). Jasmine believed the operation of the Resolutions and Five Guiding Principles should be as illegal in the Church as they would be in secular society:

I note that the female Dean of Anytown (named changed) has had a difficult reception from some of her cathedral staff who refuse her ministry and sit in the congregation rather than robing if she celebrates. I cannot imagine a management team in the secular world behaving in this way - the refuser would be sacked and would be unlikely to get another job. The church is so out of step with the modern world in my opinion.

In contrast to Tracy; Lily, Ava, Hayley and Selena found the actions of Anglican feminists in the 1990s problematic. Lily felt isolated whilst training, 'College was a very difficult place to be as it felt like all the other women were wildly feminist and my views were not easily tolerated'. She explained she 'was not a feminist and was not ready to go into a difficult situation'. Feminism was also associated with isolation and social discomfort by Hayley. At her college a group of women were attempting to 'feminise' the hymns and liturgy used in chapel. Hayley found 'the premise of the group alien and unfamiliar' and did not become a member. Ava briefly joined a women's group at college. Whilst she does not describe it as feminist its purpose seems to have been to specifically support women who were in the minority and facing difficulties. 'I was told it met regularly and was a place where women could chat, pray and encourage each other' but instead found 'a place where some of the women were airing a lot of grievances about certain tutors and students'. As a new student she found it challenging to be faced with so much negativity early on, although the women apologised 'It still left me feeling quite dispirited and I left as soon as I could and I did not go back'.

Selena was critical of women who, in the early years, would 'march and speak out in terms of their own rights rather than others' rights [this] has made me feel uncomfortable'. She did not want to be associated with 'a cause' or seen as outspoken. In later life she felt more positively about the value of the women who took a stand, 'I didn't like the reputation that some women were getting because of being outspoken and yet it is in a sense thanks to them that we have come to this point today'. For Hayley, discomfort with feminism has remained constant, she 'disliked the campaigning aspect' of the national celebration of 20 years of women's ordination at St Paul's Cathedral in 1994. She was also critical of the women who objected to the nomination of Philip North (see Chapters Two and Four) as Bishop of Sheffield.

I felt that the way in which female priests (especially) spoke about him and his possible ministry in Sheffield was utterly unacceptable. Young women especially, who had no concept of what it is to truly live with dual integrity, to work alongside men of great grace and integrity, or even men who can't get their heads round it all.

For the majority of my interviewees feminism is not an analytical tool they readily turn to, nor have they felt at home in feminist communities.

Responding to Institutional Sexism using the work of Sara Ahmed

Coser's model has allowed me to understand discrimination experienced by female clergy as an issue of institutional Church culture, a culture of which the Act of Synod is a symptom rather than the cause. For Sara Ahmed 'the personal is institutional' (Mehra, 2017) and in her work I found the tools to deconstruct the culture Coser had helped me identify. Ahmed's writing critiques the institutional culture of higher education which, as I have shown in Chapter Six, has parallels with the Church. Church culture governs how women's priesthood is discussed, Jagger's research led her to conclude that 'the notion of female belonging in the priesthood [is] being shaped by institutionally legitimised discourses' in which female protest is 'framed as inappropriate whilst those who reject female priesthood are framed as vulnerable and requiring protection' (2019, pp.228f). As an educator Ahmed is committed to helping students 'acquire the words' to articulate their experiences of exclusion (2017a, p.33). I hope to help my sister clergy find the confidence and the words to frame the debate in a language

of their own choosing and in turn challenge the institutional culture restricting women's ministry.

Many aspects of Ahmed's work appealed to me but in particular her repeated use of the family meal, as both a practical and metaphorical illustration transposed easily to my context. Christian theology does the same, making use of both literal and metaphorical table stories. In her blog, *Feminism is Sensational*, Ahmed gives practical examples of causing 'bother' at her own family meals. She describes the impact of challenging paternal aspirations or expected standards of dress, before developing a broader metaphor for her work in diversity within Higher Education. The family table she wrote, is supposed to be a site of happiness:

Effort is expended in keeping it so, we polish the table so it reflects back the image of the happy family even more strongly. Polishing drains us of energy, not polishing gets in the way of happiness. Not wanting the things presumed to be 'the right things' by others at the table tarnishes the table itself.

(2017a, p.53).

Ahmed extends her table metaphor to her experience of bringing up racism and sexism within the academy. Writing of the experience of raising the issue of her own negation in meetings and committees she explains that other academics believe her to be interrupting a happy occasion. Women and people of colour are seen as having entered a space not intended for them (2017a, p.9). The implication is that the academy would be happier without them. When women and people of colour are included and suffer negation they should not draw attention to this experience. There are many resonances here with work referred to in my literature review about female priests' attempts to blend into a masculine church as well as my own interviewees' contributions.

Ahmed's concept of 'non-performativity' is especially useful as it helps me explain why women have remained in less powerful positions than men despite their entry into all areas of ordained ministry. Non-performativity occurs 'when naming something does not bring something into effect' (2017a, p.106), when the weight of the past does not allow a 'yes' to gain the force needed to bring something into effect. It is a concept Ahmed developed based on her experience of the implementation of diversity policies in Higher Education, policies that were signed off by governing bodies but did not often result in change. Her research revealed policies can even be used to 'reblock' the system they were intended to 'unblock' (2017a, pp.102ff). After defining the institutional culture that I believe confines women I will outline the basic details of the ecclesiastical virtues that were used to 'reblock' the system after the 1992 vote. In Chapter Eight I will explore the practical operation of this 'reblocking'.

Conviviality: Strengthening the hold of the Greedy Institution

For Ahmed, the defining institutional cultural norm of both family and university is joy, but I do not believe this is the defining institutional norm for the Church. In the contexts Ahmed knows best, if women and others who do not truly belong are urged to resist discrimination and marginalisation, happiness must not become their 'cause' (*The killjoy manifesto* blog). In *The Promise of Happiness* Ahmed explains 'To kill joy... is to open a life, to make room for life, to make room for possibility, for change. My aim in this book is to make room' (2010, p.20).

Theologies of sacrifice and servanthood do not point towards joy as the defining norm of Church culture; therefore, what is the 'cause' female priests are expected to serve?

I have shown that women found the room they needed to flourish in inverse proportion to their proximity to the institutional centre, the closer to the centre they went the less 'room' or space they had. Jagger came to the same conclusion, women cannot find space at the centre and whilst marginality can be intentionally space giving it is more often 'an undermining push by the crowd of orthodoxy' (2019, p.68). As I conclude in Chapter Five, women face institutional ambiguity about their status which worsens as they become more rewarded with pay and status. Ahmed suggests steps which could be taken to build a Church unambiguously open to women in all roles. Using Ahmed's language, I asked myself what should be killed to allow women to freely occupy the roles they choose throughout every area of the Church?

Unlike Ahmed's institutional community, when the Church family gathers, literally or metaphorically, it is not in the expectation of happiness and so a 'killjoy' theology did not seem to be appropriate. Themes of brokenness and servanthood are at the heart of what Christian table fellowship aspires to be, joy is not seen as the ultimate purpose of a Eucharistic service. In the last supper Christ points towards the breaking of his body, he acts as a servant to his disciples and refers to his betrayal. He does not urge them to be happy. Neither do the Five Guiding Principles, the final official iteration of where the Church stands on the issue of female priests, claim to be able to create a happy or joyous Church. The Faith and Order Commission admits that the denial of women's priesthood is often a source of pain and that 'There is however no simple way to close the gap here so that the tension vanishes' (FAOC, 2018, p.21). The Church desires 'conciliarity' rather than happiness in legal, structural, and human relationships, although it does not describe in detail what this is (ibid., p.22).

Having dismissed happiness or joy as the key element of ecclesiastical culture, over a period of weeks in conversation with friends and colleagues I considered three possibilities that occurred to me from the experience of my interviewees and wider reading; politeness, comfort and conviviality. Percy and Lewis-Anthony's works on the expectation of politeness resonated deeply with me, also familiar was Bishop Penny Jamieson's description of the pull she feels from 'comfort'. Jamieson described the urge at times to turn aside from challenging male normativity, describing it as a temptation to 'snuggle' into the mystique of institutionalism and tradition (1997, p.4). Both politeness and comfort appealed to me but I have opted for conviviality as the ecclesiastical alternative to Ahmed's institutional happiness. It was the implication that conviviality expected action from the person responsible for the cultural tone of the Church. In Liz's contribution she wrote that she struggled with being 'expected' to both speak in debates about women's ordination and listen quietly whilst arguments against the ordination were made. Comfort and politeness, I decided, are implicit in conviviality, but I felt conviviality expected more action from the host than either of those values.

A convivial occasion is one which is 'social', even 'jovial', hosts have a proactive part to play in setting the tone of 'conviviality' (Chambers Dictionary, 1991, p.224). Being polite, not saying the wrong thing, is implicit in conviviality as is the expectation that if the guest says the wrong thing the host will work hard to put right the offence. The person burdened with the task of ensuring an occasion remains convivial puts herself to inconvenience for the sake of her guests,

just as Liz felt she was required to do in the Synodical process. Conviviality is also associated strongly with meals, the Eucharistic meal and family mealtime both being situations of stress for the women I interviewed. Within the Church, Jagger wrote, female priests are portrayed as both 'causers' and 'soothers' of pain (2019, p.229), coinciding with my belief that female priests were given primary responsibility for keeping the Church convivial after the disruption wrought in 1992.

Interviewees demonstrate how convivial culture functions. Selena's contribution in particular links practical and theological table fellowship. For 'the sake of a quiet evening' when entertaining friends of her husband's opposed to the ordination of women they would simply not mention her ministry. In effect it would be as if she were not a priest for the duration of the visit. Emily's relationship with Gordon, a colleague during her curacy, demonstrates how conviviality is used as a virtue to give a positive impression of experiences of discrimination:

I knew two things about him when I arrived in the parish; he knew a lot about BCP and he didn't agree with the ordination of women to the priesthood... By the end of my first year we obviously got along sufficiently well for me to ask him to my priesting. And one day he quietly took me aside and said he wouldn't be coming. He had been planning to, but I'd asked the team clergy to lay hands on me. He felt he couldn't do that, and he didn't want to be present and not lay hands on me. That for him would have given a divided message to our congregation and community. So he wouldn't come. It wasn't said with any judgement, any negativity whatsoever. And I completely understood his position.

Further reflecting on her experience Emily demonstrates the importance to her of social displays of unity:

I still look back to my leaving lunch in 1999 with great affection because of Gordon. My Team Rector had given a speech and a presentation and then Gordon came up to speak. He was so very gracious and lovely. He said that in me he had seen 'true priestly formation'. What an amazing experience.

Female clergy and their opponents worked together at times to create the impression of a convivial, literal or metaphorical table gathering. In my transcripts social occasions are used to illustrate how interviewees sustain relationships with opponents. In convivial institutions expectations of politeness fall more heavily on women. Rachael, for example, believed that her training incumbent expected her to demonstrate more deference because of her gender, noting in his report on her, "There is a difference between aggression and assertiveness. I recommend some work on this." which I found pretty traumatic'.

Bagilhole describes the Church context as one of 'homosociability' (2002, p.131), in which women use energy simply to exist in male territory. Maintaining ecclesiastical conviviality is costly for women who are likely to be also attempting to maintain acceptable institutional norms in relation to their position as wife, mother, grandmother or other 'family' role. Ahmed describes this burden as 'passing' (2017a, pp.126ff); the effort involved in becoming less intrusive, allowing 'others to pass over what makes you a stranger when you cannot eliminate what makes you a stranger' (2017a, p.128). It is a costly exercise, female priests must 'pass'

against the stereotype of the male priest, ideally a married man who is young, physically able, and white. Just how costly is affected by how much is entailed in the process of eliminating what makes them different to the stereotype. Interviewees had some awareness of what made it harder or easier to fit in, Kerstin for example theorised that looking as if she 'was straight out of central casting' made it easier for her to fit in as a young priest. Another priest reflected that a distinctive feature of her appearance made her less attractive to parishes looking for the ideal young vicar. When looking for new jobs divorce was also felt to be more disadvantageous to female priests in comparison to men in the same situation.

'Passing' can be achieved by trying to be less noticeable, building rapport, smiling more often and softening one's appearance. Institutional passing can involve minimising signs of difference from institutional norms or maximising signs of difference from expectations. Kerstin took care to blend into male networks, another referred back to a previous career that allowed her to be accepted as one of the men by male colleagues. Page's work and my own showed how some female priests carefully minimised their femininity when choosing clothes and jewellery. 'Passing' builds a convivial culture in which women are seen as less demanding and less intrusive. For both women and men further removed from the institutional ideal of the perfect priest the cost of passing into or through an organisation is higher (2017a, p.126). Those who wish to pass into a convivial Church must demonstrate that they are willing to ease the burden of their own difference for others (2017a, p.131). Ahmed's 'Killjoy' behaviour is simply refusing to be made happy by what others around the domestic or institutional table believe are the right things. In the Church's case, killing conviviality means refusing to accept the dominant narrative of what makes a good church or a good priest.

The Three Ecclesiological Virtues sustaining Conviviality

In the opening lines of *Greedy Institutions* Coser lays out his theory that the greed of institutions arises from the need of all organized groups to 'harness human energies to their purposes' (1974, p.1). To retain the energy organisations must evolve ways of activating loyalty and commitment in their members to ensure they choose to remain part of the organisation. A culture of conviviality, politely staying silent, submitting to expectations that she restrain the full expression of what God has called her to, is voluntarily borne by women. This voluntarism is the key difference between Goffman's theory of Total Institutions and Coser's of Greedy Institutions. Goffman's term, which Coser was reacting against, characterizes institutions that have physical barriers between them and the outside world, individuals sleep, play and work within the same sphere inside the barrier. Greedy institutions do not have guards and fences, but 'tend to rely on voluntary compliance, and to evolve means of activating loyalty and commitment' (Coser, 1974, pp.5ff.) Coser describes this individual loyalty and commitment as a scarce commodity, the finitude of which leads organisations to develop 'mechanisms which ensure that people will be sufficiently loyal even in the face of competing appeals from other sources' (ibid.). These competing sources could be practical in the case of activities undertaken or ideological, expressed in different opinions about the values of the greedy institution. Different opinions about equality for women could be understood as a competing source of values.

Female priests must entirely identify with the role of 'woman priest'. This is the case even where there is significant role conflict with other identities such as mother or clergy wife.

Ordained women complete the tasks of priesthood and womanhood, they provide the Church with labour as well as labouring to ease the pain the fact of this labour has caused in others. Ordained women may embody the hopes of generations of campaigners for women's ordination, but they have been required to maintain a convivial atmosphere by not pressing home a call for full equality as they work hard at the tasks of ministry.

