

QUAKERS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORKPLACE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This thesis contends that contemporary work processes shape fundamentally Quaker practice in the everyday context. This qualitative research is based on semi-structured interviews of opportunistically acquired participants. It is therefore an in-depth, if not statistically representative, study of the contemporary Quaker tradition.

Participants in the research are overwhelmingly adult converts who frame conversion to the Quaker church in liberating terms. The interviewees depict the prescription of religion by mainstream Christian churches as oppressing the individual religious enterprise. Rather, Quakers in the research tend to see their religious journey as a primarily individual project which is affirmed by their conversion to the church. Tensions are also evidenced, however, between affiliates' highly individualised re-imagination of the Quaker tradition and conformity to the collective concern.

The interviewees claim an intention to improve the world, matching Quaker horizons with those espoused by their work organisations. Lived religion and work are thus conflated by affiliates with regard to their everyday social practice. Workaday tensions, however, show that the claimed utopian compact between affiliates and the work setting is provisional. The thesis concludes that, whilst the contemporary work organisation sets out the terms of affiliates' social practice, these Quakers tend towards pragmatism in the everyday.

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List of Contents

Abstract
Acknowledgements
List of Contents
List of Tables

Table of Contents

Chapter One – The Research Context

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Context, literature review and discussion	6
1.2.1	The Quaker context	7
1.2.2	The contemporary Quaker church	10
1.2.3	Sociology of Quakers	11
1.2.4	Quakers and Work	17
1.3	Sociology of Religion	27
1.4	Problem Statement	34
1.5	Statement of purpose and research questions	35
1.6	Thesis outline	36
1.7	Rationale and significance	41
1.8	Chapter summary	43

Chapter Two – Research Methodology

2.1	Introduction and overview	44
2.2	Rationale for qualitative research design	44
2.3	Insider research	50
2.3.1	Locating the insider researcher	51
2.3.2	Insider to the Quaker church	52
2.4	Research constituency and sample	55
2.4.1	Constituency	55
2.4.2	Identifying the sample	56
2.5	Interviews	58
2.5.1	Critical framing of semi-structured interviews	58
2.5.2	Investigating ambiguity, intimacy and belief	59
2.6	Pilot study	61
2.6.1	Acquiring participants for the pilot study	61
2.6.2	How the pilot study enhanced the research	63
2.7	Recruiting participants for the research	65
2.8	The research interviews	68
2.9	Recording the interviews	72
2.10	Data analysis and synthesis	72

2.11	Ethical considerations	76
2.12	Methodological limitations and strengths	80
2.13	Chapter summary	84

Chapter Three – Contemporary Quaker Conversion

3.1	Introduction	85
3.2	Quakers are adult converts	85
3.3	The conversion process	87
3.3.1	Early Quaker radical conversion	87
3.3.2	Contemporary Quaker conversion	91
3.4	A familiar Christian alternative	94
3.5	Categories of Quaker church affiliation	97
3.5.1	Declared membership	100
3.5.2	Church attenders	102
3.5.3	The heterodoxy of attendership	104
3.6	Quakers as alternators	106
3.7	A re-imagined Christian home	111
3.8	A liberating church	113
3.9	Boundary-less conversion	115
3.10	Chapter summary	119

Chapter Four – The Quaker Church Re-imagined

4.1	Introduction	121
4.2	Opposing mainstream Christianity	121
4.2.1	Christian scripture	124
4.2.2	Christian church dogma	126
4.2.3	Christian passivity	128
4.2.4	Oppressive Christianity	129
4.3	Individualising Christianity	133
4.4	Contesting Christianity	136
4.5	Tensions in the Quaker organisation	142
4.5.1	Loss of original visions	143
4.5.2	Quaker inertia	146
4.5.3	Quaker church disharmony	150
4.6	Chapter summary	155

Chapter Five – The Harmony of Quaker Work

5.1	Introduction	157
5.2	Categorising Quaker work	158
5.2.1	Economic and occupational categories	158
5.3	Quakers and the workaday world	162
5.4	The dystopic work lens	165

5.5	The Quaker pragmatic lens	169
5.6	Quaker aspirations at work	171
5.7	Quaker utopians	174
5.8	Shared utopian horizons	177
5.9	Money-making re-imagined	181
5.10	Individualised horizons at work	183
5.11	Working like Quakers	188
5.12	Chapter summary	191

Chapter Six – Managing Disharmony at Work

6.1	Introduction	193
6.2	Conspicuous Quaker claims	194
6.2.1	In-work relationships	195
6.2.2	Quaker employability	196
6.2.3	Employment as Quakers	197
6.2.4	When work and Quaker collide	198
6.3	Contouring Quaker to the workaday	205
6.4	Re-imagining God at work	208
6.4.1	Managing ‘That of God’ in everyone	214
6.4.2	When work shifts the goalposts	217
6.4.3	Thriving in the supported context	219
6.4.4	Surviving the unsupported context	222
6.5	The limits of utopia	228
6.6	Chapter summary	230

Chapter Seven – Employing Harmonious Means to Utopian Ends

7.1	Introduction	231
7.2	The Critical Management lens	232
7.3	What is management?	234
7.4	The Quaker view of management	236
7.5	Shared visions of religious utopia	241
7.6	Liquid utopians	245
7.7	Fixing utopia	249
7.7.1	Re-imagining the managerial paradigm	250
7.8	Quaker workaday conformity	252
7.9	Overturning managerial utopia	255
7.10	Quakers transgress within the rules	257
7.11	Euphonious practices in the everyday	260
7.11.1	Espousing harmony amongst colleagues	262
7.11.2	Espousing harmony amongst management	265
7.12	Chapter summary	268

Chapter Eight – Conclusion

8.1	Introduction	270
8.2	Analysis of overall findings	270
8.3	Implications for current scholarship	288
8.3.1	Sociology of religion	288
8.4	Implications for future scholarship	300
8.5	Chapter summary	307

Appendix 1	Suggested Interview Questions	310
Appendix 2	Permission for Interview Letter to Quaker Clerks	312
Appendix 3	Request for Interview Flyer	313
Appendix 4	Participant Information Sheet	314
Appendix 5	Interviewee Consent Form	317

Bibliography		318
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List of tables

Table 1: Quakers working within Public/Private and Market/Non-Market sector	159
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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

This thesis builds a picture of the contemporary Quaker tradition as seen through the eyes of Quaker research participants. It explores these interviewees' perceptions of the contemporary work setting. This thesis then maps their personal views regarding what counts as Quaker against their social practice in the context of work. The conclusion of this thesis is that there are anomalies within the purview of the modern liberal Quaker church. Specifically, I identify a cleavage between the views which the Quaker research participants espouse as Quaker and their social practice in the work context. Ultimately, what counts as Quaker is subject to a process of compromise and practical accommodation within the mundane world: claims to religious horizons are circumscribed in the workaday and pragmatism rather than radicalism is typical.

The starting point of this research is that the research participants tend to convert to the church in adulthood. From this position, I build a theory which identifies what counts for the interviewees as the contemporary Quaker tradition. I suggest reasons why these Quakers opt to affiliate with a religious institution generally and with the Quaker church in particular. I suggest that the grounds for this conversion are framed by affiliates in terms alternative and oppositional to those of mainstream Christian churches. Exploring why affiliates choose to affiliate to the Quaker church in particular, I view as critical to how I depict the contemporary tradition. It has enabled this thesis to frame the trajectory

of the religious journey of these Quaker church affiliates and map this against their experience of contemporary work.

Affiliates regard the Quaker church as a liberal and permissive church organisation. It is seen as supportive of an individualised religious perspective. In these terms, the interviewees regard the church as a good fit for their personal values. In particular, they see Christianity specifically and religion generally in provisional and ongoing terms. Religious truths, from this Quaker perspective, are not fixed nor, significantly, can religious truths be fully defined for individual participants by church institutions. Ergo, the interviewees suggest that the organisational structures of traditional mainstream churches are inimical to this fundamental and highly individualised view of religious belief. Religious truth is elusive in this stratified and organisational sense.

This perception of what counts as religious is not understood by affiliates in the formal terms of church worship. Institutional church structures are seen by the research participants as superficial and as merely representational of religious belief. In this sense, affiliates contest the essential terms upon which mainstream churches are perceived to construct the Christian religious edifice. Instead, the research participants claim to place greater value on how individuals live out their provisional and ongoing horizons within the everyday. This partial Quaker approach to religion as a primarily lived experience has been termed the 'absolute perhaps' by Dandelion (2007, 152). In other words, the Quaker worldview is predicated on the idea that ultimate meaning is

unknowable and that this uncertainty is life's only certainty (Dandelion 2007, 152).

However, this worldview is held in tension by affiliates in the everyday work setting.

When the contemporary permissive and individualised Quaker tradition meets the mundane context of work, a contradiction emerges in the Quaker narrative: the interviewees' responses in the work context appear to be situated. In other words, the liberal mien which Quakers espouse and cite as a reason for affiliation to the church, framed as essential and contestational, is not evidenced similarly in the affiliates' social practice within the work context. Although the interviewees claim the everyday as fundamentally meaningful, their approach to the workaday world tends to be one of normative conformity not one of individualistic radicalism to which they apparently lay claim. This thesis explores this apparent discrepancy.

In my thesis, I hypothesise how this apparently contradictory perspective has arisen. I suggest that the interviewees' claims to approach the social world from the point of view of the 'absolute perhaps', a certainty of uncertainty, is limited within and by the context of work. Whilst the research participants appear to essentialise the 'absolute perhaps' in terms of how they construct the Quaker tradition, they adopt a pragmatic view towards the workaday world. In terms of their social practice, the work organisation is viewed as ultimately authoritative by these Quakers and managerial decision-making consequently shapes affiliates' responses.

This discrepancy between Quaker religious horizons and the contradictory demands of the workaday, at least in its potentialities, tend not to be experienced as conflicted by affiliates in the mundane, however. This harmonious tendency is explained by another finding of the research: interviewees' occupations tend to be located in work organisations whose espoused horizons are believed by affiliates to match their own. Thus, religious and work organisations are both framed by affiliates as fundamentally harmonious with Quaker horizons.

This claimed harmony between the research participants' purview and those espoused by their work and religious affiliation is identified as an apparent contradiction. The interviewees tend to feel that they can make better the world (Johns 2007, 121). They espouse the view that this utopian ideal can be put into effect through engagement with their work. However, this impulse to improve human life is not unending. Rather, it is pursued on terms defined for affiliates by the work organisation. The terms of the work organisation with which Quaker ideals are aligned are not always ideally suited to affiliates' horizons, however. These terms are also subject to change by management acting on behalf of the work organisation. In these circumstances, when organisational and Quaker horizons are perceived by affiliates as no longer aligned, the Quaker affiliates' responses tend to compromise and conformity.

Quakers in this sense are fundamentally not framed as contestational or directly oppositional in the work context. They work in settings which are seen as aligned with their Quaker horizons and, when organisational horizons are perceived as misaligned,

seldom oppose. Fundamental grounds for opposition tend also to be disavowed especially in Quaker terms: the research participants are reportedly seen as benign and ultimately non-threatening to the work organisation. Claimed opposition as Quaker is singular, that is, rare and not repeated by the individual. Thus, the essential aspects of contemporary work are neither fundamentally re-imagined nor directly challenged by affiliates. The rationale and the managerial practices within the organisation remain fundamentally undisrupted in the work setting.

Moreover, the interviewees suggest that their horizons persist across time, both prior to and since they were matched to the church through affiliation. In this sense, individual horizons are privileged above Quaker horizons in practice, doubt and uncertainty is essentialised and affiliates' lived experience is re-cast as Quaker. Quaker affiliation is seen by the affiliates to require no fundamental change from affiliates but reinforces an ultimately individualised claim to a putatively religious engagement with work. What counts as Quaker in the everyday is, thus, viewed as a fundamental investigative aspect of this thesis. The findings suggest that these Quaker claims are defined in relational terms (Day 2011, 191) with regard to the work setting. In this sense, what counts as Quaker in practice is only realised by viewing the interviewees' claims through the prism of the social particular and, moreover, what counts as work or Quaker or religion is fluid and ongoing in these terms.

I conclude that the liberal Quaker tradition as lived out in the contemporary work organisation is fundamentally shaped by its context. Affiliates' claims to transcend work

in religious terms can be seen as partially realised. However, these Quaker claims to pursue a better world are not ultimately privileged by affiliates. The permissive and liberal claims of the 'absolute perhaps' are expedient within the work context. The exposition of the contemporary Quaker tradition tends to be contoured to its context rather than the essential horizons which affiliates espouse. The Quaker tradition is thus highly individualised and affiliates' normative or universal Quaker claims are, in practice, limited in the context of work.

In the rest of this introductory chapter, I identify the significance of these findings. In the following 'Context, literature review and discussion' section, I describe the context of the study in terms of the Quaker church and the contemporary work setting. I evaluate literature regarding the contemporary Quaker church, Quakers in the work setting and sociological analyses of work and of religion. I propose that the intersection of work and religious faith generally and the Quaker tradition in particular is significantly under-researched. In the 'Research and significance' section, I set out the research questions and suggest religiosity in the context of work is a significant aspect of public life. Lastly, I outline how my thesis is set out in each of the successive chapters.

1.2 Context, literature review and discussion

In this section, I describe the Quaker church. I identify its beginnings and how its contemporary view of itself as counter-cultural is a claimed continuation of its historical radicalism. This section is a limited review of the Quaker context in terms of relevant literature. There is an extreme paucity of academic literature on Quakers' first-hand

experience of the contemporary work setting. Sociological investigations into the church began seriously with Pink Dandelion's (1996) work, '*A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers: The Silent Revolution*'. However, this and further theses analyse the church mainly within the church setting. Most other Quaker literature is historical and draws upon primary sources, the relevance of which to this study is substantially tangential. The following depiction of relevant literature highlights the uniqueness of this study in terms of the Quaker church and the juxtaposition of religion generally within the contemporary context of work.

1.2.1 The Quaker context

The Religious Society of Friends in Britain or Quakers began as a recusant movement which 'offered new religious solutions' (Hill 1991, 14) amid the political, social and religious turmoil of seventeenth century England. Its rise and subsequent longevity was not initially guaranteed and its endurance has been attributed to the organising capability of its early adherents, most notably its founding advocate, George Fox (Punshon 2004, 53).

The Quaker movement was initially founded in opposition to Christianity as it was constructed by the established English church at that time (Dandelion 2007, 240). Quakers regarded the English church as apostate and regarded the wayward morality of contemporary society as reflecting this deviation (Punshon 2004, 39; Dandelion 2007, 18; Pilgrim, 2008, 56). They proclaimed a spiritual equality amongst all believers and decried the implicit and explicit ordering manifested within the contemporary church

(Pilgrim 2008, 6). Quakers felt that they were only answerable to God not secular authorities (Punshon 2004, 59). The established church as interpreter of God's Christian message was effectively redundant in their eyes. Quakers thus indulged in social practices which accorded with their perceptions of how Christianity should truly be expressed (Pilgrim 2008, 56). Spiritual equality was enacted within their social practices. They refused to pay tithes to the church and social indulgences were withheld from the political and religious elite (Punshon 2004, 26; Pilgrim 2008, 57).

Affiliates' social practices were seen by non-Quakers as countercultural and disruptive and, consequently, they tended to be resisted, at times violently, by the temporal authorities (Punshon 2004, 50; Pilgrim 2008, 56). Many early Quakers died for their faith during the first generation of believers (Spencer 2004, 153). However, the radicalism of the first generation eventually became organised and tempered (Punshon 2004, 58). Early Quakers aged and subsequent followers were caught between precedent and conscience (Lise Tarter 2004, 91). The movement lost its radical edge and entered a Quietist period into the nineteenth century as the church became accommodated to the mundane world (Dandelion 2008, 59). However, the Quaker church has not drifted far from its radical claims at least insofar as the corporate body still extols a radicalism linked to its early beginnings (Dandelion 2007, 198; Pilgrim 2008, 58).

The current church traces its institutional and theological lineage directly to the English Quaker movement of the seventeenth century (Hill 1991, 14). The contemporary movement still lays claim to the political, social and religious radicalism and heterodoxy

of its religious forebears (Hill 1991, 14). Narratives of persecution and self-sacrifice are noted within its collective discourses. Accounts of Quaker sufferings began in the early days of the movement to record persecution of its advocates (Punshon 2004, 51). The Quaker church still formally depicts a lineage between the counter-cultural exploits of its early advocates with the heterodoxy of Quaker activists (Dandelion 2007, 198; Pilgrim, 2008, 54). However, these claims of radical social and theological heterodoxy are subject to critical analysis.

Max Weber (1989 [1930]) argued that it is the negotiation in the everyday of what counts for the individual as religious and their conceptualisation of a testable reality which is realised as an inner tension (1989, 121). Weber refers to early Quakers as being part of a 'believers' church' (1989, 144-5). The church remained a conflicted entity, in his view, both rejecting and accepting material wealth and economic processes (1985, 163). However, he notes that, from its inception, Quakers exposition of their beliefs challenged the very notion of a church if not even of a formed religion itself.

Guided by Christian principles, Quakers formed communities which 'no longer looked upon (churches) as a sort of trust foundation for supernatural ends, an institution, necessarily including both the just and the unjust... but solely as a community of personal believers of the reborn, and only these' (1985, 144-5). Weber thus explained the group in radically different religious terms, of their 'inner testimony of the Spirit in reason and conscience' (1985, 146-7) enlisting 'the force of the Holy Spirit working in daily life, which speaks directly to any individual who is willing to hear.'(1985,146). In

other words, for Weber, the Quaker church constructed an alternative to pervasive traditional church established values based instead on individual experience, and resistant to simple, organisational categorisation, especially in terms of how the inner state was juxtaposed to the mundane world.

1.2.2 The contemporary Quaker church

Whilst the contemporary Quaker tradition is liberal and permissive, the church nowadays constitutes a diversity of belief (Dandelion 1996,140; 2007,138; 2008, 4; Pilgrim, 2008, 60). Religious perspectives are pluralised (Dandelion, 2007, 134) but the church also appears to be culturally homogenous. A tabular statement of the total number of affiliates is published by the Yearly Meeting of Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. These totals are based on membership figures provided by local Quaker meetings. They indicate that there were approximately 21,000 Quaker affiliates in Great Britain at the end of 2015 (Yearly Meeting 2015). British Quakers, however, though small in number are not a socially diverse community.

The contemporary British Quaker collective tends to conform to the largely 'white, middle-class and educated' profile which typifies the contemporary liberal tradition (Frost 2013, 90). According to the British Quaker Survey of 2013, 92% of Quakers class themselves as White British (British Quaker Survey 2013). Its affiliates overwhelmingly become involved with the Society in late middle age (British Quaker Survey 2013). Only 31% of the group are of typical working age, 16 to 60 years old. A majority of Quakers hold degrees and higher degrees. The British Quaker Survey also shows that 10% of

Quakers have been awarded a doctorate and 23% a Master's degree. The contemporary church appears, therefore, not to be drawn from a broad spectrum of British society but a relatively narrowly defined stratum which is well-educated, largely indigenous to Britain and is most likely over sixty years old. However, despite a social homogeneity, the church unity is predicated on a claim to religious heterodoxy.

1.2.3 Sociology of Quakers

The Quaker church in Britain today has also been depicted as counter-cultural in religious and social terms (Pilgrim 2008, 53). It has been framed as liberal and post-Christian by Dandelion (1996 166; 2008, 7) and as a community espousing beliefs which can be framed in post-modern terms by Collins (2008, 38). It is also a liberal religious movement in terms of belief and church practice bound to Christianity by its religious history (Punshon 2004, 41). The 'promise of renewal' in Quaker religious history does not, however, necessarily fit well with the social context within which the contemporary liberal tradition is situated (Gwyn 2004, 147).

The contemporary liberal church and its diffuse ambitions are, in this sense, a post-modern manifestation for and of the age (Collins 2008, 38). As its theology is based on an espoused spiritual equality of all, the church proposes no formal leadership structure or organisational hierarchy and now upholds a highly individualised, permissive form of belief (Dandelion 2007, 80). Contemporary Quakers justify this individualised and diverse form of the tradition by regarding personal experience as primary in framing a personal theology and avoid prescribed and doctrinal conceptualisation of what counts

as Quaker (Dandelion 2007, 130). However, this liberality had given rise to a theological fluidity so that the tradition is not fixed to any one particular religious tradition and 'potentially forever on the move' (Dandelion 2007, 133).

Dandelion (1996, 166) constructs a model of the British Quaker body which he terms post-Christian insofar as the church now accommodates a wide diversity of views within its organisation. As the conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker has become open to all, Quaker perspectives now also include theist and non-theist positions (Dandelion 2008, 6). Dandelion argues that Christianity and belief in God are now only assumed in the church which instead privileges an uncertainty over certainty (2007, 189-90). In other words, Dandelion asserts, Quakers are ontologically certain of theological uncertainty, a liberal and permissive perspective which they zealously defend (Dandelion 2007, 152). Dandelion terms this conceptualisation of the church the 'absolute perhaps'. He suggests that its contemporary liberal and permissive mien rules nothing out and rules nothing in, thereby creating a genuine theological alternative to traditional mainstream Christian church thought (2008, 25).

Dandelion (1996, 193) refers to the theology of the Quakers as embedded within an institutional 'double culture'. In his view, religious belief and form of worship are separated in church practice. The public practice of Quaker theology in the context of the Meeting for Worship is framed by Dandelion as a matter of performance of collectively approved horizons on-stage (Goffman 1959, 45). In Erving Goffman's terms, Quakers co-operate in a silent religious performance, the united enactment of which

functions to mask individualised conceptualisations of Christianity. Belief in this performed sense is a matter of participation in predominantly silent ritual and the idea that the church allows individualised theologies has led in practice to conceptualisations of what counts as Quaker to become privatised (Dandelion 2007, 134).

In this sense, the Quaker church is inclusive and tolerant of diverse beliefs although the social constitution of the church is drawn from a narrow group of well educated, older age, middle class individuals. This thesis explores this social construction of the church especially in relation to its contemporary, liberal conceptualisation. It examines how advocates of a permissive and liberal church tradition expedite their espoused beliefs within their social practice in the work setting and how engagement with the contemporary work context is re-imagined in Quaker terms. In particular, it critically analyses Quaker engagement with contemporary work as an organised collective and explores emergent tensions between organisational horizons and affiliates' religious claims.

Gay Pilgrim (2008, 64) argues that there are inconsistencies and tensions with regard to contemporary Quakers' engagement with the social setting. Pilgrim defines these tensions in heterotopic terms and contrasts current Quaker practice with that of earlier manifestations (Pilgrim 2008, 54). She contends that the earliest Quakers adopted a heterotopic stance; that is, a countersite which deliberately 'highlights issues of order and power through the confusion it creates by its unexpected and incongruous use' (2008, 53). This construction of the church as heterotopic was based on early affiliates'

social practices which they regarded as preparatory for an imminent second coming. Quakers' alternative and oppositional social practice thus drew public attention to the divergence of Christians from the righteous path as they saw it at the time (2008 56). In this sense, non-conformity in belief entailed an inevitable challenge to power expressed through their heterodox social engagement with the profane world and their consequent persecution.

Pilgrim states that a heterotopic countenance is based on a perception of power relations in social terms (2008, 55). In other words, heterotopia is grounded in the idea that social relations can be re-ordered and taken for granted ways of organising disrupted. In this sense, asymmetrical relationships of power are deliberately undermined by a social engagement which is purposefully and visibly juxtaposed to cultural norms (2008, 55). Pilgrim terms this Quaker disposition to oppose a political 'othering' (2008, 56). However, Pilgrim questions whether contemporary as opposed to early Quakers any longer exercise this heterotopy. She regards Quakers as adopting a 'concept of elect moral status' (2008, 60). This status legitimises an apparent diffusion of Quaker religious perspectives and thus creates a dispersal of collective ambition. Pilgrim believes that collective Quaker heterodoxy has now been individualised to the point where it has turned inward and Quakers now privilege differentiation within the church above community counter-cultural activity (2008, 60).

The apparent tension within the contemporary liberal Quaker tradition and its social practice has also been explored in terms of Quaker use of illegal substances and

gambling as well as their conflict handling within the church. Helena Chambers (2008, 97) argues that the lack of corporate oversight within the liberal Quaker church allows wide latitude for individual interpretation of what counts as Quaker in the social context of the modern tradition. The church's lack of a fixed creed also 'permits the potential for post-modernist "shopping"' (2008, 92) selectively choosing what counts as Quaker for individual affiliates. Normative standards of what counts as Quaker are eschewed by affiliates in this sense and a permissive Quaker view of how individuals pursue their lives beyond the Quaker meeting emerges. In this sense, Chambers frames what counts as Quaker social engagement as an individual claim rather than organisationally-defined prescription. Chambers suggests that illegal substance use and gambling are problematic for the liberal church insofar as boundaries of acceptability in terms of social practice are not well-defined (2008, 97). Thus, the community is bound together by a permissive tradition but finds it difficult to act with unanimity when proscribing activities which deviate from Quaker testimonies of truth, equality and integrity (2008, 100).

There is a unifying factor within this tension, however, Chambers avers. She draws on Jackie Scully's (2008, 109) depiction of the contemporary Quaker tradition in terms of a moral collage. In other words, Scully uses a deontological perspective to delineate Quaker social practice. According to Scully:

What mattered was not theoretical consistency nor the construction of what philosophers are fond of calling a 'killer argument', but whether participants could adequately articulate their interpretation of the morally difficult situation at each stage in the process of understanding it and reaching a conclusion about the best way forward. (2008, 109)

Chambers suggests that, in Quaker terms, it is the process of applying the perceived values of the church tradition which unifies the group rather than a focus on fixed principles and specific outcomes (2008, 100). She uses the analogy of the spiritual journey to explain how Quakers proceed when faced with a morally conflicted circumstance in the mundane realm and collectively within the church when required to take up a unified position. In this sense, the Quaker church resists fragmentation and manages the best solution as it is perceived provisionally under the circumstances (2008, 103).

The tension between the individual and the collective in Quaker life has also been studied by Susan Robson (2008, 140). Robson suggests that the liberal construction of the contemporary Quaker church gives rise to an endemic problem insofar as individual difference can entail intra-personal conflict (2008, 140). However, in Quaker terms, this consequence is additionally problematic as the corporate narratives depict a community which is peaceable and inclusive (2008, 141). Robson's findings are conversant with those of Chambers and Scully: tensions within the church collective covertly exist in terms of how far individual and collective interests can be privileged in coherently Quaker terms (2008, 141). Robson suggests that the church finds it difficult to recognise the conflict which can arise within the collective. It also tends towards maintaining harmony collectively rather than pursuing 'the right decision' (2008, 145). In other words, overt and public disagreement is avoided, according to Robson, at the expense of a just outcome and solving individual grievance. The cause of tension is thus likely to be not fully resolved. Robson argues that organisationally sanctioned duplicity which

would likely be disavowed by affiliates in other social contexts are accepted in the church setting in order to perpetuate the mythology of Quaker collective harmony (2008, 150).

This thesis progresses these sociological conceptualisations of the Quaker church. It does so by considering Quaker perceptions of the church and how affiliates actively engage with the social world. It draws on Dandelion's perspective that there is an unspoken contradiction within the contemporary liberal tradition with regard to conceptualisations of individual and collective authority in Quaker terms (1996, 193). Robson avers that the re-imagination of what counts as Quaker by the collective has resolved this problem (2008, 145). She states that the church colludes in a form of permissive management whereby tensions and communally sanctioned resolutions present a 'solid front' in to the church, and to the wider, community (2008, 145). In this thesis, I examine whether there are contradictions with regard to how the liberal tradition is manifested in the contemporary work setting, outside the religious institution in the 'private life' (Dandelion 1996, xxix) unpoliced by the Quaker collective. The thesis questions how the socially homogenous group live out the espoused values of the church in the workaday world and the extent to which an 'alternate ordering' (Pilgrim 2008, 55) in Quaker terms is juxtaposed within the worldly realm.

1.2.4 Quakers and Work

There has been little contemporary study of Quakers and the world of work. The narrative of Quakers in the workaday world has constructed a 'solid front' (Robson

2008, 145) of hard work, economic success and moral probity on behalf of the church affiliates. Quakers are deemed to have been persecuted for their faith by the state until the nineteenth century (Burns Winsor 1980, 16). As a result, affiliates were 'drawn into business because of their exclusion from other areas of English life' (Freeman 2013, 420). Quaker companies were founded upon a claim to the virtues of hard-work, trustworthiness and an apparent determination to succeed on these terms (Burns Winsor 1980, 9; Freeman 2013, 423). Many large, well-known and long-lived British businesses are associated with Quaker families including significant brand names such as Lloyds and Barclays banks (Freeman 2013, 422), chocolate businesses, Rowntrees, Frys and Cadburys (Walvin 1997, 161). This tendency towards a generally benevolent conceptualisation of the Quaker industrial narrative is challenged in my thesis. I suggest that corporate Quaker narratives are likely to be bound up with maintaining organisational self-interest. Rather, a more revealing depiction of how Quakers nowadays relate to the world of work can be constructed from first-hand accounts of their multi-various everyday experience.

This nuanced depiction of the Quaker enterprise has been captured in literature more critical of the historical emergence of Quaker businesses. Healey (2013) identifies internal Quaker factional struggles in the eighteenth century. He depicts 'retrograde' Quietist Quakers of the eighteenth century and the 'progressives' who embraced capitalism and laid the foundations for affiliates engaged in the active creation of material wealth (2013, 61). Healey suggests that the eighteenth century manifestation of the Quaker church was not only theologically contentious internally. It also reveals a

fundamental struggle to define what counts as the world and affiliates' relationship to the social which 'calls into question secularisation narratives' (2013, 61). This thesis also argues this point: that the process of differentiating what counts as Quaker in contradistinction to that of work in both theoretical and practical terms is complex and that binary distinctions may be 'chronically underestimating the complexity of human life' (Collins 2008,143).

This thesis explores this apparently long-standing complication with regard to not only what counts as Quaker but also what counts as the world and how what counts as religious can be defined by participation as well as belief. It seeks to discover the basis upon which Quakers frame their current engagement with contemporary work and how they negotiate this setting. In this sense, the thesis does not attempt to deconstruct historical Quaker narratives regarding work or to unpick the corporate discourses of Quaker businesses. Rather, the thesis seeks to construct an academic account of Quakers in the work setting, especially in terms of how the workaday is seen through the eyes of contemporary affiliates in non-Quaker contexts.

The gap in academic knowledge of contemporary Quakers also includes how far Quakers' radical claims, especially in heterotopic terms as depicted by Pilgrim (2008, 61) can be framed as extant in its contemporary social practice. This espoused radicalism is a historical legacy which pervades Quaker academic literature but it is also a social and religious radicalism pertinent to its time (Gwyn, 2004, 134; Punshon 2004, 39). In this sense, the evangelical and disputatious Quaker tradition is a historical

legacy with respect to which the contemporary church is positioned. This thesis explores the experience of Quaker affiliates in terms of how they perceive this legacy and in what sense it is currently pertinent to their engagement with the social world. This thesis is significant from this point of view because it examines the liberal Quaker tradition not only through affiliates' eyes in historical retrospect but also the Quaker perspective from within the modern work organisation. It therefore also investigates the modern contexts within which Quakers work and identifies how these contemporary work contexts and the liberal tradition might be inter-related both conceptually within affiliates' re-imagination and in a practical sense. It considers the tensions which affiliates perceive to be manifest in these circumstances and how the contemporary tradition might be liberated by its participation within current forms of work

The thesis also seeks to explain whether and how far Quakers have become accommodated to, or remain separate from, 'the world'. The dilemma of whether to accommodate to the mundane or maintain the 'hedge' (Dandelion, 2007, 131) including radical, alternative and heterodox practices (Pilgrim, 2008, 55) has been highly contested in Quaker history (Dandelion 2007, 5). After the first flush of radicalism, the Quaker church gradually moved towards a more accommodating position with the world (Dandelion, 2007, 42). The death of the first generation of Quakers coincided with a pragmatic need to re-group in the face of possible persecution and to preserve the identity of the church (Dandelion, 2004, 16). However, Dandelion writes that influence within the church gradually became defined through excellence in administrative terms rather than by exposition of religious fervour (2004, 16).

The reign of Charles II between 1660 and 1685 tends to be seen as the precursor of fundamental 'Quietist' change in the Quaker church which lasted until the nineteenth century (Spencer 2004, 164). Quakers during this time had apparently become reconciled to the world and believed that the second coming was no longer imminent as the first generation had believed (Dandelion 2007, 135). This linear depiction of the evolution of the Quaker tradition does not account for the intra-church struggle of ideas to formulate a unified idea of what counts as Quaker for individuals and the collective. Tensions within the tradition were negotiated both with the world and within the church and, 'given the pluralities of Quietist Quakerism, it is likely that eighteenth century friends justified the world in diverse, not singular ways' (Healy 2013, 59). Thus, Quakers in the eighteenth and nineteenth century tried to marry their inclination towards deeper 'introspection' with efforts to improve the world through social engagement (Healey 2013, 59).

In this sense, Quaker relationship to money-making was fundamentally conflicted. Walvin (1997) observes that 'despite Quaker contributions to philanthropy, they were better known for material prosperity' (Walvin 1997, 51). The Quaker relationship to the world was conducted through money-making but how far this social enterprise can be considered commensurate with what counts as Quaker is not simply established. Burns Windsor frames Quakers' ongoing participation in the work enterprise uncritically suggesting that, 'one is led to the conclusion that there was no "magic" ingredient to explain the unique success of the Friends in business' (1980, 166). However, it is the terms upon which Quakers normatively engage with the workaday which have been the

subject of contention within the church. Walvin writes that participating within the world became an ongoing question of working out Quaker first principles (1997, 144).

Freeman writes that this 'paradox' of whether and then how to become involved in the contemporary work setting is also a contemporary problem for Quaker affiliates (2013, 432). He concludes, though, in apparently contradictory terms, that:

This blend of satisfaction and conscience continues to animate the spirit of Quaker service, and to enhance the social contribution of Quakers across the world. Although conditions have changed since the emergence of Quakerism in the seventeenth century, Quaker approaches to business and service continue to mark out the Religious Society of Friends as a distinctive religious and social force in the modern world. (2013, 432)

It is my contention that this reading of Quaker participation in worldly affairs is insufficiently helpful for academic research. The premise of this understanding reifies the idea of Quaker in the social context. This argument also asserts that categorising Quakers' participation in the contemporary world of work is helpful to understanding how the collective sees itself, although it does not articulate criteria by which this judgement can be measured. It also supposes that Quakers are somehow special in this social context. My study proposes to explore the taken-for-granted idea that Quakers are identifiably and specially engaged in the contemporary work process. My thesis questions whether the Quaker tradition is formally categorisable, especially in discretely religious terms which claim to transcend an empirical classification of the workaday world. In other words, I address not what is Quaker but what counts as Quaker, religion and work from affiliates' perspectives.

This conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker in the work setting is also represented in *Quaker Faith and Practice*. *Quaker Faith and Practice* (hereafter *QFP*) is 'The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain...an attempt to express Truth through the vital personal and corporate experience of Friends' (Quaker Faith and Practice 2016a). It is subject to periodic revision.

QFP does not afford prominence to how Quakers engage with the contemporary work setting. In Chapter 23 of *QFP* entitled 'Faith and Social Responsibility' there are, under the subtitle, 'Work and Economic Affairs', eighteen sections depicting insights about work by Quakers under this heading. Comparatively, the 'Education' section contains fifteen contributions and 'Discrimination and Disadvantage' section also contains fifteen insights. The insights in the work section tend to be mainly set at least fifty years ago. Three excerpts are dated in the 1960s. One excerpt is drawn from the 1910s, 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. One excerpt is from 1700s. Three insights are testimonies to Quakers who died in 1958, 1961 and 1990. A total of five excerpts are dated in the 1970s and 1990s. The three most recent insights are dated 1992. Two of these insights were attributed to the same person. In other words, claims by the corporate Quaker church to truth in the respect of the work setting is located in technological and economic context different from that of the twenty-first century. Whilst Quakers might assert that their essential horizons are immutable, this research seeks to discover the validity of this claim.

The excerpts regarding how Quakers engage with the work setting in *QFP* are rarely framed in terms of personal experience. Rather, they tend to opinion pieces which are anodyne and patrician in tone. In this sense, they read as generally advisory to the reader. They are also chiefly written in the third person: only two of the insights are written in the first person. These two are dated 1992 and depict the experience of a woman whose career decision 'was made for' her when she married a self-employed man who 'had no interest in the record-keeping side of the business'. The other personal insight depicts a mother who sees work in terms of being useful around the home:

One of the aspects of parenthood which I enjoy most is putting my mind to trying to solve all sorts of problems. I get a big thrill out of designing gadgets which will make life a little more comfortable. I love to get to work on a thoroughly neglected garden or room and put it right again. I find great satisfaction in being consulted about other people's problems and helping to sort them out. (Quaker Faith and Practice 2016a)

This research is undertaken in critical contrast to the somewhat anachronistic corporate Quaker conceptualisation of the contemporary workaday world in *QFP* and corporate business narratives. It is possible that *QFP* by including insights over time and precluding twenty-first century anecdotes bases its claim on a timeless view of work though this is implied rather than overtly stated. However, it does not claim to construct an academic study of the experience of the workaday world nor a critical interpretation of affiliates' practices. I suggest that this partial approach by the Quaker collective alludes to an implied unimpeachable construction of the church tradition in terms of how affiliates engage with the work setting. This research is positioned critically in order to

investigate in academic terms the view that the Quaker tradition is harmonious with the contemporary work context.

Critical voices regarding the Quaker tradition in the work context are also absent from the narrative presented by *Good Business: Ethics at Work* published by the Quaker and Business Group. The Quaker and Business Group (hereafter Q&B) is listed on the Quaker website as one of the 'independent groups through which Friends may share a common interest, seek affirmation or share common witness' (Quakers in Britain 2016). On the home page of its website, the group purports to 'champion better values in the workplace, based upon Quaker principles' whilst 'Membership of Q&B is open to all, of any religion and none, who support the purpose of the group' (Quakers and Business Group 2016).

The home page of the website also has links to *Good Business: Ethics at Work* which was first published in 2000. It is framed as a 'guide' and 'inspiration' for those involved in running a business who aspire to reach a higher ethical plane in this context and also all who are associated with contemporary commercial enterprises. The book is similar to *QFP* insofar as it includes a series of advisory prompts constructed in clear sections for readers on aspects of business management. It also contains suggestions in the form of questions or 'queries' after each short advisory section.

The book, however, adopts a patrician tone, guiding its readers towards a perceived Quaker conceptualisation of contemporary business management. It is not critically

exploratory of this conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker. Instead, it tends to be based on an implicit understanding shared with its readers that there is a commonly understood Quaker position which can be defined by reference to the work setting. In other words, the book anticipates a perspective on business and its management that can be depicted as Quaker in terms formed as essential. The claimed role of the Q&B in the process is to identify this concept.

I argue that the Q&B, in this respect, propose an idea of what counts as Quaker in the work context. The book is not exploratory in this sense and is aligned with the uncritical corporate church conceptualisations of what counts as Quaker. Its focus, however, is on the work setting in general terms and the concept of business in particular. The book also does not dispute the idea that business, management and capitalism can be neatly categorised. It eschews a critical view of Quakers in the work setting in this sense and thus also contributes to a narrative of fundamentally benign engagement by Quakers with the workaday world which is depicted in the corporate mythology.

Freeman (2013) frames contemporary Quaker business in experimental and innovative terms. He suggests that Scott Bader Ltd attempted a re-imagination of the work setting, its financial organisation and relationships between stakeholders (2013, 428). He cites a management and staff profit-sharing initiative initiated by the Scott Bader Fellowship in the twentieth century which sought to be influential in how business practices were perceived. Quaker management practices, he states, tend to be based on finding ways to improve trusting relationships with stakeholders (2013, 428). It appears, though, that

this corporate emphasis on inter-relationships in the everyday is more notable for its novelty than its successful business outcomes. Freeman suggests that there remains confusion in the contemporary church regarding how to regard engagement with the modern work setting (2013, 428). The church is constituted of affiliates in 'professional' occupations, typically 'teaching, academia and social work' (2013, 429) whose professional ethic might be more obviously aligned with the church's liberal traditions.

In this thesis, I explore the contemporary Quaker liberal trope and its apparent correlation with a professional constituency in occupational terms. I suggest that, by focussing on Quaker affiliates' first-hand intimate portrayal of their experience in the work setting, the contemporary Quaker tradition can be depicted in a more nuanced sense beyond occupational and industrial categories. I develop new markers to identify how Quakers conceptualise the contemporary church tradition and how this framing of the tradition is transposed by affiliates into the contemporary work context.

1.3 Sociology of religion

In this thesis, I depict the liberal Quaker tradition from the point of view of its affiliates. I aim to configure the contemporary liberal Quaker church as it is perceived by its participants. I explore Quakers' religious claims, in this subjective sense, rather than by examining corporate church discourses. I also investigate the Quaker self-concept through subjects' Christian perspectives. Quakers in this study claim to have affiliated to the church as an alternative to Christianity as it is espoused by mainstream churches and in opposition to its perceived prescriptive organisational manifestation. This study

is, therefore, an exploration of what counts as the Christian enterprise for affiliates of the liberal church as well as what counts for its adherents as Quaker.

My qualitative research into Quaker conceptualisations of the church tradition is pertinent to contemporary academic investigations within the contemporary sociological study of religion. In particular, my research is aligned to the current secularisation debate. Callum Brown (2009) views current church attendance as indicative of falling levels of religious belief in Great Britain (2009, 3). For Steve Bruce (2002), this decline has occurred as a consequence of the increasing popularity of an individualised search for meaning which has displaced as a consequence organised forms of religion (2002, 134). James Beckford (2003) argues that what counts as religion in social theory should not be framed in merely ontological or epistemological terms (2003, 4). Rather, Beckford writes that 'religion is an interpretative category that human beings apply to a wide variety of phenomena, most of which have to do with notions of ultimate meaning or value' (2003, 4). This thesis thus uses the context of Quakers' working lives to investigate their religious self-concept. It does not explore whether and how far an ecclesiastical conceptualisation of religion generally or Christianity in particular is or is not in decline in terms of espoused belief. Rather it shows that investigation into what counts as religion for individuals in contexts outside the church setting is a fruitful way of exploring contemporary meaning-making.

Heelas et al (2004) proposed to investigate alternatively the religious self-concept by examining the religious enterprise from beyond the mainstream church setting. They

suggested that the secularisation which Bruce proposed can be re-conceptualised as a 'subjective turn' (2004, 80). Heelas et al argue that participation in church ritual is but one measure of perceived religiosity and that meaning-making and its performance are present if more diffuse in the contemporary social world (2004, 29). My study depicts in a different sense what counts as religion by re-imagining meaning-making through the eyes of self-defining participants in a religious project within the secular world. In this sense, my work views religious meaning-making from within the everyday, secular context. It is thus more aligned with sociological ideas about the ends to which religious and non-religious claims are directed (Lee 2014, 470). It is also an exploration of how affiliates' espoused 'longing for belonging' (Day 2011, 194) within the everyday is translated by individuals into religious terms. Specifically, then, I draw on Collins' (2008, 143) ideas that what counts as religious is not dichotomous in the particular and explore within the contemporary work setting 'the commonly expressed view that the "sacred" is an exclusively religious category' (Knott 2013, 213).

Whilst my research proposes to investigate the Quaker church tradition and its exposition in the social sphere, I depict the religious enterprise through the eyes of its affiliates. In this sense, my research circumvents the investigation of churches through its organisationally defined structures. Rather, I aim to 'establish *methodological scepticism*' (Beck 2010, 2) with regard to what counts as religion and religious. As Beck states, 'individualism is a *contingent* process, and for that reason it is *highly ambivalent* in its consequences; and this is to be explained not by the conceptual fuzziness of theory but by the complex nature of the real world' (2010, 16).

Beck also dismisses the sociological pursuit of the universal and 'irresistible'. For Beck, the religious enterprise has been emancipated by a new scepticism, a search for individual truth in a state of uncertainty where once it was handed down by temporally bounded institutions and their practices. This process Beck terms the logic of *ambiguity* (Beck 2010, 68), an individualised approach to the religious enterprise which aspires to 'the utopia of a God of one's own' (2010, 94). According to Beck, however, this religious pursuit is also not unproblematic, especially in practical everyday terms. Beck considers that the individual quest can become solipsistic and he asks, 'Since "a God of one's own" lacks an authoritative reference point, outside the individual, is it capable of challenging the status quo?' (2010, 89). In this sense, Beck identifies a contradiction within contemporary, individualised religious claims; that is:

The distinction between *church* and *individual faith* leads to the blurring of boundaries. This is because priority lies with the faith of individual Christians, which is always personal, specific and immediate, so that the authority of Christianity is based on the quicksand of personal piety. The fundamental problem of Christianity in the world lies in the difficulty of determining the boundaries of what is still 'Christian' and what is no longer, and who is to decide such questions. (2010, 102)

This point is echoed in terms relevant to this research in *Crossing and Dwelling* (Tweed, 2008). Tweed pursues a processual view of the researcher's task, emphasising contingency and the interplay of situated or contextual factors in the exploration of meaning. He terms this the locative approach and emphasises a fluctuating paradigm.

Tweed writes:

It is impossible to step into the same river twice, all things are in flux...I decided that two other orienting metaphors are most useful for analysing what religion is and what it does: spatial metaphors (*dwelling and crossing*) signal that religion is about finding a place and moving across space, and aquatic metaphors

(*confluences and flows*) signal that religions are not reified substances but complex processes. (2008, 59)

This perspective is reflected in an aquatic metaphor which explores how ‘new streams’ of meaning are created out of ‘transverse confluences’ which cross boundaries and explore as they do so (2008, 60). For Tweed, religions are not existent themselves so much as orientations or sign posts for oneself and others to follow in both time and space. This idea also involves residing, making a home, within one meaning or many meanings, as well as more or less being prepared to move or to be moved by prevailing currents. Tweed writes, ‘Religions mark and traverse not just the boundaries of the natural terrain and the limits of embodied life but also the *ultimate horizon*’ (2008, 76).

In this sense, what Tweed is advocating is a way of understanding what we call religion in terms of meanings, collectively and individually ever-moving in time and in space. Viewed through this lens, this process creates the religious, it ascribes boundaries and constructs truths. According to this view, ‘Interpreters are never fully or finally in one place’ (2008, 181) and neither, critically, are the formal ‘static’ theories which characterise religion as a fixed and bounded enterprise (2008, 182). No-one and no place is singularly sacred, omitted from this fluctuation in life’s process, spanning space and time. Indeed, ‘The religious – and scholars too – are dwelling and crossing’ (2008, 183).

My thesis asserts that a subjective interpretation of what counts as religion cannot be fully captured in institutional terms. In other words, the thesis is not concerned to

discover a reified “real” religion as it is cast for participants on their behalf by organisational concerns (Maguire 2008, 22). This trope has been contested as inadequate in the framing of religious meaning-making (Ammerman 2007, 2013; Maguire 2007, 2008, 2016). Instead, it is argued that by detailing religion as it is lived out, or ‘embodied’ in Maguire’s terms (2008, 193), a more nuanced picture drawn from interviewees’ accounts can be depicted. This kind of analysis of what counts as religion focuses not only on the detail of everyday life from a subjective point of view but also illustrates how individuals re-imagine the everyday as meaningful (Ammerman 2013, 6).

Ammerman (2013) argues that religious meaning-making is constructed by participants within social processes and, ergo, investigations which overlook the everyday are deficient in their conceptualisations of what counts as religion (Ammerman 2013, 6). Whilst religious institutions make a claim to define what counts as religion for participants, religious meaning also emerges from the everyday (Ammerman 2007a, 224). In other words, Ammerman suggests, religion is ‘grounded in the everyday ways modern persons relate to the things they experience as religious or spiritual’ (2007, 5). In this sense, religion is ‘bigger than’ orthodox ideas about what constitute religious traditions in terms of belief or texts or formalised ritual (2007, 6). Instead, Ammerman contends that academic explorations need to take into account how religion looks like ‘to itself’ as well as how it works (2007, 6). In this sense, she argues, although what counts as religious might be declining in orthodox terms, this picture is incomplete. Instead, less visible forms of religiosity within the social world need to be researched and new categories defined (Ammerman 2007a, 224). These everyday explorations can

lead to the development of 'new questions' which better reveal 'the seeming paradox of religion's simultaneous presence and absence in the modern world' (2007, 4).

This view, that the social context is ripe with individual meaning-making which can be re-imagined in religious terms underpins this thesis. The study investigates the research participants' accounts of their social practice and, therefore, critically addresses what counts as Quaker through an exclusive, institutionally-defined lens. Nor does the thesis anticipate "'strict" beliefs and practices' (Ammerman 2007, 224) with regard to what counts as Quaker in the everyday. Instead, it concurs with Maguire's idea that the unitary and coherent conceptualisations of what counts as religious by church orthodoxies are open to critical investigation through the exploration of religious advocates' lived experience (2008, p.6)

My thesis investigates not only how the Quaker tradition 'looks like to itself' (Ammerman 2007, 6) but also whether the Quaker self-concept is framed by participants in terms of tension within the everyday. Beckford (2003) asserts that:

The category of religion is an abstraction from, or distillation of, (these) meanings and actions. As such, the category of religion is subject to constant negotiation and re-negotiation. Its meaning must therefore be related to social contexts in which it is used. (2003, 3)

In this sense, everyday contexts are not regarded as neutral in my analysis but are also depicted in the thesis in terms of potentially 'competing or clashing notions of religious truth, integrity, authority, obedience and so on' (Beckford 2003, 17). The thesis thus explores what counts as Quaker for affiliates in the everyday context of work and how this self-concept is expedited in relation to the collective setting. In particular, it

investigates how the Quaker self-concept is positioned within the everyday work setting and whether and in what sense affiliates favour collective conformity or organisational contention.

Bauman (1989) argues that the contemporary bureaucratic organisation is replete with tension. Individuals' urge to conform to the normative morality within the collective form is a strong determinant of conformist behaviour (1989, 168). Bauman suggests that 'for all practical intents and purposes moral behaviour becomes synonymous with social conformity and obedience to the norms observed by the majority (1989, 178). Thus, organisational conformity can be bent towards ends normally considered by individuals as immoral outside the organisational context (1989, 165). This thesis considers Quaker affiliates' participation in the contemporary work setting in this conflicted sense. In other words, my research explores how affiliates imagine the aims and purposes of the work collective and how, in everyday terms, they manage these individualised Quaker claims within the workaday world.

1.4 Problem Statement

The Quaker church is a numerically small religious organisation in Britain (British Quaker Survey 2013). It claims a strong tradition of social activism. It also claims a renowned association with the work setting through the commercial success, measured in terms of the scale and longevity, of notably Quaker businesses, for example, Clarks shoes, Barclays Bank and Cadbury's chocolate makers. In this sense, the Quaker tradition espouses an association between the religious and work as an organised form

of social activity. However, the engagement of Quaker affiliates with the contemporary workaday world and how participation in the work setting is conceptualised by affiliates in Quaker terms has not been subject to critical academic scrutiny. Rather, current Quaker corporate discourses represent work in historical terms and critiques of how the church is seen through Quaker eyes (Dandelion, 1996; Pilgrim Robson, 2008) focus on the movement within the church context (Dandelion, 1996; Pilgrim, 2008; Robson, 2008). This research investigates the contemporary liberal and permissive Quaker tradition from the perspective of affiliates engaged in the modern work setting. It proposes an affiliates' view of the church unmediated by corporately constructed narratives and postulates a qualitative exploration of how Quakers participate in the everyday context of contemporary work.

