

***The Well From Which We Drink Is Poisoned: Clergy Sexual
Exploitation of Adult Women***

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Philosophy**

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Abstract

The thesis adds to the body of knowledge on clergy sexual exploitation of adults in the UK and Ireland, which has rarely been studied, and not at all from the victim's perspective.

The study explores the lived experience of women who were sexually exploited by Christian clergy when they were either parishioners of their Church or seeking help, support or spiritual guidance. The sample is relatively large, with 63 women completing questionnaires and 19 also interviewed in depth. Data analysis has been quantitative and qualitative, using grounded theory.

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks draw on feminist analyses, especially the concepts of power and control and entrapment. This framing challenges many dominant constructions of clergy relationships with adult women; especially that which locates these encounters as 'affairs'. The analysis seeks to demonstrate that clergy sexual exploitation of adult women should be located within the continuum of violence against women.

Detailed analysis of women's accounts is presented to explore the processes of 'getting in', 'getting trapped' and 'getting out'. The complexity and variability of women's experiences are also central themes, including their changing perceptions of the sexual involvement and how entrapment limited their 'space for action'. Later chapters document the harms of sexual exploitation and some women's attempts to achieve redress and justice. There is no other contemporary study, which traces these processes in depth and over time.

The thesis includes in appendix nine an overview of Christian Church guidelines and procedures for dealing with 'sexual misconduct'. This is not part of the main thesis as the whole area requires an in depth analysis not undertaken in this study. Yet it does give an idea of how far the UK and Irish Churches have progressed (or not) in the area of policies and procedures.

Women's own recommendations for change are combined in the conclusion with insights from the whole study.

CONTENTS

Organisations mentioned in this study	vii
Dedication	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Setting the context	5
The Discourse of Love	9
Called to account	12
Developments in the UK and Ireland	14
Access to knowledge	16
Contribution to knowledge and public policy	17
 Chapter 2: Literature Review: What we know about clergy sexual exploitation of women	 20
Feminist perspectives	20
Prevalence	22
Reporting and non-reporting	24
Studies of sexual exploitation by professionals	26
Abuse in Therapy in the UK	28
Clergy sexual exploitation	29
Explanatory and conceptual frameworks	32
Conclusions	51
 Chapter 3: Methodology	 53
Formulating the research questions	53
Theoretical perspective	54
The Process of the Research	64
Conclusions	92

Chapter 4: Getting in – Getting trapped	94
Clergy background and relationship to parishioner	94
Christian women seeking assistance	95
Clergy as professionals	97
Vulnerability: taking advantage, re-victimization	98
Getting in	102
Entrapment	115
Women’s unequal position	120
Violence and fear	122
Continuum of clergy sexual exploitation (this study)	122
‘Forced’ into secrecy	126
Reframing	129
Entrapment: The Conclusion	132
 Chapter 5: Making sense – getting out	 134
Introduction	134
Multiple feelings: emotional/psychological turmoil	135
Naming and re-framing	142
Social entrapment	147
Changing perception	152
Conclusion	161
 Chapter 6: “The well from which we drink is poisoned” From Private to Public	 164
Private and public exposure of the clergyman	164
A Poisoned well? Official reporting to Church authorities	173
Official Proceedings - Court cases	183
Church Trials	184
Similarities and differences with Criminal Courts	188
Open Season	189
Church tribunals	191
Criminal Trials	194

Lessons learnt	196
How women assessed Church responses	197
Conclusion	202
Chapter 7: Impacts and Consequences: Disconnection and re-connection	205
Physical, emotional and psychological disconnections	206
The Lord's Prayer – equality of sinning	218
Caring for oneself: challenging and re-connecting	221
Taking control, challenging abusers	222
Becoming free: Death of offender	226
Hopes for the future	226
Chapter 8: Called to Account? Unpoisoning the Well	228
Introduction	228
Christian gender orders	228
Summary of Main Findings	229
Making Meaning	230
Violence within sexual exploitation	231
Responses from the Churches	232
Aftermath	233
Unpoisoning the Well?	234
Conclusion	238
Appendices	242
Bibliography	312

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule with Key Informants	242
Appendix 2: Advertisements for Research	244
Appendix 3: Participants Questionnaires	245
Appendix 4: Ethical Guidelines/Safety for Participants	268
Appendix 5: Contract for Participants	272
Appendix 6: Interview Topic Guide	273
Appendix 7: Power and Control Wheel: Minnesota (1979)	279
Appendix 8: James Ptacek's (1999) 'Battering as Social Entrapment'	280
Appendix 9: Policies and Procedure	281
Appendix 10: Appeal Options for Women	300
Appendix 11: Support Offered to Women by Churches During Reporting Process	301
Appendix 12: The Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church	302
Appendix 13: Richard Gula (1996) Sexual Ethics in Ministry (Catholic)	303
Appendix 14: Survey of Clergy Regarding Profession v Non-Profession of Clergy (Kennedy M, 2000, unpublished)	305
Appendix 15: Definition of 'Vulnerable' Contained in 'No Secrets' (2000)	306
Appendix 16: Definition of 'Vulnerable' Contained in 'The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act' (UK, 2006)	307
Appendix 17: Appeal Judgement of Archbishop of York following Conviction of Anglican Clergyman (2003)	308
Appendix 18: All Churches: Whether Clergy Charged are Suspended	310
Appendix 19: All Churches: Whether Resignation Allowed Before Proceedings	311

Organisations Mentioned in this study

BACP: British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

CCPAS: Churches Child Protection Advisory Services: An independent (of Churches) organisation offering all Churches advice and training. .

COPCA: The Catholic Office for the Prevention of Child Abuse; established after the Nolan Review 2000 which recommended procedures for the Catholic Church.

CSAS: Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service, replaced COPCA after the Cumberledge Commission 2006.

CSSA: Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse: a self help organisation for survivors who were sexually abused in Christian families.

7-11: A group for women who were, or are, in secret relationships with Catholic priests. The name derives from the date of their first meeting; the 7th November.

MACSAS: Minister & Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors; a National support group in the UK, www.macsas.org.uk.

Mind: A mental Health organisation UK that advocates for mentally ill people.

MSF Union: The MSF was formed in 1988 from the merger of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) and the Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Staffs (TASS). This Union is now part of UNITE.

Network Journal; produced by 'Woman, Word, Spirit'; an organisation largely for Catholic women interested in theology, spirituality and Ministry.

POPAN: Prevention of Professional Abuse Network'. Founded by Jenny Fasal & Mary Edwardes.

SPANNA: Survivors of Professional Abuse Network; a self-help support group for those sexually exploited by therapists and other professionals that grew out of the work of 'POPAN'.

Witness: Formerly POPAN .

This PhD is dedicated to all the women who participated in this research without whom this exploration could not have been undertaken. I especially dedicate this PhD to my twin sister Ann, whose courage and tenacity never ceases to amaze me.

*History, despite its wrenching pain
Cannot be unlived
But if faced with courage,
Need not be lived again*

Maya Angelou

This PhD also honours two women who died of cancer; Patricia Brown (Scotland) and Phyllis Hamilton (Ireland), Karen Stapley (England) and one who committed suicide; Mary (England) who will never know the progress that is being slowly made

*I do not want the peace that passeth understanding
I want the understanding that bringeth peace*

Helen Keller

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¹ SPANA: Survivors of professional Abuse National Association; self-help support group for women sexually exploited by professionals.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will set the context of this study in the UK and Ireland and how I came to undertake it. It became increasingly apparent that child protection in Churches was making some headway but protection of adults was not. Various scandals both here and in America were being dismissed as "affairs" and women not considered victims.

I decided to research women's experience of clergy sexual exploitation as an adult because it is an under-studied area in the UK. My professional background is not that of a social researcher but as a practitioner/activist/advocate. My interest stems from working with women sexually exploited by clergy, my philosophical stance is Feminism and my own experiences have influenced this study. My perception of clergy sexual exploitation is based on engagement with this issue over years. I have explored professional misconduct in all its guises, and am familiar with and concur with the ethical, professional, sexual, emotional, psychological standards of professional practice. This is allied with a profound working and activist position of seeking justice after sexual violation, the feminist underpinning of my intellectual discoveries.

This abuse of women by clergy is rarely recorded or regarded with seriousness by Churches, the general public or the criminal justice system in the UK or Ireland as demonstrated by this research throughout this thesis. I wanted to know how women became involved in these situations, how women coped, how the involvement ended and finally what the aftermath was. Thus this study aims to redress the 'invisibility' of women 'caught' and 'trapped' by abusive clergy.

The research also offers a preliminary review of the policies and procedures (appendix 9) in use in Christian Churches in the UK and Ireland. They are not included in the main body of the thesis which is focused entirely on women's journey. However some reference to what is available is useful, but needs further research.

While this is a study of women from Christian Churches in Britain and Ireland, it recognises the diversity within the Christian community in terms of denomination and beliefs. The study does not provide an account of all Christian Churches, denominations or sects in the UK and Ireland as a sample from Black majority Churches was not achieved.

There is considerable learning from the theories; data and analysis presented here could be used to explore sexual exploitation in different faith traditions, since most have majority male leadership and power. Furthermore, the role of women in faith traditions has historically been circumscribed by male leaders. In this study 'Clergy' includes ordained priests, Ministers and non-ordained Church Leaders such as Pastors, Elders, Overseers and House Church leaders. Some are not conventionally referred to as 'clergy', but for this study that is the collective noun used.

The subject of this research is considered in some arenas to be 'controversial' in that there is continued argument whether the exploitation of women is truly an offence rather than "an affair".

The role of women in Christian Churches has largely been the 'servant' role with women perceived as having 'inherited a genetic gene of seduction' from Eve in the Garden of Eden. So to challenge this patriarchal position is also controversial whilst at the same time, Churches are grappling with clergy abuse of children and have been damaged by public disclosures of cases not well handled in the past.

The focus of this thesis on 'Clergy sexual exploitation of adult women' emerged out of a journey of many years, a personal and professional discovery and experience of my self as a woman, as a professional child protection trainer and consultant, as a Christian woman (Catholic), as a feminist, as a disabled woman, as a child sexual abuse survivor and as a survivor of clergy sexual violation as an adult. It is important that I locate myself firmly as a survivor and feminist in this research. The 'personal' of my life has been political in my work; here too, the 'personal' must be integral to academic research as a feminist researcher. There is a very large part of me, which adamantly refuses now to be silenced, stigmatised, or patronised by my own experience of sexual violation. This was not always the case.

After my experience of a series of severe sexual assaults at the hands of an Anglican college chaplain whilst a young student, I felt shame and never dared to speak for fear I would be judged. I knew what was happening was sexual, but I could not frame it within a discourse of 'violation' until much later. I did not know women were (and still are):

trained to be ashamed of themselves if they become victims of sexual violence
(Schussler, Fiorenza & Copeland, 1994:31).

Later in my professional work on child abuse I came to understand the 'silencing' as a patriarchal device. We were never to speak. This for me could not be sustained as I explored female oppression and became more active and forthright in child protection within a feminist framework. Not only was I exploring a professional feminist perspective on male violence against women and children, I was also engaged in feminist theology and belonged to feminist Christian groups. The forces that silenced sexually abused children and women, as well as the forced silence of women in the Church became apparent.

At the beginning of this journey I was working as a professional with a marginalized and silenced group, abused **disabled** children. Many could not (apparently) speak due to speech and language difficulties or learning difficulties. However these children **did** 'speak' in many different ways but due to their disempowerment and low status, or the different ways they tried to 'tell', they were neither heard nor heeded in any way. Paradoxically these 'voiceless' children helped me find my own voice. They showed me that their low status, created by society, leads to disempowerment, vulnerability, with their experiences ignored. I saw parallels between my experience and the experience of sexually abused disabled children, and the exploited women I was supporting in the Churches.

My first way of 'speaking' was by founding a group called MACSAS – 'Minister & Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors', for women and men who were sexually abused as children or as adults by (largely) male clergy. As survivors contacted MACSAS it became clear that Christian Churches were failing one group and we needed to address the sexual violation of *women*, as *adults*, by clergy and ministers.

It is a powerful 'common sense' discourse that priest and congregant are equal and any sexual contacts that may arise are 'affairs' (even if the clergy is celibate). But women, who are part of a congregation, or seeking help, are in a subordinate position where the clergyperson holds considerable power, status, education and respect. These clergy are pastorally and spiritually responsible for the care of their congregants. The clergyperson who is supposed to be 'God's representative' in this world, have an additional spiritual power over women apparently

conferred by God. Feminist theologians argue that because we call God our Father so too we perceive the priest as both God and Father. (Cooper-white, 1995; Imbens & Jonker, 1992; Adams & Fortune, 1995).

Accounts from MACSAS survivors revealed that sexually abused/exploited women were dismissed. Clergy sexual exploitation/sexual abuse of adult women is hidden and ignored in all Christian denominations yet authors testify that the most common cases within Churches are exploitation of adult women in the pastoral relationships (Maris & McDonough, 1995; Sipe, 1995; Fortune, 1989; Cames, 1997; & Berns, 2000). Berns argues women are often 'overlooked in a patriarchal culture' (p7). The reason this is so and the connections between abuse and these beliefs is fully explored in the following literature review.

Women were asked to ignore what had happened, were given various explanations such as "it was an affair", "He was stressed out, it didn't mean anything", "it's not abuse, you are an adult". *Being an adult* woman seemed to be an indicator of consent so was not seen as so serious, and it was therefore not a sexual violation. It was almost universally the case that male clerics, both the offender and his superiors, within the power structures of the specific Christian Churches defined what had occurred.

All attempts to create change involve questioning who decides "what counts" as victimization and who defines it's meaning and seriousness. At issue here is the creation of a climate in which testimony and experience of women [and girls] are accorded credibility and importance (Kelly & Radford, 1996:71).

This thesis will show that the 'naming' of women's violation is vitally important. Sexual assault, rape, touching, groping, intercourse with a clergy professional in his role as pastor of a women seeking his help is not an "affair". I consider sexual exploitation of women in a pastoral setting as a form of violence/violation. Over the years definitions concerning this exploitation have been deficient. The definition used in this study adds additional elements to be considered (underlined):

Sexual exploitation occurs when a person in authority, in role, as Clergy, Minister or Pastor, sexualises contact with female parishioners or those who seek his help for his own sexual gratification. It constitutes exploitation whether or not women consented, if at the time they are a 'client' or parishioner. The Pastor mis-uses power and role whenever they sexualise contact with

someone to whom they have a duty of care. Consent is compromised within a setting where the woman seeks the advice, counsel, teaching or spiritual direction of her Pastor.

This definition was created before women came forward to be part of the research. At the time of defining I had envisaged 'women seeking help' and 'women in congregations' being part of the study. In the event only women seeking help came forward. It is this group which is examined and evidence presented.

Nevertheless the definition is one that offers a full description of sexual exploitation by clergy and the groups of women it relates too.

This research is my second way of 'speaking' and the contribution of this thesis enables female clergy sexual abuse survivors to define 'what counts' and to create a climate in Churches in which the *'testimony and experience of women is accorded credibility and importance'* (Radford & Kelly, 1998). The Churches need empirical evidence that there is a problem and we could try together to map out these violations.

Enabling women to make their experience visible means that they *have defined what counts* and will be heard. They convey to all what they want to happen now, and challenge the Churches in this research to take seriously their sexual violation and argue for 'Metanoia' - conversion, a change of heart and attitude by those Churches. They ask for justice in policies and procedures, in pastoral care and recognition of all they have gone through. This is precisely what Maynard (1994) suggests:

One of the early driving forces of feminism was to challenge the passivity, subordination and silencing of women by encouraging them to speak about their own condition and in so doing to confront the experts and dominant males with the limitations of their own knowledge and comprehension (Maynard, 1994:23).

Setting the context

Professionals abusing their patients/clients through sexual 'relationships' have been recognised since the early 1990's in the UK, though clergy victims were not included. Only if the

clergyperson was a psychologist and the women were his patients would there be recourse for some action by her.

Jenny Fasal in the 1980's identified that MIND (a mental health organisation) was aware of the problems but there were no support structures in place for victims. Together with the late Mary Edwardes she founded POPAN in 1998 – Prevention of Professional Abuse Network, now known as Witness. The organisation continues its support of sexually abused adults within the health and caring professions. Clergy cases are not at present included, but they are now considering doing so.

Research began within the field of therapy. The first literature on the issues in the UK was Janice Russell's *Out of Bounds – Sexual Exploitation in Counselling and Therapy* (1993). Tanya Garrett, a psychologist, conducted an anonymous survey of members of the Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP) of the British Psychological Society in relation to their experience of sexual contact with patients and this was published in 1998.

In 1994, Derek Jehu's book *Patients as Victims – Sexual Abuse in Psychotherapy and Counselling* was published. This was an overview of the issues taken from already established American literature on the subject. Jenkins (1997) wrote '*Counselling, Psychotherapy and the Law*' which featured professional misconduct issues. These were the only UK resources in the 1990's and remain so to date.

Breaking Silence - Influence of American Clergy scandals

Work in the UK on professional abuse has been minimal in stark contrast to the work in North America where not only did the debate concerning professionals who have sex with their clients begin in the 1960s (Schoener et al, 1989) but it has been a criminal offence in many states for some years, with Wisconsin being the first State to legislate in 1984 (Op cit:548). Currently it is a crime in at least 23 states for a therapist to have sex with a client and 17 include clergy in that group, if they are providing therapy (Lundstrum, M, 2003). Two states, Minnesota and Texas are tougher still, holding clergy criminally liable even if all (sic) they are providing is spiritual advice and comfort. Justifications for these strong sanctions span the notions of transference/counter-transference, the role and power of professionals and ethical practice.

In the early 1990s sexual abuse of children by clergy, particularly Catholic clergy emerged through survivor testimony. Silence and the secrecy were broken and conferences with survivors speaking out were convened.

Advocacy and campaigning work to support people sexually abused as *adults* by clergy began. Women challenged the notion that sexual violation by clergy was only a 'child' and 'age related' crime. Fortune (1989) first published a full account of one Church and their abusing pastor, which had a profound effect on understanding clergy sexual misconduct. At the same time women, Van Dyke (1997) and Miller (2000) published their stories, which added to exposing of clergy sexual abuse. Poling (1999) helped six women tell their story in a book and continues to lecture widely on the issues.

International cases of exploitation of women by clergy

Cases of sexual exploitation of women by clergy are now known in many countries and across all religious groups. However Catholic Clergy remain prominent in the media. Exposure is rarely focused on the misconduct but highlights the hypocrisy of celibacy and is often used to support the argument to allow the clergy to marry.

Below brief details of key cases that have influenced research and policy on clergy abuse are presented.

1980s	The Archbishop of Santa Fe, New Mexico, resigned in disgrace after it became known he had sexual relationships with as many as five young women during the seventies and others before (Shupe, 1998:20).
1991	The ECLA (Lutheran) Bishop of North Carolina resigned after admitting sexual misconduct with a woman prior to election as Bishop.
1998	Chibnall, Wolf and Duckro (1998) had previously examined the sexual abuse of 578 nuns in America but publication was barred as a condition of the research. In Boston it was reported a priest sexually

abused many novice nuns, which was allegedly hushed up by Cardinal Law, (Guardian Newspapers, 12/4/2002).

2000 A Jesuit priest declared 30 per cent of German priests are sexually active with women (Wills, 2000:186).

2001 Bishop Franziskus, in Mainz, Germany, admitted a “physical closeness” between himself and a woman who accused him of sexually exploiting and injuring her during an exorcism. Germany’s Chief public prosecutor dismissed her claim of sexual assault (The Tablet, 2001).

The widespread sexual abuse of Nuns by Catholic Priests in Africa was disclosed by a ‘whistleblower’ to the National Catholic Reporter (16/03/ 2001).

2002 The Catholic Archbishop Weakland of Milwaukee resigned after allegations that he sexually assaulted an adult man.

2002 In Melbourne, Australia, a former nun alleged abuse by a priest. (CathNews, 15/07/2002).

2003 In Boston 41 Catholic priests have been accused of sexual misconduct with women (The Linkup).

2003 In the Philippines (Patinio, 2003), Bishop Bacani admitted an “inappropriate expression of affection” when his secretary alleged sexual harassment.

2003 In Tasmania two women accused a priest of sexual misconduct (The Linkup, 2003).

- 2004 In Argentina, Fr José Mariani chose to reveal his many sexual exploits with women over decades in a book *No beating about the Bush*. His first 'love' was a 17 year old who came to confession with him.
- 2005 A photograph of a 91-year-old Greek Orthodox priest in bed with a young woman opened up a huge scandal of drugs, homosexuality, and fraud in Greece (The Guardian, 19/02/2005).
- 2009 Sister Dr Jesme a religious sister in Kerala, India writes a book *Amen: Autobiography of a Nun* detailing her sexual abuse by priests in the convent.

The predominant discourse of "affairs/love" is evident both in media reports and more in depth commentaries. Catholic priests' involvement with women is usually framed as 'love'. Ferwerda (1989, translated to English in 1993) documented 'women in love' in the Netherlands. On close inspection some of these 'women' were under 18 and several 'love' situations were within the pastoral professional relationship. Anderson (2005), in Australia, writes an apologia for Catholic priests which is entirely focused on the priests needs. Women in these 'relationships' who may well have had a different perspective were not discussed in the book. Alaya (1999) wrote her autobiography of her love-relationship with a Catholic priest in the USA in which she had children. In the *Sunday Independent* (May 18th. 2003) she hinted at her growing sense of exploitation.

Hebblethwaite (National Catholic Reporter, 1996) wrote about Clelia Podesta marrying an Argentinean Bishop and her book *Mi Nombre es Clelia*, which caused a scandal. The relationship might have continued in secrecy had not Podesta been called to Rome and made to sign his resignation.

The Discourse of Love

The discussion below addresses the known cases within the UK and Ireland and brings the issues into focus in these isles. This indicates the exploitation of women is also part of the fabric of some clergy's lives here. It looks closely at the developments of the cases that have reached public knowledge.

In England, Chris Brain, a cleric within the Anglican Church was found to be a prolific abuser of up to 40 women in his 'alternative' but still Anglican, Nine O'clock Service in Sheffield (*The Independent*, 24th August, 1995). The Anglican Church tried to distance themselves from the activities of Chris Brain by arguing that his Church was a 'cult', suggesting Brain was a 'Maverick', even though, up until the disclosures of sexual exploitation, they fully supported his work (Howard R, 1996). Chris Brain was de-frocked and he left Britain. None of these 40 alleged cases reached civil or criminal proceedings for sexual assault. Cases where Anglican Clergy have been sanctioned are recorded below. The charge is invariably 'adultery'.

Sipe (1990) made a conservative estimate that 20 per cent of American priests were sexually active at any one time, 8-10 per cent with women. He goes on to recount the story of a Catholic priest having an "affair" with a woman who sought help after the death of her child and declares it was "meaningful for both the woman and the priest" (p87/88). There is however recognition that clergy benefit from relationships at the expense of women (Anderson, 2005; Jenkins, 1995; Network,² 1995). Whilst Sipe suggests that relationships can help the priest grow up sexually and personally he cautions:

No matter how loving or how useful they eventually prove to be in the maturation of priests and their pastoral instincts, women get used. By their sinfulness women can save priests. But priests can remain within the system and retain their power – now purified – while women retain their identity in the system as evil unless they are virgins, martyrs, or mothers. (Sipe,1990:102).

Despite numerous high profile cases women are still perceived as willing partners. In 1996, Bishop Roddy Wright (Scotland, now deceased) fathered a child with a woman he was pastorally helping; this was seen as an 'affair' not sexual exploitation. Linnane (*The Tablet*, 1996), a Jesuit priest, argued that Roddy Wright had abused his position of trust, but failed to change the public perception of Wright's behaviour. Linnane's perspective was further eroded when Wright wrote his autobiography as a Love story in *Feet of Clay* (Wright, 1999). He presented himself as simply human rather than as an exploiter of vulnerable women.

² NETWORK; A Journal produced by 'women, word, spirit', for women interested in spirituality, ministry and theology.

Eamonn Casey, Bishop of Galway, Ireland, also fathered a child with Annie Murphy, a woman he was pastorally responsible for; this too, was seen as a love “affair”. Murphy (1993) wrote about this “affair”, as a ‘love’ story, though Casey himself frames his sexual activity as ‘therapy’ for Annie. Broderick (1992) in a critical analysis of Casey’s life in *Fall from Grace*, (1992) presents Casey as a selfish, self-centred man; “He wanted to be a groom at every wedding, and a corpse at every funeral” (p120). His treatment of Annie when she disclosed pregnancy was vicious.

Father Pat Buckley was one of the first to discuss clergy sexual misconduct in Ireland, but due to his rather unorthodox approach he is largely discounted. He put the Casey ‘affair’ firmly in the breach of trust category (p161). In his book *‘A thorn in their Sides’* (1994) he devotes a chapter to the sexual exploitation of Irish women by Catholic clergy. Therein he includes case studies of four women. Mairead who went to her priest to discuss her inability to have a child; Deirdre who was depressed and went for counselling to her priest to discover the priest was engaging both her and a nun in a sexual relationship; Fiona who met the priest following the death of her husband and he was helping her with the funeral; and Jane who was married to an alcoholic and violent man started to receive visits from a priest. He writes of one priest who exploited six women simultaneously. All these women he declared exploited.

Following publication of his views on the Casey ‘scandal’ 57 women in similar circumstances wrote to Buckley. He says,

In all the cases it was the priest who initiated the relationship. It often happened when the woman went to the priest to discuss a personal or a marriage problem (Buckley, 1994:153).

In Ireland Michael Cleary, a popular ‘folk singing priest’, fathered two children with Phyllis Hamilton (his ‘housekeeper’). Hamilton had spent her teenage years as a patient in a psychiatric hospital following severe child sexual abuse. At 17 years old she visited Cleary for confession, (she was still under the care of the hospital and lived there). Cleary, considerably older ‘persuaded’ her they could be secretly married. Both Hamilton (1995) and Murphy (1993) had (male) journalist’s co-write autobiographies of their stories and the “affair” discourse is used throughout.

In the UK Jenkins (1995) compiled a book of women's stories of 'love' with Catholic priests. The title *A Passion for Priests* suggests women themselves target priests. The sub-title 'women talk of their love for Roman Catholic Priests' is the substance of the book. She calls the relationships "affairs" but critiques the position in her introduction and conclusion. Jenkins acknowledges the exploitation by noting in the introduction that clergy who are counselling women betray women's trust and highlights the absence of any institutionalised ethical body overseeing these priest/counsellors. There is no official code of conduct or complaints procedures. The men are protected by the illusion that Catholic priests don't have sex and [by] their collar (p19). She is scathing of Catholic Clergy who abandon women:

Some men would say if the relationship makes them better priests, more understanding of the complexities of human emotions, more sympathetic to confusion and suffering, they are not prepared to give it up. It sounds compassionate to talk of men 'rediscovering their vocations' after having an affair. What thanks do the women receive for helping their partners to a renewal which can only benefit an entire Church? What sympathy when the man deserts them? He may return strengthened by his vows, his training, his sense of vocation. She by definition has none of this... The men have a rescue structure built into their vocation. The women do not (Jenkins, 1995: 274, 276).

The effect of the powerful 'love' discourse in both the Catholic Church and Anglican Church is that all *priest-women* relationships are now seen as loving and consenting meaning those who are exploited have no voice. This relies on the assumption women are always willing in these relationships. There is a growing belief that such sexual relationships are condoned by Church leaderships in order to keep priests in ministry, particularly if the clergy are discreet and avoid 'scandal'. There is some anecdotal evidence that Bishops too are sexually involved with women as women share with me the local diocesan rumours.

Called to account

This section highlights that whilst it is not entirely impossible to call clergy to account, both legally and canonically (that is, through Church law) the sanctions tend to be minimal.

Fr Frank Goodall, a Redemptorist priest (UK) was found guilty at a Church Tribunal in 1996 of sexually exploiting Evonne Maes, a religious Sister. Despite this there were no sanctions against him and he continued in ministry up until his death. Maes wrote her memoir (Maes with

Slunder,1999) after leaving her convent and the Church. However women telling their own stories publicly is unusual in the UK or Ireland.

A Catholic priest, Fr Terrance Fitzpatrick was ordered in 2001 to pay his female victim £70,000 compensation after he was convicted of assault in the civil courts. His order, the Benedictines, said he has taken a vow of poverty and they as an Order are not allowed to use their own funds under charitable regulations. He remains in ministry.

Clergy being jailed for sexual assault is not a common occurrence; it can be argued that the discourse of "affair" and women being 'adult', with confusion about 'consent' conspires against prosecutions. However, Fr James Deadman, a Cistercian Priest in Leicester was jailed in 2001 for 6 years on 11 counts of sexual assault of women who went to him for help. In 2004 an Evangelical black pastor, Douglas Goodman, was jailed for sexually assaulting young women in his Church in London. In 1997 a woman spoke at a conference about her rape by a priest, she became pregnant. He was jailed for 6 years (*The Guardian*, 18/9/97). An Anglican clergyman was jailed for abusing children in 2003 but he targeted and exploited their mother for access to the children. In Wales a Catholic priest was also jailed for molesting children but it is known he also sexually molested women though this 'remains on file'.

Cases of Anglican clergy called to account albeit under 'adultery' charges are reported in the media. The Anglican Consistory court³ makes charges under Church legislation of 'conduct unbecoming' of the ministry. Whilst the Dean of Lincoln, Brandon Jackson famously won his case in 1995 being found 'not guilty', some clergy have lost their positions, whilst others are simply moved to another parish. Clergy are removed (un-frocked)⁴ mostly for 'adulterous' behaviour, or bringing scandal on the Church. Geoff Howard (1994), Gareth Miller (1994), Keith Haydon (1999), Peter Davey (2000), Simon Oberst (2004) and Robert Graham (2004), all resigned as a consequence of 'affairs' with parishioners. The Dean of Ripon, John Methuen faced two charges in 2005 of 'inappropriate conduct' with women but 'resigned' before the consistory court convened. Most recently Rev David King was suspended for four years from ministry for an 'adulterous affair' with the woman who sought counselling from him (*The Times*, 12/03/ 2008).

³ Consistory court: a Church Court of the Anglican Church Tradition. Now not used in England and Wales but still used in Scotland.

⁴ 'De-frocked' is a lay term, the correct term is 'unfrocking'.

In the UK there is confusion by both Church and state about the charge to be brought, whether this should be regarded as adultery, conduct unbecoming the ministry, sexual exploitation of women, or whether clergy should be charged with assaults, rape, or other sexual offences, (see also appendix 9).

Developments in the UK and Ireland

It is important before embarking on the research to look at the history to the sexual abuse of children and of women in the UK and Irish Churches.

Denominations other than Catholic largely escape media scrutiny and it is the media who have shaped the discourse thus far. The Catholic Church proves interesting to media because of celibacy, the Anglican Church because it is the established Church and the discourse of "affairs" is attractive to journalists. Most evidence comes from Anglican/Catholic accounts.

One of the possible reasons why the UK has lagged so far behind America with regards to clergy sexual exploitation is that religion has, until recently, not been a key player in mainstream public policy. Churches are smaller and the voice of women who may be sexually exploited is silenced in a largely secular culture. This is worthy of reflection since the lack of concern on a societal level is hindering progress on safety for women in Churches. If compared with Ireland, a country hugely (until now) connected to Catholicism the betrayal of Church hierarchy and priests who abuse children is front page news with much outrage. However it remains the case that in Ireland clergy indulging in relationships with women would generate front-page news only as 'scandal' of an affair with discussion on the inhumanity of celibacy. In the UK, these issues are not seen as worthy of reflection by the media except for high profile cases.

In 2000 survivors from CSSA (Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse) gave evidence to the Catholic Church's review of child protection, *The Nolan review*. They recommended that because of increasing contacts from those sexually abused as *adults*, that Nolan should include clergy sexual abuse of adult women.

Nolan did ultimately address vulnerable adults but other than mentioning learning disabled adults, failed to respond to the call for guidance CSSA sought or a clear definition.

We have received several comments suggesting that our work might be extended to cover the arrangements the Church should make to protect vulnerable adults, such as those with learning disabilities. ...such an extension would go beyond our remit and our expertise. We do, however commend, the Church to consider the need for policies and arrangements in this area. (Nolan Review, 2000, 2.2.1).

Unfortunately the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable adults (COPCA),⁵ uses narrow definition of 'Vulnerable adults' set out in *No Secrets* (Department of Health & Home Office, 2000).

A person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against "significant harm" or "exploitation (op cit, 2.2).

Women in crises such as domestic violence who seek the help of a clergyperson and are subsequently sexually exploited would not fall into this definition of 'vulnerable'.

A group, called 7-11⁶ (UK) unintentionally compounds the confusion between 'exploitation' and 'consenting' involvement as they define themselves as women voluntarily in secret relationships with Catholic priests. Their concern is the *unfairness of celibacy for catholic priests*. Whilst they argue both priests and women are being abused by the Church's rule on celibacy. 7-11 do recognise exploitation;

...in the many stories we have heard it is the man in almost every case who has made the initial advance, encouraged the relationship and then backed away when faced with the implications of providing ongoing love and support to another person. He receives protection and often sympathy and support, while the woman is left bereaved and unsupported. There are other relationships which are abusive and are often the result of women having sought counselling help at a time when they were vulnerable. Their vulnerability is taken advantage of... (Network, December 1996:15).

⁵ COPCA is now called CSAS – 'Catholic Safeguarding advisory Service'.

⁶ 7-11: A group for women who were, or are, in secret relationships with Catholic priests. The name derives from the date of their first meeting; the 7th November.

It should be noted that Churches of all denominations are at least attempting to produce ethical guidance for their clergy albeit sometimes using the love/affair discourse or discourse of 'harassment' (see appendix 9).

Concern is generated and debates take place on a survivor individual/micro level and discussed but Christian Churches have not addressed the macro/societal level. Certainly the public are unaware of the reality of sexual exploitation of adults by professionals generally and more so by clergy. It is urgent that more public exposure of these issues is encouraged

Access to knowledge

In the UK and Ireland women have had no access to knowledge about clergy sexual misconduct against adults, very little has been written outside newspaper reporting.