Members of greedy institutions are not forced into a way of behaving; they are enticed by feeling that this is the right thing to do. In a faith-based organisation this enticement may involve practical rewards, such as housing and income, social activities and sometimes ceremonial status. My transcripts show faith communities taking on some of the roles of family and friends, for example interviewees referred to help with childcare and pastoral care in times of crisis such as bereavement. On one level this is encouraging but it sits alongside interviewees lamenting separation caused by unavoidable location disruption. Interviewees complained of the difficulty of involving parents and friends in their lives and the lives of their children, as well as disruption to preferred patterns of education for their children. More research is needed to see whether the competing demands of clergy's personal lives are crowded out by the demands of a greedy church.

Above all, as I demonstrated when discussing 'calling' in Chapter Five, loyalty is grounded in theology making women vulnerable to unhealthy interpretations of what it means to behave well as a priest. As a greedy organisation wishing 'to capture the total personality of their members in order to harness them to the collective tasks' (ibid., p.15), the Church must shape fundamental beliefs about what makes a good Church and what is a good performance of the role of 'woman priest'. These beliefs must be sufficiently strong to encourage ordained women to relinquish competing anchors for their social identity. Ordained women must find their identity solely anchored in the 'symbolic universe' (ibid., pp.7ff) of a post-1994 Church. Sustaining a Church in which women priests are both problematic disrupters of tradition and a missional and practical resource requires demands for full equality are set aside.

Greedy institutions fashion members 'into an image that serves their needs' (ibid., p.18), the ecclesiology of a convivial Church has crafted the identity of a 'woman priest' as someone who serves whilst taking on responsibility for the disruption her service causes. To achieve this, using Coser's language, the Church has 'minimised' or even 'surgically removed' sources of contradictory expectations from outside partners about equality whether in the workplace or priesthood. In their place I believe the Church has evolved three new ecclesiastical virtues giving worth and meaning to women whose identity is anchored in the role of woman priest. The virtues of graciousness, integrity, and conscience sustain the convivial atmosphere that keeps ordained women in a more restricted space than men. Words with a long history in Anglican theology have been repurposed to define a model of priest that prioritises continuity and stability over change and creativity.

Graciousness

In Selena's interview she explains that even those who did not object to women's ordination disliked the disruption women brought to the old way of being priests:

There were also some men who even accepted women's ministry who had to adapt to having them as equal colleagues in the workplace, as in other walks of life and work. Some felt they lost their comradeship, community of Brother Priests.

Graciousness in relation to women's ministry is associated with restraint, it is what women are asked to do to minimise disruption to the Church's 'community of Brother Priests'. Although it does not feature in the Act of Synod, the Five Guiding Principles, nor FAOC's study guide to the Five Guiding Principles (see Chapter Two) graciousness occurs repeatedly in my transcripts. The FAOC guide simply states that the Principles 'are not about defining the minimum which is required for fulfilment of the law, but rather an invitation to all to act with maximum grace – with sharp challenges thereby being posed for everyone involved' (2018, p.11).

The absence of a discussion of 'graciousness' in the FAOC report is unexpected as it was significantly linked with expected behaviour in relation to women's ordination by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 2015. Archbishops Welby and Sentamu began to use the term just as my interviews began, specifically in response to women's consecrations as bishops. At the ordination of Philip North as Bishop of Burnley the Archbishop of York called for 'gracious restraint', denying that his decision that only 'non ordaining bishops' participate was 'influenced by a theology of taint' (Sentamu, 2015). A month later the Archbishop of Canterbury repeated the phrase in the House of Lords 'I believe that the five principles in the House of Bishops' declaration, which formed part of the General Synod's agreement to women bishops, require a degree of gracious restraint and forbearance on all sides' (Welby, 2015).

Women in my study are gracious by staying silent and accepting requests not to participate in certain services. Selena recounted self-silencing whilst a guest, 'in respect for the host we didn't dwell on or even speak about my ordination', she felt 'in some Church circles that my ordination isn't valid, and its best to keep quiet'. Hayley described replying to a sexist comment 'in my head' rather than to the person that made it. Gracious self-silencing about discrimination against women extends beyond the woman affected; in Emily's description of not being shortlisted for a post (see above) she notes that 'everyone' knew why, yet no one commented.

Graciousness is seen as an internal Church virtue whereas allegations of sexism are associated with outside influence, Coser's contradictory sources. When considering criticism of the appointment of Philip North, Selena wondered whether involvement of the media had encouraged open opposition, 'I think that some of the responses reported lack grace and displayed spitefulness instead of love and this situation appears to have reopened wounds and previous hurts. I would be interested to hear how this may have worked without the media involvement'.

Graciousness is most often a behaviour associated with women but it is also used by women about the behaviour of those who disagree with their ordination, the word appears in Emily's description of a tribute paid by an opponent (see above). Selena sees grace in Philip North's alleged willingness to work with female clergy despite not being willing to share in ordinations or the celebration of communion with a woman:

His willingness (North) to be a minority voice was gracious at one level an opportunity for reconciliation, I could not have imagined some anti women priests wanting to work with women in any capacity. Perhaps this could have been a bridging period?

Graciousness is the mechanism which sustains the culture of conviviality, the transcripts reveal the strain gracious restraint places on women. Mary refers to 'graciousness' when describing the behaviour senior staff expected towards opponents of women's ministry, 'Initially, I told him [her bishop] that I found that difficult sometimes, but I would do my best'. In 2012, when the vote to consecrate women as bishops failed at General Synod she could no longer suppress her feelings:

I had struggled to be 'gracious' I had always tried to be open-hearted and generous I took my gloves off and told him I was sick of being gracious and that now I was just plain angry. To give him his due, he stopped using the word immediately.

Graciousness she continues, demands more from a clergywoman than simply being 'openhearted and generous', it is costly. Gracious priests do not push people to change, it requires hard work and becomes wearisome. Emily wrote:

I believe that for most people who are constantly maturing and moving forward in faith (really moving forward, unlike maybe the 'movement' by that name) that their beliefs and integrities may well change over time, and that to be ungracious and compelling of them to move ahead of when they are ready is not helpful or Christlike. However - my experience has not always been positive and I've had to work hard to maintain that 'gracious' stance!

Women maximise their efforts to fit in and minimise themselves by not speaking out. To speak up can be risky; Kerstin relates an occasion when she was interpreted as behaving ungraciously as she attempted to speak out about ill treatment from an opponent of women's ordination:

I was not supported in any other way by the PCC or the vicar because it was seen as teething pains over the recent ordination of women to the priesthood. When I spoke up for myself and said that the behaviour that this woman was displaying was abusive, I was told that it was essentially my fault and I was not helpful to the situation because I was a woman. Not because of anything I had done, or said, but merely for being a woman.

In her transcript Kerstin notes that she did not speak of this experience in public for over two decades.

Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2009) in *Behind the Mask of the Strong Black Woman, Voice and the Embodiment of a Costly Performance* describes how women who are constrained by the normative values of their context practice 'a costly form of self-silencing, which can become embodied as physical and psychological distress' (2009, pp.108-9). In the case of Black women this can involve masking pain with personal shows of strength rather than advocating for change (ibid.). The women I interviewed, whilst all identified as white, masked critical opinions and painful experiences of exclusion with graciousness. A number equated ill health, physical and mental, with their ministry situations suggesting an embodied response to costly self-

silencing. Graciousness used in this way is an example of what Ahmed describes as rapport building (Ahmed, 2017a, pp.130f). Any stereotype that is held within an institution in which a person appears as a stranger, in this case the stereotype of a woman priest, requires the emotional labour building of rapport. Graciousness as a means to build rapport results in 'perpetual self-questioning' (ibid.) which I believe in the case of female priests focuses on choices about airing opinions, liturgical participation, and decisions about whether to prioritise home and personal commitments over Church obligations.

Conscience

Jane Steen, at the time of writing *Archdeacon of Southwark*, is a priest of my generation who has made a detailed examination of the use of 'conscience' in debates about women's ordination. Steen argues that since 1992 conscience's relationship to the good of the whole has been weakened. Conscience has taken on the meaning ascribed to it by those who claimed it most vociferously, 'those opposed to the move rather than those who supported it. Conscience became as much the locus of pain caused by another's action as it was an inner faculty for self-guidance' (2019, p.289).

Opposition to women's ordination expressed as a matter of conscience, rather than preference alarmed Mary:

We need to be so careful with our language and what it conveys. This phrase suggested that those who opposed the ordination/consecration of women were taking some principled stand, martyr-like, against a monstrous regiment. The people I have met over the years who are opposed to the ordination/consecration of women are, generally, polite, decent and prayerful Christians, who, by their own admission 'just don't like the idea'.

Steen believes 'the Church of England has left "conscience" behind as a means whereby to determine the right course of action in particular circumstances'. The payment of 'compensation/conscience money' (Selena) lobbied for by the campaign group 'Cost of Conscience' gave conscience an actual value and brought the term into common use. Steen argues that the transition in the meaning of conscience was 'neither immediate nor total' but gradually more traditional ethical uses, such as Bishop Bell's opposition to saturation bombing in World War Two, became relatively isolated (2019, pp.305f). The word is changed from an intellectual concept to an emotional one, 'imbued [it] with connotations of pain, oppression and exclusion which subtly changed its moral valence' (2019, p.304).

For Steen, the way in which conscience is applied to opinions regarding women's ordination is a departure from the Church's traditional understanding. Clergy have historically been diligent about matters of conscience so 'all Christian people can be assured that they live in accordance with the law of God' (2019, p.296). Conscience for Anglicans may be internalised but it should not be privatised, an individual conscience should serve the good of the whole. In the period between the first ordinations in 1994 and the 2012 debate, Steen believes, 'Aching hurt had become conscience's new normative association. A faculty or habit which once governed an individual's action seemed now rather to feel the individual's response to the actions of others' (2019, p.304).

Providing discrimination with an ecclesiological defence allows what might be understood as sexism in some contexts to be ascribed with virtue. Mary explains how conscience was used to deflect criticism of opponents:

not all of them have been decent: not the ones who have referred to women as ‘priestesses’ or sent horrible letters, or demeaned our humanity, or used the Bible as a weapon in debate, or duped well-meaning bishops. To dress up hideous sexism as ‘conscience’ is not good (Mary).

‘Conscience’ is deployed to reinforce expectations that women must govern their behaviour by modelling a ‘gracious’ response. Putting opposition to women’s ordination on the same level as the Conscientious Objectors of the First World War or hunger striking suffragettes raises the stakes. Uniquely amongst decisions made by General Synod since 1992, only objections to changes on women’s ministry are afforded conscientious protection. In her blog Ahmed wrote of female students who begin ‘with an experience you have that gives you a sense of injustice, a feeling that something is wrong or a feeling of being wronged... why for instance being a girl is about what you cannot do, where you cannot go’. A young ordinand wanting to ask, ‘why won’t my diocesan bishop ordain me?’ is in a more difficult position if her bishop is understood to be making a conscientious stand than if he was merely seen as discriminatory. The redefinition of conscience suppresses critical questioning.

Integrity

The principle of two integrities, generally understood by my interviewees that it is acceptable to teach that women should, and should not be, ordained within the one Church has surrounded the ordination of women from the outset. Jones (2004) believes that in the period between 1992 and 1994 the ‘bishops’ commitment to “maintain the integrities of both positions” ... bequeathed to popular Anglican phraseology [the view] that the Church was henceforth divided into “the two integrities” (2004, p.178). Bray, (2002) whose argument is quoted in the House of Bishops Working Party on Women in the Episcopate (2004) shows how an opponent of women’s ordination could develop a phrase intended to relate to the pastoral care of both sides of a fierce debate into a definition of the ‘two integrities’ that precludes the ordination of female bishops:

Those who favour women bishops are not opposed to having men, but those who do not will not accept women, which means that if the two integrities are to be held together, only men can be appointed as bishops. To appoint a woman bishop would be to split the church by denying the legitimacy of one of the integrities.

(2002, pp.15f)

The legacy of the ‘two integrities’ as a concept lingers on with both the Faith and Order Commission and the Independent Reviewer (Philip Mawer) of the implementation of the Five Guiding Principles, feeling the need to clearly warn against its use. To behave as if there were ‘two ecclesiological integrities within the Church of England’ is a ‘misuse’ of the Act of Synod according to FAOC (2018, pp.28f). Mawer, when reviewing the appointment of Philip North as Bishop of Sheffield, found that clergy and laity believed in the two integrities. He explains why they should not:

Although some continue to claim that, in ‘Bonds of Peace’ and the subsequent Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod, the Church of England recognised the existence of two integrities on the subject of women’s ordination to the priesthood, this is not the case. What the Church did do was recognise the existence of two views on the matter, either of which could be held with integrity, and which the arrangements made were intended to hold within the one integrity of the Church.

(Mawer, 2017, p.55)

Bray, FAOC and Mawer all demonstrate how theology takes on a life of its own, whatever its official definition. Whether the Church officially believes in two integrities or not it is a theology which most of my interviewees raised without me mentioning. Eight women included it in their replies illustrating that it is a concept that they encounter regularly.

Rather than official reports, experience forms women’s opinions about the ecclesiology the Church really believes. Kerstin explains two integrities as, ‘the double integrity, if you do not believe in women priests that is okay, and the Church will bend over backwards to make sure that you never have to hear one preach or take communion from them’. The distinction between what is expressed by FAOC and Mawer as ‘official’ theology, and experienced by women as lived theology, illustrates Ahmed’s distinction between policy and practice. Bray’s use of the theology of two integrities comes ten years after the 1992 Synod vote, the sustained presence of two integrities theology is evidenced in reports 21 years (FAOC) and 23 years (Mawer) after the first women became priests. In institutional terms, my interviewees’ experiences with the theology of taint and the two integrities show a gulf between official written statements and lived experience. Ahmed’s critical model of non-performativity shows clearly that the Church has not truly lived as if a decision to change has been made (Ahmed, 2017a, p.106).

The language of integrity, singular, is how some women individually explain maintaining civil relationships with opponents. Interviewees respected and understood personal integrity expressed as dissenting opinions and choices:

It’s about integrity isn’t it? About not feeling all the time that one’s loyalties are divided. I think if I did feel that way I would have broken away from the C of E a long time ago. But somehow we manage to rub along don’t we? Somehow we hold the fragments together (Rachael).

Women could accept that a neighbouring clergyman might disagree with their ordination but resisted any sense that the Church validated both his opposition and her orders simultaneously. Integrity becomes an ecclesiological virtue, integrities rather than integrity, when it is alleged that it is possible for ‘dual integrity’ or ‘two integrities’ to coexist with equal affirmation from the Church.