1.5 Statement of purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to construct a picture of the contemporary Quaker tradition by examining affiliates' accounts of the everyday work setting. In this respect, the research has one main research question and four subsidiary questions.

The main question:

How is the Quaker tradition lived out in the contemporary British work context?

The four subsidiary questions:

How can affiliates' conceptualisation of the Quaker tradition be framed?

How can affiliates' conceptualisation of the contemporary work context be framed?

How far can the lived experience of the work setting be depicted in Quaker terms?

What are the boundaries which differentiate what counts as Quaker in the workaday context?

1.6 Thesis outline

In Chapter Two, I discuss the methodological approaches appropriate to investigating the Quaker tradition in the context of work. I explain the qualitative research tradition as well as my choice of semi-structured interviews. I discuss my insider position within the research, its strengths and limitations. I explain how I approached the analysis of the qualitative data and discuss the limitations of my methodological choices.

I discuss the findings of my research in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six and Seven.

In Chapter Three I discuss the Quaker research participants as adult incomers to the church. I depict how affiliates become Quakers in processual terms in the modern church and contrast this process with early Quaker affiliation. I categorise the Quaker affiliates as career converts (Richardson 1985, 171) and as alternators (Snow and Machelek 1984, 169; Carrothers 2007, 134). In other words, I show that these contemporary Quakers do not undergo a radical change in their worldview which results in their affiliation to the church. Rather, the Quaker affiliates seek a church whose espoused horizons match their own. They engage in a highly individualised conversion process with an organisation whose espoused horizons they regard as fitting their own.

I also note that these Quakers claim that the affiliation process has not altered their fundamental horizons. I report that the loose Quaker church membership structures facilitate a permissive and individualised form of affiliation. Quaker conversion is seen by the affiliates as liberating in these terms.

In Chapter Four, I note that the research participants opt to affiliate with the Quaker church rather than other churches. I investigate why, affiliates convert to the Quaker church rather than other mainstream Christian alternatives. I argue that they do so in opposition to how Christianity is apparently prescriptively constructed by mainstream Christian denominations. The Quaker interviewees recognise the Christian roots of the Quaker church and this recognition of the Christian tradition influences their decision to convert. However, they are opposed to Christianity as it is perceived in mainstream Christian church terms which affiliates frame as fixed and settled. Instead, they identify currently with the espoused radical alternative of the Quaker church narrative. The interviewees frame Christianity instead in provisional terms as more or less pertinent to the religious enterprise and privilege an individualised conceptualisation of the Christian tradition, free from organisational oppression. They frame the Christian tradition as essentially contestable in individualised rather than corporate terms. It is this highly individualised and essentially contestational interpretation of Christianity which moves these Quakers to affiliate to the church.

Thus, in this chapter, I introduce the idea that the liberal Quaker tradition is framed by affiliates not only as oppositional, but also as coherently alternative, to mainstream

churched Christianity. However, I also suggest that there are also internal contradictions within the contemporary Quaker church. Whilst the research participants depict the liberal tradition in harmonious terms, affiliates also portray church processes as disharmonious. I identify tensions within the community which show a conflicted church organisation that in its practices is seen as disharmoniously at odds with its own espoused liberal heterodoxy.

In Chapter Five I examine the contemporary liberal Quaker tradition within the work setting. I outline the occupational and industrial areas within which these Quakers tend to work. The interviewees work in 'white collar' occupations in the service sector. These occupations are also typically located in the public rather than private sectors. I report how the interviewees frame their church affiliation as conspicuous within this context. They regard their individual horizons and those espoused by the work organisation as a good fit. This claim echoes the perceived claims of the corporate Quaker church which they view as well-matched to their individual horizons. Participation in the work setting is viewed by affiliates as a means by which, through practical engagement, they can make the world better (Johns 2007, 121). In this sense, I depict these Quakers in the contemporary work setting as utopians. Affiliates, though, also depict their engagement with work in highly individualised terms and regard the liberal Quaker tradition as supporting rather than causing their social practice in the work context. In this sense, affiliates engage with the contemporary work setting not as Quakers but in autonomous terms as if they are Quakers.

In Chapter Six I critically analyse affiliates' participation in the everyday work setting. I conclude that the utopian claims of the interviewees to make better the world are not unending but are fundamentally shaped by the work context. I examine their experience of the workaday world within which affiliates claim to pursue their espoused utopian horizons. I show that the research participants negotiate with difficulty both organisationally ascribed job roles simultaneously with a liberal Quaker claim in the everyday. I also focus on how the austerity policies of the 2010 Coalition government highlighted how participating affiliates' utopian claims are situated and not unending. In particular, I explore the interviewees' everyday responses when organisations become unsupportive of their utopian horizons in the work setting. I contend that everyday means and utopian ends for these affiliates are contoured to the work setting. In other words, because the Quaker participants tend to work within work organisations whose horizons are seen as harmonious with Quaker ends, the perceived compact between work and Quaker is not questioned. However, this compact is neither universal nor unending and I conclude that work sets out the terms upon which this Quaker cohort pursue their utopian horizons.

In Chapter Seven, I analyse how these Quaker affiliates pursue their utopian intention to move the world to a better horizon whilst managing discord and disharmony in the everyday. I apply a Critical Management Studies (CMS) lens to their everyday practice. I aver that CMS also frames the contemporary work setting in utopian terms which are coincident with those espoused by the cohort. However, the utopian terms which the research participants espouse also diverge from the CMS conceptualisation of a better

work organisation. Whilst CMS theorists suggest an adversarial and transgressive re-imagination of contemporary work, the interviewees are disinclined to transgress organisational norms in the everyday. In other words, utopian intentions do not adequately account for affiliates' everyday practice. Rather, I frame the research participants' pursuit of utopian ends through everyday means as euphonious.

In this euphonious sense, the Quaker cohort seek to overcome instances of discord and disharmony in the work context by making interventions which they perceive as peaceable. They work within organisational rules towards creating these harmonious workaday ends. The highly individualised conceptualisation of the liberal Quaker tradition enables affiliates to undertake this enterprise across all occupational and economic categories and thus to re-conceptualise their spiritual quest (Scully 2008, 130). This religious project is not seen as organisationally prescribed by the Quaker church but is re-imagined individually in Quaker terms as a 'best way forward' (Scully 2008, 109).

In Chapter Eight, I conclude that the contemporary Quaker tradition for these interviewees is a highly individualised conceptualisation of religious belief and its practice is fluid in the everyday. Affiliates in the research seek to improve the world by participating actively within the work context. However, claims to make better the world are located in work settings within which few impediments to Quaker practice are perceived. In other words, occupations and the work contexts within which the interviewees are located are conversant with Quaker ends and practices. In this sense,

I find that what counts as Quaker practice and belief is conflated by affiliates in the organisational context. The highly individualised terms upon which affiliates claim to participate are a re-casting as Quaker of the individual self-concept. In these terms, I propose that what counts as belief and practice in the contemporary liberal Quaker tradition, as well as participants' conceptualisation of religion and work, are blended rather than coherently integrated by affiliates in their exposition.

1.7 Rationale and significance

This thesis makes an original contribution to academic study. It reveals how the contemporary liberal Quaker tradition is expedited within the work context from the perspective of its affiliates. This view of the Quaker tradition supports Dandelion's thesis that the church is an individualised and diverse community of belief (1996, 23; 2007, 221). It then progresses Dandelion's liberal conceptualisation of the contemporary Quaker church by framing the modern tradition within the context of work. This thesis thus depicts Dandelion's liberal conceptualisation of the church within the public sphere. This thesis synthesises research participants' liberal Quaker perspectives and how they are expedited outside of the church setting. It re-imagines contemporary Quaker affiliates within the social context as utopians as well as in pragmatic terms. I contend that Quakers' spiritual quest (Scully 2008, 130) is not unending in the context of work but is in practice significantly shaped and constrained in its outcomes.

Fundamentally, however, this thesis develops a new conceptualisation of how Quakers in particular and religious affiliates generally claim to participate within the contemporary

work setting. It depicts how the research participants manage and negotiate organisationally ascribed job roles and their religious claims in the public sphere. It reveals that these Quakers conceptualise their workaday concerns as conflicted. Their practice is especially problematic when organisations are perceived as no longer supportive of Quaker horizons formerly understood by affiliates as harmonious with their own. Thus, this research also highlights how organisational horizons are partial and provisional and how coherence in the everyday is problematic for these affiliates.

This thesis as an original study thus identifies new scope for further research. It shows that the contemporary work and religious horizons are provisionally coincident rather than fundamentally harmonious. It shows, also, that, when in competition with liberal Quaker horizons, the means and ends of the work organisation are perceived by affiliates, in a practical sense, as competitive with their religious claims. My thesis also indicates that what counts as Quaker in subjective terms is individually and collectively fluid when expedited in the work context. Boundaries between what counts as work and as religion in practical terms are also conflated by affiliates. I propose, therefore, that this thesis is thus not only an original contribution to knowledge regarding the social practice of Quaker affiliates within the work context. This thesis also indicates that research into how affiliates of other churches perceive the work context might lead to further theoretical insights into the intersection of contemporary church traditions and work. Moreover, this thesis provides a conceptual framework within which utopian ends and everyday means framed in religious or non-religious terms can be explored especially when mapped against social contexts outside the formally religious setting.

1.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature appertaining to the Quaker movement. I have depicted how the Quaker tradition has been framed sociologically and how Quakers perceive the world of work and their engagement with it. I have also shown how contemporary perspectives within the sociology of religion illustrate the contemporary Quaker church tradition. I have framed the claims of the movement in terms of its espoused fluidity and the primacy of the individual perspective. Moreover, I have argued that the claims of the tradition are based on its espoused engagement with the everyday. This idea that the Quaker movement is a lived religion is central to this thesis as it seeks to examine how far the research participants' religious claims can be understood as coherent or in tension within the contemporary work setting. I argue that the Quaker participants espouse an intention to improve the world from within the work context. However, this view is maintained by situating their everyday practice within organisations whose aims they regard as convergent with those of the Quaker tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction and overview

The purpose of this qualitative research is to identify the contemporary Quaker tradition within the contemporary work setting. In this chapter, I explain my rationale for choosing a qualitative methodology to explore the Quaker church. I define the Quaker constituency and the sampling process. I then depict the data collection process, its analysis and the ethical considerations which shaped the research outcomes. Lastly, I discuss some limitations and strengths of this research.

2.2 Rationale for qualitative research design

In this study, I adopted a qualitative methodological approach to data collection. This approach is based on an ontological premise that 'social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals rather than phenomena "out there" and separate from those involved in its construction' (Bryman 2008, 366). Bryman writes that qualitative investigations seek to discover participants' perceptions of social reality and the meanings which people attribute to their experience of the world (2008, 385). This interpretive approach thus fitted the purpose of the research to discover how the contemporary Quaker tradition is lived out in the everyday work context from the perspective of its affiliates. This intimate approach to data collection is also especially pertinent to investigating the narratives of the Quaker church. The contemporary liberal Quaker tradition has been described as highly individualised, pluralised and privatised (Dandelion 2007, 152). In these terms, affiliates' conceptualisations of what counts as

Quaker are subject to individual discretion and are, organisationally, implied rather than prescribed.

It can be difficult to categorise in precise and objective terms how to classify religious claims in the social sphere (Beckford 2003, 4; Carrette and King 2004, 3). In theological terms, religion can be cast as an intimate relationship between the individual and God (Sremac 2010, 8). The purpose of this study, however, is not to frame how God is conceptualised by affiliates but rather how espousal of Quaker affiliation is matched by affiliates to their participation in the work setting. Investigating religion in the social context also needs to take into account more than perceptions of the divine. What counts as religion for affiliates in this sense has also to account for the influence of the wider context within which religious meaning is constructed (Sremac 2010, 9). In terms of this research, then, what counts as religion is socially constructed by its participants and is subject to ongoing negotiation within this shifting setting (Beckford 2003, 4).

Religious meaning, therefore, can be seen as contingent both on the social setting and on the interpretations of individuals who are negotiating the everyday the social context (Sremac 2010, 9). What counts as religious is thus a complex inter-relationship between the individual and the social (Beckford 2003, 4). In these negotiated terms, I regarded a qualitative methodological approach as capable of making transparent this negotiated complexity.

I adopted a qualitative approach as this research intended to discover how research participants intimately perceived the contemporary church tradition and how it is lived

out within the work setting. This aim and methodological approach can be contrasted with The British Quaker Survey or BQS (British Quaker Survey 2013). The BQS investigated the current Quaker tradition by using a questionnaire-based study into how Quakers perceive their personal faith. The survey consisted of a series of closed questions with some sections for expansion of answers. It also allowed participants to volunteer for further interviews. The BQS survey is subtitled: 'A project to better understand our shared identity'. It also suggests:

Many of us are very interested in where British Quakerism is at present and what its future may hold but we often lack very basic information about who we are and what we believe. (British Quaker Survey 2013)

In other words, the BQS is framed as a research enterprise conducted on behalf of 'us', the church participants and is implicitly committed to the aims of the Quaker church. In contrast, my research differs from the BQS insofar as it is a wholly academic project with explicitly academic research aims. It also intends to reach more deeply into Quaker affiliates' individual and hitherto academically unexplored working lives and, as a qualitative project, to account for the intimate aspects of Quakers in this context.

The qualitative methodological approach accounts for the contemporary manifestation of the church whereby the collective is bound by an agreed form of worship and not what individuals believe (Dandelion 2007, 134). The primacy of the individual to determine the righteous path has been a leitmotif of the Quaker church since its inception (Wood 2014, 5). The contemporary manifestation of the tradition, however, is highly pluralised as well as highly individualised (Dandelion 2007, 134). Nowadays, the Quaker church also accommodates a diversity of beliefs including non-theist positions

'which view religion as a human creation' (Non-Theist Friends Network 2016). In this sense, where what counts as Quaker is highly individualised and pluralised, so assuming a general rule about the church would have been erroneous as it presupposes what is to be explained (Alvesson and Skoldbery 2000, 3). Rather, I adopted a qualitative approach to investigating personal insights because it is an open and evolving way of exploring feelings and participants' perceptions of their social worlds (Silverman. 2006, 130).

A qualitative study was also regarded as appropriate for investigating intimate accounts of the work setting. Work is regarded as a context which can instrumentalise religious or spiritual orientation (Carrette and King 2004, 78). It is also the setting of struggle between managerial conceptualisations of efficiency and control and their perceptions of religion as distorting organisational ends (Giacalone and Jurkewicz 2010, 10). Work organisations often seek to engage the spiritual or religious orientations of their participants *in extremis* when organisational interests are regarded as under threat. Under 'normal' circumstances, these conceptualisations of workers in spiritual and religious terms are regarded only as more or less useful to the organisation (Giacalone and Jurkewicz 2010, 10). Claims by the work collective on worker subjectivity can also include aspects of their beliefs which are related directly by the organisation to individuals' performance of the job role (Hochschild 1983, 111). In this intimate and personal sense, the work setting is also a site of competing individual and collective interests. I therefore adopted a qualitative approach in order to capture the potentially

hidden and inexplicit 'thick description' (Geertz 1973, 7) of tensions within the organisational setting.

I did not pursue a quantitative model of enquiry as I wanted to discover how the research participants perceived intimately the contemporary work setting and whether this perception could be framed in Quaker terms. In this sense, I was not seeking to test empirical accuracy of external reality (Gergen 2009, 14). Research from this positivist point of view more or less assumes the existence of the categories studied. I was not proceeding from an assumption that the Quaker tradition was an agreed phenomenon, still less that it had a quantifiable existence. My research thus did not proceed from the objectivist ontological position of quantitative methodology. I did not seek to determine from an objectivist stance 'external facts' that existed outside of human influence (Bryman, 2008, 18). Rather, I saw my task as giving voice to complex, cultural traditions (Gergen 2009, 55) which might, as part of the research process, resist easy definition.

In this intimate sense, a quantitative methodological approach was ontologically unsuited to the aims of the research: the objects of the research in terms of affiliates and their conceptualisations of what counts as Quaker were not regarded as finally knowable and fixed (Bryman, 2008, 22). Quantitative research tends to predict not only categories of outcomes but also presumes to be able to discover definable outcomes through the research process (Bryman 2008, 22). Additionally, what counts as reality when depicting organisations is often equated with quantitative models which make data synonymous with a numerical, statistical or otherwise quantifiable truth (Cassell

and Symon 2004, 23). In my view, quantitative research could not accommodate how 'meaning emerges through shared interaction of individuals in society' (Sremac 2010, 10). Rather, research from this methodological perspective tends to presuppose and anticipate its outcomes (Gergen 2009, 50). Moreover, I also had few definite ideas at the outset about the terms in which the conclusions might be framed (Blaikie 2000, 31). Overall, with regards to the individualised, pluralised and privatised contemporary liberal Quaker tradition, a methodological approach which was able to capture an emerging and evolving picture during the research process would be the most appropriate position from which to pursue this study.

My methodological approach also did not include a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data-gathering techniques. Rather, it focussed on collecting information through semi-structured interviews. The data gathered through this technique was indeed a mixture of empirically testable information with regard to, for example, participants' current and previous work status. I also acquired clearly defined data on affiliates' the length and location of their ongoing Quaker affiliation. However, I believed that categorising what counts as Quaker in a more structured method such as a questionnaire might implicitly define the study for the research participants and thereby pre-empt and determine affiliates' responses in follow up interviews (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000, 7).

This singular approach to data collection was affirmed during the interview process. Several participants expressed pretensions to know the probable relevance of their

responses to the study as well as some implicit aims of the research process. I felt that quantitative methods might indeed have provided data more comparable across the cohort. However, quantitative techniques might also have guided affiliates towards 'what is acceptable in the name of religion' (Beckford 2003, 18) in Quaker terms. Jo-Jo, for example, discussed in the interview his mental illness and religious faith though he also wondered '*How this is going to help you with your PhD, I do not know because it's not really, not relevant I suppose.*' My research was, though, investigating new ground and concerned with theory generation about how Quaker affiliates perceive the work setting not testing existing boundaries (Blaikie 2000, 18). In this sense, this study sacrificed a degree of representativeness (Blaikie 2000, 38) and prioritised instead exploring in-depth affiliates' hitherto under-researched perceptions of the world.

2.3 Insider research

In this section, I depict my position in the research as an inside-researcher. I depict insider research as a complex and fluid process of engagement with the object of study. I depict my position both as a researcher and as an insider within the Quaker community. I examine how my insider status facilitated access to research participants and provided nuance to my understanding of how Quakers conceptualise their everyday lives. I also point out some of the paradoxes in terms of this particular research process and how those contradictions were managed.

2.3.1 Locating the insider researcher

It has been argued that no social research can be undertaken in completely objective terms (Denscombe 2010, 13). Social research always assumes at least some insider knowledge if it is to be able to make sense of the subjects of the investigation (Cassell and Symons 2004, 362). Instead, the researcher's relationship with the object of study is differentiated not by insider/outsider classification but by degrees of affiliation (Dwyer and Buckle 2009, 60). Social research should thus not be subject to simple binary insider/outsider division (Stringer 2002, 3). Rather, when we 'endeavour to understand the meaning of people's beliefs and actions' (McCutcheon 1999, 5) more nuanced relationships between research subject and object are traced. McCutcheon argues that accomplishing the task of viewing the world through the eyes of the other is at the same time exploring the nature of what counts as insider and outsider categories (1999, 289).

The concept of the researcher in insider/outsider terms is a contested area of academic investigation. According to Brannick and Coghlan (2007), 'within organisational research, the subject of insider academic research has received relatively little consideration' (2007:59). They suggest, however, that a completely objective position in social research is not feasible to achieve (2007, 63). In this sense, what counts as social research is inevitably observed from a particular perspective. It is the level of prior knowledge and 'pre-understanding' of social contexts which vary (2007, 64). Research projects are, thus, a collective process rather than one viewed from the simple binary, insider or outsider proposition (2007, 64).

2.3.2 Insider to the Quaker church

Within this research process, my aim was to manage my insider relationship with the participants 'agnostically' rather than religiously (Bell and Taylor 2013, 2). In other words, although I declared at the outset of the research to participants and local Quakers meetings that I attended Quaker Meeting for Worship, my openness was intended to be a means of facilitating the academic study.

At the outset, I contacted the clerk of the local Quaker meetings initially by letter (see Appendix 1). I sought permission from the clerk to advertise my project to the local church.

I began my letter to the clerk, 'Dear Friend'. I used a capital 'F' when addressing the clerk as a Friend because Quakers often refer to other affiliates of the church in writing as 'Friends' rather than 'friends'. By using this insider knowledge, I knew that I would be identified by the clerk of the meeting as an insider to the church. I hoped that this insider connection would facilitate easier access to the participants. I also drew attention to my insider Quaker status immediately in my letter to the clerk of meeting. The body of the introductory letter begins 'I attend Lancaster Meeting and am a PhD student...' (see Appendix 1). Thus, from the start of the project, I identified my status as an insider to the Quaker church and its processes.

However, with regard to my personal religious beliefs, I was able to manage my insider position unproblematically. This agnostic research position (Bell and Taylor 2013, 2) or

ambivalent approach with regard to the truth or otherwise of the church tradition was not difficult to maintain as an insider to the Quaker faith. The individualised liberal Quaker tradition does not require affiliates to adopt aspects of religious doctrine. As Collins (2008) has written, the liberal Quaker tradition is rather a creedless form of collective belief (2008, 38). In this sense, as a researcher, I instrumentalised my insider status to gain access to Quakers. However, I felt able to guard my own particular religious perspectives. These were only available to participants insofar as I disclosed them. In this religious sense, my insider status was not influential in the outcomes of the research process. Two Quaker respondents pressed me for my views. James wanted to know what I really thought of the church and Jo-Jo questioned my religious position. However, I felt that my views were never otherwise examined directly or indirectly as an aspect of the research process.

Eleanor Nesbitt (2002) argues that 'being perceived as a Quaker is more advantageous in some situations than others' (2002, 144). This study appears to show that being a Quaker insider is not necessarily advantageous. The insider researcher is in a position to author a point of view and can thus represent an authority within the subject's community (Sambur 2002, 28). Thus, my insider status could have inhibited affiliates' responses with regard to how candid they were about their moral choices.

As Taylor (2011) has noted, insider research is not faultless, 'nor should one presume that as an insider, one necessarily offers an absolute or correct way of seeing and/or reading the culture under investigation' (2011, 6). However, relationships between

researcher and participant can be confusing especially if understood in terms which are closer to friendship (Taylor 2011, 4). According to Nesbitt, Quakers tend towards empathetic relationships (2002, 138) and she argues that this assists their capacity to carry out research effectively and all but remove insider-outsider dichotomies. I contend that this insider research shows that an ongoing self-critical disposition is singularly important. I understood that Quakers are keen to protect the church's organisational standing from assault (Robson 2008, 141) and maintained a sceptical perspective. I regarded affiliates' narratives as intimately explorable in the interview setting and, in their analysis, I re-imagined descriptions and implicit meaning lauding the liberal tradition in an analytically critical vein.

Overall, being regarded as an insider by the research participants was advantageous insofar as I was able to acquire sufficient interviewees for the project. As noted above, however, access to interviewees via the clerk of local Quaker meetings was not always assisted by the church organization even though I was an insider. It is difficult to imagine that this process would have been easier had I not presented myself as a Quaker at the start of the project. Rather, one might suppose the clerks, as gatekeepers to potential participants, might have been less disposed to projects which were less explicitly tied to Quaker church interests.

I also regard being an insider and an interviewer as advantageous. Participants made assumptions about my Quaker knowledge. Many participants, for example, referred to the Quaker testimonies in their narratives or how they try to 'see that of God in

everyone'. As an insider, I was familiar with these idioms and, in the semi-structured interview setting, I was able to explore with participants the implicit meanings in the context of the research which the affiliates attributed to them. It is not possible to say with certainty how the interviews would have been different had I not been an insider. However, as this study was conducted explicitly by an insider to the Quaker church, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the research volunteers were not ill-disposed to discussing the tradition on these insider terms. I feel that, in terms of how it connected the researcher and the participants within the interview process, insider status was an asset to the research.

2.4 Research constituency and sample

In this section, I depict the cohort from which the Quaker participants were drawn and how I arrived at sample of participants.

2.4.1 Constituency

As the formal body of the Quaker church in Britain, Britain Yearly Meeting or BYM was the constituency of this research. BYM refers to the 'combined membership of the seventy or so "Area Meetings" that make up the Religious Society of Friends in Britain' (Britain Yearly Meeting 2016). BYM is divided geographically into Area meetings which are responsible for supporting a tier of local Quaker meetings and Local meetings. These local Quaker meetings organise Meetings for Worship typically held on Sundays. Property is owned by the Area Meeting which is also the membership body. Blaikie (2000) suggests that, 'A sample is a selection of elements (members or units) from a

population; it is used to make statements about the whole population.’ (2000, 198) BYM was the broad constituency from which a sample would be selected. I intended to draw a sample from the wider BYM constituency via accessing local Quaker meetings. However, there were practical and theoretical limitations to this aim (see Section 2.7 below).

2.4.2 Identifying the sample

In this research, I intended to collect a sample of participants from BYM. A sample is a ‘selection of elements (members or units) from a population’ (Blaikie 2000). Sampling in terms of quantitative research emphasises reducing bias in order that results can be shown to represent the population (Bryman 2008, 170). The advantage of quantitative research is that it can cover large numbers of units and selection based on probability sampling of the population (Bryman 2008, 179). However, this empirical approach is not an end in the emergent process of qualitative research (Bryman 2008, 367). The aims of this research was not to produce a generalisable account of Quaker engagement with the contemporary workaday world but a more intimate depiction of Quakers’ inner lives in this setting. In order to facilitate this more open-ended outcome, an alternative to quantitative sampling methods was sought.

In contrast to quantitative research techniques which seek generalisability, purposive sampling approaches seek to identify units which can yield deeper knowledge or experience (Palinkas et al 2013, 534). Purposeful sampling focuses on the mining of rich data from specifically located participants (Palinkas et al 2013, 535). This rich data

can then be used by the researcher to inform a nuanced interpretation of the research question. Purposeful sampling must, therefore, try to include participants of maximum variation (Koerber 2008, 464). The data acquired by purposive sampling is thus aligned with the broad open-ended and evolving aims of the research to acquire deeper understanding of the research topic (Palinkas et al 2013, 534). This strategy must be directed towards gaining enough data to fulfil the theoretical aims of the research (Koerber 2008, 464). However, because the priority is to find data that is as rich as possible from within the sample, purposeful sampling is open to confirmation bias insofar as researchers can select populations on the basis that they might prove assumptions (Koerber 2008, 464).

It flows from this general sampling principle that participants which fit a specific research criteria can be difficult to locate in a wider population (Palinkas et al 2015, 5). The aim of purposive sampling is thus to capture data from well-informed and willing candidates who are not easily visible or easily contactable within the wider constituency. In this sense, purposive sampling tends towards maximal efficiency for the researcher whilst retaining depth within the data (Palinkas et al 2015, 3). I therefore limited the constituency from which participants were drawn by adopting an approach which was also closer to a convenience sampling method, that is: forsaking claims to representativeness, 'the researcher chooses the sample according to ease of access' (Ritchie and Lewis 2003, 81). Drawing upon a convenient cohort in organisational research does not necessarily reduce the usefulness of the data-gathering process, however. Smaller samples which reflect the details and processes prevalent in

organisational behaviour tend to compensate for breadth in the collective context (Cassell and Symon, 2004, 57). Obtaining the sample is covered in section 2.7 below.

2.5 Interviews

In this section, I describe interviews as a research method for the collection of in-depth data regarding the belief and practice of Quakers. I depict the pilot and interview process proper as well as the methods employed for the recording of data.

2.5.1 Critical framing of semi-structured interviews

The aim of this research was to discover more about the Quaker community from the natives' intimate point of view. It sought to reveal aspects of Quaker life that were not apparent in the context of the church processes or corporate narratives. Instead, this research sought to discover intimate and detailed perspectives of research subjects' working lives through the potentially 'insightful and revealing' interview process (Alvesson 2011, 51). This investigation, however, was also conducted from a critical perspective. It was the intention of the study to uncover how Quakers conceptualised the liberal tradition as lived out within work organisations. In particular, the research was keen to unmask any ambiguities and contradictions within the Quaker perspective. I was interested to use interviews as a means of exploring whether Quaker and work concerns were conflicted within affiliates' religious purview or whether their engagement with work was more superficial and unreflective.

I understood that interviews can be a stage upon which participants try to manage the impression they convey to the interviewer and 'to express, elaborate, strengthen, defend and/or repair a favoured self-identity' (Alvesson 2011, 86). In order to overcome this potential conflict of interest between interviewer and the participant, I chose a semi-structured interview approach to produce as much rich detail as possible (Alvesson 2011, 14). I also chose the interview method as it was possible that Quakers experience of the work setting might be incoherently understood by the participants and similarly expressed. This possibility of incoherence might reflect the open way in which Quakers often interpret the world in religious terms (Nesbitt 2002, 135-138). I felt that Quakers might frame other considerations as primary reasons for engagement with the work setting above a morally consistent position. I also felt that an affiliate's perspective which they believed was less than orthodox in Quaker terms might be difficult to articulate openly to an insider researcher. What counts as Quaker might be a 'complex reality of identity and belonging' (Nesbitt 2002, 135) which my choice of in-depth interview might better explore.

2.5.2 Investigating ambiguity, intimacy and belief

As far as this research was an inductive investigation, it was important to avoid specifying expectations as far as possible prior to the research in order to facilitate new insights (Gray 2013, 18). A semi-structured interview method was selected, as 'Considerable space is provided for interviewees to bring up what they see as relevant and for the deeper explorations' (Alvesson 2011). In this study, semi-structured interviews were intended to explore individuals' intimate views of the Quaker tradition in

the social context. The open-ended approach of semi-structured interviews tries to avoid imposition of what the researcher feels is relevant especially as what is relevant might not be immediately evident to the interviewer (Alvesson 2011, 59). It can therefore be generative insofar as it can highlight new concerns and directions as well as having the potential to develop future avenues for research (Ritchie and Lewis 2005, 39). In this sense, the subject and their own priorities within the interviews were central to the research process. As they afforded participants an opportunity to elaborate their own points of view with minimal researcher prescription, semi-structured interviews were seen as most appropriate to this task.

My research assumed that investigation into the pluralised Quaker church (Dandelion 2007, 134) would elicit numerous different interpretations of the contemporary tradition. In contrast to positivist approaches which seek to uncover an objective reality, qualitative interviews seek different interpretations of the truth or what counts as true for the individual (Rubin and Rubin 2011, 23). Interviews thus allow contrasting and alternative perspectives to be explored because they are open to deeper investigation of points of view (Alvesson 2011, 53). In this sense, the study did not aim to uncover one singular account of the Quaker tradition. Instead, participants' different and contrasting perspectives were anticipated and also framed as valid in this research. The objectives of this study were aligned with an interpretivist constructionist methodological approach (Harris 2008, 238). In other words, this research is an investigation of Quaker affiliates' claims about the contemporary liberal tradition rather than its reality (Harris

2008, 239). It focuses on exploring meaning and contingencies and frames the essential in contestable terms (Harris 2008, 240).

2.6 Pilot study

The interview process began with a pilot phase intended to test the appropriateness of the research process as a whole (Bryman 2008, 247). In this sense, the pilot study was essentially a feasibility study (Kim 2010, 191). The pilot was a useful way of discovering how I could adapt to the research situation before committing time and resources to the project (Sampson 2004, 385-6). The pilot interviews were designed to test and to adapt if necessary the detail of data-gathering techniques prior to interviewing the main sample (Bryman 2008, 247). A pilot study was deemed important in terms of foregrounding any personal and methodological weaknesses in my approach. The pilot was also a useful introduction to the unpredictable and serendipitous aspects of the research process because 'the areas in which a pilot informs a study are not necessarily those we anticipate' (Sampson 2004, 392).

2.6.1 Acquiring participants for the pilot study

At the outset of my research, I was familiar with my local Quaker meeting as I had been attending regularly for almost two years. I decided to formally contact in writing the Clerk of this meeting¹ for permission to approach affiliates. The clerk agreed to this request. In response, I wrote a short follow-up item for the newsletter of the local meeting

¹ The clerk occupies a voluntary office within the local Quaker meeting. 'From the outside the clerk appears like a cross between a chair and a secretary. Clerks prepare the agenda, do the necessary administration and guide the meeting through the items of business.' Quakers in Britain, 2016

requesting volunteer participants. I asked that the participants contact me directly in person or electronically and I recruited three participants for the pilot stage by this route. I had hoped for at least one more pilot project recruit and therefore contacted two other geographically accessible local Quaker meetings by letter. By this process, I recruited a fourth research volunteer from one of these local Quaker meetings.

My pilot project was a two-stage enterprise. I interviewed each of the four participants on two occasions at six monthly intervals. I interviewed participants twice so that I could gain a developing and more detailed picture of the liberal Quaker tradition. I interviewed the participants in their houses, in my home and Quaker meeting houses. I recorded the conversations on a small digital voice recorder and transcribed the recordings as soon as possible after the conversations, making brief notes on any incidental features of the occasion.

The research protocol was tested in several respects as a result of the pilot study and I made methodological and methodical adjustments in preparation for the research proper. Firstly, I used the pilot as a way of adjusting more suitably the sample recruitment strategy (Kim 2010, 191). Upon contacting local Quaker meetings for the pilot project, there were several affiliates who expressed an interest in volunteering for the research. These expressions of interest were made directly to me in person after Quaker Meeting for Worship or in telephone conversations. However, expressions of interest did not necessarily result in active participation. Some Quakers promised participation but then left the research process at that point. Also, I had originally

planned only to approach one meeting for the pilot study but recruitment from the first meeting only produced three participants. Consequently, I approached two other local Quaker meetings for volunteers and, by the end of the pilot study, I had acquired four volunteer participants from across three Quaker meetings. The pilot project revealed that sufficient participants via local Quaker meetings could not be taken for granted.

2.6.2 How the pilot study enhanced the research

The process of data-gathering and analysis in research is evolving and emergent (Kim 2010, 192) and this was evidenced in the pilot study. For example, I initially adopted a structured approach within the interview process. I devised a list of questions which I printed out on two sides of A4 paper (see Appendix 2). The questions were grouped under four topic headings and under these headings, I had compiled thirteen sub-headings. Each sub-heading had a bullet point followed by several specific questions. However, as the scheduled pilot interviews progressed, the questions plotted a pathway within the discussion but they were not helpful in 'making the interviewees feel relaxed and free to respond' (Alvesson 2011, 57). A natural conversation is important to facilitate a negotiated collaboration between the participants in the interview context so that participants feel able to 'reveal' rather than 'construct' their identity (Alvesson 2011, 88). A mutual understanding between the participants was deemed to be important in this research where meanings about what might count as Quaker are individualised and privatised.

As a result of the pilot test, I altered the questions. I simplified the wording of questions during the interviews, editing out duplicated ideas and thereafter used the questions as a guide within the interview situation rather than as a formal script. Originally, in the pilot, my own assumptions about what counts as the Quaker tradition were framed quite closely by the questions. During the pilot interview process, this structured approach tended to orientate the responses of the participants. I became aware that interviewees' responses might reflect my assumptions and 'blind spots' with regard to the contemporary tradition (Alvesson 2009, 9). Thereafter, I tried to become less focussed on specific questions and more intent on probing the general topic areas. I felt that the research conversations flowed more easily and naturally and the data was more wide-ranging as the research progressed. This resulted in the collection of data that was sometimes much less specific to and perhaps deviating from the original focus of the project.

These diverse, wider-ranging outcomes reflected an orientation within the interview process away from noting specific information and towards exploring the deeper meanings within participants' narratives (Alvesson 2011, 53). My interview with Jo-Jo on this open-ended basis resulted in a wide-ranging conversation. Jo-Jo had been a Quaker for only eight weeks when I interviewed him. The less structured format of the interview elicited from him intimate details about his motivations for resigning his job. Whilst his Christian faith was cited by Jo-Jo as a factor in his responses at work, exploration of his religious beliefs accidentally uncovered other motivations for his resignation. Jo-Jo recalled other influences on his disposition at work during that time

including persistent illegal drug use, 'my marriage breaking up' and diagnosed mental illness. Had I not adopted a different, less structured approach as a result of the pilot interviews, I might not have felt able to fully explore the complexities of Jo-Jo's inner life.

As the interview process progressed during the research proper, I learned then to be less prescriptive about what counts as data in the research setting. The pilot phase of the research process enabled me to re-focus the semi-structured interviews during the main data gathering. I also altered the detail of the research questions in order to privilege more subjects' understanding the topic.

2.7 Recruiting participants for the research

As, 'the size of the initial sample will need to allow scope for attrition' (Ritchie and Lewis 2003, 55), I approached a greater number of local Quaker meetings than I had initially planned. I contacted three meetings in large metropolitan conurbations and six meetings in smaller urban and rural communities. Of these local Quaker meetings, four provided no volunteer responses and one small meeting did not respond to the letter at all. The responses of the Quaker local meeting regarding my request for volunteers varied.

One of the meetings which did not provide volunteers was rejected by the clerk as 'work', in their opinion, held little relevance to members of the meeting, its demographic apparently judged to have been too elderly. There was no indication that affiliates were offered independently the opportunity to participate. Another clerk responded by

telephone and email with names of individuals who might like to become involved. However, the clerk did not respond to the researcher's further follow-up emails. Another clerk from a large urban meeting failed to respond to a number of letters and emails. One opportunistically acquired contact expressed an interest in participating but then there was no further response. Contact with these nine meetings resulted in the recruitment of fifteen volunteer participants. The co-operation of the clerk as a gatekeeper appeared to be pivotal to the success of the project.

In order to contact potential participants, I asked the clerk of the Quaker meetings to make available to affiliates a flyer explaining the research project (see Appendix 3). The flyer gave a short description of the study as an investigation into Quaker community. It included telephone, email and contact address details. Once I had contacted the clerks of the local meetings, I arranged a convenient Sunday when I would attend a meeting for worship. The clerks announced to the congregation my intention to attend. At the end of the Quaker Meeting for Worship, the clerk regularly gives out the notices. During this part of the meeting process, I introduced myself to the affiliates in attendance. I then remained in the meeting room briefly after worship so that would-be recruits could talk to me and register their interest if they wished. I also participated in the tea and coffee ritual after meeting. This is an informal 'catch up' occasion where Quakers talk with each other about church and other matters.

I attended in person five Quaker meetings for worship. After the formal meeting and the clerk had read out the notices to the attending Quakers, I was then invited to address

the group. I gave a brief summary of the research project and its purposes. I said that I would be available directly if anyone wanted to discover more and about the study or to participate. I was a little surprised when my suggestion provoked interest amongst affiliates. My study stimulated lots of conversation later in the social area over tea and biscuits between myself and those who had attended the Quaker Meeting for Worship. I recorded the names and contact addresses provided by interested individuals and then emailed the would-be participants with a participation sheet and consent form. These self-selecting participants constituted the sample.

I also contacted separately by email the clerk of the Quaker and Business Group, referred to hereafter as Q&B, (Quakers and Business 2016) with regard the aims of the project and my intention to recruit participants. Approaching the Q&B was a convenient or opportunistic way of sampling affiliates who were likely to have an interest in the project (Bryman 2008, 323). Due to restrictions on my time and the requirement to negotiate access to participants through the clerk of local Quaker meetings, this tactic was expedient. Q&B were Quakers who had already formally declared an interest in the tradition within the contemporary work setting by joining the group. Recruitment in this way also circumvented the constraints associated with recruiting participants circuitously via the co-operation of Quaker clerks and then through attendance in person at local Quaker Meeting for Worship.

An email was circulated to the membership of the Q&B by the clerk of the group. It informed members of my research and its aims to discover more about how Quakers

currently perceived the contemporary work setting. I received one email response from the Q&B. This member resided some distance from the researcher but expressed an interest in participation. In order for this affiliate to participate, interviews had to be carefully arranged because transport and time-distance was expensive and time-consuming for the researcher. Considerations of time and expense for the researcher had so far influenced the choice of local Quaker meetings from which participants had been drawn. However, as a singular case, the distance and expense were manageable. The contribution of this particular participant meant that sixteen volunteers were recruited for the main phase of the research and twenty participants took part overall including the pilot cohort.

2.8 The research interviews

Once I had acquired affiliates' contact details, organising interview dates and times was uncomplicated. I contacted all would-be volunteers directly by email. Non-respondents to the first email were later re-contacted by the same method. If this second attempt to contact affiliates produced no further reply, I understood that the subjects had effectively withdrawn from the process. Arrangements were made to meet willing participants at a venue and time convenient for them.

The participants preferred to be interviewed in their homes or at the local Quaker meeting house. Interviews normally took place in the evening or at weekend outside of working time. Interviews were conducted directly after local Meeting for Worship. One Quaker was interviewed at work. One interviewee was interviewed by telephone as it

had been impractical to arrange a face-to-face meeting due to the time constraints in the affiliates' working life. Trying to arrange interviews because of her busy lifestyle was problematic especially as she was required to travel internationally at short notice. This unpredictability became problematic for the researcher. I had bought train tickets for a 200 mile journey to interview the participant. However, as the interview date approached, I had had no recent response to my emails. The participant contacted me two days before to cancel our meeting: The person concerned wrote:

sorry for the tardy reply; life has been a bit extreme, as an example, was up at 5 this morning to get a flight to Europe and have just got home; i can meet this week or we could meet at another time also. sorry again.

Unfortunately, I had then to re-schedule the meeting upon receipt just a couple of days before I was due to travel and pay for another journey.

I also conducted joint interviews with two participants on two separate occasions. This joint interview was arranged as it was convenient for both participants who knew each other and were aware of their participation in the project. On the first occasion, the candidates had suggested being interviewed together after I had met them at the local Quaker meeting for worship. On the other occasion, the participants had discussed between themselves the idea of being interviewed together and suggested meeting jointly in order to assist with my own arrangements and their coincident plans for the day.

At the beginning of the interview process, I informed candidates that I would prefer interviews to be conducted on two occasions at an interval of approximately six months.

Eighteen of the twenty participants were interviewed twice. Two interviewees did not respond to email requests to participate after the first interview. In their case, I analysed only data from a single interview. The reasons for interviewing subjects twice were to allow the candidates the opportunity to reflect on any issues they felt relevant to the research in the intervening period. It also gave interviewees time to develop any ideas they might have regarding the subject. This approach to interviewing candidates was especially fruitful as it provided me with a chance to ask questions which I had not done during the first meeting. It also serendipitously provided developing information about the affiliates' work circumstances which I draw upon explicitly in my analysis.

This open-ended approach was shown to be useful for two candidates. They emailed me after their interviews. They explained how they had found discussing their faith more difficult than they had imagined. They wanted to draw my attention to these difficulties and to their further reflections on the process which was, according to Patsy, *'more stressful than I imagined, articulating beliefs to a stranger'*.² One also expanded on some of the family background which they had alluded to during the face-to-face meeting but had been unable to articulate at the time. The six month interlude then allowed for developments within interviewees' work circumstances and their feeling regarding the Quaker tradition to be further clarified.

This view, that subjects' lives can better be captured by follow up interviews, was illustrated in this study. I interviewed participants about their work shortly after the new

² In this thesis, I have put interviewee quotes in italics in order to differentiate their words from the rest of the text.

UK coalition government was formed in 2009. The banking crisis of 2008 had provided the backdrop to this election. Government policy was to cut back the national deficit. These cutbacks had an impact on public services funding. The majority of the research participants were employed in public services during these adjustments to funding. By chance, I interviewed Quaker affiliates as the cuts were being proposed and then six months later after the funding arrangements were being adjusted. Single interviews would have given one, fixed perspective regarding these financial cuts prior to their implementation. However, due to the decision to interview participants twice, I was able to investigate participants developing perceptions of these cuts and their impact on affiliates' personal lives.

In this sense, the material changes in affiliates' work circumstances between interviews were highlighted. During the first interview, some affiliates were worrying that they might be issued imminently with redundancy notices and had been observing the effects of redundancy on co-workers. However, by the time of the second interview, Frank's job had become safer because his organisation was providing services which could no longer be afforded in the public sector. Bernard had acquired new responsibility and a pay rise since the first interview because others had been made redundant. Patsy, on the other hand, had become disillusioned with how her organisation had executed the financial cuts and had started to doubt the practical efficacy of the contemporary Quaker tradition. These ongoing issues were serendipitously realised in the research only as a result of the participants' interviews taking place on two separate occasions.

2.9 Recording the interviews

Each interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder. The duration of each interview varied between a minimum of half an hour and a maximum two and half hours. Two candidates were interviewed for a total of more than four hours. I also made brief notes after the interviews on any points which might be relevant to the purpose of the research but were not explicitly made at the time. For example, I noted how Gina only talked freely and critically about work once the digital voice recorder had been switched off. These ongoing notes served as an advisory function for how I conducted future interviews. They also assisted in the ongoing analysis.

The digital recordings were transcribed by the researcher and electronically stored. All the documents relating to the recordings were password protected. Individual names in each document were anonymised. At the end of the evidence gathering process, I had acquired over sixty hours of data. I had collated emails and written correspondence with clerks, participants and those who had decided to abstain from participation. I understood the interviews as a process of data collection rather than simply a series of singular events which I consistently refined and altered to suit the purpose of finding intimate details about Quakers' working lives.

2.10 Data analysis and synthesis

During the data-gathering process, including the pilot phase, I acquired over sixty hours of interview recordings from twenty Quaker participants. I had to develop an approach to analysing this extensive body of qualitative information. Bryman (2008) states that

the substantial volume and subjective nature of the data collected in qualitative study renders 'broad guidelines' preferable to the less ambiguous and rule-governed approach associated with quantitative research (2008, 538). Beckford (2003) also suggests that an in-depth exploration of individuals' religious faith, in particular, tends to be characterised by ambiguity (Beckford 2003, 13). My task, in this analytical sense, was to compress the complexity of the data within categories whilst attributing a meaning to interviewees' responses 'which does not go "behind" or "beyond" participants' perspectives, in all their diversity and complexity' (Hammersley 2008, 46).

Data analysis in the research can be compared to that applied in a grounded theory approach. Kathy Charmaz (2014) depicts the grounded theory approach to analysis as 'strategies for creating and interrogating our data, not routes to knowing an objective external reality' (2008, 401). She suggests that grounded theory also relies upon a flexibility in its processes so that researchers follow 'guidelines' rather than rules which try to fix outcomes. (Charmaz 2014, 399). As the researcher successively codes the data, categories are progressively developed in parallel with the theory (Bryman, 2008, 545). In this sense, grounded theory is not only a method of categorisation but also of iterative theory generation as researchers develop themes which influence the creation and refinement of further categories.

However, whilst grounded theory is an inductive strategy for coding data, creating categories and re-constructing theory from emerging themes (Charmaz 2014, 402), the grounded approach can also over-focus on the espoused idea of emerging theoretical

neutrality (Bryman 2008, 549). It does not include very easily a broader range of phenomena which might illuminate the topic, especially as data is separated through the coding process (Bryman 2008, 549). The process of coding and categorising can fragment and then compartmentalise attempts to explain the social world so that 'it is somewhat doubtful whether grounded theory...really results in theory' rather than concept generation (Bryman 2008, 549). In view of the rich, intimate nature of my interview data, I was concerned not to focus on the process of categorisation and codification at the possible expense of theory generation. I, therefore, adopted a less formal and prescriptive approach to the development of categories in order to accommodate the complexity of intimate, religious perspectives.

In the research project, I began the process of theory generation during the interview process. I transcribed all my interviews and began to code emerging themes and to refine these themes into categories during my engagement with interviewees. As themes began to develop, further reading regarding the Quaker tradition, and within the sociology of religion and work began to inform my ideas. My reading was not simply derivative, though, and my themes and theories were consistently influenced by a broad spectrum of ideas from other fields of academia. These ideas have been drawn from across the social sciences and humanities and also my own personal experiences within and beyond academia. I had become familiar with intentional communities in the treatment of mental health through trusteeship of a charity and used these academic models to assist my categorisation of participants' ideas in utopian terms.

This utopian category was also then augmented by other utopian perspectives developed within the sociology of work and within Critical Management Studies in particular (see Chapter 7). Thus, the view that Quakers engage with the contemporary work context in terms which can be classified as utopian was a theme which I developed throughout the study. This utopian category of Quaker engagement, I then differentiated as harmonious or disharmonious with the espoused aspirations of the contemporary work organisation. Finally, I developed a category through my analysis which depicts how the Quaker participants pursue, through everyday means, their utopian claims.

As I was the interviewer, transcriber and analyst, as well as insider to the Quaker church, I viewed the data from multiple perspectives in the research. I adopted a broadly constructivist position to analysing what counts as Quaker where religion is 'an interpretative category which human beings apply to a wide variety of phenomena' (Beckford 2003, 4). This multi-perspectival approach also helps to locate ideas within the data (Basit 2003, 151). In this sense, both the data collection and the theory developed in an 'iterative interplay' (Bryman and Burgess 2002, 221) as the research progressed. My approach to data analysis, therefore, does not claim to separate data and method nor to finding rather than making meanings (Doucet and Mauthner 2003, 414). In this sense, the ontological claims which I make as an outcome of the analysis are viewed in processual terms as 'partial, provisional and perspectival' (Doucet and Mauthner 2003, 416) interpretations of the contemporary Quaker tradition.

2.11 Ethical considerations

When I contacted would-be participants by email, I set out the conditions upon which participation would be undertaken. I sent a form seeking informed consent, 'a procedure widely agreed to safeguard the rights of human subjects to know the research is being conducted and to approve their own participation' (Homan 1991, 2). This form (see Appendix 4 and 5) pointed out that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw without explanation at any point. It also said that candidates would remain anonymous if any of the data was published. These were standard procedures for participants who might be interviewed as part of a research project. The consent form was modelled on the UK Data Archive version 3. I also sent candidates a participation information sheet which gave them information about the interview procedure. This stated in particular the purpose of the study and how the interviews were intended to be organised: that they would be conducted in a place of the candidates' choice, that it was intended to repeat them after approximately six months and that participation could be discussed with the researcher or his supervisor at any time. Contact names, addresses and telephone numbers for the researcher and supervisor were included.

As the Quaker church is a small religious group of around twenty thousand affiliates in Great Britain, maintaining anonymity was a prominent consideration in the research. In the thesis, I have anonymised as far as possible, location, other church affiliation and, as far as I could without compromising its relevance, identifiable details of individuals' work background. All the research subjects expressed agreement with the

confidentiality aspects of the participation agreement. Some explicitly stated that they had no concerns if they were openly identified in the research. However, one interviewee at the start of the interview stated that he did not want his participation in the research to be identifiable on an internet search. Another research subject expressed some serious concerns about ethical practices in her work organisation only after the recording device had been switched off. She also remarked that her job was unique in its field and requested that her job role as well as her name be anonymised in the thesis. Thus, in this research process, maintaining anonymity is important not only out of respect for the public profile of the participants but also as public knowledge could impact upon aspects of participants' working lives.