A key text *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*, by Rutter (1989) is well known and had been read by some women in this research but whilst clergy abuse is noted the focus is primarily on other professionals.

In 1999 I authored/compiled *Courage to Tell*, a book of Christian women's experience of child sexual abuse. Many women shared the negative responses of their Churches to disclosure. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) wanted to advise Churches on how to support survivors and a working party was convened to develop what came to be *Time for Action* (2002). This included a chapter on Clergy Sexual Misconduct of Adults, the first official Church documentation of this form of violation in the UK⁷.

Ireland held its first conference on Sexual Exploitation of Women by Professionals and Clergy, convened jointly by the Rape Crises Network of Ireland (RCNI) and MACSAS in 2002. MACSAS held three conferences in 1998, 2004 and 2007 on clergy sexual abuse of adults in the UK.

In 1998 the UK Government became concerned about vulnerable adults in care homes, as well as abuse of adults and intimidation in courts. These concerns coalesced into Government

⁷ This chapter authored by Kennedy though not attributed.

guidance; *No secrets* (2000). This was to guide agencies on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults, that is, learning disabled, elderly and mentally ill people. The 2003 Sexual Offences Act, which aimed to protect vulnerable adults and also contained specific offences that relate to breach of trust by care workers, however clergy are not included. Some Church policies are being written with these vulnerable groups in mind. The women in this study who in their view and mine, were sexually abused whilst vulnerable are *not* regarded as: a) vulnerable or b) exploited by *No Secrets* or the 2003 Act. Challenging these assumptions is one strand of the work in this thesis.

After hearing women in MACSAS talk about their experiences it became imperative to look more closely at their experiences.

Contribution to knowledge and public policy

This thesis fills a gap in the knowledge on sexual exploitation of women by their pastors. It will challenge the 'affair' discourse by presenting an alternative understanding and analysis focused on exploitation.

The study is based on 65 questionnaires completed by 63 women, 19 interviews with women and 19 interviews with Church leaders and key informants.

The thesis tracks the journey of women taking a developmental/longitudinal approach exploring the experience from commencement to the finish, as well as looking at the pre and post-exploitation context.

Chapter two sets the context by exploring the literature on clergy sexual abuse and exploitation of women. It also describes how others conceptualise the exploitation with a critique of both language used and positions taken. The chapter also looks at how feminist writers have positioned sexual abuse and violence against women as a systemic and patriarchal oppression of women in society.

Chapter three describes how this research was undertaken. It describes how the research sample was collected and how this research using both qualitative and quantitative methods was analysed using 'framework'.

Chapter four begins the research findings based on the women in this research. It begins at the point where women met the clergyman in question and how the initial stages of exploitation were set up. It explores re-victimization of women previously abused or traumatised and how this vulnerability is used by clergy to engage and trap her into a sexual contact. The entrapment process is explored and the analysis places the sexual exploitation of women on the continuum of violence (Kelly, 1988).

Chapter five examines how women begin to free themselves and develop 'space for action' to extricate themselves. It shows the evidence of multiple feelings which contributed to the entrapment, feelings engendered by clergy for the benefit of their safety allowing secrecy and entrapment. Alongside the personal clergy mechanisms used, societal mandates with respect to women also control her. This is explored in Christian society and culture using Ptacek's 'social entrapment' model. Women's resistance is described showing that women did try to extricate themselves but were not always able to do so. The chapter continues the woman's journey by showing how her perception of what was happening changes over time.

Chapter six is an exploration and analysis of how women tell and report; the former to friends or relatives, the latter to official sources. This chapter shows that Church responses are often unhelpful, distressing and sometimes could constitute further abuse. Case studies of Church and state trials show differences especially in the protection of the witness and the victim. Women finally describe their thoughts on reporting to officials.

Chapter seven shows the impacts and consequences, and the disconnections and re-connections of the aftermath of sexual exploitation. The chapter describes how every area of women's lives is affected, work, family life, and relationships. The concept of 'forgiveness' is analysed as it is a continuing Christian belief one that women in this study found made them live in continued guilt.

The final chapter constitutes the summarising of the findings and then presents what women themselves feel are the main issues the Churches need to address.

The direct experience of women brings new insights, new directions for further studies, accountability and justice, policies and procedures.

The title *The Well from which we drink is poisoned* is taken from the work of Rev Kathy Galloway, a feminist theologian, a Church of Scotland Minister and leader of the Iona community who on exploring Church responses to survivors of clergy abuse asked “what if the well from which we drink is poisoned?” (Time for Action, 2002).

This research shows just how polluted the well from which we drink really is.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: What we know about clergy sexual exploitation of women

This chapter reviews existing research literature concentrating on key areas relevant to this study: the prevalence of sexual assault by professionals; naming the offence/behaviour of clergy; victim/woman blame; explanatory frameworks; theological reference points; feminist perspectives and analysis of gendered power.

Feminist perspectives

Sexual violence and sexuality are both central concepts in feminist theory and women throughout the world have organised in a variety of ways to highlight, respond to, and campaign against the sexual victimization of women and girls. (Kelly & Radford ,1998:53). Although feminist thought traverses many disciplines and perspectives, there is now a distinct body of work on violence against women. A core theme has been that violence against woman is an expression of male power and contributes to the systemic oppression of women: what the UN has summarised as 'a cause and consequence of' of gender inequality' (UN, 2006). Within this, social constructions of gender and heterosexuality have been problematised and the association of rape with sex questioned in favour of emphasising power and control (Mackinnon, 1987). In an overview of feminist thought in this field, Romito (2008:22) suggests that socialisation processes of femininity and masculinity are central to the maintenance of male dominance through violence and the threat of violence:

The violence to which women are subject is not random, or abnormal, or defined by specific circumstances alone. It is used as a weapon to punish women for stepping beyond the gendered boundaries set for them, and to instil in them the fear of even considering doing so. It is a systematic strategy to maintain women's subordination to men.

Within feminist thought there are ongoing debates, including whether 'violence' should be defined in a broad inclusive manner to encompass verbal abuse, intimidation, sexualisation, not just physical acts which are criminalised. A narrower definition may afford greater clarity for research, and maintain boundaries between violence and sexism (Dobash & Dobash, 1998:4).

In terms of chronology, contemporary feminist analyses of and responses to sexual violence can be traced back to Susan Brownmiller's (1975) groundbreaking book *'Against Our Will'*, where she first describes the threat of rape as a mechanism to inculcate fear in all women; empirical research by Diana Russell in 1978 identifying the prevalence of sexual violence in women's lives (Russell, 1984); and Kathleen Barry's (1979) *Female Sexual Slavery* which highlighted how women's experiences of violence trap them within abusive relationships and environments. Simultaneously and subsequently feminist work focussed on sexual abuse of children (Armstrong, 1978; Rush, 1980) and this issue dominated feminist engagement with sexual violence through the 1980s. By the 1990s a new focus on sexual exploitation of women and girls emerged (Barry, 1995; Jeffreys, 1997). Throughout these journeys, debates developed over the use of 'patriarchy' as a theoretical tool of male dominance to 'explain violence against women' (Hunnicutt, 2009:553). A body of work on masculinities, and critical men's studies, which addresses men's use of violence, continues to develop and introduced the concept of 'gender orders' (Connell, 1987; Hearn, 1998).

However, overall, addressing sexual violence has become eclipsed by a spotlight on domestic violence and trafficking over the last two decades (Regan and Kelly, 2003). At the same time, a new body of work on sexual violence and the criminal justice system has emerged, demonstrating that ideas and stereotypes concerning female appropriate behaviour are highly influential in public and institutional attitudes to sexual violence (Kelly et al, 2005; Kelly et al, 2006; Temkin and Krahe, 2008).

Romito's (2008) overview provides a useful conceptual framework here. She argues that there were, and remain, a range of tactics for hiding male violence, including: euphemising; dehumanising; blaming; psychologising; naturalising; and separating. Under euphemising she describes 'linguistic avoidance', where the use of language hides both men and their agency.

She analyses woman blame in some detail, and there are strong links to the topic of this thesis. In the religious realm historic and often present day, beliefs that link all women to Mary Magdalene (the temptress) position them as of less value to all men, and especially clergy, provide a route for locating responsibility for sexual misconduct in femininity. Remnants of each of these ideas remain in the public imagination, as seen in secular, judicial and religious ideology concerning female appropriate behaviour (Schussler Fiorenza & Copeland

,1997,Temkin and Krahe, 2008). Psychologising and pathologising both victim and perpetrator depoliticises the act of violence, evident in the therapeutic discourses that explain violence and the legacies in terms of mental dysfunctions (see also Herman, 1992). For the victim who is deemed 'mad', her perpetrator is not called to account, if he is seen as 'mad' he escapes attribution of agency and is cared for rather than accused. In addition, naturalising refers to the notion that men have greater sexual needs or 'urges' that they cannot control (Romito, 2008). This masculine sexual 'need' imperative powerfully constrains women's capacity for agency in sexual encounters, limiting it to the 'narrow range of possibilities that are culturally weighted toward sex on men's terms' (Gavey, 2005:153).

Finally Romito describes a distinguishing and separating tactic which presents forms of male violence as distinct from each other, and giving different names to them prevents us seeing that they are perpetrated by the same category of people (2008:43-93). However, as Kelly and Radford (1998) point out, the danger of emphasising distinctions is that the connections between forms of violence may be neglected. Liz Kelly's 1988 book *Surviving Sexual Violence* proposed a concept of 'continuum of sexual violence', framing women's experiences of violence as '*a continuous series of elements or events that pass into one another and cannot be readily distinguished*'. Here the categories of sexual harassment/assault/rape are not discrete. The notion of a continuum enables recognition of 'a basic common character that underlies many different events' (p77). The continuum is extended in this study to include sexual exploitation by clergy.

Prevalence

The majority of prevalence studies have focused on either sexual abuse in childhood (see Finkelhor 1986; Russell & Bolen, 2000 for overviews) or rape as adults. The latter has either been in specialist studies, primarily in the USA with student samples, or as part of studies of violence against women more widely (see, for example: Johnson & Sacco, 1995; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Walby & Allen, 2004). Measurements tend to be over (lifetime prevalence) or within the last two years. Whilst there have been far fewer studies of the prevalence of sexual assault, than domestic violence (Hagemann White, 2001; Kelly & Regan, 2001), where data does exist, prevalence figures show significant variations across the globe, with Australia, the

USA and Sweden recording high prevalence rates per head of population, and South Africa the highest for both prevalence and reporting to the police (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2000).⁸

Researching rape and sexual assault has proved more complex than many other forms of violence against women, and indeed using the word 'rape' in questions greatly decreases the reporting of forced sex (Schwartz, 1997). The redesign of questions in the US National Crime Victimization Study in 1992 resulted in findings four times higher than previous versions. The British Crime Survey also underwent similar redesign, but much later (Walby & Allen, 2004). Methodological differences in terms of samples, the number and form of questions asked, the administration of the survey (questionnaire, telephone or face-to-face interview), and the research definition of rape/sexual assault are all thought to contribute to differential findings (Schwartz, 1997).

Prevalence Findings

There has yet to be a national random sample survey on the prevalence of rape in the UK. The earliest study to move beyond the local was focused on marital rape, and involved 1,007 women in 11 cities (Painter, 1991). A quarter reported rape or attempted rape in their lifetime, with only a tenth (9%) telling someone at the time.

The Violence Against Women Survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 1992 has formed a template for a new generation of prevalence studies (Walby & Myhill, 2001). From a national representative sample of 12,300 women interviewed over the telephone high rates of sexual assault were documented: over a third of women had suffered a sexual assault in their lifetime; almost two-thirds (60%) reported more than one incident; most assaults were by known men; just over one in twenty (6%) were reported to the police.

The limited UK knowledge base has been supplemented by an overview of British Crime Survey (BCS) data from 1998 and 2000 (Myhill & Allen, 2002), that arising from the special designed module on interpersonal violence utilised in the 2001 BCS (Walby & Allen, 2004) and the more recent findings from the 2004/5 BCS (Finney, 2006). In the most recent findings

⁸ This research review was explicitly commissioned to explore whether the status of having the highest rates in both categories was an artefact. The authors conclude that unfortunately it is not, and note further the high levels of both child rape and gang rape in the South African data.

(Finney, 2006), yearly prevalence rates for women of 2.8% were found for any sexual assault (including attempts), and of 0.2% for rape. Although this calculation was not presented in Finney's (2006) findings, the slightly higher prevalence rate for rape of 0.4% found by Myhill & Allen (2002) led to a best estimate that 61,000 women suffered rape in the year before the 2000 BCS was administered. Reported rapes for that period were around 8,500. Whilst these findings are much lower than Painter's, the subsequent waves of the BCS have found that the majority of sexual violence takes place in the context of intimate relationships (Walby & Allen, 2004; Finney, 2006), and an increased willingness to tell someone; albeit that this is most likely to be a friend or family member (Kelly, 2000).

The US Violence Against Women Survey had a national representative sample of 8,000 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Here, the lifetime prevalence rate for completed and attempted rape was 17.6 per cent, with the majority of adult assaults involving current or ex-partners.

The SAVI Report, undertaken by researchers at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in 2002, represents the most comprehensive prevalence study to date of various forms of sexual violence in Ireland. The study was conducted through a telephone survey with more than 3,000 randomly selected adult females and males, and prevalence was measured in childhood (under the age of 17), adulthood (since age 17) and over the lifetime. Among women surveyed, 20.4 per cent had experienced 'contact' sexual abuse in childhood, and for 5.6 per cent this had involved a penetrative assault (vaginal, anal or oral). An identical proportion of women reported experiencing contact sexual assault in adulthood, with slightly more (6.1%) being subject to a penetrative assault than in childhood. The lifetime prevalence rates for women for any form of sexual assault were 40.2 per cent, with attempted penetration or contact assaults experienced by 21 per cent (Dublin RCC, 2005).

Relationship to perpetrator

The more recent BCS includes a perpetrator-victim relationship category of 'person in a position of trust or authority'. Walby and Allen (2004) note that these perpetrators were responsible for 1 per cent of serious sexual assaults and 1 per cent of rapes of females since the age of 16. Finney (2006) reports their involvement in 2 per cent of less serious sexual assaults and 3 per cent of serious sexual assaults of women since the age of 16.

Canada's VAW Survey included 'Minister/priest/clergy' as a specific category of perpetrator-victim relationship for all forms of violence covered, but the percentages in these categories are not reported on in published reports.

For Ireland, the SAVI Report presents rates for females sexually assaulted by an 'authority figure' of 16.3 per cent in childhood and 11 per cent in adulthood. It also specifically distinguishes 'clerical/religious ministers' or 'clerical/religious teachers' as a sub-category of these, who constituted 3.2 per cent of perpetrators of all child sexual abuse reported (i.e. for both female and male victims) and 1.4 per cent of all sexual abuse of girls. Adult women were sexually assaulted by a clerical/religious minister in 2 per cent of all cases. The Rape Crisis Network of Ireland's national statistics for 2007, gathered through 14 participating RCCs, showed that female survivors had been sexually assaulted by an authority figure in 6.4 per cent of cases (Lyons & Crean, 2008).

Reporting and non-reporting

Sexual violence, and rape in particular, is among the most under-reported crimes, Kelly (2002) summarises research findings on why women choose to report or not. Reasons given in surveys for not reporting at the time or later include:

- not naming the event as rape;
- not thinking the police will define the event as rape;
- fear of disbelief or blame;
- distrust of the criminal justice system;
- concerns about public disclosure and/or family/friends knowing;
- fear/threats of further violence;
- divided loyalty where the offender is part of social networks.

Kelly (op cit) argues that these factors combine to create a disincentive to report.

The reasons found for deciding to report were less studied, but have been found to be:

- an automatic response – 'the right thing to do';
- a concern to protect others;

- seeking protection from further assaults;
- a desire for justice/redress.

Sexual assault is more likely to be reported if: the offender was a stranger; force was used and injuries evident; the assault location was a public place; and someone the woman told encouraged reporting (Schwartz, 1997).

Studies of sexual exploitation by professionals

Early studies of sexual exploitation in a professional setting included therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists and doctors. Clergy were not included, in part due to a long standing debate on whether clergy are in fact 'professionals' (see chapter four). Most research on clergy sexual exploitation has been undertaken in North America, meaning the UK knowledge base is very limited. Birchard, (2000) using a similar study to Blackmon (1984) studied clergy. Farrell, (2003) studied whether post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was a reliable diagnostic framework for victims sexually abused by clergy. Two recent theological explorations focus on the Irish context (Hughes, 2006; McCafferty, 2006). In this first section I outline findings on the extent of the violation of women by those who have a duty of care towards them, and knowledge of, and attitudes to such behaviour among professionals.

Doctors were the focus for a number of early studies (Burgess & Hartman, 1986; Hamilton & DeRosis, 1985; Kardener, Fuller & Mensh, 1973; Perry, 1979). Gartrell et al (1992) sampled a randomly selected group of 10,000 physicians, with a 19 per cent response rate to a mailed questionnaire (n=891). Almost one in ten (n=176, 9%) acknowledged sexual contact with one or more patient. Of the total 164 male physicians (10% of male respondents), and 12 female physicians (4% of female respondents) reported sexual contact with 332 patients. The vast majority of these contacts (95%) were heterosexual.

The majority of prevalence studies have, however, been conducted on therapists, and specifically the extent to which male therapists sexualise their engagements with female patients/clients. An overview of findings from a number of studies results in estimates of 4-14 per cent of male psychotherapists surveyed reporting sexual contact with clients, with most studies yielding figures over 7 per cent (Benowitz, 1995). Abuse by psychotherapists has been studied documented in a range of studies (see for example: Belote, 1974; Borys, 1988; Butler &

Zelen, 1977; Bouhoutsos, 1986; Bouhoutsos et al, 1983; D'Addario, 1977; Kuchan, 1989; Pope et al, 1987; Vinson, 1984). The prevalence rate ranged from 1-12 percent (Benowitz, 1995). Two studies examine female therapists sexual involvements with female clients, (Benowitz, 1991; Lyn, 1990).

Other professionals studied include: psychologists (Holroyd & Brodsky, 1977; Pope et al, 1987; Stake & Oliver, 1991); psychiatrists (Derosis et al, 1987; Gartrell et al, 1986; Herman et al, 1987); social workers (Gechtman, 1989); educators, especially university teachers (Gartrell et al, 1988; Robertson et al, 1985).⁹ Rutter (1989) cites a study in which almost one in five (17%) of female psychology graduate students reported sexual intimacy with a professor during their training, with an additional 30 per cent turning away unwelcome advances (op cit, p34).

One early study (Kuchan, 1989) was multi-disciplinary, and included clergy, distributing 4,500 surveys to psychologists, social workers, clergy, drug and alcohol counsellors: 1559 (34.6% return rate) were returned. The findings show breaches of duty of care across the professional groups, with the percentages of those admitting sexual relationships with clients as: 34 per cent of psychologists; 19 per cent of social workers; 13 per cent of clergy; 11 per cent of physicians; 6 percent of marriage counsellors.

Another multi-disciplinary study (Borys & Pope, 1989) was restricted to psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers; here the 4,800 sample was randomly selected, with a return rate of almost a half (49%). This study explored how professionals viewed a variety of 'dual relationships' including financial, social, and incidental involvements. The majority believed dual role behaviours to be unethical under most conditions; with a vast majority believing it was never ethical to have a sexual relationship with a client (93.3%, n=1,089). A higher proportion of males admitted to sexual and non-sexual dual relationships.

Parsons and Wincze (1995) approached the issue in a different way, asking 381 therapists whether they were treating clients sexually exploited by previous therapists (including clergy): 26% reported having at least one client. One hundred and sixty five victims were reported, of whom 87 per cent were female, a total of 161 perpetrators were recorded of whom 85 per cent were men; their distribution across professions was: psychiatrists (n=42); psychologists (n=37);

⁹ In this study 30 per cent of female college students reported being sexually harassed by members of staff.

clergy (n=27); social workers (n=16). Clergy were just under a fifth of this sample. Less than three per cent of these cases were reported to authorities; showing that therapists know more about these issues than the justice system.

Herman et al (1987) support this, since they found that the majority of psychiatrists had knowledge of such cases but chose not intervene (p164), despite the fact that 98 per cent of them not only believe sexual contact to be inappropriate during current or concurrently with therapy but that it is always harmful. Gartrell et al (1987) found only 8 per cent of psychiatrists reported fellow professionals where they knew about sexual contact with patients (see also, Davidson, 1977; Russell, 1993).

Research, therefore, consistently show high rates of professional abuse, that colleagues regard it as nearly always as harmful, yet professionals rarely 'whistle-blow' on their colleagues.

Abuse in Therapy in the UK

The knowledge base on sexual exploitation by therapists is much more limited, with Janice Russell, a counsellor, and Tanya Garrett, a psychologist, the only two professionals to undertake research on this issue. A number of high profile cases point to a need for more work in this area.

- In 2004, psychologist Dr Steven Manley had sex with a patient claiming it was therapy. He was suspended by the British Psychological Society for three years. In the same year Colin McClean Manning was jailed for a year for indecently assaulting 12 patients. He has since been struck off the nursing register.
- In 2006 Beechy Colclough (A well known famous TV personality and therapist) was exposed for having "affairs" with several female clients. He was removed from the BACP¹⁰ register.

In Garrett's (1992) study, 1000 questionnaires were sent to a random sample of psychologists, 588 were returned (a return rate of 58%). A much lower proportion than the American studies (3.4%, n=20, 12 male/7 female) admitted having sex with a client. For five respondents sexual

¹⁰ British Association of Counsellors & Psychotherapists.

contact limited to a single occasion, for four the contact lasted three months, for two between three and eleven months, and four reported involvement for more than five years. She asks whether a distinction should be made between single and multiple sexual contacts.

The therapist who engages in a single sexual contact with one patient may have been coerced in some way by the patient or advances may have been made towards the therapist by the patient (as occurred for some respondents in this survey, op cit: 55).

The interviews with therapists include assertions that some patients had been 'coercive', with the therapists portraying themselves as immature or naïve. That said with the exception of a single case she concludes that there appear to be no "mitigating factors" (op cit:56).

Russell's study *Out of Bounds* (1993), was an influential text for the UK. She interviewed 40 women exploited by their therapists and counsellors; a focus on victims, which is rare in the field. She documents a range of consequences for, and impacts on, patients including: over dependency; betrayal of trust; guilt; anger; frustration and helplessness; ambivalence; poor or distorted self-concept; isolation; self-destructiveness; aggression to others; and problems with subsequent therapy. Many also recalled feeling special (op cit: 21-33).

Her analysis of the actions of the therapists is that some were opportunistic, some distressed, others displayed poor practice but that the majority of instances were: "more helpfully conceptualised in terms of blurred boundaries" (p57). This is surely euphemistic where there are instances of sexual assault and rape.

Clergy sexual exploitation

With regards to clergy Flynn (2000) notes that the literature "almost entirely focuses on the trials and tribulations of the clergy professionals, as opposed to those of their victims" (p7).

The first widely cited survey was undertaken by Blackmon (1984), drawing on a multi-denominational sample of whom 13 per cent admitted to having had sexual intercourse with a congregant. Fortune (1995:31) notes that whilst Holroyd and Brodsky (1977) found 5.5 per cent of males (and 0.6 per cent of female) psychologists reported sexual intercourse with clients, a clergy study (United Church of Christ, 1986) found more than twice this rate (12.7%). Blackmon found 76.5 per cent of clergy knew of another minister who had had sexual intercourse with a

Church member. The Ormerods (1995), reflecting on these higher rates attribute them to a lack of accountability mechanisms, no clear codes of professional ethics and minimal counselling training (p6).

Harassment and violence against women in Churches generally

That Christian Churches may be a conducive context for intimate intrusion find further support from a survey on sexual harassment, with a sample of 1,600 congregants (Jordan-Lake, 1990): 23 per cent of laywomen reported sexual harassment – 17 per cent by their own pastor, 9 per cent by another minister. Grenz and Roy (1995) found women are more likely to be sexually harassed in Church than in the workplace. Conrade (1994) in an Australian study, surveyed 3,000 women from The Uniting, Anglican and Catholic Church, with an 80 per cent response rate. At least one in four, and for catholic women more than one in three women reported some form of abuse: spouses were the abusers in 60 per cent of the cases; fathers in 7 per cent, and 40 per cent of the men were regular churchgoers.

Clergy Abuse in the UK and Ireland

There is a dearth of research on clergy sexual exploitation of adults in the UK and Ireland, with two of the studies PhDs. Farrell's PhD (2003) explores Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among men and women, abused by clergy as children (n-7) and as adults (n-8). The alleged perpetrators came from a range of denominations. Farrell argues that PTSD cannot accommodate the additional issues that trouble these survivors: theological conflicts; spiritual identity; and the re-traumatisation by the responses of the Church.

Birchard's PhD (2000) examined the prevalence of clergy sexual abuse and the causal factors from the perspective of the offenders. His findings echo those from USA studies, including a narrow psychodynamic focus, and use of an 'addiction' model. The literature review did not reveal any Irish research on clergy abuse of adults, though much has been written about child sexual abuse cases in religious institutions.

One area receiving some attention is domestic violence in Christian communities. Orr MacDonald's (1997) two-year study in Scotland looked at 25 cases, eight of which involved clergy wives. After publication 40 more women contacted her from all over Britain. This

research documents that clergy can be violent to their partners, albeit often shrouded with denial and secrecy.

Another survey, Lynas (1997), highlighted misogynist violence and harassment of women who became priests in the Anglican Church. It too documents that Christian clergy are implicated in sexism and violence against women. A questionnaire was sent to 365 Anglican women priests, of whom 107 responded. Three out of four (75%) had experienced problems, ranging through verbal abuse (40%) - *"I was called a witch and I should be burned at the stake"*; deliberate isolation (37%) - *"calling meetings behind my back"*; overt harassment (23%); and abuse (10%); *"some of my experiences border on criminal behaviour"*. In 64 per cent of cases the perpetrator was another clergyman. Table 2.1 summarises the position of the perpetrators in this study.

Table 2.1: Identity of perpetrators in Lynas, 1997¹¹

Perpetrator	N	%
Other Clergymen	54	64
Lay people within the Church	17	20
Lay people outside the Church	08	09
Bishop	04	05
Clergy wives	01	01

Another study, this time in the Methodist Church by a working party (1997) helps us understand the context of women's lives in Church communities. This research addressed 'harassment and abuse' which included sexual assault, abuse and misconduct, with some confusion in the study about terminology. A total of 28 written submissions and 11 verbal accounts were received, alongside a survey of District Chairmen,¹² which asked for the numbers of 'harassment' cases referred and action taken over a 15-year period 1980-1995. There were a total of 65 cases Table 2.2 records the gender distribution between perpetrators and victims.

¹¹ The MSF Union supported this research, yet when following it up I was informed by a male spokesperson that it was not a "rigorous piece of research". Lynas received much negative feedback following the research and is no longer an Anglican Priest.

¹² Methodists in the UK have 'districts' rather than 'diocese'; Chairmen are the equivalents of bishops.

Table 2.2: Gender distribution of perpetrators and victims in working party report

Gender of perpetrator and victims	Number of cases
Men against women	50
Men against young women/girls	5
Men against young men	3
Men against men	2
Women against men	3
Women against women	2

Thirty-five of these cases were dealt with in a ‘pastoral manner’, that is there were no official disciplinary procedures. Although it is not stated there is a strong inference that the ‘men’ were in fact Ministers as when discussing disciplinary action the report notes: *“The most worrying feature is the significant number in which the resignation of the minister effectively prevented any disciplinary action”* (p39). Far more cases were received than acted upon and resignation before disciplinary hearing was the commonest outcome, with disciplinary processes only taking place in two cases. That said, the Methodists remain the only Christian denomination in the UK that has attempted to determine the extent of sexual harassment and abuse against women in their Church.

Explanatory and conceptual frameworks

It is useful here to briefly review causative models of sexual offending as a context for how clergy abuse has been explained. The literature offers a variety of explanations for why professionals sexually exploit those in their care. There is considerably more material focusing on what professional abusers do, why they do it and treatment approaches than studies of victims.

The emphasis is firmly on the psychopathology of the offenders alongside a myriad of ‘situational’ factors. In much of this discourse violence against women is not the primary focus, rather there is an emphasis on the ‘sick’ perpetrator, that these are not ‘normal men’. This results in the erasure of the victim who becomes invisible, whilst the perpetrators are ‘othered’ (see also Dobash & Dobash, 1992, with respect to domestic violence).

Typologies and pathologies

Schoener and Gonsiorek, (1989) psychologists in Minnesota, describe a clinical sample of offenders. Their typology is based on clusters of offenders: uninformed/naïve; healthy or mildly neurotic; severely neurotic and/or socially isolated; Impulsive Character Disordered; Sociopathic or Narcissistic Character Disorder; and Psychotic or Borderline Personalities (p401-404). The 'uninformed/naïve' are said to have been 'led into' situations whereas for the 'healthy or mildly neurotic' situational factors, depression or anxiety play a part. Severely neurotic and/or socially isolated offenders become involved with the client outside therapy and the "growth of intimacy" breaks down professional boundaries. 'Impulsive character disordered' offenders are caught because they have 'poor judgement'. Sociopathic/narcissistic character disordered offenders are, on the other hand, clever and shrewd. There is a remarkable lack of agency in this typology, apart perhaps for the latter category.

Ward and Keenan (1999) look at child sexual offenders and note how the offenders often have a sense of entitlement, believe their sexual urges/desires are external to them ("cannot help it") and that sex will be beneficial to the victim. Variations of these themes were evident in this study and are analysed in later chapters.

Twemlow and Gabbard (1995), describe four major 'types' of offending professionals, they have: psychotic disorders; predatory psychopathy and paraphilias; love-sickness; or masochistic surrender. Wholberg disputes the concept of 'lovesick' arguing it serves to excuse the offender on the basis of "being human" (1999:253). Like much of this literature it locates sexual exploitation within a 'love' discourse, and approach echoed in the clergy sexual exploitation literature; this framing has been detrimental to explorations of how women experience these encounters.

Irons (1991) presents a set of Jungian "archetypal categories" which are frequently cited (see, for example Friberg & Laaser 1998; Hopkins & Laaser, 1995). The archetypes are: the Naïve Prince; the Wounded Warrior; the Self-serving Martyr; the False Lover; the Dark King; and the Wild Card. Categorising sex offenders as belonging to some sort of aberrant male club, in such a 'light-hearted' way, has the capacity to offend, avoids exploration of the power relations involved: whilst for the Dark King "sexual exploitation represents an expression of power,

superiority and dominance” (Irons, 1991:57-59) but ‘Dark King’s’ are considered rare. Fortune (1989) presents two types of exploiter - The ‘Offender/Predator’ and the ‘Wanderer’ (p106).

Labacq and Barton (1991) add a third, the “Normal Neurotic”. The latter is not sociopathic, but has a well functioning conscience and tries diligently to guard against any inappropriate behaviour; this pastor simply falls in love. The Wanderer is not functioning well personally or professionally and experiences conflict, inadequacy, and anxiety; he ‘falls into’ relationships to bolster his flagging self-esteem and because he has difficulties maintaining boundaries (p129). Only the Predator is assigned any clear sense of agency, since ‘falling in love’ or ‘wandering’ suggest unintentional, almost subconscious behaviour. A similar ‘cannot help it’ discourse is used by Sipe (2002) who suggests that clergy who do not have the capacity to withstand the emotional draw towards those they help, “get tripped up” (Metro News, Silicon Valley).

Multiple situational factors are considered: “conducive to sexual desire and can contribute to the temptation to act on that desire” (Labacq & Barton, 1991:45). Friberg and Lasser (1998) focus on lack of education, naiveté, family of origin dysfunction, emotional neediness, and/or chronic depression. Pamela Cooper-White (1995) argues that it is the conjunction of multiple situational factors, which increases the likelihood of exploitation, emphasising: educational gaps; situational stresses; characterological factors resulting from core woundedness. In the latter case wounded healers may suffer depression, dependency, compulsive/addictive personality, narcissism, borderline personality, sociopathy and in rare instances, psychosis (p135). Schoener (1999:4) notes that many of these studies fail to establish causal pathways between the stressors and sexual misconduct.

Many of these typologies imply that the actions of the clergyman were ‘mistakes’ or ‘misjudgements’, few explore whether clergy are acting within an accepted pattern of male entitlement. The typologies and pathologies constantly distract from perpetrator agency by foregrounding pathology, ‘stressors’ or ‘situational factors’. Some of the more populist encourage the reader to ‘feel sorry for’ the perpetrator, often at the cost of recognising the damage done to women in the process. Whilst ethical, pathological, situational and multiple stressors may be part of the explanation in individual cases they fail to address the gendered patterning of victimisation and offending.

In the context of clergy abuse models of 'deviance' serve to protect the image of the Church as a non-violent institution. It also salves the conscience of most males who do not perceive themselves as exploitative. There is a marked reluctance to seeing clergy sexual misconduct as wilful and this has important ramifications. Ussher (1991) cites Conrad, (1982:107): Deviance that is seen as *wilful* tends to be seen as crime; when it is seen as *unwillful* it tends to be defined as illness (p146).

Another group of researchers (Carnes, 1983; Hulme, 1989; Laaser, 1991; Schneider, Irons, & Corley, 1999) adopt the addiction discourse; attempting to 'marry' addiction models with criminal behaviour, sin, and immorality (Laaser, 1991:214-215). The Ormerods (1995) introduce an 'addiction' element, discussing the 'Vampires' who 'feed off the life-blood of their victims' (p65). The addiction model is endemic within Church circles (particularly Catholic) and is one of the prime causes given for clergy exploitation by Bishops, church leaders and congregations, and the offenders themselves.