Ava gives a good summary of the conflicted position my interviewees found themselves in. She was first made aware of the principle before offering for ordination whilst on a preselection placement in her early twenties. Over the course of her ministry she has understood it as flawed but necessary:

I recognise that this vote and its consequences represented a huge paradigm shift for the Church and it was right to be sensitive to peoples' feelings. I know there was a lot of scaremongering too about the numbers who would leave in protest so I know that there were a lot of factors to be considered.

At the same time I feel that if the vote was seen as God's will and the right way forward for the Church then the Church should have had the courage of its convictions. The idea of two integrities is oxymoronic; both technically and as a pun! It was about appeasement and there didn't seem to be much thought given to the long-term impact of allowing churches to opt out of women's ministry.

The principle of the 'two integrities' is the element of the Church's response to women's ordination which most women in my study felt most able to criticise. The 'graciousness' extended to individual opponents is less happily extended to the institution as a whole:

What we had, of course, was a Church that had made a decision and acted upon it (ordaining women as priests), and then tried to create a system for people who didn't like that decision. I had no problem with that per se: what I disliked, always, was the idea that the people who disliked a decision (over which we had taken much prayer and discussion) were assumed to have parity. They had an 'integrity' that was equal to the Church's 'integrity'. This was utter nonsense, but it came to be a phrase everyone used, so then it assumed some sort of validity, even though it was founded on nonsense (Mary).

In her replies Tracy wrote that the two integrities attempted to frame opponents as victims, 'the church will ordain women but allow abusive behaviour toward women to be tolerated because those who did not like women priests were the real victims'. All contributions on this topic expressed the belief that, to a greater or lesser degree, the implementation of 'dual integrity' policies favoured opposition over the wellbeing and affirmation of female clergy. Attempting to work within 'the two integrities' causes inner conflict, increasing the burden female priests have to bear. Emily wrote, 'I respect the fact that some people have different views to mine' but 'in some senses particularly struggle with the concept of two integrities. What I deep down try to believe and practice is often different to how I feel'.

It is clear from the transcripts that women believe that they are personally affected by the theology in a way that opponents are not. Based on Mawer's definition, the Church should accept the ordination of women as a true and lawful fact. Alongside this absolute affirmation the Church should permit dissent and accommodate the dissenters for pastoral reasons. The persistence of an unsanctioned understanding that both views are equally valid rather than one being correct and the other being an acceptable divergence from the Church's core belief shows that ordained women are not experiencing full inclusion and affirmation. Women's experience demonstrates the persistence of dual integrity theology whatever the official position. This theology is deeply, personally, undermining, 'my curacy was really difficult because of the "two integrities" and members of the congregation who were anti-women priest (i.e. anti-me) so it was a struggle' (Kerstin).

Conclusion

As established in Chapter Five, women have voluntarily chosen to join an existing model of priesthood. In this and the preceding chapter I have shown that women accept limitations which they admit are burdensome and in the case of the Act of Synod have wider reaching consequences than first intended. Their transcripts show that within the community of priests collegiality is fractured and behaviour characteristic of habits associated with the theology of taint is regularly experienced. Women processed discrimination in varied ways but all acknowledged a culture in which gender-based discrimination was broadly acceptable. The embedding of this discrimination was enabled by a culture of conviviality suppressing challenge. Within this protected space a new interpretation of virtuous behaviour arose redefining conscience, graciousness and integrity.

In the next chapter I contrast these new virtues with the expectations of the pioneering campaigners for women's ordination. I illustrate how the Act is now understood as essential enabling legislation by a misremembering of history. Misremembering and the culture of conviviality has given the Church power to reblock systems it appeared to be unlocking for women. Ordained women whilst privately critical continue to accept these restrictions, interpreting them from the narrow perspective of their place in the Church of England rather than believing them to have any wider relevance. I raise the question, inspired by the pioneers for women's ministry; what would happen were we to believe the ordination of women and its concomitant restrictions have wider repercussions for women and other marginalised people beyond the Church of England?

Chapter Eight

Legacy, Responsibility, and Being Bothersome

Introduction

In this chapter I will consider what lived experience of the practical implementation of women's ordination reveals about the institutional culture of the Church. The chapter addresses why women's ordination fell short of initial aspirations and identify where and how Ahmed's 'reblocking' has occurred. Revisiting the hopes of the pioneering campaigners for women's ordination I will identify what has been achieved in the experience of the women I interviewed. However, I conclude their vision for a re-formed Church has failed to materialise, prevented by a convivial culture requiring ordained women to inhabit qualities, a phrase used in the appraisal of new clergy explained below, qualities that minimise disruption to historic institutional norms. Looking ahead I consider whether women could and should choose to behave badly in institutional terms. I point to areas of intersectionality which I believe make challenging institutional culture essential for priests wishing to fully inhabit the qualities of their calling.

Women's progress into the Church's hierarchy has been swift; women are present at all levels of ordination including a woman appointed as Bishop of London. As of December 2021 only 2 of the 42 dioceses have no senior female clergy and 30 have two or more women in diocesan leadership roles (WATCH, 2022). Women make up half of those entering training and 29% of ordained women are in some form of paid role (ibid.). Thirty years on there has undeniably been change. Nevertheless, the culture of the Church has proved remarkably adaptive at sustaining centuries old normative models of hierarchy and masculine priesthood in the face of policies that might have otherwise undermined both. The Church has absorbed the gifts and energies of women whilst simultaneously failing to fully acknowledge them as priests and continuing to expect sacrificial behaviour in the home. The culture of conviviality shapes how women behave professionally, liturgically, and domestically. My research demonstrates the Church requires female priests behave in ways that disproportionately burden them with responsibility for Church unity and family happiness in comparison to male peers.

A precarious beginning. Why did the pioneers not push on?

In 1993 women and men who had campaigned hard for women's ordination over previous decades accepted the introduction of the Act of Synod, thereby lessening the impact of their success in the previous year. Mayland, in her personal reminiscences of the progression from proposed code of practice to legislation, remembered that whilst many General Synod members regretted voting in favour only two spoke against the Act when it came for Synodical approval in 1993 (Mayland, 1998, p.69). Unlike women's ordination it was not hard to get the Act of Synod voted through. Initially I could not understand why this had been the case, I am grateful that through this research I have been forced to look more deeply at the processes at work and come to a better understanding of why supporters of women's ordination voted as they did. In this next section I consider why General Synod was asked to vote on the Act

of Synod in 1993, and why with victory in their sights supporters accepted the compromised implementation of the 1992 vote (see Chapter Two for details of the Measure). The pressures evident in this period are forerunners to those borne by female priests today. The same desire amongst the pioneers to minimise disruption to Church unity, weariness brought about by multiple demands, and a focus on getting on with day-to-day ministry, recurs throughout the experience of my interviewees.

Convivial concern for brother bishops, a desire for as little disruption as possible, and the precarity of women who felt called to ordination as priests were the key features of the period between the 1992 vote and the first ordinations in 1994. Whilst informal provision was always expected to be necessary for existing bishops who did not wish to ordain women, there were no plans for anything as strong or long lasting as the Act of Synod. Mayland argues that an institutional culture that valued women less highly than men lay behind the creation of the Act, written in response to 'a scream of pain' from senior opponents (1998, p.67). Culturally and theologically men in leadership were not prepared for women's ordination, the Church's culture of conviviality led male bishops who had been advocates of women's ordination to try and soothe the pain of their fellow bishops. Mayland wrote:

We women had developed our spirituality of waiting and grieving and hoping and trusting over many years. The opposition did not seem to have any spiritual depth with which to cope with the situation. The bishops were shocked by both the result and the reaction, even supportive bishops lost their heads and their hearts lay with the opposition.

(ibid.)

Furlong, one of the leading activists, later reflected that she believed as senior clergy realised they could no longer hold back pressure for women's ordination they strategically let it pass and then curtailed its impact. Furlong believed that feminist campaign groups had at most pushed the Church's hand to ordain women but the male dominated Church only did so whilst it still had the power to 'control' the 'women Priests phenomenon' (2001, p.3). The Act was an example of this power, a symptom rather than the cause of institutional bias towards men.

Walrond-Skinner (1994) and Furlong (1994) both refer to the Church undergoing a profound trauma and needing to restabilise itself. In the minds of my interviewees the value of the Act was believed to be its power to restore a peaceful, convivial culture (see Chapter Seven). It was legislation to stabilise the old order rather than midwifing a new theology of equality in ministry. In her reply to my questions about the Act, Selena wrote, 'these were fragile times and it was important to show empathy and try to work with those who were disturbed by the outcome'. Ava observed, passing the Act 'was about appeasement' and to Georgia restrictions on women's ministry were acceptable as 'the Church of England has not split as soon as it might'. Lily stressed the importance of female clergy taking personal responsibility for consoling opponents in both 1992 and around the time of the votes about women in the episcopacy. Lily was committed to unity, 'I do not wish to see the Church split/divide over this issue' (Lily). Mary explained that ordained women had a responsibility to support their opponents, even at cost to themselves, 'We pastor those who disagree – that's what Church does' (Mary). Women from 1992 to the present day were content to take on the burden of

making a more convivial Church for their opponents. Whilst they might regret the restrictions on their ministry they see them as part of a greater work of maintaining Church unity. Future research might usefully assess the amount of energy ordained women put into supporting each other and whether opponents of the ordination of women undertake a comparable amount of emotional labour pastoring women hurt by the limitations on their ministry.

The women who felt called to priesthood, including those already deaconed, were in a particularly precarious place as all would have to go before reassessment panels before ordination as priests. In 1993 campaigners were tired and lacked energy for an unexpected second fight. In her *feministkilljoy* blog entry 'No' (2017b) Ahmed describes a situation which illustrates why women may have felt obliged to concede to restrictions on their ministry, 'If your position is precarious, you might not be able to afford no. You might say yes if you cannot afford to say no, which means you can say yes whilst disagreeing with something' (Ahmed, 2017b). Furlong believed that women were left with a fear 'of being seen as pushy, ungracious, aggressive, or unfeminine, of upsetting men, annoying bishops'; this constrained their ambitious earlier aspirations for women's ministry (1994, p.20). Mayland explained women felt too vulnerable to challenge the status quo by speaking against the Act, 'They dreaded being considered harsh, or strident or uncaring.' (Mayland, 1998, p.69). The same concern was expressed by my interviewees, in particular when speaking with senior staff, at clergy chapter meetings or synods. It is integral to Archbishops Welby and Sentamu's concept of gracious restraint (see Chapter Seven).

Even before the deacons were ordained priests there was a concern that the creative spirit of the campaigners might be subsumed by institutional culture. Writing a few weeks before her ordination Farrington described the Act of Synod as 'the frostiest of welcomes' for new female priests (1994, p.78) Her 'nightmare' was of women not being strong enough to resist being sucked into male patterns of clericalism (ibid.). She feared that women 'having waited so long and become so exhausted in the process' might at best become complacent or at worst either collude with male power or abuse the power they hold in their own right' (ibid.). Interviewees, in particular Mary and Katie, wrote of the choice between creativity and conformity needed for those considering roles close to the centre of the institution (see Chapter Four). Part of my reflexive journey in this research has been reconsidering how I viewed the members of General Synod who voted for the Act in the light of what I now understand about their situation at the time. Campaigners without allies to take on the fight, especially those seeking ordination, were precarious; disrupting the Church's attempt to rebuild a convivial culture would have been professionally and personally costly. The sense of personal precarity persists throughout the contribution of my interviewees as well as in more recent studies. In the words of the authors of *Using the lens of women's ordained ministry, how can we grow diversity within the strategic leadership of the Church so that all may flourish?* (2020) ordained women are unable 'to tell their stories [in public] without fear of losing their jobs or their hopes of future ministries' (2020, p.14).

Reblocking: Misremembered History and The Church Adapts to Reblock

Ahmed argues that institutions whilst appearing to ‘unblock’ systems for those who do not ‘pass’ also effectively reblock their structures in new ways (2010). Although women in my study were present at almost all levels of ministry my interviews showed that women encountered blockages recognisable to former generations, as well as new blockages which they believed were caused by ‘mission creep’ from the Act of Synod (see Chapter Seven). The Act itself was an expression of reblocking, evidence that in the Church as in other institutions there is a gap ‘between what organizations say they will do, or what they are committed to doing, and what they are doing’ (2010, p.107). It is in the gap between what the Church says it is doing and what it is actually doing that Ahmed’s analysis may be most fruitful.

Ahmed argues that institutions making policy changes must immediately follow through with changes at every level, rather than allowing time for people to get used to the idea. Once a decision has been made everyone must act in the spirit of the change. If they do not act as if a change has been made, it will have not been made. Ahmed explains, ‘A decision made in the present about the future (under the promissory sign ‘we will’) can be overcome by the momentum of the past’ (2017a, p.106). Eighteen months passed between the vote in General Synod and the first ordinations, a hiatus between decision and enactment that allowed resistance to change and to gain strength. I will demonstrate that the Church has created a version of the history of women’s ordination which foregrounds protection from disruption rather than celebrating equality. This has enabled reblocking, which whilst difficult to precisely quantify can be illustrated by an analysis of resource allocation and the experience of my interviewees.

Adapting to Reblock: A theology in numbers

All the women I interviewed identified examples of ‘mission creep’ flowing from the Act of Synod, but how might one quantify institutional adaptations that demonstrate how the momentum of the past resists challenges to an all-male priesthood? The Archbishop of Canterbury cautions, ‘The way the Church sets budgets is as important as the way it writes its theology, as a budget is applied theology expressed in numbers’ (Welby, 2016, p.126). Budgetary priorities can point towards areas of reblocking. The following short analysis of institutional funding for future leaders demonstrates a growing investment in clergy opposed to women’s ordination. Further work is needed in this area, some of which WATCH is undertaking.

Financially costly provisions that were expected to be temporary before the vote have become entrenched and expanded. From 1992 male priests who disagreed with the vote to ordain women as priests could leave the Church with a compensation payment, something that remains unique amongst all Synodical decisions (see Chapter Seven). In the first decade of the policy £15.8m was paid out to 412 priests, the Church Commissioners estimating the overall cost to the Church would be £24m (Goodchild, 2002). In 1994 the creation of three Provincial Episcopal Visitors was approved by General Synod to provide episcopal oversight to parishes who did not agree with the ordination of women. Whilst the Church in Wales ended its similar scheme, arguing it was neither ‘necessary or consistent with Anglican ecclesiology’ (Morgan, 2008) the Church expanded the number of bishops, in 2014 a bishop was added specifically

for evangelical parishes. In 2021 a report presented to General Synod with the backing of the House of Bishops proposed:

serious consideration is given, in all dioceses with more than one suffragan see, to the possible appointment of traditional catholic and/or complementarian evangelical candidates to one of the sees once a vacancy occurs should qualified candidates from those traditions be available.