The issue of confidentiality and anonymity was a significant one in this research. I saw preserving anonymity as a way of encouraging participation by those who might wish to express opinions critical of the church or their work organisations. I had to devise a method of recruiting participants which allowed them to become involved anonymously. I first contacted the clerk of the local Meeting for Worship. I informed the clerk about the research project and its aims. I sent the clerk a flyer with a description of the project and contact details. I requested that the flyer was made available for affiliates at Meeting for Worship. I tried to ensure that candidates could remain anonymous if they wished to participate in the project. I also asked the clerk for permission to address the congregants collectively at the end of the Meeting for Worship when notices are normally read out to the attendees. In this sense, I intended to explain the study in person and in more detail for any interested participants in the project. It was agreed

that I could speak at the end of the Quaker meetings. I outlined the study and tried to emphasise in my short missal that anonymity and confidentiality were paramount and would be respected. I stated that candidates were free to withdraw without explanation at any point in the programme. I was available for discussion at that time or I could be contacted directly through the details on the flyer.

There was a substantial and immediate response to my request for participants directly after addressing the congregation on the five occasions I addressed a meeting in this way. I did not leave the meeting room straight away in order to allow affiliates time to meet me discretely if they wished. However, the affiliates appeared to have no real concerns about remaining anonymous in the church setting as far as participation in the research was concerned. It was actually difficult to co-ordinate all the offers of participation. On each occasion there was something of a disorderly queue of Quakers who were enthusiastically providing me with their names and addresses. I was struggling to write down contact details quickly enough whilst also finishing off conversations with others still relating observations about their own work-life experiences.

At another smaller meeting, I had already been approached by one would-be participant in response to the flyer sent to the clerk. There were only perhaps six people who participated in the after-meeting tea and coffee conversations. I met the volunteer on this occasion who was introduced by the clerk. It was apparent that efforts to maintain anonymity were not appropriate in this setting. I felt efforts at guarding anonymity would

have been contrived to the point of artificiality. In that situation where everyone was familiar and apparently at ease with each other, I felt that it would have been incongruous to try to disguise participation in the project when it was effectively a publicly known fact. I felt that I was a lot more concerned about confidentiality than the would-be participant or the other Quakers in attendance. This experience illustrates that anonymity within the faith group at least in terms of participation in this study was not considered to be of sufficient importance to deter a public show of interest. I had tried to arrange participation in terms that allowed anonymity and therefore to protect confidences. In trying to promote the study and give candidates a chance to hear more about it, I discovered that the affiliates appeared not to feel threatened by this open arrangement whilst amongst other Quakers.

I could perhaps have obviated this problem of anonymity. I might have relied on clerks to distribute the literature and allow candidates to contact me directly without any personal contact. However, the pilot study and the initial phase of the research proper indicated that reaching prospective interviewees and then enlisting them might not have been a straightforward or a productive strategy. It might have been expensive in time and effort, especially as candidates were allowed to withdraw at any time. This method was productive in terms of recruitment. At the local Quaker meetings where I addressed the gathering, the study drew four and five participants. Without this personal touch, it possible that recruitment overall would have been considerably less and the outcomes of the research much more narrowly circumscribed.

The complicating issue of confidentiality within small communities also became apparent in the research. Whilst interviewing one participant, I was informed that my research had been mentioned in the ministry of another interviewee. I was informed by the participant that another interviewee had been ministered to the congregation during meeting for worship about the benefits they had found from participating in the research project. This exhortation was compromising insofar as other participants in the research cohort also attended this meeting and might have been influenced about the project by this utterance. This might have influenced other participants in terms how they might engage further with the research. It highlighted how precarious the issue of confidentiality and neutrality can be in the research, that is: participation in the study and its outcomes can be purposefully oriented away from the aims of the researcher and towards other ends of the participants (Homan 1991, 5). This knowledge also influenced my own approach to the interviews within that particular community. I became aware that participants might be engaging with the study having already been subject to a partial interpretation of its purposes.

2.12 Methodological limitations and strengths

As a research project which relies on data generated during interviews, the reliability of the research is limited in terms of its stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency (Bryman 2008, 149-50). Cassell and Symon (2004) write that, whilst the interviewer and interviewee are involved jointly in the construction of a reality, the analysis is conducted from one only point of view (2004, 249). Thus, interviewers will find it difficult to gather other, contending perspectives when categorising the data. The

research findings are thus not reliable as they do not include alternative viewpoints which contribute to inter-observer consistency. Nor can respondents' answers within semi-structured interviews be compared easily so internal reliability is contestable. Also, in terms of reliability, the interview process lacks stability as it is trapped in a particular time and social context and therefore cannot be replayed (Bryman 2008, 149-50). In this reliable sense, my thesis is 'the outcome of an interviewer's own construction of their world and the given interview situation' (Cassell 2005, 170).

In this study, the interviewer and interviewee are seen as part of a process where 'people want to give a good impression of themselves and also the institutions with which they identify' (Alvesson 2011, 90). The findings of the research are thus also potentially an analysis of how Quakers attempt to make a good impression upon the world. 'Impression management' (Alvesson 2011, 91) is assumed in the interview process and theories to explain affiliates' perspectives might have been developed from this disingenuous Quaker enterprise. Alvesson and Skoldbery (2009) suggest that the ambiguity inherent in interview-generated meaning is also valuable in a research context (2009, 47). They argue that a study that reveals ambiguity is closer to the complexity of the real world than the objectively defined categories which emerge from positivist studies (2009, 47). Although interviews are regarded as a way into the inner world of research participants, data always requires selection and interpretation and this subjective process to some degree entails contestation of outcomes (Alvesson and Karreman 2011, 15). In this sense, this research cannot point to reliably reproducible,

postivist outcomes but rather, it privileges findings which ‘focus is on the “disclosure” of how social phenomena are socially constructed’ (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2009:15).

Bryman (2008), however, states that reliability and validity in qualitative studies can be understood in an alternative sense. He suggests ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’ as equally substantive characteristics of qualitative research (2008, 377-9). He asserts that social reality is contested and subjectively interpreted from multiple perspectives rather than empirically provable. In these terms, evidence and analytical processes plus the theories from which they emerge can be understood as more-or-less credible, transferable and dependable. In this sense, theories affirm interpretations, and, Bryman writes, they tend towards confirmability rather than espouse the categorical provability of a researcher’s analytical position (2008, 278). Bryman also argues that research can be re-conceptualised in terms of transferability. These concepts share ‘depth’ instead of ‘breadth’ rather than the idea of a universal generalisability which tends to be predominate in quantitative studies (Bryman 2008, 378). The issue of dependability is also posited by Bryman (2008, 378) as a practical step whereby ongoing and variable outcomes of the research process are shared with peers who act as ‘auditors’ in order to monitor procedural practices (2008, 378).

As a distance researcher, I have been in very frequent email contact with my supervisor at all stages of the research. This contact has produced a litany of jointly produced insights and criticisms which I have assiduously stored, re-read and have re-considered. I have shared edited and full versions of my data-gathering. In particular, I shared a full

recording of one extensive interview with my supervisor which I found personally challenging. I have also shared with my supervisor theories and ideas from social science and humanities which have been formed jointly into concepts to explain aspect of my research. However, this exercise in dependability has not been formalised and potentially lacks the formal rigour afforded to researchers who work substantially within research-orientated institutions and have predictable access to peer discussion and review.

The findings and insights of this study are limited by the researcher's methodological approach to analysing the data. I conducted the research as an insider. This position with regard to the Quaker church cannot therefore claim to interest-free data-gathering. The research process is thus constrained by a personal preference towards the Quaker church of the interviewer and the interviewees. In Gergen's (2009) terms, then, 'there is no privileged relationship between world and word. For any situation multiple descriptions are usually possible' (1999, 34). It is in this provisional and subjective sense which the data collection process and its analysis have been conducted in this study. I view a wholly neutral position in social research as elusive, not necessarily or universally desirable in the pursuit of rich data and that all findings in social research are ultimately subject to human interpretation.

2.13 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have articulated my rationale for a qualitative methodological approach and specifically for gathering information via semi-structured interviews. I have detailed an appreciation of my position as an insider researcher and suggested that this role was generally advantageous to the outcomes of the study. I have defined the constituency from which participants were drawn and how I acquired my interview data. In particular, I have contended that the semi-structured interview method was most applicable for obtaining information with regard to religious beliefs generally and especially perspectives regarding the individualised Quaker tradition. I detailed the organisation and usefulness of the pilot study, how I accrued data during the research proper and my approach to analysis. I have suggested that the study makes limited claims to generalisability but that its academic credibility is predicated on the rich data obtained with regard to how the Quaker affiliates view the contemporary social world.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEMPORARY QUAKER CONVERSION

3.1 Introduction

Prior to analysing in further chapters how the Quaker tradition is expedited in the contemporary work context, I first depict the church as perceived by its affiliates. In this chapter, I depict the Quakers interviewees typically as converts to the church who become affiliated in adulthood. However, this conversion is not framed in Pauline terms as a radical change in their worldview (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989, 1). Rather, the affiliates' conversion is portrayed as a process of comparing belief traditions. Converts choose to affiliate to the Quaker church because its espoused horizons are seen to match their own. The interviewees frame this process of matching as an ongoing religious enterprise. In this chapter, the interviewees are depicted in terms of 'experimental converts' who sequentially 'try out' suitable church affiliations (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989, 5). This process whereby affiliates match their horizons to those espoused by the Quaker church is augmented by its membership structures. I depict how the interviewees perceive categories of affiliation and how these distinctions facilitate the liberal, permissive and highly individualised church tradition.

3.2 Quakers are adult converts

My research shows that the research participants tend to affiliate to the Quaker church in adulthood and that affiliates who are not first generation converts are atypical. Seventeen out of the twenty research participants stated that they first experienced the Quaker church tradition by attending a Meeting for Worship (MfW) as adults. The

remaining three Quakers reported attending regular Quaker church MfW as children. Martin said *'in my mid-twenties, thirties...more or less stopped'* and Bernard at fifteen *'left the Quakers and joined the Church of England'*. However, both re-commenced attending MfW later in their adult lives. Only one affiliate, Pippa, reported having been a Quaker, in her words, *'from day one'*. In the rest of this chapter, I identify Quaker participants as adult converts within the contemporary Quaker collective as well as their conversion process.

These findings regarding Quaker demography accord with the British Quaker Survey 2013 (British Quaker Survey 2013). The BQS suggests that nearly 90% of British Quakers are adult converts to the church. According to the BQS, the mean average age of Quaker affiliates is 64 years and the average age when affiliates first attended Meeting for Worship is 36 years. The age at which Quakers first applied for formal membership is 41 years. Also, indicative of the current older age demographic of the church, 61% of Quakers are retired. This BQS survey positions my research more narrowly within the broader church context. In other words, this thesis is based, not upon the views of the majority of Quakers who are retired, but upon the responses of a minority of affiliates within the collective who self-define as working. In this sense, my construction of the contemporary Quaker tradition is not representative of the church. Rather, this study depicts how affiliates from this minority category of Quakers conceptualise the contemporary tradition.

3.3 The conversion process

In this section, I identify how affiliates understand conversion to the contemporary Quaker church. Accounts of contemporary Quaker conversion are contrasted with the conversion processes of the group's earliest followers. Grounds for Quaker conversion to the contemporary church are portrayed in highly individualised and liberal terms by modern-day affiliates. I depict the contemporary Quaker church which arises from these processes as a liberal, permissive and fluid re-conceptualisation of the Quaker tradition.

3.3.1 Early Quaker radical conversion

The contemporary Quaker church is a similar entity to the first Quaker movement insofar as modern affiliates regard religious experience in highly individualised terms. Whilst 'there is a school of thought which sees early Quakerism as a generic spiritual movement which took Christian form for the lack of any other conceptual framework' (Punshon 2004, 39), the earliest Quaker converts were disciplined and independent spirits who were 'intensely evangelistic' (Dandelion 2004, 15). They saw the world through a Christian prism which reflected an 'Inward Light' and illuminated sin (Dandelion 2004, 15). Early affiliates regarded their life anew through the prism of someone who had become estranged from God (Gwyn 2004, 144). In this sense, an individual's sins and sinfulness were revealed to them by conversion which provided a new and more perspicacious lens (Gwyn 2004, 133). As a result, the worldview of early Quaker converts was believed by its affiliates to have been radically altered through an intense personal experience of self-realisation (Barbour 2004, 25). Quakers depicted

experiencing an 'Inward Light' which revealed an individual's intimate and unmediated relationship with God.

The first Quakers attempted to make manifest in the social sphere a shared and intense inner experience of God (Barbour 2004, 26). Early Quaker adherents, though, experienced 'an acute and painful death of self' (Gywn 2004, 144). Responding to God's call provoked a thaumaturgical re-orientating of the spirit within (Greaves 1997, 382; Bailey 2004, 66) where the old self was perceived by affiliates as old and outdated. Conversion from this perspective was understood by Quakers in terms of the 'indwelling Christ' and the mystical body (Tarter 2004, 93). God had directed Quakers towards a new life of inner and outer transformation, awe and wonder (Bailey 2004, 66). In this sense, conversion for first generation Quakers marked both the thaumaturgical end of a one life and the new and distinct beginning of another. However, as first Quakers' lives changed inwardly, its outward manifestation also fundamentally altered.

Gay Pilgrim (2004) asserts that early Quakers beliefs were conjoined with their social practices (2004, 210). Pilgrim (2008) writes that their social practices were commonly predicated on an impulse towards heterotopic otherness within the society of the time (2008, 56). Early Quakers understood their inner transformation as a call to re-create society in God's image. This heterotopic interaction in social terms was understood by early adherents as an external response to the internally felt 'direct leading of the Holy Spirit' (Punshon 2004, 33). In this sense, Pilgrim avers that the early church attracted converts who felt impelled by God to challenge social practices perceived as an affront

to the divine (2004, 210). According to Pilgrim, whilst early Quakers were embedded in the society from which they arose, the church organisation sanctioned counter-cultural social practice with the intention of re-ordering perceived social, religious and political apostasy (2008, 57-58).

The beginnings of the Quaker tradition are rooted in an individualised and alternative conceptualisation of Christianity which affiliates lived out as transformed, counter-cultural social practice. Quakers claimed a new conceptualisation of religious belief and observance and, as a consequence, this became realised as a radically new relationship with the everyday. However, what constitutes the Quaker church for contemporary converts today is at variance with these first manifestations of the tradition. Pilgrim argues that the contemporary Quaker church is a conflicted organisation (2004, 217-8). Whilst the earliest forms of the tradition intentionally juxtaposed social practice against that of the prevailing cultural norms, early Quakers pursued a heterodox form of religious practice in the social sphere (Pilgrim 2004, 212). However, although contemporary manifestations of the tradition espouse a counter-cultural worldview, Quakers nowadays do not juxtapose their claims as radically oppositional within the social sphere (2008, 61).

Pilgrim suggests that the contemporary church is populated by 'syncretists' who now draw upon and interpret Quaker narratives but prefer to follow the tradition in terms of what counts as a Quaker 'lifestyle' rather than from the perspective of its historical beliefs (Pilgrim 2008, 63). Moreover, conversion to the contemporary church is no

longer framed by affiliates in terms of a worldview or alternative social practices radically changed and evinced by conversion. Instead, affiliates in the contemporary church espouse a conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker in terms radically deviant from all other preceding forms of the tradition (Dandelion 2008, 37).

Whereas first Quakers expressed an 'intimate' relationship with the divine, affiliates no longer cast God in authoritative terms of how the tradition is practised (Dandelion 2007, 189-90). Nowadays, by contrast, the contemporary tradition frames the individual affiliate as the author of their religious enterprise. From this perspective, experience is seen as the primary influence on how Quakers conceptualise what counts as Quaker (Dandelion 2007, 129). What counts as Quaker, then, is understood through the prism of this experience although, as Dandelion notes:

Not only is the experience of Liberal Quakers less of transformation than was the case for the early Friends, but the stakes are less high. Salvation is not of upmost concern for Liberal Friends and they are not corporately convinced of its necessity or its existence. (Dandelion 2007, 233)

Whilst contemporary Quaker claims can be categorised as alternative *vis-à-vis* materialism or consumption, these contemporary manifestations of the tradition are rather cultural markers than radically heterodox anti-establishment practices which delineate the group from the world (Dandelion 2007, 230). The findings of my research support these views of the Quaker tradition insofar as its claims and practices are not consistent.

Conversion for contemporary affiliates is not depicted in the radical terms espoused by the first Quakers whereby affiliation marks a new beginning. Instead, conversion is seen by Quakers as a process whereby affiliates' existing horizons are matched to the perceived claims of the contemporary liberal church. Organisational structures are perceived by affiliates to support a church of individualised perspectives, a religious autonomy which is affirmed by the Quaker collective. Affiliation, in this individualised sense, is also framed by Quakers in personally liberating terms. Thus, practices and worldviews held prior to affiliation tend to be fundamentally unchanged by conversion. The church requires no re-orientation of perspectives as a condition of affiliation and individuals' views are, instead, maintained and re-cast by affiliates in Quaker terms. The individual perspective, from this point of view, is privileged by the church which affirms the converts' claim to be at the centre of their religious enterprise. In the next sections, I discuss the contemporary Quaker conversion and how it is facilitated by contemporary church processes.

3.3.2 Contemporary Quaker conversion

In my research, contemporary Quakers depict discovery of the church in terms which omit reference to 'radically inward worship and apocalyptic social change' (Barbour 2004, 19). Rather, the research participants frame their initial contact with the church in cheerful terms of chance discovery and as a happy accident. Trudi had discovered the contemporary Quaker church only by happenstance. She had been invited to help a charity whose beginnings had Quaker roots and then she attended a Quaker Meeting for Worship as part of her research into the charity's origins. *'I supposed I better go to*

the local Quaker meeting,' she said, 'and find out what the Quakers do; so that's how I got into the Quakers.' Annie also first discovered the group by accident during a conversation with one of her in-laws and whimsically acted upon her find. *'I was talking to her about Quakers years ago,'* Annie said, *'and so, just out of a whim one day, I went along to a meeting.'* In this sense, contemporary affiliates' discovery of the tradition is not similar to that depicted by the first Quakers insofar as the interviewees do not frame conversion in terms of holiness (Spencer 2004, 154). Neither is contemporary conversion framed in intense and irresistible terms (Spencer 2004, 155). Rather, today's Quaker conversion is framed by affiliates as the unexpected result of a fortuitous encounter with the mundane world.

The decision to act upon this discovery of the Quaker church and to participate in its conventions is framed by affiliates in rational terms. Conversion tends to be framed as a freely chosen option from within a religious market economy of alternatives (McKinnon 2012, 530). The experience of early advocates can be framed in terms of a thaumaturgical reorienting of the spirit whereupon their worldview is radically transformed (Greaves 1997, 382; Bailey 2004, 66). However, contemporary conversion is framed by affiliates without reference to a profound inner transformation. Instead, affiliates depict conversion as a process of alignment where personal horizons held prior to affiliation are maintained rather than radically changed. Trudi said:

This (nuclear war) was a real possibility, that's what scared me; it's not a morality thing, this is real; and this dovetails with why I ended up at the Quakers.

Gina asserted:

Other religions weren't taking priesthood of all believers and equality seriously but I was convinced of it; it made sense for me to be looking at Quakers.

Conversion to the church is, in this sense, depicted by the interviewees in processual terms. In other words, it is not determined by a single, identifiable Pauline point of radical inner transformation (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989, 1; Spencer 2004, 153). Rather, contemporary conversion to the church appears to be based initially on a process of discovery and then rational calculation of coincident interests; that is, Quakers come to realise an apparent convergence between their personal concerns and the horizons espoused by the church.

Also, in contrast to early Quaker conversion, whereby advocates experienced a thaumaturgical radical re-orientation of early Quakers' worldviews, contemporary Quakers depict their worldview as fundamentally unchanged by the conversion process. Instead, the research participants purposefully match Quaker narratives to their pre-existing worldview. Personal aspirations are framed by affiliates as persisting unchanged after conversion to the Quaker church. In this sense, what count as religious horizons are not felt to be prescribed by the church but are framed in highly individualised terms which pre-date Quaker involvement or even knowledge of the tradition. Patsy said:

You can come to your own conclusions; your own spiritual journey; your individual views are respected; define your own sort of pathway; they do listen, respect and take a positive view on problems; as an individual I can be guided to live a good and positive life; Quakers reinforce that background.

In this sense, contemporary Quaker conversion is not a single event but is a learned process (Collins 2008, 44). Affiliates convert to the Quaker tradition because their horizons are felt to be already matched to those espoused by the collective and are not required by the collective to change them. The interviewees do not claim to learn anew their religious claims but rather learn how far their own perspectives are matched to those espoused by the church collective. In this sense, contemporary conversion to the Quaker church does not entail a death of the old self as experienced by early adherents (Spencer 2004, 153). Annie said that Quaker affiliation *'does help me to sculpt my beliefs but they are my beliefs; they are not Quaker; they are not Quaker beliefs.'* Quaker horizons collectively are thus depicted by affiliates as subordinate to the individualised perspective so that, in Tom's words, *'I could be the same if I weren't a Quaker; what comes first is my mode of being, what comes second is being Quaker.'* Rather, individual horizons are framed as fundamentally unaltered from those held prior to their conversion to the church. Affiliates aver that the church influences how individual horizons are understood and expedited but they assert that these horizons are only affirmed not caused by Quaker conversion.

3.4 A familiar Christian alternative

The research participants are not naïve entrants into the church and tend typically to have personal knowledge of at least one other church tradition (Collins 2002, 90). This conceptualisation of Quakers as a tradition well informed about how Christianity is organised is borne out by my research. The interviewees point to their experience of the Christian tradition when depicting their religious worldviews. This experience might be

direct and highly involved. Dinah had been involved in the Catholic Society at university and was, for a decade, chairperson of her local parish council. Other Quakers were less directly involved with churches but expressed an awareness and appreciation of the Christian tradition which provided a context for their conversion. Donna had said that, *'I was brought up in a Christian way I don't think I appreciated until I came to Quakers.'* Howsoever Quakers have been connected to Christian churches, affiliates claim an appreciation of Christianity prior to affiliation and this recognition frames their interest in converting to the Quaker church.

The research participants tend to have an appreciation of other Christian churches through first-hand experience. In particular, they reported familiarity with Presbyterian, Baptist and Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and 'Anglo Catholic' churches. Of the twenty interviewees, eight affiliates reported direct participation in the processes of a single church prior to Quaker affiliation. Four affiliates had participated successively in at least two religious organisations prior to their Quaker conversion and two Quakers reported serial affiliation with several religious institutions prior to converting to the church although they did not specify an exact number. *'I don't think there is a faith tradition,'* said Colin, *'whose door I haven't knocked upon at some point.'* Additionally, the research participants had also participated in Buddhist and humanist groups and as well as practising transcendental meditation. Participation in, and an appreciation of other religious traditions contributes to the Quaker conversion processes. Eventually, the Quaker affiliates' appraisal of other belief traditions frames affiliation to these

alternatives as sub-optimal and the Quaker church is depicted by affiliates in more personally suitable terms.

Whilst the research participants convert to the church, its perceived Christian context is also framed in familiar terms. In this sense, the Quaker participants' conversion is not a neutral process. Rather, 'the total environment of religious change' is intimately influenced by the social context within which conversion is lived out (Rambo and Farhadian 1999, 24-5). From this perspective, conversion cannot be divorced from the influence of the cultural context within which the convert is embedded (Sremac 2010, 8). In this sense, the interviewees' conversion is portrayed by affiliates as a move within familiar Christian conceptualisations of what counts as religion. This familiarity is framed by the research participants as facilitating their investigation of religious contexts within the perceived Christian church tradition and eventual, Quaker, conversion. Maddy stated that she had '*tried out*' the Methodists and the Church of England. She had also been actively involved with the Buddhists, '*more esoteric spiritual stuff*' as well as being '*in the spiritual wilderness for a decade*'. She continued:

One of the reasons that I turned away from the Buddhists, because it was Tibetan Buddhism, is that I do have a sense that I am a Western European person; and that's my heritage and that's the world I move in...and therefore a tradition which also emanates from similar places, which is from Christianity; it just seems to me to be more authentic way for me to access it; having been brought up in the Church of England...Christianity has always been something that's always been there.

In terms of the Quaker conversion process, the cohort do not radically alter their worldview by affiliating with the church. Nor do they move from a fundamentally alternative religious context. Rather, the research participants convert to a church

enterprise which they deem to suit their mundane interests but which is not fundamentally different from their religious and cultural experience. In this sense, conversion is an ongoing appraisal of the perceived appropriateness of Christianity to their religious enterprise.

Affiliation to the church is the eventual outcome at the end of the research participants' appraisal process. Jo-Jo had been to '*different denominations*' but had settled at the Quaker church. '*I was talking at one point of going to the Methodist church, you know, just rotate it,*' Jo-Jo said, '*but to be honest, I prefer the Quakers.*' The Quaker converts in this sense are itinerants who map their experience of Christianity against Christian church alternatives but they finally reject the option of converting to other belief traditions in favour of the Quaker church. In the next section, I depict how Quaker categories of affiliation facilitate this conversion process.

3.5 Categories of Quaker church affiliation

The research participants describe the church membership categories in permissive and highly individualised terms. They aver that the church and its structures facilitate an individualised conceptualisation of the organisation: the church does not prescribe belief for its affiliates. In this sense, the Quaker church is depicted by affiliates in terms alternative to other Christian churches insofar as it is framed as a 'priesthood of all believers' (Quaker Faith and Practice 2016b). In other words, the Quaker church is a gathering of those who share the belief that religious insight is primarily a matter of individual acuity. In this claimed alternative sense, the individual rather than the church

collective is seen as the interlocutor of the divine (Quakers in Britain 2016a). The church and its processes are not viewed as a mediator between the mundane and the immanent: anyone can attend Quaker Meeting for Worship and its processes are framed as open to all (Quakers in Britain 2016a).

In this sense, Quakers see the tradition as accommodating differences between individual religious claims, a perspective which accords with Dandelion's theologically pluralistic conceptualisation of the church (1996, 133; 2007, 134). Dandelion argues that differences of belief are not only accommodated within the church but framed as normative by the collective (2007, 152). Dandelion (2007) frames this liberal tolerance of diverse beliefs as an orthodoxy which binds together individuals within the contemporary tradition (1996, 100). This normative view of the tradition is supported in the research whereby the interviewees not only espouse individualised liberal perspectives but also frame this diversity in orthodox terms. Roger said:

That's the great thing about Quakerism; we all have different approaches to things; put thirty Quakers in a room and ask them what they believe you will get at least thirty different answers.

In this sense, difference between individualised perspectives is normalised and this perception of difference appears to be how these Quakers frame what they hold in common with each other. Instead, what unifies this individualisation of beliefs within the church apparently rests on affiliates' espousal of a Quaker claim to be Quaker. This Quaker claim to be Quaker supports Dandelion's conceptualisation of the group which is not united in terms of affiliates espousal of a coherent collective theology but which is 'held together by *how* it believes' (2007, 152).

In this united sense, the Quaker participants do not claim collective theological coherence (Dandelion 2008, 37; Scully 2008, 110). Instead, how Quakers believe is reflected in affiliates' perception of church membership and, in particular, how it facilitates a highly individualised claim to a unified Quaker enterprise. In other words, I suggest that the converts to the contemporary church are also held together by why they affiliate to the liberal church. Church membership structures are understood to support individualised conceptualisations of the religious enterprise which also do not require a fundamental re-orientation of their collectively defined and collectively prescribed worldview. Rather, as there is no fixed and settled corporate construction of what counts as Quaker, this thesis argues that affiliates' perspectives persist post-conversion. This individualised construction of the contemporary tradition is facilitated by the bifurcated church membership categories.

Quakers in the research were not asked explicitly to state their category of affiliation. I attempted not to anticipate categories of affiliation on behalf of participants 'paying attention not to what experts decide to be the "objective properties", but to the meanings and views of the subjects to be understood' (Alvesson 2011, 24). Participants depicted affiliation in terms of 'member' and 'attender' categories. Five Quakers explicitly referred to themselves as 'members' and nine Quakers referred to themselves as 'attenders'. Six Quakers did not explicitly identify their relationship to the Quaker church in exclusive terms of being either a 'member' or an 'attender'. In the next section, I explore how Quakers depict church affiliation in terms of 'member' or 'attender' and suggest that

Quakers declared affiliation is framed as an individualised alternative to mainstream Christian traditions.

3.5.1 Declared membership

In the Quaker church, members are framed corporately as individuals who are in agreement with the movement's principles and are willing to make a formal and public commitment to the aims of the group. This category is depicted in corporate terms in *Quaker Faith and Practice* a book which 'attempts to express Truth through the vital personal and corporate experience of Friends' (Quaker Faith and Practice 2016a). However, this orthodox classification of affiliation in terms of declared church membership is framed by affiliates in terms alternative to those espoused by mainstream Christian organisations. Membership of the Quaker church, from this perspective, is regarded by affiliates as a loose category of affiliation. It is not framed as differentiating members from non-members theologically. In Luke's words, the Quaker church was a '*DIY religion*' which is not organised by a professional class of administrators. In this sense, it does '*let you in for a lot of commitment*' and responsibilities '*which could be shared around a bit more*'. Rather, Quakers see involvement in church affairs as a matter for individual discretion rather than a function of a declared category of membership. Membership, in this sense, is an individually-defined category in terms of belief as well as the extent to which affiliates participate in formal church practices.

The process of application for, and church approval of, declared Quaker church membership is idiosyncratic to the church. By idiosyncratic I mean that processes of application for membership are peculiar to both the particular applicant and to the local Quaker group. *Quaker Faith and Practice* states that:

An individual, of any age, becomes a member of their area meeting, and through it of Britain Yearly Meeting, by a simple process agreed and adopted by the area meeting. Variety and flexibility in procedures are needed to reflect individual and local circumstances. Each area meeting will develop one or more of such procedures. Guidance on current procedures used by various area meetings can be obtained from the Recording Clerk. (*Quaker Faith and Practice*, 2016, Chapter 11.4).

According to J William Frost, 'local meetings are practically autonomous' (2013, 90).

Thus, it is committees of local Quaker volunteers, working at the local level, which determine how applications for declared membership are processed and, therefore, how this category of affiliation is constitutive of the Quaker church.

Formal application for membership tends to follow a period of attendance at the local Quaker MfW. During this period of attendance, the Quaker affiliates appraise the tradition and, in particular, assess whether and how far the espoused horizons of the church are aligned with their own perspectives. Gina:

felt a continuity between my beliefs and those of the Quakers; during time when I was away from the church, I wanted to belong still to the church community; started going to their meetings and eventually found I was no longer on the periphery; no longer felt like I didn't belong to a religious community; and just carried on going there.

The decision to declare affiliation by applying for membership is initiated by the individual would-be member. It is pursued by the affiliates once they are convinced that

personal horizons and those espoused by the church are comfortably matched. Annie said, *'I will eventually (become a member); I am sure if I went and asked the clerk can I be a member, she'd say, "yeah, sure". I haven't done that. Yeah. She'll probably ask me one of these days.'* Gina said that: *'I was an attender for a few years and joined as an obligatory measure to help the statistics (and a) need to nail my colours to the mast.'* In other words, the reasoned rather than a divinely inspired judgement of the individual is framed by affiliates as tending to be at the centre of the membership enterprise. In this sense, declared membership is not a simple category. Rather, it illuminates the contradictions which have persisted in the church since its inception with regard to how far the collective religious project can be pursued individually (Punshon 2004, 33). Whilst the research participants advocate a direct relationship with the divine, why individuals openly define their relationship to the collective setting is difficult to clearly determine. However, the interviewees do not appear to be concerned to construct exclusive boundaries between their church affiliation and those of other religious entities. This inclination towards inclusivity is explored in the next sections where the declared membership category of affiliation is depicted in contrast to the classification of a Quaker 'attender'.

3.5.2 Church attenders

Attender is a popular category of affiliation in the Quaker church. In the research, nine out of twenty affiliates explicitly cited 'attender' when framing their engagement with the church collective. Attender is, however, an ambiguous category in terms of affiliation. Dean was an attender because *'it was my wife who decided she wanted to get*

involved'. He felt that it was not easy to talk to people in local Quaker meeting but through continued attendance had felt connected to the meeting. Dean said '*I've got roped into various rotas over the years, tea, coffee, outreach and so on.*' This involvement included practical help with the local Meeting for Worship as well as taking part in events to render accessible the Quaker tradition beyond the church setting.

'Attender' is a self-defined category of affiliation. It is assumed by the individual through attendance at Quaker MfW. Quakers do not apply to become attenders. Rather, by participation in the church processes but not declaring formally for membership, 'attendership' is assumed by the individual and the collective. In this sense, 'attender' describes those affiliates who are not formally declared Quaker members but visibly participate in its church processes.

Attenders are regarded by these affiliates as *de facto* members of the Quaker church. In this sense, attenders feel able to take part fully in local church processes. '*You can be very active as an attender,*' said George, '*contribute a lot.*' However, attenders do not hold a system of beliefs which affiliates see as distinctive from those held by declared members. So, whilst the church privileges individualised interpretations of the Quaker tradition, the categories of attender and member are not regarded by affiliates as differentiating affiliates in terms of belief. The church, thus, apparently still regards the individual as the centre of the religious enterprise irrespective of their class of affiliation. The affiliate is also at liberty to claim affiliation with or without collective sanction.

3.5.3 The heterodoxy of attendership

Attendership is reported by the Quakers participants as an interregnum or intermediate phase in their Quaker conversion. 'Attending,' said Tom, 'was a *finding out stage*' before deciding later to apply formally for membership. In this sense, attender status is seen by affiliates as an interregnum between discovering the church and formally applying for and declaring their membership. Attenders are, thus, implicitly regarded by the church as potential members or as members-in-waiting and attender status is, inferentially, a pause in their religious enterprise.

Attender status allows these affiliates to procrastinate with regard to formally declared membership. In this sense, attender status is a positive choice insofar as the affiliates elect at least temporarily not to pursue formally declared association with the Quaker church. Deferment of membership is depicted as possible in the church without compromise and this construction of the church process tends to facilitate in the view of attenders an arms' length engagement with the corporate church. Attender status is thus an evaluative stage in the formal, religious enterprise from within the church. These grounds for delay, however, are not framed uncritically by the research participants in terms of how the Quaker movement is constituted. Dean framed his decision to remain an attender as '*an excuse to put off membership*'. He said:

I find that I welcome the silence-based worship of Quakerism; though that in itself creates a bit of an issue for me; I'm not a member of the Society of Friends; I'm an attender; if I ever did go through the process of being a member...one issue that I think I'd have to think through...is within the Society of Friends in Britain, I can feel quite comfortable...with the style of worship that I encounter; but I am aware that if I went to some friends' meeting in some parts of Africa or America, I would encounter something very different; I would guess more like the kind of evangelicalism that I have run away from; and for me that is a bit of a problem.

In this sense, interviewees aver, individual doubts about the church and further formal commitment to the collective Quaker enterprise are maintained by attenders. Attenders can continue to learn about the group and fulfil the role of the convert from within whilst undertaking an appraisal of the church (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989, 6) However, participation within the church is maintained in these circumstances as ‘there is little pressure to change one’s status’ (Frost 2013, 90). Thus, the attender category allows conspicuous participation in church processes whilst individual theological beliefs can be maintained inconspicuously. In this sense, perspectives implicitly critical or even oppositional to what counts as Quaker corporately can be maintained undeclared through attender status.

Insofar as the interviewees choose to remain attenders, the status is framed by affiliates as a category of affiliation alternative to membership. Application for formal membership is not only deferred, it is also framed by the research participants as a *de facto* alternative category to formally declared membership of the church. Trudi stated:

I can first say that I am not a Quaker. I mean, you are aware of this? I am a Quaker attender. OK? You know? I am in the book. I'm in the blue book with a big A: Attender.

Whilst the research participants frame attendership as a category from within which the church can be eternally explored, there is also an implication within this conceptualisation that formal declared membership is a category from which one cannot turn back. Moreover, attender status is also regarded as a category to which Quakers cannot return once formal membership has been undertaken. ‘*You have got to be sure,*’ said George, ‘*when you become one, you are going to stay one*’. Attendership is thus

framed as a self-defined, potentially perpetual category of affiliation where affiliates' church participation often mirrors that of members. It is also a formal category from where, implicitly, commitment to the church can be forever deferred. This processual and ambiguous conceptualisation of affiliation to the Quaker church suggests a liquidity in its practice and imagination (Collins and Dandelion 2014). In the next section, I explore in Snow and Machelek's (1983) terms how this liquidity can be categorised.

3.6 Quakers as alternators

The interviewees' conversion differs from Snow and Machelek's (1983) conversion typology. In this research, affiliates' horizons after affiliation remain fundamentally unaltered. There is no depiction of a new self in this portrayal of Quaker conversion. (1983, 265). Affiliates' worldviews do not undergo a fundamental change (Snow and Machalek 1983, 265; Carrothers 2007, 134). Instead, the research participants adopt a Quaker descriptor which they see as encapsulating their individual perspective.

Quaker conversion, in processual and individualised terms, matches an alternator typology insofar as affiliates do not espouse a radical and divinely inspired transformation of their worldview. Snow and Machelek argue that, in terms of their ideal typology, converts' primary motivation draw upon a declared new 'root reality' and in this sense, is founded upon a new conceptualisation of the world (Snow and Machelek 1983, 265). This new identity, they argue, is based upon a reconstruction of one's biography in the light of adopting a 'master attribution' lens, through which, the world is now viewed (1983, 266). The new role of the convert is now framed as pre-eminent in

all social situations and, in this sense, past conceptualisations and behaviours are newly regarded as erroneous (1983, 269). The world is viewed from one particular, new perspective and 'interpretive options are thus inhibited' (1983, 270).

Snow and Machelek also depict conversion to a different religious perspective in terms alternative to this ideal typology. This alternative category of conversion is termed alternation (Snow and Machelek 1983, 265; Carrothers 2007, 134). Converts who claim a new religious perspective in these terms do not experience a radically altered perspective through which they view the world. Rather, alternation is a form of conversion which is practically convenient for the convert (Carrothers 2007, 134). The convert as alternator has other, secondary motivations for church affiliation whereby they actively compare the situational benefits of collective association for the individual (Carrothers 2007, 134). In contrast to ideal type conversion, alternation does not disrupt individuals' existing worldview but rather is more-or-less goal-orientated (Carrothers 2007, 135). Personal transformation is not an aspiration for the alternator. Whereas 'the convert changes intrinsic beliefs, alters his/her root reality', the alternator's goal is a practical alignment of personal and church horizons at the everyday level (Carrothers 2007, 135).

Conversion from this alternating perspective is an individualised process of choosing between platforms of belief (Pilarzyk 1978, 388). Alternators then order and re-organise everyday life within these alternate, newly adopted systems of meaning (Pilarzyk 1978, 388). However, 'it is believed the converts have undertaken a radical change in their

self-concept and religious identity, whereas the alternator will report little change along either variable' (Carrothers 2007, 135). In other words, alternators tend to experience little inward change when shifting between institutional contexts. They participate in organisational processes for reasons other than a primary motivation of a radical personal transformation although, in an observational sense, it appears that their espoused aims are shared with those claimed by the collective.

The object of alternation is the alignment of individual horizons with those espoused by the organisation rather than with the claimed primary goals of the collective (Carrothers 2007, 140). Alternators in this paradigm tend to be pragmatic in their social practice. They select organisations whose horizons appear to fit their own and which do not disrupt their existing worldviews. Alternation therefore depicts how horizons are employed within and between organisational contexts. Snow and Machelek also argue that personal changes are not 'unidimensional' (1984, 170). In other words, alternation and conversion are both types of personal change. Although it is difficult to be exact about the difference between what counts as conversion or a fundamental shift in personal perspectives (Snow and Machelek, 169), it is the primary motivation for conversion which distinguishes it from alternation (Carrothers 2007, 138-9).

The research participants' personal horizons are framed by affiliates as transcending the prescriptive tendencies of organised churches and they privilege an individualised, unmediated connection with the divine. Within this paradigm, personal experience remains a primary authority (Dandelion, 2007) and, thus, what emerges as Quaker is

framed by converts in highly individualised terms. In this sense, conversion is regarded by affiliates as influential but is not framed as primary within their worldview. The interviewees claim that conversion confers a new perspicacity upon affiliates and a new coherence between their former and present worldview. Maddy declared:

I think what being involved with Quakers has done for me; it's been like, kind of, like wearing glasses really; I think of before as like not having my glasses on; there is always stuff and it's blurry; and I know that it is there but I don't know what it is; and I put on my glasses which is exposure to Quaker ideas and people who are Quakers and how they deal with things...Quakers brought a lot of it into focus for me and continue to.

In this sense, the research participants perceive these perspectives which constitute the new self in terms fundamentally undifferentiated from their former self-concept. They understand the world after conversion with new perspicacity but this acumen is framed as a refinement of their older and continuing views. Rather than typical conversion whereby individuals' worldviews are radically altered upon conversion towards a new reality (Snow and Machelek 1983, 265), the Quakers in my research are categorised as alternators who 'experimentally' appraise socio-religious contexts in provisionally appropriate terms (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989, 5).

Kilbourne and Richardson (1989) suggest that processes of conversion can be categorised in 'experimental' terms. 'Experimental sampling', according to Kilbourne and Richardson (1989) is a process of 'trying out' other faiths. 'This type of conversion is characterised by a "try it out" or "show me" attitude, and by a priority to consummate the conversion experience in a group setting' (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989:5). Conversion in this sense is not a Pauline sudden and dramatic inward response to

external events which mark a 'before and after' life transition (Richardson 1985; Kilbourne and Richardson, 1989). Rather, Richardson (1989) terms these cumulative affiliation patterns 'conversion careers' which are characterised by 'sequential identity quests' (1989:6). In this thesis, attenders are framed as converts in this experimental sense (Richardson, 1980).

The research participants thus frame their fundamental horizons as transposed into a church setting. This church setting is seen as rooted in, but also alternative to, Christian mainstream institutions with which they are familiar. The espoused liberal and permissive horizons of the church are claimed by affiliates to fundamentally match their own. Dinah said:

I do want to continue on that journey; I do think a lot about it, and that's what Quakers do, you know; I do want to pursue my beliefs, my faith and all that goes with it; there is continuity in that I still believe in the same God; inspired by Jesus Christ and his teachings; the bit that changes is the approach and the dogma of Catholicism; so there is continuity in the fundamentals and the belief, but the approach really is very different; and I am much more comfortable with the approach we have now.

In this sense, as religious alternators, 'conversion does not cause converts to discard their former belief systems, suspend analogical reasoning or displace previously important identities, it just causes them to "have religion".' (Carrothers 2007, 146). Through their self-defined affiliation, the Quaker participants are able to thus 'have religion' on highly individualised terms alternative to those which they perceive as prescribed by collective church authorities.

The research participants seek to 'have religion' (Carrothers, 2007) on terms alternative to the organised church constructions of Christianity with which they are familiar. They embark on an enterprise of comparative appraisal of belief traditions and tend to discover by chance the Quaker church drawing upon their experience of Christian traditions. Attenders as experimental converts (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989) 'try out' the church prior to affiliation. In this sense, the participants' conversion also fits Richardson's (1985) depiction of the process whereby organisational alternatives can be sampled and appraised by would-be affiliates. The Quaker *manqué*, in Richardson's terms, has often already in other religious contexts, undertaken a series of 'affiliative and disaffiliative acts which constitute a conversion career' (1985:172). Conversion in this sense is thus framed in terms of social relationships, according to Richardson (1985) as new affiliates experiment with the role of the convert amongst other church members within the new setting.

3.7 A re-imagined Christian home

The contemporary Quaker conversion process is also framed by the interviewees in metaphorical terms as a religious journey. They portray the purpose of their journey metaphorically as seeking a home where their horizons are shared within the church setting. These horizons are not framed by affiliates as corporately prescribed by the Quaker church. They are depicted in individualised terms which align with the horizons of the Quaker collective. Donna said:

I was looking for some spiritual; somewhere I could explore that; well one of my priorities was looking for spiritual life and somewhere I could be openly gay; there seemed very few organisations on offer and Quakers were the one; no creeds, a lot of emphasis on your own spiritual journey; but what Quakerism

does have is a series of testimonies; so for me, that was really fundamental, the link between testimonies and practice, and Quakers came up with the goods on that; so it was a really impressive state of affairs; sexuality was fundamental in my choice of actually coming here.

Conversion is also framed by affiliates as an arrival, as optimal and more specifically as 'coming home'. Affiliation to the Quaker church is claimed to be the culmination of their personal journey of seeking. Prior to Quaker conversion, Jack had been attending services in a mainstream church. *'There was a little advert in the local paper about an open day at a Quaker meeting,'* he said. *'So I went along. It just felt like coming home.'* Annie had been raised in the Catholic tradition but saw it as *'just a cultural thing.'* Affiliation for Annie was *'a really comfortable shoe; it fitted on a lot of different dimensions instantly; there wasn't any edges there.'* Dinah had been an active member of the local Catholic church and *'Catholicism wasn't challenging me...it sounds trite; it probably is trite,'* she said, *'but if I could have designed my own religion, I think I would have designed Quakers.'* Conversion to the Quaker church, then, can be seen as an optimal destination in affiliates' ambulatory religious project. Belief traditions are successively appraised during a conversion process and Quaker affiliation is framed eventually as an optimum and homely good fit.

The Quaker church is regarded by the affiliates as embedded within a Christian social context and tends to be framed as more or less aligned to affiliates' understanding of the Christian tradition. However, the contemporary Quaker tradition frames the concept of 'truth' as progressive and its affiliates are continually open to new light (Dandelion 2007, 130). In this sense, some Quaker participants had to realign their assumptions

about the Christian doctrinal basis of the church upon conversion. Jo-Jo stated that '*I expected Quakers to be like George Fox and I was a bit taken aback when I found out you could be an atheist; you don't have to believe in Jesus Christ.*' Luke also found a dissonance between his conceptualisation of Christianity and how Quakers often imagined the Christian. This misalignment was seen initially perplexing for him. Luke said:

Well, you see, coming from a mainstream Christian background...I'd always taken it for granted that Quakerism was a branch of mainstream Christianity because that was my understanding of how it originated; I was taken aback at the beginning, I mean I have come to understand it and very largely to have shared some of it.

In the context of affiliates' conversion, this research supports Dandelion's conceptualisation of the liberal tradition. Conversion, in this liberal and continual sense, is framed by affiliates as never fully realised or even as realisable. As Quakers are not tied to a particular doctrine, nor are they tied to the group or its corporate worldview, 'truth' in traditional Christian terms is re-imagined as finally unknowable and the group is 'potentially forever on the move' (Dandelion 2007, 133).

3.8 A liberating church

As a category alternative to formal membership and the corporate Quaker church, attender status is cast by affiliates as liberating. Attender status in the Quaker church allows affiliates to set out invisibly the terms upon which they engage with the church. The liberal and inclusive Quaker church does not require affiliates to subscribe to a particular dogma or creed (Collins 2008, 38). Opacity in terms of privatised individual horizons is collectively tolerated. In this sense, there is also no requirement by the

church collective for affiliates to declare aspects of their beliefs. The attender category facilitates a toleration of ambiguity behind the privatised 'mask of silence' (Dandelion 1996, 259). The church can be openly explored by attenders who are free to play the role of converts but are also free to keep their horizons private and aligned with the church on individualised terms. Quakers cast this contemporary construction of the church in liberating terms especially relative to that offered by mainstream Christian alternatives.

James still attended Anglican services but found the Christian orthodoxy prescribed by the church as oppressive. He said:

I am surrounded by people who believe in certain things, many of which I don't believe any more; and who express in ways which mean absolutely nothing to me...

However, since affiliating with the Quaker church, James had begun to understand conformity within the mainstream church context as prejudicial to her religious enterprise. James stated:

If a Quaker asked me whether I was a Christian, I would have to say I am not sure; it depends on what you mean by Christian; to talk about that to Anglicans would be too disturbing and frightening for them; to have a discussion with somebody about their faith and church would be quite difficult; for them it's a comfort thing.

The Quaker religious enterprise is also cast by affiliates as ongoing irrespective of their institutional affiliation. James remarked that:

She's a Quaker, and I'm a Quaker but we have completely different, opposing views; I want to be in a place where you can ask questions about your faith and you don't have to stay in that place; as a human being, you grow, move all the time; and I want to do that in my faith.

In this sense, the participants' impetus to pursue their vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61) is framed as primary and it is perceived as transcending prescription by organised churches. Apostasy by the individual religious enterprise regarding organised church doctrine is gainsaid in these terms. Affiliates' religious enterprise is thus not only continual but also transient. It transcends particular church contexts between which it can shift potentially eternally (Dandelion 2007, 130). What counts as the religious enterprise, in this sense, is cast in highly individual terms as shifting between optimum contexts whilst the church organisation in contrast is framed by the research participants as a provisional institution to which they are provisionally and, therefore, temporarily, affiliated.

3.9 Boundary-less conversion

In this shifting sense, the interviewees tend to see conversion to the church theologically as more or less without boundaries. Dandelion avers that the collective does not impose high demands on affiliates' participation in terms of belief (1996, 264). He argues that the beliefs which the church espouse are 'a-theological' or 'anti-theological' in Christian terms (1996, 264). He also writes that inclusive claims of the church eschew well-defined boundaries of organisational membership (1996, 275). Instead, Dandelion identifies an organisationally affirmed neo-orthodoxy around a 'non-credal' belief system (Dandelion, 266). In this sense, the modern liberal church conforms to Collins and Dandelion's (2014) liquid conceptualisation of the church. The tradition demarcates few discriminating boundaries between the contemporary Quaker church and other belief traditions. However, I suggest that the research participants

regard this permissiveness as liberating and that organisationally prescribed boundaries are not pertinent to how they pursue their individualised religious enterprise. Colin averred that:

(I) find myself just being glad that I inhabit the skin and the life that I inhabit; being grateful, feeling blessed, feeling delighted to be who I am, living the life that I live...I think that's one of the things I like most about Quakers; is that explicit freedom...this realisation that, with regard to spirituality, you can't really do it wrongly...you only have your personal perspective.

The contemporary Quaker church thus facilitates the interviewees' individualised religious enterprise. Affiliates are liberated from having to align their beliefs publicly with the church's horizons in order to claim Quaker affiliation. Moreover, the contemporary church tradition allows individual perspectives to be held in tension with the corporate collective. The contestation of corporate Quaker positions is thus not perceived by affiliates as a religious heterodoxy. Rather, the individual adoption of alternative and oppositional positions is also framed by affiliates as a liberal Quaker orthodoxy. Roger said: *'I have a view on the peace testimony that not all Quakers would share but that's the great thing about Quakerism; we all have different approaches to things.'* Quaker conversion, then, is cast by the affiliates as liberating because it allows a re-framing individually of what counts as Quaker without perceived organisational circumscription. Affiliates can select experientially what works for them rather than what is theologically or organisationally consistent (Scully 2008, 109). As Colin said:

It's one of the things I like most about Quakers, is that explicit freedom; some years ago, I had this realisation that with regard to spirituality, you can't really do it wrongly; you can't understand God wrongly; you only have your own perspective; I think Quakers are searching; Quakers is appealing because you don't have to leave the tent to have a look along a different drive.