Close to this discourse is an emerging view of 'brain dysfunction' particularly in relation to child abuse. Several more recent studies (Lothstein, 1999; Prebble Huson, 2002) cite Brewster's (1996) argument that clergy involved care-taking (a feminine role) may affect their masculine identity if isolated from male activities and friendships. Here 'acting out' sexually serves to reaffirm a sense of male identity. Sexual entitlement as a basis for masculinity is implicit here.

The perception and designation of clergy as 'fathers' leads some writers to suggest that sexual represents an 'incest dynamic' (Benyei, 1998; Fortune, 1992; Friberg, 1995; Irons & Roberts, 1995; Ormerods, 1995; Rutter, 1989). Another group of writers (Brubaker, 1991; Dosh, 2003; Frey, 1996; Shupe, 1998) suggest Church structures more broadly are at fault, providing clerics with subtle 'permission' to treat women exploitatively.

Many Churches prefer the 'affair' discourse since this 'normalises' the clergyperson, even though his behaviour is – in theological terms - immoral or sinful, this is a human 'failure' and more acceptable than pathology. This discourse is favoured by denominations that have married clergy, though even with Catholic clergy the "affair" discourse may also be used (Brewster, 1996; Goetz, 1995; Grenz & Bell, 1995; Horton, 1992; Steinke, 1989; Thoburn & Balswick, 1993). The "affair" discourse presupposes that the women are fully able to consent

and denies the power of the clergyman. Some commentators do recognise the relative social positions of the parties (Keshgegian, 1999; Patterson, 1992). Marie Fortune (1992) observes:

when there is an imbalance of power between two persons arising out of role differences there is no real equality (p48).

The emphasis on affairs or adultery denies the existence of violence or exploitation, echoing moves recognised by Hester, Kelly and Radford (1996:10) to retain narrow definitions of what constitutes 'violence'.

They seek to return us to previous certainties, where men – as scientists, judges and the/rapists – set the boundaries of what was and was not violating, what was and was not 'serious'.

It is men as a group and as individuals, who benefit from limited definitions of sexual violence which function to distinguish a small group of 'deviant' men from the 'normal' majority. (Kelly, 1988:27). Even the designation of "misconduct", or pathology discourses, fail to place at the centre women's sexual, personal, emotional, psychological and spiritual integrity.

Slightly more promising are studies and commentaries which draw on the wider professional abuse literature, where boundary crossing and boundary violations are understood as mis-uses of power (Fortune, 1992; Friberg & Laaser, 1998; Gonsiorek, 1995; Nestingen, 1995; Patterson, 1992; Stevens & Meharry, 1994). Here sexualising relationships is unprofessional behaviour, a transgression of ethical professional codes and a mis-use of the therapeutic space¹³. Rutter (1989) notes the gendered patterns involved: *"men are taught to challenge sexual boundaries and women are taught to accept masculine boundary crossing as a matter of course"* (p40). Friberg and Laaser (1998) concur, and draw attention to the fact that: *"many women don't even perceive boundary violation because they've accepted them as the standard way society works"* (p47). Whilst in this framework power is acknowledged, it tends to underplay the intentional actions of perpetrators, and has limited purchase when behaviour is manipulative, aggressive, violent and planned.

¹³ Some writers, whilst accepting the importance of boundaries, argue for the possibility of genuine love relationships (Labacq & Barton, 1991), mutuality and friendship (Carter Hayward, 1994); Ragsdale (1996) argues that this requires clear thinking to delineate the meanings, overlaps and tensions between mutuality, friendship, sisterhood, and professional ethics (p109).

Many writers eschew a specific explanatory framework, opting instead for 'multi-factor' causation models. Here multiple situational factors and stressors pushing 'vulnerable clergy' over the edge into misconduct. Some argue that the complex and diverse demands on clergy are impossible to manage (Gonsiorek, 1995; Loftus, 1994), and that misconduct arises in the context of impossible role strain. The stressors noted are: over work or over commitment to work; marital discord; social isolation; loneliness; loss of a parent or child; burnout; absence of supervision; lack of accountability; requirement to care for, and through this, access to vulnerable parishioners; alcohol; work structure.

Cooper-White (1995), a feminist clergy professor, notes that neither typological models nor the multi-factor framework should excuse behaviour or to remove responsibility from the minister who crosses a professional boundary (p136). Whilst this may be true in principle, in practice they often function in precisely this way.

The only framework which begins from a strong principle of accountability is that developed by some feminist thinkers. Here the link between male clerical power and misogyny is placed at the centre (Cameron, 1995), with the historical role of religious thinking in justifying and/or minimising many forms of violence against women emphasised. The shift here has been from a traditional discourse, which focused on female wantonness to a more contemporary preference for male 'sickness'. Within a feminist analysis, all sexual violation represents an expression of power and dominance.

False Naming

The failure in much of the literature, and by Churches, to name sexual exploitation deprives women of a language with which to speak of their experiences. How can one name sexual exploitation when the only concepts available are affairs and adultery? Naming affects how the sexual exploitation of women is articulated and responded to; it encodes understanding of power (Time for Action, 2002:115).

False naming is a major component of institutional violence, for it helps to accomplish denial. False naming means we can avoid responsibility and it protects the abuser. False naming creates false consciousness. It avoids assigning responsibility, thus cloaking the identities of the offender. This false naming sends a message to an offender that he has still not been "found out" and that the Church is not concerned (Carol Adams, 1991:20/21).

Media representations are enlightening with headlines providing a voyeuristic entry point. Newspaper reports from 1995-7 were analysed, with the majority focusing on the clergyman and his sexual behaviour, using an “affair” or “scandal” construction. Table 2.3 provides illustrative examples.

Table 2.3: Examples of false naming in newspaper headlines

Headline	Newspaper	Date
<i>The dirty monk and Di's pals</i>	Daily Mirror	September 16, 1995
<i>Drunk priest fondled former topless model</i>	Metro	August 27, 1999
<i>Rector denies sex romp with parishioner</i>	Guardian	October 23, 1997
<i>Priest's love life splits village</i>	Guardian	October 25, 1997
<i>'Ill' Priest & Secret Partner run pub in Spain</i>	Sunday Mail	February, 2008

As part of the literature review an exploration of language used in professional literature on clergy exploitation was undertaken. An academic study of socio-linguistic use is not yet available and would be very valuable. A "preliminary exploration" of 123 articles published between 1984 and 1999 was undertaken. These were taken from religious newspapers, academic articles and papers, some were written by clergy who were academics others by psychologists, therapists or other professionals. This suggestive piece of work indicates that there is a fertile and important area that deserves careful attention, that is, how language use affects the conceptualisation of clergy sexual exploitation.

Every word used to describe sexual exploitation was highlighted. It is quite possible that authors may have been attempting not to ‘overuse’ a single descriptor. Table 2.4 records the terms used organised within analytic framings: normalisation; theological; misconduct; morality; pathology; weakness; criminal acts; minimisation and misbehaviour. Table 2.4 illustrates the multitude of ways in which false naming took place – representing abuse as something else.

Table 2.4: Language use and false naming in religious, academic and professional literature

Normalisation	Misconduct	Pathology	Criminal acts	Minimisation
				Inappropriate behaviour
Affair -extramarital -Clandestine	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Addiction	Crime	Become <i>involved</i> - Involved sexually - Inappropriately involved
Liaisons -sexual	Sexual Malfeasance	Acting out	Sexual offence	Involvement - Emotional entanglement
Falling in Love	Violate the forbidden zone	Intimacy deficit	Rape	Inappropriate touching
Adultery/ Marital infidelity	Abusing intimate relationship	Boundary diffusion	Sexual exploitation	Sexual encounter
Infidelities	Misconduct "mess"	Sexual boundary violation	Euphemisms	Sexual contact
Unfaithfulness	Professional sexual misconduct	PSM (professional sexual misconduct)	<i>The phenomenon</i>	Misbehaviour
Sexual relationship	Sexual infraction	Non-paraphiliac sexual interest	Straying into dangerous waters	<i>Sexual escapades</i>
Relationship	Sexual misdeed		Fallen	Naughty
Sexual attraction	Morality	Weakness	<i>Situation</i>	<i>Transgressions</i>
Sexually intimate	Sexual impropriety	Sexual temptation	<i>The problem</i>	<i>Indiscretion</i>
Sexual seduction	Morally indefensible behaviour	Personal Failure	Male malady	Succumbs to sexual attraction
	Moral failure	Failure	Get into trouble	Sexual favours
Theological	Immorality	Intimacy failure	Delicate situation	
<i>Sin</i>	Moral Lapse	<i>Human frailty</i>	Trouble	
<i>Evil</i>	Wrongful sex	<i>Mistake</i>	Clergy crises	
			This intimacy	
			Dalliance	

The ‘normalising’, ‘theological’, ‘minimizing’, ‘weakness’, ‘misbehaving’ ‘morality’ and ‘euphemism’ categories all re-conceptualise clergy sexual misconduct into a discourse that obfuscates. Whilst the ‘pathology’ category may recognise a serious problem, the words fail to indicate that behaviour may have been criminal. The ‘pathology’ category re-conceptualises sexual exploitation as ‘illness’, thus minimising the agency of perpetrators. Many categories avoid articulating the conduct of the clergyman as either pathological or criminal, though some for example, ‘clandestine liaison’ suggests secrecy and others illicitness ‘affairs’, ‘liaison’ ‘unfaithfulness’.

The 'normalisation' category presents the clergyman's behaviour as within the norms of everyday life. Both this and adultery or infidelity erases any sense of there being an offence, and therefore a victim. The only caveat here is that such actions offend the Christian moral code, but the language choice is that of the secular, since in religious terminology the appropriate words would be sin or immorality. Most mainstream Churches opted for the secular, and thus normalising language, only the more fundamentalist chose the language of morality.

The sin and morality categories are used in the Christian discourse. Here sexual exploitation can be re-defined as breaking sacred marriage vows or in the case of Catholic clergy of breaking vows of celibacy and chastity. The 'wrong' here is towards the clergyperson's wife or God, again making the victim invisible. 'Fallen' is used in evangelical, Pentecostal Christian traditions and means 'falling from grace' or 'falling into sin'. It always has a spiritual connotation and refers to the position of the clergy. Similarly, the designation of 'evil' has a particular meaning with Christian discourse, suggests the clergyperson is 'possessed' and not fully responsible for his behaviour.

Minimizing descriptors - 'moral failure', 'moral lapse', 'failure' - suggest momentary lapses in character, whilst also locating the offence in the spiritual/ethical rather than criminal discourses. Some of the minimising words can be connected to the pathology category since they imply character defects that are either permanent or transient.

The euphemisms of 'mistake', 'misbehaving', 'escapade', 'transgression' or a 'dalliance' suggest that whilst something has happened, it is neither serious nor to be taken too seriously, a small trivial issue. Similarly, in the misbehaving category 'naughty' presents adult male behaviour as 'child-like'.¹⁴

Examining language use in more detail, through an analysis of terms used and gender of authors in a sub-sample of the papers, suggests that male authors tended to use more euphemistic language and descriptors which served to hide the possibilities of an offence and/or a victim. It was also evident that a range of descriptors could be used whilst still

¹⁴ The Anglican Bishop of Liverpool wrote in 1999: "Five per cent of clergy dominate the headlines when they're *naughty*, but 95% of them do a most fantastic job". (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

conveying clarity about harm and power relations. When normalising language overwhelms, however, both offences and victims disappear.

This exercise demonstrates that the causation models from the previous section are present in commonsense discourse. The ongoing problems of false naming have led to a lack of clarity about what is actually happening.

Even when the context is recognised as abusive possible names remain which can be used simultaneously as well as alternatively which may also confuse rather than clarify. Five main categories are possible that identify harm; sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, harassment, sexual violence and sexual misconduct. Gula (1996:94/95) presents definitions for the first three:

Sexual Abuse: refers to using persons who lack the ability or will to protect themselves (a child, the elderly, or a physically or emotionally disabled adult) for sexual stimulation by the one responsible for their care.

Sexual exploitation is fundamentally a betrayal of trust in the professional relationship by using one's personal, professional, or physical power to develop a romantic relationship with someone under our care or to use that person for one's own sexual stimulation and satisfaction.

Sexual Harassment: is using one's power to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to exchange sex for some favour. It also involves creating an intimidating, offensive working environment through unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Misconduct is the umbrella term used by Church bodies when official proceedings are to be instituted and can include any of the above behaviours. It is preferred by Churches to any of the other categories, probably because it retains an aspect of euphemism, and sits outside critical feminist discourse. Sexual violence has been the preferred feminist concept, encompassing all sexual encounters in child and adulthood in which the power hierarchies of gender and generation are implicated.

Alternative usages arise, in part, because no one definition is sufficient and specific forms of behaviour and relationship are either explicit or implicit within names and definitions.

Considerable debate, for example, has taken place about whether the concept of 'violence' is less inclusive than 'abuse' (see Kelly, 2000 with respect to child sexual abuse, Radford & Hame, 2008 on domestic violence).

In this study the concept of 'sexual exploitation' is preferred but not used to the exclusion of other relevant concepts. It allows for recognition that not all of the sexual contact is violent or abusive, but is often achieved through deception and/or misuse (an exploitation) of the power and authority invested in the role of clergy.

The definition used in this study, therefore, adds additional elements to be considered (underlined):

Sexual exploitation occurs when a person in authority, in role, as Clergy, Minister or Pastor sexualises contact with female parishioners or those who seek his help for his own sexual gratification. It constitutes exploitation whether or not women consented, if at the time they are a 'client' or parishioner. The Pastor mis-uses power and role whenever they sexualise contact with someone to whom they have a duty of care. Consent is compromised within a setting where the woman seeks the advice, counsel, teaching or spiritual direction of her Pastor.

The study findings will demonstrate that sexual exploitation by clergy reflects aspects of Kelly's (1988) 'continuum of violence' in that it encompasses rape, sexual coercion and sexual pressure - the concepts she used to reflect women's subjective experience of unwanted sex. At the same time it extends the continuum to include sexual encounters which were desired by women at the time, but which took place in a coercive context in which clergy misused their power and authority.

Blaming women

Blaming women for their own violation is a recurrent theme in the literature on domestic violence and rape (Kelly, 1988; Martin, 2005; Adams, 2002) argue:

[that] by ignoring domestic violence and by discouraging or blaming victims who sought help, mainstream institutions collude with batterers. Findings of social and cultural collusion bolstered the feminist analysis that the sexist

attitudes and expectations of individual men who batter merely reflected those of mainstream institutions (p311).

This can even extend to presenting the perpetrators as victims (Jukes, 1993).

Emphasising a man's suffering before he has, takes responsibility for his violence and his sadism, may even profoundly reinforce his capacity for denying and justifying his violence, and seeing women as persecuting evil witches who have to be controlled, or failing that, destroyed (op cit:289-290).

Some discursive constructions focus on what women do (or not do), and a search for characteristics that 'make them' a victim.

The search for characteristics of women that contribute to their own victimization is futile...it is sometimes forgotten that men's violence is men's behaviour...what is surprising is the enormous effort to explain male behaviour by examining characteristics of women (Herman, 1992:116).

Similar themes are evident throughout the literature on women's role in sexual exploitation by their therapists or clergy: therapists (and by implication clergy) are described as having fallen into 'treatment traps' in response to the woman's pathology and seduction (Chu, 1988). Brock and Lukens (1989) describe female personalities who "tempt" the pastor; the affectionate parishioner; the advice seeker; the weeper; the fragile lover; the histrionic counselee; the anxious ingénue and the disarmer. Within each of these 'types' agency is attributed to the temptress. Thrull and Carter (1993) take this further explicitly claiming that clients 'intentionally seduce' and 'lure' ministers into sexual activities in order that they can feel a more intimate relationship with God (p83). Women who come from deprived homes pose dangers, meaning that clergy and seminarians need to have "continuing education concerning the dangers inherent in these populations" (Laaser & Friberg, 1998:65).

Jehu (1994) develops a multifactor analysis which serves to blame women, with the factors implicated in abuse by professionals including: her child abuse history; her personality disorder; her dissociative reactions; her knowledge gaps; her learned helplessness. What is missing here is that these are precisely the vulnerabilities that might account for someone seeking – or being referred for – therapeutic support; but in this account these become the perpetrator's reason to abuse. Additional arguments include Stone (1980) and Gabbard (1995) who argue

that some women seek to recreate a mother attachment with their therapist, a maladaptive attempt to repair 'early ego damage' (p28). There is a gendered presumption – frequently implicit – which is pervasive in this literature: that it is women's responsibility to control male sexuality and to maintain boundaries between professional and client (see, for example, Rutter, 1989). Rutter is among many who whilst making the statement that it is the professionals responsibility to maintain boundaries precedes this by a qualification - "no matter what the level of *provocation* or apparent consent by the woman"(p21, emphasis added by Kennedy).

Another form of women blame locates the explanation for abuse in the abuser's relationship with his mother: Penfold (1998:41) makes this argument with respect to her own experience. Sipe (1995) suggests a wider maternalist framing, whereby women are blamed; "because they are the 'mothers' and should have looked after the boy" (clergyperson:128). Others also note this dynamic (Cooper-White, 1995; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Goodman & Fallon, 1995). Some writers implicate the women's movement:

... the male [therapist/clergy] finds himself actively sexually pursued by his more liberated female client... the female clients response may be based in her hostility of the oppressed (Barthram, 1984:39).

The inference here being that a woman liberated by feminism seeks to punish her pastor for years of sexist oppression: that feminism 'permits' women to be sexually provocative or aggressive. Brewster (1996:357) takes a similar tack; asserting that a parishioner may be trying to "punish her spouse or prove her attractiveness" through sexual involvement with a clergyman. The notion of female sexual revenge, however, long predates feminism, with deep routes in religious doctrine. Moreover, research on female sexual pleasure has consistently found that sexual agency for women continues to be circumscribed by notions of reputation (Lees, 1997).

Some female, and feminist, researchers, (see for example, Keshgegian, 1999) locate the responsibilities placed on women within heteronormativity: cultural constructs which school women to assume responsibility for the regulation of sexual behaviour whilst providing legitimation for male pressure, coercion and boundary violation (see Jenkins, 1995; Sipe, 1995 on Catholicism). An example of the presumptions of heteronormativity can be seen in Bell's

(1995) advice that a married pastor should entrust to his wife the right to veto a long-term counselling relationship with any female congregant (p36).¹⁵

This discussion of woman/victim blame in the literature on professional abuse illustrates the multitude of ways in which individual women can be implicated in their own violation. Furthermore, women, as a social category, can be deemed responsible – as mothers of male abusers or through attribution of fault to women's movements. Whilst the evidence base for such charges is weak, the resilience of such ideas is such that they are often present in the accounts of women who have been exploited, congregations, Church hierarchies, media reporting and academic writing. Woman blame, like false naming, serves to deny that there is a victim who has sustained harm.

Vulnerabilities

The fact that someone has sought therapy and/or spiritual guidance indicates that they are troubled in some way. In this section two aspects of vulnerability – histories of sexual abuse in childhood and attributions of personality disorder - are explored since they have been theorised in explanations of abuse by professionals.

The proportion of survivors of incest among therapy clients is estimated to be double or triple that of clients without such histories (Armsworth, 1990). There are two broad approaches to theorising connections with professional abuse. One takes a psychoanalytic approach, suggesting a "repetition compulsion", and/or the existence of "masochistic females", (De Fuentes, 1999; Gabbard, 1995; Gorkin, 1985; Shackelford, 1989). Hopkins (1991:250) suggests: "Many women who are victims of incest or earlier abuse unconsciously or consciously behave seductively with clergy". Even feminist Judith Herman (1992) notes that even though survivors are fearful of abuse, they may be unable to prevent it and at times even seem to invite it. Friberg and Laaser (1998:11) argue that some women are so damaged by prior abuse that they aggressively pursue further harm, to prove their unworthiness. This approach is not without its critics, who point to the slippage between this type of analysis and victim blame, included in many discussions of transference (Becker & Donovan, 1995; Hulme,

¹⁵ A pastor in a study conducted by Balswick and Thoburn's (1991) suggests clergy take their wives with them to most places they go and to "Stay clear of compromising situations and the appearance of evil"(p279).

1989; Masson, 1997; Penfold, 1999; Poling, 2004; Weisner 1994; Wholberg, 1997; Wortman, 1995).

The alternative approach to re-victimisation raises issues about the behaviour and decision-making of the abuser, and in the process ask profound questions about the construction of, and responses to, vulnerability. In an meta-analytic review of re-victimisation studies (Messman-Moore & Long, 2003) the authors argue that this query is not intrapersonal but interpersonal: a history of sexual victimisation only increases risk/vulnerability to further abuse if there is a perpetrator who is prepared to take advantage of this. Moreover, risks/vulnerabilities are not independent as much psychological research treats them, but overlap and are often compounding. For example, common coping strategies for dealing with victimisation are substance abuse and dissociation, but these are often designated risk factors. Messman-Moore and Long (op cit) argue that the mechanisms through which vulnerabilities become implicated in re-victimisation need further study, including the ways in which contacts with potential perpetrators are structured and what enables/encourages perpetrators to act in exploitative rather than protective ways. Extrapolating to this study, contact is often through the provision of support and counselling, with clergy perpetrators possibly operating through belief systems that lead them to see women who have already been abused as 'worth less' than others. The authors conclude:

Our theories of revictimization will shape what we find empirically. If we focus on the victim, we will find within her and her behaviour explanations for revictimization. However, we must recognise the interpersonal context in which revictimization takes place, and choose to also focus on the perpetrator and cultural factors within our society. The study of revictimization should focus on the intersection between the victim and the perpetrator. We will never fully understand while the microscope remains focused solely on the victim (Messman-Moore & Long, 2003:566).

Explaining clergy sexual exploitation

Theory and explanation are not just theoretical: that is ideas with limited connection to everyday experience. Constructions of how and why clergy sexual exploitation and abuse happens have profound effects on how victims are able to make sense of their experiences and the responses of others to them. Women are aware of how they are perceived and 'women-blaming' discourses contribute to their entrapment and shame. Women will not report if they

think they will be blamed or the exploitation considered an “affair”. To the extent that these meanings predominate in public and popular discourse the realities of sexual exploitation will continue to be obscured and women will continue to struggle with the disconnection between their sense of harm and hurt and the discursive constructions available to them. For women with Christian faith, theology itself constitutes a challenge, in this respect.

The impact of theology

Since this study is located within a ‘culture’ differentiated from the secular world, the spiritual/theological foundations need to be examined, and particularly how women are viewed and located within it. The research does not focus closely on these issues; they nonetheless, form the backdrop to the research topic.

Most feminist theologians start from the implications of a male God: Thorne (2000) cites Maitland:

Once the divine is securely identified as male, however subconsciously, women become less divine than men; and for Christianity that also meant less human...they no longer needed to be treated as though they were fully human people made in the image of God (p21).

Johnson (2003:28) comments religious patriarchal ideas have had immense influence, with both sexism and androcentrism - the privileging of men and the assumption that the male is the norm – have roots in Christian theology (Slee, 2003), with implications for the abuse of power. God is male; therefore men are to be ‘head’.

Proponents of ‘headship’, especially protestant evangelicals, start with the assumption of a divinely instituted unchanging social order of male priority (Ashley, 2004:88). Schüssler Fiorenza and Copeland (1994) attribute abuse of women and children to this ‘sacralizing of a patriarchal, hierarchical system of domination and submission’. Murphy (1997) and Loades (1996) argue that it is religious traditions, not theology as such, which are responsible for ‘gender indoctrination’. A specific Christian dualism emerges, a mind/body split, in which the male is equated with soul (divine) and mind, both of which are valued more than the body, associated with the female. This links women with carnality, and the belief that “woman is seen ethically as dangerous to the male” (Rossi 1993). Feminist theologians Mary Pallauer (1987)

and Galloway (2002) both argue for a theology 'from the body', since women are saying clearly that when the body is raped so is the 'soul' and spirit. Without such a change the violations of women and girls is downgraded, since women are 'body' and not 'soul/mind', and the harms to spirituality and sense of self are frequently ignored.

Eve, Mary and Mary Magdalene: role models?

Eve, the first female person, Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, the alleged reformed prostitute, have shaped the image of all women within Christianity: not only her image but her 'role'. The assumption in fundamentalist Christian theological thought is that all women are 'whores' since they can never attain the ideal of womanhood – the Virgin Mary.

In the biblical account Eve (Gen. 2:17), by giving the forbidden fruit to Adam in the Garden of Eden, causes the downfall of man. This has been interpreted as the downfall of all males, and the apple has been interpreted as representing sex. In this view, Eve, and all women thereafter cause all males to be sexual, a necessary evil instigated by females. The creation story has been used on countless occasions to justify male dominance both in the Church and in heterosexual relations. For example, Ambrose, in the third century AD, approved the submission of women when he said, "It is just and right that women accept as Lord and master him whom she led to sin" (Ussher, 1991:44).

A common Christian belief is, therefore, that women are seducers of men. In the second century the *Testament of Rubin* describes female behaviour thus: "*the insatiable lust of women, their promiscuity and deceitfulness in getting what they want and their ruthless exploitation of their own sexual attractiveness*" (Norris, 1998:90). Tertullian, a second century theologian reminded his 'beloved sisters':

And do you not know that you are each an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age; the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law; you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert – that is, death – even the Son of God had to die (op cit:196).

In contrast, the Virgin Mary is untouched by such matters of the flesh. Marina Warner (2000) discusses the impossibility of the Virgin Mary for women today. The title of the book *Alone of All Her Sex* clearly alludes to the impossibility. The Catholic Church continues, however, and “presents Mary, the Mother of Christ, as the ideal role model for women” insisting “that Mary’s dispositions of ‘listening, welcoming, humility, praise and waiting’ are qualities every Christian woman, indeed every baptised person should have” (Beattie, 2004). This ‘listening, humility and waiting’, sounds suspiciously like subordination to men.

Mary Magdalene has been portrayed most commonly as a ‘reformed prostitute’, feminist theologians (De Boer, 1997; Picknett, 2003) have sought to recast as disciple, apostle and human being. Most Christians still view Mary Magdalene as ‘whore’ (though reformed). It was Magdalene who was chosen as ‘role model’ for ‘fallen women’ and led to the infamous ‘Magdalene Laundries’ where women and girls at supposed sinful (sexual) risk or who had been sexually abused or raped were incarcerated across Europe, but with the most pernicious and prolific establishments in Ireland.

The constructions of Eve and Mary Magdalene, in contrast to the virginal Mary, lead to views of women as ‘insatiable’ sexually, which in turn justifies their control and domination and an emphasis of sexual purity before marriage¹⁶; both deeply held Christian patriarchal belief. This meshes with the psychoanalytic discourses outlined above, in so far as they both attribute sexual agency to women. There are implications for any woman attempting to make sense of sexual exploitation/violation.

This is the theology, which has shaped the minds of women and men throughout centuries and contributes to the low self-esteem, guilt and shame characteristic of many Christian women (Warner, 2000). It has extensive implications for Christian women who are sexually abused in childhood, raped in adulthood and/or experience clergy sexual exploitation.

That such ideas still have purchase in Christian theology can be seen in the Vatican letter ‘On the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World’ (31/05/2004), written by a

¹⁶The Catholic Church sainted Maria Goretti, a young girl who was murdered in trying to protect her virginity. She was even examined in hospital immediately so that her mother could be reassured that her daughter had died a virgin. It is recorded that the mother was very relieved, Redmond (1989:76).

group of aging celibate men. Here feminism is represented as emphasising “strongly conditions of subordination in order to give rise to antagonism”, and that “women, in order to be themselves, must make themselves the adversaries of men”. The feminist solution “[when] faced with the abuse of power, the answer for women is to seek power” (Beattie, 2004). Writing in the Catholic newspaper *The Tablet*, Beattie notes that the letter:

... does not acknowledge the extent to which this has meant the domination of women by men, in Christianity as well as in non-Christian cultures and religion... It does not address domestic abuse and sexual violence as urgent pastoral problems in the Church's dealings with women, nor does it say anything about the responsibilities of men in the home (op cit).

The connections to abuse

A number of writers have made clear connections between Christianity, patriarchy and sexual abuse (Adams & Fortune, 1995; Carlson, Brown & Bohn, 1989; Cooper-White, 1995; Imbens & Jonker, 1992). Cooper-White (1995) takes the biblical woman Tamar as her starting point, a woman raped by her half-brother. Tribble (1984) in her book *Text of Terror* notes how violence was normalised and almost sanctioned in Biblical times and to this day.

A slightly different perspective is that taken in the extolling of suffering, and its link to redemption. Women, especially, have been assigned the ‘suffering-servant’ role. Manlowe (1995) notes that this romanticisation of self-sacrifice can lead to a spiritualising of self-surrender, which gives meaning to passivity, which may facilitate present and future victimization. Brown and Parker (1989:7:20) comment:

Such a theology has devastating effects on human life. The reality is that victimization never leads to triumph. It can lead to extended pain if it is not refused or fought. It can lead to the destruction of the human spirit through the death of a person's sense of power, worth, dignity, or creativity... The problem with this theology is that it asks people to suffer for the sake of helping evildoers see their evil ways. It puts concern for the evildoer ahead of concern for the victim of evil. It makes victims the servants of the evildoers' salvation.

James Poling (2004), a theologian, speaking to clergy survivors in London believes there is nothing incongruous in the reality that there is sexual violation in Christianity and perpetrated by Clergy.

A sexual relationship between a male clergyman and a female parishioner replicates the drama between a patriarchal God and an obedient, self-sacrificing Jesus standing in for a sinful humanity... The clergyman has taken the place of God who is all-knowing, all powerful, and all-loving, and the parishioner has taken the place of Jesus who takes on the sins of humanity, submits her will to God's, and sacrifices her life unto death on the cross for the sake of the relationship... Clergy sexual abuse is an expression rather than an aberration of fairly traditional forms of theology.

These particular beliefs have a direct relevance on how women both perceived and how clergy sexual exploitation responded to. The emphasis that Christianity has always placed on women's sexual sin has made women speaking about their sexual violation almost impossible in many Christian Churches.

Sinners in need of redemption

Parishioners in Christianity are all sinful, in need of the redemption faith offers. Clergy occupy an especially powerful position, as heads of the Christian family, spiritual parents. Parsons (2000:30) points out the implications, whereby parishioners are positioned as 'children'. 'Maturity and independence of thought' are not encouraged in most Christian communities. The call to obey one's Father on earth, the clergy, can trap a woman who is being sexually exploited by the clergyman. In this sense the dynamic is akin to incest. Pellauer (1987) argues that the emphasis in Church attendance is one, which discourages the expression of painful emotions, which "undermines our ministry to victims of abuse" (op cit:57).

That feminist theologians have challenged biblical exegeses, re-interpreted the Bible and created alternative readings does not alter the fact that these beliefs retain a strong hold in many faith communities. Male clergy still hold the reins of theological discussion and many hold that feminism is incompatible with Christianity.

Conclusions

Sexual violence is far more widespread than previously thought, and the majority of perpetrators are known to victims. That professionals are part of this group is not, therefore a surprise. What is more disturbing is that professionals such as therapists and clergy – who are all too aware of the vulnerability of those who seek their help – choose to sexualise these relationships so frequently. Language used to describe sexual exploitation by clergy is hedged

in euphemisms, denial or excuses; and in some instances extremely discourteous towards women, and minimizing of their suffering. The dominant perspective of a 'love-affair' has taken particular root in Christian Churches.

Where some form of wrong-doing is recognised the dominant discourse in both academic and Christian commentaries emphasises either the pathology/distress or sickness of the clergy perpetrator or the stress and multiple roles of his position. These studies ally with Christian theology in attributing sexual agency to the female. The dangers of 'seductive women' or women who have a 'repetition compulsion' deriving from past experiences are discussed frequently.

Very few authors to date take a feminist position (see Poling, 1991,1997, 1999, 2004, for an exception), which gives prominence to the role, and power position that inheres to clergymen. Christian theology accords limited role models to women, and historically all women, apart from the Virgin Mary, have been vilified. Christian women abused by clergy have to contend with these constructions of the female when naming and dealing with their experiences.

This thesis rejects the pathological model of causation and seeks to locate the behaviour of abusive clergy on the continuum of violence against women. It adds to feminist research on sexual violence through uncovering victim blame, prioritising the voices of women who have been victimised and arguing that sexual exploiters should be called to account.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Formulating the Research Questions

Given the paucity of research in this area, the study was question and not hypothesis-led. The research was initially framed around four core questions:

- why has this area not been addressed in the UK and Ireland and is this connected to 'Eve based theology'?
- how are the boundaries between assault, exploitation and consent articulated?
- how do Churches respond to victims and perpetrators?
- what are the barriers to, and possibilities for, Christian Churches taking a more professional response?

These questions were then incorporated within a more critical area of interest, as the research purpose was refined in the early stages of the process. Women's *experience* became more prominent as the literature review revealed its absence in discussions about abuse. I realised that my focus became diverted from the woman to the institutions so I consciously re-directed myself. The findings provide some purchase on the original questions alongside a body of data grounded in the women's experience itself. The revised objectives of the research were to:

- document the experiences of women in major Christian Churches;
- analyse women's experiences within a feminist perspective;
- document the strategies used by male clergy to sexually exploit women;
- explore how Churches respond to accusations and to the women who report sexual exploitation by clergy;
- analyse how women coped and survived, including the process of making sense of their experience and moving on;
- contribute to the development of strategies to address this issue;
- locate these forms of sexual exploitation within the broader concept of violence against women.

Theoretical perspective

The theoretical perspective behind all research provides a context for the process involved and a basis for its logic and its criteria (Crotty, 1998:66). This includes an understanding of epistemology and truth.