(General Synod, 2021, p.63)

The report is currently the subject of a working party but if approved this could potentially increase the number of bishops for the 4% of parishes opposed to women's ordination by at least 16. This would be 16 fewer senior roles available to women or men who support women's ordination, reblocking access to power and resources for women and creating a new block for some men. In contrast, in 2021, 71% of ordained women served the Church without payment for their labour (WATCH, 2022). These are budgetary decisions betraying the Church's theological priority that ordained women bear far more of the cost of unity than their male peers.

Development of future leaders is key if Church culture is to transform. In 2010 the Leading Women course was founded by senior female clergy using external funding and resourced by women freely giving their own time. The delivery of the course echoes Coser's conviction that people ensnared by a greedy institution voluntarily offer more and more of their personal resources. In 2020, 25 'senior women and men in strategic positions within the Church of England' were interviewed about potential tools to increase the number of women in senior roles. Interviewees felt the Leading Women course could not have been seen as a safe space for interviewees had it been 'provided by the "hierarchy"' (Strategic Learning and Development Programme. Cohort 2, 2020). At the time of writing the course had run out of funding and those leading had been unable to recruit new volunteer leaders. As with the campaign to ordain women those involved were now at the end of their supply of energy.

The establishment of the Church's Senior Leadership Development Programme for both men and women was felt to offer sufficient space for women to develop without the need for a dedicated course. Instead of supporting a new cohort through the Leading Women course, funding was allocated for a male-only space. The centrally funded '*Nurturing and Discerning Senior Leaders: Programme for Traditional Catholic Clergy*' seeks to equip male clergy opposed to women's ordination for leadership roles and to draw out 'the catholic voice in mission' (Church of England, undated). In addition to training for senior leadership a male-only residential community for the training of new priests was established in 2022. Ladyewell House aims to increase the number of congregations opposed to women's ordination, 'It is our hope that we will call out a new generation of priests formed within the traditional Catholic stream of the Church of England... establishing new worshipping congregations' (Ladyewell House website, 2022). Using Welby's metric that a budget is a theology in numbers these examples demonstrate resourcing opposition to women's ordination is an institutional priority.

The Church exploits women's unwillingness to challenge restrictions on their ministry to facilitate the nurturing of new resistance to women's leadership. It does not resource the

future of its leadership in a way that presumes women to be a full and equal part. Women believe that their ordination is based on sacrifices made by a pioneer generation. In a further act of reblocking, since 2015 all ordinands have been required to explicitly consent to the Five Guiding Principles before they attend a Bishops' Advisory Panel and again before they are ordained. Theological Education Institutions (TEI) Principals and Diocesan Directors of Ordinands (DDOs), some of whom are ordained women, are required to gain this assent verbally or in writing (Fern, 2014). This embeds a culture of affirming objection to women's ministry and makes ordination contingent upon it. Accepting constraints is an essential precursor to priesthood whereas prior to 2014 it was simply the Oaths and Declarations required by Canon Law. These practical examples give quantitative evidence of a gradual reblocking of the openings that allowed new theologies of priesthood, equality, justice, and liturgy to be imagined, these are explored in the next section. The Church has effectively retained women's labour in the home and clergy marriages, gained their labour in the priesthood, and shored up the defence of male normativity with resources and new policies.

Misremembering our history

In Chapter Two I demonstrated the importance of showing the deep historical roots of the resistance to women's ordination through the reports of the previous 100 years. History, I said, matters deeply in the Church and historical context is often provided to explain or defend a decision. In its theological reflection on the Five Guiding Principles, FAOC stressed that it was after the vote in November 1992 that the House of Bishops decided that further provisions would be required' (2018, p.14). The 1992 vote passed with a two-thirds majority without containing a guarantee of further legislation. However, my interviewees believed the Act preceded the vote as a guaranteed safeguard to convince Synod it was safe to vote for women's ordination. My interviews exposed a powerfully influential inaccurate retelling of the history of women's ordination which portrayed unfettered women's ministry as being impossible to consider.

This new history is a story of generous self-sacrifice, it subsumes the recollections of Mayland and Furlong, et al., concerning old boys' clubs and precarious deacons. This version of the Act using Coser's terminology, activates loyalty and commitment (see Chapter Seven, Conviviality). Understood through this new history, the Act of Synod embodies conviviality rather than constraint, one side graciously giving way to the other to enable an otherwise impossible change to occur. Ahmed warns that if we do not keep pushing after a policy change, possibilities begin to recede or never become actualities. The vision of women serving as priests on precisely the same terms as men never became an actuality. As this possibility receded the events began to be 'remembered' in reverse order. Only Mary remembered the events in the correct order, alluding to the passage of the Act after the vote in her answers, 'I know that lots of women lamented the fact that, while we were celebrating women's ordination as priests in 1992, the Act of Synod was "slipped in" when eyes were taken off the ball'. All my other interviewees believed the Act should be remembered as an essential act of enabling, of these only Tracy reflected that with hindsight it would have been better to delay women's ordination until it could have been enacted without constraint.

If the Act is erroneously believed to have enabled women's ordination, criticism of the Act necessarily threatens the convivial compromise. In Ahmed's terms, to criticise the Act is to be

pushy, to behave badly; interviewees believed there would have been no women's ordination without the Act. Some interviewees interpret criticism of the Act as disrespect for those who brought about women's ordination, 'it is easy when you are not in leadership and not in the room to be critical of those who are faced with making the tough choices' (Ava). Public criticism is not only disloyal to Church unity, but also to people to whom they owe a debt of gratitude. One of the key elements in how my interviewees accepted difficulties caused to them by the Act was the belief that campaigners consciously sacrificed full inclusion before General Synod voted as 'a way of getting people on board' (Tracy). Chronological reordering ascribes an enabling, bridgebuilding purpose to the legislation as expressed by Katie's appreciation of the Act of Synod, 'I suppose the fact that we almost certainly would not have passed the vote on women priests in 1992 without it'. Understanding the Act of Synod as a costly but ultimately enabling gift from our foremothers makes it harder to challenge the Church's position.

Aspirational Legacy: Nothing Less Than a New Reformation

Just as it was important to give space to the women I interviewed I wanted to remind myself, and hopefully inform a younger generation, of the vision for a renewed priesthood amongst those who brought it about. In her *feministkilljoys* blog, Ahmed (2013) urges women to return to the past, 'Feminist intellectual histories can be a resource for the present, which might be why one of our tasks as feminists is to keep feminism alive as a sensational form of politics'. Women of my generation inherited the legacy of these women, but the attention of the Church immediately strayed from their aspirations towards resisting change as much as possible. Very many of the aspirations that follow remain unrealised, some are hinted at in contributions from my interviewees but mostly it is the dreams unfulfilled that reveal where the institution has been most resistant to change. The areas that have seen most change, flexible forms of ministry allowing women to perform domestic and ecclesiastical roles simultaneously, show the Church as a greedy institution can adapt if adaptation brings it more resource. I believe the least fulfilled of these aspirations, which include, a new understanding of what it is to be a priest, a less hierarchical more inclusive Church for all people, an end to the culture of overwork, and liturgical renewal, point to the most challenging areas of contemporary institutional culture for female priests. The pioneers' visions could be effective resources to resist mission creep, act as an incentive to clear away blockages to change, and ultimately prove to be a way to lessen the demands of a greedy institutional culture.

The 'long wait' had created a space in which attention could be paid to the theological, ecclesiastical, liturgical, and even societal changes women's ordination might bring. According to Milford, those who 'laboured long for delay', were unwise. Whilst waiting, lay and diaconal theologians in favour of women's ordination had time to open 'a veritable treasure trove of exciting insights and possibilities'. She continued 'the waiters have been the gainers... The flowering of feminist theology, feminist spirituality, and feminist liturgy bears this out' (1994, p.58). Ahmed reflected on the writers that had influenced her when she wrote, 'It [feminism] brings to mind books written, tattered and worn, books that gave words to something, a feeling, a sense of injustice, books that, in giving us words, gave us strength to go on' (2017a, p.1). In turn, Ahmed encouraged me to revisit the bequest of women like Milford, Mayland and Furlong. When compared with the lack of clarity around the Five Guiding Principles, which

still awaits a clear theological framework, the ambitions outlined below are clear bold visions of a Church transformed.

What has been realised in the experience of my interviewees?

Before turning to unfulfilled aspirations, I want to acknowledge areas where there has been some change and where my interviewees are more optimistic than I am. Whilst there has undoubtedly been non performativity and reblocking, my interviewees have pointed to some elements of change that aligned with the aspirations of the pioneers. Whilst I remain pessimistic, almost all my interviewees had something positive to say about the current situation for ordained women and it is important that I give space for that perspective before moving on to the most powerfully resisted proposals for change. Women entering the priesthood slowed the decline in numbers of candidates for ordination (see Chapter Two). Retaining this new resource of people required changes in clergy working conditions. Ordained clergy wives and clergy mothers (all mothers whether lone parenting, or alongside a lay or ordained husband) have been able to shape their ministry in creative ways so long as they have been willing to wholly, or partially, sacrifice a stipend, and always prepared to sacrifice time for leisure and self-care. The option to maintain a professional role whilst unpaid is far less available to female engineers, medics, and others who may have to revalidate their professional qualification after a substantial break.

The culture of long hours referred to by Farrington has not been undermined, but priests as mothers are undeniably visible as they combine motherhood and public priesthood. Presiding whilst visibly pregnant, sharing the experience of challenging childbirth, ministry at the school gate and through their children's leisure activities, were mentioned by interviewees as ways in which the two roles could be compatible. The fact that the Church has generally not fairly remunerated these reshaped roles, nor offered much support, must not be allowed to completely distract from the positive contribution they make to the definition of priest. The most profound expression of this came from Tracy.

When I was pregnant with both Victoria and Henry and my bump was visible, there were several women in my congregation who specifically commented on the fact that I was presiding at Communion, obviously pregnant, and that that somehow was very affirming for them and for their own experiences of motherhood - a symbol that what was most important in their lives was being upheld as being sacred / divine (Tracy).

In this incident the physical reality of a pregnant priest created a kind of guerrilla theology, breaking into the lives of parishioners, despite the Church not yet having an authorised theological work on the experience of menstruation, pregnancy, motherhood, maternal loss or menopause. In their stories of parenting, there is hope amongst my interviewees that they have resisted what Farrington described as becoming clones of the male priests before them.

It would be difficult to objectively prove that women bring different pastoral priorities to priesthood but the pioneers' hope that women's ordination would impact most profoundly on those on the margins or suffering trauma is echoed in the stories I gathered. Interviewees talked about how their gender brought women closer to them at times of trouble, whether that be Hayley's experience of women talking with her about rape, or Ava's of giving and receiving pastoral care for post-natal depression. Whether Milford's hope that the values of

compassion and nurture are now more highly valued is unclear but it is certainly one of the strengths the women I interviewed felt they brought to their ministry.

The pioneers hoped women would be called to senior roles and flourish in them. Although each has difficult stories to tell, the interviewees in such positions believed they had been affirmed, at least in part, and wrote optimistically about some aspects of their experience. Women had been able to subvert patterns of ministry, use networks that might otherwise work against them, and rise into positions of power and influence at the heart of the Church. On occasions this had been by using their resources of privilege in other areas of their life which could offset the negative status of their gender. One woman wrote that being an Oxbridge graduate made her an honorary man in the eyes of opponents, another admitted to using upper middle class family connections to her advantage, 'A common theme of my life and my priesthood has been, ironically, the Old Boys Network - pulling favours on my behalf for which I am very grateful'. Whilst personally effective this demonstrates the failure of the pioneers' aspirations for Church freed from other prejudices, such as those relating to class or ethnicity.

Despite these positive experiences the women I interviewed experience a burdensome priesthood whose challenges are easier the further they are from the heart of the Church's power structure. The bold visions of the pioneers outlined below remain unfulfilled, the Church having used a cultural insistence on conviviality to resist change. Institutional energy has been devoted to creating a theological base for discrimination, rather than continuing the flowering of liturgy and theology of the late twentieth century. Reinterpretations of what it is to suffer for one's conscience, act graciously and behave with integrity have sustained inherited norms of priesthood. Changes in the lived experience of theology and ministerial practice are far less apparent than the campaigners hoped they might be, and restrictions on the fullness of women's priesthood remain. If we turn back to the texts of the 1980s and 1990s, as Ahmed encourages us to do, the treasure trove that sparkled in this period is largely untouched. When asked for sources of affirmation only Tracy made an explicitly positive reference to the theological work of the women I have termed pioneers.

The dream of a new Reformation

The pioneers were looking for the affirmation of women in every area of the Church's life, in the words of one of them they looked 'actively for a new Reformation in the promise of the ordination of women' (Pemberton, 2019). According to Walrond-Skinner (1994) the campaign was about far more than simply ordaining a few women. Whilst not wishing to overstate the importance to women who were abused, homeless or exploited who 'all have more important things on their minds at this moment than our priesting' (1994, p.1), women's ordination was about more than the Church. She wrote on the eve of the first priestings, 'running through all the accounts of the struggle there has been a consistent theme, that this moment when it came would have meaning mainly for those who did not belong to the English church' (1994, p.2). Sometimes these themes are merely expressed as a 'whisper' but, as she explains, there was 'always somewhere the thought and the hope that the struggle was *beyond* the theology, the politics and the personnel of the Church of England' (ibid.).

Milford (1994) believed the ordination of women would contribute to a society wide reevaluation of the status of supposedly feminine attributes (1994, pp.60ff). Allowing women to take on the role of priest placed the feminine virtues of 'compassion, nurture, grace, generosity, charity, vulnerability, community building', which were also the 'qualities of God', at the heart of the structures of Church and society (1994, p.63). Fawcett (1996) believed ordaining women allowed the Church to embody the vision that all could use their God-given talents to the full, without prejudice.

The ambitious expectation of a transformed society did not overlook the need for internal institutional change. As well as a transformed world, supporters of women's ordination believed they had developed the resources to transform the Church and the priesthood. On one level they were traditionalist, for example the pioneers did not argue against the existing threefold model for the ordering of ministry. They felt called to ordination in the model as it was, but they believed there would be a transformed understanding of priesthood (see Chapter Five). Furlong relished the challenge, urging women to be bold in 'revising and articulating the role of the priest' (1994, pp.24f). Furlong understood the need for a renewal of institutional culture in every area, and pressed theologians to 'communicate their ideas in language that lay people could understand' (ibid.). Milford warned that the re-imagining of priesthood would be fraught with anxiety but it was a longed for sign of hope that 'must take place if Church and society are to be transformed' (1994, p.65). Evidence that this vision remains unfulfilled can be found in the 2020 launch of the Church's Vision and Strategy, 'Simpler, Humbler, Bolder' (Cottrell, 2021). As well as simplification and humility in mission and governance Cottrell argues that essential work to make the Church fully inclusive in areas of sexuality, gender identity, racial justice and disability also remains undone.