The Quaker church then can be framed as not one religious institution but as a kaleidoscopic post-modern conceptualisation of a religious tradition (Collins 2008, 38). Its privileging of individualised interpretations lends it to potentially multiple, even mutually contradictory conceptualisations of the contemporary tradition which, because they are privatised, are not viewed as collectively inconsistent. The church is constructed by the affiliates as an entity which liberates the convert from prescribed conceptualisations of what constitutes a religious tradition. In this sense, the Quaker church is not only an alternative to mainstream Christian churches but is framed by the interviewees as an alternative form of religious organisation. Its construction is regarded as liberating the affiliate from organisational prescription. Boundaries of belief are re-imagined as individualised, fluid and ongoing terms so that '*doing it wrongly*', in Colin's terms, becomes a non-sequitur.

Differences between personal theologies and those of the church are framed as coherent from the individual's point of view. This perspective accords with the view of the contemporary Quaker church as a moral collage (Scully 2008, 108). In Scully's terms, there is no Quaker orthodoxy in terms of an organisationally sanctioned correct way of understanding or performing what counts as the religious enterprise. Rather, individualised ideas represent a provisional and individualised best way to understand God. Quaker affiliates tend not to seek theoretical consistency, as Scully observed, but privileged 'what "seemed right"... using concepts and symbols that unite Friends' moral understanding with elements of their religious lives' (2008, 110). Collectively, Quaker constructions of their tradition can be framed as a collage of individual perspectives

framed by affiliates as contingent to the tradition (Scully 2008, 114). In this permissive sense, parameters of what counts as Quaker are wide and 'are tied to nothing in terms of doctrine, to no particular text, no particular rendering of the tradition' (Dandelion 2007, 133). The Quaker church thus franchises an individualised exploration of the religious enterprise which, in terms of belief and practice, carries few if any corporately defined sanctions.

Through self-defined affiliation, the research participants claim licence to seek meaning experimentally as Quakers both within the contemporary church and other belief traditions. From a Quaker perspective, the church is framed in broad and individualised rather than narrowly in organisational and exclusive terms. The interviewees feel that their liberal vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61) is an agglomeration of individualised views. Moreover, Quaker affiliation also permits a fluid and provisional conceptualisation of the religious enterprise so that affiliates, in Colin's words, can '*leave the tent to have a look along a different drive*'. Thus, the research participants can still 'have religion' (Carrothers 2007, 146) even if, or even because, they explore other belief traditions. The fluidity of the individualised liberal Quaker tradition facilitates a continuation, and continual re-conceptualisation, of the affiliates' vision quest without having to relinquish their individual Quaker claims.

From under this fluid and provisional canopy, Quakers can leave the church intermittently, temporarily or permanently in order to pursue their individualised religious project. In this sense, these affiliates are liberated by the Quaker tradition from having to

construct perceived organisational boundaries exclusively around their enterprise.

Rather, the liberal church permits the affiliates to move amongst other spiritual traditions whilst maintaining their Quaker claims. Colin said:

I joined the society because I realised I am Quaker; it's not like I became female, I am female; I try to match my life to my god space, my deepest most essential space; I am sure I was like that before I joined the Society; but patterns of relationships within the society encourage more awareness of that.

The research participants depict their affiliation as a continuance of their religious enterprise which can also be pursued beyond the Quaker church. In this sense, Quakers' enterprise has not necessarily ended with their church affiliation but is continually provisional and unending. This individualised, liberal and permissive project is, through the Quaker lens, polymorphous. In other words, the liberal Quaker tradition which frames the religious enterprise in partial and provisional terms (Dandelion 2008, 35) can be realised within and pass through many different organisational forms. This organisationally polymorphic journey is thus seen by affiliates as licensed by the liberal church which allows affiliates to transpose and match the individualised conceptualisation of belief to other contexts simultaneously with their Quaker affiliation.

3.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have based my analysis on a salient finding of the study; that is, the research participants are typically incomers into the church. I have thus explored why affiliates have come to engage with the Quaker movement. In particular, I have contrasted contemporary with historical conversion. I suggest that the early advocates' church affiliation was based on claims of radical personal conversion. The research

participants, on the contrary, do not claim that affiliation to the church has fundamentally altered their worldviews. Rather, their affiliation is founded upon an alignment of unaltered personal, and espoused Quaker church, horizons. I have contended that contemporary Quaker church structures facilitate conversion on these unreformed terms. I argued that the research participants tend to frame the contemporary church tradition in fluid and highly individualised terms. These terms accommodate an ongoing, open-ended view of religious institutional affiliation. In this sense, the Quaker participants frame affiliation to the church as a personally liberating religious enterprise.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE QUAKER CHURCH RE-IMAGINED

4.1 Introduction

Although the research participants have first-hand experience of Christianity, they opt for conversion to the Quaker church and explicitly against converting to mainstream churches. In this chapter, I identify the commonalities which these Quakers express in the decision to convert to the Quaker church and conversely not to affiliate to mainstream Christian traditions. I suggest that Quakers in the cohort are sceptical about the pertinence of Christian scripture, the dogmatic tendencies of Christian churches and their oppressive effects upon congregants. The interviewees, then, are framed in this chapter, not as critical of Christianity but how it is prescribed for believers by mainstream Christian churches. Rather, the research participants advocate a conceptualisation of the religious enterprise which is framed in highly individualised terms. I argue that it is this permissive, in individual terms, and essential conceptualisation of Christianity which affiliates espouse through their conversion. This individualised conceptualisation of the religious project is, however, also framed by some interviewees as incoherent with regard to the aims of the organised Quaker church.

4.2 Opposing mainstream Christianity

The research participants are not naïve migrants into the Quaker church in terms of theology and its practice. They also claim knowledge of other belief traditions which they have acquired prior to their Quaker affiliation (Collins 2002, 90). In this sense, this

thesis concurs with Peter Collins' perspective insofar as Quakers in the study are mainly incomers from other belief traditions and that their affiliation is framed in relation to mainstream Christian churches. Tom depicted how he had '*played around with other kinds of religion*' but was averse to non-mainstream Christianity and '*having to get into this sort of alien creed.*' He stated:

I am not a Christian but that is what mattered. I didn't want to buy into sort of having to adopt a set of beliefs that belonged to a different culture. And so, although I am not sort identifying myself as straight Christian either, I did come to the realisation, that was what mattered; start from where I was already embedded.

Collins suggests that the contemporary Quaker church is founded in opposition to Anglicanism and its rituals (2002, 90). In this thesis, I assert that these affiliates do not only reject Anglicanism, however. Rather, the contemporary Quaker tradition is understood by affiliates as a fundamental, individualised re-imagination of how mainstream churches prescribe Christianity. In this sense, Quaker affiliates elect to convert to the Quaker collective because it is seen to support this claimed radical and highly individualised re-conceptualisation of the Christian enterprise.

The Quaker church is represented in Christian terms, according to the interviewees, and, because it is seen as recognisably Christian, affiliates deem it more easily accessible. '*It all comes down to ease of access,*' said Maddy, '*and Christianity then is more pertinent.*' Conversion to the Quaker church, then, is a process whereby the research participants' conceptualisation of Christianity is re-familiarised in a new social context. In this sense, I frame Quaker conversion in institutional terms as 'switching' (Perrin and Maus 1991, 98). In other words, these affiliates have not converted to a

substantially unfamiliar church but sought out familiar religious landscapes 'that are quite close to former ones' (Perrin and Mauss 1991, 98). So, whilst affiliates are incomers to the Quaker church they do not see themselves as incomers to a context which supports Christian perspectives.

In this sense, the interviewees are not only 'switchers' to the church but 'switchers' from other belief traditions. Their Quaker church affiliation is framed in relation to Christianity as it is presented by mainstream Christian churches. In this sense, Christianity is framed as influential in their self-concept. As Colin said, '*I have taken Christian concepts that I grew up with, and my life and experience has coloured them.*' The interviewees' relationship to Christianity is not painted by affiliates in neutral terms, however. Rather, the affiliates understand Christianity in terms critically alternative to those which mainstream churches espouse. These alternative conceptualisations are specified in opposition to the mainstream Christian churches. Gina said that she:

became disillusioned with Christianity and Christian belief that I was familiar with; didn't really believe in eschatological aspects of heaven and hell; the divinity, the trinity; also the authority of the Bible; OK as a rule of ethics but a lot of the stories I believe simply as stories; points of Christian doctrine became less important than how I was living as a Christian.

In this sense, the research participants are oppositional to how Christianity is constructed by mainstream churches. By framing mainstream Christian churches as misconstruing the concept, affiliates also juxtapose the liberal Quaker tradition in essential terms. In the next sections, I categorise how the Quaker participants re-conceptualise Christianity and how they re-imagine the Quaker church in alternative and essential terms.

4.2.1 Christian scripture

The research participants tend to frame Christian scripture as pertinent to their religious enterprise. However, Christian scripture is not depicted as the word of God or as historically authentic. Quaker participants do not espouse the Bible's primary relevance in their religious understanding. Rather, the affiliates tend to frame the Bible in allegorical terms which can be adapted and interpreted individually within their religious purview. Martin suggested that Christian scripture is '*just a story in an old book*' and Patsy declared she didn't '*believe in original sin, and that was an attraction of Quakers; I see Jesus as a not insignificant prophet, but I wouldn't take it further.*' Luke also depicted Christian scripture as impenetrable and framed its significance in highly qualified terms. He said:

I would declare myself Christian; I would aspire to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ; the bits I have reservations about are all these sort of sacrifice bits and salvation; washed in blood and all this language which I struggle with; the resurrection, I don't know where to put that; and as for the concept of being saved, I literally don't understand that; I never have, actually.

In this sense, the interviewees see Christian scripture as merely potentially relevant and meaningful to their religious enterprise but only in the particular and only insofar as it is subject to individual interpretation. They do not regard scripture as an unadulterated expression of a divine will nor do they regard scripture exclusively as having a monopoly on truth. From this Quaker view, scriptural meaning is neither prescribed nor is fundamental significance attributed exclusively to Christian texts. Rather, the value of scripture is regarded by the affiliates as an individual matter. It is comprehended through the prism of individual experience and its significance cannot be prescribed.

James said that, as an Anglican:

I felt guilty if a line from the Koran meant something to me; It doesn't matter now; Quakers take from everything and everywhere; it's to do with your experience and it was that openness that made me want to dive and experience more of it.

This individualised Quaker conceptualisation of scripture which is open to the idea that texts are not only meaningful through church prescription is contrasted by the affiliates with that of mainstream Christian traditions. Mainstream churches are seen to construct the meaning and significance of Christian scripture in fixed and definable terms on behalf of participants. Scripture in this sense of settled meanings is regarded by the interviewees as imposed upon the congregants non-negotiably by the church collective. In this sense, meaning is seen to be ascribed by mainstream churches and individualised interpretations are thus oppressed in this process. James said:

The set of concepts that he (Jesus) put forward about the way we should live; I think is brilliant and he has got it right; it's the way it should be if everybody aspired to be like that; that's what matters to me, and trying to live that life is extremely difficult; it's quite shocking that people use words and they don't have any idea what they mean.

The research participants believe that Christian scripture has relevance but that significance is pertinent to the individual through their interpretation. Prescriptive forms of Christianity are seen as obscuring essential messages from church congregants who are positioned by mainstream churches as passive participants in the religious process. 'Everyone wants to tell you how to read that book,' said Jo-Jo. Church constructions of Christianity are thus regarded by Quakers as prejudicing Christians' individualised re-imagination of scripture. This re-imagination is framed by the affiliates alternatively in Quaker terms. George stated:

I think I am a Christian; Jesus and Mary's lives, those things don't matter to me any more; it's almost as I am speaking a different language; the bottom line for

me is that the Bible is a collection of experiences, it's not the word of God; it's what some Christians would hang me for if they knew I was saying it.

Thus, the research participants frame mainstream churches as claiming a singular authority to interpret scripture. Moreover, from this Quaker point of view, mainstream Christian churches organisationally claim to prescribe the significance of texts and therefore proscribe its autonomous re-imagination. In this way, meanings are fixed for congregants by mainstream churches who cede individual authority to the collective. Christian scripture in this sense is seen by mainstream churchgoers as 'closed' (Eco 1979, 51) by the religious organisation and the agency of individuals to frame text as re-imaginable in provisional and partial terms is collectively denied. Christian scripture and its embedded messages are thus framed in terms of individualised interpretation by Quakers. From this perspective what counts as meaningful in scripture is dependent on the affiliates' experience and how this shapes their interpretation. In this sense, texts resist 'closure' and 'are quite literally unfinished' (Eco 1979, 49).

4.2.2 Christian church dogma

The research participants do not reject the pertinence of Christianity to their religious worldview and social practice. Rather, the interviewees contest how authoritarian mainstream churches position affiliates through presenting Christianity in prescribed terms. Dinah had been active in the Roman Catholic church as a volunteer. She had '*always been religious*' but became '*a little disillusioned*' and '*it all just started to fall apart*'. She did not frame Christianity as baseless. Rather the churches which, in her opinion, interpreted scripture had become unmoored from the essential aspects of the

Christian tradition. *'I still believe in the same God, inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ,'* she said. However, as a member of the Quaker church, she now preferred *'to find myself the way to God without it being revealed'*. Dinah eventually became estranged from the Catholic church which *'wasn't challenging me'* and from the essentialised form of Christianity within the Catholic church which was disguised within organised, ritual preoccupations.

Dinah believed that her perspective had begun to diverge from that espoused by other Catholic worshippers and clergy and she had begun to question the basis of her Catholic affiliation. A new tabernacle in the church was described to Dinah by one parishioner as *'wonderful'*. *'It was wonderful for him,'* she said, *'but it just makes you think, am I in the right place?'* Continued affiliation with the Catholic church was framed by Dinah as empty of meaning for her and spiritually unsatisfying. Dinah saw Catholic Christianity as an orthodox form of religion that was prescribed by the church and personally unrealisable on these conformist grounds. She said:

I do want to continue on that journey; I do think a lot about it, and that's what Quakers do, you know; I do want to pursue my beliefs, my faith and all that goes with it; there is continuity in that I still believe in the same God; inspired by Jesus Christ and his teachings; the bit that changes is the approach and the dogma of Catholicism; so there is continuity in the fundamentals and the belief, but the approach really is very different; and I am much more comfortable with the approach we have now.

For Dinah, conversion to the Quaker church was framed as a chance to fundamentally re-imagine Christianity on her own individualised terms. She felt that Quaker conversion entailed liberation from oppressive mainstream church constructions of Christianity and facilitated an understanding based on her own experience.

4.2.3 Christian passivity

Mainstream Christian adherents are framed by the research participants as recumbent. They tend to be regarded as followers of mainstream Christian traditions rather than as active interpreters of religious meaning. Churchgoers' participation in the religious process, therefore, is depicted by the interviewees as passive and supine within oppressive mainstream church processes especially in relation to how Quakers are perceived to engage with their church. From this Quaker perspective, Christians do not question fundamentally church doctrine and therefore become accepting of religious belief which is prescribed on their behalf by the collective. James commented:

I found that gradually all the stuff that meant things to me in the Anglican church became obstacles between me and God, they were getting in the way; I found myself saying, why are we talking in the same way to God, why aren't we listening; all the peripheral stuff; I found that it got annoying and it was a relief to go to a Quaker meeting; and sit there and nobody say anything; this is no criticism of church of the people in it; I feel that isn't useful any more; I don't say the words in church any more.

The interviewees depict mainstream Christians' participation as dominated by perceived coterie of interest within ecclesiastical bureaucracies. Christians are seen as participants in church ritual but also as remaining largely ignorant of, or unmoved by, what counts as religious in an essential sense. Moreover, affiliates view mainstream church Christians as acquiescent in the prescription of Christian tropes by organised churches. This perceived acquiescence is contrasted by Quaker research participants with an espoused active and critical lens through which they claim to view Christianity. Jo-Jo said:

I think a lot of people go to church to ease their conscience, and make themselves believe they'll get to heaven just by doing that; but I think there's

more to it; you've got to carry your cross every day; you've got to live that life every day...So that's what drew me in to Quakers originally.

Christian worshippers are also framed as adopting, uncritically and wholly, doctrinal Christian views passed on bureaucratically within the mainstream church tradition. Jack stated: *'The non-judgemental thing was quite a revelation,'* he said. *'No one's telling me what to think. It was quite refreshing to meet a group of people who walked the talk without looking for recognition.'* In contrast, the individualised Quaker religious enterprise is framed by affiliates as enlightened and perspicacious. Maddy suggested that:

I always felt other branches of Christianity were too certain; far too big to be certain about; Sunday mornings, standing up, kneeling down, what has that got to do with God?; churchgoers seem to live their lives in a selfish way, but I will also live as I like all week, as long as I go on Sunday, it's all right; not so much stress on walking the walk as talking the talk; here's what we believe, sign up to it.

The research participants contest organisational constructions of the religious enterprise and re-imagine Christianity within the Quaker church. However, this re-imagination is framed by affiliates as an essentially heterodox conceptualisation of the church tradition. This re-imagination privileges individual, ongoing and essential conceptualisations of Christianity whilst mainstream claims are viewed as organisational pretensions based on errant certainties.

4.2.4 Oppressive Christianity

From the perspective of the research participants, mainstream Christian churches prescribe the boundaries of what counts as Christianity for churchgoers who accept

these terms. In this sense, mainstream churches are also seen to suppress the Christian enterprise. Mainstream churches delineate the religious project and thus prescribe an organisationally sanctioned re-imagination of Christianity in fundamental terms. Boundaries of what counts as essential are also seen by the cohort to reflect institutional priorities rather than liberate the individual religious enterprise. Thus, mainstream church organisations control how Christianity is perceived through organised structures which proscribe contestation by church members. Churches, from this point of view, are seen by these Quakers as oppressive because they conflate the boundaries of the church as an organisation with essential Christianity. The research participants suggest that this conflation of church and Christianity suppresses churchgoers' capacity to re-imagine the Christian concept. George said:

I wouldn't call myself a Christian; so that's a bit of a dilemma; that's what I meant about Christian things, you see; coming from Catholicism, they would say that Christ wasn't just a man; he was also the son of God, he was God; well Quakers say there is something of God in everyone; it's like believing in him as historical figure, as a person who had a big influence on things; the bit I have read seems to imply that there were lots of people like Jesus Christ around at that time; rebelling against the system as it existed then, and for some reason, his ideas were carried on.

In this sense, traditional Christian processes are seen to impose normative organisational conformity upon congregants' conceptualisations of the religious belief. However, the Quakers in the research oppose mainstream church conflation of Christianity with organisational aims.

The research participants claim to disaggregate what they regard as organisationally prescribed Christian tropes by mainstream clerical institutions. Mainstream churches

and Christianity are not seen as identical through Quaker eyes and claims by churches to shared horizons with Christianity in a fundamental sense are contested by the cohort. Moreover, mainstream churches are viewed by the participating Quakers as oppressing the potential of the individual to re-conceptualise Christianity by marginalising uncertainty and contestation as heterodox. Moreover, these Quakers consider that it is only possible to engage with the Christian concept on individualised terms and that engagement is not possible within the oppressively prescriptive terms of mainstream church organisations.

The research participants regard mainstream Christian churches as perpetuating a singular view of Christianity. Individualised and pluralised interpretations of Christian doctrine are not encouraged by mainstream churches. Rather, mysticism in mainstream church ritual is seen by affiliates to be privileged above rational understanding and contestation of Christian meaning. Trudi felt inclined to re-visit an Anglican service after her Quaker conversion. She said:

I thought, I'll go and try that out; it's got a Shorts organ, and again it's got a high church and full sung English mass; I thought, Oh, I'll go along and it'll be wonderful; in one of the pews I can sit quietly and have a little meditation; like you do in Quakers; erm not a bit of it; singing hymns, prayers, incantations; you know, great big book from the Bible; and all coming, three priests, walk down the pews, they putting incense...amazing emotional impact it had; quite surprised about that, but at the same time...could distance myself from it because I could actually see what the, you know, religiosity was working on.

Organisational constructions of essential Christianity are thus framed by the cohort as adverse to the religious enterprise. Moreover, these Quakers are sceptical about how far Christian meaning can be represented institutionally. The research participants

frame organisational representation of meaning as fundamentally misrepresentation and the consequences of misrepresentation are depicted as convenient for organisational interests. Roger had become progressively disillusioned with the teachings of the Catholic church. He said:

(I) read about the life of Jesus and the early Christian church; and the fact that none of this was written down within decades of his life; I couldn't say by this time that Jesus was the second person of the Trinity; couldn't see him as being in any unique sense the son of God.

He understood the Bible only as a historical document. However, he felt that the divinity of Jesus had been re-constructed by the church organisation to support sectional interests. *'That load of men,'* he said, *'all in Rome, had the power, sole exclusive revelation and could determine what the rest of their church believed.'* Roger depicted the objectives of the Catholic church as inessential in these collective terms. He saw the church in practice as fundamentally conflicted and he suffered consequent disillusion with how it employed its offices. *It was 'not possible to stay in the Catholic church and not believe,'* said Roger, *'I needed coherence between my beliefs and the way I was going to live my life.'* In this sense, Christian traditions are viewed by Quakers as conflating essential and organisational concerns, the outcome of which is to marginalise the individual religious project. Jo-Jo had visited mainstream Christian churches but they had found his individualised perspectives *'a bit too radical'*. He said:

If you deviate from that path and say, well actually I don't quite believe in the virgin birth, it's like 'whoa, you just crossed the line there, mate; actually I am going to bring some literature and prove you wrong'; I'm not going to accept that, I can't take that mentality; I think it's rubbish to say, you've got to be a Christian to get to heaven; so that's what drew me to Quakers originally.

Mainstream churches are thus regarded by Quakers in the research as fundamentally oppressive because their organisational structures and temporal concerns resist an individualised re-imagination of the Christian concept. Organisations are framed by participants in the study as preoccupied with constructing a fixed and settled conceptualisation of what counts as Christianity. The research cohort, however, believe that this mainstream construction of what counts as religion excludes authentic exploration of the Christian concept. In their view, Christian horizons can never be arrived at (Dandelion 2007, 133) and, moreover, the culmination of the religious journey is forever aspirational. *'I always feel there is something to aspire to,'* said Frank, *'you know this place where I will arrive in; where I am Quaker.'* In this sense, the participating Quakers depict the individualised, contested and ongoing religious project in fundamental terms. These conceptualisations are framed in relation to mainstream Christian church claims to author and shape the religious experience on behalf of congregants which Quakers maintain are oppressive and essentially unChristian.

4.3 Individualising Christianity

The research participants cast their re-imagination of Christianity in fundamentally individualised terms. Quakers, in this sense, reject Christianity in an organisationally settled and orthodox sense. However, the Quaker participants also remain open to the idea of Christianity as a concept which can be re-imagined in terms alternative to mainstream churches. I frame these alternative claims as heterodox insofar as they are alternative to those espoused by mainstream churches. Dean had converted to the Quaker church from a Methodist *'background'*. His Quaker conversion was framed as a

'reaction' to his former churches 'evangelical excesses'. He asserted that he had not abandoned Christianity, however, but rather its construction by his former church as a 'formed faith'. Dean stated:

The figure of Jesus is important; I get a lot of inspiration from the Bible especially the Gospels; but that's not a matter of having a formed faith; it's more a matter of inspiration, something from my background that I have carried with me; I think I'd have to acknowledge that my background in Methodism has continued to influence me in that way.

Dean framed Christianity as still pertinent to his Quaker vision quest (Scully, 2008). However, Christianity was re-imagined by Dean as pertinent only insofar as it avoided organisation prescription in favour of individualised and alternative re-interpretation. In this sense, Quakers aver that the individualised re-imagination of Christianity is facilitated by conversion to the contemporary Quaker church. Dean said:

I was going to say we all have clergy, but let me put it the other way around; we are all clergy; one thing I value about Quakerism, Naylor was fond of railing against what he called a formed faith; a faith presented to you by the clergy or by the church; and you are told this is the faith you should have; and you will be saved; we do not present these things to us as a rule or form to live by; that is another aspect I value about Quakerism, a sense that you have got to work out your faith, your theology yourself.

These individualised re-imaginings are depicted by affiliates as orthodox within the Quaker setting although, contrariwise, they are regarded by the research participants as heterodox with regard to mainstream institutions. In terms of the church, the Christian concept can be explored in individualised and ongoing terms within the Quaker setting which facilitates this pursuit. Bernard said that '(I) can't go along with everything that is said...That was part of the reason why I left the evangelical church...Quakers attracted me because I could fit in and be myself at the same time.' Bernard regarded the Quaker

church as a community of people who are allowed to think autonomously. They were enabled, through affiliation to the Quaker church, to reach alternative conclusions regarding the religious enterprise which were not available to Christians constrained within mainstream organisations. *'If a man doesn't keep pace with his companions,'* Bernard said, claiming to cite Henry Thoreau, *'perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.'* In Bernard's opinion, the Quaker church attracts those *'who listen to a different drummer; and I think I have always listened to a different drummer.'* In this sense, individual re-imaginings of Christianity are seen by affiliates as a fundamental aspect of the Quaker self-concept. The Quaker church is constituted of affiliates who wish to interpret Christianity apparently without organisational prescription. Affiliates, thus, regard the Quaker church as a harbour for heterodox re-imaginings of Christianity on individualised terms.

I have framed conversion to the contemporary liberal church in relation to the perceived construction of Christianity by mainstream churches. In this sense, Quaker and mainstream church conceptualisations of what counts as Christianity are seen to differ by affiliates. Moreover, research participants contest the conceptualisation of Christianity as it is framed by mainstream clerical organisations. In this sense, these Quakers do not oppose Christianity. Rather, they reject its perceived collective prescription by mainstream churches. Instead, they re-frame Christianity as an individualised pursuit for essential meaning. It is, thus, a matter of how Christianity is framed in essential terms which distinguishes the Quaker perspective.

4.4 Contesting Christianity

W. B. Gallie (1955) developed the idea of 'essentially contested concepts' to explain how differences of opinion on abstract topics are conceived (1955, 167). Gallie suggests that concepts such as 'religion' or 'art' which resist precise definition by measurable criteria are essentially contested (1955, 168). Unlike in the physical sciences, testable evidence cannot be acquired to definitively settle differences of opinion regarding how concepts such as 'religion' or 'art' are evaluated. Rather, these concepts are subject to unending debate between parties who claim to be able to fathom their true meaning and application in the world. However, 'essential contestedness theorists believe that an essentially contested concept is not vague or ambiguous: rather there is just one concept which is itself essentially contested' (Swanton 1985, 811). In this sense, the potential for agreement regarding the concepts of 'religion' and 'art' is seen by Gallie as a basic misunderstanding of what counts as a contested concept. Ultimately, differences of opinion in these essential terms cannot be reconciled because there are no common criteria which can first of all be agreed upon to define the concept prior to its eventual measurement and practical application to settle the contest.

Gallie (1955) states that the general use of particular concepts, for example, regarding what counts as Christian doctrine, can never be agreed by competing groups (1955, 168). Differences over meaning for these concepts are inevitable because grounds for agreement necessarily resist precise definition as they are essentially immeasurable. In this sense, protagonists' conceptualisations share a common aim, to reach agreement,

but attempts to find common ground in terms of detailed specifications are necessarily bound to be frustrated. Empirical differences in terms of what counts as a Christian are unattainable and essential meanings of Christianity will inevitably and unendingly be contested between rival parties (Swanton 1985, 813-4). As claims to correct or standard usage cannot be substantiated, this can polarise and render ineffectual attempts at debate. Thus, disputes regarding essentially contested concepts might encourage 'the deluded belief that different teams are playing the same game' (Gallie 1955, 176). Christians might share the same vocabulary, for example, or their arguments might draw upon similar sources in order to substantiate claims. However, according to this contested view, the mutual use of the term 'Christianity' is a chimera and differences in its usage will inevitably be forever debated by claimants as points of view are promoted from a subjective standpoint.

In this sense, 'further refinement' of essentially contested concepts is more or less futile. Nuanced interpretations of Christian doctrine are unlikely to convince, for example, as they cannot be advanced from an agreed neutral perspective. Gallie suggests that protagonists in a debate abandon the belief that agreement can be reached and instead seek 'an indication of the conditions in which the continued use of any such concept...can be defended' (1955, 176). In other words, the meaning of 'religion' or 'art' or 'Christianity' cannot be finally settled in terms which are 'correct or proper or primary' (Gallie 1955, 168). It is not possible to realise through debate how claims to know God's truth can be weighed, for instance, and a true and mutually agreed conceptualisation arrived at. From this perspective, Gallie argues that essentially contested concepts do

not rest on a killer argument which renders the dispute finally 'settleable'. Moreover, disputes about the meaning of essentially contested concepts are not just multi-perspectival and nuanced; they are also argued from fundamentally incompatible subjective positions.

Kekes (1977) suggests that ongoing re-imagination of essential concepts is both beneficial and vital in social terms (1977, 78). He argues that that the ultimate rational resolution of essential disagreement ossifies debate and stymies the pursuit of better, more applicable solutions.

The reason why the occurrence of philosophical arguments about the correct use of ECC's (essentially contested concepts) is in everybody's interest is that their occurrence lessens the chance of establishing an orthodoxy. And the reason why an orthodoxy should not be established is that problem situations continually change. No doubt, what now has a claim to orthodoxy was once a fresh new situation. But its attaining the status of unquestioned authority prevents the search for solutions to meet new problems. (Kekes 1977, 89)

In Kekes' terms, contestation of essential concepts accords with the perspective of liberal Quaker tradition with regard to Christianity (1977, 83). Settled and agreed interpretations of concepts can be evasive, Kekes argues, and the value of essentially contested concepts is not framed as a final agreement but within the process of their negotiation (1977, 87). In this sense, the stasis of a fixed and settled orthodoxy is framed as not only theoretically but practically oppressive. From this perspective, the tendency of disputes with fundamentally settled outcomes to be oppressive can be avoided and its pursuit can be socially as well as conceptually regenerative. Heterodoxy, then, from this perspective, disrupts the religious organisation by introducing re-imagined essential concepts to the organisational process. It prevents the

domination of particular points of view and opens up paths for other, alternative re-conceptualisations.

In this essential sense, the meaning of the Christian concept and its realisation is regarded by research participants as eternally disputatious. These Quakers tend to cast the concept of Christianity as essentially contested insofar as Christianity is framed provisionally and on highly individualised terms which resist a definable end. This conceptualisation of Christianity as an essentially contested concept for affiliates is framed by Dandelion as the 'absolute perhaps' (2007, 152). From this point of view, the Quaker enterprise is framed fundamentally as contested and unending. Truth, in this sense, can only ever be partially and provisionally known (Dandelion 2007, 152). It is in terms of this open, provisional and individualised tradition, where no conceptualisation is ruled out and none is ruled in, which Quakers explore the Christian concept. And it is in contrast to mainstream church orthodoxies, that Quakers in the research cast their re-imagination of Christianity in fundamentally alternative terms. These Quakers, then, do not dispute the meaning of Christianity as it is framed by mainstream institutions. Their concern with the concept is depicted at a more fundamentally alternative level. Whilst mainstream Christian churches are believed by affiliates to seek fixed and settled conceptualisations, these Quakers resist the idea that a single conceptualisation of religious can be ever be arrived at and that Christianity is in a most fundamental sense, forever essentially contested.

As an essentially contested concept, Christianity is framed by research participants in terms of individually-defined ends. Moreover, organisations which profess to prescribe Christianity are framed by affiliates as a bulwark in practice to the individual religious enterprise. In this sense, it is the individual perspective which is regarded by affiliates as fundamental. The fundamental individual enterprise is framed by Quakers in the study in terms of an ongoing and negotiated journey through the organisational edifice.

Unencumbered by church dogma, and empowered by their autonomous perspective, these Quakers assert that this essential vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61) is able to thrive independently of organisational re-imagination. Dinah said:

I went and spoke to the priest; and he said that Catholicism is a revealed religion; I understand (by) that you are telling me what the truth is and what to believe; so you reveal to me what the truth is, do you?; is that how it goes?; that doesn't sit right; and I want to think for myself and work things out; I still want to find myself the way to God without it being revealed; it works for some people but not for me.

Christianity for the research participants is thus ever subject to revision through newly enlightened experience (Dandelion 2007, 130). Its boundaries are not delineated by the Quaker church and the authority of mainstream churches to define the concept on behalf of individuals is also contested essentially. In this sense, Christianity from the Quaker perspective can be framed as a re-presentation of an espoused reality. In other words, from the Quaker perspective, Christianity is a reality insofar as it is 'alive and dynamic – existing *only* in the relational encounter in the in-between space we create in dialogue and negotiation with others' (Howarth 2006, 6). Quakers, thus, tend away from the temporal conceptualisations of religion which mainstream churches tend to espouse (Day 2011, 202). They also claim to be averse to 'passive acceptance of binary oppositions' (Day, Vincett and Cotter 2013, 1). Instead, affiliates propose a provisional

re-imagination of religion without conceptual boundaries (Collins and Dandelion 2014, 298). This liquid conceptualisation of the tradition (Collins and Dandelion 2014, 298) is, in Day's (2011) terms, given form through its claimed exposition as practice in the shifting social sphere (2011, 202).

Quakers thus re-imagine Christianity in relational terms which contest its organisational reification. It is the certainty of uncertainty (Dandelion 2007, 152) within which the Quaker essentially contested approach to Christianity is grounded and it is the 'absolute perhaps' (Dandelion 2007, 152) which is relationally juxtaposed as alternate to organised Christian prescription. In this sense, the provisional and individualised perspective is essentialised by Quakers in relation to Christianity and the authority of mainstream church to prescribe Christianity is undermined. Thus, the ongoing Quaker vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61) is seen as realised in individualised terms essentially alternative to the fixed and settled construction of Christianity by mainstream churches.

James stated that he:

found that gradually all the stuff that meant things to me in the Anglican church became obstacles between me and God, they were getting in the way; I found myself saying, why are we talking in the same way to God, Anglicans, Methodists and Catholics have built these structures around themselves and if you don't say these words, you are not a Christian; if a Quaker asked me whether I was a Christian, I would have to say I am not sure; it depends on what you mean by Christian; to talk about that to Anglicans would be too disturbing and frightening for them; to have a discussion with somebody about their faith and church would be quite difficult.

Roger felt that he '*still wanted to be part of a worshipping community*'. However, he perceived the Catholic church as heavily proscribing debate within the religious

institution. This constraint on religious exploration was felt to be incompatible with his emerging scepticism. Roger stated:

I no longer expected there to be answers, unlike what the Catholic church says, you know, here are the answers, here are the questions you can ask; not possible to stay in the Catholic church and not believe; I developed a huge problem saying the Creed; staying put but not believing wouldn't have worked for me.

Mainstream churches are seen to resist ongoing reformulation of ultimate meaning in the light of experience. These Quakers, however, tend to frame progressivism in relation to organised constructions of Christianity as fundamental to their religious motif (Dandelion 2007, 130). In this essentially contested individualised sense, the meaning and realisation of Christianity cannot be ultimately settled. *'I see this as a process, of living your life better,'* George averred, *'you know; we must work out for ourselves what we are here for, why we are alive; and I don't have an idea.'* Rather, through a Quaker lens, the meaning of Christianity is framed in terms pertinent to the individual as subjective, partial, ongoing and fluid. Contestation is thus cast by the Quaker affiliates as perpetual, as an individualised process and its processual outcomes are viewed through a personally progressive lens.

4.5 Tensions in the Quaker organisation

From this essentially contested perspective, the Quaker church is also cast by affiliates as a home for a collectively progressive enterprise. Christianity as an essential concept is seen as collectively as well as individually realised through the Quaker setting, especially in relation to the mainstream Christian churches. Beliefs are pluralised in the shifting Quaker setting (Dandelion 1996, 140). However, individual differences of belief

tend to converge insofar as affiliates share a view of Christianity in essentially contested terms. This conceptualisation of the Quaker church is presented by affiliates as a collectively dynamic and progressive, ongoing religious experience. However, this re-imagination of the religious enterprise in essential terms is not only heterodox in relation to Christian churches. Whilst Quakers in the research tend to be uncritical of the liberal tradition, there are tensions identified within the contemporary church. These internal tensions can be framed in terms of how Quakers' claim to religious heterodoxy is practised within the contemporary liberal church.

4.5.1 Loss of original visions

Jack framed the contemporary Quaker church setting as an arena where social inequalities were undeclared but were manifested in church practices. He regarded these inequalities as a contradiction with regard to espoused corporate Quaker horizons. In social terms, he framed Quakers critically as an organisation of middle class individuals. *'Quakers are lovely people and their values speak to my values,'* he said, *'but I have not yet met a working class Quaker.'* Jack depicted the liberal tradition as a middle-class orthodoxy. This orthodoxy was covertly privileged within the Quaker church, a disposition which contradicted Quaker espoused heterodoxy and testament to equality. Jack had now begun to question the integrity of the Quaker tradition which had originally framed his conversion.

As a convert to the Quaker tradition, Jack initially perceived his horizons and those espoused by the Quaker church as well matched. He originally believed that the

Quaker collective in practice challenged social oppression and that it would support others who shared its values. He saw his social practice in the mundane as a radical heterodoxy which fundamentally challenged hypocrisy in society and mainstream religion. *'I am holding up a mirror to say "Why?": I am very subversive,'* he said, *'I am against orderings.'* Jack, however, also extended the focus of his espoused 'subversive' lens on to the organisation and integrity of the Quaker group. However, the 'subversive' standards which questioned 'orderings', when applied by Jack to the Quaker church, had resulted in his disappointment.

Jack was sceptical about the value of ministry within Quaker Meeting for Worship (MfW). According to Jack, the church professed that the divine was accessible to all without corporate regulation. However, he believed that spoken ministry within the group disguised individuals' power and authority. He felt spoken ministry in practice privileged particular contributions from particular individuals. Orderings and hierarchies existed covertly and political inequalities were effectively maintained within and supported by the church. This political asymmetry he believed was injurious to the essential integrity of the Quaker tradition. Jack stated:

I don't like religion to take itself too seriously; because then there is this, what's valued in meeting and what isn't; I think very quickly you can go to an ordering; whose word is valued and whose isn't.

For Jack, particular interpretations had become privileged. Jack had initially become engaged with the Quaker collective through its perceived integrity, its non-judgemental approach and because *'no-one is telling me what to think.'* However, he believed that an unspoken status within the collective was attainable through public performance at

Meeting for Worship and, for Jack, that this was inimical to Quaker claims. Jack depicted a church of superficially benign Quaker discourses which highlighted the contradictions within the organisation.

Corporate discourses regarding equality and integrity had originally drawn him into affiliation. However, he believed that Quakers in practice adopted '*a managerialist approach to saving the world*'. Jack suggested that Quakers had become detached from their beliefs and dislocated from the community more widely. '*It can be very frustrating, this very Quakerly measured approach,*' he opined. Jack framed Quakers as middle-class individuals who had become detached from their socially-grounded Quaker claims. This detachment had led to a practical mis-alignment of their church affairs. Rather, in his view, a bureaucratic exactness in church administration, structures and inter-personal relationships had become privileged at the expense of a religious authenticity. Jack said:

I am doing my stuff in the world for social justice; for women who experience even more inequalities of social justice; the only way it (his direct appeal for Quaker support for his work project) could be considered is if it went up through the many tiers of bureaucratic middle class, what I would call a managerialist approach to saving the world; by managerialist, I mean command and control; it's antithetical to Quaker beliefs and practice; it felt bizarre; I couldn't understand it, that's how Quakers conduct their life and their work, their meetings; it just felt so wrong.

Jack felt that this had become oppressive as individual efforts to remain true to the original vision were at odds with espoused Quaker practices and thus the church's vision had also become compromised. Jack said:

You know. It's like, oh for fuck's sake. Where's the spontaneity? It's a very middle class way of thinking. They don't run with an idea. It has to be: can we get a

groundswell of opinion on this? It really pissed me off. There's a tyranny of their own structures. They don't duck and dive like us working class people.

Jack constructed a view of the church which he felt to be not only practically but also essentially incontestable. He had been drawn into the Quaker church through espoused Quaker heterodoxies active within the social world. This heterodox approach was framed by Jack as an inclination to essentially contest the mainstream construction of Christianity where authority resides in churches which try to shape individual responses. *'It comes down to not the individual conscience with the Anglican church,'* said Jack, *'it's about, OK, here's our creed; if it doesn't make you a better person, why go?'* However, the Quaker church was now in its practice if not in its espoused horizons to be replicating this perceived dogmatic and ossifying mainstream Christian process. In this sense, the Quaker church was felt to be creating an orthodoxy grounded upon false premises: a closed, settled and illiberal configuration of what counts as Quaker through its practices whilst simultaneously advocating through its discourses a liberal, permissive view of its tradition (Dandelion 2007, 138).

4.5.2 Quaker inertia

Patsy was also essentially critical of the contemporary Quaker tradition. She initially *'came along as a look-see'* to Quaker meetings *'five or six years ago'* and reported feeling *'at home'* in the community which she felt *'good to be part of'*. In Patsy's view, Quaker affiliation had given her a way of exploring the metaphysical. Her faith ideas were reportedly being explored with care, *'very slowly, in incremental steps'*. The faith's attraction for her was that *'you can come to your own conclusions, define your own sort*

of pathway'. For Patsy, this was a singular strength of her affiliation: the church facilitated a journey of personal discovery. However, in Patsy's terms, the perceived bias by the church towards individual interpretation of the belief tradition is conflicted for Quaker affiliates.

Patsy was critical of the administration of the Quaker church. The group was depicted by Patsy as backward-looking and suffered from organisational inertia and potentially terminal decline because '*Quakers find it difficult to cope with change; that is undeniable*'. Patsy regarded the structures of the Quaker church as anachronistic and unsuited to effective, collective decision-making. In her opinion, the church structures were inimical to the implementation of progressive perspectives. She said:

You try and get Quakers to say, oh well, let's reduce the agenda. Oh, well, we've got to discuss this and this and this... There's no point in saying it's a meeting for worship for business and therefore we've got to keep on; if you don't get people coming because they don't want to spend three hours on a Sunday afternoon.

Patsy believed that the church tradition was rooted in radicalism but also that Quaker essential tendencies were subject to diffusion and practical impotency in an unwieldy Quaker bureaucracy wedded to antiquated processes. Patsy believed that Quaker organisational structures were labyrinthine and administratively cumbersome. They required updating and made relevant to contemporary norms. In order to confront this perceived problem, administrative progress within the church required '*changing mindsets, thinking out of the box*'.

Patsy believed that she had been active and progressive with regard to re-orienting the perceptions of fellow Quakers towards a more contemporary approach to organisational processes. She saw the outcome of this engagement as partially successful. *'It has taken a year of bringing in management theories to get Friends accepting there is no alternative,'* she said. However, Quakers remained ponderous, in her view, and their structures still privileged time-consuming deliberation rather than decisiveness and action. Moreover, affiliates were seen as attitudinally disinclined to organisational dynamism. As a consequence of organisational inertia within the structures of the Quaker church, and individuals who were seen as enslaved to the traditions of church orthodoxy, Patsy framed the Quaker community as lethargic and reactionary. Her vision with regard to the Quaker church was apocalyptic as an aging and out-of-touch group struggled to recognise the functionally oppressive present-day outcomes of its heterodox past. Wrapped in espoused liberal discourses, Patsy extolled a *'doomsday'* church where illiberal enactment of its permissive tradition would erode its legitimacy in the eyes of future affiliates.

Patsy's critique framed the contemporary Quaker group as, in its practices, an emasculated church entity. She felt that it attracted individuals who liked to think of themselves as radicals. Patsy compared this ersatz church radicalism to the purer form of Christian fundamentalism of the earliest Quakers. In her view, the contemporary reality was a relative failure insofar as its individual and collective efforts had not lived up to the perceived dynamic practices of the Quaker past. Patsy stated:

Quakers are really good at solemnly worrying about global issues; whereas they should be more concerned with issues in the locality; a rainbow coalition against

the cuts, rather than wringing their hands and deploring it; I think they have got to be much more, well, George Fox would have stood there and damned the bureaucrats; I think we have got to go back, Quakerism is a radical movement; I think we have forgotten that; let's rediscover, re-emphasise our roots; it can be done; I think Quakers are in danger of talking too much, wringing their hands.

In Patsy's opinion, Quaker priorities were now outdated and methods of decision-making had retained in the group peaceable individuals who were comfortable in the current administrative structures. Patsy felt that the group was *'too nice about things'* and preferred to *'put off difficult issues'*. Her vision of the group was based on a lifetime of experience in managing children's services, a *'background in change and embedding change'*. Involvement with Quaker committees and administrative procedures had given her an insight into the inner workings of the Quaker church collective. However, Patsy had ultimately found serving on Quaker committees to be a very frustrating experience.

Whilst Quakers had begun as radicals, challenging religious and social orthodoxies, Patsy felt that their current manifestation was now much less than counter-cultural. *'It would be a shame if they disappeared; ...cultural, religious life would be the losers...because they are a sort of an irritant; they do try to punch the pomposity and established thinking,'* she remarked. She painted an introspective church which struggled to keep pace with the more dynamic social institutions she had experienced through her work in education.

In Patsy's view, Quakers had *'lost something'*. In practice, they were no longer heterodox or authentic followers of the tradition. Their current position amounted to a radical deficit in their practice which might be rectified by importing progressive ideas

from the world of work. *'We are a do-it-yourself organisation. You've got to run a professional show,'* she declared. Instead of being inward looking, Quakers needed to do more *'outreach, niche marketing'* and links needed to be forged with other local and national organisations. She suggested that cooperation with other movements already existed. For example, she pointed out a march in central London which had recently been held in support of the 'Save the Libraries' campaign though she had been unable to take part. *'I would have gone,'* she said, *'but I had something else on'.*

4.5.3 Quaker church disharmony

Howard Aldrich (1999) argues that organisations are systems of purposive human activity (1999, 3). He contends that they are socially constructed and exist for the general purpose of setting and directing goals as well as for maintaining boundaries between themselves and non-members (1999, 3). Aldrich contends that collectively-agreed and maintained meanings within organisations are significant. They are capable of unifying activity and belief within the group 'although individual participants might personally feel indifferent toward these goals or even alienated from them' (1999, 3).

According to Aldrich, this dissonance between individual and collective goals remains a perennial tension generally within organisations. Organisations attempt to compensate for these internal tensions. He states that, 'organisations are thus structured in ways to suppress, or at least compensate for, the excess baggage that people bring with them' (1999, 4). However, the tensions within the contemporary Quaker organisation can also be depicted at an institutional rather than simply at an individual level. Rather, the

tensions within the group are also at odds with its religious claims predicated on liberating the individual from organisational mainstream church oppression. It is in this organised sense that the religious institution appears flawed insofar as its practices are inconsistent with its harmonious claims.

Gay Pilgrim (2008) writes that early and contemporary Quakers are linked by heterotopic social practices (2008, 54). She describes this impulse in social terms as a heterotopic alternate ordering whereby the expositions of their faith were juxtaposed against temporal political authority. Pilgrim depicts the concept of heterotopia as a heterodox form of social practice (2008, 53). It is a 'countersite' within the wider social setting and is employed as a form of boundary-making by groups who wish to highlight current social practices and the possibility of alternatives (2008, 55). Pilgrim writes that Quakers have adopted heterotopic practices since the group's inception and that this alternate form of social engagement has prevailed up to the present day (2008, 54). In this sense, Quakers normatively position themselves within social spaces in ways alternative to their local environment. These heterotopic sites of alternative occupation are not only socially marginalised but also 'simultaneously...embedded in the prevailing social order' (Pilgrim, 2008, 55). Alternate ordering therefore emerges from and is stimulated by its social context. Pilgrim argues that otherness is thus fundamentally relational but also that the relational aspect of the Quaker church has altered in its contemporary manifestation and its heterodox claims have become subject to individuated diffusion.

Pilgrim suggests that the individualisation of what counts as Quaker has led to a loss of collective vision. The church is a site of alternative exploration which is now conducted on individual bases and on individualistic terms learned from outside and prior to affiliation with the Quaker church (Pilgrim 2008, 61). Moreover, the conceptualisation of the Quaker church in terms of an alternate ordering has now become internalised, according to Pilgrim (2008, 64). Quaker heterotopia is now contested from within rather than without the church (2008, 63). What counts as Quaker in terms of its otherness is now the subject of negotiation internal to the church and individuated internal conceptualisations of what counts as Quaker (2008, 64). Thus, argues Pilgrim, the liberal Quaker tradition is a synthesis of individual interests which have been grounded outside the church collective but are now presented externally as acceptably mainstream if not as socially anodyne in practice (2008, 64). The heterotopic impulse has become mollified, turned inward, and is essentially uncritical of the liberal Quaker motif.

The exposition of Patsy and Jack tends to support Pilgrim's argument that tensions within the Quaker church can be framed as a failure to accommodate liberal, permissive horizons and worldly heterodox practice. Patsy and Jack's conceptualisation of the church as conflicted illustrates that the liberal church is not internally harmonious. It is not harmonious in these essentially contested terms. In other words, the church is perceived as acting oppressively with regard to its liberal and permissive horizons. It is seen by Jack and Patsy as zealously enforcing collective conformity in practice whilst espousing liberal and permissive horizons. This perception of how Quakers cope with

conflict within the church accords with Robson's (2008) argument that the Quaker church is conflicted about how to manage disharmony (2008, 141).

Quakers, Robson asserts, are averse to conflict and will seek unity rather than adversarially defend fundamental principles in a collective sense. This aversion is framed by Robson as a strategy for managing everyday inconsistencies with respect to group's espousal of peaceable living and the apparent existence of intra-church strife. Robson writes that, 'It is usually a more important aim that the group retains members than that searching process finds a right way forward even at the expense of disagreement or loss' (Robson 2008, 145). However, Scully (2008) writes that Quakers ethics are not governed by 'theoretical consistency' but by generalised rules on 'the best way forward' framed in Quaker terms of implicitly agreed 'concepts and symbols' (2008, 110). From Scully's point of view, general agreement in terms of these concepts and symbols is assumed within the group (2008, 108). However, my research shows that unifying and fundamental assumptions about the Quaker church and its concepts and symbols are not shared in practice across the collective. In this sense, Quakers are not a united collective. When assumptions about what counts as Quaker are not shared and horizons claimed individually by Quakers are framed in contestational terms with regard to the church, disharmony within the church is revealed.

My research supports Scully's contention that 'theoretical consistency' is not privileged within the contemporary Quaker tradition. Rather, the horizons of the research participants are highly individualised. In this sense, the Quaker research participants do

not seek consistency with the collective when converting to the church. Instead, they unite around individualised re-imaginings of what Christianity is not. This re-imagining of what Christianity is not is conceptualised in essential terms. What Christianity is, however, from a Quaker perspective, is framed as a matter of individual interpretation. These Quakers see this individual remit of the church as liberating. However, 'the best way forward' for Quakers based upon 'what seems right' becomes problematic within the contemporary Quaker tradition (Scully 2008, 109): ergo, there is disharmony within the church. Scully's view does not fully account for tensions which exist within the group regarding what counts as Quaker and, moreover, what counts as Quaker which is contestable from within the church.

My research, then, builds on Scully's idea of the Quaker 'moral collage' where the collective ethic fits a kaleidoscopic metaphor of intricate and interlocking individualised perspectives. It suggests that the Quaker intention to find the 'best way forward', creating a 'moral collage' does not depict fully the tensions between the individual and the collective Quaker condition. It assumes that general agreement regarding Quaker concepts and symbols is extant within the group. However, these Quakers do not claim to progress their religious enterprise in generalised or matter-of-fact terms. They convert to the Quaker church on terms fundamentally opposed to the Christian concept prescribed by mainstream churches. In this sense, I suggest that within the Quaker collective there is a tension between individual and collective conceptualisations of Christianity which underly superficial problems of Quaker decision-making which Scully and Robson identify.