Epistemologies are theories of knowledge concerned with different ways of knowing and learning about the social world, focusing on questions such as; how can we know about reality and what is the basis of our knowledge? (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:13)

There are varied epistemologies with differences in belief as to how 'meaning' is derived. Positivists believe human behaviour is governed by law-like regularities and that it is possible to carry out independent, objective and value-free research. Mirroring the natural sciences, advocating 'objectivity' was seen to be essential in social research. Only that which was observable would be a valid research finding (positivism). Kant however refuted this and in 1781, argued that there are ways of knowing about the world other than by direct observation and that people use these all the time (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:6). In a more contemporary context, Feminism challenged the positivist position by arguing that material conditions, social, political, gender, and cultural factors have a major influence on people's lives (ibid:9) and on research. Feminists perceived the inequality inherent in the positivist approach. to research objectivity and value neutrality and wanted to question the *roles* of researcher and participant, thus allowing a more collaborative relationship within the research between researcher and participant.

Feminists among many others have located their research within interpretivism. Interpretivists believe the social researcher must explore and understand the social world through the participant's own perspective and explanations can only be offered at the level of meaning rather than cause. (Ritchie & Lewis:23)

These two epistemological schools of thought are often presented as polar opposites and thus create debate about potentially contradictory worldviews. This has led to qualitative and quantitative research methods being associated with specific epistemological positions, the former allied more closely with interpretivism and the latter with positivism. More recently the

debate has widened to move away from a polarised position to argue that methodology and method must be primarily fit for purpose (Bryman, 1994).

Central to the debate are the concepts of objectivity, reliability and validity. Benton (1978) says that social researchers cannot in practice specify some universal criteria of validity across the confines of a single theoretical system. Whilst some feminists have taken different positions on whether knowledge claims are better founded than others, they have tried to resuscitate issues of validity by grounding feminist knowledge in women's experience but still face questions about validity, reliability and generalisability (Ramazanaglu & Holland, 2002).

Kelly, Burton, and Regan (1994) were concerned that experience alone was being seen as a way to 'awareness' that was political, with an implicit or explicit assumption that such an awareness was inaccessible to those who have not lived such experiences. Maynard and Purvis (1994) say individuals being 'researched' may *not* have all the knowledge one needs and other sources need to be explored. Just as in this research, women's experience was fundamental but other sources had to be examined to contextualise their experiences. However Maynard and Purvis argue that the interpretation of women's experience by which researches reach conclusions, is a social process and that the very interpretation of data is a political and contested activity.

Feminist research?

Feminist social research developed through a critique of the social sciences. Feminists wanted a more relational theoretical perspective although this has raised questions of power. Does the interviewee *really* collaborate, or become *equal* with the interviewer in the research process? Morgan (1981) among others believes this is possible. Others argue that method and methodology are so infused with male bias that this cannot be the case (Thorne 2000:42). This latter view additionally fails to acknowledge what the researcher brings to the process, her or his commitment to collaborative or relational research. Researchers are not 'born' as feminists but develop consciousness through experiences and learning. It is hoped that the feminist researcher can recognise the stereotypically masculinist biases within method and methodology and Stanley (1987) says that feminists use all the methods that traditional androcentric researchers have used but argues that there can be a feminist version of the traditional approaches. Kelly, Burton and Regan (1994) add to this and suggest that studying

women's lives as a feminist means that male dominance, masculinity and men will always be a part of the research, as women's lives have consistently been shaped by male power and oppression. Thus, it is unrealistic to assume that men and maleness are not integral to research about women. My cultural beliefs, values and behaviour (and experiences) have shaped the analysis of the research no less than those of sexist, androcentric research (Stanley, 1987). My awareness must be that women's experiences were within a context where men were present and that women's experiences could not be taken out of a context in which men played such a key role.

What I also brought to this research are skills honed within the social work profession such as empathy and core values, which have enabled me to be non-judgemental. My professionalism and capacity to reflect have allowed the data analysis to be as free as possible from bias.

Some feminists reject positivism and with that, quantitative methods as unethical because they argue they are; Patriarchal, Sexist/anti-feminist, Biased, Impersonal, and controlling of the data and because they distort women's experiences by placing them within 'categories' and thus silencing women's voices (Epstein, Jayaratne & Stewart in Fonow & Cook, 1991:85). Others believe a quantitative element can be useful. The argument here is that it is not the quantitative (gathering of statistical data) per se that is problematic but using quantitative methods in ways that are not consistent with broad feminist goals and ideology (Jayarathne & Stuart, 1991). Combining methods, and in certain circumstances termed "triangulation", can overcome the weaknesses in each single method by counterbalancing strengths of another (Jick, 1979).

A further argument against the case of quantitative methods as 'non-feminist' is that they divorce women from her 'voice' and may make her invisible in the findings. Here there seems to be a narrow interpretation of 'voice' meaning women *speaking* orally to a researcher in a relational way. Marks, (1996) quotes Derrida, who calls this emphasis on speech "phonocentrism". As a woman who has worked with 'non-voiced/speaking' children I can testify that 'voice' can be used in very many different ways. Indeed, as a deaf person, my communication is not only a voiced one but also visual. It also has to be recognised that not all women favour the one-to-one interview to speak of her story or insights, and that she may find her voice better expressed in a questionnaire or survey which offers both quantitative aspect and a qualitative one e.g. open ended questions. In this study some women did not take part in

interviews but nevertheless wrote copiously in open-ended questions or where they were invitation to write anything at the end of the questionnaire and to add pages as necessary. These were indexed and analysed in the same way as the qualitative transcriptions.

Jayarathne and Stewart (in Fonow & Cook, 1991:91) refer to Harding (1987), who says feminists can use any method but notices how they have used methods deemed 'patriarchal' in 'strikingly different ways'. Harding further states that *"it is not by looking at the research methods that one will be able to identify the distinctive features of the best of feminist research"*. Stanley and Wise (1983) argue that *"the ways in which research participants are treated and the care in which researchers attempt to represent the lived experience of research participants are of more concern"* (Jayarathne & Stewart, in Fonow & Cook, 1991:90-91). Oakley (1999:156) and Patton (1988, in Thorne 2000:42) argue that the researcher should use the methods congruent with the research setting or questions.

Jayarathne and Stewart attempt to move away from the quantitative versus qualitative dichotomy by suggesting that qualitative be renamed 'systematic' and seen as but procedure on a qualitative-quantitative continuum (in Fonow & Cook, 1991:94). They conclude that to *'continue the debate between quantitative and qualitative research...wastes our valuable time and effort'* (p101).

Instead, they present nine key principles that define 'feminist research' (p101-103).

- How the research has the potential to benefit women;
- The study design should ensure appropriate methods for the kind of question asked and information needed, which will permit answers persuasive to a particular audience;
- The problems associated with both quantitative and qualitative methods should be addressed;
- Both methods should be combined wherever possible;
- Research should be bias-free or 'sex-fair';
- Time and effort should be taken to do high quality research;

- When interpreting results alternative interpretations, always consistent with the findings that might imply a change in women's lives should be investigated;
- Some political analysis of the findings should always be attempted;
- Results should be actively disseminated.

The present study has used this framework as a methodological guideline applying the principles across qualitative and quantitative dimensions. As my working experience has been with women, I deliberately excluded men as victims of clergy exploitation (though this does happen) because I wanted to explore the experiences of women within a culturally male biased institution.

Fonow and Cook, (1991) further describe salient features of feminist research relevant to this study which are examined individually below:

The role of reflexivity

Action orientation

Attention to affective components of the research

Use of situation at hand

The role of reflexivity

Reflexivity means that the researcher reflects upon, examines critically and explores analytically the nature of the research process. Researchers must constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process, and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of the 'data'. This includes the researcher's reactions to doing the research, their feelings and emotions. This is based on the belief that the researcher regardless of the method they use cannot be detached from the knowledge and evidence they are generating (Mason, 1996:6).

Mies (1991:79) describes a way for feminist researchers to have 'partial identification', by recognising that 'not only do the 'other' women have a problem, but I do too'.

Binding us are the experiences of women all over the world of repression, sexism and exploitation. Partial identification means in addition that I also recognise what separates us.

She calls this 'affectedness and concern' and says that simple divisions between the victim and the non-victim are not helpful, since we have all been affected at some time and on some level by male violence. Mies suggests that from this condition springs a conscious reflection in the mind. The state of being affected and concerned and the perspective of critical self-reflexivity mean, additionally, becoming conscious. This entails searching for explanations, leading to critical analysis and action. Affectedness and concern mean, therefore, that "the victims think their anger through to the end and emerge capable of action" (Mies, 1991:79).

Describing her experience of the research process, Mies concludes that she was:

the one affected [who] must press toward action. Affectedness and concern cannot remain at the level of emotional outrage, of coming to consciousness, of criticism and analysis. If it does, it will inevitable end in resignation and regression (1991:80-81).

Mies suggests that communication at a deeper level will only be possible when women begin from the perspective of their own reflexivity. This research was part of my own journey of reflexivity, affectedness and concern. In applying to be part of it, the women who participated also joined with me in this journey and all but a few reached a state of engaging in criticism and analysis, while some 'emerged capable of action', as I had.

'Journey' is one metaphor Kvale (1996) uses to describe the research process. Kvale also uses two metaphors for the generation of data: one of a miner digging for nuggets (knowledge is taken); the other of 'traveller' (through conversations the interviewer leads the subject to new insights), meaning there is a transformative element to the journey (Legard et al. in Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:139).

The traveller metaphor refers to a research process in which:

the interviewer wanders along with the local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world and converses with them in the original Latin meaning of conversation "wandering together with" (Kvale, 1996:4).

To summarise these insights, Mies declares that we 'understand together' as women, while Kvale (1996), describes the 'conversation' unfolding as that between co-travellers and Legard et al. (2004) view the researcher as an active player in development of data, with interviewees. I was a 'traveller'. I related to the metaphor of journey, which also implied 'companionship'. I had for many years 'journeyed' with women who were sexually exploited and it was a way of working that empowered woman rather than made them nervous, frightened or intruded upon. In this position, I was never a social worker but a feminist activist and advocate. Together we were trying to understand the nature of our experiences in a complete vacuum of understanding here in the UK and Ireland. The metaphor of 'miner' strikes me as blunt, intrusive and potentially damaging. Reflexivity requires that as a researcher we have understanding of our own emotions as well as use these as part of the research process.

Consciousness raising

Consciousness-raising is part of feminist understanding of reflexivity. Stanley and Wise (1979:360) suggest that feminist interviewing methods are not only data-collecting strategies, but related to the consciousness raising and self-examination central to feminist practice. Thorne (2000:45) disagrees, suggesting that the notion of consciousness-raising within research is "an idea which in itself can be patronising". I did not perceive this as the case. One participant explained that she wanted to be part of the research as a way of 'reframing' and 'sorting out' what had happened.

Talking to people has made me realise that it was not my fault and that most of the responsibility lies with him. I hope that by talking and writing about it I can somehow reframe it, sort it out in my mind and eventually put it to one side and just get on with my life. (Q69/RC)

The research process did encourage some women to think more about their situation, to go deeper. For example:

[S]ince I got in touch with my anger, part of me would like to have actually really had a face-to-face with him and said what I really thought of him.

MK: *What would you say?*

I would be very angry to the point of saying "How dare you! How dare you, [you] have broken those boundaries! You knew what you were doing". It wasn't up to me to stop things; he should never have allowed it to get to that point.

*He had other people he could have referred me to. ...how dare he dump me?
Allow me to go through with that abortion, not take any responsibility, just walk
away. (64/ang)*

Certain questions appeared to move the respondent on and into further thought and reflection and hence a development of their understanding, both of their experiences and of the research. I hoped I was not patronising but rather sharing as best I could some knowledge of the process of understanding, since I had studied the issues for many years. All the participants welcomed this level of sharing. The 'consciousness-raising' was not one way; their stories prompted reflection on my part too.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003:139) suggest that the interview is deeper than a conversation but seems like one to the interviewee. They are called interviews for a purpose: researcher and interviewee are *discovering meaning* together in the process of language. In telling me about the effects of being part of the research, the women did express how it might/did lead them to new insights – the transformative element to the journey alluded to above (Kvale, 1996)

Completing the questionnaire was helpful. (Q60/Assemblies of God)

It really has helped me tremendously writing all this down and knowing that someone is doing something to try and help. I would do anything to help the cause. (Q16/Ang)

Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to tell my story. (Q64/Ang)

Each time I reflect on my story with/to someone else, I gain new insights, and completing the questionnaire is part of this. (Q71/Ang)

In Feminist research, undertaking the journey together is vital if we are all to move forward in understanding and challenging violence against women. In this way, reflexivity and journey become uniquely combined.

Action orientation

An intended outcome of this research was to contribute to change in women's lives through critical engagement and analysis of women's experiences of clergy sexual exploitation. It also follows the principle of trying to 'liberate' women, and sets a framework for political and ecclesiastical/structural action within the Christian Community. I hoped that by focusing on this

area sexually exploited women would not feel so isolated, would understand that work on the issues had preceded mine, therefore would understand the vast body of understanding available. Notwithstanding I hoped women would be able through this research to expand the knowledge base and to find them an opportunity to be part of the ongoing challenges facing women in these Isles.

It also calls on feminists to explore what happens to women within religious traditions. Though feminists have a long history of challenging women's position in society many have steered clear of women in religion. Those who are doing this work are feminist theologians but acknowledge that knowledge is often kept within a circumscribed arena. I hope secular feminist sociologists will break into the world of religious institutions more and raise their concerns to a wider audience. Much of the 'action' flowing from the research will follow completion of the PhD.

Attention to affective components of the research

As a feminist, I care about the women I conduct research with. As a researcher, I was conscious that my background of counselling and social work practice which could play a part in the interview process whilst aware that the two roles were different. The first, that of researcher was a supportive questioning/listening and documentation role; the second; counsellor/advisor/supporter, involved 'going with' or doing work with the person. I occasionally slipped into the latter, and there were times when it was necessary to re-focus during the interview. It became clear that at times more information was forthcoming in my second role, and I was glad of my lengthy experience in this field, which enabled me to be a better supporter as well as researcher. The researcher role was highly effective for redirecting the interview when some participants wanted to use the time more as a counselling situation, but throughout this research these were often artificial boundaries and at times, keeping to my research protocol felt like walking a tightrope and sometimes I felt 'artificial' in my humanity.

Whether a level of 'counselling' or 'explanatory advice' is contaminating or disruptive to the research process brings us back to the discussion on 'masculinist' and feminist paradigms. I would argue that incorporating a 'feelings' or 'emotional' content does not distort findings but rather, enhances them, as it allows trust to be built and dialogue to ensue without fear. Certainly, many of the women cried during their interview and I, too, felt raw on exiting some

homes. These aspects have especially influenced the chapter on 'aftermath' and the ongoing suffering of women, such that this pain becomes part of the data. This reflects the difficulties in facing violation, talking about violation and dealing with violation. Pain and suffering were not the only emotions, however. There was also an element of 'I know that you know' between us that brought connections that were deeply moving.

As an activist, I did not want to become just a research 'interviewer', a 'miner'. This might, I anticipated, have made women retreat in fear, as for many the experiences remained all-too vivid.

MK: It's still quite close to you isn't it?

Oh very, very.

MK: Even though it was...how many years ago?

Yeah, er – about 17 years ago.

MK: It's like it happened yesterday? Or is it?

*The – The actual ...happening [assault], erm, I guess I'm coming to terms with, but the aftermath that is so hard to live with...the breakdown that it caused.
(6/House Church)*

This woman was deeply wounded and offering her warmth during my questioning facilitated further exploration instead of collapse.

Oakley (1997:31) critiqued interviewing within a 'masculine paradigm', which had as its motif 'be friendly but not too friendly' (p33) and refutes the view that there are rules that spell out where necessary friendliness ends and unwarranted involvement begins. Conversely, Moser (1958:187-8) argues:

...there is something to be said for the interviewer who, while friendly and interested does not get too emotionally involved with the respondent and his problems.

Oakley puts it well when she asks whether 'Women [are] interviewing women: or objectifying your sister'? (p41)

There lies an important issue, which was how should I present myself to those I interviewed. Oakley (1981) suggests a requirement that we have an openness or personal responsiveness, an engagement and a striving for intimacy (King, 2000:177). I wanted very much to do this and largely succeeded. Whether this includes self-disclosure by the researcher is a thorny issue. I took King's (ibid:180) position, *'I drew the boundary that I would not intentionally disclose anything in the interview that I felt strongly about and would wait to be more open in the post interview de-briefing'*.

After reflection I realised that interviewing for research was not like being a social worker, nor like being an advocate, or activist, nor like friendship. However there was a unique intimacy as travellers and companions. The interviewer incorporates all her skills from previous experiences and roles and uses them in a way that allows participants to understand her as a caring compassionate person yet one with a set agenda as traveller or better still as explorer... but always together as a sister.

The use of 'the situation at hand'

This aspect of feminist research shows women being innovative about the situations that present themselves and turning these into opportunities. For example, I could turn being a survivor/activist into a 'situation at hand' and be seen as worthy of conducting research with fellow victims.

I have encountered strong resistance, usually male, concerning my apparent bias in studying female victims as opposed to both women and men. Such a response could be utilised as a study area in its own right, and it is these opportunities we need to run with in developing feminist research into areas not yet explored.

The Process of the Research

This research examined a form of sexual violation within a particular organisation – the Christian Church. The study was approached multi-methodologically; drawing on data from a range of sources to illuminate this under-researched and poorly documented area. As well as contributing much needed knowledge to an issue surrounded by silence or, indeed, titillation (see previous chapter), the research aimed to contribute knowledge in several other ways: linking feminist theology and feminist research on sexual violence; engaging with the debates

on agency and victimisation in current feminist theory; exploring the meaning of consent in legal and other discourses; and examining the social location and responsibility of clergy.

This study was undertaken using a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory originally meant 'theory emerging from (grounded) in the data', (Richardson, 1996:80); in other words, the attempt to 'generate theory' not simply to analyse data. Reissman (1993:82) maintains that the researcher requires *some* theoretical resources to guide the process of interpretation and representation. Thus what appears to be the 'discovery' or 'emergence' of concepts and theory is in reality the result of a constant interplay between data and the researcher's developing conceptualisations, a 'flip-flop' between ideas and research experience – this is 'theory generation' (Richardson, 2000:82). The researcher must have a 'perspective' (Chamez, 1990), substantive interests that guide the questions to be asked, a philosophical stance or a school of thought that provides a store of sensitising concepts and the researcher's own personal experiences, priorities and values (Richardson, 2000:83). Ritchie and Lewis (2003:218) also say that making sense of data 'is more dependent on the analyst and the rigour, clarity and creativity of her or his conceptual thinking'.

Research Methods

This project was carried out using predominantly qualitative methods premised on an interpretivist approach to analysis. The primary focus was on women's experiences so the research was based on the testimony given by women themselves. Nevertheless, a quantitative element in the form of a questionnaire was included in order to collect data from a wider sample of women and analyse it systematically. The two methods are complimentary.

A mixed method approach allowed for collection of the maximum breadth and depth of data. It also enabled validity checking of the data as the following example illustrates. The questionnaire included the question: *"How did you perceive the clergyperson when you first met him?"* and gave a range of possible answers. Though many answered that they regarded the clergyman as a professional and ticked this box, it was clear from the qualitative interviews that this concept was more diffuse than the statistics could encompass. Women grappled with the notion of 'professional' when sex was an element of the contact, thus the blurring of boundaries blurred also their perception of the clergyman, which was reflected in their response.

As part of the research I invited 19 key informants to be interviewed. These individuals were largely male clerical officials who were knowledgeable on policies and procedures not necessarily on sexual exploitation (see appendix 9). They also gave me insight into the difficulties women had when reporting.

Table 3.1: Key informants

Church interviewees	Non-Church interviewees
1 Catholic Bishop (male)	1 American survivor (female)
2 Catholic priests	1 founder of POPAN
1 Canon Lawyer of the Catholic Church (male)	1 director of POPAN
1 married Catholic Priest (Male-USA)	
2 senior lay Church of England (male)	
1 Anglican priest (male)	
2 senior Baptist Ministers (male)	
1 senior Methodist Minister (male)	
1 senior Minister of the Congregational Church (male)	
1 Church of Scotland official (male)	
1 Church of Wales official (female)	
2 senior Quakers (female)	

These interviews sought to elicit attitudes, values and position regarding clergy sexual exploitation of women, to learn more about disciplinary processes and explore the potential for change. Some people appeared resistant to participating. Although one Catholic Bishop agreed to be interviewed, two Anglican Bishops declined.

You ask whether I would be interested in your interviewing me for your PhD. I am afraid given my impossible diary commitments just at the moment and my plans for the summer I am simply not taking on anything further at the present time. With good wishes.

Whilst I am interested to learn of your PhD research I feel unable to contribute by means of an interview. You will appreciate that clergy discipline matters are both a legal process and a confidential pastoral matter. [...] With best wishes.

It was, however, possible to speak with a legal professional and another Anglican senior lay person. A Baptist leader also provided input; he retired shortly after and on clarifying some issues with his successor he gave me a different account of the procedures. I also interviewed a Methodist Church leader, the Director of POPAN (now called Witness), the founder of POPAN and two concerned Catholic Priests. Whilst in America I interviewed Richard Sipe, a former priest psychotherapist who has worked in the area for many years.

I was far from comfortable in the presence of most male Church leaders who themselves seemed uneasy at times. Whilst not formally part of the research, my observations suggest that they were defensive and critical of the possibility of clergy sexual exploiting parishioners. Even female Church leaders seemed reluctant to engage on these sensitive issues and the interviews or phone calls were frequently conducted in an atmosphere of tension. Four Church leaders appeared patronising, choosing a conversation style in which I felt I was expected to be 'taught' the facts in a way that was discourteous to my understanding and skills. One was overtly hostile and declared I was not an objective researcher if I could not accept that some women led clergy on.

The interviews with key informants were semi-structured as I drafted a guideline for questions (appendix 1). The first part asked whether they were aware of clergy sexual exploitation or knew of cases elsewhere. Then I explored with them their understanding of consent in a pastoral relationship. I asked about ethical codes of practice and policies and procedures that might be available. I asked if they had views on why clergy may engage women sexually and what should be done if clergy did so. In order to further contextualise the primary data of the research, I examined a range of documents including ethical codes and policies and procedures both here in the UK and Ireland as well as America, comparing them to elicit differences or usefulness. I studied findings from tribunals or official disciplinary procedures. In all of these explorations scrutiny was focused on language use, (see chapter 2), structures, accountability, power and effectiveness of policies or procedures, and whether women were supported and protected throughout official proceedings. (See chapter 6 and appendix 9).

The study

The rationale for using a predominantly qualitative method lies mostly with the overall research objectives. Ritchie and Spencer (1994:174) remind us:

What qualitative research can offer the policy maker is a theory of social action grounded on the experiences – the world view – of those likely to be affected by a policy decision or thought to be part of the problem.

Qualitative methods are used to meet a variety of different purposes but can broadly be divided into the following four categories, (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) all of which are pertinent to this research.

Contextual: identifying the form and nature of what exists. This research was both contextual and strategic and allowed full exploration of a previously un-researched area of sexual violation. It has been possible to demonstrate the contextual element of abusers' strategies and behaviours which entrap women, as well as how women dealt with this (chapter 4).

Explanatory: examining the reasons for, or causes of, what exists. The explanatory element was less prominent here, though within the literature review. Frameworks proposed by some authors for why clergy sexually abuse and exploit women they are helping are presented. How women perceived their situation was also explored.

Evaluative: appraising the effectiveness of what exists. An evaluative element was incorporated by analysing Churches as places of abuse/exploitation and why this can be the case (see literature review; chapter 2). I also explored Church responses to women and how effective these were (Chapters 6 & appendix 9).

Generative: identifying new theories, policies, plans or actions (Ritchie, J & Lewis, J, 2004:27).

One aim was for this research to have a generative component or 'outcome' – not just to improve knowledge about women's experiences but to contribute to the development of policies and procedures and a set of guidance to inform Churches (see Chapter 8).

Familiarization – a first stage of research

In order to begin the process of research a period of **familiarisation** was necessary to improve understanding of the subject of inquiry and to ensure that the design of the questionnaires and interview schedule was as complete as possible.

The avenues trawled to familiarise myself, including: theories and concepts on theology, power, celibacy and child abuse; resources such as newspaper accounts; official guidelines; the Sexual Offences Act, policies and procedures and ordination services; and contact with relevant organisations like POPAN¹⁷ and SPANA. This also helped direct reading for the literature review, as well as providing insights for the design of the questionnaires and interview schedule.

As part of the familiarisation process, I undertook a study trip to California for three weeks, where I had access to extensive Christian publication archives. Information and references were located via searches using 'first Search', 'Ovid Web', 'PsychINFO', IBSS data service and Zetoc. Searching on terms 'Clergy misconduct', 'Clergy exploitation', 'Clergy malfeasance', or 'Clergy affairs' retrieved most articles. 'Clergy sexual abuse' tended to elicit child abuse references, which is interesting in itself, showing that sexual contact with adults is not coded as 'abuse' in online abstracting services. This process generated a considerable volume of material. Valuable conversations were also held with Dr Kathryn Lynch, who had extensive resources following her research on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in clergy abuse. A further meeting was held with Richard Sipe in San Diego, an acknowledged 'expert' in clergy sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, who agreed to be interviewed.

Finding the women

Following my own experience of sexual exploitation by clergy, I ran a support group MACSAS, for eight years. MACSAS grew out of CSSA 'Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse'. The original organisation supported adults sexually abused, usually as children, by Christian family members; MACSAS sought to address the different issues abuse in adulthood by clergy raises.

¹⁷ POPAN (now called 'Witness') is a support organisation for adults abused by professionals.

As the only organisation addressing this issue it made sense to recruit through MACSAS, but it also raised complex ethical issues and the potential bias for bias. For example, some women who took part I had met face to face and knew well, others I had written to but there was less of a personal connection. These women formed 46 per cent (n=29) of the sample. The potential for bias is that in contacting MACSAS women were already exploring the possibility that this encounter had been exploitative, and the organisation itself took this position. By the same token, contact with MACSAS was part of these women's own journeys and worthy of research. To minimise bias the decision was taken early in the study to recruit women with whom I had never had contact. This group was slightly larger than the known group comprising 54% (n=34) of the whole sample. During the analysis no differences emerged between the experiences of the two groups of women.

Potential bias and ethics combine in the researchers' role, and I endeavoured to keep the research role uppermost in my mind, to not confuse the role of 'supporter' with that of 'researcher', although there are inevitable overlaps with individuals for whom research questions prompt painful realisations, which other feminist researchers have noted (Coy, 2006).

The core ethical issue was whether it was appropriate to invite individuals I had been supporting in research. Having decided that it would make generating the sample too complex to exclude the one relevant support project, I then developed a process for ensuring women did not feel obligated to take part. After sending members the initial contact letter I paid close attention to how the women themselves described their motivations for wanting to contribute to the research.

To recruit beyond MACSAS advertisements containing information about the research were placed in Church papers, magazines and relevant publications (see Table 3.2 for how the sample was built). The use of CSSA box number, as a safe address for responses, could have created some bias in those responding, but this would only be the case if they knew of the organisation and its remit, since it explicitly declares that it supports adults who have been abused. This may potentially have prevented women in congregations, not seeking pastoral care, but in 'relationship' with clergy, from coming forward, as they may have been loathe to call their situation 'abuse' or 'exploitation'. The other route to recruiting this group of women was via 7-11, a support group for women involved in secret relationships with Christian clergy,

but they declined to take part due to confidentiality. The very secrecy of the relationships made women fearful of being identified, and 7-11 felt bound to maintain absolute confidentiality. Indeed, the secrecy which many women have to live in may have prevented many in this situation from coming forward, and none did. It was undoubtedly ambitious to attempt to also reach this group of women though a further study would be valuable, in order to compare across the meanings women attribute to their sexual encounters with clergy.

The Christian papers that carried the advert included the *Church Times* (Anglican), the *Universe* (Catholic), the *Baptist Times*, and the *Methodist Recorder*. Christian groups such as; We Are Church (Catholic), 7-11 (Catholic group supporting women in relationships with priests), Safety Net (Evangelical Protestant support group for survivors) and Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse (CSSA) were approached to publicise the research. The advert was also placed in the professional newsletter of the British Association for the Safety and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (BASPCAN) and an Irish counselling Journal '*Éisteach*'.

The definition of sexual exploitation and misconduct employed for the purposes of this study was devised before respondents had replied, in the event no women in this study were part of a group designated as parishioners who had not sought advice. This meant that the research focus was on clergy sexual exploitation *within the pastoral relationship of counselling, spiritual direction or tutors and employers*. In order for women to be eligible for inclusion, the sexual contact must have been made within a pastoral context, not, for example, if the clergyperson met the woman socially or in another context. It was apparent, however, that while some women had met the clergyperson within the pastoral context, they did *not* perceive the sexual contact as abusive, exploitative or wrong. I also wanted to reach these women in order to explore how they made sense of the sexual contact. Hence the advertising had to be carefully worded; language usage was important. Appeals could not be made to women 'who had been *sexually exploited* in a pastoral relationship' because some did not perceive it as exploitative. Cost and size constraints also meant that a very precise and clear advertisement was necessary. Figure 3.1 shows an example of the text used in one advertisement:

Figure 3.1: Sample advertisement to recruit research participants

Clergy and Minister's Sexual Relationships/exploitation with women for whom they are pastorally responsible

Did you seek the help, spiritual direction, support of a priest or minister and then were encouraged, manipulated, or coerced into a sexual relationship?

As a parishioner, are you, at present, involved sexually and secretly, with the priest/minister of the church you attend?

PhD Researcher is looking for women willing to be interviewed or offer written submissions.

All responses treated with utmost confidentiality.

*Other samples Appendix 2

*the second group did not come forward and therefore are not represented in this study

The efforts at inclusions were not altogether successful! One woman emphatically objected to the word 'relationship' in the advertisement and questionnaire. This led to a refined awareness of the importance of language use (see Chapter 2). Full details of the sample are included in the penultimate section of this chapter.

Designing research tools

Questionnaires

Although, since my study was on the experience of women exploited by clergy, the mode of *data production* would seem best suited to qualitative methods as *'the information gathered is produced in a social process of giving meaning to the social world'* (Ramazanaglu, C, & Holland, J:154). However, the quantitative aspect of this research established the details and composition of the population under study. It was not possible to interview everyone and the large numbers of women were a rich source of information that could not be ignored in this, one of the first UK and Irish studies on clergy sexual exploitation of women. Ritchie and Lewis also argue that for a 'rare' or sensitive population surveys are valuable, although in order to have a large sample that could be statistically representative all the requirements for comprehensiveness, diversity and lack of bias would need to be met (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:90); a claim that cannot be made in this case. The questionnaire sample offered me a wider base for analysis; the interviewed group came from this broader sample.

Questionnaires (appendix 3) were designed with the original research questions in mind. However, the study period in the US helped with formulating a clearer direction; one that was focused on women's *experience*. I became increasingly interested in understanding the developmental progression of sexual exploitation. I had not yet decided where the starting point would be so included an early section on 'growing up', and questions on family and religious affiliation. Whilst some of this background was important, such as experience of previous abuse as a child, family history did not feature largely in subsequent analysis. Further on I explored their faith practice, abuse history, how they perceived the clergy exploiter, how they met, what they felt when the contact became sexual, how the contact ended and if they reported. The final section included exploration of the aftermath, Church responses and what they would recommend to the Church.

It also became clear that little on the clergyperson was included in the first questionnaire, so a shorter second questionnaire was designed to elicit this information. The second questionnaire included the denomination of the clergyperson, his age and marital status, whether he had disclosed personal information about himself (a key marker for subsequent misconduct), whether he related the woman's childhood abuse or marital problems to the sexual contact he initiated and whether women knew if there were other women affected. One crucial question in the second questionnaire was how long participants took to understand that their experience was exploitation if they perceived it as this in the first place. What was particularly striking was that all the women agreed to continue to supply information through a second questionnaire.

Both questionnaires were scrutinized by my supervisors and an experienced researcher and suggestions made to modify or include further questions.

I wanted to obtain as much information as possible from participants and the flow of the questionnaire was developmental from childhood, through to meeting the clergyperson, the experience of sexual contact, 'making sense' of events, getting out and aftermath. Aftermath included reporting or not reporting to the police or other authorities, forgiveness, consequences to both women and clergy and recommendations. The reason for this whole journey overview is that former researchers have only focused on parts of the journey, mostly aftermath or spirituality. I was concerned to view the context of women's lives and the whole of the women's journey.

Once someone agreed to take part questionnaires were sent separately from a covering letter. The letter was sent first giving the women their coded reference number. In this way, if the questionnaire went astray the woman's name and address were not attached thereby not identifying her. A pre-paid envelope was supplied returned to a box number. These coded references are used in the text of the thesis. Thus Q9/RC and Q64/Ang. 'Q' refers to comments from questionnaires, absent 'Q' means the reference is from an interviewed woman. The reference to denomination is that of the clergy perpetrator. Abbreviations of the denominations were used RC=Roman Catholic, Ang =Anglican, Bapt = Baptist, Meth=Methodist, CofS= Church of Scotland and URC= United Reform Church.

Of these women, the clergy perpetrators number 63. One Catholic priest sexually assaulted three respondents; two respondents had two clergy perpetrators.

Cases of exploitation	n= 65
Number of women participants	n= 63
Clergy perpetrators	n= 63

The final return rate was 66 per cent (n=63 women of 96 who received the questionnaire). Twenty-nine did not return and only one attempt was made to remind. I was conscious that non-return might mean a 'no' to participating and was keen not to put too much pressure on women. One woman was too ill to complete her questionnaire and died during the course of the research.

Sample achieved

One hundred and twenty-seven women expressed interest in knowing about the research. These were largely women who, by the time of the research, had identified themselves as having been sexually exploited, though this had not always been the case. Routes for recruitment are outlined in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: How participants were recruited to the research

CSSA/MACSAS Church Times	n=29 n=8
Counsellor told them about research	n=4
Daily Mail letter	n=4
Unspecified advertisement	n=3
Pastors told women about research	n=2
We are Church group	n=1
Safety Net group	n=1
Rape Crisis Centre	n=1
Radio programme (Woman's Hour)	n=1
Radio 4 (Sunday Programme)	n=1
Television programme (BBC)	n=1
News of the World	n=1
CCPAS Magazine	n=1
POPAN newsletter	n=1
Eisteach	n=1
Flame	n=1
Friend	n=1
7-11	n=1
Not Known	n=2
Total	n=63

Ninety-six women who fulfilled both of the following criteria below were sent a copy of the questionnaire to complete:

- were or had been Christian;
- had been/were sexually involved with clergy in the pastoral relationship.