Milford also believed that female priests would bring a new way of pastoring (1994, p.55), a theme developed by Farrington who hoped that women would introduce the value of 'being as much as doing' (1994, pp.75f). In what feels like the most disappointed aspiration Farrington hoped women would end the culture of overwork. She believed that meditation and prayer rather than activity would become a defining feature of priesthood, 'my hope is that with the coming of women priests, God centred things of the Spirit may have greater emphasis' (ibid.). With a transformed priesthood would come a less hierarchical view of authority. Female priests would replace 'father knows best' by sharing leadership and working collaboratively (Farrington, 1994, pp.76ff). Women must 'be alert to the dangers of becoming male clones, of being unwittingly drawn into old, traditional, paternalistic, and hierarchical models of priesthood' (1994, p.79). If they could resist, the church would become less concerned with status and hierarchy and the role of the parish priest would become adult to adult rather than adult to child. Both greedy Church and family demand more and more of the time of my interviewees. Only by distancing themselves from the continuing hierarchical understanding of leadership, by switching to chaplaincy, part-time roles, low status parishes and non-stipendiary ministry can they ease some of the pressures they face.

A practical outworking of women's ordination was expected to be the expansion into mainstream Church culture of new forms of liturgy and language to express God's relationship with humanity and the whole of creation. A renewed, collaborative priesthood would be reflected not only in pastoral care and outreach but also through the writing and performance

of new liturgy and inclusive language for God. There was a demand for this already, Milford noting that the Archbishop of Canterbury only had to warn against using St Hilda's Community liturgies for *Women Included* (1991) to go into its third printing (1994, p.58). Between 1988 and 1991 *All Desire's Known* (Morley, 1988), *Women Included* (St Hilda's Community, 1991), *Bread of Tomorrow* (Morley, 1991), each providing rich, women-centred resources, were published. Alongside these, publications such as the Iona Community's Wildgoose liturgies and Stuart's *Daring to Speak Love's Name, A Gay and Lesbian Prayer Book* (1992) further expanded the canon of new material. There has been no substantial work in this area by either the Liturgical or Faith and Order Commissions.

Above all, the pioneers repeatedly return to the expectation that equality would gain more attention as a key Christian virtue. Women's ordination was about equality of men and women and an end to discrimination of all kinds. Furlong acknowledged the low base, 'the Church has everything to learn in establishing a simple basic equality between men and women, and the longer it takes to do it the more foolish it appears' (1994, p.26). Fawcett believed women's ordination was a vision of a world where men and women lived in harmony (1996, p.39). In summary, the pioneers expected that women's ordination would drive forward equality and a more compassionate and collaborative style of leadership across the whole nation. It was a vision for transformation across the whole Church, male and female, ordained and lay, inclusive of people whatever their class, ethnic heritage, sexuality, disability, or anything else that led to them being excluded. They expected a transformed practice of priesthood, a new norm of what it was to be a priest and, in a Church that claims doctrine is expressed in liturgy they expected new authorised liturgies. Nothing less than a full reformation of the Church's culture.

Responsibility: Created from the Same Dust

In 1996, Fawcett cautioned, 'It is a big responsibility and a great challenge to reflect to the world a picture of women and men together, created from the same dust and made equally in the image of Creator God' (Fawcett, 1996, pp.39f). My research proves ordained women have not experienced a culture reflecting men and women made from the same dust. The convivial culture has made discrimination against them a virtue, demanding they bear greater burdens for less reward than male clergy. Gender is not the only characteristic that leads to people not being perceived as equal in the sight of God, indeed some of my interviewees experienced discrimination beyond their gender but to dwell on that in depth risks identifying them. The experience of discrimination is widespread and varied in the Church and my critique of conviviality should have broader applications.

A valuing of 'people who are different from us – racially, sexually, religiously' (1994, p.26) did not flow from the ordination of women as Furlong hoped. Since 1994, the Church has repeatedly identified persistent discrimination within and outside the Church. During the quinquennium 2015 – 2020 General Synod received reports about the experiences of people who are BAME, LGBTQ, Roma, Travellers, residents of Outer Estates, working class, had learning difficulties or disabilities, and those in the Global South facing the loss of their land because of consumer choices by those in the Global North. The authors of *Lament to Action* (2021a) identified 25 previous reports addressing racial injustice with no significant change arising from any of them. In the area of sexuality, *Issues in Human Sexuality* (1991), *The Pilling*

Report (2012), and *Living in Love and Faith* (2020) all witnessed to the discrimination experienced by LGBTQ Anglicans. However, because I am focussed on the unique resolution in relation to discrimination against female priests a detailed proposal for a wider application of my findings is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In a pattern Ahmed would recognise, none of these reports resulted in institutional change. There are hints that, as with the stages on the road to the ordination of women, the reports blocked the changes they were intended to bring about. For example, in the case of 'Issues in Human Sexuality' (1991) Bishop Michael Bourke (Bishop of Wolverhampton 1993-2007) believed the report had 'served as an instrument of management and control' (Brierly, 2006). Based on my research I believe an intersectional analysis of all reports and Synodical decisions would expose other areas where actions, ostensibly about equality, effectively reblock any significant change in patterns of privilege and power. Beyond the completion of this thesis my personal next step will be to apply what I have learnt about the power of an institutional culture of conviviality to other areas of discrimination.

Collicut (2020) argues in *What makes mutual flourishing challenging from a theological perspective?* the Church has paid insufficient attention to theological process by not asking 'who decides what is God's purpose for each member of the body and for the body as a whole' (Collicut, 2020). The culture of conviviality has resonances with the Church's culture of deference identified by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA, 2020). Ian Paul (2019) in his blog *Should clergy expect deference?* argues that deference not only hinders the reporting of child abuse but also negatively impacts on clergy wellbeing by creating a culture in which parish priests and chaplains feel unable to seek help from senior leaders. In future work I would like to explore the similarities between these two concepts and consider their role in sustaining all areas of persistent discrimination. As a greedy institution the Church focused on getting the most out of women doing the job of a priest, it did not put in the theological effort required for the systemic cultural change needed to understand all people as made in the image of God. Therefore, the potential for women's ministry to point towards greater equality was lost, where there was mission creep it was in the spread of exclusion rather than inclusion (see Chapter Seven).

My interviewees had chosen to work within the culture of conviviality, showing the deference required of them by the Act of Synod and Five Guiding Principles. They also cared about discrimination in other areas and many expressed a personal commitment to social justice. Rarely, however, did my interviewees theologially critique what limiting their ministry said about the Church's attitude to equality more broadly. Acceptance of discrimination towards female priests as virtuous behaviour and resistance to discrimination in other areas remained separate. I will now point towards an argument that I believe demonstrates that the culture of conviviality which supresses challenges towards constraints on women's ministry should not be seen as separate from wider issues of discrimination.

The Bigger Picture – Beyond the Church of England

I have illustrated the precarity of women's situation in 1993 when the Act of Synod was passed and through my interviewees seen where precarity continues in the lives of today's female priests. Although this thesis deals in detail with the disproportionate demands of a greedy

institution on ordained women, we are also women of substantial privilege. As described above participants were not averse to using these advantages to their benefit, class featuring most frequently as a way to distract from gender. These highly educated women, with homes, in most cases salaries, occupying upper middle-class roles, have significant advantages not shared by most women globally.

Interviewees made the connection between the fact of female priests and increased equality for women but, of the still serving priests, only Tracy wrote that they saw a connection between restrictions on their ministry and discrimination in other areas:

It [the Act of Synod] would be equivalent to appointing a White Bishop who does not believe that Black people can be priests but who still promises to somehow treat them with integrity - it does not work. We would, as a Church, not allow the situation in terms of race but somehow we think it is acceptable in terms of gender. (I know that there is an issue regarding race and ethnicity within the C of E but am using that example to make the point of the sexist legacy of the Act of Synod).

I cannot tell whether the others did not perceive the linkage, or whether they did but felt it inappropriate to express an opinion out of synch with institutional culture. Farrington (1994, p.78) encouraged the women being ordained in 1994 to collectively preserve, 'The experience of once being powerless in the Church', they must 'not lose a sense of identification with other powerless people and continue[d] to work for equality'. However, the story of women's ordination has been told from the perspective of what has been achieved rather than what has not happened. A powerful example of connecting rejection of women's calling to a bigger picture was made by lay Christian Julia Ogilvy when General Synod refused to ordain women as bishops. Ogilvy concluded the rejection sent an 'appalling message to women across the world' (2014, p.1). She drew a clear line connecting the Church's policy on women's ordination and those living far more precarious lives:

The horrors of the sex trade, of contemporary slavery and of domestic abuse often stem from the way women are perceived as lesser beings... How could the Church of England, leader of 85 million Anglicans across the world, send any kind of message that women are not of equal worth and should not be properly valued?

(2014, pp.2f)

As Collicut demonstrated, the convivial culture of the Church has led to a situation where the theological innovation needed to defend the Act of Synod and the Five Guiding Principles is not scrutinized to discover the wider implications of the teaching. The experience of the institutional culture of the Church has shaped the questions women ask and the time they have available in which to ask them. We have been formed to focus on the wider implications of what is open to us, to get on with the practicalities of ministry and home life, rather than ask questions about what is closed to us and what that says more broadly about women's status.

My experience of precarity is not particularly challenging compared to many people on the planet, it is not 'life lived as a fragile thread that keeps unravelling' (Ahmed, 2017a, p.238). Continuing with Ahmed's terminology, I pass with relative ease within the Church, the

university where I work and British society. In some instances, the women I interviewed worked around their precarity by using class or ethnic privilege, in others, aspects of their identity increased their precarity. In general, our circumstances compared favourably with those most at risk from displacement, exploitation, and hardship. After I had finished coding and ranking statements in my transcripts, women's experiences of flourishing and diminishment were evenly balanced. In total 45% of statements were coded as experiences in which women wholly, or partially, flourished whereas 44% of experiences were mostly, or partially, diminishing. 11% of experiences were neutral. Put crudely, the experience of priesthood had been equally good and bad, the institutional culture of conviviality creates a culture in which it is easily possible to survive but very difficult to thrive. Ahmed argues it is precisely because it is possible for us to survive the limited precarity we face that we should resist anything that suggests women are not of equal worth and entitled to thrive.

Ahmed argues in her *feministkilljoys* blog post 'No' that those who generally pass with ease within society, as people who matter, should be willing to say no to things that say other people do not matter. The culture of the Church, in particular as formalised in the Act of Synod and Five Guiding Principles, suggests women are not of equal worth. Female priests can bear this restriction because, in Ahmed's terms, we are likely to have found it less difficult simply to exist in the world than many other women and men. Personally I have not needed to insist that I matter, simply because in most cases I do (Ahmed, 2017a, p.239). Nevertheless, Ogilvy, Collicut and Ahmed draw attention to the mission creep that comes when one act of discrimination is not resisted. The women I interviewed had witnessed mission creep within the Church which I believe extends to our wider context validating discrimination in other religions and societies. Ogilvy's words on female bishops apply equally to the Church's broader treatment of ordained women, it sends a 'message that women are not of equal worth and should not be properly valued' (2014, p.2).

Understanding how the Culture of Conviviality is sustained

In this thesis I have explored how institutional culture has been experienced by a group of ordained women; but I have not had space to explore in detail how that culture is sustained. I hope to do that with a subsequent project but for now will make some simple suggestions of resources that I intend to use in that work.

One of my more difficult and painful conclusions is that today's ordained women bear a degree of responsibility for sustaining a culture that costs us relatively little in comparison to the first women ordained, ordinands today, and especially when compared to the context of women globally. We exist politely within a culture that makes a powerful philosophical statement about the worth of women. Theologically the current status quo also reveals a conviction that the Church can reject the fullness of a divine calling. The women I interviewed ministered as if they are in agreement with the restrictions, keeping to the rules and cultural conventions when needed. They chose to behave well in public even though in private they expressed some disquiet; future research might focus on unpacking the thought process behind this. Introducing Coser in Chapter Six I referred to Meyer's critique of Greedy Institutions; he concluded that it was a valuable contribution to the field but lacked a detailed examination of psychology (Meyer, 1975). I have not been able to explore in depth what might be described as 'the Church in one's head' and how individual women make choices about how to regulate

their opinions. If I had, I sense that I would discover self-interest informed decision-making alongside other factors.

There are two writers, Carter Heyward and Joan Tronto, that I will consider as part of that project as both point toward my painful suspicion of self-interest on behalf of ordained women. Heyward, who in 1974 was one of the first women ordained in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, observed in the preface to a reissue of *Staying Power* (1995) that white women and white men were turning inwards, concerned simply for 'self' rather than all situations of injustice (2000, p.X):

Rather than finding a place to stand in history that is somehow 'ours', a moment in which we are comfortable and from which we draw spiritual strength through memory or nostalgia or reputation, we need to help one another find ways to move and bend and change together.

(2000, p.1)

Based on her personal experience, Heyward has become a passionate advocate for ending what she describes as 'disconnection from commonness' (ibid, p.7). An exploration of commonness within the whole body of Christ, commonness amongst all of those made from the same dust, might offer significant challenge to the apparent implicit acceptance that discrimination against ordained women might have no link with other situations of discrimination. There is a need for us to interrogate what it means to say that women cannot do something to which the Church claims God has called them.

I can avoid looking closely at what commonness might mean for the convivial circumstances in which women minister because in general my life is not that hard. Since 2016 anyone aspiring to ordination who refuses to agree with the Five Guiding Principles cannot be ordained. They would rightly share the same fears as the deacons of the long wait in 1993 and 1994 that ordination depends on behaving well. My priesthood was not dependent on specific assent to the Act of Synod, I am already ordained and in receipt of salary and housing. My stipend could be removed but my priesthood cannot be easily taken from me. Mary and Jasmine both refer to 'once a priest always a priest', or a 'priest forever', whether one has a Bishop's Licence or not. Ordained women of my generation are not only more secure than many women globally but also in a stronger position than those ordained before us or seeking ordination since 2016 onwards.

The pattern of behaviour inspired by the precarity of the first female priests continues to sustain convivial Church culture. Church culture has encouraged me to act as if the most significant context of the Act of Synod and Five Guiding Principles is the emotional wellbeing of those opposed to women's ordination. If opponents are not leaving, if the Church is not splitting, then all is well. The Church has rewarded me for not demanding to know what these restrictions say about God, what they say about the worth of all women, and how acceptance of them might disconnect us from a common struggle against inequality. However uncomfortable it is to acknowledge it, there is significant self-interest in accepting, rather than publicly resisting, convivial culture. As Ahmed explains it by conforming to the norms of a convivial culture I avoid the cost of being excluded (2017a, pp.50f).