Research participants, then, convert to the church on fundamental terms which they claim as heterodox in relation to the construction of Christianity by mainstream religious traditions. This heterodoxy is highly individualised and this individualised perspective frames the fluid and provisional conceptualisation of the liberal Quaker tradition. However, this concept of what counts as Quaker in terms of a rational certainty of theological uncertainty (Dandelion 2007, 152) is evidently regarded within the church setting as disputatious. Contention, though, is managed by church processes and internecine conflict is disavowed in Quaker terms so that a patina of harmony is outwardly maintained. So, whilst affiliates do not depict the church as conflict-ridden, my research suggests that there are tensions both within the 'theoretical consistency' of its espoused heterodoxy and in terms of how fundamental inconsistencies are managed practically within the church setting (Scully 2008, 109). In the next chapter, I explore what counts as Quaker for affiliates in the context of contemporary work and whether these espoused religious horizons are also consistent in practice.

4.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have depicted how the research participants framed the Quaker church in relation to perceived Christian alternatives. I suggest that they convert to the Quaker tradition in opposition to other mainstream Christian church alternatives. They see traditional, churched Christianity as a prescribed form of belief which stifles the individual quest for fundamental meaning in the contemporary world. The research participants regarded Christianity only as individually pertinent to the religious enterprise. The religious enterprise was rather understood by affiliates as an

individually interpreted project and framed in essentially contestational terms. The impetus to contest religious meaning essentially was equated by affiliates fundamentally with the horizons of the Quaker tradition. This approach to meaning-making was regarded especially in contrast to the perceived fixed, settled and self-serving constructions of Christianity promulgated by mainstream churches. This contestational and alternative conceptualisation of the Quaker tradition, however, was also framed problematically. It was framed as a potential tension when applied to the church organisation by affiliates seeking theological coherence from within the contemporary collective.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HARMONY OF QUAKER WORK

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I frame the highly individualised liberal Quaker tradition within the contemporary context of work. I examine interview data to construct categories which explain how the research participants engage with their work. These Quakers see their religious enterprise as an everyday practice and I frame their approach to work in the contemporary setting in utopian terms. The research participants' claim is framed as an impetus to make better the world (Johns 2007, 121) which is apparently harmonious with the horizons espoused by their work organisations. This harmonious perspective can be observed in the economic and occupational areas within which the Quaker affiliates work. In other words, affiliates in the cohort tend overwhelmingly to work in white collar occupations within the service sector and within the public and non-market sectors. However, these Quakers frame their participation in the everyday work process in highly individualised terms. What counts as Quaker is framed by the interviewees as an affirmation of their individualised claims which are held prior to conversion to the church.

In the next section, I examine the kinds of organisations within which the research participants work. I define work more narrowly in economic and occupational terms. I suggest that economic and occupational categories of work which these Quakers tend to occupy might share their individualised ambitions but that these categories alone do not sufficiently define affiliates' participation in the everyday process.

5.2 Categorising Quaker work

The findings of this research show that the settings within which the research participants work tend to share common occupational and economic characteristics. In terms of economic categories, these Quakers work mainly within the public sector and less commonly within private organisations. In occupational terms, this research shows that the affiliates typically work in managerial, administrative and professional jobs. In fact, of the twenty Quakers interviewed, only one affiliate did not fit this ‘white collar’ categorisation of typical affiliates. In the following section, I define further this economic categorisation of Quakers’ engagement with the contemporary work setting. I argue that economically and occupationally defined classes do indicate Quaker participation with work but that this indication is limited in how far it can capture the research participants’ individualised intentions.

5.2.1 Economic and occupational categories

When defining what counts as public and private sectors, I draw upon the Office for National Statistics (ONS) definitions of UK economically active enterprises. These classifications are intended to assist the government describe what is happening in the national economy (UK Economic Classifications 2016). However, they can also be used to indicate in which industries Quakers currently tend to work. This positioning of Quakers within industrial categories gives an overview of affiliates’ work settings. Table 1 (below) shows that Quaker occupations are located primarily in the public and non-market sectors of the UK economy. It also reveals that fewer Quakers also work in the market sector.

Table 1: Research participants working within Public/Private and Market/Non-Market sectors according to European System of Accounts (ESA10) (ONS UK Economic Occupational Classifications 2016).

	Public	Private
Market	<u>Public corporations</u> 0 Quakers	<u>Private corporations</u> 4 Quakers working in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manufacturing, • finance (x2) • language services
Non-Market	<u>General government</u> 12 Quakers working in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public administration • medical and emergency services • education 	<u>Households or Non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs)</u> 4 Quakers working in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charities

The ONS measures economic activity in terms of institutional units which are classified according to whether they are ‘Public’ or ‘Private’ and ‘Market’ or ‘Non-Market’.

Public/Private distinctions are defined in terms of whether ‘government exercise(s) significant control over the general corporate policy of the unit’ (ONS UK Economic Classifications 2016). A unit is categorised as a Market or Non-Market entity in terms:

defined by charging “economically significant prices” (that is, prices that have a substantial influence on the amounts of products that producers are willing to supply and on the amounts of products that purchasers wish to acquire) for all or most of the goods and services they produce. By contrast, some units provide all or most of their output to others free of charge or at prices that are not

economically significant – these are non-market producers. (ONS UK Economic Classifications 2016)

Additionally, research participants also work within public sector corporations categorised by the ONS as HM Forces, Police Service, Public Administration, Education, National Health Service, Other Health and Social Work and Other Public Sector (ONS Public Sector Corporations 2005, 5). Within these industrial categories, affiliates' work can also be categorised occupationally. Nineteen out of twenty Quaker occupations can be classified as Managers, Professional Occupations, Associate Professionals and Administrative Occupations, according to the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) (ONS Standard Industrial Classification of Occupations 2007). Moreover, only one Quaker or five per cent of the cohort, worked in a Skilled Trades Occupation (ONS Standard Industrial Classification of Occupations 2007). This skilled tradesperson was also the only Quaker in the cohort who worked in a manufacturing context.

This aspect of my research findings tend to support Freeman's (2013) suggestion that 'teaching, academia and social work have become popularly associated with Quakerism' (2013, 429). However, my research has revealed that the organisations where Quakers work, and their particular occupations, are more varied than that implied in Freeman's suggestion. Framing Quaker work as middle class and professional does not fully account for this economic and occupational variation. His assertions also tend to support the stereotypical view of the Quaker church as 'a middle-class religion, in which professionals are over-represented' (Freeman 2013, 429). My research shows

that the research participants typically but not exclusively work in the Public and Non-Market sectors of the British economy. Quakers also work in the private sector although, in private concerns, they appear equally likely to be employed in organisations which do not charge 'economically significant prices' (ONS UK Economic Occupational Classifications 2016) as those which do: in other words, in either the public or charitable sectors. Accounting for this distinction in terms of industrial categorisation, four out of five Quakers in the research work in either public sector or in charitable concerns.

My research shows that research participants are also highly likely to work in the service sector, most specifically in administrative, managerial and professional occupations. Quakers in my study are rarely other than 'white collar' workers. They work in Non-Market occupations in the public sector and conform to Freeman's professional conceptualisation of the church demographic. However, these Quakers also work in professional roles within economic and occupational areas other than the public sector professions. What the Quakers appear to have in common within the contemporary work setting by analysing these simple categories, is that they perform 'white collar' service sector jobs across all industrial categories.

This differentiation is highlighted by the outlying example in my research. I frame the single Quaker in my research working in the manufacturing sector and in skilled trades as an 'outlier' within the occupational profile of the church community. I use the term 'outlier' to refer specifically to a case which appears to be at variance from the rest of the data. This variance can be seen as significant but not influential (Aguinis et al 2013,

286). In other words, it illuminates a difference between itself and the rest of the cohort without contravening the overall findings. Conclusions are not altered because of the identification of an outlier. Rather, the outlier data is exceptional and distinct from the norm. Outliers are interesting insofar as they are 'accurate (i.e. non-error) data points that lie at a distance from other data points and may contain valuable or unexpected knowledge' (Aguinis et al 2013, 275).

Jo-Jo, worked as a skilled tradesperson in a manufacturing company. His singular occupation and its work setting were atypical within the Quaker church. Within this setting, Jo-Jo depicts his horizons as disharmonious with those of the work organisation. This perception, as well as the industrial context of his work, was unique in the research. Jo-Jo's outlying experience is explored in this sense more fully in Chapter Six. In the next sections, I investigate typical categories of affiliates' work. I suggest that the horizons which these Quakers espouse are framed by affiliates as harmonious with those claimed by their work organisations. It is this espousal of horizons which are harmonious with work which I depict as more accurately definitional of the Quaker affiliates in the contemporary work setting.

5.3 Quakers and the workaday world

Quakers in the research assert that their individualised religious enterprise is an everyday project. This inclination is evidenced in their participation within the contemporary work setting. These Quakers partake in the everyday processes of work and, moreover, share its worldly ambitions. The Quakers affiliates are 'world accepting'

in this sense (Dandelion 2007, 230). They do not see others in the mundane setting in terms of apostasy, as did the first Quakers (Dandelion 2007, 241) but join with others who might not be Quakers in a collective workaday venture.

The research participants also assert that their engagement with the workaday is based on highly individualised claims to religious practice in the everyday. Affiliates espouse a view that these individualised imaginations of what counts as Quaker are also counter-cultural in the work setting. Engagement with the workaday, from this perspective, is framed as a personal '*challenge*', in Dinah's words. From this perspective, Quakers opt not for an easy life of normative conformity in the collective setting. Rather, they claim that their worldly engagement is onerous insofar as they feel they have to live up to their individualised moral standards, sometimes, in testing circumstances. Tom said that being a Quaker in the everyday is:

not a soft option; demands a lot of engagement and being prepared to act; being a Quaker gives me the opportunity to move forward in some way... to invent your own challenges; because that is what keeps you alive; Quakers stand up for their principles and put themselves on the line but in a quiet way; it's the process that matters not the actual decision; and then you have to live with it; it takes a lot courage to do something that is not in the self-interest but in the communal interest for wider humanity and you are bringing that into the way that you act in the world.

In this sense, Quaker engagement with the everyday is based on an autonomous claim to difference or otherness. This difference also claims to render unnecessary church prescription of a code which guides their religious participation in the everyday. Instead, what counts as Quaker mirrors the contemporary claim to 'holiness' which is 'the *sine qua non*' of what has, over time, counted as Quaker' (Spencer 2004, 160). These

Quaker affiliates frame their religious perspective as special insofar as they individually re-imagine as meaningful the worldly within which they move. However, this individualised and autonomous claim to difference which transcends organisationally prescribed boundaries of what counts as religious is open to critique.

Pilgrim frames the liberal Quaker conceptualisation of the everyday as an escapist re-imagination of the temporal world. She suggests that Quakers, through their claims to religious insight, re-vivify the mundanity of everyday life which they find 'oppressive, soulless, ethically and morally unsatisfying' (2008, 61). She also views Quakers as 'seekers' who are engaged in a 'transitional' enterprise based on the re-construction of a new identity through their affiliation to the church (2008, 61). My research tends towards Pilgrim's assertion that contexts shape how what counts as Quaker is expedited (2008, 64). However, in the next sections, I show that the tension in the research participants' practice is not wholly captured in terms of the marginal social spaces which Pilgrim suggests are 'best suited' to the exposition of affiliates' religious claims. Rather, my study instead supports Collins's (2008) re-imagination of social practice. Collins writes that his intention is to construct:

through an examination of the faith and practice of Quakers in Britain, an alternative approach to the social/individual dichotomy, an approach which eschews any account which represents social interaction in inherently dichotomous terms, whatever those terms might be. (2008, 143)

I suggest that Quaker social practice is a processual religious enterprise which does not fit the dichotomous terms that claim to differentiate in the everyday what does and what does not count as Quaker. Instead, Quakers are framed as 'doing belief' (Day 2011,

193) from an individualised point of view. David Voas (2009) has also suggested that what counts as contemporary religious claims are 'fuzzy', transitional and fundamentally 'non-dichotomous' (2009, 161). In this thesis, the individualised conceptualisations of the religious enterprise is depicted in these terms which, Day has argued, 'may be also longing for deeper connections with the social' (2011, 190). It is in this individually differentiated workaday sense, rather than in terms of espoused institutional coherence, that the Quakers' workaday engagement is observed.

5.4 The dystopic work lens

In general terms, work can be understood as an ongoing site of identity work (Watson 2008, 122). Watson argues that the personas that individuals are required to adopt 'are likely to differ from the ones they adopt in other parts of their lives and, indeed, may come into tension with them' (2008, 121). Work nowadays tends to ascribed social value so that 'whilst few people today consider their work to be a calling or service to God, hard work is still viewed as a sign of good character' (Beder 2000, 127). Stephen Ackroyd (1999) suggests that the work setting can be seen as a discrete social 'enclave' which imposes particular norms of behaviour on to individual participants (1999, 55). In this context, he argues that individuals are not autonomous and that engagement is subject to circumscription by management (2008, 58). In this sense, argues Ackroyd, claims developed in collective opposition to the espoused horizons of the organisational context are also influential within the work setting (1999, 55). Work can, therefore, become a struggle to form and maintain identity at the same time as it is felt to be a liberating enterprise (Aldrich 1999, 8). From this perspective, participants in the work

enterprise are not cast as free but as constrained within and by organisational processes.

Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2001) aver that the terms of economic morality at the turn of the twenty-first century can be understood as significantly altered from former conceptualisations (2001, 8). Ideas of what counts as risk are weighted away from individual interests and economic production is now privileged above post-war utopian horizons of 'egalitarian futures, work for all or the paternal government envisioned by various freedom movements' (2001, 8). Bonds between employer and worker tend now to be short term and instrumental and people, in practice constructed as a source of wastefulness, are 'ever more disposable' (2001, 10).

Guy Standing (2011) suggests that, as occupational identity and security is eroded, claims on family and community support can become complex (2011, 23). In the new paradigm of personal responsibility and individual self-reliance, workers are vulnerable to blame for their circumstances especially as sources of collective and individual identity are undermined in the work context. This economic and social vulnerability Standing frames as precarious and those affected are termed 'the precariat' (2011, vi). Standing states that old certainties associated with the work process and the place of participants within its structures are evolving and there is increasing scope for workers to be included in the precariat class, directly or indirectly. The precariat increasingly includes workers that have been understood traditionally in professional and secure terms (Standing 2011, 51). Standing suggests the professional classes are less easily

defined in terms of their conditions of work so that permanent contracts are terminated and participants re-employed on less secure terms (Standing 2011, 47). Whilst not all workers in particular industries will be employed on the same insecure terms, tensions associated with neo-liberal economic relations appear to have penetrated these work environs. Thus, the modern work setting can be characterised not as a place of harmony or unity of purpose but of 'anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation' (Standing 2011, 30).

Precariousness in terms of employment is increasingly pervasive amongst the white collar occupations and service sector within which Quakers typically work (Chapter 5, Table 1). The backdrop to contemporary work in these sectors is one not only of increasing insecurity and but also organisational emphasis on individualised achievement which 'compel people – for the sake of their own material survival – to make themselves the centre of their own planning and conduct in life' (Beck 1992, 88). Thus, the individual has to accept socially ascribed risks, according to Beck and re-imagine engagement with work 'as if it were a work of art' (2000, 54) whilst 'corporate power' defines and disaggregates the extent of its responsibilities in favour of workers in the organisational setting (2000, 54). Beck writes that:

Having lost faith in God, they believe instead in the godlike powers of work to provide everything sacred to them: prosperity, social position, personality, meaning in life, democracy, political cohesion (2000, 63).

In this sense, Beck argues, meritocracy and efficiency in work-lives have transformed into a pervasive form of personal responsibility where individuals are deemed to be 'the authors of their own lives' (2000, 53). The effect of this shift in economic authority has

been to re-position the individual as an isolated component in an environment of tenuous risk (Beck 1992, 92). The apparent effect of this occupational insecurity is that managerial priorities are internalised and the potential consequences of the risk are borne by the individual (Beck 1992, 89). Structurally, the effect, argues Beck, is that boundaries between work and non-work are becoming more fluid and internally competitive and individual flexibility vis-à-vis market opportunities are adopted as a key survival strategy (1992, 142).

This view of risk in the shifting world of work should not be understood simply in terms of individual vulnerability within the economic process. Contrary to Beck's analysis of the increase of risk at work, Edwards et al (2008) state that evidence of insecurity at work that is measurable in empirical labour market and economic terms might not have altered significantly in the early twentieth first century (2008, 1163). There is little evidence of single trend towards less secure terms and conditions, they argue (2008, 1163). Rather, Edwards et al argue that risk should rather be understood in terms of individual expectation which is shaped purposefully by organisations (2008, 1165). In this sense, risk and insecurity is most often an experience that is shaped by particular contexts and is primarily felt at an individual level. So, whilst permanent contracts still predominate overall in employment, 'subjectively, people feel more exposed to uncertainty' (Edwards et al 2008, 1165).

It is evident from my research, however, that the research participants do not share a dystopian view of the contemporary work setting. Affiliates do not experience the work

environment as exploitative (Standing 2011, 129). Rather, affiliates tend to share a view of work as benevolent as well as harmoniously and fundamentally supportive of horizons which they identify as Quaker. In the next sections, I explore the terms upon which affiliates engage with work and suggest that Quakers individualised participation in the work setting can be categorised in utopian terms.

5.5 The Quaker pragmatic lens

In this research, the Quaker impetus to make the world better (Johns 2007, 121) is not depicted as utopian in the sense that it is a naïve pursuit of an ‘unworldly’ or ‘impractical’ concern (Parker et al 2007, 299). In terms of their experience of work, participating Quakers are both worldly and practical. Their experience leads them to take seriously the advantages and disadvantages of active participation in the contemporary work setting.

Fundamentally, the research participants conceptualise engagement with the contemporary work setting in terms of economic necessity. The perceived need to earn money and make a living is evoked in how the affiliates rationalise their participation in the work process. Colin said, *‘Everybody has to work basically; if you don’t work, you don’t have money to pay the rent, buy food; so you have to work.’* In this sense, Quakers aver that they are more-or-less compelled to participate within the contemporary work process in order to provide for their basic material needs. This need has often been met by undertaking part-time and temporary work in the past. Colin had previously held several jobs sometimes simultaneously in order to meet basic costs:

'Secretarial stuff, waiting tables, dancing on tables; professionally would be stretching it, because some people paid me to do it; and when you have a small child you have to earn income.' This depiction of work as a struggle instrumentally to make ends meet is depicted by the research participants in historical retrospect, however. These Quakers do not depict their current employ in these simple terms of economic necessity.

Affiliates in the research also understand work as at least potentially discordant and disharmonious and as emotionally troubling. In the research, five out of twenty research participants stated that their mental health had been affected directly by work and that their mental state had affected their ability to perform their job role. Jack said that he left his work in the NHS because:

I got to the point where I've got to make a change, here, because it was making me ill, making me depressed having to behave in a certain way; there was a part of me that realised, I wasn't who I was and what I was about; you know, very managerialist, always fighting your corner, always fighting battles around money.

However, these deleterious experiences are also framed by Quakers in historical terms. In the research, affiliates did not frame their current experience of work in terms fundamentally prejudicial to their emotional wellbeing. Previous to his current employment, Frank had worked in a *'sick'* office environment where *'I'd be working with people who were drunk at ten o'clock in the morning; six o'clock in the evening there'd be people doing lines of coke in my office.'* He recalled how co-workers directly blamed each other for mistakes and where he was shouted at *'endlessly'*. He decided to leave the organisation and not have a career *'because it was going to kill me'*. Eventually, Frank had left the organisation and had moved to his present job where he no longer

experienced anxiety. Rather, Frank depicted his current experience of work in more ideal terms. He said:

It's really healthy, it's really nice to be told you have done well; I think everybody in their life needs to know that they are not doing it wrong; work's such a huge part of our lives; I have been having it out with people recently because people tell me, it's all very well where you work, why can't it be how I work where you work; I don't see why you can't run a bank like it; run a business like it; where you work's quite small; what's scale got to do with treating each other with respect; people would just abuse it; no, I don't, no-one I work with does; none of the volunteers does, why would they; it's just brainwashed Fordism, that we have to not trust each other, not treat each other with respect; I still maintain that everything that needs to be done, could be done like this; it would cut out an awful lot of unhappiness and stress; and I am very smug, because I am all right.

However, whilst these Quakers might depict their experience of work, especially in historical terms as a personal struggle, they are enthused by their participation in its processes. In particular, the interviewees are optimistic about the potential outcomes of work and how they can contribute to the improvement of human life through workaday engagement.

5.6 Quaker aspirations at work

The research participants do not frame work in dystopic terms but across the cohort Quakers instead depict work and their engagement within it in generous terms. They are well-disposed to active participation in the workaday world. They see their participation as personally meaningful and socially useful. The Quaker affiliates assert that work is a personal and social good in these terms. James worked in the public sector in education and said:

I absolutely love my job; it's great; music is what I do, music is what I am; I am very comfortable doing what I am doing; I love it; I am lucky I have a job I love.

Maddy also worked in education and asserted that his work was an enjoyable aspect of life:

Lots of ways to enjoy life; and different situations; have to see truths at work and find a way of acknowledging them; can't imagine doing a job that is promotional or not valuable for society; encouraging people to want things they don't need or can't afford; I could do work as long as it was contributing something to society; couldn't do a job that damages.

In this sense, work and especially participation within it is seen by the research participants as a significant aspect of Quakers' lives. Work and participation within it is also perceived by the affiliates as fundamentally related to how they see themselves and their place in the social world. According to Luke, work is the '*next most important thing in my life after my family*'. Participating in work, in this sense, is not seen as instrumental or peripheral in Quakers' lives. Instead, participation within work is framed in terms of central, personal importance. Roger said:

Work is an important part of my identity; always has been, always will be whatever I do; voluntary, unpaid, etc.; so I never worry about being made redundant in that sense; or even retiring because there will always be some other kind of work activity; I do think work is important; it's why we are here; it gives me a sense of who I am; it's very important to me in those terms; I would find it difficult to do a job if I didn't think there was intrinsic worth in it; just doing it for the money; I can't justify doing a job that does not turn out to be particularly useful when I could be washing up at the hospice or working with refugees and asylum seekers.

However, these Quakers do not see mere participation within work processes as a singular good. The interviewees also frame their work as goal-oriented in social terms. In other words, work for Quakers is framed by the research participants as socially useful. These Quakers through participation in work assert that they can contribute to society. Moreover, they do not see all work as equally useful. Rather, the affiliates rank

particular occupations in terms of their social import. In this socially useful sense, these Quakers tend not to be critical of their current occupations and imply that their present participation in work has social purpose. Colin who was self-employed said:

I am privileged to have found some work that excites and stretches and fulfils me; but that happens to be what I do for work; could be sitting at a till in Tesco's, god forbid; sometimes you have got to do those jobs if there is nothing else there, but I don't have to.

In this sense, the research participants do not express a merely instrumental connection with their current job. Nor is participation in the work process framed simply as a means to an economic end. Instead, interviewees' engagement with the contemporary work process across the economic and occupational categories is deemed to be purposive and meaningful. In other words, participation in the work process is viewed as an example of how Quakers seek to make a difference by their everyday engagement with the mundane. From this perspective, Quakers are not only doing a job, they are seeking to realise a better world through their workaday participation. In this sense, Quakers give meaning to the work setting and their participation in it which is seen as only one aspect of a wider intention to foment harmony in the world. Jack said:

Reading with children in the school where my murdered friend used to read; my way of putting something back into the universe that her death took out; helping young women to gain confidence is a way to make useful difference in the world of a dry academic subject; doing a higher degree was a way of affirming I am still here and I am going to do something useful; this journey that I had been on since I had a serious illness was all about, what nourishes me, what do I feel happy doing; and to what extent can I make a difference in the world.

In the next sections, I examine how the research participants imagine their participation within the contemporary work setting in terms harmonious with their utopian horizons.

5.7 Quaker utopians

I frame the research cohort as utopians in the contemporary work setting insofar as they express a 'desire for being otherwise, individually and collectively' and an intention to bring about 'human flourishing' (Levitas 2013, x). According to Levitas, the utopian imagination does not make a neutral claim regarding the present day. Instead, it is employed purposefully as a critique of everyday social life as it is presently constructed (Levitas, 108). Utopia, in this sense, is an alternative and better horizon which 'disrupts the taken-for-granted nature of the present' (Levitas 2013, 4). The utopian enterprise aims to achieve this re-imagination of what is socially possible by proposing social alternatives which might be dismissed as, in practice, 'unworldly or impractical' (Parker et al 2007, 299). However, utopian aspirations are not constrained by considering impracticalities in their possible execution. Rather, utopian ambitions rest on an essentially hopeful alternative aspiration that 'living a better life is possible in the here and now' (Sargent 2013, 8). In this utopian sense, the research participants do not frame the contemporary work process as an instrumental means to a personal end but depict their engagement in fundamental terms as socially purposeful. It is a means by which they can move the world to an individually-defined better horizon.

The interviewees do not depict prescriptive conceptualisations of the everyday world. They portray better horizons in terms alternative to utopia as a prescribed ideal (Parker 2007, 298). In Thomas More's depiction of an allegorical ideal city-state, 'Utopia', represents an ideal and stratified way of living (Turner 1965, 13). This account of a non-existent and happy place (Parker et al 2007, 296) is modelled on a satirical commentary

on the human roles and responsibilities within religious societies (Turner 1965, 11). All aspects of life are regulated in More's utopian paradigm and the welfare of all is privileged above individual wants and alternative desires (Turner 1965, 15). Human society in everyday terms is prescribed in terms of rigid uniformity (Parker et al 2007, 297). This ideal imagination of human organisation is depicted as a collective enterprise to 'ensure safety and prevent it from being contaminated with foreign ideas' (Parker et al 2007, 297).

This highly prescriptive form of an ideal world is also a highly contested paradigm, however (Parker 2007, 300). Utopia in this closed and non-negotiable sense can rather be understood in dystopic terms which eschew the multiple and individualised re-imagination of a social ideals (Parker 2007, 300). Utopia also carries a deeper message than a simple, mundane depiction of how social life can be organised otherwise (Turner 1965, 10-11). Instead, utopia can be conceptualised as more than the derogation of explicit and implicit ideas about what constitutes a good society (Levitas 2013, 177). More's utopia, Turner argues, is also a critical re-imagination of the everyday world in ongoing terms (Turner 1965, 12).

Utopia, in this sense, presents better ways of living as a contested and provisional concept which seeks to move beyond a view of a singularly better world in the fixed and settled terms (Dahrendorf 1958, 116; Webb 2008, 127). Utopia is not simply representational of other worlds. It does not only propose other forms of social life. Rather, the utopian concept questions the normative idea of social permanence and

passive human participation (Reedy 2002, 174). From this point of view, utopia is depicted as a process and the idea of 'openness' rather than 'closure' of the project to make a better world is privileged (Levitas 2013, 103). Instead, utopia is depicted by Parker as a continual pursuit of a better way of life (Parker 2003, 222).

It is in this individually enterprising and aspirational sense, which resists the perceived oppression of organisational prescription, that Quakers in the study are depicted in the workaday as utopians. These Quakers view the world as sub-optimal and in need of improvement. In this utopian sense, Quaker participants frame the world as an unfinished project (Levitas 2013, 193). It is through engaging with the contemporary work setting that these Quakers aim, not to complete the world, but to move it to a better horizon more suitable for perceived human interests. The research participants harmonise their intentions to improve the world with the fundamental horizons espoused by the contemporary work organisation. However, the Quaker perspective from which the workaday world is viewed is framed by affiliates in highly individualised terms. Thus, these Quakers compose a collectively complex picture of engagement with the work setting. These terms of the workaday are depicted in a primarily individualised sense and what counts as Quaker is framed by affiliates as a subset of their own personal horizons. In the next sections, I depict Quaker research participants' utopian horizons, how affiliates harmonise them with espoused organisational claims and suggest that, in the collective setting of contemporary work, individual and collective ends are perceived to be well-matched.

5.8 Shared utopian horizons

Irrespective of work setting and occupation, the interviewees express an intention to make the world better from within the contemporary work context. These utopian intentions are portrayed by affiliates in terms of making a difference so that, through participation in the workaday, Quakers can help bring about a better world. This better world is not prescribed for affiliates by the Quaker church, however. For affiliates, what counts in the everyday as making a difference is framed in highly individualised terms. Thus, affiliates move amongst the workaday world and aspire to shape it for the better but do not claim to be directed along a religious path by the Quaker collective. The Quaker religious enterprise in the workaday across contexts is thus framed by the research participants in highly individualised terms.

Pippa stated explicitly that her participation in the contemporary work setting was intended to make the world better. Pippa worked for a charity and had spent most of her working life engaged with ‘*humanitarian*’ projects. Pippa’s work organisation charity materially assisted disadvantaged young people. She said:

You are trying to help them and, you know, injustice in this world just doesn’t work with me...my life is about trying to get things better than when I came into the world; I like to see things getting better; work is a vehicle that helps me do things in the world; I’m trying to make things better.

The charity’s fundamental aim to progress human life coincided with her personal horizons and ‘*fits very much with Quaker interests*’. Pippa, however, did not depict the Quaker tradition in causal terms with regard to how she engaged with the workaday

world. Rather, the horizons of the liberal church tended to be coincidental to her highly individualised aspiration to improve the world.

Pippa averred that some organisational practices within her work setting tended to act unjustly. This malpractice was framed as a misalignment between individualised and organisational fundamental horizons. Pippa framed her engagement as working to redress perceived intra- and extra-organisational injustices. She suggested to managers that volunteers were treated by the charity '*as though they owed us a job*'. Pippa objected to this practice formally, aspiring to '*opening the eyes to seeing there's alternative ways of handling things and the reasons why*'. She also asserted that affiliates should actively pursue their intention to improve the world. The pursuit of justice was framed as primary in the work context and, she remarked, '*if you see something wrong, speak up and say something about it...I hope that Quakers are not always quiet people*.' Pippa asserted that individual interventions can alter the world and that Quakers '*should be doing that; it's dead easy to change some things like that, you know*'. Pippa did acknowledge that there was '*an element of risk*' in taking this approach but she also felt that tensions in the work setting were negotiable and by '*working with intelligent people*' a consequently better horizon was cast as achievable.

Maddy was similarly concerned to improve the world from within his work setting. She depicted her public sector work organisation as aspiring to improve the social disadvantage of young people. Maddy regarded this organisational aspiration to help the unfortunate and vulnerable as mirroring her own, remarking:

I enjoy making a difference to people's lives in big and small ways; I am putting my philosophy about how society should work into action, and trying to treat people who don't get treated with a great deal of respect with humanity.

Society was also perceived by Maddy as working against disadvantaged young people.

Educational institutions were also depicted as privileging organisational rather than individual priorities and Maddy asserted that '*when you see the parents you realise these kids never had a chance*'. Maddy suggested that she engaged with these social problems through participation in the work setting in order to move society to a better horizon. She stated:

It's not about the individual or team or organisation; you are there to serve, to do your duty, serving society; it's about common understandings that are shared by everybody; doing my best for society that has given me a lot and if I can make it a slightly better place for the people who are in it, if I can save one of them from a wasted a life, it's been worth it for me.

However, Maddy suggested that her intention to improve the world on these utopian terms was not undertaken on Quaker grounds nor did Maddy claim to participate in the workaday as a Quaker. Rather, Maddy framed her horizons in highly individual terms.

She said:

Difficult to disentangle the Quaker and non-Quaker really, I don't think I can disentangle which bits are Maddy and which bits are Quaker, and which bits are the person who does this job, because they are all part of the person who goes out and does this job everyday; so there are instances where I am particularly aware of it; I might be asked why I did that and I will say because I believe in the truth or equality, but a lot of the time I am not very conscious of it, being Quaker is part of how I process the world; I don't have to say this is the Quaker way, I don't believe in conflict, but I am not sure I did before I became a Quaker.

In this sense, Quaker engagement with the contemporary work setting is framed by affiliates in terms of their harmonising intentions. Injustices and discord in the unfinished

world, from this perspective, can be redressed and a greater social harmony promoted. Quakers thus espouse a utopian inclination to move the world from within the work setting towards a better horizon and they see these individual horizons as fundamentally aligned with those espoused by the work setting. Tom said: *'Work magnifies what you can do in your life as an individual; you have to earn money, you might as well make a difference at the same time, ideally.'* Participation in the work process is thus seen by affiliates to facilitate their utopian ambitions. Quaker utopian aspirations are shared with their work organisations regardless of industrial category. This conceptualisation of the work setting as ambitious to improve the world is not constrained by the particulars of Quaker 'white collar' experience. It is evidenced by affiliates in the financial sector as well as in education, medicine and allied professions whose discourses are depicted by affiliates as explicitly caring.

Research participants across economic and occupational categories match their intentions to improve the world with the perceived aspirations of their work organisations. In this sense, interviewees work typically in white collar, service sector occupations which are perceived by affiliates as personally meaningful and socially useful. Affiliates participate in the work setting on these terms and espouse a view that these horizons are also harmonious with those of the work organisation. So, whilst economic and occupational categories indicate jobs and their contexts, it is how these Quakers perceive and re-imagine their engagement with the work setting with reference to their utopian aspirations which more accurately portrays the affiliates' workaday participation.

5.9 Money-making re-imagined

Annie worked in the private, market sector as a financial trader. She depicted her work setting as '*intense*' and '*ruthless*'. In her previous company, '*their moral code is how we make money.*' She had worked with '*monsters*' in this company which:

is incredibly political; the bullying behaviours of certain individuals; some of the things they did were just awful in terms of how they treated colleagues, but specifically juniors; stopping career progression, constant aggressive verbal behaviour; they just want to be in total control of everything that goes on.

Annie said that the intensity of her work had had a '*significant psychological effect on me*' and had contributed to the break-up of her marriage. However, Annie was much happier within her current work organisation. Its practices were more '*collegiate*' and aggressive behaviour was not tolerated by the company. Annie stated that she had a lot more autonomy within her present job and her career had also progressed in this congenial environment.

Annie did not only portray her work in terms of everyday practices which were more-or-less conversant with her personal happiness and ambitions. She also re-imagined her horizons as fundamentally harmonious with those apparently espoused by the work organisation. Despite an intense and ruthlessly competitive organisational backdrop, Annie's work, in her eyes, opened up a window into a world of danger and morality that was ripe with religious opportunity.

Annie had been required to deal in the everyday with clients from whom she felt morally estranged. Her contacts included officials in former Soviet countries who were

apparently strongly implicated with large scale corruption, extortion and contracted murder. For her, the collective conscience of the Quaker movement weighed heavily at work on this point. She felt that working amongst a criminal class on equal terms in order to make money would have been unacceptable for others in the Quaker church. '*I would have thought a lot of Friends would say: well, look, someone is accused of murdering someone...then, you should never do business with them.*' However, Annie re-conceptualised Quakers' imagined disapproval at her practical connivance. Instead, Annie's eschewed fixed and unbending horizons and, in a spirit of functional forgiveness, '*to do business, very much eyes open*'. Annie did not recourse to divine intervention or to Quaker church guidance. Rather, with whom and how she conducted her workaday affairs was understood from a highly individualised perspective.

Annie re-imagined the concept of finance as a moral enterprise, of '*economics correcting behaviours*', and highlighted how international finance can be orientated by individual and collective actions at work to enhance the lives of the poor and the dispossessed. She cited her work in Asia helping to restructure '*sensationally corrupt*' overseas state banks. For her, this was a just enterprise, repairing economic infrastructures to prevent the further exploitation of ordinary citizens by political and economic elites.

This kind of corporate engagement, in Annie's view, made a compassionate difference to ordinary people's lives. In other words, Annie believed that, whilst the idea of accumulating material wealth and its promotion as desirable does not cohere

particularly neatly with the corporate view of Quaker faith for some affiliates, in practical terms, the beneficial effects of engaging with the financial process at an organisational level, can materially improve lives.

Research participants across the economic and occupational categories undertake this process of re-imagining their horizons as harmonious with those espoused by the work organisation. Whether interviewees work in public or private sectors is not consequential, in this sense: the Quaker affiliates frame their participation in the work process as an intention to improve the world regardless. These individualised Quaker horizons are perceived to be harmonious with those espoused by the work organisation. In the next section, I suggest that these individualised horizons are cast in liberal Quaker terms as fluid and provisional.

5.10 Individualised horizons at work

The research participants depict their participation in the work setting in terms of the pursuance of fundamental horizons which are open to individual interpretation from within the work setting. What counts as improving the world, in this context, is thus not fixed and settled nor is it seen as prescribed. Rather, interviewees in white collar, service sector occupations frame their work in liberating terms within which they can move and explore their utopian ambitions implicitly supported organisationally by both the Quaker church and work. These Quakers in the work setting espouse horizons which match Dandelion's depiction of the liberal perspective in progressive and experiential terms, as 'tied to nothing in terms of doctrine, to no particular text, no

particular rendering of the tradition' (2007, 133). Research participants' intentions are not depicted as unconstrained in the work context. Instead, the affiliates frame their religious and work enterprise as a single project conjoined by an ongoing view that a final utopian horizon is in practice unreachable.

Dinah, a self-employed financier, depicted her participation in the work setting as continually '*searching and re-challenging*' in order to find '*the ultimate right answer that God would have come to*'. As an employee in her former job, Dinah had become disillusioned with that particular work context and was now '*much more comfortable working for myself; running your own business*'. Decision-making in self-employment was understood by Dinah as an onerous responsibility because:

the boss will always carry the can at the end of the day...there are more pressures which challenge you as a Quaker in my position; pressures on employees are from a line manager; they are different from the ones I have.

However, Dinah also framed the responsibilities of her work in Quaker terms as liberating. Her increased personal responsibility also apparently entailed more control over the work process and this enabled her to perform good works as well as sustaining her business. Dinah portrayed her engagement with her job in '*ethical*' terms. She considered herself scrupulous and honest in how she executed her responsibilities. Other rival businesses were depicted as not always as scrupulous and might be willing to cut corners to suit the clients' interests rather than pursue an honest path. Dinah said:

Truth and integrity, I think it is just the emphasis that Quakers put on that side of things; integrity is probably the biggest challenge of all; because that is very demanding on different levels; it challenges what you stand for as a person; how you represent yourself.

Dinah suggested that she was not interested in working outside the boundaries of integrity as she saw it. However, there were pressures within her business which made this approach less than straightforward.

In order to serve the clients best interests, she depicted a context of competing pressures. Her professional body '*would probably take a fairly ethical stance on most issues but then what is an ethical stance on issues?*' In order to help clients fully, Dinah said that she had to provide them with comprehensive information upon which they could make an informed decisions. Whilst not illegal, the advice which Dinah proffered to clients provoked wider concerns for her, especially with regard to proposing individually advantageous financial affairs without compromising her social conscience.

Dinah suggested that she did not have an answer to this and other dilemmas she deemed ethical in her workaday world. However, the belief that there was no single solution to these ethical issues was not framed by her as compromising her Quaker horizons. As a Quaker, she felt able to individually decide how to interpret integrity in the everyday and, fundamentally, she said, in her everyday work context, '*there's no conflict with any sort of religious or Quaker stance*'. The complication in Dinah's view was not that her work was ethically compromised but rather how manageable were her individual horizons in the everyday. Dinah suggested that the Quaker testimonies were helpfully '*fundamentally right*' and depicted her interpretation of them as integrated into her workaday world. She said:

So very definitely, Quaker faith has a place in business; it influences what you do, how you treat people, employees as well as clients; everything is so

intertwined and one thing affects one aspect of your life and then impinges back on something else.

However, the Quaker tradition was not understood to fix the terms which defined Dinah's ethical stance in this setting. Rather, Quaker horizons were depicted by her as subject to individual interpretation. She said that, in general terms, *'business puts pressure on you, challenge to truth and integrity; I haven't found a perfect answer; life and business is so many shades of grey; you struggle for solutions but don't always find them.'* In Dinah's view, seeking particular solutions was framed as a *'journey'* and that this path was effectively without end. She said:

You may come to a wrong conclusion in someone else's view, which is equally valid; which is why you have got to continue searching and re-challenging; because you never know whether you have got to the right answer; the right answer in terms of the ultimate right answer, that God would have come to; because we are only human; so we come to our conclusion honestly and people have to accept that if arrived at honestly; I may come up with the wrong answers, but if you are honest with yourself, it is difficult for anyone to criticise you.

Scully suggests that the highly individualised boundaries in terms of which affiliates construct what counts as Quaker lacks theoretical coherence (2008, 109). However, this lack of coherence in these terms is not framed as problematic when conceptualising the contemporary liberal tradition. Insofar as research participants can re-imagine the tradition in highly individualised terms, Quakers can be understood to pursue a utopian impetus to improve the world from within the context of contemporary work. This disinclination to depict in fixed terms, relational to the liberal church, utopian horizons within the work context supports Scully's conceptualisation of the contemporary Quaker tradition. Instead, Scully argues, the Quaker tradition can be framed in practice as a *'moral collage'* (2008, 109). In other words, Quakers' ethical responses tend to be

based provisionally on what 'seemed right' (2008, 110). In Scully's terms, Quakers do not rely on the substantive content of their moral judgements to define their ethical engagement with the world. Rather, what counts as Quaker in this sense is not collectively prescribed but is framed by affiliates as an authentic individualised re-imagination of the church.

From this point of view, what counts as Quaker does not depend on following particular rules or the employment of a 'killer argument' (Scully 2008, 109). Quaker horizons are not depicted by affiliates in fixed or settled terms. Nor are they constructed in terms prescribed by the Quaker church, Christian texts or other belief traditions. Instead, according to Scully, Quakers' horizons are shaped in the particular and are articulated in a pragmatic sense. What counts as Quaker within the social context, however, is that affiliates frame their everyday horizons and responses in moral terms. In this highly individualised sense, then, what counts as Quaker is a process of conceptualising one's relationship to the world in moral terms. Affiliates, therefore, can make a Quaker claim in the social setting by individually interpreting and pursuing 'the best way forward'. Coherence in Quaker collective terms is marginalised and, in this sense, within the contemporary work context, affiliates are able to pursue utopian horizons from an individualised point of view whilst maintaining their Quaker claims.

In the next section, I explore how affiliates conceptualise the individual rather than the Quaker perspective as primary in the work setting. I suggest that the research

participants do not pursue their horizons as Quaker in the workaday but in individualised terms as if they were Quakers.

5.11 Working like Quakers

Across all economic and occupational categories, affiliates assert that what counts as Quaker is not a primary factor in how they imagine their engagement with contemporary work. Instead, what counts as Quaker for the individual affiliate is affirmed but not prescribed by their affiliation. Quakers, as adult converts to the church, do not depict their affiliation to have caused how they relate to the work setting. There is no religious conversion narrative which is portrayed in relation to their occupations. To adapt Carrothers' (2007, 134) terms, Quaker affiliation does not cause Quakers to 'have' work, or a particular job or work in a particular work setting. Rather, it allows affiliates to re-imagine occupational paths laid out prior to church conversion as Quaker upon affiliation. What comes first, in this sense, according to Quakers, is the individual and what counts as Quaker in their eyes is seen as subordinate to this view.

Annie had been introduced to the Quaker faith through a conversation with one of her in-laws after years of looking for alternatives to her original Catholic beliefs which she now regarded as *'just a cultural thing, I don't believe in that stuff any more'*. Catholic doctrine was framed as oppressive and its teachings regarding the divine were depicted as fundamentally incredible. *'I don't believe in God the way that Catholics believe in God,'* she said. In this sense, the Catholic church was not deemed to be pertinent to Annie's religious enterprise because *'I don't get anything from it'*.

In contrast, Annie depicted Quaker affiliation to be like '*wearing a comfortable shoe*', which she said, '*fitted on a lot of different dimensions instantly; there wasn't any edges there*'. Affiliation to the church thus enabled Annie to '*sculpt her beliefs*'. These personal beliefs, she framed as primary in relation to Quaker horizons which were depicted in secondary and subordinate terms. Claims to the contrary were portrayed by Annie as inauthentic and pretentious. She said:

I don't kind of wear a Quaker badge; to be honest, I don't feel that there is such a thing as Quaker beliefs; I feel that I have a set of beliefs, and that's my beliefs, and pretending that I have some other beliefs that aren't my beliefs because they're Quaker beliefs or Catholic beliefs or whatever beliefs; it's not particularly effective with me.

Quakers espouse an intention to move the world from within the work setting towards a better horizon. Quakers claim this aspiration is shared with the work setting. However, affiliates frame their horizons in highly individualised terms so that what counts as Quaker in the work context is shaped primarily to the individual self-concept. This highly individualised conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker is evidenced in affiliates' views irrespective of occupational or economic setting. The primacy of the individual to determine for themselves what counts as Quaker is universal in the research cohort. In this sense, affiliates' perspectives have coherence only insofar as they frame their utopian claims in highly individualised Quaker terms and it is the individual horizon which is seen by affiliates to persist. Roger was an administrator for a charity which was:

fundamentally committed to justice, redressing injustice and to truthfulness; and that chimes with Quakers; there was nothing in the organisation that was any problem at all. And my values were the values of the organisation before I was a Quaker and especially after.

However, Roger stated that his utopian engagement with the work context was undertaken on highly individualised terms. He suggested that that what counts as Quaker was problematic and that conceptualising the individual and the Quaker was fundamentally incoherent in the work context. Roger said:

I was the person who put on the silly red nose and raised money for Comic Relief: but was that because I was a Quaker?; I was the person who pushed disability issues, but was that particularly because I was a Quaker, or was that me? I don't know; I try to not just deal with people as just colleagues, having a proper relationship, having a genuine sort of interest; I probably work nearer full time on part time pay; now is that because I am a Quaker?; I am not sure how much of this is helpful to your work, Mark, but I am not sure how much of it is because I am a Quaker; indeed how much of the way I relate to people is because I am a Quaker generally.

In this highly individualised sense, what counts as Quaker for participants in the contemporary work context is an intention to improve the world from within the work setting. However, this research has also uncovered that what counts as Quaker beyond this construction of how affiliates' participate in the work setting is less than clear. Colin said:

I joined the society because I realised I am Quaker; it's not like I became female, I am female; I guess I just am Quaker I guess I maybe I didn't name it; my work is something that I do, not something that I am; Quaker is not something that I do, it's something that I am; I am always a Quaker when I am me at work.

Affiliates are disinclined to ascribe what counts as Quaker causally to how they participate in the organisational setting. Instead, the research participants identify fundamentally with participation in the work process in highly individual terms. Also, what counts as Quaker is deemed by affiliates to precede their affiliation and is only coincidental with how the church collectively identifies its aims. Quaker affiliation is also an experimental conversion (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989, 5). In other words, whilst

Quaker affiliation tends to be framed in terms of coming home, it is also a provisional form of conversion whereby the religious enterprise is 'potentially forever on the move' (Dandelion 2007, 133). In this sense, the interviewees do not regard work and their participation within its processes as Quakers but they rather do so as if they were Quakers, privileging a highly individualised 'best way' of progressing their utopian claims within the contemporary work setting from a primarily individual rather than Quaker perspective.

5.12 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I categorised Quaker research participants in terms of occupational and industrial categories. I portrayed affiliates as working in service sector occupations mainly within public and non-marketised organisations. The interviewees tend to see engagement with the mundane world as an integrated aspect of their faith tradition. They also express a pragmatic view of work insofar as it is a means by which they can earn a living. However, the participants also expressed an aspiration to make better the world from within the work setting. In this sense, work is framed by the participants in meaningful as well as practical and instrumental terms. I frame these Quaker horizons in utopian terms as intending to make better the temporal world. They are viewed by participants as shared with the claimed intentions of the work organisation. The research participants, though, engage with the utopian aspirations of the work setting in highly individualised terms. The horizons of the church do not prescribe affiliates' responses. Rather, participation in the work setting is framed by affiliates primarily in

autonomous terms so that what counts as Quaker is understood as affirming not causing how they engage individually with the workaday world.

CHAPTER SIX

MANAGING DISHARMONY IN THE WORK SETTING

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the research participants' discordant and disharmonious experience of the work setting. I trace the boundaries of the interviewees' harmonious utopian claims in this context. Thus, I refine further how the affiliates' engagement with the work process is categorised in utopian terms. I use Arlie Hochschild's (1983) feminist idea of emotional labour to analyse the Quaker claim that there is that of God in everyone. By viewing the research participants through this lens, I argue that Quakers negotiate both their espoused Quaker self-concept simultaneously with the organisationally-defined job role. This negotiation can be problematic for affiliates when individualised and organisational claims are perceived by affiliates as no longer aligned.

I argue also that this misalignment can be traced further in the work setting. I propose that Quaker research participants typically work in settings within which articulation of church affiliation is understood to be acceptable within everyday discourses. However, the liberal Quaker tradition is not always felt to be supported within the work organisation. I also examine interviewees' perceptions of the Coalition government cutbacks and their effects within their work organisations. When Quaker and organisational horizons are perceived to be no longer aligned, affiliates perceive expediting the liberal church tradition as practically problematic. I conclude, in this chapter, that what counts for the research participants as Quaker in the workaday is a highly individualised conceptualisation of the tradition notwithstanding affiliates

tendency to work in contexts which accommodate this liberal Quaker perspective and its exposition.

6.2 Conspicuous Quaker claims

The research participants work in settings which they depict as congruent with their espoused fundamental utopian horizons. Quaker affiliates, in this sense, do not only regard their fundamental aspirations as matched with those espoused by the organisation. They also engage with work contexts which they see as contoured to their everyday practices and utopian aspirations. Thus, when Martin suggests that *'there is nothing in my job that stops me being a Quaker'*, his statement cannot only be applied to the idea that his utopian intentions are matched to those espoused by the work organisation. Martin's comment can also be applied to the practical, workaday conditions within which his utopian intentions are expedited. In this everyday sense, the contemporary work context is seen by these affiliates to support their utopian aspirations whereby both means and ends are viewed as aligned within the workaday.

This conceptualisation of the contemporary work setting, cast by affiliates as supportive of fundamental intentions in practice, can be observed by examining how affiliates' perceive their church affiliation as conspicuous in the work context. Across all 'white collar' occupations, irrespective of industrial or occupational category, Quaker research participants frame their church affiliation in conspicuous terms.

The interviewees also depict their church affiliation as not only conspicuous but also as accepted within and by the work organisation. In this everyday sense, these Quakers experience no tension in the work setting in religious terms. In this supportive setting, the research participants feel able to pursue their intentions to make better the world openly as Quakers from within the everyday work setting. Pippa said:

Well, I have to (mention Quaker affiliation) in a sense, because I have so much time off doing Quaker things;...we have done quite a lot of talking about Quakerism, explaining what it is, the way we behave;...I don't mind at all; so it's fairly easy conversation.

Practice and fundamental aspiration are depicted as married, in this sense. The research participants work in organisations which not only share their utopian intentions to make the world better in a fundamental sense. They also work in organisations which in everyday and organisational terms are seen as tolerant of their religious affiliation and which are not seen to affect their utopian claims, implicitly or explicitly espoused.