This second criterion meant the women were either parishioners of the Church where the clergyperson under discussion was a pastor/minister or priest or were women who had sought out the clergyperson for help, support, advice, spiritual direction or counselling/therapy. The former group of women did not in fact apply to be part of this research and this may be a

reflection that women in these circumstances do not identify as 'clients' of the priest and therefore do not perceive the sexual relationship as either exploitation or misconduct.

There is wide debate on whether women attending Church and in 'relationship' with the Church priest or pastor should be included as women who are 'clients' (to use the vocabulary of professional-person contact). The position of this thesis is that since the clergy person has a role vis-a-vis all parishioners with an ethical mandate of "duty of care". He by virtue of his role and training is more powerful, as spiritual teacher, or advisor, than parishioners. This power imbalance results in inequality between the clergyperson and parishioners.

The envisaged wide catchment as a sample for this study would have enabled a comparison of women not in a position of asking for help, with women who sought help. This could not be achieved due to no women in this former category coming forward.

The disadvantages of the wide criterion is that the study might have become confused for all, as 'exploitation', though sometimes acknowledged by women in relationships with clergy, is rarely seen as something that should be challenged or sanctions demanded.

On return of the questionnaires, some exclusions (n=2) had to be made, as they did not meet the study criteria, one was of physical abuse, another of emotional abuse. In total, 63 women took part in the study by completing research questionnaires, 19 of whom were also interviewed. Two of the 63 women had had more than one experience of clergy sexual exploitation by different clergymen, making a total of 65 cases of sexual exploitation in the sample. These two women completed two separate questionnaires; one on each experience and one was also interviewed. In addition, it emerged that the same clergyman had exploited three of the 63 women, thus there were 61 perpetrators. These variations affect the way the data have been analysed and are referred to here, since each group, whether women, clergy or cases, has a slightly different base number. Therefore, data relating to the individual women (as research participants and victim-survivors) are based on a total of 63 women; data on clergy (as perpetrators of sexual exploitation) are based on a total of 61 men; and data on experiences of exploitation are based on a total of 65 cases. In each instance, results are presented on the basis of the question being answered. There are some missing data, as some participants did not answer all questions

Why interview?

The feminist research paradigm suits 'sensitive research', and 'holds' the pain and feelings of respondents by offering support and empathy throughout an interview. For this reason Oakley (1997:41) calls traditional non-feminist approach as 'morally indefensible'.

It becomes clear that, in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship.

Nevertheless such a stance can prove problematic or open to criticism and Oakley (2005) herself has changed her position more recently. The 'friendliness' of the researcher could encourage women to disclose more than they would have wished on reflection. Ethically, this means that the data obtained might transcend that which the interviewee intended and researchers are more bound to protect this information and use it wisely and carefully. My concern about confidentiality and safety are evident in careful annotation and locking of tapes, transcripts and questionnaires in a secure filing cabinet within my home.

The activist has other issues to address. The fact that I was a survivor of clergy sexual exploitation caused some deliberation on my part. For the interviewees, there may have been some advantages that I too was a survivor of clergy exploitation. Most participants knew I ran a clergy abuse support organisation. Many had read my leaflet on clergy exploitation. Some had known me for a long time. This may have deepened trust and may have resulted in what Burgess (1980:109) calls a '*sustained relationship between informant and the researcher*'.

As well as managing my two roles as researcher and counsellor (with my strongest efforts to maintain the first), I worried that I might 'contaminate' the data because I, too, was a survivor. I wondered if in knowing this, participants might have felt constrained about articulating their own views. This might have been particularly so those who had not identified their experience as exploitative and reversely others who might have disclosed more than they intended. The view of Hester, Kelly and Radford, (1996:3) reassured me:

Within a feminist frame researchers' own experiences of sexual violence are recognised as significant to the research process, both in terms of the effect we may have on the ways and extent to which women articulate and name

their experiences of sexual violence, and our knowledge and understanding of our own experience

Research on interviewer effect by Sudman and Bradburn (1974) concluded that in many instances interviewer effects do not exist or are small. However, where the topic is sensitive there may be an 'interviewer effect'. Females, for example, were more comfortable when interviewed by a female interviewer (Lee, 1999:100).

Rapoport and Rapoport (1976:31) also suggest that the quality of the data is not compromised by a close relationship with the interviewee.

[Data which relies] very much on the formulation of a relationship between interviewer and interviewee [i]s an important element in achieving the quality of information...required.

My interviewees and I shared partial identification in the experience of clergy sexual exploitation. We had full identification in the experience of being a woman but even here our experiences were different according to context, culture and class. There were factors that we did not share. Our religious traditions were often different, our social class was sometimes different, our marital statuses were different and our citizenship and nationality were sometimes different. Even the fact I was designated 'researcher' made a 'difference' to some.

The interviews

The interviews initially explored childhood and background up to meeting the clergy in question. This included any history of abuse, domestic violence or other traumatic circumstances. It also included history of family's affiliation to Church and interviewees experience of faith and Church growing up and prior to meeting clergyman. Moving on, the women were then asked to explore how they met the clergyman, their personal circumstances at the time. Women were asked about the initial sexual contact and how exploitation or sexual/intimate contact progressed. They were asked about their responses to sexual intimacy that was enfolding and how they coped. They were asked how the contact was terminated and repercussions of others finding out, whether they told anyone or reported to officials and their responses too. Finally present circumstances were explored, repercussions of the experience, aftermath and legacy of what had happened. They furthermore offered suggestions to Churches to stop more women being harmed.

In interviewing women the intention was to hear how they made sense of their experience in the context of both their faith and place in the Christian Community and the effects on their lives and social relationships. Interviews help one to observe more closely the psychological and emotional effects of exploitation on women and understand the outcomes more fully.

Interviews were conducted with 19 women. There were originally 20 but one was too ill to be interviewed (not the woman who died). From 63 women who completed the questionnaires it was necessary to decide which 20 I would interview; the selection of participants was purposive. In purposive sampling members of a sample are chosen with a 'purpose', to represent a location or type in relation to a key criterion. This has two principal aims. The first is to ensure that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered. The second is to ensure that, within each of the key criteria, some diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristic can be explored (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:79).

The sample units were chosen because they had particular features or characteristics, which would enable detailed exploration and understanding of the themes and puzzles I wished to study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:78). They could potentially 'tell me what I wanted to know' (Mason, 1996:90). My 'sampleable unit' (Mason, 1996:86) was women, but not *all* women. The criteria for this element of the study were; Christian women; exploited by clergy/ministers *in the pastoral setting*, and a spread of denominations.

Denominational spread was difficult to achieve since the majority belonged to the Catholic or Anglican Churches, so that the sample was more constrained than originally envisaged. The final sample, for example only contains two members of "House" Churches (Table 5.4:150).

Selection not only represented a range of denominations, but also within these different strands of belief such as traditional, liberal, evangelical and Pentecostal. I was careful to also include women who described their situation as 'love', and some who described theirs as 'exploitation'. In the questionnaires, the latter proved to be the larger group. Women from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland were also represented. I also selected some women who had specific experiences such as one case where a woman had been made pregnant by her clergy-psychotherapist; women who were told they were possessed and women who said they

had been raped and sexually assaulted. I also selected some women who had gone through official Church reporting processes.

Safety for women participants and ethical guidelines

Once women had expressed an interest in participating, a letter with guidance and a consent form were sent (see Samples in appendix 4) to a secure address. With women who were previously known, security was assured but it was difficult to broach this with those I did not know. It was impossible to be sure whether partners/husbands were aware of the woman's experience and a cautious approach was taken to minimise the risk of recriminations. A simple form was sent asking if the address was 'safe' and it was left to each woman to determine what that might mean to her. In all cases the answer was in the affirmative. Women who were being interviewed adopted additional safety strategies to distance themselves from their usual environment by asking to meet for interviews in hotels, cars, parks or other neutral places.

The guidance concerning how this research would be undertaken was written with reference to the London Metropolitan University, British Sociological Association and Social Research Association guidelines. It was laid out in a question and answer format, which anticipated the questions the women might want to ask, and answered them. This was a very successful method of sharing the ethical and methodological process of the research.

Those willing to undertake an interview were asked to sign a contract form (appendix 5) to the interview and being tape-recorded. I explained that as I was partially deaf the transcriptions would be undertaken by an experienced university transcriber, who had signed a confidentiality agreement. Interviewees were informed that they would receive two copies of the transcript, one to keep and one to make further comments on if they so wished. All transcripts were sent recorded delivery and with no identifying features other than the return address on the envelope in case of loss. Respondents were asked to return amended transcripts to me without a covering letter (they were identifiable to me through a numerical code) to further safeguard their identity.

Pre-interview, women gave written permission for:

- use of their nominated safe address during the research process;

- to be interviewed;
- to transcription of the interview by another person;
- use of material within the bounds of confidentiality.

As the researcher, I agreed to:

- safeguard their identity;
- destroy tapes at the end of the research period;
- send hard copies of the interview transcript;
- allow amendments.

All researchers require support, particularly in difficult or potentially emotionally upsetting contexts. Ethical guidance for research refers to this quite clearly. The dangers of not seeking supervision and support lie largely with skewing of interviews or analysis such that validity is compromised. I was fully cognizant that having endured clergy sexual molestation, albeit 25 years previously, I needed to be especially careful. The impact of this and the interviews was fully explored in supervision to circumvent research contamination or bias. Emotionally difficult times were absorbed and supported by the CWASU research unit personnel. At no time did I feel unable to deal with my own emotions and I was fully able to be in a safe place that safeguarded me and participants.

Interviews were semi-structured in order to 'explore in depth'. (Kane & O'Reilly-De Brún, 2001:115), using a topic guide (see Appendix 6). Some women raised issues outside the guide some of which were relevant.

Interviews took place in venues requested by respondents. Some of the choices were significant. One woman, a religious sister chose to come to my office for fear that she might be identified by her religious order. Another wanted to be interviewed in her car as she said she would not let me see her 'place' since it was so messy. She explained she was barely coping and was ashamed about the state of her home. We drove to a park. One woman from Scotland was in London and an interview took place at a mainline station before she returned. Her husband was present, as they had travelled from Scotland together. He was able to add

important technical details regarding Church law, but largely remained on the sidelines. Five interviews took place in a hotel; I was teaching in several areas and arranged for the women to come to the hotel. Five took place in the woman's home, three in my office, two on Church Premises, and one on a university campus.

One woman wanted me to hear what her male partner had to say. I was not sure whether she really wanted this but he was insistent and had spent hours writing out everything that had happened to him and his partner. He was not present when I interviewed his partner. It turned out that he was a child abuse survivor and needed support himself. This interview, though recorded (so as to make him feel included), was not appropriate to use in the research. Another woman made dinner and I met with her husband after the interview. All three men were very supportive of their wives/partner.

Post interview

As with Oakley (1997) and Mies (1991), women in my research did what women do: they offered me hospitality in their homes, gave me tea and cakes. One older woman had prepared a lovely lunch, with paper napkins at a table, each plate covered in cling-film to await the end of our interview. I wondered whether this effort was a treat for me after travelling very far to hear her story, or perhaps a thank-you for listening after years of no one doing so! In many instances we made tea in kitchens together, walked around gardens discussing gardening and went to a park and watched passers-by. We discussed herbal remedies for old age, hobbies and children or not being able to have children, illnesses and loss. I even had my first spin on the back of a heavy-duty motorbike as one woman gave me a lift back to a train station!

At the end of interviews time was put aside for me to explain more about my work, to discuss any issues women wanted to look at further. Some had not been fully aware of the exploitative nature of the clergy context but post-interview were, in fact, ready to face this and could see after the developmental progress of the interview how it all worked out. Some were unaware of the growing literature in this field or about the work in America on professionals who abuse their clients, whilst others had read things on the subject, particularly Rutter's (1989) book *Sex in the Forbidden Zone*. I was always conscious of a great wish that I should not leave with them feeling that I was merely exploiting their experiences for my ends – the PhD.

Did this constitute enmeshment and being 'over-involved' or was this simply a sister being with a sister? Was I a traveller or a miner? I believe this is the gendered nature of the research process; throughout the time I focused on my task, I developed relationships with the women and this has meant the data are rich in women's stories.

A few days after the interview I telephoned interviewees to ascertain how they were. I knew from experience that discussing abuse/exploitation evokes memories and may raise difficult emotions. It is an ethical obligation to one does 'no more harm'. In some cases, several calls were made over a period of time. In only one case was I very concerned about a woman; she declined further contact.

Some said they were stirred up by the interview others that they were okay. Those whom I could not contact I wrote to. Some replied; others did not. I was reluctant to 'chase' interviewees and felt they needed space to re-settle themselves. After a month or two I rang again and in all but two cases was able to make contact and all was well. All were offered a transcript of their interview. Not all chose to take this up, though in two cases I suspect that the interview had been very painful and they did not want to revisit it.

This study does not claim to be representative of *all women* sexually abused and exploited by clergy. Though larger than any previous study, the sample is small and some denominations and groups, such as black and minority ethnic groups, are minimally represented. In addition, women were self-selecting as participants. Importantly, it adds to the lack of research done on this issue and adds to the knowledge base on women's experiences as victims of this form of gender violence.

Reflections on the research design

The questionnaires and interviews met the needs of this research. Those who completed the questionnaires wrote supplementary comments, which were full of detail and rich in content. There was, for some, an effort to use every spare space on the questionnaire to tell their story, which indicated a desire to be heard, the relief of being asked or the willingness to share. Some added up to six pages of written text. I sensed that being asked was like offering water to thirsty people.

It was difficult to convey my appreciation to women who were markedly wounded, in supporting me in this research. The willingness to trawl their past was courageous. I remember all of them.

My only regret is that I failed to surmount the tricky task of contacting women years on from the start of the PhD for fear of breaching confidentiality or causing distress and exposure. I may try to circulate a flyer with details of a monograph or paper based on this research.

Data Analysis

Holliday (2002:99) describes how it is difficult to capture the data when located in what he describes as 'the mélange of social life'. Data must be organised and analysed. In order to demonstrate how the 'mélange of social life', in this case sexual exploitation, has been constructed out of the women's reality it is important to outline how the material of this research was analysed and demonstrate how the final results have been constructed.

At this point I had a vast array of material from several sources.

- 65 Questionnaires;
- Interviews with 19 women (two-hour tape transcriptions);
- Interviews with 19 key informants;
- Of above, 10 Church leaders were taped (one- two hour tape transcriptions);

The questionnaires contained topics similar to the interview process (see appendix 3). Covering details of upbringing, religious affiliation, and how they met the clergyperson. Questions were asked about the sexual contact, and their responses to it. Further questions explored whether they told anyone or officially reported. How long the contact lasted and how they extricated themselves. At the end of the first questionnaire women were asked about the repercussions and aftermath as well as asking what recommendations they would make to their Churches.

A second questionnaire was sent as I reflected on some missing data particularly concerning the alleged abuser. It included questions on the abuser's religious affiliation, whether he was single or married, whether the woman knew of other women also involved and whether he

made connections that his exploitative behaviour was because of any of her presenting difficulties.

The questionnaires contained a series of closed questions with pre-set responses, as well as spaces for respondents to elaborate and record additional comments. This generated both quantitative and qualitative data. For this reason, two methods of analysis were employed. Firstly, for the quantitative data, a database to enter and analyse responses was created with the help of an experienced researcher. Secondly, the qualitative data from the comment sections of the questionnaires were typed up, grouping comments from all participants each question together. These were indexed using a coding schedule. This was not a simple process as each comment might relate to several codes/issues.

Interviews were guided by a schedule that would help women speak through the stages of their journey. This was not rigidly adhered to if women wanted to proceed differently but I endeavoured to secure the data required at some point in the interview. I especially wanted to progress through the journey of women from childhood through to aftermath and the present moment. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and indexed for analysis.

Analysing the interview data using Framework

The analytical method used to work with the data was 'Framework'. Framework has its genesis in grounded theory. This method was developed during the 1980s and is now widely used in qualitative research. Ritchie and Lewis (2003:220) describe it as follows:

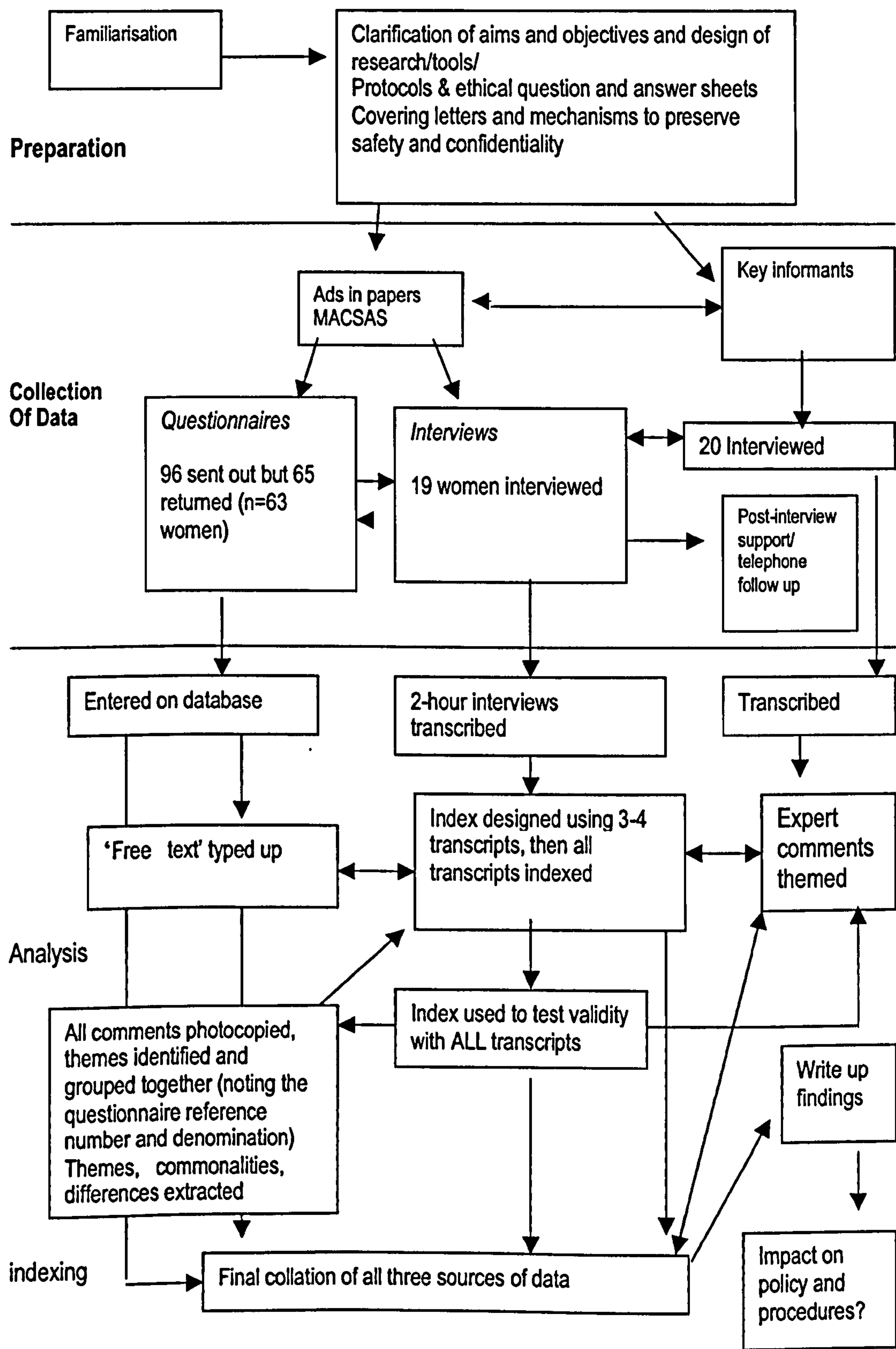
It is a matrix based analytic method, which facilitates rigorous and transparent data management such that all the stages involved in the 'analytical hierarchy' can be systematically conducted. It also allows the analyst to move back and forth between different levels of abstraction without losing sight of the 'raw data'

The process of data analysis and conceptualisation continues until categories and relationships are 'saturated', that is new data does not add to the developing framework (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:201).

Framework helps classify and organise data according to key themes, concepts and emergent categories. The aim of hearing the woman's journey from beginning to end required an

extensive indexing system. Framework allows the researcher to systematically work through the raw data in a way that is manageable and meaningful. Figure 3.2 is a flow diagram depicting how I organised this data using Framework

Figure 3.2: Organisation of the research using framework ©Kennedy M



In order to determine a coding frame/index I took several transcripts and worked with them to discern the common and less common features.

Table 3.3 below illustrates this with respect to 'Meeting the clergyman'. The first column includes what the woman said; the second column is initial wording for meaning. After several transcripts themes emerged so that I was able to design an effective indexing schedule. Doing this exercise the value of a developmental and longitudinal look at the journey of women was confirmed.

Table 3.3: Initial indexing from interview transcripts

Meeting the priest	Initial analysis	Index
Priest talked about sex, so she viewed him as 'open minded'	How she initially viewed him	3.1.3
Met him via husbands work doing films on marital guidance for the Church	Idiosyncratic	3.1
Active in Church/a lot of contact with priest	Parishioner	3.1
Wanted annulment so asked to see priest one-to-one	Pastoral relationship	4.1
Saw him not as 'friend' but as pastor	Her perception of Priest/minister	3.3.1
Saw as professional/father figure	Her perception of Priest/minister	3.3.1
Hug on first visit/kiss on forehead	He initiated physical intimate contact	4.2
Met in priest's house		
In sitting room, tea, warm, safe attention	Ambience of first meeting	4.2
He suggested I come back	He takes initiative to see her again	4.2.1
2nd visit probing about sex/kiss on lips, hug	He's asking for more	4.2.2
1st priest: Kiss: 'Giving me affection I craved'	Acknowledges her deprivation/ need for affection	4.2.6
He said she was his friend; reason for kiss	Blurring professional boundaries	4.2.1
Said he hadn't any girlfriends at the moment	Admits relationship with others	4.2.1
She was 'totally confused'	Her feelings	4.2.6

The subsequent data was not sorted using a computer; rather an 'old fashioned' method was chosen – pen and large sheets of wallpaper lining. First, it was necessary to see if the indexes highlighted any new directions for my study. This was done by charting the all indexes down one side and all the case references above. Each index was ticked if referred to. Table 3.4 illustrates some of the results.

Table 3.4: Example of indexing of interview transcripts

Case	1	2	3	4	6	9	13	14	15	18	26	40	61	63	64	70	72	73	88
4.1	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/			/		/	/	/	/		/
4.2	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
4.2.1	/	/		/			/		/	/	/								

Index 4.1, ‘Sort of help being offered by clergyman’, revealed that 14 of the 19 interviewed women were being helped in some way by the clergyman.

For index 4.2, ‘Incidents of assault/sexual contact’, all reported at least one. 4.2.1 ‘Grooming’ reveals that seven women mentioned grooming themselves. With further analysis, and by looking at the behaviour of the clergyman under other indexes it emerges that more women were, in fact, groomed. What this analysis showed was that the coding’s were appropriate and highlighted for further study the high level of aggression within the exploitation. The next task was to take each index and note what each woman said. I took the whole transcripts of what women said, in relation to each index, recorded it in the relevant column, noted the page reference and finally took key points from it as below. This process was repeated across the entire interviews.

The example in Figure 3.3 illustrates it is possible to discern several reasons for reporting: to vindicate oneself; to have something on record; for him to be part of official statistics; because he was a risk/dangerous; to get compensation; to take power back; to receive an apology; and for him to be removed.

Figure 3.3: Example of thematic analysis: what makes women report

Index	2 RC	4Ang	6Ang	9RC	13Quaker	15Ang	64Ang
7.1 What made her report	...That I needed to vindicate myself (p34)	Being my own boss (p1)					To take some power back (p28)
		Own Authority (p2)					
	For him to say sorry (p2)	Maturity of age (p3)					
	Removed from parish (p3)	Enough was enough(p4)					
	Compensation (p4)	I wanted to be part of blowing (p5) the whistle		Needed an apology (p1&p20)		I didn't report taken out of my hands (p32 & 33)	
		To have a statistic on it (p6)	Concerned he may be a killer (p19) Concerned about local children going missing (p30)		I thought he was a risk, (p24) a danger to women (p25)		
		Authorities to have something on record (p8)					
		Put him on blacklist (p9)					

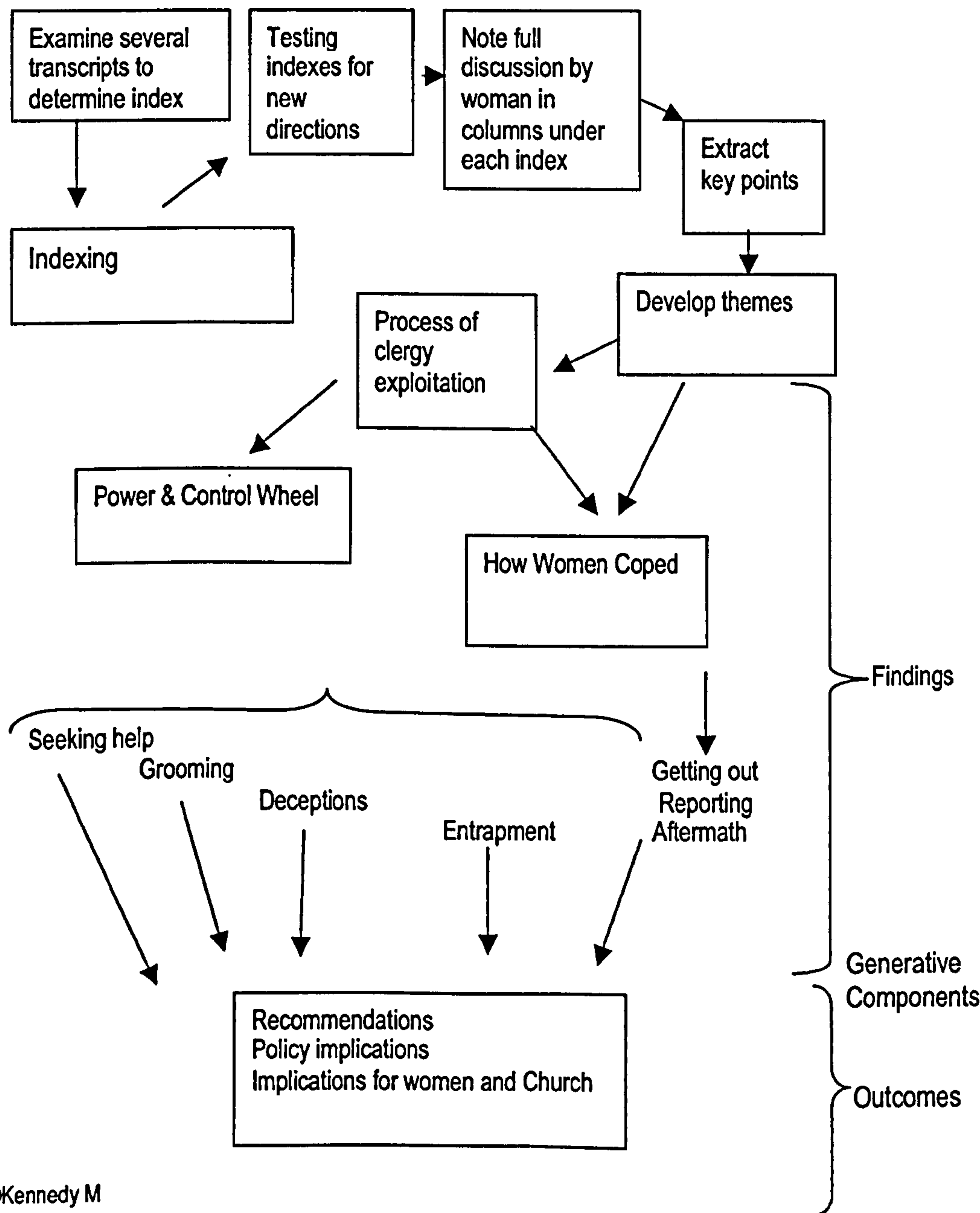
By linking with arrows one can see several women have similar reasons for reporting. The next stage of Framework can be described as ‘thematic charting’. It can be seen above that women report for three distinct reasons (Themes):

- something for herself (personal);
- to protect others;
- to have the clergyman recognised as an abuser (policy & procedures).

These themes are incorporated into the relevant chapters where specific ‘data generation’ is discussed, in this case ‘reporting’ (see Chapter 6).

The next figure shows how the data analysis and framework approach feeds into and structures the empirical chapters which follow; the high level of themes, core issues have become the chapters:

Figure 3.4: Framework analysis



Conclusions

It is important to ask whether and how this analysis 'framework' worked and fitted with feminist theory. Key questions here are: whether the women's voices came through? Whether the process of the research honoured their participation and experience? And whether new data, new insights, new ways forward were generated.

I believe the process of the research did honour the women's participation because this was the first opportunity many had to talk about their experience. Their voice was indeed very much part of the research and heard. Finishing the study further honours them, as the new insights they brought will be disseminated widely in publications. Together as 'travelers' and 'explorers' we have charted new waters and in coming in to land we will offer new suggestions for ways forward.

The academic process can be alien to life's journey but feminism has created a theoretical perspective that does allow less of a separation between informant and researcher – the activity can be collaborative. As a method, Framework digs deep into the narrative of women and allows a structured approach.

In this process the application of 'structures' and 'framework' does not detract from the human endeavour of respondent and researcher talking about painful things in sisterly companionship.

Women did value taking part of the research, as it gave them a sense of both being heard and contributing to change.

I would like to say that it gives me great comfort to know that there are people working so hard to not only bring this abuse to an end but also being strong enough to stand up to such a huge institution that is riddled with lies, deceit and corruption, despite professing endlessly about love, forgiveness and honesty. (Q79/RC)

I very much value being part of this research and the issues in this questionnaire are still very important to me. I have never been able to gain any justice from the [consistory] court case; being a further part of this research would be a way of 'making it count' and, more importantly, so that any victims of the future will have a more improved support system and a fairer hearing. (Q15/Ang)

Although some found participation difficult or upsetting because it returned memories of the experience to the fore, they completed the questionnaires, offering a vital contribution to the research.

I found the questionnaires quite disturbing to fill in. It has brought back the horror of it all. (Q34/RC)

I am finding this too painful to fill in at the moment. It makes me feel as if I could have done something to prevent it. I think because I am physically run down (with an infection) I am not coping well with doing this. (Q21/URC)

Although in considerable pain, this last participant added that she would, and wanted to, be in a position to assist at a later stage.

I really want to help with this work, so I don't want you to worry about me. I get through these bad patches. To me it is important that this research is done and published. Even if you want to interview me I will cope with that too. (Q21-URC)

Another woman was wary of reviving painful memories and of leaving a record of her experience that could be recovered from her computer, but she still chose to contribute information to the study.

I am sorry to have written so much extra words by hand – I dare not type anything that might one day be recoverable from the hard drive!

I feel there is a lot more I would want to say but don't know where to start – it would be like opening up a can of particularly painful worms! Will I get a second chance later on? (Q18-Ang)

It is these voices that made the study urgent and placed considerable ethical responsibility on the researcher, to both protect confidentiality and produce 'useful' knowledge.

Chapter 4: Getting in – Getting trapped

This chapter is the first of four dedicated to the findings from the research. It describes the context of women’s lives, which led them to seek support from clergy. It is essential here to explore why these cases can be understood as exploitative, with particular respect to the dynamics of power and authority inherent in the clergy-parishioner relationship. It also examines how many women were drawn into and entrapped in a ‘relationship’, not of their initiation or choosing and were unable to escape. It demonstrates how the involvement developed, documenting the patterns and progress of exploitative contact.

The chapter charts the process of what this thesis terms ‘getting in-getting trapped’. Key themes include seeking support within Christian infrastructures, clergy as professionals and the re-victimisation of women.

Clergy background and relationship to parishioner

The sample of 65 cases in this study involved a total of 63 clergy. One clergyman was responsible for sexually exploiting three women who participated in the research. The denominations of the clergy are presented in Table 4.1. This breakdown is broadly reflected in the in the interviewed group.

Table 4.1: Clergy’s denomination in questionnaire and interview samples

Denomination	Number of cases in questionnaire sample	% of questionnaire sample	Number of cases in interview sample	% of interview sample
Anglican	25	40	6	32
Roman Catholic	23	37	7	37
Baptist	4	6	-	-
House Church	2	3	2	11
Methodist	2	3	1	5
Assemblies of God	1	2	-	-
Pentecostal	1	2	1	5
Quaker	1	2	1	5
URC	1	2	-	-
Other	1	2	1	5
Unknown	2	3	-	-
Total	63	100	19	100

Based on n=63 clergy

Christian women seeking assistance

Women as 'Eve', it is asserted, *'are born with a tragic flaw, and therefore must depend on the perfect father and other persons with authority to reveal the truth'* (Brown & Bohn 1989:52).

Feminist theologians such as Mary Daly (1973) and Carter Hayward (1994) argue that Christianity encourages an unhealthy idolatry or Christolatry – an idolisation of Jesus as the one, unique revelation of God. This is considered particularly harmful for women, because it reinforces the notion of emotional dependence on men (Slee, 2003:52). Slee calls this an idolatry problem.