To unpack the roots of this self-interest and narrow focus on our immediate context I hope to adapt Joan Tronto's work in the ethics of care as part of a deep exploration of what commonness truly means in practice. In *Caring Democracy. Markets, Equality, and Justice*, she argues that to maintain and preserve political institutions and the community, citizens must think closely about their responsibility to themselves and others (2013, p.X). In their replies to my questions, interviewees did not offer many thoughts on their responsibilities beyond the household of the Church, other than it was good for society that women were ordained, and that it was embarrassing when outsiders discovered the limits imposed on female priests. I want to think more about individual responsibility for collective Church decisions, pursuing Collicut's concerns about the broader implications of the decision.

Tronto describes how viewing one's personal ethical decisions from a perspective 'fixed along lines that reflect inequality and historic forms of exclusion' makes it hard to grasp anything beyond the situation in one's own household (2013, pp.42f.). If I understand female clergy as residing in the household of the Church, then my perspective on our treatment and our responsibilities is shaped by the location of my ethical theorising. Compared to women globally, I am affluent, free and privileged, I theologise from this place. By believing the starting point for my identity, my calling, is the same as the starting and ending points for everyone in society, Tronto argues, I will miss an important feature of what justice requires. I have been willing to sacrifice a theological and philosophical point, that the calling of an Anglican woman should be followed as freely as the calling of an Anglican man, in return for a partially restricted experience of priesthood. In doing so I have also sacrificed the idea that all men and women should be allowed to pursue their calling with equal freedom. I wrote this paragraph in the week the Taliban excluded all women from Higher Education (December 2022). Following Tronto I could argue that I have chosen to be 'absent' from full participation in a global conversation about equality and inclusion. Absenting oneself allows a person to shirk responsibility for labour. In the case of female priests in the future I wish to explore whether we maintain our comfortable position by shirking the labour of 'commonness' with all people seeking equality. By not asking relatively simple disruptive questions about equality we make it harder for more costly questions to be raised.

To shirk responsibility, in Tronto's terms to absolve oneself from responsibility, is an expression of power. By taking a pass out of owning responsibility for equality I have assigned that labour to others. From a narrow perspective this is a way of shirking responsibility for restrictions on future ordinands. From a broader viewpoint I am shirking responsibility for challenging the philosophical and theological view that discrimination is acceptable. It is a privileged irresponsibility as I am already ordained and in common with interviewees can work around some of the restrictions. In her example Tronto asks why some people are exempt from the labour of domestic cleaning, and some are overly responsible. I would argue that the same holds true for the labour of resisting cultures that have developed a theological rationale for gender-based discrimination. The cultural norms of conviviality also resist challenges to many other expressions of discrimination, to behave well is to avoid asking disruptive questions. I might admire the women who are resisting the closure of universities in Afghanistan but I do what I am told when asked to show 'gracious restraint' at an ordination.

I do this by not interpreting my actions as in any way linked to anything beyond my immediate household of faith, in this way I do not act as if all people are made from the same dust.

Being Ungracious

At the end of this thesis I find myself attempting to hold two documents in tension, The Five Guiding Principles and Ahmed's Killjoy Manifesto (see appendices for complete copies of each). The Five Guiding Principles state that although all orders of ministry are open equally without reference to gender a place must be maintained for those who are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests. The Fifth Principle makes this clear; the Church is committed to enabling opponents of women's ordination to flourish within its life and structures without limit. Mutual flourishing, introduced in the final sentence makes women's priesthood contingent on the flourishing of their opponents. Unlike their opponents, female priests are never referred to in the Principles as worthy of flourishing as a distinct entity. Ahmed meanwhile describes a series of choices that need to be consciously made if an institutional culture is to be challenged, (2017a, pp.257ff). Each choice to resist the culture of happiness, reinterpreted by me as a culture of conviviality, begins 'I am'. Her manifesto is a series of ten principles she argues women should live by. These include whether to reject happiness as a cause, whether to 'participate in a killjoy movement', and whether 'I am willing to snap any bonds, however precious, when these bonds are damaging to myself or others'. The Five Guiding Principles insist that all who minister in the Church of England acknowledge that the Church has reached a clear decision on the matter whereas Ahmed urges me to not get over histories that are not over.

As mentioned in Chapter Five and the introduction to this Chapter, clergy are required to 'inhabit' certain qualities (Church of England, 2022, p.2). Since 2016 one of the explicit dispositions expected of all priests is a willingness to work with deference to the Five Guiding Principles. I have argued that the fundamental implicit disposition is convivial compliance with the demands of a greedy institution. I could simply avoid complying with this expectation by, for example, refusing to stand apart from male candidates at ordinations, refusing to keep silent whilst men concelebrate. By doing so I would not be simply holding an alternative opinion, I would be inhabiting an alternative status. Just as in the language of the Church, ordinands are 'made' priest, it is to be 'made' ungracious, to no longer inhabit the quality of conviviality. Becoming ungracious risks being understood to inhabit values incompatible with priesthood. One could be perceived to have been unmade as a priest. In her blog post 'No' Ahmed explains the consequences that flow from such actions:

Those who complain about a system, those who intervene by saying **no** at some point, and saying **no** can sometimes be a matter of not saying yes, of not going along with something, encounter the full force of that system. A system: can be what comes down on you; a ton of bricks. (2017b)

Rothwell's research suggests the reaction of the Church would be similar, 'Breaking silence remains a risky business for women who have felt powerless to speak honestly in public' (2016, p.137). There are no case studies amongst my interviewees, or in the public domain, of women who have resisted the formal restrictions on their ministry. No one has yet been disciplined for refusing to get over histories that are not over by resisting the Five Guiding Principles.

Nevertheless, I have been cautious not to write articles nor speak at conferences on the subject of my research whilst I rely on a Church of England stipend.

My research suggests the institutional culture of the Church has formed female priests for conviviality, the essence of the implicit understanding of priesthood for women is one in which they deny the full calling God has laid before them. If the findings from my small sample are replicated across the Church, as I suspect they would be, rather than a re-formed priesthood and Church, as the pioneers hoped, the path of women to a fully expressed priesthood has been reblocked. Using the Church's language, women might feel as if they fully inhabit the role of priest, but the Church does not permit female priests to fully inhabit the household of the Church. The Church's reinterpretation of graciousness as submission, its remaking of integrity as an either/or theological principle, and, through its use of conscience, the elevation of sexism to the same level as Pacifism in the First World War, has come about through an institutional culture that has failed to re-form its concept of priesthood following the 1992 vote. To be made priest, women must concede to their current institutionally approved status as less fully priest than men. Women must agree to be included in a Church which, as an institution, embodies the words of Ahmed's manifesto, it is 'unjust' and 'unequal'.

The Five Guiding Principles affirm that the 'Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter'; I know this is not a decision that I and many of my participants agree with, but it is one that as priests we expend considerable energy living with. As an academic I find myself 'unable to get over histories that are not over', and through this research have become increasingly committed to 'widen[ing] the scripts available for what counts as a good life'. I am painfully aware that this means I will minister in a way that is deemed disruptive rather than convivial (Ahmed, 2017a, p.257). Ultimately, I may have to snap the precious bonds that tie me to the Church or may have them snapped for me through a disciplinary process. The conclusion of this thesis is, in large part, why I resigned from the Faith and Order Commission and my role as Bishop's Advisor for Women's Ministry in the Diocese of Lichfield. Both roles I felt required a respect for the Church's formal position on women's ordination which I do not share. By moving from parish ministry to Higher Education chaplaincy I have been able to distance myself from occasions such as Confirmation, concelebration, and preaching, where my gender is an issue. If anything, as Kerstin wrote of her move into chaplaincy, my gender is now seen as a gift as I mentor religious female students from a range of faiths. Any future post that requires an affirmation of the Five Guiding Principles, which a number of Dioceses now choose to request, is closed to me.

The culture of the Church of England creates formal and informal restrictions on the full expression of ordained women's calling which ordained women accept by choosing not to resist. Criticising the culture of conviviality, being bothersome (Ahmed, 2013), ungracious rather than gracious, creates a problem – the complainant. Ahmed explains, 'We become a problem when we describe a problem' (2017a, p.39). To be bothersome is to choose not to let a system persist without challenge. To raise a concern about the way in which women have been accepted as clergy is to create bother. The experiences of the women I interviewed, and the history of the Act of Synod, demonstrate that the Church's culture of conviviality requires an absence of bother amongst many other greedy demands.

Mainly these restrictions are the responsibility of the Church but I believe female priests and our allies should think carefully about the part we play by voluntarily colluding with a culture of convivial discrimination. The choice to be bothersome could be exercised at far less cost than the choices available to women in Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. My recent thoughts on commonness and privileged responsibility link the experiences and aspirations of the women I interviewed with those of women across the world. In conclusion I repeat Fawcett's vision, as the pioneers are dying, those who inherit their legacy must not lose sight of the great responsibility 'to reflect to the world a picture of women and men together, created from the same dust and made equally in the image of Creator God' (1996, pp.39f).

Mayland one of the pioneers who died during the writing of this thesis wrote, 'To my mind, it is absolutely no good women being ordained priest unless we are willing to try and remodel the Church and change the priesthood' (2002, p.46). I have become convinced that if we are to remodel the Church I must inhabit my priesthood in a way that is bothersome. I should be priestly by living the fullness of my Godly calling rather than operating to the limit prescribed by the Church. The women I interviewed believe themselves called by God, they believed they were made fully priest at ordination, but their experience of the institutional culture has demanded a restricted and overly burdened practice of ministry in comparison to men. The problem is embedded deep in the heart of the Church's culture, the Act of Synod and the Five Guiding Principles are merely the most obvious signs of an institutional rejection of the fullness of what God has offered in the ordination of women.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

For the Church of England

The previous chapter is a detailed examination of the current situation as I see it within the Church. It was therefore inward looking, focused on the context in which my research is grounded. My conclusions for the Church and its female clergy draw attention to how women's priestly ministry has unfolded over the past 30 years; the neglect of theological resources created or used by those who waited long for the 1992 vote, a convivial culture demanding more of women than it does of men, and formalised constraints which have overspilled their intended boundaries. This began a process of 'reblocking' a Church which the pioneers believed would have otherwise opened up to a more equal understanding of all men and women made in the image of God, both within and outside the Church.

A Contribution to Knowledge Beyond the Church of England

The thesis also offers material of broader relevance, something I became increasingly aware after my professional institutional context switched from parish ministry to Higher Education. My method is a novel approach to interviewing under-researched groups who are literate. I have demonstrated that almost 50 years on Coser remains relevant to institutions, extending his work to a new context and supplementing his analysis with additional examples of the tools used by greedy institutions. I have demonstrated that the logic of Ahmed's 'killjoy' example can encompass other unspoken norms. I am not the first person to apply Ahmed to the experiences of female priests in the Church of England (Jagger, 2019) but her work is still comparatively uncommon in this field. Ahmed demonstrated the power of joy as a concept to maintain unspoken norms, norms which quietly irradicate attempts to reduce inequality. My analysis shows that a more complex unspoken norm, conviviality, functions in the same way. It affirms that Ahmed's reading of institutional culture applies to the Church whilst adding a further typology of unspoken normative behaviour that may have relevance beyond the Church of England.

Method

Previous uses of Asynchronous Electronic Interviewing have drawn attention to the nature of data gathered which is reflexive and detailed, and the types of person for whom the method was best suited. In particular AEI was suggested for individuals who may have feel embarrassment when meeting an interviewer. AEI also offers a model that is accessible and inclusive in comparison to face to face interviews. My research to place in 2015/16, from 2019 the COVID pandemic provoked other researchers to turn to AEI. Amri et al (2021) describe the value of AEI for research amongst globally disparate, highly busy, healthcare professionals during the height of the pandemic. My research similarly demonstrated the value of AEI amongst time pressured individuals in varying locations. Additionally I believe AEI offers a research method that expands who can conduct research, it is cheaper, more accessible for those who struggle to travel and less environmentally costly. Research becomes more feasible for people with limited physical or financial resource. Had I conducted my interviews face to face they would have entailed approximately 1860 miles by train or car and 13600 miles by plane. Not only would this have generated a significant

carbon footprint it would have been a costly and demanding schedule. The 2020 Office for Students' report, *Postgraduate Research Students at High Tariff Providers* reveals that only 11.1% of research students at universities demanding high entry grades (including Birmingham) come from the lowest postcode areas in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Only 12.7% of PGR students at these universities declare a disability (2020, p.6ff). If research is to be more affordable and accessible online alternatives to the physical face to face interview will be important.

Video interviewing may provide a low cost alternative to physical face to face interviewing but unfortunately it requires high quality broadband. It also has the same scheduling challenges as a face to face interview. The United Nation's *Measuring Digital Development – Facts and Figures 2021* (2022) reported that whilst 95% of the world's population had access to broadband in developing countries users faced many barriers to connectivity including, coverage, cost, and availability to good quality hardware. Unlike video interviewing AEI does not require a strong internet signal, it needs only a small amount of data to upload material and can be conducted on the most basic of internet enabled equipment. In some circumstances, for example where it is safe for a participant to retain data about their personal circumstances on their own device, AEI offers an accessible tool for global researchers of limited means. Not only does AEI benefit hard to reach populations it also serves the needs of researchers who may be from those communities.

Adding to Coser: the power of hope and ineffectual status.

Coser's vivid imagery of a voracious institution devouring the time of its members resonates strongly with my professional pastoral role in Higher Education. I think his analysis of how individuals are constrained and how they might collude their own constraint remains relevant 50 years after publication. Despite Coser's hope that employment legislation and labour saving domestic appliances might improve society the Greedy Institution still trespasses on time and life space which does not rightly belong to it. Earlier studies demonstrate the importance of tied housing, morals relating to public, political and community service, and benchmarks for what is personal worth derived solely from the priorities of the host institution. My research adds two further examples of constraints which increase loyalty to a greedy institution. Both are non-fiscal rewards; the hope of better circumstances, and the giving of honorary awards and titles. Hope for better times can distract a person from the reality of their context. Awards and titles confer ineffectual status, often bringing more work but without access to increased power or resource. Hope and the conferment of ineffectual status binds members more closely to the institutions in which they are located, they inspire and renew loyalty and cost little in terms of power or finance. They are found in the military, universities, trade unions and online communities studied by the writers referred to in Chapter Six.