6.2.1 In-work relationships

Interviewees frame their affiliation as facilitating relationships with co-workers and the conspicuousness of Quaker affiliation is depicted by affiliates in frictionless interpersonal terms. Gina worked in education and saw her horizons as fundamentally well-matched to those of the organisation. She said:

Ideas on equality mesh with Quaker beliefs; rationale would be a socialist one which meshes very closely with my Quaker beliefs; I don't separate them, really; how we live our lives and relate to people is both social and spiritual.

Gina asserted that these perspectives were not only aligned in the abstract. She believed that her Quaker intentions were both implicitly and explicitly evidenced in her

work setting. She said that, *'Everyone knows I am a Quaker.'* This affiliation with the tradition was not only declared, however. Gina depicted her practice of pointedly refusing to use co-workers' given titles because they denoted interpersonal inequalities. She declined to attend some formal events which she felt were based on socially constructed assumptions about what counts as meaningful in the organisation and at times she eschewed formal dress codes at work because they indicated differences of status. Her opinions regarding the work setting were also apparently gently mocked by her co-workers as reflecting typical Quaker impracticalities. However, these dispositions as well as active articulations of her Quaker affiliation were depicted by Gina as not only conspicuous but also as socially acceptable within her work context.

6.2.2 Quaker employability

The research participants' affiliation is not only visible to co-workers within the work setting; it is also organisationally conspicuous in formal terms. They evidence their affiliation to the church prior to employment specifically during the application process. Roger, Tom and Bernard worked in charitable enterprises, education and local government respectively. They stated that there were explicit references to Quaker affiliation on their curriculum vitae. These references to Quaker affiliation were framed in experiential terms as well as the skill requirements of the job role. Roger said,

A lot of my hobbies are doing Quaker things; it's on my application form as it's a significant part of what I do in my non-work time, and it was relevant; for example, it was Quakers that trained me as a small group facilitator.

In this sense, Quaker affiliation is apparently not only acceptably conspicuous but is also viewed by the affiliates as directly or indirectly pertinent to the job role. Quaker

affiliation is not framed by the interviewees as oppositional to, but as congruent with, and pertinent to, their occupation role in everyday terms. This congruence, apparently, is implicitly not an impediment to the job role but it can also be instrumentalised within the work organisation.

6.2.3 Employment as Quakers

The research participants also state that their church affiliation is, in practice, supported actively by the organisation. In the work setting, affiliates are sometimes deployed instrumentally as Quakers by the organisation. Frank worked for a charity as an advisor and his role required that he spoke to often extremely distressed individuals regarding intimate and sensitive matters. Frank was identified by his work organisation as an individual who held religious beliefs. The work organisation told Frank that clients with religious beliefs might prefer to talk with an advisor who openly expresses a religious faith. Frank said:

I think clients like talking to me about stuff they don't necessarily like talking to our more atheist staff about; not because they feel judged but because it's just easier to connect in that way.

Frank was not resistant to the charity's utilisation of his Quaker faith in these overtly instrumental terms. Rather, he felt that his Quaker horizons were affirmed by the supportive disposition of the work organisation. In this sense, Frank asserted that Quaker and organisational horizons were shared within the practice of his job role whilst his affiliation was also depicted as a potential asset for the aims of the work organisation. He said:

I am identified as Quaker in a work context because we have quite a few callers who are church-goers, and I feel quite comfortable being very open; when I mentioned being interviewed for this research it was; oh, it's only Frank and his fluffy bunny kitten Sundays, they were very supportive.

Quaker affiliation in this sense was conspicuous not only for co-workers.

Organisationally, his church affiliation was also supported by the work collective and made visible in practice to service users. In Frank's view, Quaker and work horizons in practice within the organisational setting were fundamentally aligned. He said:

I feel like I am being given the opportunity to express my faith, being able to offer that kind of support and be supportive; and all the concepts of sufferings and looking after each other; very Christian ideals about treating people as you wish to be treated; I have never had a job before where I could do that; it's very hard to find a place where you can work where you can use who you are inside; and project it out into what you are doing.

However, this construction of Frank's Quaker affiliation as conspicuous by the organisation was not regarded by him as tendentious or compromising to his religious perspective. Rather, his conspicuous affiliation was framed in benign terms and as harmonious with the fundamental horizons of the work organisation as well as with its practices.

6.2.4 When work and Quaker collide

This conspicuous harmony which typifies how Quaker horizons are practised in the everyday work context can be observed through the outlying example of Jo-Jo's workaday world. The disharmony which Jo-Jo experienced within the organisational setting was exceptional in terms of the Quaker workaday experience. Jo-Jo was a skilled worker on the shopfloor of an engineering company. He depicted the work

organisation as fundamentally discordant with his Quaker intentions and his social intercourse in this setting was portrayed as problematic and difficult to manage. Jo-Jo depicted his Quaker affiliation as conspicuous in the work setting. However, he also portrayed the organisation as unsupportive of his affiliation. His Quaker affiliation was positioned by Jo-Jo in heterotopic terms (Pilgrim 2008, 52). In other words, the Quaker tradition was juxtaposed alternatively to the normative social practices of the organisation which, likewise, framed it in oppositional terms. Jo-Jo saw his work setting in fundamentally discordant terms. He said:

I feel so out of place sometimes at work, I do; when they are just talking about their usual banal stuff; about the girls they have slept with; or how good they are at fighting; it just doesn't, I can't really relate to people, you know, a lot; and all that crap I am having to deal with at work.

At the start of his employment, Jo-Jo had engaged the owner of the company in a conversation about religion. However, Jo-Jo soon realised that the owner did not share his horizons. Jo-Jo said:

We were just talking about Jesus Christ...and he said I don't believe in Jesus; there were other things; it was always to do with money; if you cost him money, he'd be up in arms...he were just not the nicest person to work for.

Jo-Jo was not deterred by this apparent discrepancy between his horizons and those espoused by the work organisation. He enjoyed his work and mostly the companionship of his co-workers. He conversed openly about his Quaker affiliation within workaday context. He said:

I never went into the workshop environment saying I'm big on Jesus or whatever, I just carried myself, you don't have to go on about religion, Jesus Christ, because people shut down; only just recently discovered the Quakers, I started talking about the Quakers.

In his conversations with his co-workers, he revealed in the factory workshop how he had actively participated in Quaker Meeting for Worship. He described the process of the Quaker Meeting for Worship where affiliates are allowed to openly contribute if moved to publicly minister to the congregation. He depicted his co-workers as enthusiastic for more detail but also as sceptical of church processes. There was no opposition to his affiliation, according to Jo-Jo, although co-workers did express disagreement with his beliefs. Discord in the everyday more openly emerged in this context when, Jo-Jo stated, he took up an oppositional position towards management.

Jo-Jo said he had stood up for a co-worker who had been bullied by management.

There had apparently been a high turnover of workers in Jo-Jo's factory as the owner intimidated workers on the basis of how more or less useful they were in the work process. Jo-Jo said:

I enjoyed the job; I enjoyed the company; the lads on the shopfloor were brilliant; but the boss; he could be total arsehole; some of the things that man did to people, you know; I must have had about twenty different assistants in the five years that I was working there because of the way he treated them.

Jo-Jo's bullied colleague, Zamzam, was a casual worker who was at the bottom of the factory hierarchy. Jo-Jo stated:

When we got busy, they'd get Zamzam to come and give us a lift for a couple of months or four weeks; but he was always the butt of all the abuse because he was like, like I say, there was like a pecking order there...the better you were, the less aggravation you'd get off him; you'd have like the skilled men, Dick, who'd been there longest, then myself, then Eric; and then you had the apprentice; the assistant; and then you'd have the whipping boy, you know, who was only there on a four week contract.

Zamzam was also debilitatingly unwell but the work organisation was unsympathetic to his position and anyone who was unable to work due to illness generally. Jo-Jo said:

We don't get sick money, we don't get sick money if you are off. You just don't get paid; that's it; so, he was still coming in and he was struggling like; he was doing a job where he had to crouch down on the floor and it was taking him a long time.

Hearing that Zamzam had been called a '*fat, slow, dying bastard*' by the boss, Jo-Jo complained to the management on his friend's behalf. Jo-Jo also protested at the same time about his working conditions and his rate of pay. The management, though, framed his opposition pathologically. They asserted that his explicit contention of their ends was the result of '*brainwashing*' by the Quaker church. They had discovered his Quaker affiliation apparently second-hand from co-workers on the shopfloor who had relayed Jo-Jo's religious views. The management did not regard Jo-Jo's Quaker affiliation in legitimate terms. Rather, Jo-Jo's putative Quaker motivations were regarded sceptically by the management who unilaterally imposed new, non-negotiable conditions on his employment. Jo-Jo maintained his principled position and finally decided to leave the company.

In the research, Jo-Jo's case is an outlier insofar as he works in manufacturing setting and in skilled manual work. Differences between his position in the work context and those of other Quakers are thus apparent in these terms. However, he is also an outlier in terms of the conspicuousness of his Quaker affiliation and insofar as it was not viewed by the organisation as congruent with its intentions. Jo-Jo's social practice as a Quaker is perceived by the organisation as alternative and oppositional to managerial

authority. This perception is also atypical in terms of the Quaker experience insofar as management overtly resist this perceived challenge. Jo-Jo's challenge to management was ascribed by them to his Quaker affiliation. In the opinion of Jo-Jo, management had framed oppositional behaviour in religious terms as resistant to the exposition of managerial authority.

This adversarial managerial perception of Quaker affiliation is also atypical of other interviewees' experience. Quaker affiliation is not only depicted as conspicuous by the cohort but it is also regarded, in practical terms, as congruent with the job role. It is therefore seen by affiliates as implicitly acceptable within the work collective. Jo-Jo said:

He (the boss) said to me at one point, you know, when I were upstairs; we all thought you had been brainwashed by the Quakers; I said, it had nothing to do with that; he said, well you had never been on about religion before (attending the Quaker church); I said, I know, but I never went to church before but I always carried Jesus in my heart.

Although the construction of Quaker affiliation as oppositional to managerial authority is unique in the research, the organisational context of Jo-Jo's discordant experience, however, also points to the view that Quaker everyday congruence is situated. In other words, belief and its exposition adapts to, and is shaped through, its social location (Day 2011, 193). Moreover, the research participants work in organisations which accept and even affirm their church affiliation. In this sense, it can be personally advantageous in some contexts to be conspicuously Quaker in the same way that it can also be disadvantageous in others. Co-workers frame affiliates' responses in Quaker terms and the interviewees accept this religious ascription by others in the work context. The configuration of what counts as Quaker in social terms is not cast by affiliates as

prominent or heterodox within all work settings. Instead, it appears to be delineated most prominently in relation to contexts untypical of the current Quaker experience.

This conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker as socially located is emphasised by Jo-Jo's experience after he resigned. He began work at another manufacturing company. However, he said:

I've copped for probably two of the worst guys I've ever met; I mean, I've met a lot of people in the manufacturing game, rough and ready guys, you know, arrogant sometimes; this guys, guys, is the most arrogant guy I've ever met in my life, final; way head and shoulders above anybody else.

Despite moving jobs, Jo-Jo was apparently trapped in a cycle of discord from which he found it difficult to escape. Unlike the rest of the cohort whose harmonious experience of the everyday was typical, Jo-Jo depicted work settings which were not only unsupportive of conspicuous Quaker affiliation but actively hostile towards religiosity and its perceived horizons. Jo-Jo portrayed the social intercourse within the work setting as one of casual racism and misogyny. Individual weakness was apparently socially exploited by his co-workers. Jo-Jo had also retreated from making his Quaker affiliation conspicuous in the work setting. Jo-Jo said:

I don't say I go to Quaker meetings; I just don't want the abuse in my life. but like I say, I don't mention it; oh my God, I can just imagine if I said, I go to church and I'm a Quaker; that would make my life even more of a misery than what it is, you know...because I have never worked with a bigger bunch of piss-taking bastards in my life.

In this discordant context, conspicuous Quaker affiliation is suppressed. Jo-Jo regarded overtly declaring his affiliation as inhibited because his peace of mind and personal wellbeing was threatened. He said, *'I deal with it the best I can but some days I just*

dread going in.' Jo-Jo, therefore, managed his utopian impetus by adopting an alternative and more evasive everyday strategy than he had previously practised though this entailed feeling conflicted about this avoidance. Jo-Jo was determined '*not to stand out too much*'. When he witnessed unsettling comments '*now I just ignore it, try not to say anything...I don't want to say "you are out of order"; I am a bit of a coward.*' Despite his espoused intentions towards promoting a better workaday world from within the workaday, Jo-Jo's aspirations in the everyday were consistently unsettled because his work colleagues' practice was perceived as alternative and oppositional to his own. He said:

All they seem to be interested in is how much they are earning; all (the foreman) wants to do work, work, work and every year, it's about competition; how much money he can make; he's got no faith; they've got no faith in them you know.

Jo-Jo struggled to maintain a claimed peaceable, Quaker disposition in this environment which was hostile to his religious horizons. He expressed extreme personal antipathy towards some of his co-workers and suggested that social intercourse at work was practically unmanageable in Quaker terms. He described one co-worker in particular as, '*all the things that you dislike in a human being; nothing is off limits to him, nothing is sacred*'. Jo-Jo felt inclined to be generous towards his colleague but depicted this inclination as too challenging to put effectively into practice. He said, '*I focus on the good things in a person sometimes, it's hard to find much good in some people.*' Jo-Jo had tried to focus on the 'good' in his co-worker but found only that he had three children and he liked dogs. He suggested that, despite his intentions, '*the guys I work with, a lot of it is just beyond forgiveness and beyond redemption*'. Jo-Jo concluded that it was not possible within this particular work organisation to forsake his personal

antipathy towards some of his co-workers and live out his Quaker claims congruently and conspicuously.

6.3 Contouring Quaker to the workaday

It appears that Jo-Jo is not only a Quaker 'outlier' (Aguinis et al 2013, 272) in terms of his occupational profile but also in terms of how he framed the conspicuousness of his church affiliation and the collective's responses. Atypically, Jo-Jo did not frame his church affiliation as frictionless with regard to interpersonal relationships. It was also framed as an impediment to the continuance of his employment within the work setting. Jo-Jo also averred that he felt compelled to disguise his Quaker affiliation. Co-workers had apparently betrayed his trust by mentioning his affiliation to management who had re-framed his religious claims in terms of mental illness.

Although atypical of the cohort in this sense, Jo-Jo was not an outlier in terms of the precariousness of his employment. Trudi was recently semi-retired. She had been in post for twenty years but had only been employed on temporary contracts for the duration of this period. She also defined her work organisation in terms of a '*tremendous amount of politicking*' which was problematic for those on temporary contracts. She said:

There's this other massive problem about not being recognised; I was on a short-term contracts; even though I was a senior employee, you are still subject to funding, subject to politics; so you had a cauldron of departments working against each other;...you know, who gets the promotion, who gets the position; and a position like ends up being well, who gets the sack, you know when your contract isn't renewed.

Trudi, however, despite the precariousness of her terms of employment, did not depict her Quaker affiliation as being in conflict with the workaday setting.

Rather, Trudi stated that religious traditions were openly followed in her institution so that co-workers '*they're all at it, you know, they're having prayer meetings and Bible meetings*'. Trudi stated that religious belief was positioned not only conspicuously but was overt in her work setting. She averred that in-group bias was actually employed by decision-makers to favour the employment of a coterie of Christian employees. Trudi expressed disapproval in writing at this prejudice towards religious affiliation. However, despite her oppositional stance with regard to sectional interests within the organisation, the precariousness of her employment was never attributed to Quaker conspicuousness. On the contrary, Trudi felt able to mobilise her critical disposition to challenge the hegemony of religion within pockets of her work organisation without apparently compromising her employment status.

Thus, in terms of organisational resistance to conspicuous affiliation in the research, Jo-Jo, rather than Trudi, is framed as an outlier (Aguinis et al 2013, 272). He depicts a work context unique in the cohort insofar as it is perceived as overtly resistant to religious affiliation. It is depicted by Jo-Jo as alternative to his perspective in terms of the single-minded money-making priorities of its owners. But Jo-Jo also depicts the work context as resistant to conspicuous religious affiliation insofar as the perceptions of management regarding his Quaker affiliation materially affected his employment status. He was finally subject to marginalisation by organisational authority. Unlike the

rest of the cohort, Jo-Jo stated that he did not reveal his Quaker affiliation. In this sense, his Quaker affiliation was not formally expedited within the work. Whilst it is located inconspicuously in the work setting in terms of Jo-Jo's personal beliefs which he no longer revealed, it was framed as incomplete and frustrated. In this sense, whereas Martin claimed that *'there's nothing in my job that stops me being Quaker'*, Jo-Jo's Quaker claims in the work setting were repressed. Jo-Jo's strategic adaptation to the social context, in Day's (2011) terms as Quaker in his new work setting was to tactically avoid possible confrontation. In response to perceived racist comments, Jo-Jo said that:

(I) try not to say anything, I don't want to stand out too much; I don't want to start saying, you are out of order; I am a bit of a coward, for not just; you're not going to change those guys; no, all I'm going to do is make it harder for myself.

In this sense, the research participants' practice does not transcend the normative terms of the everyday organisational context. What counts as Quaker for affiliates in terms of everyday practice thus tends to contour the work setting. Specifically, what counts as Quaker practice for affiliates tends to contour how far organisations see conspicuous church affiliation as matching their intentions in the everyday. If individuals' practices are not perceived by the organisation as sufficiently well-matched, Quakers in some contexts can experience collective resistance to their affiliation. However, significantly, adversarial experiences which contour their religious claims are not typical for the group. Quakers in the study work in settings and occupations which they frame as practically supporting and at times instrumentalising their horizons in practice. And only in outlying settings, where organisations deem Quaker horizons ill-suited or even oppositional to the ends of the work collective, do interviewees perceive organisations as preventing fundamentally the progression of their intentions to make better the world.

These Quakers espouse intentions to improve the world from within the everyday work context but the exposition of these aspirations closely correlates to the work setting. In this sense, the Quakers' horizons are not pursued independently of the work organisation. In other words, the research participants typically work in organisations where their affiliation is conspicuously known and from within which they claim to be able actively to pursue their utopian vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61). Interviewees tend not to work in organisations which are perceived as unsupportive and are typically located within contexts which uphold conspicuous Quaker affiliation. Quaker ends within these organisations are seen as antipathetic to those of espoused by the organisation and conspicuous church affiliation is perceived by affiliates as detrimental to the organisational pursuance of the ongoing Quaker enterprise. It is not clear, however, within the remit of this study how far this correlation between the espoused Quaker horizons and those of the work setting are a singular function of affiliates' religious affiliation. Other factors such as social class, for example, might also be influential in how Quaker practice is contoured to the work setting and further research might discover such influences which remain explicitly unexplored in this particular study.

6.4 Re-imagining God at work

When the research participants experience discord in the everyday work context, affiliates suggest that they manage inter-personal conflict by seeing 'that of God' in everyone. The Quaker idea that there is 'that of God' in everyone originates from the founding years of the Quaker church (Scully 2008, 121). It is nowadays viewed by the community as one of the most 'fulfilling' aspects of contemporary Quaker perspectives

(Chambers 2008, 100). The idea that there is 'that of God' in everyone is seen by affiliates as expressive of the Quaker tradition in the workaday world. Chambers argues that its practical application is to 'mitigate harsh or censorious judgements' of others and within the individualised Quaker faith, it is 'the bare minimum left which all Friends can still sign up to' (2008, 121).

Pilgrim states that the contemporary liberal Quaker conceptualisation of 'God' as present within everyone is alternate to the idea of the divine espoused by early church affiliates (2008, 59-60). Instead, the first Quakers espoused that they were aspiring to pursue God's purposes in the world, for which, they needed no interlocutor (2008, 59).

Pilgrim writes that:

The first Quakers did not have a vision of the world as it *ought* to be because of an ideology about social justice, peace and equality. It was *God's* vision for the world and humanity's place and purpose within it that was the inspiration and foundation for their otherness and alternate ordering. (2008, 59)

However, the idea that God is not only accessible to, but there is 'that of God' in everyone is now a popular, unifying claim within the Quaker group (Chambers 2008, 100). This conceptualisation, however, has been re-imagined within the contemporary church and is now but one Quaker, interconnecting value (Scully 2008, 102) which frame Quaker ethical responses. The coherence of the Quaker idea of 'that of God' in everyone has also been contested. Pilgrim (2008) posits that this claim amounts to a significantly alternative re-imagination of the original Quaker theological perspectives.

Pilgrim argues that the conceptualisation of God's availability to Christian adherents has 'now metamorphosed into a belief that there was that of God in everyone' (2004, 206).

Pilgrim writes that this current perspective is a liberal re-conceptualisation of the concept which matches the highly individualised contemporary tradition. She writes that:

They are attracted by Friends' heterotopic stance and the utopic space it offers, rather than an explicit religious enterprise. Their identity as a Quaker is but one among many, and signifies an alternate ordering rather than a particular religious belief. (2008, 64)

In this sense, what counts as the religious enterprise from this contemporary, purview is not understood by the collective as individually agreed and shared and what counts as Quaker 'owes more to the concept of an elect moral status (Phillips 1989; Hetherington 1998) a concept describing those who believe they have access to a heightened sense of experience, resulting in the expression of moral values to do with better ways of living and interacting with one another' (Pilgrim 2008, 60).

In this sense, the idea that there is 'that of God' in everyone is not a coherent claim but has become contestable within the church and is now another, individualised way in which Quakers seek a coherence in their social practice. The concept is now viewed by affiliates as 'undertaken through common processes of virtue ethics, and within a community that emphasises relationship over "right outcome" – work together to mitigate (but not remove) the emotional discomfort that arises in individuals when their behaviour departs from these testimonies' (Scully, 2008, 102). My research supports the contention that Quakers have re-conceptualised the idea that there is 'that of God' in everyone. It is framed by affiliates as a leitmotif of the contemporary tradition and it is

applied piecemeal by affiliates in the work context. It is a sense-making enterprise which Quakers engage in as they try to re-align feelings of sometimes extreme discomfort within the work setting with their religious claims.

The idea that there is 'that of God' in everybody is depicted by the research participants as a way of managing discord and conflicted emotional responses in the workaday. It is cast as an empathetic and pragmatic disposition towards others. Luke referred to the use of 'that of God' as a kind of Quaker competency and its discovery was the result of this claimed Quaker capacity for personal insight. *'I do say to people that we have to look for what there is of God in people; I find it rather difficult in some individuals; sometimes you can find it, sometimes you can't.'* Luke stated that some individuals he encountered through his work would *'rub me up the wrong way'*. However, this consternation led Luke to find ways of practically managing his emotional discomfort in ways which were compatible with his espoused Quaker views. Occasionally, Luke said, young people upset him:

but it's more to do with the parents where I really have to make a conscious effort to see that of God in them because it's not easy. And that's where I suppose I am consciously invoking my Quakerism when I am doing that.

As well as depicting a Quaker claim to see the good in others, these re-imaginings of God inhering in everyone are instrumentalised by research participants. The idea that there is 'that of God' in everyone tends to be understood by affiliates as a resource upon which Quakers can practically draw, often *in extremis*.

James worked in a school and found this everyday context personally challenging. He described sobbing when he was at home because he felt that he was '*a rubbish teacher*'. He depicted the school management as unsupportive and equanimity was deemed difficult to maintain in the classroom circumstances. James recalled feeling challenged by one particular confrontational student. He said, '*All the time he was in my face swearing and shouting at me; and all the time I hung on to: I am a Quaker; he has something of God in him.*' James suggested that his management of this situation rested on his capacity to invoke the idea that there is 'that of God' in everyone. Without this insight, James believed, the problem might have been unmanageable. He said:

You know, it helped me to deal with children like that; because it was the most difficult thing I have ever had to do as a teacher; but it was being a Quaker and knowing that I had to treat other people in a certain way that helped me to deal with those very difficult children in that school.

Seeking 'that of God' in everyone, then, is portrayed by Quakers as a way perceiving others in benevolent terms whilst also managing in the everyday the Quaker self-concept. It is also portrayed by affiliates as a means of last resort when confronted by otherwise intractable tensions in the everyday. Discord in work organisations, in this sense, is depicted by these Quakers as potentially overwhelming for the affiliate and as requiring urgent management. It is in these extreme circumstances where the affiliates' emotions are set against the contrary demands of the workaday that the research participants seek 'that of God' in others.

The liberal Quaker idea that there is 'that of God' in everyone is not elaborated further by affiliates in the study. The idea of God is no more defined in the process of its

application nor otherwise explored. Rather, seeking 'that of God' in everyone is employed as a functional device in the workaday. In practice, 'that of God' is only evoked *in extremis*. The function of seeing 'that of God' in the everyday is, in practice, a face-saving device. It is an everyday process, the function of which appears to be maintaining coherence between Quaker practices and Quaker claims to holiness within the morally compromising worldly realm.

The research participants thus perform, in Abby Day's (2011) terms, their religiosity in the workaday context. Day writes in terms of 'belief's social location and its role in bringing into being forms of identity that actors strategically create to adapt to and integrate themselves into various social situations' (2011, 193). My research reveals that the performance of the organisationally ascribed job role is not always harmonious with the Quaker self-concept. Interviewees find difficulty in adapting and integrating their religious claims with their workaday practice. In these discordant circumstances, when these Quakers inwardly feel antipathy towards others in the work setting, antipathetic feelings towards individuals are not felt to be congruent inwardly or outwardly with the Quaker self-concept. In this sense, what counts as Quaker is also framed in 'political' terms (Day 2011, 194) insofar as affiliates' religious claims are juxtaposed against other performances of contrary and competing interests within the workaday context.

Feelings of powerlessness or anger in the workaday are framed by affiliates as in conflict with the harmonious performance of the organisationally-defined job role and what counts as Quaker for the individual. The research participants seek to manage this

conflict within their religious and occupational roles by inwardly appealing to ‘that of God’ in others. However, whilst affiliates claim to be seeking God in those associated with their work, it is unclear how far this process can be framed in religious terms.

6.4.1 Managing ‘That of God’ in everyone

This process whereby discord and its emotional consequences in the organisational setting are re-imagined as benign cannot be uniquely attributed to liberal Quakers. Rather, it can be compared with the feminist perspectives of Arlie Hochschild in her seminal work *The Managed Heart* (1983). Hochschild argues that service sector workers are engaged in a continual process of emotional labour. In service sector employment, workers are required by the work organisation to constrain their intimate feelings during their exposition of the job role (1983, 17). Hochschild describes how flight attendants are trained to suppress in practice personal antipathies which they might feel towards individual customers in challenging situations. In this sense, flight attendants’ disposition towards helping others is employed by the work organisation to make customers feel good whilst employees must mask intimate feelings which are not conducive to this end (1983, 37). Flight attendants adroitly use surface acting skills such as greeting passengers with appropriate body language (1983, 38). This form of acting projects an organisationally approved image of the company to passengers. Flight attendants must also use deep acting skills in order to manage their more intimate feelings especially those which conflict with impetuses inappropriate to the role (1983, 38-9).

Hochschild suggests that organisational ends are privileged in practice by workers and individuals' intimate beliefs and personal qualities are instrumentalised by the work organisation. Flight attendants were trained not only to help provide a service to customers but 'beyond this, there were actual appeals to modify feeling states' (1983, 105). Flight attendants, therefore, had to manage their personal feelings, especially when they were experienced as disharmonious with the work circumstances and organisational as well as customer claims. These service workers, writes Hochschild, experienced work as personally compromising in the workaday because of 'the company claims on private territories of the self' (1983, 99). In this scenario, flight attendants are required to be more than undertaking an organisationally ascribed job role. Rather, they are required to manage their feelings in organisationally ascribed ways towards others in the workaday especially in personally discordant circumstances. In Hochschild's terms, they must see the customer as a friend, 'or as like one, and to be as understanding as one would be with a good friend' (1983, 109). They must also try to regard the world through the passengers' eyes and 'imagine a reason that excuses his or her behaviour' (1983, 119).

The liberal Quaker idea that there is 'that of God' in everyone is redolent of, in practice, this organisational form of emotional management. Intimate feelings are suppressed in favour of maintaining organisational reputation. This feminist lens is useful to frame interviewees' practice in the work context. Although the airline attendants are encouraged to view workaday discord within the everyday from the organisation's point of view, their emotions are depicted as at times fundamentally conflicted. Hochschild

argues that they must manage their emotions towards antagonistic passengers by viewing them through a managerially defined prism of goodwill (1983, 109). Whilst airline attendants manage to put this requirement into effect, having to see workaday situations from both the organisational and customers' perspective is depicted by Hochschild as emotionally demanding (1983, 105).

The conceptualisation that there is 'that of God' in everyone to ease the research participants' discordant experience within the work context reveals how religious tensions are lived out in the everyday. Quakers in the study depict work as a site of inner conflict. Whilst discord is not common, when it is encountered, affiliates seek to manage both organisational expectations and their Quaker religious claims. Work sets out the terms of Quaker social practice in this everyday sense and affiliates depict their emotional management in terms processually similar to the flight attendants attempts to alter their feeling states towards a benevolent view of the other (Hochschild 1983, 105). However, in common with the flight attendants which Hochschild depicts, Quakers depict an awareness of organisational conditions and their contending inclinations.

I argue that it is between these organisational conditions and religious claims which affiliates must position and manage the highly individualised Quaker self-concept. Typically, these demands with regard to how the job role is expedited is not in conflict with what counts as Quaker. In these emotionally conflicted exceptional states, however, Quakers strategise their workaday responses by appealing to 'that of God' in everyone. Publicly acceptable boundaries are, therefore, maintained with regard to

acceptable practices as Quaker and worker. This exposition is facilitated by the Quaker church insofar as ethical boundaries of what counts as Quaker are not prescribed and affiliates manage their religious claim individually to find ‘the best way forward’ (Scully 2008, 109) in the particular. However, my study shows that the work collective shapes individuals’ responses at a fundamental level. In this sense, what counts as Quaker and what counts as work are perceived as intricately and inextricably linked by affiliates. In the next section, I discuss further the extent to which work or Quaker claims prevail in circumstances where affiliates see their claims as competing.

6.4.2 When work shifts the goalposts

The idea that what counts as Quaker contours the work setting can also be observed in terms other than conspicuousness or in Quakers’ espousal of ‘that of God’ in everyone. It can also be depicted in relation to the shifting organisation of work and the research participants’ perceptions of these shifts as supportive of their fundamental horizons. In this changing circumstance, participants in the work process were required by the organisation to re-imagine their Quaker horizons and to re-calibrate individually the ‘best way forward’ (Scully 2008, 109) in terms depicted as at times highly problematic.

Interviews in the research were piloted in 2009 and 2010 and took place in the research proper during 2010 and 2011. In this sense, the economic and political context of the research process was serendipitous. The data collected serendipitously about work in the economic and political context was not the result of hard work and curiosity but was unforeseen and accidental (Gest 1997, 21). Interviewees also reported in their accounts

of their current work setting, the political effects of the crisis in global banking. The work circumstances of research participants were affected directly and indirectly by cutbacks initiated by the Coalition government. In particular, affiliates who worked in public sector enterprises regarded the effects of the financial constraints as visible in their work organisation. Affiliates who reported being affected worked in local government, in the NHS and in the charitable sector. Research participants who worked in these industrial areas reported structural changes to staffing, voluntary and involuntary redundancies and stories of internecine organisational discord.

Six Quaker interviewees variously attributed changes in their work organisation directly to a re-prioritising of government funding. They related that these financial constraints had resulted in the re-organisation of their work setting. In particular, these new funding arrangements were reported in terms of scarcity of resources. Competition for these resources was described as having an effect on personal relationships. In the first interviews, participants discussed the potential effects of fiscal constraints. However, when follow up interviews were conducted approximately six months later, the research participants detailed the effects of these financial cutbacks. Interviewees depicted how their work organisations in general, and their job roles in particular, had been affected by these newly ascribed fiscal boundaries.

6.4.3 Thriving in the supported context

The responses of Quakers affected by the new financial circumstances were varied in the particular but, in general, affiliates tended to feel that their utopian intentions were supported by the work organisation in the everyday. Donna worked in building services for local government. Her department apparently represented '*a nice little saving*' for the local council. By the time of the first interview, local council managers had informed staff that Donna's department was likely to close due to budgetary constraints. Donna's response to this fluid circumstance was to gather together the whole office in order to find alternatives to the management's redundancy proposals. The approach of management to this initiative was depicted by her as highly supportive and affirmed her quest to seek a better alternative to compulsory redundancy.

Donna framed management in highly favourable terms. She felt that her proposal for an alternative approach was supported by '*good management*' which bent organisational rules to allow individuals an opportunity to create a business plan as an alternative to redundancy during working hours. This policy effectively paid for her colleagues collectively to find alternative arrangements to redundancy. This group eventually drew up alternative business plans, one of which was adopted by the local council in order to save the department.

Donna felt uplifted by this process, specifically as she took the initiative to start the project, and by its ultimate successes. These outcomes were measurable in terms of saving the department from closure. Outcomes were also less tangible in terms of how

the collective enterprise had shaped fundamentally participants' perceptions of the work process. Donna said:

The other interesting thing was that within that process, there was an acceptance that this was a benevolent process; an acceptance that there wouldn't be a divide if people didn't get involved; we were actually doing this for everybody.

Donna depicted as revelatory the nascent collaborative movement within work setting. Co-workers sought solutions to the problems of redundancy in ways which were innovative and collective. As a result of the planned cutbacks, from Donna's point of view, management had effectively created a new administrative structure to share possible solutions.

Donna identified her Quaker horizons as activated within this process. She had initially become a '*driver*' of the project to avoid redundancies which had transmogrified for her into a moral enterprise. In her view, the venture to save jobs was an explicitly inclusive and egalitarian project. Participation was voluntary and this sense of collective purpose also allowed junior staff to become involved and to flourish in this context. She described the horizons and practice of the enterprise as in fundamental harmony with her Quaker aspirations. In her view, the redundancy process broke down barriers of '*this idea that it's us and them*' and Donna came to believe that, in terms of management, '*they don't want to make people redundant*'. Mutual horizons were newly formed and greater respect for the motivations of all employees at all levels was created in her opinion.

In this sense, Donna linked her participation in the redundancy process explicitly to her Quaker horizons. Donna depicted how her Quaker intentions and her work in the everyday had been intimately *'intertwined'* as she *'sort of drove it forward'*. In this sense, *'getting something organised'* initially, *'the equality thing'* as well as knowing the limitations of her capacity to endure in a leading role, was framed by Donna in fundamentally Quaker terms. *'It felt as if my faith and Quaker practice was coming all into that,'* she said. Outcomes of the project were, therefore, not depicted in measurable terms of jobs saved or new pathways to employment found. Donna asserted that participation in the enterprise had also had a profound effect on her further engagement with the work process.

Since engaging with the enterprise to save the department, Donna felt that her approach to others had altered in the everyday. She said that she had become noticeably less *'antagonistic'* when managing co-workers. She had also become more mindful of others as individuals and not just instrumentally as co-workers who were paid to do a job. *'Whereas before it'd be, right just get that work done, not really bothered if I offend somebody,'* she said. In this sense, Donna depicted a personal transformation through her participation in the redundancy process. She believed that the work organisation had also implicitly supported her Quaker horizons and practice in the everyday. Although she felt that the process had been personally demanding, she also stated that the experience had engendered in the workaday a heightened awareness of her Quaker horizons and how she now engaged more empathetically with others in the work setting.

6.4.4 Surviving in the unsupported context

Donna's experience of personal transformation can be contrasted with that of Patsy. Patsy's utopian horizons had also been transformed by participation in the redundancy process. However, Patsy depicted a work context which she perceived as unsupportive and destructive of her Quaker aspirations. Patsy had been a local authority worker for nearly thirty years. The financial restrictions imposed by her employer, however, were portrayed by her in terms substantially dissimilar to those depicted by Donna. Patsy's experience of her work organisation at this time was framed as exceedingly dispiriting for her and the way in which she believed the financial restrictions had been managed had left her feeling emotionally bereft from the work process.

Patsy worked in local authority administration. She related how a programme of impending redundancies was undertaken with little sympathy for individual circumstances. As a consequence, *'everyone is turning round, looking at what's happening behind their backs'*. In her view, local authority redundancies led to selfishness and cynicism at work where none had before existed. The workaday setting during the redundancy process was portrayed as *'a deeply unhappy place where people are just left to find their own salvations'*. Patsy reported strong feelings regarding the effects of these cutbacks which had been framed unfairly by the national government and their local councils. She said: *'you feel that you are being caught by two pincer movements: demonised by the Tory government and cut by your own officials in the local authority.'* It was the perceived unfairness of these cuts on individuals who were simply earning a living which particularly upset Patsy.

Patsy framed the effects of the redundancy process as fundamentally divisive. At the end of her working life, she had already been enlisted onto a phased retirement scheme and was not required through redundancy to move on to another job. However, Patsy reported enduring a *'terrible'* way to end a career. She described a *'toxic'* office of colleagues with their *'heads down, not talking'* where *'nobody says hello'* and *'some people would be in severe economic difficulties'*. She disagreed with central government's characterisation of administrative support staff as *'evil bureaucrats'* and *'evil dictators that tell schools what to do'*. In her opinion, the cutbacks had given licence to managers in her work organisation to treat workers and indirectly their families disrespectfully.

In Patsy's view, managers had deliberately withheld information from staff during an impersonal redundancy process in order to disempower the employees. She said, *'When you see your job is not on the new model, then you know it is publicly flagged up that you are surplus to requirements.'* Managers appeared to be ignorant of the effects of their impersonal approach on individual members of staff. She said that management provided no practical support for staff on a jobs *'hitlist'* who, as a consequence, now faced a *'lack of motivation, loss of jobs, loss of dignity'*. According to Patsy, the way in which the cuts were implemented resonated with *'rampant capitalism at its worst; and this was the local authority'*. This impersonal application of financial calculation by management resulted in people, in Patsy's opinion, becoming alienated from each other and the aims of the local authority and working in isolated cells until they left. Patsy stated:

And on our last day, which makes me very angry, when people were really quite screwed up, nobody said thank you for the work you have done; nobody said goodbye, there were no presentations, no senior managers around; you hung around and you buggered off; and that was the end of a lifetime's career; and even before that you were a non-person.

Patsy's faith was not unaffected by this circumstance. She had become '*bitter*' and '*angry*' as a result of this process. During her interview prior to the implementation of the cutbacks, Patsy depicted her Quaker horizons as harmonious with those espoused by her work organisation where there was no '*dividing line*'. However, she felt that her work organisation had betrayed those mutual horizons. In a time of severe financial and organisational upheaval, shared intentions to improve the world were felt to have been abandoned. She said:

The council owes us a great deal for how we worked and (they) gave nothing in return; and this isn't the way to be; and there's a real paradox; that we are, that educationalists are supposed to be caring about these sorts of issues; of respect and motivation and all this sort of thing; but we couldn't organise those sort of values for ourselves.

In Patsy's view, the redundancy process also illustrated impotence with regard to Quaker horizons in a corporate and an individual sense. Patsy characterised the current manifestation of the Quaker church as a betrayal of its original form. It had forsaken its claimed '*zealotry, revolutionary ardour...and we are reaping the effects of that now*'. In her opinion, the practical complexities of the contemporary work setting were irresolvable in a Quaker sense. She believed that the contemporary Quaker community tended nowadays to '*wringing their hands and deploring this sort of thing; solemnly worrying about global issues*'. However, these worthy responses were insufficient to

tackle intractable, everyday issues. *'I am not sure Quakerism has an answer to this to be honest,'* she said; Quakers are *'too nice about lots of things'*.

Patsy framed her own position as impotent in the context of local authority redundancies. She suggested that her Quaker horizons which were once shared with those espoused by the work organisation were no longer felt to be mutually held. The work organisation had revealed its horizons to be inconsistent and untrustworthy and, Patsy said, that her own horizons had also altered. Patsy now believed that *'nice liberal Quaker values are out of the window'*. These utopian intentions were no longer deemed by Patsy to be appropriate. They were rather, for *'happier economic times when you can afford to do that'*. She was no longer inclined, in Quaker terms, to be *'tolerant'* and *'understanding'* about the managers who might have put the cuts into effect. Rather, as a result of the redundancy process, she said, *'Quaker values are way parked.'*

The experience of Quakers who were affected by the financial constraints imposed by the Coalition government illustrates further the correlation between the everyday work context and how the research participants frame their social practice. However, it appears that the organisational conspicuousness of what counts as Quaker does not in the everyday sufficiently account for the extent of its exposition. Patsy said:

Would I put a little sign on my desk, saying I am a Quaker? No. I would certainly not go into a meeting and say I'm a Quaker, let's do it this way; (I) discuss what I have done at the weekend at work, Quaker business, Quaker projects; I have not had any hostility, no hostility at all; just accepted that's as it is.

She depicted her work organisation as accepting of her Quaker affiliation. The horizons of the work organisation were also portrayed by her as in fundamental harmony with her own. She said:

I think the two (work and Quakers) are not dissimilar; I don't see any dividing line there; the connections blur; but some of the work I do, you don't use labels, you just behave; it would be very difficult to quantify where Quaker attributes come into a work day; it's the generic qualities that people have, then they can do the job well; you don't have to be a Quaker; some of my colleagues have faith, some don't; what makes their work good is their integrity, working with people, respecting people; that comes from a wider range of background than simply faith.

It appears, rather, that the espoused horizons of the work organisations with which Quakers intimately identify are only partially and provisionally harmonious in everyday terms. They are partially harmonious insofar as their horizons are located within workaday contexts which are conspicuously supportive of the explicit and implicit Quaker intentions. They are also provisionally harmonious insofar as the context within which Quaker horizons are situated, whilst they might be depicted as supportive in the everyday, are subject to alteration autonomously by the work organisation. Although Quakers tend to espouse an ethical approach to the everyday in terms of the 'best way forward' (Scully, 2008), they also implicitly accept the authority of the work organisation to set out the terms upon which their horizons are pursued.

When the organisation alters the terms of these conditions, especially away from the perceived horizons with which Quakers claim to identify, the everyday context is cast by affiliates as less manageable. The authority of work is seen as impermanent and adverse to Quaker intentions. In this ethical context, affiliates' conceptualisations of

what counts as Quaker in the everyday are singularly individualised. Decoupled from organisational aspirations and its perceived support in the everyday and lacking direction and oversight from the liberal, permissive church, without succour from the divine, discord in the everyday is experienced fundamentally by the interviewees..

So, whilst these Quakers perceive that the organisation is supportive of their fundamental intentions in the everyday, their harmonious claims remain intact. They are not typically aware of perceived boundaries in the workaday between Quaker claims and their own horizons overlap in practice. Roger said:

I suppose now, it's so much part of me after ten years, and I am not in a job any more where it's stressful, and I enjoy almost everything that I do, I work with some lovely people and I'm doing something useful; so I am probably in a situation where my Quakerism underlies everything but I am not having to resource it as I would do in more stressful situations, if you like.

However, the Quaker pursuit of utopian intentions in the everyday is highly individualised, partial and provisional. It also appears to be highly contingent on how affiliates perceive their aspirations are managed supportively within the workaday world. The research participants tend to align their fundamental ambitions within organisations which they perceive as highly supportive of their aims. In practice, however, this alignment is not unending. These Quakers' experience of contemporary work settings reveals that the organisational setting is subject to alteration and re-imagination on terms decided by management. So, what count as organisational horizons, can also substantially shift both over time and between contexts. In this sense, Quakers' highly individualised conceptualisation of the 'best way forward' is depicted as impotent in practice without the perceived implicit or explicit support of the work collective.

6.5 The limits of utopia

The research participants' intention to make the world better from within work organisations which share their utopian claims is shaped by the workaday. Typically, Quaker and work organisation intentions are seen as harmonious within the workaday. However, perceived discord in the everyday is problematic for affiliates especially if their utopian intentions are perceived as unsupported by the organisation. As affiliates appeal to that of God in everyone suggests, interviewees have to manage their religious self-concept within the work context on terms set out by the organisation. Thus, the research participants negotiate both their Quaker and occupational claims under the auspices of an organisational authority. However, discordant circumstances are not perceived by Quakers to impede intentions to improve unless they are seen as unsupported by the organisation.

Furthermore, the work organisation is perceived by affiliates to have the authority to circumscribe expositions of perceived religiosity amongst workers. Typically, the interviewees work in organisations which are perceived as tolerant of religiosity or even deploy it explicitly through the responsibilities of the job role towards organisational ends. Affiliates also tend to conflate Quaker utopian horizons and those espoused by the work organisation so that the workaday world is thus framed as congruent with affiliates' ambitions. These Quakers do not perceive the workaday as fundamentally oppositional to their ends. However, this conceptualisation of work is constructed socially and reflects affiliates' experience as white collar workers within service industries. These economic and occupational categories of work typically support

affiliates pursuance of utopian horizons in the everyday and this supportive context is framed as normalised by affiliates.

The research participants' experience of discord, however, also reveals that affiliates' utopian intentions are pursued on organisationally-defined terms. When the work organisation is perceived to have altered the terms upon which the interviewees engage away from shared ends, then affiliates' aspiration to make better the world is frustrated in the work context. In other words, work organisations do not only shape how the affiliates perceive the work context as harmonious, they suggest that pursuit of utopian ends unsupported by the work organisation is experienced in terms which can be intensely problematic for the individual. Quaker utopian ends are therefore pursued from within the work collective, despite interviewees' individualised and autonomous religious claims, primarily on organisational terms.

However, although the organisation shapes Quaker responses in the everyday and might impede their utopian vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61), in the next chapter, I discuss how Quaker practice in the work context is not only shaped by the work setting. Rather, Quakers move within workaday condition with the intention to move the world harmoniously towards a better horizon. Thus, I develop a further category which depicts how affiliates negotiate their utopian ends and the practical constraints of the everyday on terms which acknowledge the authority of the work organisation.

6.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have argued that, in everyday terms, Quaker research participants' horizons and those espoused by the work organisation are not unendingly harmonious. I suggest that there is conflict within the Quaker affiliates' experience of work even though their horizons appear to be fundamentally well-matched. The research participants state that their Quaker affiliation was conspicuous insofar as it was recognised by colleagues within their work setting. In the view of the research participants, Quaker affiliation also tends to be seen as conspicuous within the organisational context. However, tensions are also depicted by the interviewees between what counts as Quaker in practice in the everyday and the exposition of the job role. When the work context is no longer felt by affiliates to be supportive of Quaker horizons, their workaday experience was framed in conflicted terms. I suggest that this tension in the everyday reveals that research participants engage with the contemporary work setting on terms set out by the organisation and that affiliates' religious claims are not held autonomously but grounded in the workaday world.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EMPLOYING HARMONIOUS MEANS TO UTOPIAN ENDS

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse how the research participants aspire to move the world to a better horizon within the workaday world which they depict as disharmonious in the everyday. I observe affiliates' claim to pursue utopian horizons from within the work setting through a Critical Management Studies (CMS) lens. I define this lens and suggest that these Quakers and CMS share a common view of the contemporary work process. Both research participants and CMS theorists see the workaday world as an opening within which its participants can improve the world. However, I also depict differences between their perspectives. CMS portray how organisations are managed in the everyday as a fundamental impediment to the realisation of human flourishing. It recommends the transgression of organisational boundaries in order to overcome these impediments and realise a fairer world. The interviewees, on the other hand, are averse to the transgression in the workaday which CMS recommends. They do not construct the work setting as fundamentally oppositional to their ends and move within the discordant everyday in order to foment a more harmonious context for the pursuit of their utopian aspirations.

The research participants see their work enterprise as pursuing utopian horizons to make the world better. They also aver that these horizons are conversant with their own. They state that engaging with the everyday is fundamental to the Quaker self-concept although how they participate in the workaday is depicted in highly

individualised terms and is not prescribed by the church. These Quakers tend therefore to adopt a pragmatic view of how better horizons can be pursued and realised through participation in work processes. Whilst their workaday can be experienced as disharmonious, however, and in contrast to how they view the prescriptive tendencies of Christian institutions, the interviewees are not ill-disposed to how work is currently organised and the authority of its managerial structures. This pragmatic disposition towards contemporary work and its organisation stands in contrast to that adopted by Critical Management Studies. In this section, I describe the academic field of Critical Management Studies (CMS), draw parallels between CMS conceptualisations of contemporary work and those espoused by the Quaker affiliates and discuss how these perceptions also differ.

7.2 The Critical Management lens

CMS is a more-or-less discrete theoretical sub-discipline within academic circles which melds 'management' and 'critical' ideas (Fournier and Grey 2000, 8). What constitutes the field of CMS is diverse, fluid and 'contested' (Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott 2009, 8). It is distinct from the academic discipline of Management Studies insofar as it claims to be studies *of* or even *against* management and its interests (Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott 2009, 1). In this sense, CMS is fundamentally oppositional to the contemporary work enterprise model and tends to frame its object of study in terms of assumed 'prevailing relations of domination' (2009, 1). CMS also aligns itself with the liberating aims of the Enlightenment in which human life can be made better by empowering individuals to understand their own situations (Scherer 2009, 30). Alvesson

and Willmott (1992) assert that CMS 'contributors are more attracted to its emancipatory spirit than to the authoritative letter of any particular Critical Theorist' (Alvesson and Willmott 1992, 3).

Scherer (2009) writes that critical theory does not intend only to explain present conditions which inhibit this process but propose also the development of a more humane, rational and just society (2009, 30). Fournier and Grey also attest that, 'CMS is not "anti-management" but rather aims to transform it, to promote less rational, socially divisive forms of management theories and practices' (2000, 23). Reedy argues that it is not management per se but the conservatism which is entailed by managerial constructions of organisational reality which should be disrupted by critical involvement (2002, 177). According to Reedy, the focus of CMS is a dialogic engagement with managerial discourses which 'demand for the reality behind the sham' (2003, 174). In this sense, the organisation and authority of management is not understood by CMS as illegitimate. Rather, CMS view management as fundamentally contestable and it seeks to expose the inconsistencies which constitute a managerial worldview.

As there is no single and academically agreed definition of what counts as Critical Management Studies, when the term 'CMS' is applied in this thesis, it is employed to denote concepts and their protagonists in a broad sense which generally frame the status quo within the contemporary work as suboptimal, leaning towards narrow, organisational interests and open to fundamental critique. Specifically, I also draw upon

Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) definition of CMS to position my discussion. Alvesson and Willmott write:

We are here concerned primarily with how organizational control is accomplished through the self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourses about work and organization with which they may become more or less identified and committed (2002, 620).

In other words, in this chapter, I critically analyse Quaker intentions to improve the world by contrasting it with alternative conceptualisations of the contemporary work setting set out by the broad area of CMS. CMS espouses an idea, in common with Quakers, that the world can be improved from within the collective context. However, they also view the work context as a site of competing, sectional interests which impede intentions to improve the human condition. Participants, in Alvesson and Willmott's (2002, 620) terms, are not invested with agency by the organisation in a personally liberating sense. Instead, participants' conceptualisation of what counts as work is re-imagined on their behalf by management. In this sense, CMS depicts how sectional interests within the collective setting are deployed by managers as constituting an organisational asymmetry which debilitates the pursuance of utopian ends. I use this critical lens to investigate how Quakers perceive and engage with the contemporary workaday. Firstly, I describe what counts as management before investigating how Quaker conceptualisations of work can be compared to those advocated by CMS.