Christian women are seven times more likely to seek assistance with marriage and family problems from clergy (86%) than mental health professionals (12.5%) (Gengler & Lee, 2001:44). Several studies show that victims of domestic violence more often turned to their religious leaders for guidance and assistance than other secular sources of support (Alsdurf & Adlsdorf, 1988; Bowker, 1982; Hage, 2000). This may be due to the trust and respect women have for clergy or in some denominations the injunctions to seek God's help first. Women's religiosity thus, paradoxically, enhances their vulnerability and adherence to Church expectations (Van Wormer & Bems, 2004:59).

Women in this study continued the trend of seeking male helpers more commonly than female following the abusive contact with clergy. Helpers were not always clergy but included male doctors, psychologists, friends and clergy. Thus when analysing help from others in the interview transcripts it was noted 39 male helpers, 26 female helpers and in four cases the gender of helper is unknown.

An analysis of the initial relationship between the clergy and women in the sample shows that clergy were located in positions of trust, power and authority from the outset. For instance, when asked about the nature of the original relationship between them in 63 per cent of cases (n=41) women said that clergy were parish priests/pastors/ministers (see Table 4.2). The 7 per cent (n=11) who were supervisors, tutors and employers also held a position of authority. The 'other' category comprised clergy who women saw outside their parish in positions of trust, such as therapists, counsellors and spiritual directors. It is important to recognise that clergy were therefore almost exclusively occupying positions of power in relation to the women.

Table 4.2: Clergy's relationship to the victim when first met

Clergy's role	Number of cases	%
Parish priest/minister/leader	41	63
Course supervisor/tutor	4	6
Employer	3	5
Work colleague	1	2
Other	16	25
Total	65	100

*Based on 65 cases

Table 4.3: What women went to clergy for

Type of assistance	Number of responses	% of cases
Support/personal difficulties	27	42
Spiritual direction	18	28
Help during marital difficulties	10	16
To discuss past childhood difficulties/sexual abuse	8	13
Advice	7	11
Other	17	27

*Multiple responses possible, percentages based on 64 cases where the question was answered

Of those who responded 'other', two did not answer the question, two clergy were involved in youth leadership where women were helping, one was in danger and he rescued her, two were offered clergy's support in times of difficulties, three met the clergyperson in the context of parish work, one woman was trying to help the clergyman with *his* problems, one was student having tutorials from clergyman, one wanted a Church position and met clergyman about that, another was receiving help from clergyman in tracing relative. Three women were attacked/assaulted; one when given a lift home, one when taken to view new Church, and another when she visited his Church.

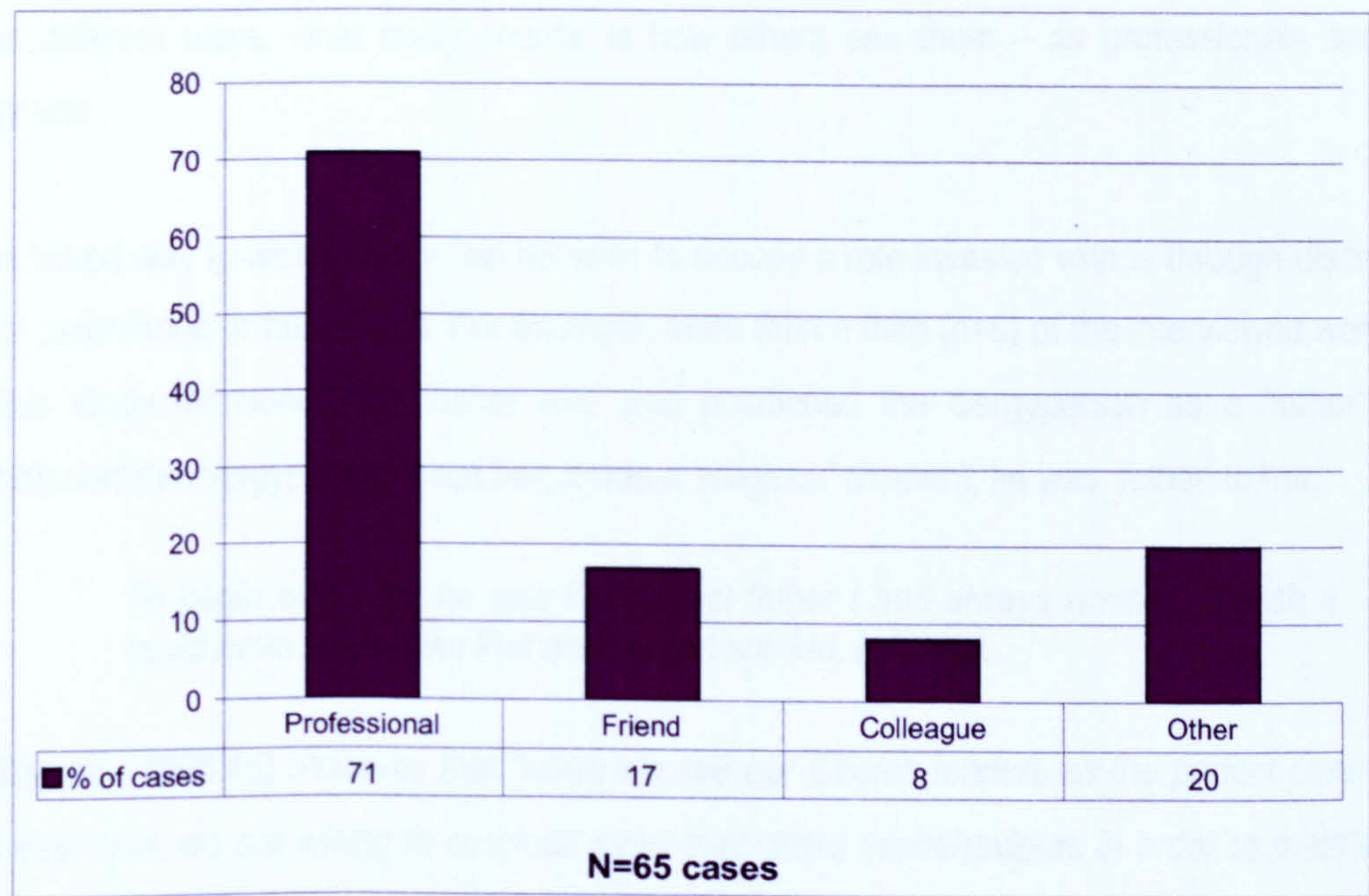
Originally women made contact with male clergy for a variety of reasons but all these were linked to seeking support or advice in some way.

These findings suggest a professional context in which the women were 'clients' or workers in the parish, and the clergy were in a professional role, highlighting an inherent power imbalance.

Clergy as professionals

The questionnaire took into account confusion about the role of clergy by asking how women perceived the clergy they sought help from. Participants were asked if they saw clergy as a professional, friend, colleague or something else. Data analysis showed that in the majority of cases (n=46, 71%) the women viewed the clergyman as a professional and perceived themselves to be in a professional-client relationship (fig 4.1)

Figure 4.1: How women viewed clergy



In contrast, it appears that clergy are reluctant to view themselves as professionals preferring the notion of 'vocation' instead. In an unpublished survey (Kennedy, 2000)¹⁸ male clergy said that professionalising ministry would diminish the spiritual and transcendent dimension of 'priesthood'. Female clergy were more likely to view their role as professional and attach authority to the role. It is possible that some male clergy valued their powerful links to God and therefore feared loss of numinous¹⁹ power.

¹⁸ Survey conducted for MACSAS (2000) in which a small group of clergy (n=21) from all denominations, 11 female and 10 male, were asked about their perception of their role. The survey asked three simple questions: 1) Do you think priests or ordained ministers are **professionals**? 2) Do you think to be a Priest or Minister is to belong to a *profession* (similar to doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists etc)? 3) Do you think Priesthood or ordained Ministry should be regarded as a *profession*?

¹⁹ Numinous: spiritual power; that from God.

Some have argued that the spiritual dimension should enhance awareness of authority and power. In terms of guidance for clergy, there is clearly a distinction between where authority is located. Gula (1996:11) contends that because pastoral ministry is a religious vocation: *“we must even more respect the responsibilities that come with being a professional”* (original emphasis). It is clear that at the outset women’s perception of the sort of ‘contract’ they were entering into when seeking advice or help from clergy was a professional one.

Crucially for this study Loftus (1994:16,44) notes that although clergy may define their ministry in different ways, what really counts, is how others see them – as professionals and with power.

A linked way in which clergy can be seen to occupy a role invested with is through discourses of parenthood or fatherhood. For example, more than a third (n=8) of the interviewed women in this study mentioned the ‘father role’ and positioned the clergyperson as a ‘father’. One believed the clergyperson loved her; it was a ‘religious’ moment, he was ‘father’ to her;

To begin with I felt he was the perfect father I had always wanted. I wish it could have stayed like that and not get spoiled. (14/Ang)

Benyei, (1998:45) observes that *“when we see our Church leaders as the perfect parents we never had, we are willing to overlook even their gross misbehaviours in order to maintain our very clearly held illusion”*. Such a paradigm implicitly positions parishioners as ‘children’, a view, which has been fostered by Church authorities over many decades; such parishioners are in a weak position should power be abused.

Since two thirds of women did *not* perceive clergy as father figures, this is only one of the multiple meanings the position of clergy holds. Nevertheless, the use of a parental model by some victims still locates a form of authority with them. The issues of power and authority will be discussed in the next chapter and will highlight how complex the sexual exploitation of adult parishioners by clergy really is.

Vulnerability: taking advantage, re-victimization

Chapter two outlined how, over centuries, women in Christianity have been encouraged to be submissive and, as temptresses, to be controlled. One of the ways this has achieved is through

directing women to be humble. Jamieson (1997:26), the first female Anglican Bishop, comments:

Deeper and more damaging are the many strong injunctions on women to serve, in humble and lowly manner, and to do so uncomplainingly. Vulnerability is a much-lauded virtue... (Emphasis added by Kennedy).

Vulnerability, taught as 'humility,' may create a conducive context for sexual exploitation since it encourages passivity and submission. This was then exacerbated by the situation of women which led them to seek help.

Their self esteem and self-belief was very low: 85 per cent (n=55) of women described themselves as 'vulnerable' at the time of seeking help, with only six describing themselves as 'strong'. Almost two-thirds, 60 per cent, (n=39) saw this vulnerability as a factor in what happened. One interviewee explained how her particular circumstances had played a part in her exploitation.

Yes, [vulnerability was a factor] I was very vulnerable in lots of ways. I had very deep depression, been in hospital a lot. Very needy. Unloved. I was an easy target for anyone. (Q38/Ang)

Gartrell et al (1986), Russell (1986) and Herman (1992) all note the increased likelihood of re-targeting of women who have been previously abused.

The risk of rape, sexual harassment, or battering, though high for all women, is approximately doubled for survivors of childhood sexual abuse (Herman, 1992:111).

The data on re-victimization has mounted since Herman's groundbreaking book. Tjaden and Thoennes, (2000) in a national random sample survey in the US found that women raped before age 18 have double the risk of being raped in adulthood. Classen, Palesh and Aggarwal, (2005:4) reviewed 90 studies of adult re-victimization among child sexual abuse survivors and found an average re-victimization rate among them 2.5 times that of woman who had not been abused.

Similarly in this study, one of the key ways women were ‘vulnerable’ was through their histories of abuse prior to their seeking help from clergy (table 4.4). Of those who completed the questionnaire, sixty per cent (n=38) stated they had been previously abused and provided details of the types of abuse. The largest category of abuse was emotional abuse; 71 per cent (n=27), with sexual abuse close behind at 66 per cent (n=25).

Table 4.4: Prevalence of forms of abuse in those abused as children

Form of abuse	Number of responses	% of cases
Emotional	27	71
Sexual	25	66
Physical	16	42
Neglect	8	21

*Multiple responses possible, n= 38

Penfold (1998) and Sipe (1990) have both argued that women’s stories about sexual abuse/rape become ‘pomography’, ‘a form of sex’ which becomes titillating to the clergy/therapist. This may account for why so many women are re-victimised by therapists or clergy when they disclose past sexual abuse (Adams & Fortune, 1995:19).

In 28 per cent (n=18) of the questionnaire sample clergy were aware of childhood sexual abuse, and in 32 per cent (n=21) they knew of marital difficulties. In 12 cases women said the clergyman cited these factors as justification for sexual contact, either as healing or ‘romantic’ deception (see below). ‘Romantic’ here describes how clergy emotionally manipulated women into believing the clergyman was in love with them and naming the contact as genuine love. Usually he persuades her it is mutual. Impairment and ill health may have been a vulnerability factor for some women, especially mental distress. There were disabled and ill women in this study, 11 per cent (n=7) were disabled²⁰ and 40 per cent (n=25) had an illness. It is not known whether these conditions were present at the time of the exploitation.

In Christianity, virginity/purity is a high moral marker and the perceived lack of it may make women seen as ‘damaged goods’ and ‘fair game’ and thereby more of a target. The abusing therapist/clergy may excuse his abuse by telling himself that he cannot do her any further harm

²⁰ Disabled children/adults are between 1.6 and 4 times more likely to be sexually abused than non-disabled people (Crosse *et al.* 1993; Sullivan & Knudson, 1997).

than that which she has already suffered (Penfold:61). She is 'publicly deflowered', no longer deserving of protection or respect (Summit & Kryso, 1978 in Penfold, 1998:61).

Some theories of abuse reject the notion that vulnerability is a cause of sexual abuse/exploitation and argue that this is a perversion of logic, which amounts to blaming the victim.

Vulnerability is the setting in which abuse can take place, but is not the cause. The cause of the abuse is the failure of the abuser to respect the vulnerability, either deliberately or through sheer inattention, through neglect (Ormerods:34).

Flynn (2003:73) suggests perpetrators create vulnerability so that the victim's coping mechanisms are overwhelmed. Fortune (1992:38) argues clergy have greater powers and resources, meaning that those who do not share them are vulnerable.

Those who command fewer resources are vulnerable relative to them [clergy resources] (original emphasis).

When considering the impacts of these power imbalances, what matters is what the professional *does* and how he *behaves* in his fiduciary²¹ capacity of 'duty of care'. Parishioners might be vulnerable due to previous histories *and yet remain* safe; that they were not in the cases under study here tells us much about the clergyman's and Church leadership actions. Church leaders who, rejecting the professional nature of the role, dismiss or ignore the requirement for clergy to behave as a 'professional' thus leave women at greater risk of abuse/exploitation. Where women see clergy as professionals whom they can feel safe and comfortable enough with to disclose personal histories, this can make them more vulnerable.

The vulnerability of women is further compounded by church leaderships. This extends women's risk not only to clergy offenders but to leadership power. This and the professional role of clergy is addressed further in Chapter 5 and appendix 9.

²¹A breach of trust that does not require a professional duty of care (Bisbing, Jorganson & Sutherland, 1995)

Getting in

This next section explores how and when clergy initiated sexual contact. Various authors have described these mechanisms previously (for example: Carnes, 1997; Disch & Wohlberg, 1995; Fortune, 1992; Farrell, 2003; Penfold, 1998). The present research adds to, and in places critiques, previous research.

The timing of sexual contact is not necessarily an indicator of exploitation, but in this research it does show that more than a third of clergy were focused on sexual activity very early in the so-called 'relationship and **clergymen initiated the sexual contact in all cases**. For just under a third of women sexual contact was initiated within weeks of seeking help (see Table 4.5 below). For others it took over a year.

Table 4.5: How soon clergy initiated sexual contact

	Number of cases	%
At the first meeting	6	9
Within weeks	13	20
In the first 3 months	8	12
Between 3-6 months	7	11
Between 6-12 months	9	14
After about a year	8	12
Longer than a year	11	17
Some other time	3	5
Total	65	100

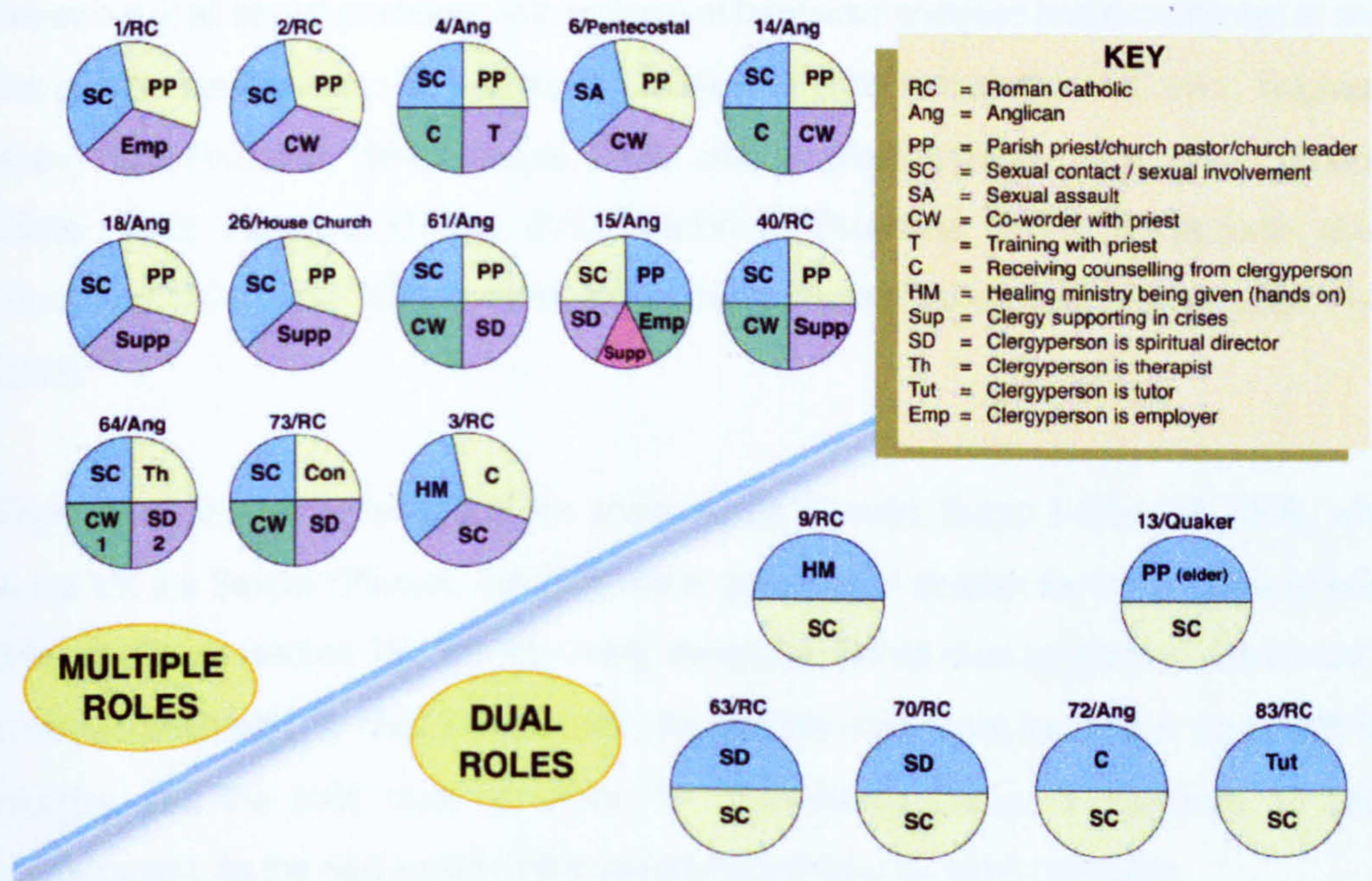
*based on 65 cases

Marie Fortune (1992) describes how clergy *over time* cross the appropriate boundary/space whereby woman and clergy are then in an 'intimate lover/familial' relationship which she calls 'mutual intimacy' whilst also an unacceptable 'dual relationship' (see Figure 4.5 below).

Fortune's (1992) conception of 'dual relationship', namely the roles of both clergy and lover, whilst revealing is incomplete since this study suggests the presence of multiple relationships, which is a more complex dynamic. For one woman, the Anglican priest was her psychotherapist (for which she paid), and he also encouraged her to run groups with him (as a co-worker), whilst being her spiritual director; all of these roles became sexualised. Figure 4.2

also shows that for the women who participated in interviews clergy took multiple roles in their lives (n=13 68%), whilst in 6 cases (32%) there were 'dual' roles.

Figure 4.2: Dual and multiple roles of clergy/minister (interviewed women)



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Dual and multiple roles between parishioners and clergy are not unusual. For instance, the clergyman can be both priest to a woman and, perhaps, run marriage guidance courses with her as a 'colleague'. However, given that he is always the more powerful in the Church context, when sex is added to the equation the relationship is imbalanced, for he alone has the power to stop any Church work the woman may love and value. He is, in fact, both her pastor and her employer but then adds a sexual component that 'looks' like a relationship.

Here questions arise concerning what is clergy malpractice and what is a 'breach of Fiduciary duty'. A claim of malpractice requires a breach of professional standard of care unique to that profession, whilst a breach of fiduciary duty is a breach of trust, which does not require a professional standard of care (Bisbing, Jorganson & Sutherland, 1995).

In both dual and multiple roles *in which there is sexual contact* between the clergy professional and client/parishioner both malpractice and breach of fiduciary duty pertain.

Targeting and grooming of women

Studies on re-victimization (see above) suggest that adult women are both targeted and groomed by men for further sexual violence. Targeting and/or grooming is noted in the behaviour of all sexual predators, with patterns of behaviour analysed and documented to show the precise mechanisms, for example, in relation to child sexual abuse (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998; Finklehor, 1984; Gillespie, 2004), child prostitution (Swann *et al*, 1998), (Cooper-White, 1995; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), professional abuse (Gonsoriak 1994; Jehu, 1994; Penfold, 1998), clergy abuse (Carnes, 1997; Farrell, 2003; Flynn 2003).

There is still little understanding of this phenomenon (Craven, Brown & Gilchrist, 2006), whilst in the UK the Sexual Offences Act 2003 made grooming of children for the purpose of sex a criminal offence (section 15). The Act clearly states the offence must be planned, there must be communication with the child at least twice, the offender must meet the child or travel with that intention and the child must be under 15. The offence carries a maximum 10 years imprisonment. As the next section will show grooming has a far wider relevance.

Farrell (2003:49) highlights how "*grooming [...] is an essential component of [clergy] work*", as in their role as priest they 'groom' people to the practice of Christianity. This is a feature of clergy training.

Targeting is the choosing by clergy exploiters of women for sexual exploitation. Grooming is how clergy engage women through behaviours, which deceive and confuse them.

From their review of the literature regarding child sexual abuse, Craven, Brown and Gilchrist (2006) found three types of sexual grooming: self-grooming; grooming the environment and significant others; and grooming the child. This research will look at two areas, 'self-grooming' and grooming women. One could consider that the lack of policies and procedures to control such clergy behaviour create a 'conducive context' for 'grooming the environment' (Kelly, 2007).

In child sexual abuse cases, sex offenders 'self-groom' to allow themselves to sexually abuse. Similarly, in the case of women, the Minister provides a story or what Carnes calls a "sustaining fantasy or supportive script" (1997:56) for the sexual contact. Various writers (see, for example, Gonsiorek et al., 1995) suggest that clergy abusers develop a personal style to entrap women. Disch and Wohlberg (1995:61-62) categorise these styles as "*business practices, dependency, isolation and derailment, social contact, feeling special, cult themes, mind control, treatment process, dual roles, sexual activity, body work, health care*". Sipe (1995:125-126) describes how Catholic priests develop the contact akin to patterns of courting.

Penfold (1998:55-56) describes 'grooming' and 'targeting' strategies used by professionals. They are listed in detail here (table 4.6) as they were replicated by clergy in this research, though additional scenarios were found.

Table 4.6: Comparative grooming and targeting strategies used by professionals and clergy

Penfold: Professionals	This study: Clergy
Bringing up his personal problems	Bringing up his emotional problems
Sex is brought up out of context, and discussion of sex is emphasised in sessions. Sex might be put forward as the answer to all the problems	Sex is brought up out of context, and discussion of sex is emphasised in meetings. Sex might be put forward as the answer to all the problems
Sessions are booked at odd hours or when there is no other staff at the office	Clergy visiting women in their own home, in cars, or Churches (rather than clergy office)
Sessions are arranged outside the office, or the patient is invited for a meal or other social occasion	Meetings arranged which do not take place in the rectory/presbytery/clergy house/office. Arranging holidays away together
Forming a close personal relationship is presented as part of the treatment	Sex is presented as curative/healing/beneficial
Directions on how to behave and what to do in everyday life	Control over women through Christian expectations and humility
Presenting himself as the expert who has answers to every problem	Clergy presents himself as "guru", special, god-like
Dependency on the professional is encouraged alongside separation from family and close friends	Clergy tell women not to have sex with partners, to keep secrecy or to leave husbands
Assertive behaviour is criticised	Women made to feel should be passive, servile and servicing, vulnerable. Violence or aggression when women challenged or told others
Alcohol or drugs are made available during	
Gifts given	Gifts given
Personal letters are written, phone calls	Personal letters are written, phone calls

Women were given the opportunity to describe in more detail the forms of manipulation they had experienced in the questionnaire in a series of open-ended questions. Fifty-eight of the 63 women gave examples of forms of manipulation used to draw them into sexual contact. Clergy used many strategies to maintain and bring women closer physically, psychologically and emotionally. House calling was common in the initial stages of developing a 'relationship'. For over half of the 19 women interviewed, clergy came into their homes. On their own territory, women felt in control, at ease and let down their emotional, psychological defences. One woman was off work for depression and the clergyman came to 'comfort her'. Another was engaged in an important search, which the vicar promised to help with, so he visited her. One vicar visited a woman at very low ebb at unpredictable hours. One Catholic woman, who wished to explore her spirituality, found the priest kept coming for tea, and another was seeking annulment of her marriage when the priest began to visit her home.

Hugging or physical contact is prevalent in Christian Churches as a sign of openness and being 'part of the family of God'. Indeed, most Churches have a designated time in a Church service for 'the sign of peace', which involves hugging or shaking of hands.

Clergy who saw women individually, either in the home or Church house, used hugging in apparent innocence, particularly on departure, as opportunities to kiss and engage more extensively on a physical level. Several women remarked on this.

He would come in [to my home] and he would sit and talk for about three-quarters of an hour, and it wouldn't be until he was leaving that things would happen. (88/C of S)

In this study, clergy used several distinct targeting and grooming strategies to engage women sexually: romantic deception, where the clergyman argues the situation is one of romance; therapeutic deception, where he persuades her that the sexual contact is healing or beneficial; and spiritual deception, where he implies that God either sanctions or instructs sexual contact. These will now be described in more detail.

Romantic deception

Romantic deception involved clergy positioning themselves as sexually and emotionally neglected and needy, requiring nurturing, a better 'wife', sex and a better lover. They praised women for fulfilling these roles, thus sustaining women's desire for approval and investment in the relationship with the clergy.

Grooming can appear like courting and this deception is so realistic that Church leaders (and victims) commonly call such situations 'affairs' or 'love'. In a third of cases (n=20 of 65, 31%) women said the clergyperson said he had 'fallen in love' with them.

He declared undying love. I was the woman he should have married. He was also aware that he was leaning very heavily on me as his own marriage was very destructive and he had reached the end of his tether with it. (Q78/Ang)

Yes, to begin with he was worshipping, adoring, loving, and affirming. He said he loved me. Later, he resented the fact I expected to see him. (Q74/RC)

Married clergy described their wives in ways that invited sympathy, for example, as unloving, unfaithful, not understanding, unresponsive or angry, with five interviewed women saying the clergyman gave recurring descriptions of 'cold' and distant wives.

He hadn't been allowed to touch her since then (birth of their baby) and that was twenty years ago. She wouldn't let him. Separate bedrooms, and he'd lived a difficult life. She was also a very demanding woman – demanded to be looked after all the time. (61/Ang)

In two cases, the women were told that the man's wife had even suggested he look for sex elsewhere, and in another three she had apparently refused sex.

Victims of exploitation and Church authorities frequently accept these explanations about the wives' alleged 'deficiencies' as a credible account, seldom questioning either the accuracy of the charge or whether it might, in fact, serve to disguise the abusive behaviour of her husband. Nor was there much recognition concerning the 'abusiveness' of such an explanation in and of itself. Interviews with Church leaders consistently focused on clergy stress and, in the case of married clergy, difficulties in marriage.

The minister himself is under stress...particularly where there is stress in the relationship in the manse, ...there's some sense there of a lack of affirmation or he's so overwrought by his work that he doesn't get the needs that he feels he has satisfied in his marriage relationship, he – he himself is very vulnerable... (Baptist Church Leader, emphasis added by Kennedy).

Catholic clergy represented celibacy to women as harsh, cruel, old fashioned, and inhumane. Women were invited to regard the priest's human suffering and sexual deprivation as unfair or unreasonable. Some priests maintained that whilst they could not have a sexual relationship (often meaning intercourse) they could engage in other sexual intimacy.²² Some said their priority was to the parish, so they could not commit to her and said that breaking the vow of celibacy was for her benefit only. This latter claim increased women's sense of being 'special', a classic grooming technique.

Catholic priests have been described as having 'elastic consciences' (Jenkins, 1995:10), a form of self-grooming, believing that leaving the priesthood to marry is a serious sin against their vow of celibacy, while staying and being sexually active is not. In order to behave promiscuously, such priests conform to the practice of celibacy, namely not marrying.

²²Celibacy means to abstain from marriage rather than sexual activity, though it is widely accepted that celibacy also implies chastity. Most religious order priests would take an additional vow of chastity.

Most clergy were adept at encouraging women to feel sorry for them and evoking the nurturing role. This appeared to run across all denominations and was, therefore, a powerful element of the grooming process.

He talked about his chastity and purity and how the cross he carried was so heavy that he needed me to 'mother him'. (Q25/RC)

Speaking of Catholic priests, Sipe (1995:128) calls this an 'adolescent mindset' based on the perception that "women (girls) have the duty and responsibility to sacrifice and take care of men (boys)".

Many [Catholic] priests use women to prove their masculinity, to comfort their loneliness, and to relieve their sexual needs (Sipe, 1995:121).

The word 'use' is worth noting here. This analysis also implicates notions of gender construction where women are socialised to feel responsible for the welfare of others, particularly by assuming emotional caretaking roles such as mother.

Goodman and Fallon (1995:47) refer to similar dynamics in domestic violence situations,

The reality is the abuser is not a child. He is a grown man and growing up means assuming responsibility and being accountable for one's choices and actions (original emphasis).

The paradox here is that whilst on a range of measures the women were acutely vulnerable, the clergymen placed themselves in this position, inviting parishioners who had come to them for advice and support, to take care of them. This distorts and disrupts the real power inequality.

Women also described how romantic deception was often interlinked with therapeutic deception and/or spiritual deception, both of which are analysed below.

Therapeutic deception (bodily redemption)

This technique/strategy draws on beliefs that women are descendants of Eve. Manlowe (1995:59) suggests this:

...not only facilitates the "rightness" of violence against women, it also sets her up to be in constant need of bodily redemption (original emphasis).

Jehu (1994) names ploys used by secular therapists as 'persuasive communications', 'indoctrinating [patients] with certain messages and arguments', and it has been suggested clergy do the same (Maris & McDonough, 1995). Russell (1993), Werking Poling (1999) Ussher (1991) and Imbens and Jonker (1992) note how therapists and clergy have justified sexualising the relationship using a variety of 'curative' accounts. 'Bodily redemption' messages identified by Jehu (1994:69) include:

- sex is a necessary and appropriate part of your treatment;
- sex will make you feel better;
- I am uniquely able to provide the sexual experience you need.

In one third of all cases in this study (n=22, 34%) women were told that sex was for their healing or beneficial. Clergy told women that by healing the sexual harm of the past or present (through sex), the spiritual would also be healed.

I needed to know sex was beautiful and he wanted to show me, this was before he raped me. (Q82/Baptist)

A Spiritual Director²³ persuaded a Catholic nun that he was helping her become sexually mature and a more spiritual person. Her 'spiritual direction' took a sexualised and abusive route.

We were talking ... he sort of looked around, dropped his trousers and gave me an illustrated lesson on the male genitalia... I have the visual image... I'm not sure whether it was at that time or whether it was at other times when he asked me to hold his penis. It was always a suggestion – well, "this is not for me, it is for your benefit and growth" [He would say] "I think, I am sure you would like to hold my penis now". There were things being said like "you're going to experience a lot of sexual arousal but that'll be good for you in the long run", and of course I am so completely in control that I don't feel anything" ...I am beginning to feel angry now. [He said] "You will feel so aroused that you will want to be raped." He used to say that, he was always in control; a kind of a sense of I'm doing all of this for your benefit. (73/RC)

Here, the priest skilfully displaces agency onto the woman through phrases like "you may want to hold my penis", "you will want to be raped", so that if anything does transpire it will be

²³Spiritual Director: Someone trained to help another with their spiritual life, most often a clergyperson or religious sister but can be a lay person.

because *she* wanted it. Such subtle dimensions of sexual abuse are rarely documented but undoubtedly contribute to the self-blame, which is so ubiquitous in the aftermath of sexual exploitation.

The nun started to masturbate privately and confessed this 'sin' to her clergy abuser in confession. That she returned to him needs to be understood in relation to his structural power and the way in which she still believed he was her 'tutor' in sexual matters.

MK: *You went to confession to him about the masturbation?*

73/RC: *Yes, Yeah.*

MK: *And what did he say?*

73/RC: *I'm...stopping here. I mean I can find myself stopping. [He said] "The right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you."*

MK: *If it was a sin for you to masturbate – then why is it OK for you to hold his penis?*

73/RC: *The logic of that never occurred to me. I never actually saw the incongruity of it placed side-by-side before, even. I do see it now.*

He argues when she holds *his* penis it is for her education, not wrong; yet when *she* masturbates *she* must cut off *her* sinful hand. The manipulative power of the confessional and theological justification is illustrated by the fact that she had not compared the two actions until the interview.

One Anglican woman assumed digital vaginal penetration was therapeutic, not even sexual, but rather a means to help her "break down her barriers", a learning experience.