The power of hope is revealed in the transcripts of women who optimistically believed they had negotiated better working conditions. Promises of unremunerated and flexible, i.e. unboundaried hours can be found in many institutions. Prior to COVID many clergy were already used to their home being their place of work. The COVID pandemic from 2020 and concomitant lockdowns saw an increasing number of people's homes becoming their place of work. Reports including the Confederation of British Industries and Cranfield University's

(2022) *The Future of Flexible Working* and Adamson, Beauregard and Lewis' (2023) *Future Proofing Your Flexible Workforce* show that post pandemic employers across many sectors have continued to permit working from home and diverse working schedules. Adamson et al (2023) discovered that in many cases 'flexibility in working time was rarely matched with flexibility in terms of workload'. My development of Coser's model allows me to demonstrate that hope that one day a worker will 'get on top of their hours' or make use of the 'option to say no' activates loyalty that burdens an individual but benefits the institution. The experience of female clergy interpreted through Coser's model provides a cautionary tale for those who are hopeful about improvements that flexible working might bring.

Unusually, if not uniquely, the experience of clergy also offers insight into unremunerated part time and flexible working within a profession. This may become more widely relevant as employment patterns change. I have recently learnt of a friend reactivating her professional status after her children started school through a year of 'volunteering' as an occupational therapist within the NHS. My work shows the promise of a part time or flexible role, paid or unpaid, is an effective way to activate loyalty not considered in *Greedy Institutions*. Writers who have expanded Coser's theory into other contexts refer to the intrusion of work into the home and personal time of individuals but they do not consider the power of actively soliciting this intrusion through negotiating a promise of homeworking, flexibility, or reduced hours. Promises of flexibility and reduced hours incentivise women to remain aligned to an institution even when the reality of a part time or flexible role is full time and / or inflexible. The ostensibly compassionate offer of flexibility and professional validation in return for reduced reward is shown through my data to bind members closer. Both Mary and Katie referred to retaining the 'option' to work part time even though their workload was fulltime. Women in my study were kept as loyal members of a greedy institution through the hope of flexible and reduced hours rather than the reality.

The research also demonstrates the power of honorary titles, awards, and other symbols of status as one of the Greedy Institution's invisible restraints. In his reflection on sects Coser draws attention to what he describes as a tendency to 'level off individuality', the Greedy Institution desiring an undifferentiated character structure amongst its members. Anyone who departs from the norms of the institution could potentially be seen as attacking the basis of the institution's existence (1974, p.107). Nevertheless I demonstrate status which is ineffectual, a title or award that comes without increased access to resources of power, income, or labour is a powerful tool for rewarding and reenergising loyalty. In Coser's model of a Greedy Sect a very small number of charismatic individuals have power over a much larger undifferentiated group. In organisations where there is less stress on charisma as the sole criterion for who joins the small leadership group, one finds in the larger group indicators of status which diverge from Coser's hypothesis of levelling.

Disruptions to levelling come in the form of titles, awards and additional unpaid roles that signify status whilst not actually increasing access to power or resources. My interviews showed that some honorary statuses increased a person's workload whereas others simply activated loyalty which might have been slipping after a period of long service. Hallmarks of status might include a voluntary role involving increased administration but bringing with it an ancient title. In institutions replete with ceremony, titles may confer a more prestigious

place in a procession or at some other formal occasion. The military, academia and the Church all exercise this sanctioned standing out. Coser did not consider the role of ineffectual status amongst individuals or the operation of power involved in awarding as part of the maintenance of a Greedy Institution. This addition to Coser's work is widely relevant as many of the institutions subsequently shown to conform to a Greedy Institution model, universities, the military, trade unions are replete with honorary positions and regularly confer seemingly prestigious awards which amount to very little.

Enriching Ahmed: More to kill than joy.

In the latter years of my research Ahmed began to be referred to in my conversations with feminists researching the Church. Jagger heavily references Ahmed and I am sure more work relating her conclusions to female clergy will be published. I have proven that Ahmed's description of the power of unspoken institutional norms in constricting attempts to improve Higher Education can be adapted to the Church. My work points towards the applicability of the killjoy manifesto to women's experience in faith groups in general as it shows how loyalty to God and what is judged as the proper performance of religion is measured against an unspoken norm.

In institutions where women and others are deemed not to fit in, joy may not be the dominant norm. I have shown that the unspoken norm might have other characteristics, in my case I identified the power of conviviality. My transcripts led me to conclude that there is a requirement around conviviality that extends beyond 'killjoy' behaviour. My critique of conviviality is built on Ahmed's underlying logic that there are some people who do not fit in with unspoken norms, however it takes her theory into a new context and extends her definition of approved normative ways of behaving. Conviviality is perhaps more complexly rigid, it is bound up with a multifaceted concept of what is good behaviour. Other unspoken, invisible norms will operate in different institutions. My work demonstrates the importance of identifying the character of discrimination within an institution. We must go beyond the facts of discrimination, the practical behaviours that resist change and restrict the lives of women and others, to the culture that enables and even celebrates discriminatory behaviour. If we can identify what the dominant culture is, we are better placed to write our own manifesto for change.

Greedy Institutions continue to thrive in many forms, any attempt to reduce their greed and free those whom are ensnared within them must first identify the norms that sanction such 'voracious' (Coser) behaviour. Pemberton (2019) described the Church in the 1990s as needing a 'new Reformation', the same is true today not just of the Church but many institutions where one small group with inherited power still dominates. Luther nailed his theses to a door; Ahmed published her manifesto online. I hope by explaining how identifying one institutional norm exposed a mechanism of invisible control in the Church of England I have suggested a starting point for anyone wanting to see reformation in their own institutional context.

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Appendices

Appendix A Glossary

Alternative Service Book (ASB)	Authorised liturgies of the Church of England, in contemporary language as an alternative to the Book of Common Prayer. In use 1980 - 2000
Act of Synod	An Act of Synod is a non-legislative instrument or resolution of the General Synod which is formally published as ‘the embodiment of the will or opinion of the Church of England as expressed by the whole body of the Synod’. Though it is morally binding, it is not legally enforceable. (Forward in Faith, 2014) Rescinding an Act of Synod requires a simple majority in the General Synod. <i>The Act of Synod is commonly used shorthand for the 1993 Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: Pastoral Arrangements</i>
Alternative Episcopal Oversight	Between 1994 and 2014 parishes who did not accept the ministry of ordained women were able to pass resolutions requesting pastoral oversight from a Provincial Episcopal Visitor. A PEV, also known as a ‘flying bishop’ is a non ordaining male bishop who has not ordained women or been ordained by a woman himself. In the 2014 the Act of Synod was rescinded and replaced by the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.
Area Dean	An honorary role where a priest has pastoral responsibility for other clergy in their geographical area, and convenes chapter meetings and co chairs Deanery Synods.
Bishop	Bishops are the ‘chief pastors’ (Common Worship, 2007) with a ministry of oversight, they preside at services of confirmation and ‘They are to preside over the ordination of deacons and priests and join together

	in the ordination of bishops' (Common Worship, 2007).
Book of Common Prayer (BCP)	Published following the Church of England's break with the Roman Catholic Church. Between 1549 and 1662 it underwent a number of revisions, including being abolished under Mary I and during the Civil War. Having been reinstated under Charles II the 1662 version became, and remains, the official prayer book of the Church of England.
Chaplain	Works occupationally outside of the Church of England in secular settings such as universities, the armed forces and prisons (although many are still involved in worship provision at Sunday services within the Church). Page, SJ. (2014)
Chapter	A group of clergy, formally related by serving in the same Deanery or Cathedral. Clergy who are informally linked by shared identity or beliefs, eg Diocese of Manchester Women's Chapter or the Chapters of Society of St Wilfred and St Hilda clergy also exist.
Chrism Mass	Annual renewal of ordination vows presided over by a bishop, at which oils for anointing the sick, the dying and those to be baptised are blessed.
Common Worship	The official liturgy of the Church of England from 2000 onwards.
Complementarian	Christians who view the roles of women and men as different but equal, as opposed to all roles being equally available to both sexes. An opinion sometimes called a 'headship', based on a reading of the Bible that leadership positions in churches should only be for men.
Concelebration	A celebration of Holy Communion where several priests join with a principal celebrant assisting in the act of consecration.
Curate	A person in a training position immediately following ordination,

	supervised by a more experienced priest.
Deacon	An ordained role, in the Church of England men traditionally served a year as a deacon before ordination as priests. The introduction of female deacons created a permanent diaconate, which some women remained in having opted not to be ordained priest in 1994. 'A deacon assists the priest under whom he serves, in leading the worship of the people, especially in the administration of Holy Communion. He may baptize when required to do so. It is his general duty to do such pastoral work as is entrusted to him'. (ASB, 1980:344)
Deaconess	Deaconesses served under the direction of bishops and priests. They were admitted by a bishop using a ceremony that was ultimately concluded, after years of debate, to not be an ordination (Field Bibb, 1991:67ff). It could be a salaried role, albeit a poorly paid one, required training, a probationary period and episcopal permission to move between dioceses or resign from work as a deaconess. In particular deaconesses were encouraged to work amongst women, children, and the poor. It was not a preaching or liturgical ministry.
Deanery	A group of parishes forming a distinct group within an archdeaconry which in itself is a region within a diocese.
Diocese	A geographical area of the Church of England with its own cathedral and diocesan bishop. The diocese is divided into archdeaconries, and may have assistant or suffragan bishops supporting the diocesan bishop.
Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament	Consists of 15 Members of Parliament and 15 members of the House of Lords. The members consider the

	merits of any draft Measures issued by the Church of England's General Synod and advise on whether or not they should be approved by Parliament
Faith and Order Commission (FAOC)	A group of clergy and laity appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to advise the House of Bishops, the General Synod, the Council for Christian Unity and the Church of England as a whole on theology.
Flying Bishops	See Provincial Episcopal Visitor
Forward in Faith (FinF)	A conservative Anglo-Catholic campaign group opposed women's ordination.
General Synod	The national assembly of the Church of England since 1970. The General Synod considers and approves legislation affecting the whole of the Church of England, formulates new forms of worship, debates matters believed by the Synod's Business Committee to be of national and international importance, and approves the annual budget for the National Church Institutions.
Headship	See complementarian above
House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests	Replaced the Episcopal Act of Synod (1993) in 2014. Parochial Church Councils can reject the ministry of ordained women, so long as there is not a female incumbent in post at the time, and access alternative episcopal oversight by voting in favour of the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests. Unlike the Act of Synod the Declaration has associated with it a Resolution of Disputes Procedure established by Regulations under a Canon, under which grievances can be brought. Unlike the Act of Synod the House of Bishops will only be able to amend or revoke the Declaration if the amendment or revocation is supported by two-thirds majorities in each House of the General Synod.

House of Bishops	One of the three Houses of General Synod consisting of all diocesan bishops, nine elected suffragans, the Bishop of Dover and the Bishop to the Armed Forces.
Incumbent	A priest responsible for a parish or benefice, 'incumbent status' roles might include Rector, Team Vicar, Priest in Charge, any role where an individual priest is given charge of a local church by a diocesan bishop.
Measure	Church of England measures are laws with the same force and effect as Acts of parliament. They relate to the administration and organisation of the Church, are made by General Synod but require Parliamentary approval to come into force.
Ministerial Development Review (MDR)	Bi or tri annual professional reviews required of all licensed clergy. The format varies from diocese to diocese but generally involves a reflective questionnaire, a conversation with a specially trained lay or ordained reviewer and a meeting with a bishop.
Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW)	The leading campaign group for women's ordination in the Church of England, 1979-1994.
Non ordaining	Bishop, or a candidate to be considered as a bishop, who does not, or would not, ordain women to the priesthood. 'Non-ordaining' bishops can adopt this stance for a variety of theological reasons (GS2225, 2021)
Ordinal	A liturgical book containing the rites and prayers for ordination to each of the three orders of ministry, deacon, priest and bishop. These liturgical texts contain descriptions of the functions of each order.
Ordinand	A person sponsored by a bishop to train for ordination but is not yet ordained.
Priest	Priests can preside in liturgical acts, the celebration of Holy Communion, giving of absolution and blessing are uniquely reserved to those who have

	been ordained priest. (ASB, 1980:356-7)
Provincial Episcopal Visitor (PEV)	PEVs take pastoral and sacramental care of parishes and clergy who have requested Alternative Episcopal Oversight. From 1994 three PEVs, the bishops of Ebbsfleet, Richmond and Beverley, each post holder being in the Anglo Catholic tradition have fulfilled this role augmented by a designated bishop from the team of Area Bishops in London. In 2014 a conservative evangelical bishop was added to the group to support parishes and clergy who object to women's ordination on complementarian grounds.
Stole	A long narrow scarf placed around the neck of a person as they are ordained. Priests' stoles, hang down on each side of the wearer, deacons wear the stole over one shoulder. A deacon's stole is untied when they become a priest.
Synod	An assembly of clergy and laity representing different parishes and ministries. In the Church of England there are synods at deanery, diocesan and national level.
Traditional Catholic	Laity, clergy or bishops, who have reservations about the full ministry of women as priests or bishops, for reasons relating to concerns about the validity of sacraments, or to the position of the Church of England as part of the broader catholic church, or to the importance of a bishop, clergy, and people all having the fullest communion between them.
Training Incumbent	An experienced parish priest who is given the responsibility of working with a curate and supervising their training for three years after their ordination.
Women and the Church (WATCH)	Founded in 1996 as a successor to the Movement for the Ordination of Women (1979-1994). WATCH campaigns on issues of gender justice for lay and ordained women in the Church of England.

Appendix B: Progress towards women's ordination in the Church of England.

The following timeline, shows the admission of women into the different orders of ministry in the Church of England, placing the documents and events referred to in the body of the thesis in chronological order. The Churches of the worldwide Anglican Communion have progressed towards women's ordination at varied paces, key dates from the global communion are only included if they have a relevance to my research. For a fuller evaluation of the history of women's ordination in England see Jaqueline Field Bibb's (1991) *Women Towards Priesthood*.

Key Events

1562

Fundamental beliefs of the Church of England defined.

Referred to as the Thirty Nine Articles, the Articles of Religion were agreed by a Convocation of archbishops, bishops and 'the whole clergy... for the avoiding of diversities of opinions and for the establishing of consent'.

1861 onwards

Introduction of deaconesses and reestablishment of sisterhoods.

Convocation, the legislative body of the Church of England, began to develop guidance for the growing number of women joining Anglican religious orders or being 'made' or ordained deaconesses. In 1862 Elizabeth Ferard was ordained as the first deaconess in the Church of England. After her ordination by Archbishop Tait Convocation debated and reported about deaconesses (1878, 1883, 1885, 1890) before final confirmation in 1891 that deaconess was a lay role, women were made rather than ordained as deaconesses (Field Bibb, 1991:67ff). The order of deaconesses was closed to new members in 1987 as part of the legislative to ordain women as deacons.