7.3 What is management?

Organisations are 'goal-directed, boundary maintaining and socially-constructed systems of human activity' (Aldrich 1999, 2). Within organisations, CMS theorists tend

to view management as a separate and obstructive class of worker (Alvesson and Willmott 2012, 17). Defining in detail, though, what counts as management is not straightforward (Alvesson and Willmott 2012, 17-8). Alvesson and Willmott frame management minimally as the performance of 'a daily struggle to accomplish ordinary tasks, maintain normal routines and deal with the unexpected' (2012, 15). In modernity, they assert, formal management of everyday life is nowadays organised in rational rather than intimate terms within education, health, consumption, leisure activities and work as well as in corporate and public institutions (Alvesson and Willmott 2012, 13). Within this rational paradigm, argue Alvesson and Willmott, responsibility for the management of human activity has become specialised so that it is represented by a class of workers institutionally conferred with specialist expertise (2012, 17).

Historically, the origins of management can be depicted in terms of collective human achievements which have been more recently synthesised into a method to facilitate the accumulation of profit (Klikauer 2015, 197). Ideas of management and its ethics can also be traced back at least to Adam Smith's treatise, *The Wealth of Nations*, in the eighteenth century (Fournier and Grey, 2000, 9). The process of identifying what counts as management discretely has created a new field of human enterprise attached to the formal organisation of wage labour (Hancock and Tyler 2008, 30). This perspective on management practices as serving narrow interests was a departure from previous framings of managerial processes which had, by the 1970s 'by and large, been based on *ad hoc* criteria rather than been guided by any coherent ordering principles' (Wood and Kelly 1978, 2). Wood and Kelly (1978) argue that the Taylorian scientific principles

claimed by management tended to be seen in academic research as established until and even after this time. However, Wood and Kelly argue, over the next decades, a new critical spirit within academic circles regarding what counts as management began to evolve (1978, 3-4).

In the view of CMS theorists, management's role in organisations began to widen as efficiency and accountability became aims increasingly pursued by organisational and professional power (Fournier and Grey 2000, 9-10). Management began to transcend its former mainly productive rationale. It became 'lionised, even glamourised, in more diffuse ways...Managers were seen as having some special insight which qualified them to pronounce on a broad range of issues' (Fournier and Grey 2000, 10). These conceptualisations of what counts as management also appeared to transcend political divisions so that the singular status of management was supported equally by mainstream political parties from both the left and right (Fournier and Grey 2000, 11). In this sense, the idea of management within collective enterprises became an accepted aspect of the organisational as well as the academic landscape (Wood and Kelly 1978, 14). It is this naturalised model of management and its influence on individuals which CMS analyses and claims to critically oppose for the sake of social betterment (Wood and Kelly 1978, 15).

7.4 The Quaker view of management

CMS promotes an ideological view of work insofar as work aims to promote social compliance in circumstances where alternative views are possible (Reedy 2002, 174).

The work organisation accomplishes this by promoting managerial ideas as fundamentally coherent and explanatory but which actually serve merely to mask the internal contradictions within organisations (Parker 2003, 220). In this sense, critical management perspectives view the management of work as a goal-oriented process of control exercised over human lives not just productive efficiency (Alvesson and Willmott 2012, 624). The research participants' perspectives on the contemporary work setting differ from those espoused by CMS insofar as they do not frame management as an antagonistic class in practical or ideal terms.

The research participants do not frame work processes as governed by management in this sense as singularly oppositional to their shared utopian horizons. Whilst the interviewees can be critical of managerial policies and their implementation, they tend not to perceive management in adversarial terms. Rather, they frame managers in individualised terms rather than as impersonal interlocutors of organisational control. In Hochschild's terms (1983, 109), these Quaker affiliates, in the workaday, are willing to see work from the others' point of view and this perspective also includes espoused managerial concerns. They tend to be accepting of, if not in agreement with, managerial and organisational inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies and they make efforts to rationalise the organisational process rather than apportion blame to a single class of worker or individual.

Martin was an emergency worker who had witnessed over time an apparent transformation of management within his organisation. The approach of managers had

changed from a perceived patrician style of management in the past which was orderly and firm to nowadays a '*management by fear*'. He said that currently '*a spate of illnesses could lead to dismissal*' and identified:

a culture in the public sector now of saving money and everything gets scrutinised to the point where you feel that it's not enough that you do your job, you almost feel guilty for getting paid for it.

Whereas his organisation had operated often on '*goodwill*', this erstwhile benevolent disposition had now been largely withheld by his colleagues. Martin said that banal issues such as mending broken fittings which would previously have been sorted out freely and spontaneously by colleagues were now deliberately ignored by them to spite the work process. In Martin's view, there existed an adversarial disposition amongst his colleagues towards management, the causes of which he appreciated. However, although Martin understood his co-workers grievances, he did not share them and he claimed to avoid in practice their apparently self-interested responses. Instead, Martin was well-disposed towards management and at times tended to favour their case rather than his colleagues' inclinations.

Whilst completing a technical procedure at work, Martin and his colleagues had accidentally damaged some valuable company equipment. This accident was likely to compromise the reputation of his working group amongst management as standard operating procedures had not been followed correctly. His colleagues were concerned to avoid disfavour with senior officials and Martin was mindful of this concern. However, Martin was also minded to tell the truth rather than conveniently lying to managers. This dilemma was the subject of much discussion between Martin and his co-workers. He

was reluctant to deceive the management as he regarded their view to be sincerely held. However, he also had sympathy with his colleagues' difficulties especially if managers had discovered the full circumstances and the workers as a result suffered blame. Martin eventually acceded to his colleagues' requests to falsify paperwork and cover up the collective error. He judged pragmatically this best, most harmonious outcome, undertaken with his co-workers interests in mind, although he felt it to be compromising his Quaker principles.

Martin related that the espoused managerial view of this kind of incident had coincided with his own truth-telling Quaker claims. Managerial processes had been set up to prevent practical problems and truth-telling was an integral aspect of management's expectations. A culture of deceit could lead to developing issues in the work setting, from Martin's perspective and safety, espoused as paramount, could be compromised. Martin felt that this view was antithetical to that which prevailed amongst his colleagues. Taking a more benign view of management was considered by Martin another boundary between his own and his colleagues' approach to organisational authority within workaday.

Martin felt that he was regarded, by his colleagues, inclusively in social terms but also as somewhat aloof. His religious beliefs appeared not to be anathema to his co-workers, in his opinion, but he felt that he was also perceived as a good-natured outsider. As a Quaker, he believed that he was on good terms with his colleagues but

'not that close to that many'. This perceived air of detachment by others in the work setting was, though, appreciated by co-workers in some circumstances.

During annual company meetings between staff and senior colleagues, Martin felt that he was relied upon to ask management questions which his colleagues were reluctant to publicly indulge. Martin did not believe that management were disingenuous or malevolent in their intentions. He believed that they were united by mutual interests regarding the organisation and framed the senior officer as *'deserving of respect...he is a nice bloke apart from anything else but...he is one man, I am one man; he is no better, no worse than I am'*. Martin did not frame management intentions as oppositional and fundamentally disempowering. Rather, he saw their intentions and the work processes which they managed as fundamentally benign.

Whilst there are tensions in the workaday between competing interests, the intentions of other parties in the work process are not framed by the research participants in narrowly oppositional terms. These Quakers tend instead to frame participants in individualised terms, as managers rather than management. The interviewees see the workaday as a site of interpersonal negotiation and they frame this process of negotiation and its ends in harmonious terms. However, harmony in the everyday is privileged by affiliates rather than the fundamental utopian ends which they espouse. Martin believed that, if he had been promoted and taken on an uncompromising managerial ethos, *'I would consider that...I had failed as a person'*. Instead, Martin eschewed promotion in favour of accepting a position with less managerial responsibility in the organisational hierarchy.

In this circumstance, he framed his everyday practice in liberated terms. From this position, Martin felt he could espouse a more sustainable position regarding truth-telling without fundamental compromise to his Quaker intentions.

Using Martin as a case-study, the Quaker cohort, then, do not tend to frame management and managerial processes in the critical and oppositional terms which CMS theorists adopt. Managers are viewed in individual terms rather than as solely representatives of the organisation. In this sense, managers are not regarded as a separate class of worker. Neither are the research participants fundamentally critical of organisational processes especially when viewed in contrast to their espoused heterodox comportment with regard to how mainstream Christian churches are organised. In these terms, Quakers in the study profess a highly individualised perspective with regard to their religious enterprise and fundamentally reject the role of the mediator. Quakers, in this sense, see interlocutors as inauthentic, superfluous and antagonistic to their project. The Quaker conceptualisation of how religious and work collectives are managed is implicit rather than explicit within the research. However, it appears that Quakers are less prepared to adopt a critical approach to organisational interlocutors within the work rather than the contemporary religious context.

7.5 Shared visions of religious utopia

CMS and the interviewees' perspectives coincide with regard to their exposition of how the world can be transformed. In CMS and Quaker terms, religious concepts are framed as potentially pertinent to a utopian enterprise. However, both also see traditional

religious conceptualisations as suboptimal lenses through which to view the mundane world.

Parker et al (2007) suggest that religious views are valid conceptualisations of the contemporary immanent world insofar as they propose an alternative, counter-cultural model of human life (2007, 145). Parker identifies how socialist ideas of social equality, siding with the poor against the interests of the establishment, are extant in dissident religious traditions in the United Kingdom. John Ball, a Lollard priest, was held up in nineteenth century British socialist circles as a proponent of a timeless form of equality and social justice (Parker 2007, 25). Parker (2007) also points out that the Jewish and Christian idea of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, has been described as one of the world's most revolutionary concepts (2007, 145). Its advocacy of a better world that was near at hand and could raise up and inspire the dispossessed in the present 'constantly broke into and disrupted the prevailing order of things' (2007,145).

However, CMS asserts that, although they present a radical rationale for social re-imagination, mainstream religious perspectives tend to be anodyne in their practice. Reedy critiques religious discourses as socially conservative in their effects especially insofar as they can constrain the practice of alternative perspectives (2002, 174). Reedy views the religious promise by institutional religion of a Paradise that is attainable in the hereafter as insidious (Reedy 2002, 174). He asserts that utopia can be built by collaborative human efforts within the mundane and that the religious form of utopia projects the idea of a tension-free zone safely 'outside of normal, temporal

space...beyond the grave' (2002:174). Utopia and its passive accommodation rather than active construction in the everyday, in this sense, is cast as anodyne and quiescent within the everyday.

From this point of view, the promise of redemption and everlasting reward is held over *post-mortem* and any incentive for people to undertake direct redemptive action with regard to the prevailing social order is thus reduced. In this way, social institutions can disempower opposition by creating an idea of a better world for the dispossessed but which is only perfectable outside corporeal existence (Parker 2007, 146). In this sense, pursuit of a temporal ideal can be cast as futile and reliant on a diffuse and ultimately ineffective attribution of hope rather than alternative and disruptive activism (Webb 2008, 126).

The research cohort do not link their participation in the contemporary work setting with a *post-mortem* reward. Indeed, Dandelion (2007) suggests that contemporary liberal Quakers do not frame their worldview in eschatological terms (2007, 197). Instead, Quakers advocate a heterodox conceptualisation of the Christian ideal. In this sense, Quakers eschew literal interpretations of scripture and re-frame Christianity in terms of an individualised re-imagination of fundamental horizons which transcend denominational prescription. In practice, Quakers in the study pursue an individualised conceptualisation of social justice rather than heavenly reward and view the mundane setting as a site for their progressive ideals. Research participants, in this sense,

espouse anti-establishment perspectives which they frame as proffering a Quaker alternative to the status quo.

Liberal Quakers are likewise sceptical about the efficacy of mainstream constructions of religion to make better the world. Dandelion (1996, 133) writes that Quakers no longer strongly identify as Christian and he suggests that in this sense, their outlook is more properly described in post-Christian terms. Parameters of belief are now wide, he argues, and the theological constitution of the church is highly pluralised. Dandelion asserts that Quakers do not conceptualise the tradition in terms of 'endtime' or 'meantime' and that waiting for a second coming is meaningless if attributed to a collective sceptical of a first coming (2007, 135). Participants in the research, as well as critical disposition towards traditional Christian doctrine, also espouse a re-vivified conceptualisation of the religious idea. They convert because the everyday is viewed by the church as a site of religious enterprise and that a better here and now can be realised through active participation in the world. Their understanding of the Quaker religious project, then, is highly coincident with that of the CMS critical perspective regarding religion as essentially passive socially and its utopian realisation in *post-mortem* terms. In this sense, both CMS and the Quaker tradition, at least as exemplified within this study, share a normative view of the religious enterprise as a socially rather than divinely inspired re-conceptualisation of the everyday.

7.6 Liquid utopians

Utopia and its active pursuit by organisational participants are counterpoised by critical theorists as alternative to the static and conservative form of work-life which they suggest management imposes on organisational life. Fournier suggests that the framing of utopia as a fixed and settled 'blueprint for a better society' (2002, 201) is inadequate as it does not account for utopian intentions in processual terms. Fournier avoids 'static versions of a better order' and proposes instead utopianism as process rather than utopia as a 'destination' (2002, 192). In this sense, the function of utopianism is its performance as an ongoing as well as a disruptive process which 'undermines dominant understanding of what is possible and opens up new conceptual spaces for imagining and practising possible futures' (2002, 192). Fournier infers that it is the closure which appertains to managerialist views of what is possible, rather than its espoused intentions, that is problematic. This version of utopia in terms of its finality where nothing can be improved is seen by critical theorists as antithetical to the utopian project.

In utopian terms, Lyman Sargent (2013) also suggests that a single and fixed view of what counts as a better horizon is problematic when enacted in the social sphere (2013, 444). Whilst ideology is depicted in prescriptive terms, utopia is framed as necessarily vague. What counts as utopian, in this sense, is privileging of ideas and the collective will to bring them about in the everyday in the face of opposition than a fixed and deterministic model of how the world can be righted (2013, 444). This exclusivity, he argues, is dangerous and inimical to the exploratory utopian urge. Utopia, in this sense, he writes, is an ongoing critique of the world which can never be fully regarded as

closed and finished (2013, 447). Utopian thought is, therefore, radical insofar as it challenges the premise of ideological views that a better world can ever be realised. In this sense, the idea of utopia is transgressive: it is restless and cuts across the concept of a settled world (Sargent 2013, 448). Fournier states that it is paradoxical to believe a liberating environment can be imposed from above by a centralised authority (2002, 192). Rather, social betterment can be created through a continual exploration of alternatives to a prescriptively imposed better world (2002, 208).

Dahrendorf (1958) argues that perfect and perfectable worlds inhere in a society which lacks an incentive to change (1958, 117). Harmony, especially in terms of the 'absence of structurally generated conflict' (1958, 116), Dahrendorf argues, discourages efforts at social improvement as the most perfect social form is seen by people as already extant. Dahrendorf writes that utopian projects which reveal disharmony and sub-optimal social conditions embrace human creativity and disrupt human inclinations to supine acceptance of present conditions (1958, 117). Thus, Dahrendorf re-imagines the ideal vision of utopia as a world that is necessarily conflicted and tension-free utopias as ersatz versions of how the real world functions (1958, 117). In this sense, utopia is contested, a condition which is both necessary to propel the world to better horizons and, therefore, to be encouraged in social terms (1958, 118).

The research participants tend to share with CMS the utopian view that human life can be not only made better than its present manifestation but also that it can never be fully realised (Levitas, 2013, 84). What counts as Quaker for these affiliates is also ongoing

and 'potentially forever on the move' (Dandelion 2007, 152). Collins suggests that the individualised Quaker purview has 'post-modern overtones' insofar as it is understood in myriad ways through the prism of individual experience (2008, 38). Unconditional perspectives are thus elusive within the liberal contemporary Quaker tradition and the fluid and changing 'absolute perhaps' (Dandelion 2007, 152) is a constant within the modern, liberal conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker.

In this sense, liberal Quaker perspectives cohere fundamentally with those of CMS. Both propose that the world can be mended within the everyday and that human life can be moved continually towards a better horizon from within the work setting. What counts as a better horizon in prescribed and detailed terms is also resisted by Quakers. Moreover, according to Dandelion, Quakers are zealous insofar they defend and evangelise an epistemologically relativist point of view (2007, 152). From the Quaker perspective, Dandelion writes, 'the group cannot know the Truth, except personally, partially, or provisionally' (2007, 152). The Quaker vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61) for a better world is, at least potentially, unending in this sense.

This conceptualisation of the liberal church is supported in my research. Horizons towards which the interviewees would like to move the world are not depicted by affiliates explicitly in Christianised terms. Nor are their utopian motivations in the everyday attributed to the direct influence of the corporate church or divine intentions. Instead, these Quakers make an essential claim to their participation in workaday affairs which, from affiliates' perspectives, transcends organisational prescription. This thesis,

thus, also supports Collins and Dandelion's (2014) argument that the liberal Quaker tradition can be conceptualised in liquid terms. Collins and Dandelion also argue that 'belief and (less prevalently practice) is significantly liquid' (2014, 298).

I suggest that this liquid conceptualisation of the tradition can also be re-imagined in utopian terms. This liquid Quaker utopianism coincides with the ongoing aspiration for a better world advocated by CMS. In Fournier's terms:

Utopianism is about movement and processes rather than better states; about journeys rather than destinations; it is about opening up alternatives, rather than closing down on a vision of 'a' better society; it is about what moves us to hope for, and to cultivate, alternative possibilities, and it is about establishing the conditions for the development of alternatives. (2002, 192)

My work also concurs with the implication in Collins and Dandelion's (2014) work which suggests that Quaker liquidity is less prevalent in Quaker practice than belief. My thesis argues that it, in terms of Quakers' contemporary work setting, this liquidity is proposed in hopeful terms for a better world. However, this liquidity is perhaps too liquid within the contemporary work setting insofar as affiliates frame it as a frictionless fit to the collective context and also as lacking practical traction in contexts which are foreign to its benign ambience. Quaker utopianism is also highly individualised and, therefore, appears contoured to, rather than 'integrated' within (Day 2011, 193) the workaday world. As the context shifts, not only liquid Quaker utopian beliefs but also practices move to blend whilst they mend.

These CMS and Quaker conceptualisations of what counts as utopia do not cohere entirely, however, especially in practical terms of how a better world can be realised. In the

next sections, I depict how affiliates' practice in the workaday moves within espoused organisational horizons and Quaker utopian claims.

7.7 Fixing utopia

CMS theorists tend to view managerial constructions of work as attempts to determine on behalf of participants what counts as meaningful in the work setting. John Law and Annemarie Mol (2002) suggest that work processes are framed by management as tension-free zones (2002, 84). In this sense, 'managerial utopia', according to CMS theorists, is not utopian but is dystopian insofar as its ends tend towards, in their realisation, a social equilibrium of recurrent predictability, hierarchical control and passive quiescence (Dahrendorf 1958, 121). CMS suggests that individual autonomy in the work setting is practically limited and when felt by participants as micro-emancipation based on a realisation of their real identity, is largely illusory (Alvesson and Willmott 2002, 624). From this perspective, work participants' intentions and responses are determined by managerial strategies in the everyday.

In this sense, worker agency within the organisational setting is prescribed by management strategies in ideal terms. These organisationally-defined ideal workers are employed by management as more or less suited to the achievement of collective goals (Foster and Wass 2013, 705). Reedy (2002) suggests that management can control individuals through this process of ideally-defined engagement. Workers are encouraged to regard work and its horizons as synonymous with individual self-

actualisation and to see the pursuit of organisational ideals as a way to personal development. Reedy writes:

Our highest aspirations involve complete identification of our own selves with that of our work...Utilising critical utopian analysis, it appears that the means and ends have been fully integrated but, in this case, the means of being fully committed member of the organisation are also the aspirational end within which every individual will find fulfilment...We are, in fact, to be so intoxicated by the process of 'doing' work that its effects and purposes disappear entirely from view. (2002:176-7)

Reedy states that the promotion of ideal collectives and ideal workers in this sense acts as a conservative force in the work context (Reedy 2002, 177). Grounds for opposition to the ends of the work organisation tend not to be recognised by participants, however, and 'a failure to challenge authoritative representations including one's own only serves to reinforce the status quo' (Knights 2006, 700). This pursuit by individuals of an organisationally constructed ideal has been termed 'the excellence project' by Fournier (1998, 59). It is an ideal collective form, the pursuit of which is framed seductively as not closed but open and mutually beneficial to the collective and the worker (Fournier 1998, 62).

7.7.1 Re-imagining the managerial paradigm

The effect of this managerially constructed delusion, argues Reedy (2002), is that the processes of work are no longer the focus of fundamentally alternative critique by participants (2003, 177). Instead, the locus of transformation becomes the individual who no longer perceives work in terms of radical structural alternatives but as a site for organisationally benign self-improvement. Moreover, even when alternatives are proposed, management colonise them and re-configure opposition on its own terms

(Parker 2002, 222). In this sense, management tends to be able to shape both organisational processes in the everyday and individual responses. Individuals are liberated in a micro-emancipatory sense insofar as they can pursue their personal goals within the workaday context (Fournier 1998, 63). However, the terms upon which alternative re-imagination of the work setting can be debated are set out and therefore controlled by management. Managers thus define the work organisation in their own terms, conflating sectional interests with individual and personal goals.

Carrette and King (2005) argue that the private individual and their motivations are bound up within the structures of the social context (2005, 71). Social institutions of religion and work in neo-liberal modernity orientate the individual towards understanding this engagement in terms of a personal experience. Carrette and King term this engagement as 'interiorised transcendence' (2004, 73). In other words, personal values are privileged by the individual at the expense of a wider social awareness. This privatisation of the self, they argue, 'does little to challenge structural violence and inequality and does little more than provide another avenue for inventing the self in capitalist society' (2004, 73). For critical theorists, then, utopianism requires an individual capacity to transcend selfish impulses which can, within the collective setting, open up 'new conceptual spaces for imaging and practising possible futures' (Fournier 2002, 192).

7.8 Quaker workaday conformity

In this workaday sense, the research participants' practice accords with Susan Robson's (2008) analysis of the group within the Quaker setting. Robson avers that harmony is privileged over principle in this setting and compromise is an implicit goal (2008, 141). Within the work setting, affiliates are not adversarial in how they manage tensions as Quakers through their everyday interventions. Management as an 'other' category tends not to predominate in how the Quaker affiliates view the work organisation. Rather, they recognise the authority of management in the work context and believe that this authority is a negotiable aspect of the workaday. This organisational authority is implicitly accepted by the interviewees within the work setting. In this sense, management are not regarded as other or as oppositional but as influential in the everyday. This influence is not framed by Quakers in the research as a fundamental impediment to the exposition of their utopian intentions.

This research supplements Susan Robson's analysis of the Quaker group and the orientation of individuals towards peaceable practices. It shows that these Quakers in the workaday strategise their inclination towards privileging harmony above principle (Robson 2008, 141). This harmonious orientation is also facilitated by their individualistic claims to religious horizons. The research participants, in this sense, are open to compromise and are not constrained by organisationally defined, policed and imposed boundaries. So, whilst parameters of belief within the liberal church are wide (Dandelion 2007, 134), also equally are affiliates' range of individually-claimed alternatives when making decisions in the everyday. 'The best way forward' (Scully

2008, 109) can thus be framed as ambiguous within the Quaker 'moral collage' (2008, 110). In the work setting, though, it is also a practical asset as affiliates are liberated to pursue what individually seems 'right' (2008, 115). Thus, whilst, within the work setting, the research participants have to manage coherently their organisationally prescribed job role, theological coherence is not primary amongst this cohort (Dandelion 2008, 37; Scully, 2008, 110) and these affiliates are liberated in this setting from the constraints of religious conformity.

CMS also suggests similarities with Quaker ambitions in terms of its resistance to the organisations which seek to impose fixed and unitary perspectives upon participants. Whilst the research participants claim to be recusants from the fixed and oppressive conceptualisation of Christianity by mainstream churches, CMS tends to frame contemporary work organisations similarly. Managers frame utopia from an imposed 'top-down' perspective as achievable (Parker 2003, 220; Douglas 2010, 25). However, this imposed utopia is rather depicted by CMS as domination of participants' interests by organisational concerns (Parker 2003, 221). Instead, managerial aspirations to liberate individuals through framing their work-lives as emancipatory can be disavowed by participants in the organisational process. But this liberation from dominating managerial discourses, argues Parker, can be achieved if, and only if, participants in the process are so moved to protest (2003, 224).

The perspective of the Quaker cohort tends to diverge from the CMS conceptualisation of the contemporary work setting on this point. Dandelion (2008) writes that the liberal

Quaker perspective is a highly individualised conceptualisation of the religious enterprise (1996, 294). In this organisational sense, the liberal Quaker tradition makes a claim to a boundary-less re-imagination of what counts as religious, regarding experience as primary. Affiliates claim that their exposition requires no organisational prescription or mediation with the divine in order to configure the everyday religious project. Jack worked with '*disadvantaged young people*'. He was careful, however, to depict his utopian horizons as not necessarily contoured to those of the work organisation or the young people. Espousing his workaday horizons, he stated:

I do believe in the power of one; I do believe that can move out from a single encounter; I do want to make a difference; but only on the scale that matters to these people; I am very aware of making sure that...I am not overlaying my concerns and my aspirations for them on them; again, that would be a question I would ask myself; whose needs are being met here.

In this sense, the influence of the Quaker collective is marginalised and, within the research, in everyday terms, individuals pick out the 'best way' forward (Scully, 2008) in the particular. Quakers, then, are highly resistant to the concept that their imaginations are essentially shaped by the collective landscape. Instead, the research participants suggest a highly individualised re-conceptualisation of the affiliate within the organisational setting.

This highly individualised conception of the individual, however, is also undermined in terms of the work setting. The interviewees see their horizons as fundamentally in harmony with those of the work organisation. They also tend to frame their utopian inclination in essential terms. However, these Quakers' work organisations not only claim aspirations harmonious with those of affiliates, they are also white collar, service

sector occupations whose practices in the everyday also are perceived to support Quaker horizons. The interviewees who experienced the authority of work organisation, and its propensity to alter conceptualisations of what counts as organisationally valid, and ensuing institutional discord, also had their Quaker self-concept fundamentally disrupted. In Patsy's words, her organisation did not live up to its espoused horizons. In this sense, the CMS conceptualisation of management as purposefully and invisibly reconfiguring the interests of participants towards its own sectional ends is revealing in Quaker terms. When management moves the goalposts, the highly individualised Quaker self-concept is exposed: its limitations to influence, unsupported, how organisational horizons are defined and realised, is then revealed.

7.9 Overturning managerial utopia

The potential for transformation of fundamental organisational goals, from the CMS perspective, relies on the recognition by participants that work is less than a promised managerial utopia and that the practices and ethics of work, for example, through modern Human Resource Management processes (Roberts 2013, 323), are unable to shape totally their individual experience. As Parker (2003) contends, critical ideas of utopia rest on the capacity of individuals to perceive their work-lives as sub-optimal, to believe that situations can be changed in a hopeful sense and to conceive work-life in alternative ways (2003, 224). And, Parker argues, for organisational utopia to be realised, subversion of managerial interests by participants must be understood by them as an option: 'All that is required is that we are unhappy with the present state of affairs and prepared to acknowledge that there are always alternatives' (Parker 2003, 218).

CMS theorists tend to view managerial constructions of work as attempts to determine what counts as the work setting. Management constructions of work processes are framed as attempts to settle contemporary work processes rationally (Law and Mol 2002, 85) in naturalised state of homeostatic equilibrium (Dahrendorf 1958, 119). Organised work is framed for participants by managers as already solved or of no everyday concern because there are no conceivable alternatives (Alvesson and Willmott 2002, 625). The status quo is preserved if organisations operate under a principle that reduces management of human complexities to method within organisationally-prescribed structures (Law and Mol 2002, 85).

CMS theories suggest that utopianism does not only intend to change social conditions but also, importantly, agitates for the adoption of a better way of ordering human affairs. This intention to agitate for utopian change requires 'the capacity to imagine ourselves beyond and to act upon, rather than simply react to, the external structures around us' (Levitas 2013, 185). In the view of CMS, the managerial ideal is one, not of organisational control of workers' responses, but essentially of enforced organisational conformity. Roberts argues that workers are cast by management, in this sense, as 'oblates' in the contemporary work setting, whose embodied, cognitive, emotional and spiritual life is drawn within the remit of managerial power with a view to undergoing 'transformation' (2013, 325). However, Roberts understands this 'transformation' of values and worker perceptions as the ultimate goal of management. Workers are rather 'employee-oblates' in Roberts' terms because they willingly sacrifice their interests to those of the deity, in this case, the goals of the work organisation (2013, 330).

The oblation paradigm frames individuals in the work enterprise in terms of the submission of self-interest to a collective goal. Submission of self-interest is seen by participants in the work process as a logical response to the demands of a Performative Absolute (Roberts 2013, 330). This Performative Absolute, argues Roberts, is an 'all-consuming, all-seeing, yet self-concealing power that feeds on identity' (2013, 325). It demands total submission by workers under the guise of 'transformation' and 'personal development'. In this sense, the experience of work is re-framed by managerial discourses in terms which are intended to appear liberating for the individual and which transcend the mundanity of the everyday. The work context itself is thus transformed by management into a venue for the realisation of individuals' higher aspirations, which are, in practice, managed towards the fulfilment of organisational ends (Reedy 2002, 176). For the utopian horizon to be realised, however, the ever-present human urge to transcend requires a transgressive impetus to push the human world beyond 'life as it is' (Bauman, 2003, 11). Whilst affiliates appear to share this universal urge to transcend (Bauman, 2003, 12), in the context of work they do not transgress the authority of the organisation to set out the terms upon which the world can be improved.

7.10 Quakers transgress within the rules

The human urge to pursue a better existence beyond the limits which the world ascribes is a most natural inclination (Bauman 2003, 12). Bauman also suggests that this unending impetus to transcend and to transgress worldly boundaries is not necessarily destructive in its effects (2003, 16). Whilst CMS frames organisational conditions as obstructive, Bauman writes that interventions to bring about utopia can creatively

circumvent perceived impediments even by engaging in abstract processes of re-imagination (2003, 16). Quakers, in this sense, whilst evincing a euphonious urge to make better the world harmoniously, also advocate disruption surreptitiously in the work setting. Euphonious intervention does not exclude organisational transgression, in this sense. Rather, the research participants suggest transgressive actions only insofar as they can be pursued within normative organisational boundaries.

Trudi had depicted her career in education in engaging terms. She had been involved in projects which she considered personally meaningful and socially helpful. However, she also described a highly politicised environment within the organisation. Her field of expertise was also becoming more controversial in terms of its social exposition. These factors had combined so that she became increasingly conflicted with regard to how far her aims were shared with those of the work organisation. She said:

I find it a strain to actually maintain what you might call a liberal position; that is, looking at, thinking, well, do you actually have to believe in the project you are working on in order to engage with it as a worker...and I find that socially and politically actually very, very difficult; virtually impossible.

Trudi believed that management were being manipulative and aggressive towards her in the work setting and said that she had few alternatives in terms of how she could engage meaningfully within her job role. Management were perceived as personally provocative and indulging in political brinkmanship within the organisation. Trudi felt that the pressure from managers to conform to her organisationally prescribed role conflicted with her fundamental horizons. These managerial pressures were depicted by

her as incompatible with the continuation of her offices under the same conditions. She stated:

And then I'm in the position of thinking, oh, fuck, what do I do now? Do you make this a confrontation? Do you blow the thing on, and say this is actually, I mean aggressive; do you want to bring this organisation out? And I thought they were being provocative anyway; and I thought that's what they were after; and I thought, fuck them, I'm not going to let them mess me around.

Trudi stated that the developing perspective of her job role away from formerly shared aims was undermining her Quaker activism beyond the organisational setting. She considered whether to approach management with her concerns but dismissed the option of confrontation as potentially futile given a perceived managerial preoccupation with administrative rather than more fundamental priorities. Rather, Trudi opted to redress the balance with regard to managerial dissembling by transgressing the spirit rather than the practice of her professional endeavours. She said:

It put me in a position of for nearly a year, sabotaging my own work; saying, oh well, I have completed these projects but actually you're making it, the results aren't very good; I did write full reports; but they weren't as sabotaging as I'd hoped; writing reports so they looked reasonable; they were full of fudge and not really giving anything of use; well, that's my strategy; didn't quite work out but; and I sometimes wonder whether I should have, you know, should have fallen on my sword and go out with a big bang; anyway I looked around for another job and then ended up in a different department.

In this sense, the contemporary liberal Quaker tradition is not seen to advocate, but neither is it seen to exclude, transgression. Transgression, in this sense, however, is conducted in harmonious rather than confrontational terms. The research participants claim to progress a more harmonious world is, thus, not overtly oppositional. They guide their euphonious intentions towards the optimum harmonious positions and avoid explicit conflict in their relationships. However, particular instances of covert

transgression indicate that the cohort is not averse to transgressive non-conformity in the work context as long as affiliates perceive their interventions as promoting a more rather than a less harmonious world. As Trudi illustrates, transgression for the Quaker research participants in the work setting is framed in terms of a highly individualised interpretation of re-balancing discord in the everyday. Whilst transgression in terms of disharmony is generally avoided, the individualised conceptualisation of the liberal tradition grants scope for affiliates' alternative workaday practices, re-imagined as promoting harmony in the world.

7.11 Euphonious practices in the everyday

The research participants do not pursue their utopian ambitions transgressively in the organisational context. In the contemporary work context, they do not advocate breaking or admit transgressing organisational normative boundaries. How far the particulars of the economic context are influential in this generally peaceable disposition is not clear. This a factor which cannot be discounted as significant although it was not cited specifically by affiliates in my study. Rather, at least within the remit of this investigation, it is apparent that these Quakers in practice accept the organisationally-defined terms upon which they pursue their utopian intentions in the workaday. The interviewees co-operate with the work organisation in the everyday in order to foment their utopian horizons. They disagree with organisational everyday practices or horizons which they see as re-orientated by the work organisation away from shared aspirations to improve the world. In this sense, the research participants frame the work setting as at least potentially disharmonious. However, the interviewees do not overtly challenge

organisational authority but claim to partake harmoniously in workaday processes to advance their aims. They also claim to be able to manoeuvre within the practical constraints of the everyday whilst continuing without essential compromise their vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61).

The Quakers in the research participate in the contemporary work setting, pursuing utopian ends whilst claiming to negotiate harmoniously impediments in the workaday. I term Quaker participation in this sense 'euphonious'. 'Euphonious' depicts how these Quakers participate in the everyday of the contemporary work organisation and euphony refers to the ends to which they aspire. The term euphonious, according to the literarydevices.com website (December 2016), is a literary or musical one which describes how melodious sounds are added to a text or composition in order to create a pleasant and harmonious effect. This conceptualisation of Quaker practice can be understood in terms alternative to 'cacophonous'. Whereas, according to the dictionary.com website (December 2016), cacophonous can be depicted as 'harsh' and 'discordant' sounds which create a meaningless mixture, rather, the outcome of euphonious interventions is intended to be mellifluous. Euphony is composed intentionally for listeners by combining pleasing sounds harmoniously to produce a sweet sounding resonance. Its aim in practice is to produce a pleasant and peaceful feeling by carefully introducing soft sounds. Its individual sounds are pacific and euphonious practice intends to combine peaceably a unified and harmonious whole. Thus, euphony is a series of individual interventions which are blended within the whole for an accomplished peaceable effect.

In terms of this research, the Quaker affiliates in the work setting are depicted as euphonians. They aspire to move the world towards a better horizon from within the contemporary work setting. They aver that work organisations share their vision for a better mundane world as well as a mutual understanding that this improvement can be achieved by participating collaboratively within the temporal setting. These Quakers, thus, engage in the everyday process of work to foment their highly individualised conceptualisation of a better world. In this sense, through the organisationally ascribed job role, the research participants pursue essential horizons which they frame *inter alia* as justice or equality and, by so doing, on a wider scale, engender a more euphonious world. However, the Quaker participants also seek harmony within the workaday context as euphonians insofar as they pursue an intention to reduce the causes and effects of discord within the work setting.

7.11.1 Espousing harmony amongst colleagues

The research participants suggest that the world can be improved by practically peaceable interventions through their everyday engagement within the work context. Whilst they espouse to make the world better through organisationally-ascribed job roles, the interviewees also seek to make the world better by their workaday interventions in this context. Roger had recently worked for a government agency before taking redundancy and a starting new job in charitable work. He described the aims of the government department in fundamental terms and as contiguous with those of the Quaker tradition in terms of '*justice, redressing injustice and to truthfulness*'.

However, as Roger implied, work was also experienced as discordant and this disharmony had to be managed within the everyday as a Quaker and as a worker.

In Roger's view, the espoused aim of the agency was to facilitate citizens' access to social care. This work was '*very, very stressful*', according to Roger, and the demands of the job role were compounded by '*time targets, productivity targets, units per week, a bonus if you dealt with a huge number, problems if you didn't deal with them*'. The pressure of managing these at times personally conflicting demands had apparently resulted in colleagues cutting corners, managers favouring target completion over integrity, as well as a divisive organisational culture which resulted in ill health for some '*one of whom was a lovely, very principled woman but the contradictions within the organisation gave her a mental health breakdown.*'

Roger said that some individuals thrived in this competitive organisational culture whilst others believed that it was antagonistic and antithetical to the aims of public enterprise. This juxtaposition of competitive managerial aims and resistance to self-serving practices had engendered, in Roger's view, pervasive discord within the organisation. Roger believed that endemic cynicism within the department was collectively corrosive and he did his best to '*work against that*'. Roger tried to celebrate success rather than accentuate the apparently normative disharmonious perspectives amongst co-workers. He claimed to include the cleaners in staff gatherings and attempted to foment a more inclusive outlook within the department.

One manager in particular was depicted by Roger as '*a very, very negative influence on colleagues, on the office, on the work, bringing us into disrepute*'. The manager victimised some workers as well, thus unsettling the work process generally. Roger felt that he refrained from gossip and other practices which might undermine his harmonious working relationship with all staff. However, he was presented with a dilemma because of the antagonistic behaviour of the manager and its nefarious effects on his co-workers' disposition towards him and the organisation more widely. Roger's co-workers had openly discussed their dislike of the disreputable manager, candidly fantasising about '*cutting his brake cables*' on his car. Roger was led to consider whether '*as a Quaker, do I de-throne*' the manager from his job.

Roger contrived practical strategies for addressing this discord. He stated that he did not wish the manager harm but, '*at the same time, I really don't like him being around*'. Roger hoped that the manager could have everything he wished for himself, including being:

headhunted for a wonderful job that would use his considerable talents, but not give him the opportunity to exercise negative ones; where he would be really well paid and happy; and that he had a long and happy life

The organisation conducted a round of voluntary redundancies and Roger, along with other colleagues, organised a farewell party for the staff. This occasion was depicted by Roger as problematic for others in the work context. Many of those being made redundant were reluctant to attend the occasion especially if the divisive manager was in attendance. Roger chose not to divisively, in his words, '*de-throne*' the manager. He realised the manager's approach was difficult to bear amongst his colleagues in the

office. However, he purposefully avoided being perceived as antagonistic in his practical responses. Instead, he sought to encourage amongst staff an acceptance of difference between their positions and that of the manager. Roger attempted to work inclusively in his everyday practice, trying to encourage goodwill and harmonious relationships between his fellow office workers.

7.11.2 Espousing harmony amongst management

The research participants also engage in euphonious practices with regard to management. In contrast to CMS, the Quakers in the study do not frame managers in adversarial terms. Rather, the interviewees intervene within the work setting in ways which attempt to include managers and managerial perspectives. They claim to be careful with regard to how they engage with managers so that, if the parties appear separated in terms of their perspectives, Quakers in this research attempt to peaceably embrace managers in terms of how they expressed their opinions.

Maddy worked for a government organisation which helped a *hard to reach* constituency of young people *'access education and its benefits'*. She saw her work as fundamentally meaningful and satisfying, *'contributing to society'* and making a difference to people's lives *'in big and small ways'*. However, whilst the organisation espoused an intention to improve young people's lives, this claim was depicted by Maddy as multi-faceted and complex in its everyday exposition. Maddy claimed to undertake this job with integrity but her fundamental aims, and those espoused by the organisation, were not felt to be equally shared in practice amongst her co-workers.

This discrepancy between fundamentally shared ends and workaday practice was depicted as problematic for Maddy in her work setting. She said:

Well for a lot of my colleagues, they do just that, go in do a job and are probably much less angst-ridden because of it; but I am not like that; for me it's a much bigger thing than what's on my job description; I am quite invested in how I am earning a living, especially compared to other people, it's part of Quaker faith in action, it's an important way of putting this stuff into practice, you are actually trying to live by those testimonies.

Maddy viewed the organisational horizons as conflicted in practice. According to Maddy, individuals' engagement with work was framed by the organisation in rational terms of '*key performance indicator and strategic objectives...which didn't take account of the human dimension*'. In practice, she perceived managerial ends to be privileged above those of young people. Rationally-defined outcomes were apparently manipulated by the organisation away from fundamental ends towards managers' selfish interests. Maddy also framed her co-workers in this context as compliant with this disingenuous enterprise.

Maddy attempted to directly address the fundamental contradictions within the project. She tried to encourage a critical stance on the organisational position but '*a lot of people were not really interested in truth thing; than why they think they are there, or whatever ideological position they've told is what they are there to do.*' Maddy also challenged her managers in essential terms to '*get a bit deeper than that into the simple honest truth of what we're trying to do*' and to transcend, in her words, '*the management bullshit*'. However, her intention to provoke a thorough examination of the project's rationale was ultimately unsuccessful. Maddy's manager was resistant to views and her

co-workers remained apparently unconcerned. Maddy felt personally conflicted by this incongruity between organisational discourses and its practices and had taken time off work due to the stress of dealing with what she perceived as managerial duplicity.

As a Quaker, Maddy discovered that compromise was a practical and convenient default position in the work context. But she also found the lived experience of '*typical Quaker fence-sitting*' and organisational compromise difficult to reconcile with her espoused fundamental horizons. The work context was also depicted by Maddy as an alien setting for Quaker horizons and practices. She suggested that in the workaday context, Quakers were '*rubbing up against this society, which is very often a long way from Quakerly...work forces you to do that*'. Work was depicted by Maddy as a compromising process. The cultural experiences of Quakers did not typically fit the confrontational work setting, in Maddy's view. Their liberal worldviews were theoretically coherent, she felt, but she was sceptical about whether they could be transposed seamlessly unadulterated into the challenging aspects of his work. Interpersonal and internecine organisational conflict was also framed by Maddy as a normal aspect of the workaday world which compels individuals to adopt stances that could not always be aligned in practice with pacific Quaker claims.

Maddy felt that her intention to make the world better was not, in practice, always understood by others within the work setting. Her efforts to effect fundamental change were not ultimately fruitful. She pointed out to her manager the contradictions in how organisational aims were put into practice. She tried not to alienate co-workers from his

intentions but, she stated, the success of the project on managerial terms had already been explicitly equated by management with the continued employment of staff. Her attempts to re-align espoused organisational horizons and practice were apparently misconstrued. *'I didn't set out to challenge my manager,'* she said, *'I set out to challenge something that I thought was an injustice.'* However, Maddy felt that her boss thought she was:

a big pain in the backside and that caused me to ponder how I felt I was speaking truth to power; but actually, is my truth any more real than her truth? i.e. her perception of the situation; ...and also on that point we had a big 'to-do'.

In this sense, I frame Quakers in the study as euphonians in terms of how they make interventions peaceably within the everyday. These everyday interventions are seen by affiliates to move the world further towards a good horizon, seeking to avoid outright conflict between participants in the everyday or procedural transgression which would impede organisational harmony. For Quakers in the research, contemporary work is a process with which they are moved peaceably to engage. They do not espouse organisational transgression. Rather, these Quakers aspire to move the world to a better horizon from a perceived less optimum place. They do this from within the workaday and they privilege perceived harmonious means to assist this process.

7.12 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have framed how research participants manage the inconsistencies and tensions they experience in the workaday world. Affiliates espoused utopian ends but their exposition is seen to be limited within the everyday context of work. However, I have argued that Quaker responses are not inevitably determined for affiliates by the

everyday work context. I have shown, by comparing Quaker conceptualisations of the work setting with those depicted by Critical Management theorists, that affiliates in the research tend to accept rather than to transgress the authority of the work setting. Nevertheless, affiliates are also moved to pursue a better world within the collective form. They seek to create a harmonious workaday context which fits their ongoing ambitions for a better world. In this sense, Quaker religiosity in the work setting is not fully defined by the parameters set out by the work setting. Nor is it adequately depicted by reference to corporate church discourses. Rather, it is conceptualised as a highly individualised re-imagination of what counts as a better world, peaceably pursued by affiliates from within the everyday processes of the contemporary work context.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I have discussed Quaker research participants' experience and perceptions of the contemporary work setting. This thesis is an original investigation into the social practice of affiliates in this context. Its findings illuminate how the Quaker tradition is conceptualised by affiliates, how it is perceived as transposed into the public sphere and how the interaction between the mundane setting and Quaker affiliates can be categorised. My conceptualisations of liberal Quaker faith in the work context also frame affiliates' perceptions in problematic terms. I have analysed these problems of consistency between Quaker claims and how these claims tend to be positioned within the contemporary work setting. In this sense, I have achieved the purpose of the research: to critically analyse how affiliates of the tradition re-imagine and expedite the contemporary Quaker faith in the modern work context. In this chapter, I summarise the main findings and discuss them in the light of previous scholarship and future research.

8.2 Analysis of overall finding

In my introductory chapter, I suggested a main research question.

The main question:

How is the Quaker tradition lived out in the contemporary British work context?

The four subsidiary questions:

How can affiliates' conceptualisation of the Quaker tradition be framed?

How can affiliates' conceptualisation of the contemporary work context be framed?

How far can the lived experience of the work setting be depicted in Quaker terms?

What are the boundaries which differentiate what counts as Quaker in the workaday context?

In this section, I analyse how these questions have been answered in the thesis. I have answered the first subsidiary question by depicting in detail how the Quaker tradition is conceptualised by the research participants in highly individualised terms and in a claimed heterodox relation to mainstream Christianity. I have explained my response to the second subsidiary question by conceptualising affiliates' participation also in highly individualised terms as if they were Quakers. In answer to the third question, I argued that the lived experience of this Quaker cohort in the contemporary work setting can be framed in utopian terms, aspiring to improve the world, and in euphonious terms, intending to harmonise the discordant workaday. I also suggested that there are boundaries to Quaker participation, in answer to the final subsidiary question. These boundaries can be delineated by observing the Quaker interviewees' practice through a broadly Critical Management Studies lens whereby affiliates are seen not to transgress organisational authority.

This analysis also gives rise to my response to the main question regarding how the contemporary Quaker tradition is lived out by affiliates in the workaday. I contend that the highly individualised conceptualisation of the contemporary Quaker tradition as depicted by the interviewees is well-matched to the horizons and practices of the work

setting. Affiliates are able to eschew boundaries between what counts as Quaker and work because the church and the work organisations within which these Quakers move are perceived to support in practice their highly individualised claims.

In Chapter Three, I discussed my finding that Quakers tend to be adult incomers to the Quaker church. This finding is significant as it allowed me to categorise Quaker research participants as converts to the church. I suggested that Quaker affiliation is a process rather than a sudden changing of worldview in a Pauline sense (Richardson 1985, 164). Rather, Quakers depict discovery of the church as accidental. They also tend to be seekers: they look to match their personal horizons rationally with those of a, most often, Christian, religious collective. In this sense, Quakers tend to conform to the category of experimental converts whose religious enterprise of successive affiliation is best understood by examining 'the individual's series of group identities not just the individual's current group identity' (Kilbourne and Richardson, 1989, 6). Quakers' conversion is also framed in this chapter in terms of alternation whereby there is no radical disruption to affiliates' worldview upon affiliation to the new church (Snow and Machelek 1983, 264; Carrothers 2007, 135).

Quakers conversion patterns appear to match these categories as their personal horizons are depicted by them as fundamentally consistent and unchanging before and since affiliation. The Quaker process of conversion, then, is a re-casting of personal horizons held prior to affiliation. In this sense, where personal horizons are framed by affiliates as fundamentally unaffected by Quaker conversion, affiliation to the church is

depicted by adherents as affirming a consistent worldview rather causing a radically new social and theological orientation.

Insofar as Quaker converts are experimenters (Kilbourne and Richardson 1989, 6), affiliates depict a shifting tendency of affiliation between religious traditions and between affiliation and non-affiliation. Moreover, Quaker research participants also depict a view of personal belief as continuous and essentially unshifting. In this sense, Quaker conversion does not entail a radical alteration of affiliates' worldviews. Rather, I conceptualise the interviewees as converts who frame what counts as Quaker primarily in individualised terms. The Quaker conversion patterns thus illustrate the primacy of the individualised perspective within the church (Dandelion 1996, 294) and it is this primacy of the individualised perspective which is seen as essentially consistent relative to differing religious contexts. Instead, according to these affiliates, it is the collective backdrop to their beliefs which is depicted as shifting and provisional.

At times in the research participants' lives, the backdrop to Quaker belief is depicted in institutional terms; at other times affiliates do not feel bound to a particular church tradition. However, according to these Quakers' perceptions, it is the collective religious organisation which is provisional and contingent rather than affiliates' enduring personal horizons. In this sense, the Quaker participants do not privilege institutional constructions of what counts as religious. Rather, as Tom averred, '*What comes first is my mode of being, what comes second is Quaker.*' From this point of view, the individual affiliate and the individual perspective within the Quaker church context is

regarded by the interviewees as primary and as essential. In this sense, the Quaker church is also seen as contingent and is viewed by affiliates as, at least temporarily, agreeable to the individual convert. From this perspective, Quakers see the individual as standing outside this social construction of the church and do not, in Frost's (2013) terms, perceive this construction of the Quaker perspective as culturally arrogant (Frost 2013, 89). Affiliation is, thus, not cast by these Quakers as inevitable, inspired or as necessary for the realisation of essential goals except insofar as it facilitates the converts' highly individualised ends. These individualised terms are portrayed by affiliates as usefully accommodated within the liberal and permissive construction of the contemporary Quaker church.

The membership structures of the Quaker church are also depicted in this chapter as facilitating an individualised conceptualisation of the religious enterprise. Quaker church structures frame affiliates as 'members' who have publicly declared their affiliation and 'attenders'. Attenders are understood to be at an intermediate stage, implicitly on their way to Quaker membership. However, these categories reveal no theological and few intra-organisational distinctions or obligations. Instead, these classifications draw a picture which supports Dandelion's conceptualisation of the church as liberal and permissive in terms of agreed belief and as accommodating and affirming a highly individualised conceptualisation of the contemporary Quaker tradition (2007, 80; 2008, 6).

In Chapter Four, this tendency towards the individualised conceptualisation of belief within the liberal Quaker collective is analysed. I frame contemporary affiliates as contestors of mainstream Christianity within this Quaker paradigm. Affiliates choose not to affiliate to mainstream Christian churches, but, instead, to identify with the Quaker tradition, converting by a processual matching of persisting individual horizons within a liberal and permissive institutional frame. However, these Quakers depict a familiarity with institutional constructions of Christianity. In this sense, the research participants can be framed as 'switchers' (Perrin and Maus 1991, 98) insofar as they tend to seek out religious contexts with which they are familiar in theological or ritual terms. So, although affiliates claim a highly individualised conceptualisation of personal beliefs, they switch their religious back-stories to contexts with which they are somewhat familiar. In this sense, the liberal Quaker tradition is not a radical departure from former religious experience. It is anchored to the Christian church and affiliates' individualised claims are not de-contextualised. This depiction of the Quaker church as pertinent to affiliates' experience is also framed by affiliates in terms oppositional to mainstream Christian churches.