Well, I didn't think it was [sexual] you see. But there was that sort of thing, quite a lot of fondling and up between my legs and things like that. [It was] breaking down my coldness, I was very kind of shut off. Withdrawn. Because I responded, it was as though this was obviously what I was needing. That if it hadn't been the right thing I wouldn't have responded. (72/Ang)

Women were told they 'needed' touch.

[He said] What you need is touch... you need to be soothed, I'll soothe you, you need physical touch, and you need what I give you like this. (26/House Church)

Those who are hurt, in pain or distress, trust in order for their life to become more bearable. The longing for resolution of the problems brought to the professional leads clients or parishioners to rely on the skills of the professional/pastor (Parker & Brown, 1989:35).

In some cases, the therapeutic deception was reversed and women were persuaded that *they* were healing the *clergyperson*. Two women were told the clergyperson was a victim of child sexual abuse. Two clergy said their lives were a 'mess'. Three either mentioned or threatened suicide. Two said women are primarily to be of *benefit to him*: to heal and in one case 'to make him a man'. Again, this draws on personal problems to evoke expectations of women as emotional caregivers.

Structural and personal power can be used to convince. What this research shows is how clergy deftly use historic constructions of women, existing vulnerabilities, often those which led women to seek their help, and the power of their role to groom and persuade women of the validity of the sexual contact which they initiate. This is upheld and even supported by the structures of the establishment and Church leadership, an issue, which will be explored further in Chapters 6 & appendix 9.

Spiritual deception: the sacrament of sex

In some cases, God was drawn on to convince women that sexual activity is not only therapeutic but also 'god-inspired' or sanctioned. Spiritual Deception played a large part of the clergy's control of women and a unique dimension from other forms of violence outside of the Christian context. Of the 58 women who described the manipulative processes employed by clergy, 21 (36%) women mentioned spiritual justifications for sex, but the spiritual dimension was wider than this. This is where the male clerical privilege was so evident. Eighteen of these women (31%) spoke of clerical privilege – the clergyman was either God, god-like, holy or at minimum far superior to them. He was a "guru", "learned", "wise", "clever", "more powerful", "a leader", and "important". He was 'god', a 'father', 'professional', not a mere ordinary man. They expected great things of the clergy-helper, almost miracles. The 'God factor' significantly prolonged their involvement (Flynn, 2003).

Sexual involvement in some cases was constructed as 'sacrament' thus elevating it into a divine occurrence and implying it was a great honour to be the 'chosen' one. A number of Clergy told women "it was God's will" (Q30/RC), "God told him he could show me affection I

missed out on" (Q20/Bapt), "[he said] when God does something, God does something" (14/Ang). This was very effective as a strategy to limit questioning; as to do so was to question God and therefore faith.

Confronted with such arguments, women can increasingly doubt their own perceptions and come to see and define reality through the framework provided by her abuser. The disjunction between her perceptions and his accounts can produce the sense of being 'crazy' (Penfold, 1998). For women who dearly want to be good Christians and are committed to God, and for many with backgrounds of child sexual abuse, such messages cause extreme confusion and distress (see also Chapter 7).

Women with the 'spirit of enticement'

Possession beliefs contributed to the entrapment of women. A small number of women in conservative traditions were told *they* caused the clergyperson to exploit them due to her 'spirit of lust' or 'a spirit of enticement'.

He told me what he was doing and what had happened as a child was because I had a spirit of lust, and other unclean spirits that caused it all to happen. He was, "having to fight these spirits in order to help free me, but some days he failed!" So I was very confused and full of fear. (Q20/Baptist)

I had a spirit of enticement and that I needed deliverance, and that I should seek God about that. (26/House Church)

The Pastors suggested the women needed 'bodily redemption' or 'exorcism' from these spirits. Aspects of 'deliverance' ministries²⁴ were thus used to sexually abuse/exploit: in 2004 one Pentecostal pastor (Goodman) was jailed in London for three and a half years for sexual assault within 'deliverance' ministry.

In this study a Catholic priest manipulated ideas about chastity to his own benefit but also used a 'spirituality of bodily redemption'.

He would say, "I want to penetrate you with my chastity". I reacted in a confused manner and one of incomprehension. (Q25/RC)

²⁴Deliverance ministries are not unusual in Pentecostal, Baptist and evangelical traditions. The belief is that in abuse 'demons' have entered via bodily orifices and must be expelled. Though there are variations to this. 'Hands on' ways of extracting the 'demons' can lead to sexual abuse. Such methods can also be used in 'possession' beliefs to get rid of 'spirits of enticement' or lust.

The 'penetration of his chastity' was, apparently, to heal/cure effects of sexual abuse by her father, which had: "Left me in darkness and unclean, the only remedy was for him to cleanse me of evil" (op sit). Her husband was "undo[ing] the Holy work of the priest, "he would purify me because my husband soiled me more and more". She too was 'persuaded' by a powerful, spiritual man: "[I] Trusted [him] because of his priesthood, Spiritual/mystical/holy".

A Baptist Minister told a woman her husband did not love her, or love her in the way she needed. "God was allowing him to love me instead so at last I could understand what love means". (Q20/Bapt)

'Healing' women

It appears from women's experiences that healing ministry to the sick can be used as deception for sexual touch and abuse. One woman desperate to be rid of severe depression recalled:

I would have done anything that he asked me to do in the hope I would be rid of the depression. [He also] suggested a 'blessing' of my body with 'oil of gladness', so that I could start to love myself again. I was to take all my clothes off for this ceremony, which had allegedly helped so many others. (Q69/RC)²⁵

One Anglican clergyman invoked the Holy Spirit:

[He said] he was being led by the Holy Spirit. "We'll see how the Spirit leads us". I just assumed – because part of the bargain was that I wouldn't block the work of the Holy Spirit, I didn't. (72/Ang)

In order not to block the Holy Spirit she let the pastor perform digital penetration. She too was desperate for her depression to be healed and believed the clergyman was attempting to heal her.

In contexts such as these it becomes extraordinarily difficult for women to separate out abuse from Christian healing or God-inspired ministry. As one Catholic woman put it, "it was hard to disassociate religion and *his* religion". These men drew on elements of faith which they shared with women to construct meanings (self-grooming and grooming) which not only justified sexual activity, but implicated women and their desire/need for healing in the activity.

²⁵ This priest was jailed for six years for sexually assaulting four women, including this woman.

Entrapment

The loyalties shown to clergy offenders suggest grooming of vulnerable women by clergy is effectual. A House Church pastor typifies many of the manipulative strategies identified by Penfold (1998) and Disch and Wohlberg (1995), as well as modes of entrapment described by Flynn (2003) and Herman (1992). This woman described the whole process in considerable detail:

Targeting

The Pastor of the Church took a lot of interest in me and he would give me lifts home and pop in to see me, you know, it all started up like that.

Grooming

...and he started pouring out his marital problems to me [...] He used to praise me up in lots of ways. He used to go out and speak at lots of other Churches and have healing meetings [...] He used to say how wonderful I was. That I was special to him and all that stuff. That he loved me and that, erm, one day he was going to marry me.

Entrapment

He arranged for me to live in the house next door to them (pastor and his wife) so that he could come in at night and sexually abuse me. He taught very strongly on the submission of women – how we were to submit to the authority of men. Women who didn't submit were a Jezebel woman. I was concerned not to be a Jezebel woman so I submitted. He talked a lot about loyalty, and you had to be loyal to him and that he was the most important person in the Church. He said that if it wasn't for me he wouldn't have kept going and you know how – he – he couldn't get through without me.

Entrapped

Every time he came back [from being away] he would visit me, and, things would happen. He kept in touch by phone and letter and he said that he believed God wanted us to have this relationship, that it was for both our benefits – and that he wanted – that God wanted us to have this – this relationship. (26/House Church)

Here the pastor was flattering, helpful and supportive in his behaviour. Praise made the woman feel a valuable contributor, boosting her morale as well as providing regular contact. He said he loved her; this was powerful for her after a very difficult childhood with sexual abuse, anorexia and depression. Finding her accommodation close by was very convenient for him, ensuring her closeness and constant availability. Whilst increasing her sense of obligation.

In this case manipulative teaching about submission of women facilitated the engagement and maintained the stage of entrapment. If the woman resisted or withdrew, she risked being

labelled a Jezebel, so she worked hard at submission. He convinced her that God wanted them to have this relationship, so God sanctioned the sexual contact. Emotional blackmail, such as threatening to commit suicide, was a burden for her, as she felt responsible for his life. This terrified her and further enmeshed her. Similar strategies have been documented by researchers in relation to domestic violence abusers (Ritchie, 1996).

The duality of body and spirit

Theologians, particularly feminists, are attempting to unite the duality of body and spirit created by past 'fathers of the Church' so that women, viewed previously only as body, flesh and carnality, might also be seen as spirit (holy) in God's image. This is a useful and right direction. In Christian doctrine, sex and sexuality have been seen as 'sinful and dirty', with women historically blamed for both.

Abusive clergy subvert this positive direction for unity by 'spiritualising' sex and sexuality, and eroticising and sexualising spirituality, way beyond the bounds of any proposed positive unity.

In the next section an analysis of the dynamics of power and control within these clergy/congregant relationships is presented, applying feminist perspectives to this particular form of sexual exploitation.

Power, control, and entrapment

The dynamics of power and control within these clergy/congregant relationships have previously been described as an 'incest' dynamic, work undertaken in the domestic violence arena (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Kelly & Radford, 1996); seems more appropriate as it does locate clergy sexual exploitation of women within a 'violence' continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988). This is valid given the high levels of violence, coercion, fear and the patterns of entrapment experienced by women in this research (see below).

In the Anglican policies and procedures, Bridger (2003) presents Rollo May's (1972) description of different forms of power, the first three evidenced in this research by various forms of deception and, in some cases, by brute force:

- *exploitative power that dominates by force or coercion;*

- *manipulative* power that controls by more subtle and covert psychological means;
- *competitive* power which is ambiguous as it can be used constructively where parties are relatively equal but is destructive where they are unequal (as in most pastoral relationships) (Bridger, 2003:18).

Gula (1989:102) offered further insight:

Rollo May distinguishes five kinds of power which can be in all of us at different times. The moral issue is concerned with the proportion of each kind of power [...] Exploitative and manipulative power are destructive. These are forms of power over another and often can be equated with force or violence. Competitive power acts against another. It can act destructively when it puts people down....

The remaining two aspects of power – *nutrient* and *integrative* – the former involving care for another and the latter drawing out the best of another, were not evident in the clergymen under discussion in this research.

The feminist theologian Catherine Keller's (1986) discussion of 'separative power' is explored by Larry Kent Graham (2002). This is power based on a patriarchal model and is the power to 'disconnect, control, and render the other subservient to one's own purpose'. According to Keller a separative selfhood is the source of misogyny and violence against women in Western civil and religious culture (p82). It is activated and maintained by shame. Separative power works on 'dissolving' women's power so that women in these circumstances have a 'tendency to dissolve emotionally and devotionally into the other'. This is one way to explain how women in this research had such a powerful 'adulation' of clergy. The word 'devotionally' is pertinent when viewed alongside the loyalty given to the clergy exploiter and, in some women's accounts, a desire to protect him from his actions. Later, women are further 'dissolved' by Church hierarchies and communities if the imperative to forgive, thus saving the clergyman at the expense of herself becomes the predominant motif (p83).

In the later chapters the concept of 'spiritual and pastoral power' is used.

At one level this is recognition that clergy are a 'profession' and have forms of authority which stem from this. At another level these are forms of power which are specific to the role and position of a leader of a faith congregation. Gula (1996), a priest, explains:

The power and authority which derives from the symbolic representation of pastoral ministers is frequently misunderstood, and often strongly resisted or denied. We are like everyone else in so many ways, but there is always something different about us. The difference is that we bring "something more" to ministry than just ourselves. ...we are for people representatives of the sacred ...we represent God, some people feel that to talk with us is to talk to God or to be accepted or rejected by us is to be accepted or rejected by God. .. there is a "sacred weight" which adds more seriousness to what we say or do. ...the representative role also helps to explain, in part, why others believe that we are worthy of trust. (p72-73, emphasis added by Kennedy).

Pastoral ministry therefore comprises two important features, a clergyperson who 'represents God' with their power derived from being seen /infused by a direct link to God. This is often referred to as 'spiritual or numinous' power.

Gula (1996:68) further explains why spiritual power can exert significant influence on others.

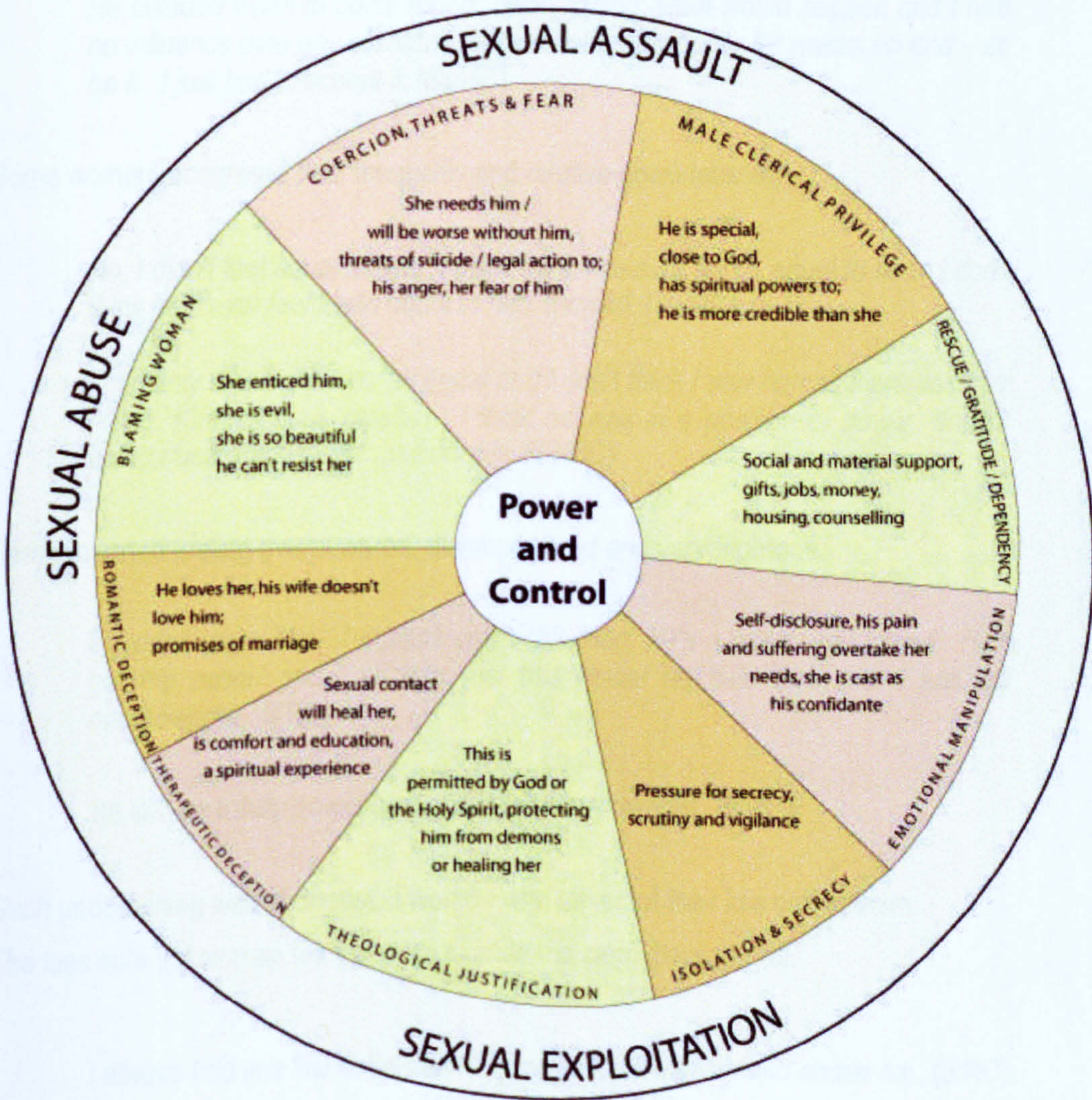
More integral to the responsibility of pastoral ministry than structuring an environment is exercising power by defining reality from a theological perspective. Insofar as pastoral ministers are the community's theological resource, they mediate meaning by interpreting experiences in the light of faith. ...one of the primary goals of theological reflection is to help people to see more than what meets the eye. Ministry is about correcting vision. We are the ones people come to so that they may be able to see their lives through the lens of faith. We profess to be the ones trained to know what faith demands. The ministries of preaching, teaching, counselling, and spiritual direction stand out as prime opportunities to do some lens grinding, to influence the way people see themselves in relation to God. When we remember that pastoral ministry deals with the realm of ultimate meaning and value, we might well shudder at the awesome power we have (emphasis added by Kennedy).

This spiritual power can have a profound influence in how ministerial power is used. The 'symbolic representation' (of God) and the role of one who 'names' the way we live in a faith context (spiritual power) is a form of power unique to clergy, and represents a strong argument for clear ethical principles and guidelines. Pastoral power combines the powers that are invested by clients in therapists with spiritual power. Gula identifies how clergy power is used to form faith and 'correct vision'. This is a process often referred to as 'spiritual direction' whereby the clergyperson helps another to live according to gospel values. This being the case clergy already have skills of persuasion and direction for how one should behave. There is the potential for these skills to be used abusively as demonstrated by this study (see power & control wheel p279).

The power and control wheel was first developed in 1979 by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, Minnesota (Cooper-White, 1995:103) and has been adapted for this study. The original wheel (see Appendix 7) specifies a variety of abusive behaviours that battered women may experience, becoming encircled and hemmed in by them all. Figure 4.3 is a version of the wheel created out of the experiences of women taking part in this study.

This clergy sexual exploitation power and control wheel comprises nine distinct mechanisms/manoeuvres/deceptions used by clergy. These cover the dynamics of targeting, grooming, and entrapment. Often used simultaneously they ensnare women, and provide new understandings of the way sexually exploitative clergy operate.

Figure 4.3: The Clergy Sexual power & control wheel exploitation



Women's unequal position

There can be no equality between clergy and women when he is a pastor. Ordained clergy/ministers are seen as 'holy' people, in *persona christi* (Keshgegian, 1999) and/or as 'father' figures. Spiritualising/sacralising the Church leader as 'God' on earth accentuates power, which can be misused, especially if they invite adulation.

He had a tremendous following and I thought this man must be powerful, must be wonderful, that people thought highly of him. He was a professional, a learned man, I wasn't. And, er...he was wise. He was a missionary [...] I just thought he was some wonderful fellow I'd been lucky to find. (3/RC)

Women often used the words "controlling", or "called the shots", to describe the clergy person and to explain that the decision-making was in his hands.

He decided when to come round, when to ring, what would happen and I had no influence over any of that. If he decided to disappear for weeks on end – so be it. I just had to accept it. (63/RC)

Some women recognised their inequality and relative powerlessness.

No, I didn't feel equal to him. I don't think I've ever felt ... equal to him. I don't think he'd ever feel I was equal to him, himself. (70/RC)

I certainly didn't see him, as equal and I don't think I saw him as a professional either. Kind of guru, maybe... I think he was in a position of power, and of being trusted and I was...vulnerable. (73/RC)

Some reported feeling overpowered, disempowered and very frightened:

I mustn't cross him. I mustn't cross this man, he's a priest, you know? He's got the power and I –It was just this power he held over me. I just felt overpowered. (3/RC)

he left me totally powerless...I just felt overpowered. (9/RC)

Such undermining was strongest in women who talked of their low self-esteem.

The less able the woman felt the more exalted the clergyperson was.

I always had this low self-esteem. I always felt he was much above me. (3/RC)

He left me feeling, you know, that there was...absolutely nothing worth redeeming in myself...made me feel so weak. (9/RC)

Denial of power by clergy

'Father', 'Reverend', 'Elder' 'Overseer', 'Brother', 'Minister' 'Pastor' are all titles of power; they all reflect a leadership position and people 'called by God' to this role. As we saw previously, women perceived clergy as professionals in positions of authority, which had spiritual dimensions.

Clergymen have multiple sources of power, not just as men, but also as men who claim sacred power. In the Quaker denomination all are equal in this 'Society of Friends', as they are officially known as. They have roles of Elders and Overseers which Quakers say are not positions of power and not 'powerful' leaders. One Quaker woman challenges this:

The very term "overseer" or "Elder", you know, it makes you feel that the person can be trusted...it gave him a label, it gave a title, it gave him status, it gave him authority and it gave him opportunities, and until the Churches recognise this can be the situation. (13/Quaker)

Some clergy said *they* needed help and were the weak ones. Threats to commit suicide were particularly effective together with an expression of loneliness; women felt it hard to break off the involvement:

[He] gave me the impression I was supporting him so that tied me into the relationship [...] and he was dependent on me, I felt, then and I couldn't do anything about it [...] I found myself being there to support him and that – that if I didn't then – then he would have a breakdown and erm, and that I would be responsible. (4/Ang)

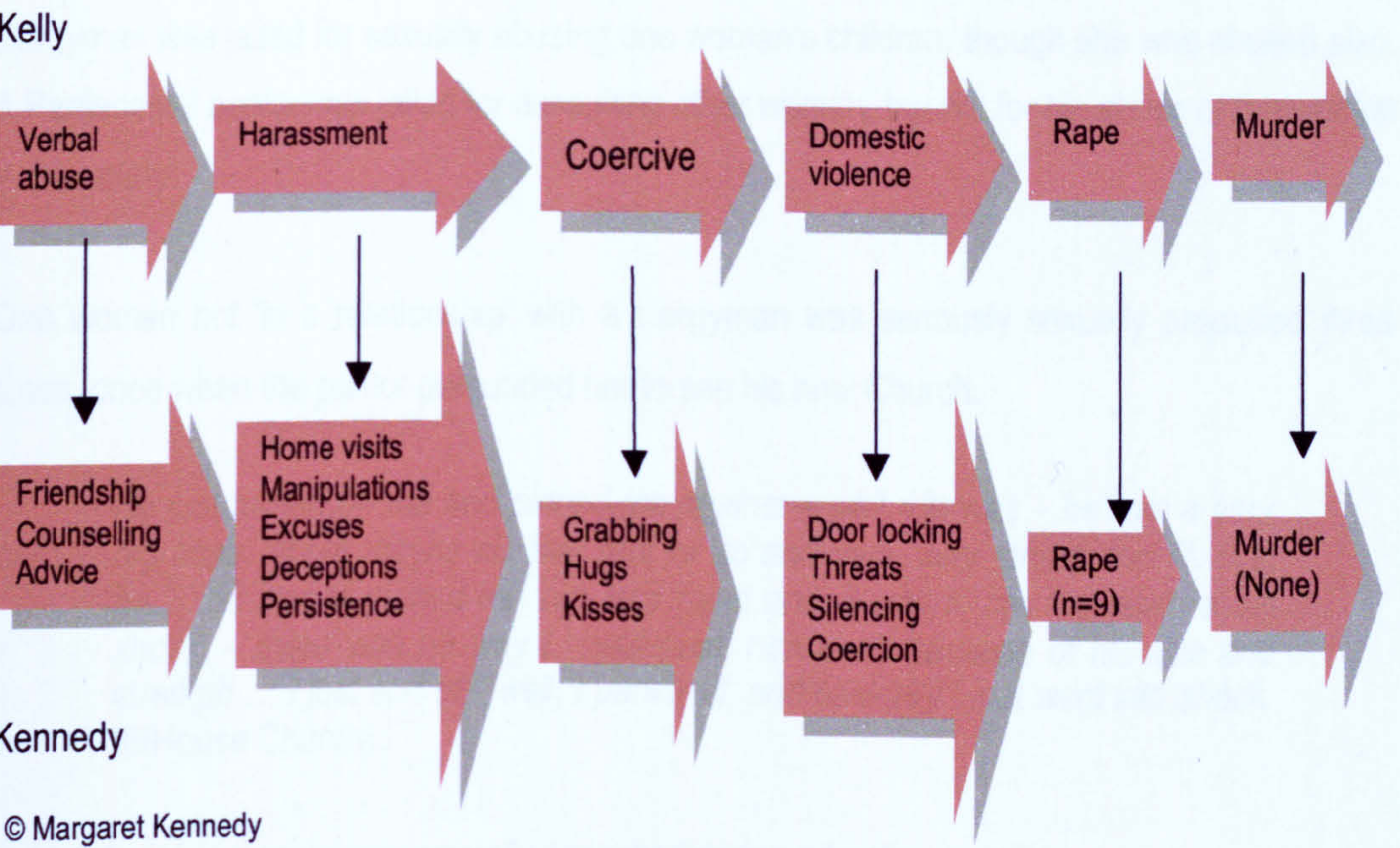
While some clergy may have been struggling, all used manipulative tactics to ensnare, entrap and later encourage others to overlook or excuse their behaviour by *feeling sorry* for them. Grooming the environment and significant others (Craven, Brown & Gilchrist, 2006) was evident in this research. Congregations and hierarchy respond to the vulnerability of the clergy but not of the victim's. One woman describes how the clergyman

...put out the story that he'd had a terrible time in boarding school, and he needed a lot of healing, and that's why he'd gone and done these things. (26/House Church)

Violence and fear

The outside of the power and control wheel comprises the sexual violence/abuse/exploitation. The level of violence and assault evidenced in this study was shocking and revelatory. Such violence is not evidenced elsewhere in literature on clergy sexual exploitation of women. The continuum (Kelly, 1988) here went from the subtle 'relationship'/'affair' to rape/assault and even in the 'relationship' dynamic episodes of violence could occur. Coercion was often mentioned even in situations where the woman believed in the relationship. Kissing, hugging, and pushing against walls without consent and catching women 'off-guard' were common.

Figure 4.4: Violence continuum (Kelly, 1988) adapted to clergy sexual exploitation continuum of sexual violence



Continuum of clergy sexual exploitation (this study)

In well over a third of cases, (n=26 of 65, 40%) women were subjected to violence or assault. References to rape were discernible in response to a range of different questions in the questionnaire. Some (n=2) declared it was rape when answering the question on how they perceived what had happened at the time, while others (n=6) declared they had been raped in response to later open-ended questions. The final total of those who said they had been raped came to 14 per cent (n=9 of 65 cases). A further three said, "I thought he was going to rape me" (Q16/Ang & 4/Ang) and "[it was] almost rape". (Q38/Ang) Other women described assault

or force of some kind, including physical rather than sexual violence on some occasions. Of the interviewed group, over a third (n=7 of 19, 37%) said they were sexually assaulted.

Alleged rapists included two Baptist ministers, one Anglican clergyman, one United Reformed Minister, four Catholic priests and one Pentecostal pastor. Two women were anally raped, one by a Catholic priest and another by an Anglican priest. Only one of these men was reported to police, and this was only because of an ongoing high-profile child sexual abuse case.

Of the abusers in this study, four were jailed for sexual assault. Three Catholic women saw their (same) abuser jailed for six years for sexual assault. Another Catholic priest was jailed for child abuse but the adult assault cases (she was one of many) were "left on file". An Anglican clergyman was jailed for sexually abusing one woman's children, though she was abused also. A Pentecostal pastor was jailed for assaulting other women, but not for his abuse of the woman in this study.

One woman *not* 'in a relationship' with a clergyman was seriously sexually assaulted three times, once when the pastor persuaded her to see his new Church.

He just turned on me and pinned me against a wall. He was – he was a very big chap, about maybe six feet four or so and very, very strong and fit. And he..., he sort of pinned me with one hand and, it was to say the least, a big shock, – there was no way I could push him away because of his size and strength ... I just sort of,– well, I panicked, and basically I just went into shock. (6/House Church).

A deaf disabled woman was sexually assaulted during a healing session.

We talked for a bit, and before I knew it he sexually molested me... there was no getting to know him or... I mean – virtually on the very first meeting he abused me. I was having a conversation with him and then suddenly he told me to stop and he came up very close to me and knelt at my feet, very, very close to me, I didn't like that, he was a bit too close to me...(sigh) ...and ...[without voice] do you want the details? (9/RC)²⁶

Women who had been exploited for some time, could also be subjected to assault, as these examples illustrate,

²⁶ This priest later attended a treatment centre (twice) to learn to 'modify his ministry'; he is now in Africa.

He came in and he seemed more excited than usual, and he scared me, because – he was unpredictable, – we were in the front room, and he immediately made a grab for me, and undressed me, and it was like when I said I felt like a doll, that I just stood there and he treated me like a doll. And he was – he was excited and out of control... (nine second pause). (4/Ang)

On another occasion, this clergyman took her off in a car and exposed himself. She feared he was going to rape her so she threatened to jump out of the car and opened it at 60mph.

A nun described her experience.

He'd only seen me five minutes and the next thing, he'd sort of pulled my dress down, and had his hands everywhere, and I was saying, "No, I don't want this". (70/RC)

One woman described anal rape.

Basically, to cut a long story short, he raped me anally. I mean, he pinned me down, and – you know, from behind, and erm, I was – it was absolute agony. I couldn't speak I was in so much agony. I wanted to tell him to get off me and I couldn't speak... (26/House Church)²⁷

Three cases also constituted harassment, which included stalking and following. One Anglican clergyman ruined a woman's career in ministry by slanderous allegations. She was sacked after his actions.

He made the workplace increasingly unpleasant for me and he eventually made false allegations against me to justify dismissing me. He also acted on his treat to ruin my career, displaying an amount of influence, which staggers me and has been very damaging professionally. I am on income support. (Q5/Ang)

Table 4.7 uses five cases to illustrate when power and control, threats and fear, secrecy and loyalty are viewed together, one can see the cumulative advantages for the clergy perpetrators and the strength of their hold. These combined with dynamics outlined above such as therapeutic, romantic, spiritual deceptions and emotional manipulation. The final strand to silence women was secrecy; entrapment was complete when women are unable to disclose their experiences. In the table women's own words are in italics.

²⁷ This woman needed repair surgery.

Table 4.7: Cumulative pressures to women

Case references	Power/control	Threats/fear	Secrecy/fear	Loyalty
2/RC	He made appointments for her to see him for 'counselling' even though she didn't want them.	<i>I think I was fearful that if I didn't [comply] everything would stop. I had more to lose by saying no. Yes, fear as well, fear of what he'd started.</i>	Afraid others would notice her car outside. Afraid it would get out and ruin her career. Priest furious when she told him she'd discussed the situation with her therapist	Loyalty to clergyperson's institution
4/Ang	<i>He depended on me</i> Cult-like Church	<i>Threatened suicide</i> Feared rape when taken away in a car, had to threaten to throw herself out of the car to escape.	<i>He said I was special, not to tell anyone, that it was our secret</i>	Loyalty to her duties in Church
6/House Church	<i>Very strong physically, used to pump weights</i>	Assaults. Frightened of being hurt or strangled. Taken away in a car and assaulted	Threatened, <i>if you expose me...</i>	Should not report to secular authorities as it says so in the Bible. Loyalty to faith, Church, Pastor.
73/RC Nun	<i>He was guru</i>	<i>I was depressed, feeling terrified. I didn't know what to do, where to turn to.</i>	<i>I didn't have the words to do it (to tell)</i> <i>I felt no one would understand</i>	Loyalty of 'love'
26/House Church	<i>Taught strongly on submission of women</i> Spiritual abuse	<i>I was dead scared.</i> Spoke of his vulnerability she worried about suicide	<i>I didn't feel there was anyone I could actually talk to.</i> Church person said "You are not to tell anyone	<i>I couldn't accept responsibility of blowing apart this man's ministry</i>

Secrecy

Though keeping the exploitative 'relationship' a secret was common, many were confused by the need for it and some felt guilt. Secrecy was always accompanied by fear. Some did tell one or two very close confidantes (see Chapter 5).

In fifty-eight cases (89%) women answered the question on secrecy. Table 4.8 illustrates the range of factors that ensured secrecy was maintained, the most common being a direct injunction from the clergyman.

Table 4.8: Women’s reasons for secrecy

	Number of responses	% of cases
He told me not to tell anyone	25	43
I knew it could not be open	22	38
I wanted to tell, but did not know how or to whom	18	31
I was too afraid to tell anyone	11	19
I decided it was best kept secret	9	16
We planned together how to keep it secret	5	9

*Multiple responses possible, percentages based on 58 cases where the question was answered

‘Forced’ into secrecy

That exploitative clergy create a situation where women feel deceitful, collusive and to blame suggests shame and guilt must be part of the egregious nature of their exploitation. A veiled threat stopped one Anglican woman from speaking out. ‘He once said to me, “If we were ever to be found out we would not be judged kindly” (18/Ang). One Baptist woman had to swear on the Bible that she would never tell anyone before the pastor would let her go (Q/43).Two women were threatened to keep it secret (Q80/Anglican) and (Q82/Baptist). One priest told a woman nobody would believe her (Q68/RC). Three pastors threatened suicide (two 6/26 House Church, one 4/Anglican), which was terrifying and constraining. Another said press coverage would “destroy her”, this man later, to name her to the press. Another clergyperson made a similar threat:

He threatened me to keep it secret. He said it would ‘go badly with me’ if I told. He would be hurt but I would be more so. The papers would get to me and tear me to shreds. (Q80/Ang)

A Catholic priest only had to look at one woman to cause fear.

The priest was watching me all the time, he didn’t take his eyes off me, he was watching every move I made, as if to say, from a distance, “Don’t you dare say anything”. (9/RC)

Instructions to women about their behaviour, what to do or not to do, were pervasive. One woman travelling on a plane with her clergy exploiter was told to “be careful, I know that women in that seat” (83/RC). A very vulnerable nun who sobbed throughout her interview was simply told not to tell, as no one would understand. When she telephoned him at his residence she got “a strong message not to phone him up”.

Isolation

Secrecy had a profound effect on women’s lives. Living with secrecy and fear was often unbearable, causing stress, loneliness and isolation.

The pressure of keeping it a secret, erm, was far more, erm, unbearable than I imagined it to be. (15/Ang)

One woman felt secrecy proved deceit, and felt “very bad” as deceit was “alien to my nature” (63/Ang). By sexualising a pastoral situation in which she sought support she felt she had been manipulated into morally questionable behaviour, which she would never have contemplated at another time.