1897

Lambeth Conference recognises the office of deaconess.

Worldwide recognition of the role of the deaconess in the Anglican Communion.

1919

Church Assembly replaces Convocation

Lay people join priests and bishops in making decisions about Church governance.

First Church of England report to specifically examine women's ministry.

The Ministry of Women. A Report by a Committee Appointed by His Grace The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury (1919)

1920

Lambeth Conference re affirms the office of deaconess as the only ministry open to women.

Encyclical Letter from the Bishops with Resolution and Reports. Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion Holden at Lambeth Palace (1920)

1935

The possibility of change identified.

Report of the Archbishop's Commission on the Ministry of Women (1935). For the first time a Church of England document acknowledged a possible interpretation of the Church's historic formularies, specifically the Thirty Fourth Article of Religion, which could allow for the ordination women. Although the report supports the continued ban on women's ordination it contained a dissenting opinion from the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral

1944

First Anglican woman ordained priest

Florence Li Tim-Oi (1907-1992) ordained in Zhaoqing, China by Bishop Ronald Hall. Hall was condemned by his fellow bishops and Li Tim-Oi voluntarily withdrew from priestly ministry after the Second World War. In 1948 Lambeth Conference rejected a request from the Diocese of South China for an experimental period in which deaconesses could be ordained priests, concluding the time was not yet right for women's ordination (Field Bibb, 1991:85)

1970

Equal Pay Act

General Synod replaces the Church Assembly.

1974

First Anglican female priests since 1944

The Philadelphia Eleven, were eleven women ordained in an unofficial service, later regularised, by Anglican bishops in America.

1975

Sex Discrimination Act

Women's ordination given theoretical approval.

General Synod passed the motion 'That this Synod considers that there are no fundamental objections to the ordination of women to the priesthood' (GS,1975 542-73)

1978

General Synod votes against beginning to remove the legal barriers.

Una Kroll, who had publicly declared her sense of calling to the priesthood, shouted from the Public Gallery 'We asked for bread, you gave us a stone'.

To break the impasse General Synod began to approach the three orders of ministry, bishop, priest and deacon separately.

1986

General Synod votes in favour of women's ordination as deacons.

Clause 1(4) of the Measure stated (4) 'Nothing in this Measure shall make it lawful for a woman to be ordained to the office of priest'.

Parliament approves women's ordination as deacons.

1987

Deaconesses are ordained as deacons.

From 1987 onwards women are able to sit in the House of Clergy of General Synod, women enter training as ordinands for diaconal ministry.

1988

Draft legislation for the ordination of women as priests referred to dioceses for consultation.

As with legislation to ordain deacons this proposal separated priesthood from the other orders of ministry explicitly excluding consideration of women's ordination and consecration as bishops.

1992

General Synod votes in favour of ordaining women as priests.

1993

Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod passed.

The Act of Synod allowed Parish Church Councils to adopt resolutions refusing the ministry of women. The House of Bishops document, *The Bonds of Peace* (1993) explained that the Act ensured that 'those who for a variety of reasons cannot conscientiously accept that women may be ordained as priests will continue to hold a legitimate and recognised place within the Church of England' (HoB, 1993).

Parliament approves Synodical decisions relating to women's ordination.

1994

Existing deacons ordained as priests.

2006

General Synod resolves to draft legislation to permit women's ordination as bishops.

As well as proposing the removal of obstacles to women becoming bishops General Synod requested 'a draft of possible additional legal provision consistent with Canon A 4[27] to establish arrangements that would seek to maintain the highest possible degree of communion with those conscientiously unable to receive the ministry of women bishops'

2012

Legislation to ordain women as bishops fails to pass.

Although the draft measure passed by the required two thirds majority in the Houses of Bishops and Clergy it fell by six votes in the House of Laity.

2014

General Synod approves the ordination of female bishops

Parliament approves Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure 2014

Episcopal Act of Synod (1993) rescinded replaced by The Five Guiding Principles

The Five Guiding Principles are a Code of Conduct intended to affirm both opponents and supporters of women's ordination.

2015

First woman ordained and consecrated as a bishop in the Church of England.

2017

January to March controversy surrounding the appointment of Philip North as Bishop of Sheffield.

An opponent of women's ordination accepts the invitation to become a diocesan bishop but subsequently withdraws following protests.

2018

Church of England publishes the theological rationale behind the Five Guiding Principles.

The Five Guiding Principles A Resource for Study (2018) is produced by the Faith and Order Commission to explain 'to other churches the distinctive approach the Church of England has taken on the ordination of women to the episcopate, including the provision made for those who do not accept the ministry of female clergy' and support 'staff at Theological Education Institutions responsible for teaching ordinands about the Five Guiding Principles' (2018:7).

Appendix C: Interview Documents

The introductory letter

Dear

I am contacting you in relation to a research project that I am currently engaged in. I am a Team Vicar in the Parish of Central Wolverhampton also a post graduate research student at the University of Birmingham. My area of study, a piece of independent research, is the vocational journey of young women ordinands who were ordained Deacon and Priest between 1995 and 1999, this includes the entire cohort of 71 women whether still serving as a Priest or not. I have written to you because I believe that you were aged 29 or under when you started training for ordination and were subsequently ordained Deacon no earlier than 1995 and Priest no later than 1999.

If you are initially interested in learning about, and possibly taking part, in the research project I would be grateful if you could reply to this email or write to me (The Vicarage, 27 Adelaide Walk, WV2 1DX). I will then send you a more detailed outline of what would be entailed and the ethical framework of the research during late July or early August. The interviews themselves will take place over the next 6 – 9 months.

If you would feel more comfortable responding after checking my background please contact my supervisor Dr Deryn Guest.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/tr/guest-deryn.aspx>

You will also find me listed in Crockford's Clerical Directory.

I would be grateful if you could check with fellow women of this cohort to see if they have received this letter. If they have not I would appreciate you forwarding it on to them. Equally, if I have misidentified you, I apologise.

With best wishes,

Reverend Sarah Schofield.

The Survey

Vocational Journeys 95-99

I Contact details

In the beginning

Some questions about age

2. What age were you on September 21st in your first year of training for ordained ministry?

Vocational Journeys 95-99

Who do you say that you are?

Rather than give a list of tick boxes please give a short description in words of your choosing of your ethnicity, sexuality, marital status, family circumstances, disability, etc thank you.

3. My description of me.

Part of the research explores initial expectations and lived experiences of priesthood, in particular there will be a discussion of imagery

4. If you have, or had, a stole you would describe as your ordination stole which of the following apply.

I designed a unique stole for myself

I made my own stole

I selected an off the peg stole for myself

Another person selected an off the peg stole for me

Another person designed my ordination stole

I have an emotional attachment to my ordination stole

I did not have an ordination stole

I still have my ordination stole

I still use my ordination stole

Other (please specify)

What is your current situation

5. At this time

I no longer hold a Bishop's license

I am a religious leader in another Christian denomination

I am a religious leader in another faith tradition

I no longer see myself as part of a faith community

I am in stipendiary ministry

I am in non-stipendiary ministry

My primary professional role is as a religious leader

I am active within an Anglican community outside of England

I hold a Bishop's license within the Church of England

Notes for the introductory conversation

'Name Number

Date time means of communication.

duration

Things to cover

Ring on time

Thank you

Stress independence from C of E esp current young vocations

What is AEI

Sampling method

Confidential

Possibility of revising email transcript

Possibility of revising thesis

Timeline of editing transcript (2 months)

Why am I doing this?

Other notes

Challenges for me'

Sample notes from a phone call

adapted to preserve anonymity

Name xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Date time means of communication 0/7/16 6.30pm

Duration 8 minutes

Things to cover

Ring on time **yes**

Thank you **yes**

Stress independence from C of E esp current young vocations **yes**

What is AEI **yes**

Sampling method **yes**

Confidential **yes**

Possibility of revising email transcript **yes**

Possibility of revising thesis **yes**

Timeline of editing transcript (2 months) **yes**

Why am I doing this?

Xxxxxxxx was very interested in my motivation, illustrated with story of people leaving and whether this was normative and being the midpoint i.e. not 1994 but still many firsts. I realise I am getting better at answering the question.

Other notes

Quick v business like

Challenges for me

Why don't I mention my issues with Act of Synod in motivation? Because I don't want to skew the answers? No, I think honestly because I don't want to appear like a troublemaker and risk putting women off. Self-silencing or professionalism? Problem both

Interview questions

1. Outline a timeline of your journey from when you first considered ordination as a Priest until now. Are you still licensed as a Priest in the Church of England?
2. When do you consider yourself to have become a Priest?
3. Do you still consider yourself to be a Priest? We will consider how and what ways later.
4. When pursuing your Priestly role within the Church of England what were / are your sources of encouragement? Can you identify any specific Church teachings that have affirmed you?
5. In what way was / is this encouragement healthy for you?
6. When pursuing your Priestly role within the Church of England what were / are your sources of discouragement? Can you identify any specific Church teachings that have undermined you?
7. In what way was / is this discouragement to pursue your Priestly role healthy for you?
8. As a Priest how have you felt about representing the Church of England?
9. How does representing the Church of England differ to representing Christ?
10. Speaking entirely personally what have been the positive and negative aspects of the Act of Synod and the concept of two integrities for you?
11. Have you ever concealed your true feelings about the Act of Synod? In what context and why? Do you regret your decision?
12. Speaking entirely personally what have been the positive and negative aspects of the Act of Synod and the concept of two integrities for you?
13. Have you ever concealed your true feelings about the way the Church of England operates in relation to the ministry of female priests? In what context and why? Do you regret your decision?
14. On many occasions individuals have contributed to the choice, design and manufacture of their ordination stole. Can you talk me through any choices you made about an ordination stole?
15. What did you want those choices to say about your future ministry?
16. If you were designing a stole now for the actual ministry you would go on to have what would it look like?

Additionally after Philip North (more detail)

17. Has the situation in Sheffield impacted on your feelings and opinions – spoken and unspoken?

Appendix D: Stages of numerical refinement of sample

Initial sample: all women ordained 1995 – 1999	<u>552</u>
Sample refined by age, under 32 when commencing theological training	68 (12% of all women ordained 95-99) 2 removed, myself and Canon Clare Maclaren, a friend who helped draft the questions.
Contact details found	64
First email / letter sent	64 (email 56, letter 8)
Replies	37
Survey requested	34
Survey completed	29
Invited to participate	16
Agreed to participate	13 (20% of those eligible to do so)

Appendix E: Ranking

1. Unequivocal cause of flourishing 363 statements

Which experiences have been uncomplicatedly positive? After outlining a prolonged period of ill health, which she attributes to a demanding job with little support, Katie describes the methods she has used to return to physical and mental wellbeing. Resigning to spend more time with her son and focus on homelife was an unequivocal cause of flourishing: 'I am trying to heal some of that and spent a year doing little except domestic chores and childcare.' (Katie)

2. Mainly a cause of flourishing 263 statements

Many interviewees found encouragement and diminishment in the same experience, representative membership of the Church of England frequently featured in the descriptions of things which both energised and drained my interviewees: 'As for representing the Church of England mostly it has been fine. Really most people just see you as the God person rather than representing an organisation. Even in civic events in Barrow (named changed) it felt like that' (Mary)

3. Neutral statement 151 statements

To keep the narrative moving some statements are simply statements of what is, or are included without comment on whether this is good thing or not. The bulk of each transcript is experience followed by an opinion, to be expected in a reflective process. Neutral statements were important in establishing commonalities of experience: Georgia gives a detail of her work which is shared by the other women in the sample, in her case it is given without reflection related to flourishing. 'I represent the CofE any time I turn up to a community meeting for example - whether I am wearing a dog-collar or not - and I am aware of that' (Georgia)

4. Mainly a cause of diminishment 270 statements

These statements often occurred as expansions of positive points, nuanced statements of what is mostly good or mostly bad are almost equal in frequency. In this quote Mary adds a caveat to a positive statement about representing the Church of England: 'However there have been times when I have been ashamed to represent the CofE usually role of women and sexuality' (Mary)

5. Unequivocal cause of diminishment 333 statements

Statements about experiences in which the interviewee relates distress, trauma or other negative impact with no positive reflection. Katie wrote of the strain on her mental health of the pressure to move up the church hierarchy: 'I am, from time to time, pressured (in a polite way) by my bishop and others to consider senior posts (if not now then in the near future), but I am resisting this because everything about the idea repels me and makes me feel physically tense'. (Katie)

Appendix F: Illustration of Interim Themes

Interim themes within the decisive category of Calling

Original category label	Explanation of label	Occurrences
Awe	A compelling sense of having one's call affirmed by encountering God in a particular place, moment or act.	4
Calling	Autobiographical details from interviewees' own vocational journey.	79
Change of plans	Discontinuity as a catalyst for affirmation or reappraisal	16
Direct Affirmation	Positive encouragement from others.	53
Doctrine	Christian teaching that has encouraged or discouraged a sense of calling	37
Guidance	One off intervention from religious figures whilst considering a call.	4
Household	The impact of significant others whilst discerning or living out a calling.	82
Identity	Priesthood as who a person is rather than what she is qualified to do	144
Indirect affirmation	Feeling affirmed by the general culture around oneself	8
Invitation	Being asked to consider specific roles	4
Joy	Calling affirmed by moments of happiness.	7
Moment	Calling affirmed by a brief incident.	22
Pre 92	Sensing a calling to priesthood in the period prior to the change in Church of England policy in 1992. This resulted in women being ordained as priests in 1994.	15
Scripture	Biblical material that has encouraged or discouraged a sense of calling.	8

Self-Doubt	Questioning ability to fulfil the calling of a priest.	19
Visible women	The impact of observing women, or not being able to observe women, engaging in ordained ministry.	76
Young	The distinctive experience of a young person called to priesthood.	33

Appendix G: The Five Guiding Principles

1. Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
2. Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter
3. Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;
4. Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
5. Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England

Appendix H: The Killjoy Manifesto

I am not willing to make happiness my cause

I am willing to cause unhappiness

I am willing to support others who are willing to cause unhappiness

I am not willing to laugh at jokes designed to cause offence

I am not willing to get over histories that are not over

I am not willing to be included if inclusion means being included in a system that is unjust violent and unequal

I am willing to live a life that is deemed by others as unhappy and I am willing to widen the scripts available for what counts as a good life

I am willing to put the hap back in happiness

I am willing to snap any bonds however, precious when those bonds are damaging to myself or others

I am willing to participate in a killjoy movement

Appendix I: Illustration of stoles being worn

Priests and deacons wearing ordination stoles after a Chrism Mass.

Photo credit, Reverend Mark Salmon.