Affiliates tend to make a rational choice (McKinnon 2012, 530) to convert to the Quaker church rather than mainstream Christian churches. This Quaker conversion is premised on an alternative conceptualisation of Christianity which privileges the individual perspective above that of the collective view. From this Quaker perspective, mainstream churches privilege the collective above the individual view. It appears that the interviewees choose to affiliate to the Quaker church on these alternative grounds: that

mainstream church constructions of Christianity are actually social constructions of religion. These church constructions of Christianity are perceived by affiliates as potentially oppressive *vis-à-vis* the individual believer and they are seen to favour sectional interests within mainstream churches rather than serving its essential unadulterated ends. According to this Quaker view, therefore, individual inclinations towards seeking the truth are perceived as suppressed in this mainstream Christian context. Seeking religious truth in institutional terms is understood by these Quaker affiliates to be a conformist response to the imposition of organisational norms and essential contestation by the individual affiliate is marginalised.

In this sense, Christianity is problematised by the research participants in terms of how it is constructed by mainstream churches. Whilst mainstream churches are perceived to construct Christianity in a corrupted form which embeds sectional interests at the expense of essential truths, the Quaker affiliates construct the religious enterprise otherwise. Instead, the interviewees suggest that religious messages are also available outside Christian church doctrine and can be re-imagined by the individual affiliate. According to the research participants, mainstream churches suppress this conceptualisation of the Christian message by professing a fixed and settled idea of the religious project on organisational terms. On the contrary, these Quakers perceive Christianity as an essentially contested concept (Gallie 1956, 168). In this sense, the research cohort do not disavow the pertinence of Christianity but rather argue against how it is traditionally realised and made manifest by prescription through Christian institutions (Gallie 1956, 168). So, whilst Christian tenets might or might not be

essential, from this Quaker perspective, how Christianity is realised is framed by affiliates as contested.

This conceptualisation of Christianity appears to be a fundamental point of difference between Quaker perceptions of religion and those which they identify in mainstream churches. From this Quaker point of view, Christian churches appear to reify traditional social constructions of Christianity. The research participants oppose this claim and charge that the meaning of Christianity and religion is not and probably cannot be settled. In other words, the Quaker participants conceptualise Christianity as essentially other than that its construction by Christian churches. In these Quaker terms, the concept of Christianity is provisional and its realisation is contingent. It is perceived as an ongoing process of re-imagination. Moreover, contestation from an individual perspective and its alternative re-imagination is not seen as credible from within the oppressive constructions of contemporary mainstream churches. From this Quaker perspective, re-imagination which is faithful to the Christian tradition is possible only from without the traditional constructions of Christian institutions.

The research cohort claim to contest Christianity from this individualised perspective. They convert to the church on this basis in opposition to perceived mainstream constructions of the Christian concept. Thus, it appears to be not the concept of Christianity to which these Quakers are opposed. As Dandelion (2007, 152) has written and which this thesis has affirmed, contemporary affiliates perspectives conform to the concept of an 'absolute perhaps', a certainty of uncertainty with regard to the

construction of the liberal tradition. Within this paradigm, Christianity is essentially contested and not portrayed as erroneous or untrue. Rather, it is the mainstream construction of Christianity in institutionally defined and defended terms of certainty to which this Quaker cohort are essentially opposed.

Moreover, through this individualised and uncertain lens, the 'absolute perhaps' is essentialised by the Quaker affiliates. The 'absolute perhaps', a certainty of uncertainty with regard to essential truths and, in particular, their final discovery and realisation, is constructed as standing outside a perceived socially constructed mainstream church view of Christianity. In this sense, adopting a relativising perspective of the 'absolute perhaps' allows Quakers to regard all collective systems of belief as *de facto* socially constructed and contrastingly they frame religious belief normatively as an essentially contested concept. It is this normative essentialisation of the 'absolute perhaps' which I suggested in this chapter has become problematic for the group.

I argue that this critique of the Quaker propensity towards essentialising the 'absolute perhaps' is suggested in the research findings. It is indicated in particular within the apparent Quaker conversion as essential contestors of Christianity. The research participants claim to articulate essential contestation of Christianity from within a religious collective. The Quaker church collectively supports this view of Christianity as an essentially contested concept alternative to mainstream churches. It also affirms the Quaker affiliates' claims that the religious enterprise is an autonomous and highly individualised disambiguation of the Christian tradition. However, the organisational

practice of this re-conceptualisation of belief in universalist terms is also challenged from within the Quaker church. Some Quakers in the research have suggested that this essentially contested position *vis-à-vis* the organised construction of religious belief is not consistent if it is also not applied equally to their present church.

Affiliates have critiqued the contemporary liberal Quaker church in terms of its practices within the organisational setting. The formal organisation of the church has become, in Jack's words, '*a tyranny of its own structures*'. In other words, it can be seen as inclusive in terms of its discourses but is framed as exclusive in its practices. The essential conceptualisation of the religious enterprise which frames the liberal position is illiberal in its exposition. Universalist principles of a 'certainty of uncertainty' with regard to universal truths and other perceived culturally constructed religions are seen by affiliates as not always applied essentially within the collective form.

This perceived unequal application of the uncertainty principle of the 'absolute perhaps' is seen as practically contingent and is framed as iniquitous in its realisation. Thus, the Quaker church is framed in the research in terms of how the liberal tradition constructs implicit orderings within its organisation; in other words, a space where participation in the Quaker church ritual and the outcome of structural processes are, apparently unacknowledged, privileged. The contradiction of this practically unequal ordering in apparent contradiction to an espoused spiritual equality is observed by some Quakers as a betrayal of a fundamental principle: that is, religious belief and its organisation is an

essentially contested concept and the religious enterprise is for individuals affirmed and facilitated by the contemporary Quaker church in this sense.

This research thus supports Dandelion's thesis that a Quaker double culture is extant in Quaker practice and church theology (1996, 119). It also supports his argument that the contemporary liberal Quaker tradition can be framed in terms of a certainty of uncertainty, the 'absolute perhaps' paradigm (2007, 152). However, I aver that this construction of the contemporary Quaker church can be developed further. The form of the contemporary Quaker church as depicted by the research participants is constructed around essentialising the 'absolute perhaps'. The Quaker affiliates as incomers convert to the church as contestors. By doing so, they espouse an essential alternative to Christian mainstream churches. They advocate an essential contestation of how Christianity is constructed in functionally oppressive terms. These Quakers tend to misapprehend or disavow the socially constructed aspects of the universalist Quaker tradition, however, and in practice reconstruct implicitly the orderings of the mainstream Christian churches which they claim to have rejected.

In Chapter Five of this thesis I discussed liberal Quaker adult converts in the context of the contemporary work setting. I framed the liberal Quaker self-concept and their perceptions of work in harmonious terms. The research participants assert that the liberal religious enterprise is realised through affiliates' active participation in the everyday. In this sense, affiliates frame the workaday world as significant. The work context is not depicted by affiliates in dystopic terms, however, nor as disempowering or

oppressive. Although these Quakers experience disharmony in the work setting, they frame the intentions of the work organisation in utopian terms. In other words, Quaker research participants frame the contemporary work setting as a process within which they pursue an impetus to make better the world (Johns 2007, 121). These Quakers suggest that their utopian horizons are shared with those espoused by the work organisation. This harmonising of Quaker horizons can be observed specifically in occupationally and economically-defined terms.

The Quaker participants' work organisations are categorised in economic terms of public and private, market and non-market terms. Occupationally, the Quaker cohort also work in white collar jobs within the service sector. However, although these economic and occupational categories are useful to orientate the findings, they do not of themselves sufficiently depict how the liberal Quaker tradition is matched to the contemporary work organisation. In this chapter, I developed these categories further to depict what counts as Quaker in liberal and highly individualised terms. I argue that affiliates across all economic and occupational categories assert that work organisations, through pursuing mutually shared horizons, support their utopian aims. Organisational horizons are re-imagined as commensurate with Quaker horizons and affiliates' participation in the workaday process is framed as a highly individualised pursuit of 'the best way forward' (Scully 2008, 109).

The research participants, however, also cast their vision quest (Pilgrim 2008, 61) in the work context in primarily individualised terms. Affiliation to the church does not cause

the Quaker affiliates to pursue a particular path in the everyday. Rather, what counts as Quaker for the affiliate in this context is seen as a highly individualised interpretation of the workaday as if they were Quakers. In other words, participation in the everyday work context is undertaken essentially on terms which preceded their conversion to the church and which are now seen as coincident with those of the liberal tradition.

In Chapters Six, I argue that the Quaker research participants' impetus to make better the world is not unending. The work setting is framed as harmonious insofar as affiliates claim to share with the organisation an aspiration to make better the world. However, the work setting is also seen as disharmonious by affiliates. The disharmony of work tends to make less safe the Quaker affiliates' individualised claim because their practice is shaped by organisational discord. The highly individualised Quaker assertion does not transcend the work setting but is contoured closely to the work context.

In this chapter, this view that what counts as Quaker is contoured to the work setting is evidenced in terms of the interviewees' claim to see that of God in everyone. Quakers, in this workaday sense, view that of God in everyone instrumentally rather than theologically. It is employed as an everyday strategy to facilitate better relations with work associates within circumstances of workaday discord. However, its use also implies that the highly individualised and liberal religious perspective is intended to mollify felt discomfort within the everyday. It is melded to particular circumstances only *in extremis* and demonstrates how affiliates manage discord. They frame negotiating discord as doubly problematic insofar as they manage the roles ascribed by the work

organisation and their Quaker claims. These Quaker claims are also viewed by affiliates as conspicuous in the work setting. In this sense, the affiliates manage their own and by implication others' perceptions of the Quaker religious enterprise. So, by analysing the idea that Quakers see that of God in everyone in discordant circumstances within the contemporary workaday world, a conflicted picture is developed of the interviewees' interiority within the organisational context. The work process is, for these Quakers, one where the ascribed requirements of the organisational context are not only managed as workers but also in terms of publicly visible and invisible conformity with Quaker claims.

The liberal Quaker tradition does not adapt easily to discord and disharmony in the work setting, especially in circumstances where it is not or no longer felt to be supported in the everyday. The research participants' claim that their affiliation is conspicuous in the work context. They suggest that their everyday engagement in this sense is harmonious with the organisational context. However, outlying examples show that organisations resist opposition in the everyday framed in religious terms and that organisational authority is at liberty to alter tendentiously the terms upon which these Quakers pursue their utopian aspirations. The liberal and highly individualised terms upon which the Quakers claim to engage with the contemporary work setting are thus re-focused in this thesis. The liberal and highly individualised Quaker claims which affiliates frame as harmonious with the organisational horizons are not unending. Rather, by analysing discord and disharmony in the workaday, the contemporary liberal tradition can be seen as matched to the organisations within which interviewees are typically engaged. When the contemporary tradition is framed as not well-matched to the work setting, however,

especially in terms which affirm utopian aspirations in the everyday, affiliates' responses are shaped fundamentally by the perceived unsupportive disposition of the work organisation.

In Chapter Seven, I examined how the Quaker affiliates manage disharmony in the workaday world whilst pursuing their fundamental ends from within the work organisation. I apply a Critical Management Studies (CMS) lens to Quakers' conceptualisation of, and participation within, the contemporary work organisation. CMS and Quaker perspectives tend to coincide in terms of how they view the potential of the current work setting especially with regard to similar claims that human life can be improved through organisational collaboration. The research participants aspire to move the world to a better horizon by collaborating with the work organisation whose espoused horizons they perceive as shared. CMS, however, frames organisational claims in pejorative terms.

Whilst CMS depict management and its intentions as oppositional to its espoused horizons, these Quakers do not categorise managers as a discrete class antagonistic to organisational ends. Rather, the interviewees tend to regard work processes generously and management in particular as individuals who are well-disposed to the ends of their religious project. The research participants affiliates see managers as co-collaborators whose real intention is to improve the world. Although the cohort might disagree with how this betterment can be realised, affiliates regard themselves fundamentally as co-operating alongside all workers to this utopian end.

CMS and the research participants also share a view of institutional religion as in practice fundamentally flawed in its exposition of what constitutes a better world. The interviewees regard their religious perspectives in everyday rather eschatological terms and see participation in the workaday, not by undertaking good works 'in the world only to increase this glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of his ability' (Weber 1989 [1930], 108). Instead, CMS and the Quaker perspective view the world as unfinished (Levitas 2013, 193) but also as repairable in a temporal sense. They do not advocate mending the world doctrinally according to a 'blueprint for a better society' (Fournier 2002, 201). Rather, the Quaker affiliates see the world in terms of a gradually unfolding progressivism (Dandelion 2007, 130). What counts as a better world for the interviewees and CMS, then, is the hopeful idea that by engaging actively with the worldly process participants play a part in the temporal realisation of a better social setting.

Within the context of the contemporary work setting, Quakers attempt to realise this utopian aspiration as euphonians. In this respect, the Quaker perspective is at variance to that advocated by CMS. Whilst CMS theorists suggest that the utopian intention requires transgression, Quakers in the study do not frame their everyday engagement in these terms. The Quaker affiliates pursue utopian horizons from within the work organisation but advocate pragmatism in the workaday, especially in disharmonious circumstances. The research participants manage discord and interpersonal conflict by making peaceable interventions which intend to create a singular, harmonious

workaday whole. Harmony between all parties in the everyday as a consequence of workaday participation is their end.

I conclude that the Quaker research participants claim to manage their religious self-concept in the work setting by recourse to a highly individualised interpretation of the workaday world. What counts as Quaker is thus a highly individualised declaration. There are no demonstrable methods by which these claims can be tested as Quaker. Affiliates can, then, re-imagine *ex post facto* the workaday in terms of the Quaker religious enterprise. This individualised workaday religious project is framed by affiliates in fundamentally harmonious terms and what counts as Quaker and what counts as work are essentially conflated. Quakers as individuals and the work organisation are seen by affiliates to be engaged upon the same utopian quest to improve the world. However, conversely, it is this espousal of harmony between Quakers in the research and the workaday which reveals the discrepancies in the claims of the contemporary tradition. These Quakers do not tend to work in work settings which are perceived not to share their utopian intentions or within contexts within which their aspirations cannot be re-imagined as Quaker.

By applying this CMS lens, I conclude that the Quaker affiliates' individualised claims are not expedited oppositionally in the work context. Although the research participants frame their affiliation to the church in heterodox terms with regard to Christian churches, they engage with the work organisation in orthodox terms. They do not transgress the temporal authority of the work organisation. Instead, affiliates' participation in the

workaday contours closely their conceptualisation of the organisationally-ascribed job role which is also framed by affiliates as coincident with the pursuance of espoused Quaker horizons. Quakers in the study also pursue harmony in the workaday as a priority and claim to work purposefully with management in order to achieve their utopian ends.

However, I conclude that the interviewees' utopian intentions and their everyday harmonising tactics tend to be practised comfortably only in work settings which are accepting of religious horizons. When Quakers in the study perceive that their horizons are not aligned with those espoused by the work organisation, or that managerial practices appear to inhibit their utopian pursuit, their drive to make better the world is then framed not as harmonious but as precarious in the everyday. In this sense, what this research observes with regard to the contemporary liberal Quaker tradition is not a highly individualised interpretation of its workaday practices. Rather, the study reveals how far the contemporary traditions' highly individualised claims, framed by affiliates in terms of a workaday religious enterprise, are aligned within organisations complementary to espoused Quaker utopian intentions. It shows that the research participants' harmonious and harmonising claims are not unending in the contemporary work context. Rather, their aspirations are situated within and by the social context. They are located within and by the work organisation and Quaker utopian intentions are situated by affiliates whose claims to religious heterodoxy are also only expedited within the ascribed rules of the work organisation.

8.3 Implications for current scholarship

In this section, I summarise the implications of this study for previous scholarship in the field of Quaker studies and the sociology of religion.

8.3.1 Sociology of religion

This study builds on Dandelion's (1996) sociological analysis of the Quaker church. It supports Dandelion's arguments regarding how contemporary affiliates interpret the liberal church tradition. In other words, Dandelion depicts the contemporary church as pluralised and highly individualised where 'anything goes' (1996, 204). Quakers in my study also view the contemporary church tradition as theologically permissive. They depict their understanding of the Quaker church in Christian terms drawn from their own experience. However, I argue that affiliation to the Quaker church is also portrayed by affiliates as theologically liberating. Whereas Dandelion frames the contemporary theology of the Quaker church in terms of 'anything goes' (1996, 204), my work makes a further distinction in terms of how the tradition is nowadays framed by affiliates. In this sense, affiliation is, moreover, a liberating alternative to organised Christianity. Thus, the liberal Quaker tradition is fundamentally a heterodox re-conceptualisation of the religious enterprise. Its premise is that God is universal and is found in everyone (Dandelion 2007, 11). Quakers re-imagination of Christianity is, therefore, not only understood in contradistinction to how it is organised by mainstream churches, but is seen by affiliates as a re-framing of Christian essential claims.

I frame this argument in terms of the research participants' claim to essential contestation of Christianity as it is presented by mainstream churches. I suggest that these terms also fit Dandelion's argument regarding the contemporary manifestation of Quaker belief. Dandelion avers that Quakers claim to observe others' and their own belief through the prism of a certainty of uncertainty (2007, 121). This concept, that the truth cannot be ultimately known but, in essential terms, must be forever pursued, Dandelion terms the 'absolute perhaps' (2007, 121). However, I assert that this theologically forever uncertain construction of the contemporary Quaker tradition is radically alternative in how it is juxtaposed by affiliates to the organised and prescribed religious enterprise. Thus, my argument coincides with and supports Dandelion's central thesis. It also develops his liberal concept with regard to how it is regarded as oppositional to the collective religious concern. In other words, I suggest that the espoused liberal Quaker tradition makes a heterodox claim regarding organised churches which affiliates frame in essential terms. These individualised and heterodox claims are not perfectly aligned, however, and my thesis reveals that this inconstancy can be observed in Quaker social practice.

My thesis suggests that, rather than transcending the workaday context within which affiliates claim it is practised, the liberal Quaker tradition is shaped by this worldly setting. In this sense, the individualised, liberal Quaker tradition which Dandelion identifies and my research affirms, is espoused as heterodox but it is lived out in terms of organisational orthodoxy. In other words, Quakers in the research essentialise the 'absolute perhaps'. Thus, they make a claim implicitly that their horizons transcend the

workaday setting and participation as laid down by the worldly organisation. However, their participation in this sense is patterned to their perceptions of the work setting which are seen as harmonious within this worldly context.

My argument, then, extends Dandelion's articulation of the contemporary Quaker tradition. I suggest that its exposition is grounded in the social world and is not governed by a universalised view that there is 'that of God' in everyone. Nor do affiliates frame their engagement in the everyday in terms of a certainty of uncertainty (Dandelion 2007, 121). Critiques by Quaker research participants regarding how mainstream churches present a socially constructed conceptualisation of Christianity are thus central to my progression of Dandelion's argument. I move the locus of these Quaker claims outside the church. I suggest that Dandelion's thesis is valid but also that it is necessarily limited in its wider applicability to other settings. As Collins and Dandelion (2014, 298) have argued, however, the fluidity of the Quaker tradition is somewhat less prevalent in its practice than in its espousal. I propose that this conceptualisation of the contemporary liberal Quaker tradition is an area which requires further academic investigation. In particular, I propose that what counts as a boundary for Quaker affiliates in the social sphere apart from the work context is ripe for further research.

I apply Dandelion's thesis into the social context beyond the church community and conclude that there is a fundamental tension within the liberal Quaker tradition. Thus, the Quaker 'private life' (Dandelion 1996, xxix) is not only lived out beyond the oversight of the church. What counts as Quaker in this setting is an *ex post facto* re-interpretation

of affiliates' religious enterprise in the workaday world. This conceptualisation of the tradition counts as Quaker only insofar as it can be re-imagined in terms coherent with the individuals' re-imagination of the contemporary tradition. Within contexts which Quakers typically are engaged, the work process and the permissive, liberal tradition are highly harmonious and the 'absolute perhaps' is lived out as if it were essential. However, in settings alternative to this harmonious ideal, liberal Quaker claims to organisational heterodoxy regarding mainstream Christian churches are not transposed into the workaday setting. I propose that further academic work is required to explore what counts as Quaker practice in outlying work settings and suggest that purposive sampling methodology be applied to discover its diversity. By examining outliers, this research shows that what is typical for the collective is illuminated more clearly. I propose that further research can reveal how the Quaker claim at work is delineated in settings less typical than public sector and non-market industrial sectors and white collar, service occupations.

This thesis also progresses conceptualisations of the Quaker church in terms of its corporate commercial and industrial narratives. Research in this area is not extensive although Quaker business enterprises are prominent within Quaker discourses. Freeman explicitly links in causal terms the Quaker church with nascent capitalist enterprises in England (2013, 421) as well as Quaker businesses with philanthropic practices (2013, 423) and seeking progressive alternatives to impersonal business enterprises (2013, 428). Freeman's analysis tends to pursue a corporate path through Quaker historical and contemporary enterprises. It defines what counts as Quaker in

organisationally contrived terms which view Quaker participation in the work setting as it is espoused from the apex of work hierarchy. In this sense, I argue that Freeman's (2013) perspective is not commensurate with the aims of my study which seeks to depict what counts as Quaker from the everyday perspective within the contemporary work context.

My research is a unique and original qualitative comprehension of the lived experience of Quakers in the contemporary work setting. It does not seek to re-frame contemporary business discourses within a Quaker tradition as espoused by the corporate church. Rather, it takes a critical approach to how the contemporary tradition is lived out in the context of work and provides fresh insights into the faith as seen through the eyes of affiliates. In this sense, it examines how far the corporate business and church conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker is integrated in the work setting. This approach to framing the Quaker tradition is liable to be influenced by sectional interests and has occurred in its history. Lise Tarter (2004, 92) states Quaker records were altered in the 1670s after the death of the erstwhile *de facto* leader, George Fox. My research, however, makes a more significant contribution to the study of the contemporary Quaker tradition as it is lived out in the work context.

I also suggest that my research explores the idea that the liberal Quaker claims to religious heterodoxy, framed in organisational terms, reveals everyday practice in this context to be complex and fluid. My study challenges Walvin's (1997), Burns Winsor's (1980) and Freeman's (2013) ontological assumptions about the work collectives within

which Quakers participate. I argue that Freeman's conceptualisation of the Quaker tradition assumes a naturalised organisational form of the contemporary and historical work setting. I aver that the lived experience of Quakers in the contemporary work setting demonstrates that the work organisation is rather fluid, nuanced and contested when viewed from the individual perspective.

My research also argues that the work collective in this sense is constituted of the individualised conceptualisations of its subjects. It highlights perceived power relations between participants within organisations at a personal and individual rather than a structural level. It demonstrates that engagement within the work organisation cannot be framed easily and simply in Quaker or even in religious terms. Religious claims, from which affiliates proceed, are also conspicuous in corporate Quaker terms. However, this highly individualised conceptualisation of the religious enterprise shows that organisational approaches towards church affiliation tend towards insouciance if they do not account for affiliates' understanding of their lived experience.

Freeman's (2013) lack of critical engagement with the lived experience of the liberal Quaker affiliate and alternatively a focus on the organisational conceptualisation of the tradition is depicted as fundamentally problematic within this thesis. Blass (2007) suggests that organisations are 'perhaps *the* central feature of modern life' (Blass 2007, 264). He also explains that hierarchies which are prevalent in terms of how the contemporary organisation is arranged, also impose implicitly and explicitly individual compliance with the collective authority (2007, 215). The tendency of individuals to

privilege conformity in goal-oriented collective enterprises provides social cohesion, he argues. This evolutionary tendency towards collective compliance is advantageous when coping with external threats, for example. However, in modernity, he suggests, conformity within the rational collective setting holds contemporary risks. He suggests that individual moral principles can come under pressure in collective processes 'especially in response to the demands of authority' and that this serves to emphasise 'the dehumanising potential of the hierarchical forms of social organisation' (2007, 261). This problematic conceptualisation of the contemporary work organisation is especially pertinent when 'efficiency is the god, the ideal, the path to a functional utopia' (Bauman 1989:4).

I suggest that the taken-for-granted assumptions regarding the neutrality of the rational work organisation is evidenced within Freeman's (2013) work. My study avoids conceptualising the contemporary work context in these terms. Rather, I adopt a critical lens through which work processes are more exactly portrayed. My study also frames the confluence of religion and work in the organised setting from a qualitative perspective. Thus, I avoid making assumptions with regard to what structurally counts as religion, work and as an organisation. Instead, I proceed from the participants' perspective. Thus, I move the conceptualisation of what counts as Quaker away from uncritical assumptions of the collective concern and re-frame personal accounts of affiliates' experience in alternative terms. These Quakers are viewed as participants in a collective process whereby the organisational authority is difficult to transcend in the

everyday and 'a constant reminder of the inherent dangers lurking within organisational environments' (Blass 2007, 264).

My thesis is broadly aligned with research into the current Quaker tradition from a critical perspective. In this sense, it echoes the findings of Helena Chambers (2008) insofar as it depicts non-normative Quaker views and social responses which are not fully coherent with contemporary church discourses (2008, 96). Chambers investigated Quaker substance abuse and gambling involvement and she takes a qualitative approach to investigating affiliates' experiences. Gay Pilgrim (2008) also depicts the contemporary liberal Quaker church in conflicted terms (2008, 60). Pilgrim suggests that this tension is unresolved and potentially, in terms of its contemporary liberal form, unresolvable (2008, 64).

My research aligns with this critical apprehension of the Quaker church. It suggests also that the tension within the contemporary liberal tradition is a fundamental product of affiliates' permissive theological and highly individualised social stance. I examine interviewees' claims as workers and as followers of a highly individualised religious enterprise. In this sense, I question what it means to be Quaker in the social sphere today. I advance an idea that, whilst Pilgrim (2008) and Chambers (2008) both depict new boundaries around the Quaker concept, I suggest that these categories are socially constructed. In this sense, my study re-imagines what counts as Quaker in terms of affiliates' perceptions of their social engagement. Research participants assert that the Quaker concept affirms their individualised approach to participation in the work setting

and that, in Patsy's words, '*you don't use labels, you just behave.*' In other words, Quakers engage with the work setting as if the Quaker category is not essential and appellate the term to their responses as an exercise of public and personal sense-making.

In this sense, my study concurs with Collins's (2008) conceptualisation of religious belief in non-binary terms (2008, 144). Collins writes that the dichotomies which are appellated to religious perspectives by sociologists are helpful in categorising academic classifications of the social world but also 'damage our attempts to understand the everyday experience of individuals by chronically underestimating the complexity of human life' (2008, 143). Collins asserts that, in order to make sense of the social, notwithstanding everyday complexities, he prefers 'to foreground the individual in my own understanding of social life' (2008, 147). The complex classification of the lived experience of religious claims is also considered as numinous by Abby Day (2011, 191) insofar as what counts as religious resists simple categorisation. Day suggests that religion 'does not exist pre-formed in the individual but is relationally produced' (2011, 193). Rather, Day adds, examination of what counts as religious belief is apposite to an investigation into individuals 'longing for belonging' (2011, 193). My research shows the pertinence of both Collins's (2008) and Day's (2011) work.

My study shows that Quakers cast the individual as salient in terms of how the contemporary church is conceptualised. What counts as Quaker is the religious enterprise which they cast as transcending organisational boundaries in both public

spheres of religion and work. In this sense, the Quaker religious enterprise is relational with regard to the work setting and the church's theological inconsistencies can be explained in this sense, as located in the social sphere. Quakers' conceptualisations of the liberal church thus do not cohere because their relatedness is tied to the vagaries of the social setting. In other words, observing the liberal Quaker tradition through the lenses which Day and Collins have constructed, this research is an investigation into how affiliates' conceptualisations of the liberal tradition are constructed in relation to categories of religion and work. Quakers tend not to feel able to differentiate these classifications clearly in terms of how they frame their practice but also suggest that, in terms of religious discourses, a normative distinction can be articulated. Day and Collins's work then helps to focus the research in these terms: that is, non-prescription by the church might itself be framed as a prescription. Affiliates' intentions to marry liberal Quaker theology with its workaday practice can thus be seen as an attempt by the church participants to resolve this implicit differentiation within the everyday.

My work, thus, supports Day's (2011) argument that the individual religious project is also an ongoing social enterprise of meaning-making. In Quaker terms, it is also a declaration of belonging to a religious tradition which claims to transcend perceived socially constructed religious boundaries whilst simultaneously framing this claim as a form of boundary marker. My research also suggests that mapping the religious enterprise against the institutional context reveals, not only the salience of the individual in creating and espousing meaning. It also adds to Day's fundamental relational assertion with regard to how what counts as religious is 'multi-dimensional' (2011, 194).

Day states that, 'The way belief is resourced and performed in late modern societies may be best explained through multidimensional analysis, where the tendencies discussed above fluctuate according to situation and context' (2011, 193-4).

Moreover, I argue that the Quaker conceptualisation of the religious enterprise valorises this tendency to 'fluctuate'. What counts as religious for the group is not only highly theologically individualised but also, within its utopian conceptualisation of its social practice, fluid, provisional and forever contestable. Thus, whilst this liberal conceptualisation of religion is not coherently unending in its workaday manifestation, the Quaker aspiration to engage with the social world, in these terms, marks a boundary claim between itself and the world. It is in this relational sense that Quakers espouse a belonging to the contemporary church.

This thesis also depicts what counts as religion for Quaker research participants not only as relational in terms of how affiliates engage with the work setting but why they participate in its processes. In other words, it investigates the idea that religion can be constructed from a highly individualised perspective beyond church ordination within the social sphere. In this sense, this thesis shifts the focus of religious meaning-making away from 'societal structures' (Davie 1994, 193) and towards the concept that what counts as religion is a highly individualised claim shaped within the everyday. In this sense, religion is in the particular. The reasons why people engage with the world shapes their intentions and their responses. In this sense, too, what counts as religion is

framed in terms of individual perception of the social world which I show is not equivalent for Quakers in the workaday as it is in the formal church context.

This thesis, then, reveals ‘how the terms “religious” and “secular” represent a second dichotomy which, if we are not careful, contributes fundamentally to our misunderstanding of religious contexts’ (Collins 2008, 143). Instead, it argues that what counts as religion is fundamentally processual as well as relational. Quakers conceptualise the contemporary church as fluid and ongoing (Dandelion 2007, 129-133) and as liquid in its belief and exposition (Collins and Dandelion 2014, 298). Quakers’ highly individualised construction of the religious enterprise claims that truths are universal and potentially accessible through multiple means. The religious enterprise is not fixed temporally or spatially but, Quakers claim, it passes through phases successively towards a hoped-for better personal and collective horizon.

This processual conceptualisation of the religious enterprise is transposed by affiliates into the workaday world. Quakers partake in the everyday processes of work and frame their engagement as an ongoing intention to make better the social world. This research indicates that the social world in this religious conceptualisation is not static and that what counts as the liberal Quaker tradition can also be framed in shifting, kaleidoscopic terms.

The Quaker processual perspective is also significant in relational terms. It demonstrates that affiliates’ attempts to differentiate the individual from the social within the collective context in fixed terms are regarded as problematic (Collins 2008, 146).

Quakers conceptualise their religious tradition as transcending, in Dean's words, a 'formed faith', especially with regard to that prescribed by mainstream Christian churches. This nebulous arrangement is managed in practical terms by a 'double culture' whereby a rejection of overt religious form is replaced by a covertly applied normative conformity to a 'behavioural creed' (Dandelion 1996, 291).

It appears that the Quaker claim to non-conformity in the social context is further problematised in this sense. Re-imagining what counts as Quaker in the ongoing and uncertain terms of the liberal tradition is not easily transposed as a singularly religious claim to the everyday of the work process. Relatedness thus also matters in the social setting on a deeper level (Day 2011, 190) and the interviewees are not able to transcend this need for meaningful, interpersonal connection in the everyday. Quaker claims to frame religion in processual terms are, thus, situated in contexts which accommodate the shifting, liberal perspective which they espouse. Despite claims to pursue integrity and social justice from within the contemporary work context, the Quaker religious enterprise is located in collective settings where, in Day's (2011) terms, their beliefs are 'be-loved' (Day 2011, 191) in preference to settings more antagonistic to their religious enterprise.

8.4 Implications for future scholarship

This thesis is an analysis of the liberal Quaker tradition within the contemporary work setting. It provides insights for further exploration through future scholarship.

The finding that the research participants are converts to the church and affiliate in adulthood is significant in this research. From this finding, it was then possible to analyse the grounds upon which Quakers affiliate to the church and to place their rationale in the context of the contemporary church tradition. This discovery regarding conversion is also recorded within the British Quaker Survey 2013 (BQS) which sought to provide 'basic information' on contemporary church membership (British Quaker Survey 2013). The BQS proposes to discover via questionnaire the religious background, levels of involvement with the Quaker church and the religious beliefs of current affiliates. The BQS also seeks to contextualise this information in terms of the present Quaker church and its future. My research contributes to further scholarship with regard to the BQS findings and aims in both a methodological and a theoretical sense.

This thesis has also developed a rich, contextualised picture of liberal Quaker perspectives at the start of the twenty-first century. It has provided deep personal insights of Quakers with regard to the church, its espoused beliefs and its practices. I suggest that, in view of the outcomes of my research, the BQS is a potentially rich area for future academic exploration. However, my study suggests that in-depth, qualitative research is an especially productive approach to investigating what counts as religious belief. This approach is particularly pertinent to Quaker perspectives which are not prescribed. These beliefs are also imported by converts from other contexts and traditions outside the church. In this sense, methodologically speaking, a greater

understanding of the contemporary tradition can be achieved by exploring individual perspectives via more unstructured methods.

At the start of my research, the findings of the BQS were not available. I had mostly to work out my own categories within which the contemporary Quaker tradition could be framed. I think that the BQS would have proved a useful tool for acquiring and analysing information about the group. However, I suggest that future research into the Quaker church might not methodologically rely solely on data as it is presented in the BQS when exploring the contemporary tradition. Nor, if investigating what counts as Quaker, might future scholars have to represent the tradition via corporate discourses. My research shows that the Quaker perspectives are intimate, private and highly individualised.

My research proposes a perspective on the contemporary Quaker tradition which frames it as opposed essentially to mainstream churches and their perceived prescription of what counts as Christian. This is an alternative re-conceptualisation of the Christian tradition by Quaker affiliates in essential terms. My thesis suggests that this re-framing of the contemporary Quaker church by affiliates is also an exploration of what counts as religion from the individual perspective. Brown (2006) suggests that the enduring Quaker church entity represents the contemporary 'de-Christianisation' of Britain and potentially a new form of church aligned to secular society (2006, 280).

I contend that my research rather reveals an ongoing negotiation at the individual level between what counts as Christian belief and what counts more widely as religion in contemporary society. It suggests that institutional and individual constructions of religion are processual and in subjective terms held in tension. My research enables future scholars to explore how contemporary Quakers perceive churches, Christianity and other, social discourses as influential in their conceptualisation of the tradition; and how this religious self-concept is differentiated in the church and social setting. This study also engages with the concept of the 'non-religious' and whether as Brown (2006, 280) suggests, the contemporary Quaker tradition is situated at a religious intersection of what might count as meaningful in the social world. My work, thus, allows scholars of religion and non-religion to investigate how far the liberal and permissive contemporary Quaker church is at the crossroads of an alternative form of current religious traditions or a universalist re-defining of what can count for individuals as religion.

As Lee (2014, 469) has argued, an analysis of non-religion can be framed categorically as 'indifference' to religion. My study reveals that these Quakers claim voluntary commitment to the contemporary tradition in the everyday as well as amongst other Quakers. In this sense, Quaker does not appear to portray participatory indifference to the religious context. However, affiliates' claims to a religious enterprise in practice are not unending and these claims are espoused with regard to contexts which are suited to their horizons. The research participants also assert that their horizons in the workaday have been essentially unaffected by their conversion to the Quaker church. My research, then, raises the question regarding whether, in what sense, and at what point,

Quakers can be categorised as indifferent to the espoused horizons of the Quaker church and at what point do their espoused individualised and collective ends diverge in terms of belief and social practice.

This thesis suggests that indifference is not a boundary marker which differentiates social practice as Quaker. This is not to assume, however, that Quakers are therefore religious. My study suggests that the social context is setting ripe with potential for exploring, from the subject's point of view, what counts as religious. As Day (2011, 193) has inferred, the articulation of a religious claim might also be understood as a meaningful re-framing of the individuals' need to differentiate belonging in the social world. This point raises the fundamental question: as Quakers claim no alteration in their perspectives as a result of conversion, affiliation can be framed as a public expression of liberal, permissive horizons within the social setting. My study suggests that further research is necessary to explore why Quakers voluntarily make a public commitment to a religious organisation in general and to this entity in particular and on what grounds.

My findings open up further possibilities for research specifically also into how the work context is perceived by individuals who espouse religious and non-religious perspectives. My research suggests that religious boundaries are not prescriptive in terms of how Quakers engage with the workaday world. Quakers depict their decision-making in highly individualised terms. I aver that this conceptualisation of individual participation in the contemporary work setting might be explored in normative terms with

regard to other religious traditions in particular, the Christian mainstream churches which Quakers elect not to join.

Bell and Taylor (2004) assert that managers in contemporary work organisations seek to orientate workers attitudes to work (Bell and Taylor 2004, 441). Managers employ a variety of techniques which draw on the individuals' inclination to find meaning in the everyday participation in the work setting. Carette and King (2005) frame managerial intentions in spiritual terms which aspire to manipulate individuals towards organisational compliance (2005, 23). Carette and King, however, aver that this re-imagination of the work setting by management in spiritual and religious terms is disingenuous. They write that:

The most troubling aspect of many modern spiritualities is precisely that they are not troubling enough. They promote accommodation to the social, economic and political mores of the day and provide little in terms of a challenge to the status quo or to a lifestyle of self-interest and ubiquitous consumption. (2005, 5)

I regard this aspect of my research as significant. My study shows that, although Quakers assert heterodox conceptualisation of the religious organisation, they claim that their individual horizons are harmonious with those espoused by the work organisation. The contemporary liberal Quaker tradition is practised in contexts which are perceived as sharing and pursuing mutually held horizons. However, as Carette and King aver, these religious horizons tend not to be troubling within the work setting (2005, 5). Rather, 'relinquishing responsibility to the person in charge and accepting his definition of the situation' (Blass 2004, 261) can be understood as powerful condition of organisational membership (Milgram 1974, 134). The need for individuals' behaviour to

be seen as acceptable to the group can thus impede an inclination to tack a normative course alternative to that of the collective.

My research frames Quakers as engaged on a religious enterprise within the contemporary work organisation. However, this participation is framed in asymmetrical political terms. In other words, Quaker engagement within the work setting is one which they understand as liberating but one that can also be conceptualised in oppressive terms. The *quid pro quo* for Quakers acquiring material satisfaction and social regard through remunerated participation in the work collective is compliance with the pursuit of organisational interests.

I suggest that this thesis can be used to further research into whether and how far religious claims are framed in oppositional terms within the contemporary work context. I argue that work is a site of religious exposition which can be framed as both disruptive, counter-cultural and as proscribed by the work organisation. Parker has written that religion in the contemporary work setting is viewed in ambiguous terms by management, at once benign in its exposition, promising rewards for the compliant beyond the grave (2002, 224). Yet, work organisations, in common with the social world in general, are less than keen to support participants who advocate a utopia in the here and now. 'If utopia is nowhere, it is not dangerous, but if it is somewhere, it is potentially very dangerous indeed,' writes Parker (2002, 224). I aver that my study indicates more research is required to determine, whether religious claims are framed as oppositional within the contemporary work organisation. I suggest that more academic exploration

can be undertaken into the explicit structural and inter-personal organisational form which this opposition to religious claims adopts.

Parker (2002, 221) has also written that boundaries between what counts as social practice in the contemporary work organisation are difficult to categorise in everyday terms. He suggests that social experiments by organisations in the re-imagining of the work setting reveal 'that the clarity of the boundaries between work and leisure, the public and the private, production and consumption and so on, begins to look increasingly vague' (2002, 221). What counts as religion or Quaker, then, in social research is not simply an academic problem of reconceptualising what counts as religion for sociologists. I argue that this conundrum in terms of how to classify social interaction within the social sciences, is both an academic and a practical tension with everyday implications for participants across the world of work.

Although this study has focused on Quaker claims in particular, I propose that inter-disciplinary perspectives, particularly including critical conceptualisations of what counts as work, would provide fresh insights into how boundaries between religion and the social world are conceived.

8.5 Chapter summary

This chapter brings together my findings on how the Quakers in this study see the tradition as lived out in the everyday work context. I aver that there are tensions within the individualised liberal Quaker tradition with regard to how it is espoused and how it is

articulated in its practice. In this sense, the apparent discrepancies between the liberal tradition's espousal and practice can be interpreted as a failure of contemporary discourses to adequately capture how affiliates re-imagine their highly individualised claims in the social sphere. In other words, the liquidity of the liberal Quaker tradition is a transparent attempt by affiliates to articulate their self-concept from within the shifting backdrop of the work context. This conceptualisation of liberal Quaker practice is not fully substantiated within this research, however.

As my research ultimately shows in this concluding chapter, the conceptual gap regarding what counts as the liberal Quaker tradition today is not to be found between highly individualised Quaker religious claims and their everyday responses in practice. Rather, my findings point to this everyday discrepancy: Quaker practice is located relationally to a contemporary work setting within which affiliates claim to expedite their horizons in the everyday. Fundamentally, in workaday terms, Quakers do not pursue their utopian claims from within work organisations which do not share ideally and support practically their liberal horizons.

This study shows that there is an absence of data regarding Quakers' practice in these workaday contexts. In this sense, my research reveals a self-reported harmonious relationship between the highly individualised Quaker tradition and a limited range of religiously-compatible contemporary work contexts. Thus, is revealed by my study the blind spot in the religious claims of the liberal tradition: Quakers report how harmonious it is to participate in work organisations which in practice are perceived rarely to

challenge the individual affiliate's liberal beliefs. Moreover, this thesis indicates that, in terms of how the research participants engage in workaday settings which are fundamentally antagonistic to the horizons of the contemporary liberal tradition, these Quakers have, in experiential terms as Quakers, almost nothing to say.

Appendix 1 Suggested Interview Questions

Managing Quaker Identity in the Workplace

Mark Read

Tuesday 18 August 2009

Topics

Subject areas and possible questions include:

General

1. Background within the Religious Society of Friends:
 - How long have you been associated with the Quakers? How would you describe your current involvement with Quakers?
2. Previous work history and current employment
 - What is your current job? What kind of jobs have you had in the past? What is a 'typical' day at work?

Internally Framed Quakerism at Work

3. Personal ambitions at work
 - Do you enjoy your work? What are its most/least enjoyable aspects? Can you describe a good/bad day at work? Is work meaningful for you?
4. Idealism and ideals at work
 - What do you see as the most important part of your work? What do you see as the most personally satisfying part of your work? Do you ever feel a spiritual or religious connection with your work? Do your Quaker beliefs matter to you at work?
5. The visibility of Quakerism in the workplace
 - Does anyone at work know that you are a Quaker? How could they tell? Does it matter to you that people do or don't know? How free do you feel to live your faith? Have you ever felt pressured to morally or ethically conform at work? What were those circumstances? How did you deal with those situations? Have you ever explained your actions in terms of your faith or spirituality?
6. Ethical dilemmas as a Quaker
 - Have you ever had to do something which made you feel uncomfortable in a moral sense but which you did anyway? Have you ever refused to comply with working practices on ethical grounds?

Externally Framed Quakerism at Work

7. Engaging with other people in the workplace
 - How does your work involve contact with other people? Have you ever had spiritual or religious conversation with others in your workplace? How would you describe your relationship with your colleagues/managers?

8. Practical outcomes of Quakerism within the workplace

- Has Quakerism made any difference to your working life? Have you ever lied at work? Have you ever felt compromised by the organizations working practices? Have you ever been tempted to speak out about something which you believed was morally wrong at work? Has anything ever happened at work which made you think about your faith more deeply? Does your work enable you to live out your Quaker values?

9. Separation of Quakerism at work and outside work

- Are there differences between your friendships with Quakers and your friendships at work? How, giving examples, are they different?

10. Perception of work-site/company values

- Are there any personal qualities or values that are especially important for your work? How far do you feel that your Quaker faith conforms to these? How do you see the most important organizational values – bottom line – of your workplace? How far do you agree/disagree with them? How far do you see your organization as being faithful to these values? Do you see any conflict between the organizations values and the values of your faith? If there is a conflict, how do you try to manage that conflict?

Summary

11. Quakerism at work: failures or regrets/highs and lows

- If you could turn back the clock, would you have done anything differently during your working life? If you could change anything about your current working life, what would it be?

12. Views on the reality of a 'Quaker way' at work

- Do you believe that there is a 'Quaker way' at work? (i.e. unique to Quakers) Could you describe it? Do you believe that there is a place for the Quaker faith in the workplace?

13. Looking ahead

- How would you like to look back on your faith in your working life? Do you think that Quakerism really matters to you in the context of your working life? Can you see that change in any way?

Appendix 2 Permission for Interview Letter

_____ Road

29 July 2010

Clerk to the Meeting
_____ Quakers
Quaker Meeting House
_____ Street

Dear Friend

I attend Lancaster Meeting and am a PhD student at the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies at the University of Birmingham, researching Quaker faith identity in the workplace. I am particularly interested in how far Quakerism affects how Quakers are, and how they are perceived, in the workplace. I recently completed a pilot study and would like now to progress the main stage of the research. The purpose of this letter is to seek permission to contact members of Central Manchester meeting who might be willing to become volunteer interviewees and form a case study for the research. I am hoping to interview eight people twice, six months apart.

If permission to approach members is approved, it is envisaged that this could be done by distributing leaflets explaining the research at the end of meeting for worship. Interested parties would be asked to contact the researcher if they felt willing and able to participate. Any participation will be covered by the University of Birmingham's ethical research policy which includes the subject's right to withdraw without explanation at any stage. Interview data will remain secure, anonymous and confidential.

I would be more than happy to attend a Business Meeting to explain the research in person and in more detail if you wish, and to answer any questions you might have.

In the meantime, if you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address or by telephone on 01_____ or email:

In Friendship

Mark Read

Appendix 3

Request for Interview Flyer

PHD STUDENT REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

QUAKER FAITH IN THE WORKPLACE

I am a third year, part-time PhD student (Quaker Studies) at the University of Birmingham. My research interest is Quaker faith in the workplace.

I am seeking volunteer research participants who are currently engaged in any paid or unpaid employment.

Participation would probably involve meeting on two separate occasions. The intention of the meeting would be to find out about the life of individual Quakers (members or attenders) within their workplaces.

The research has been approved by the University of Birmingham ethics committee. Participation would be entirely voluntary, without obligation at any stage, and research data will be kept securely and anonymously.

If you feel able to participate or would like more information, please feel free to contact me.

Mark Read

Phone: 01__ _____

E-mail: _____



Appendix 4 Participation Information Sheet

Project Working Title: 'Managing Quaker Identity in the Workplace'

Introduction to the research and invitation to take part

You are being invited to take part in a research study. It is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve before you decide whether or not to take part. Please read the following information carefully and please discuss with others if you wish. Feel free to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

This is a study of how Quakers view their working lives. The project will focus on how individual Quakers' beliefs are lived out at work and how individual Quakers view their place of work in contemporary Britain. The intended aim of the study is to discover whether there is an identifiable Quaker identity at work and how Quakers' beliefs are manifested within working culture.

Why have you asked me to take part?

You have been invited to take part because you are closely associated with the Religious Society of Friends. It has been assumed that, because of this association, your own personal beliefs reflect, to some degree, those of the Quaker faith. For the purposes of this research, it is also important that you see yourself as being engaged in some form of work, paid or unpaid. In short, you have been asked to take part in this study as a working Quaker.

What will I be required to do?

You will be asked to talk about your experience at work during two informal meetings with the researcher. The researcher will ask some fairly general questions about your faith and your working life. The meetings will be recorded with a digital audio recorder.

Where will this take place?

The meetings will take place at a convenient time and location for you. This could be during the day, in the evenings or at weekends, and it might be at your home or at any other location of your choice.

How often will I have to take part, and for how long?

It is assumed that there will be one initial and one follow-up meeting, approximately six months apart. The meetings are arranged in this way so that you have an opportunity to talk about your experience at work. It might be, for example, that an interviewee's working life has moved on during in the intervening period or you could have reflected on some issues in the meantime and would like to share those reflections. A further meeting will give you an opportunity to talk about this.

When will I have an opportunity to discuss my participation?

You can discuss your own participation at any point during the research process. A telephone number, email and 'real world' address will be provided so you can contact the researcher.

Who will be responsible for all of the information when the study is over?

The information will be anonymous and kept by the researcher in a password protected computer only and its backup system.

Who will have access to it?

The data will be stored securely, primary access being with the researcher. The data will not be shared outside the project.

What will happen to the information when the study is over?

The information will be available only as part of the PhD thesis and related publications. It will be kept only for as long as required for these purposes and always **confidentially**. The thesis will be available through Birmingham University library and publicly available journals.

How will you use what you find out?

The data will be published as part of the PhD thesis and related, publicly available, academic journals.

Will anyone be able to contact me with what is recorded and reported?

All data will be anonymously recorded with the express intention of rendering the participants non-identifiable. The researcher is a registered postgraduate student of Birmingham University, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT.

How long is the whole study likely to last?

The PhD course is likely to last up to six years, part-time. I began the research in January 2009.

How can I find out the results of the study?

The thesis will be available at Birmingham University library. The researcher will be happy to provide a digest of the findings of the PhD after it is completed.

What if I do not wish to take part?

There is no obligation to take part at any stage.

What if I change my mind during the study?

Similarly, there is no obligation at any stage to take part and participants can withdraw at any point without explanation.

Do you have any questions?

If there are any questions at all about the study, I will answer them as fully as I can.

Details of who to contact with any concerns regarding the study.

The research supervisor is Ben P Dandelion, Professor of Quaker Studies,

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

There could be any number of questions which arise after reading this information sheet. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you want to discuss any part of this research.

I would welcome any feedback on how you felt the interviews went. I have a supportive supervisor who has helped me to create an academically robust thesis. Further feedback can only support this work.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that, should you wish to withdraw from the research at any stage, you are completely at liberty to do so. No explanations for your decision will be required.

Thank you for showing an interest in taking part in this project.

Mark Read

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Tel: 01____

[Redacted]

26 September 2010

Appendix 5 Interviewee Consent Form

**Consent Form for PhD Research: Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies, Woodbrooke, University of Birmingham
'Managing Quaker Identity in the Workplace'**

Please tick the appropriate boxes

I have read and understood the project information sheet dated

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and audio recorded.

I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part.

Select only one of the next two options:

I would like my name used where what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognised.

I do not want my name used in this project.

I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.

I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs but my name will not be used unless I requested it above.

I agree for the data I provided to be archived at the University of Birmingham

I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of that data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.

I understand that other researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs according to the terms I have specified in this form.

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to Mark Read.

Name of Participant Signature Date

Researcher Signature Date

Contact details for further information: Names, phone, email addresses, etc.
Mark Read



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