Three women spoke of the efforts required to maintain the secrecy; “*You had to be careful what you said, who you spoke to, what they saw you doing, where you were, you had to have an extremely good memory*” (40/RC). An Anglican woman said; “*I would have a bag of Mark’s and Spencer’s shopping, in case he [husband] asked me where I’d been*” (64/Ang). She made sure her children were doing things or out at various activities. “*I was ultra careful I didn’t spend time with him [in college], I was ultra careful that nobody had any reason to put us together in anyway whatsoever*”. (83/RC)

Secrecy made one nun feel safe. This is understandable since she *would* be blamed for allegedly ‘seducing’ a priest and she knew this. She said, sobbing, that she still had to be careful and was afraid of her convent finding out that she was ‘a slapper’. She had totally accepted she was to blame...and a ‘slut’, therefore she maintained the secrecy of the ‘relationship’.

Fear or dread was a common feature in women’s emotional landscapes – fear of pregnancy, violence (from either husband or clergyman), being killed, loss, God, exposure and repercussions. Most of the women interviewed (n=16 of 19, 84%) talked about layers of fear.

Seven were afraid of the clergyperson, four that the clergyperson would commit suicide. Three were afraid of 'blowing everything apart' (meaning the clergy's ministry); two were terrified of spiritual retribution and feared God.

Other silencing strategies

Two Anglican women believed the exploitation was within a 'pastoral confidence' arena:

It was years before I realised this "pastoral confidentiality" had been a manipulative ploy and that I need not be bound by it. (Q5/Ang)

One woman was told she was a favoured confidante, a very special person, *"it was our secret"* (4/Ang). Simple, apparently, throwaway remarks encouraged secrecy: *"these things are too precious to share"*. (61/Ang)

Several Catholic women remarked that the priest *"knew I wouldn't tell"*. One *"didn't have the words"* and shame silenced others.

Loyalty was a key technique through which secrecy was enforced, particularly by invoking that women protect him from exposure. The clergymen promoted loyalty through inviting concern for his reputation, job, and position. For many women loyalty took precedence over their own suffering, pain or loss. This reflects how worthless they felt compared to this God-Priest.

I would protect him to the ends of the earth...I just knew I had to protect him and just not tell anyone and not give the slightest indication of what was going on. (83/RC)

One woman made a pact with God: *"My life for this man's reputation"*. When I asked why, she remarked, *"His position was so important, my reputation wasn't anywhere near as important compared with him"*. (61/Ang) Here we have further evidence of how the context of religion affords additional powers and protections to abusive men.

A further way in which women were manipulated into secrecy was through gratitude. Ten of the 19 interviewed women were grateful, felt rescue and were dependent on the clergyman. Clergy were skilled in this form of entrapment. One woman was able to keep her baby as the Catholic priest gave her a job and a home, and many gifts (1/RC). Another was 'rescued' from domestic violence by the clergyman (40/RC). One woman got a prestigious job because her clergy

exploiter 'coached' her for her interview (15/Ang); another (4/Ang) was elevated to a position of great responsibility in the Church, which made her feel honoured, special, affirmed and grateful. Another woman was helped by her tutor-priest exploiter to get an extension on her university course so that she could complete it (83/RC). A woman with a history of depression felt overwhelmed with parish work; he rescued her and she felt grateful (14/Ang); ironically, it was he who had first put the load upon her.

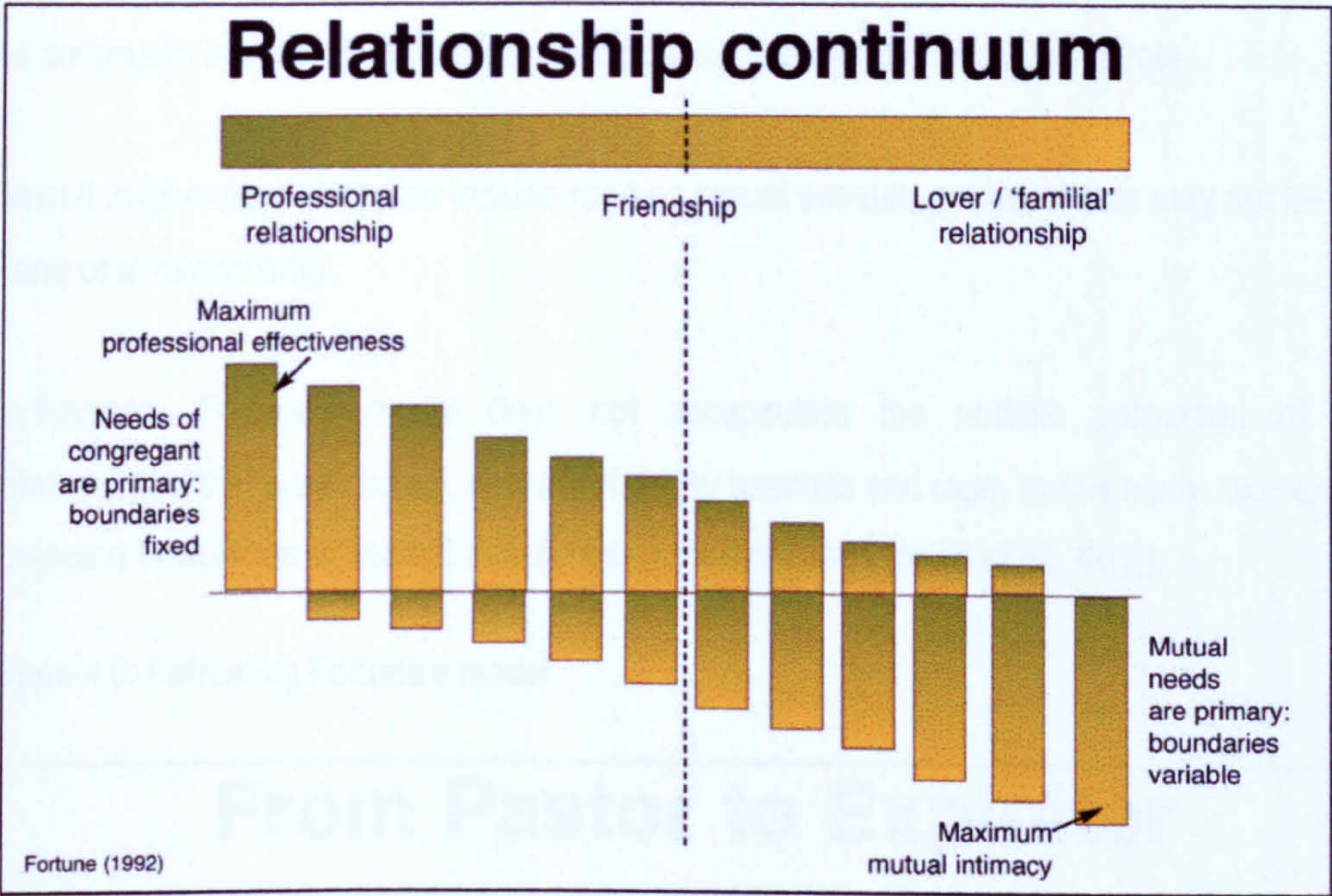
Women were grateful for the 'love' that was shown. Another, who was a victim of domestic violence (13/Quaker), felt that the elder repaired the lack of love she had endured for years by sending her poems, love letters and always asking how she was. Women repeatedly discussed their need for love and affection and were amazed when their clergyperson granted them this honour. A woman sexually abused in childhood felt tremendous love from a priest 30 years older than her (15/Ang). She admitted she lacked love and was very needy at the time. Women often felt special because of this gift of love, particularly so because he was 'a great man of God'. Many spoke of being 'flattered'. All operated to inculcate a sense of loyalty that ensured women would not expose the clergyman and the sexual contact he had embarked upon.

Reframing

Table 4.2 showed how women in this study perceived the clergyman they sought help or advice from as a professional person whom they could trust. This made them vulnerable when a clergyman used and exploited them in times of crisis, upset or even danger.

Chapter two showed that some frame this as a 'dual relationships' between women and clergy, that is, women become both 'client' and 'partner'. Fortune (1992) was one of the first to use this model. Her 'continuum' uses the language of friendship/lover and positions *both* parties in mutual need, and mutual intimacy (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Fortune's relationship continuum



In this research, Fortune's conceptualisation proved inadequate for the following reasons:

- clergy usually had more than one role/meaning for the woman;
- the word 'relationship' presumes a particular meaning and context;
- the sexual contact is not the only factor leading to harm ;
- a proportion of women were, assaulted or raped.

It is my contention that such sexual contact between congregants and clergy should never be called a 'love/familial relationship', since women are 'clients' of the clergyperson. Figure 4.6 adapts Fortune's model to convey how clergy exploiters manoeuvre women, the 'mutual intimacy' Fortune describes is for me in these early stages the process of grooming. In this diagram I argue that a clergyperson is always a pastor and professional and this being so there must remain a boundary of 'professional distance'.

Gula (1996:76) a Catholic priest and moral theologian, agrees:

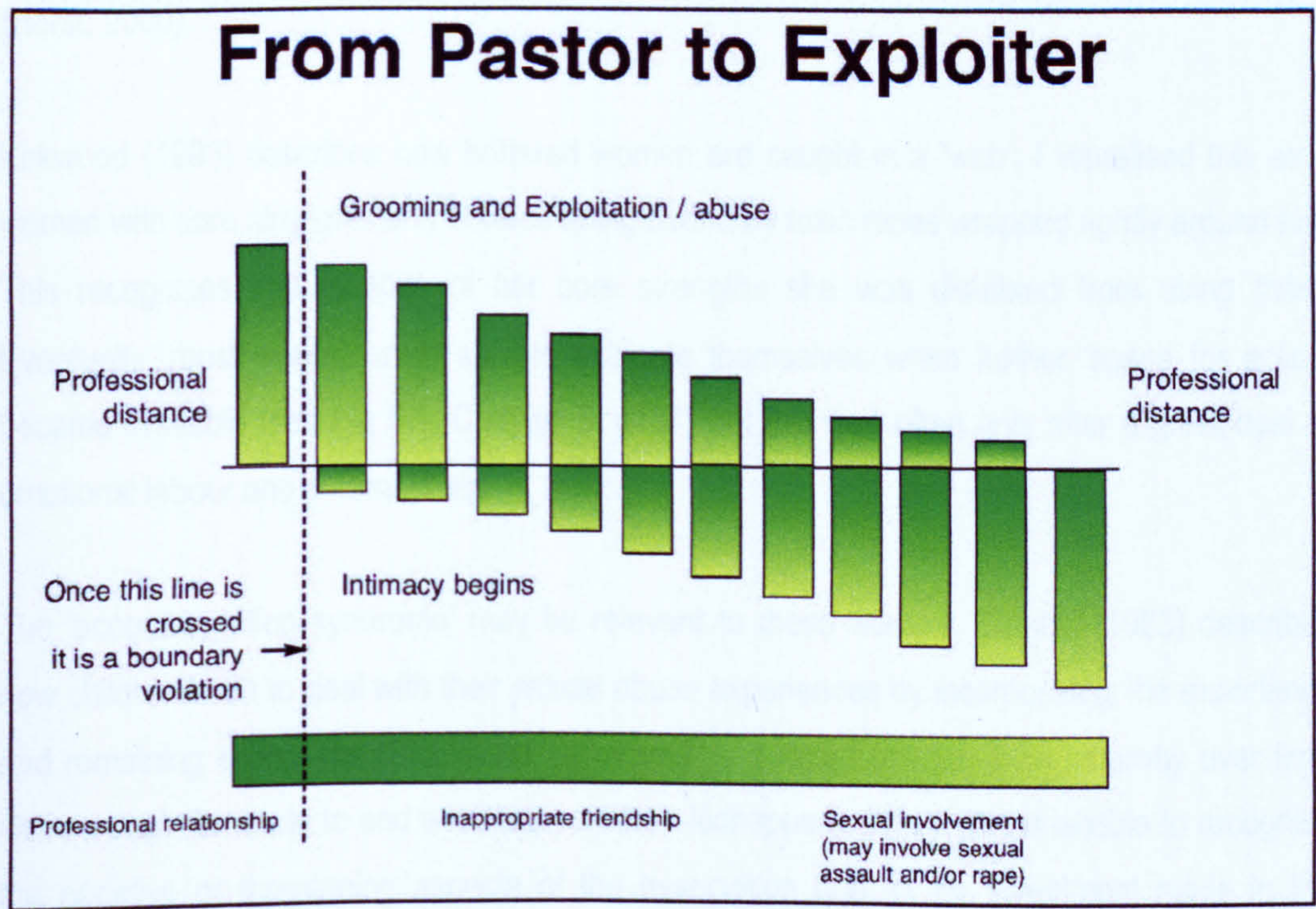
The temptation to reduce or hide the power gap in the pastoral relationship leads to treating it as a friendship. But trying to make the pastoral relationship a peer relationship only falsifies it's real nature and puts us at greater risk of unethical behaviour..

This argument places the line of boundary violation at the point the clergyperson crosses over into inappropriate friendship/ intimacy and I do not name this 'mutual' intimacy. The end point of the continuum is maximal exploitation and abandonment of the professional role.

'Sexual involvement' may also include rape or sexual assault, or sexual acts may not be in the arena of a 'relationship'.

Furthermore Fortune's model does not encapsulate the notable proportion of those 'relationships' that were, in fact, characterised by assaults and rape. In this study, women were subjected to violence or assault in well over a third of cases (n=26 of 65, 40%).

Figure 4.6: Reframing Fortune's model



Adapted from Fortune (1992)

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Structurally, such relationships cannot constitute 'mutuality' whatever women (or others) believe. She may believe in her own consent or complicity. But, consent is not a de-contextual decision; it is an act *in context*. Clergy may not force, and the woman may desire him, but he has constructed this context, in which he makes her responsible, whilst relinquishing his responsibility for the boundary-keeping he knows he, as the professional, should maintain.

What created great confusion for the women concerned is that clergy hold the boundary when it is convenient to do so, yet at other times, when it benefits them, they breach it.

In this framing, a woman who seeks help or is a parishioner is a 'client' of the clergyperson and if sexually involved by him she has been sexually abused and/or exploited. The power and control exerted is further confirmed when women describe how classic abuser behaviour develops by clergy who, in their words, were "calling the shots" and controlling the contact.

Entrapment: The Conclusion

Captured is how Flynn (2003) and Herman (1992) describe the psychologically and emotionally bound women unable to leave an abusive partner. Perpetrators are able to deprive their victims of their usual agency for discernment, good judgement and action (Garland, 2006). The more subtle the coercion, the more invisible the power play and the greater the damage done to her (Horst, 2000).

Kirkwood (1993) describes how battered women are caught in a 'web'. I visualised this as a woman with core strengths and abilities being bound by toxic ropes wrapped tightly around her. This recognises that in spite of her core strengths she was dis-abled from using them. Eventually, most women were able to extricate themselves when further 'space for action' became available (see Fig 5.1, Chapter 5, p137) but this was often only after a great deal of emotional labour and external help.

The 'accommodation syndrome' may be relevant to these women. Summit (1983) describes how children learn to deal with their sexual abuse experiences by incorporating the experience and remaining silent. The 'Stockholm Syndrome' is a noted phenomenon whereby over time victims begin to relate to and even support their kidnappers. The victim is unable to recognise the negative or threatening aspects of the association due to the investment made in the 'relationship' (Van Zandt, 2006).

The deceptions, whether romantic, therapeutic or spiritual, may have been perceived as 'beneficial' or 'benevolent' by the woman *at the time*. Nevertheless, they cannot be seen in isolation from the secrecy, constant fear, self-blame and isolation that were the outcome. Women were thus confused by feeling that the clergy were being helpful in some way whilst also feeling frightened, alone and guilty. Behaviours by clergy which were inappropriate for his

role as pastor and position of authority took her off guard, and few felt able to discern clearly in order to take evasive action. In this way, women became like a 'rabbit' frozen in the headlights.

Women in distress, worry or need approached clergy for help, guidance and support. The thinness of women's lives, the absence of caring and nurturance, is evident in the references they made to lack of love and affection. In such narrowed spaces women often felt honoured by the attention of the 'man of God'. Their neediness was exploited by clergy, who were mostly aware of the gaps in their experiences as children and adults. Rather than explore those gaps they chose to take advantage, to exploit the situation for their own ends.

Now women had to contend with conflicting emotions created by the sexualising of the pastoral role, the clergymen's demands for secrecy, violence and threats and the clergymen's confusing analysis of what was taking place in the form of therapeutic, spiritual deception and romantic deception.

Women had limited space for action as they struggled to make sense of this context. The next chapter explores these challenges and how women made sense of the situation and extricated themselves from exploitation and silence.

Chapter 5: Making sense – getting out

Introduction

How women made sense of the confusion described in the previous chapter is the subject of this chapter, illuminating some of the reasons why women did not immediately grasp that they were, in fact, experiencing sexual exploitation and/or involved in exploitative relationships. This chapter also explores the 'emotional work' (Gattuso & Bevan, 2000; Strazdins, 2000; Yoo et al, 2008; England & Farkas, 1986; Strazdins & Broom, 2004) women had to do throughout this experience and ultimately what it took to end and redefine the involvement with the minister.

Techniques used by clergy induced women to: blame themselves, suffer shame and guilt, adhere to secrecy and experience fear. Women participating in this research were part of weaving a clearer account of the complexities of the sexual contact between clergy and parishioners.

Even though clergy provided an explanation for what was happening when the contact became sexual women, 80% (n=51) were often profoundly confused, this indicates that despite the clergy explanation women were not entirely convinced. This confusion relates to an antithetical experience, two diametrically opposing realities, creating enormous conflict and confusion as the individual struggles to integrate two contradictory experiences in a way that makes sense (Hughes, 2006:13).

Some women described 'dissociation' or 'shut down':

It felt like I was in a 'glass bottle' looking at people but not really with them. I panicked when I thought about it. So I learned not to. (Q22/RC)

[I] went into a world of my own which meant in my head it wasn't happening. (Q82/Baptist)

In the sense that it was never mentioned and I immediately went into a profound withdrawal (as when a child) until I could "block it out" – isolate it. (Q33/RC)

This sense of being overwhelmed or dissociated prevented women from seeing a way to 'get out'.

Others always knew what happened was abuse:

I always knew it was [abuse] – the problem was trying to convince the Church – none of them believed me – indeed they accused me for two years. (Q16/Ang)

It was my immediate conclusion at the time. (Q8/Baptist)

I generally felt things were inappropriate pretty much from word go and left the situation. (Q44/n/k)

This last woman reminds us that if one *knows* something is inappropriate there is a greater chance of ‘getting out’. If you don’t know what exactly is going on it is difficult if not impossible to deliberately and consciously take steps to do something about it. What hindered the ‘knowing’?

Multiple feelings: emotional/psychological turmoil

The following sections explore layers of women’s inner turmoil. When the pastoral context turned sexual there was invariably a range of conflicting emotions. For some, being asked to recognise, name and describe the feelings they had *at the time* was not easy.

Oh it’s hard to say [how one feels], you’re not really in your head, are you, when this happens. (70/RC)

Table 5.1: How women felt when relationship became sexual

Feelings	Number of responses	% of cases
Confused	51	80
Guilt	31	48
Horried	28	44
Frightened	36	56
Shame	22	34
Loved	22	34
Cared about	19	30
Happy	14	22
Felt nothing	3	5
Anger	1	2

*Multiple responses possible, percentages based on 64 cases where the question was answered

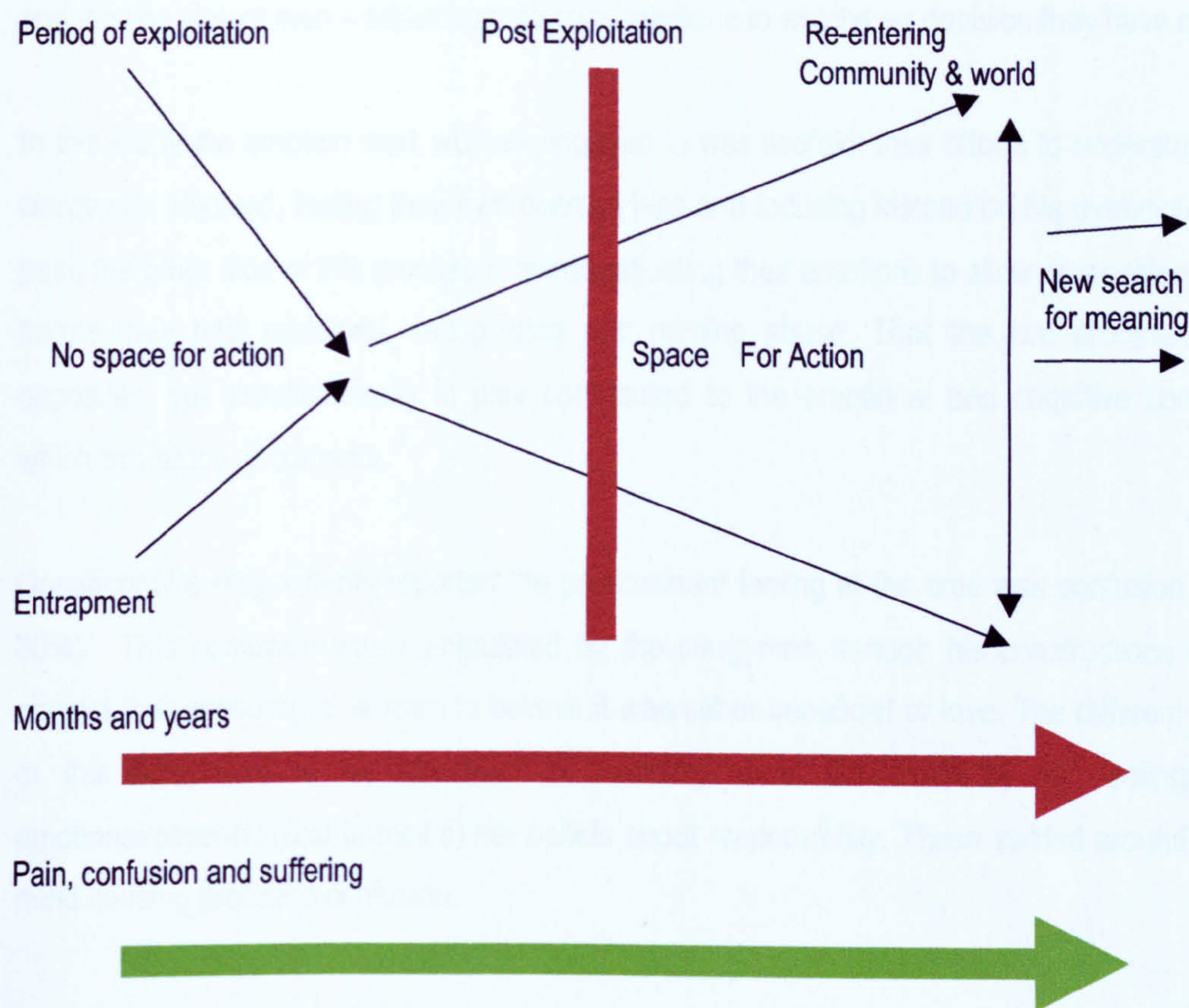
The following sections explore common key emotions, confusion, and self-blame.

Confusion

Because of the antithetical experience there was confusion: and multiple meanings - "is he my counsellor?" "Is he my pastor?" "Is he my lover?" "Is this healing ministry?" "Is this beneficial?" "Is this love?" "Is this my fault?"- which took some time to untangle, for many this took years. Given that 71% (n=46) regarded the clergy as professional it must have been a profound shock to be engaged in a sexual way. The multitude of feelings swinging from love to shame, from guilt to flattery, from hope to despair made 'making sense' problematic and tortuous. Clergy often provided incongruous explanations for the sexual contact and the confusion of the multiple roles the clergy had in the women's lives together with vulnerability, dependency and adulation of the clergyperson 'captured' them. These multiple meanings hinder women's thought processes as there is no coherent picture, or there is a picture filled with contradictions and confusions. It is not surprising therefore that the women found it difficult to think about what was happening. This narrows her space for action. Only with time is there room to think and finally take action (see fig 5.1 below; line colours used for clarity only).

This diagram shows how during the period of exploitation there is entrapment and little or 'no space for action'. Gradually women come to understand their position and often with help, a 'space' is created in which she thinks about and prepares to take action. The diagram shows that before complete freedom from her exploiter there still remains emotion work to do, hence there is still a bar to complete extraction from the entrapment. After the bar the woman re-enters community and the world and eventually begins a new search for meaning. At the bottom of the diagram the red horizontal arrow indicates that this 'freeing' journey can take weeks, months or years. Meanwhile the green arrow shows that throughout that period the woman still has to deal with her pain, confusion and suffering. This may continue even as 'new meaning' is found.

Figure 5.1: Space for Action



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‘Emotional Labour’ and ‘emotion work’ are associated with the work of Arlie Hochschild (1983), research has focused on the ways in which employees have to manage their emotions – and possibly those of others – so they are consistent with the ‘feeling rules’ for their job, regardless of whether this is what they actually ‘feel’. The occupations where emotional labour has been considered most salient include: air stewards; nurses; restraint workers; counsellors and secretaries. It has been described as a blurring of the public and private in women’s experience and maternal models of care (Gattuso & Bevan, 2000), which points to its highly gendered organisation.

Emotion work is a wider concept, and is often used to refer to processes in the private sphere; deliberate actions and thoughts intended to “*improve psychological well-being in others*” Strazdins (2000). An example provided Yoo, G et al (2008) describes how women diagnosed with cancer had to cope not only with their own emotions, but manage the “vulnerabilities of loved ones”, and in the process adjust their own sense of loss and despair. A recent PhD thesis

from Sweden (Enander, 2008) has explored the emotion work that women do in both staying and leaving violent men – adjusting their own emotions to whichever decision they have made.

In this study the emotion work women engaged in was twofold: their efforts to understand the clergyman involved, feeling their own distress less and focusing instead on his dysfunctions or pain; the other side of this process required adjusting their emotions to allow recognition of the harms they had sustained, recognising and naming abuse. That the two processes are opposites, yet simultaneously in play contributed to the emotional and cognitive confusion which this study documents.

Questionnaire respondents reported the predominant feeling at the time was confusion (n=51 80%). This confusion was manipulated by the clergymen through his constructions of the contact that encouraged women to believe it was either beneficial or love. The different layers of this comprised a) his construct of meaning about the event b) her feelings and emotional/psychological turmoil c) her beliefs about responsibility. These swirled around in her mind causing profound confusion.

For six women the confusion was 'complicated' by their own physical arousal, which they interpreted through conventional notions of heterosexual desire or were convinced of its therapeutic value.

The confusion again, I think, because I responded, it was as though this was obviously what I was needing. The feelings, completely mind blowing and confused. (72/Ang)

Some interviewed women recalled feeling flattered (eight) and good (three) not just because of the intimate attention but the fact it was the attention of a clergyman:

The confusion you feel. I mean I was flattered and I felt loved and wanted and especially valued. (64/Ang)

Shame

A large part of not being able to 'make sense', was shame and fear.

Shame about sexual relationships is induced by decades of Christian teaching about 'no sex before marriage', 'monogamy', virginity, and purity; leaving many women believing they had failed or sinned.

Manlowe (1995:67) suggests that it is virtually trans-cultural that women feel sexual transgressions committed against them reflect her own sexual shame.

In the Christian context, shame is increased by the injunction to forgive, especially if women believe this is paramount and they are unable to. Graham (2002:83) in the previous chapter describes how women are 'dissolved' by the separative power of the perpetrator, he further states

Her shame, and the implied imperative that she forgive, keeps her morally accountable in a manner exceeding the accountability that he has for his actions. She is further dissolved, whilst he may be absolved without repentance and restitution'.

Schussler Fiorenza & Copeland (1994:31) note women are *trained* to be ashamed of themselves if they become victims of sexual violence. This socially sanctioned shame was reinforced/used by clergy to facilitate silence. Shame acted to control women and prevent them from challenging clergy actions. Thus shame and a sense of gullibility led most women to maintain secrecy (n=58, 89%).

Women tried to find ways of dealing with their confusion and shame by taking the blame, and believing it was they who 'should have' done something/not done something. It was their fault.

Taking the blame: the words 'fault' and 'should'

Blame for sexual violence, abuse and exploitation is gendered. Feminist research has documented how this operates with respect to child sexual abuse, rape, and domestic violence (Herman, 1992; Kelly, 1988; Cooper-White P, 1995).

This perception is accentuated in a Christian context where women can be viewed as another 'Eve' or 'Mary Magdalene' (see chapter 2). They are either 'unique deviant women' (Dobash & Dobash, 1992), seductive, or vulnerable. As Keshgegian (1999) says: *Men are sexually powerful, but women are sexually responsible* (p47).

Marie Fortune (2001:106) notes how easily women assume responsibility for men's actions:

It is a paradox how often those who have the most resources and opportunity to exercise moral agency seek to deny it and those who have the least opportunity seek to assume it.

In this study sixty per cent (n=38 of n=63) of women had been wounded by previous sexual, physical or emotional abuse in childhood and may already have carried messages that they were at fault for this. Russell (1993:17) believes further abuse 'consolidates, or locks in, some of those feelings', and reinforcing self-blame messages.

Having your clergy "guru", someone you trust, and look up to, fall from grace would cause emotional and psychological devastation. Women therefore positioned themselves as the 'wrong-doer'. Taking responsibility also meant women had an illusion of control, which conveniently protected the clergy. Clergy manipulated 'self-blame' by constant reference to what *she* needed, what *she* did, did not do. For example; '*I do this because you need healing*'; '*I do this because you need love*'; '*You could have stopped me*'.

That women absorbed the responsibility as projected by clergy was evidenced by them using certain phrases and words. Two words and phrases were predominant, "*I should have...*" "*My fault...*" women believed that they 'caused' their own violation or failed to stop it. Other women questioned themselves. "What was the matter with me", "I was an adult".

It was all my fault and I should have known better. (73/RC)

It was my fault that I led him on. (4/Ang) (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

An elderly woman blamed herself for the break-up of her marriage (64/Ang). She did not attribute blame to the clergyman even though he had been her psychotherapist and she understood it had been exploitation. Another asked; "*Why did God let this happen if it wasn't my fault*", (6/House Church). One woman was glad Jesus wasn't here on earth because '*she'd get it wrong with him*'.

I wouldn't dare go near him in case, you know, I had a sexual relationship with Jesus". (14/Ang)

Other women were either confused or ambivalent about whose 'fault' it was:

It wasn't my fault, yet I was guilty. There is ambivalence there. (61/Ang)
I'm finding it very difficult to put the blame where I know it should be. (83/RC)
I was confused and guilty because I felt I must have given him some sign – an encouragement. (Q93/Ang)

I should have... was a recurring phrase, throughout a number of interviews and questionnaires. Women believed they should have 'controlled' the situation:

I should have jumped ship the first minute. (1/RC)

I should have run out of that room and, not gone back. (9/RC)

I should have said no and I didn't. (18/Ang, emphasis added by Kennedy)

A nun, crying throughout the interview, uses 'should' six times with reference to what she felt was a lack of strength.

I should have been stronger, should have said no. I shouldn't have made myself unsafe...I feel I should've said no, I should have been stronger, I should have let... (70/RC, emphasis added by Kennedy)

Another suggesting other women would have 'read the signs' uses, 'should have' ten times:

I still feel I should have... I should have known, I should have – that something should have told me, something must – should have – the warning bells should have gone off. What sort of person was I? I was an intelligent person or thought I was. So why wasn't anything coming across? I should have known better.

MK: *Do you still think that?* [Even after priest jailed]

Yes, yes, I do

MK: *That you should have known better?*

Yeah, that I should have – looking back I realise – I hadn't a clue, but I think yes, I should have ... I should have recognised the signs, and I didn't and for that I feel guilty. (3/RC) (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

One woman thought; "I shouldn't be doing this", a Catholic priest she consulted for advice reinforced this perception: "there are many women who are trapped in these relationships; you must make sure you don't get in that circumstance" (emphasis added by Kennedy). Whilst he

admits he knows of other women in this situation, he advises her that she must control the priest. Implicit here is that she not only carries the power but also the responsibility for clergy sexual exploitation. She took his advice to heart and warned other women in relationship with Catholic priests, "If you don't take ownership, you've only got yourselves to blame for being abused". She rationalised this stance:

Because by then I'd come to that point that it's my fault, I could have done something about it but I didn't, I let it happen. (40/RC, emphasis added by Kennedy)

Only two of the nineteen women interviewed specifically and clearly stated they had never carried the blame for what had happened.

Benyei (1998:75) argues that women take responsibility because a) they feel they have got something from the relationship and b) because the clergyman has strengthened the 'your fault' perception.

The emotional work that women had to engage in to understand what was happening, to control the situation as best they could, to safeguard themselves from frightening or violent clergy to maintain the secrecy, to deal with their guilt and shame, testifies to the truly enormous depth of the trap these women found themselves in. The fear of 'exposure' to husbands, families and congregations militated against 'naming' the sexual contact as abusive or exploitation for quite some time.

For some women daily living became a nightmare as they wrestled with conflicting emotions and fear and the potential repercussions of exposure. This did *not* allow room for reflection, they could not move beyond the clergy's explanation for what was happening. The nature of the situation was often crucifying in that the pain, secrecy and self-blame held them in a trap. Their mind was on safety, of jobs, marriages, homes, reputations, and not least their emotional, physical and sexual safety.

Naming and re-framing

Naming sexual exploitation can be difficult, not least because clergymen were skilled at giving the sexual contact a legitimate, non-abusive name; ('affair'/'love') or a purpose ('therapeutic', spiritual'), in this process they both naturalised and 'normalised' the events. Clergymen 'named'

the exploitation as something other and wider discourses supported their view. The limited literature and awareness about clergy sexual exploitation of *adults* in the public domain in the UK or Ireland (see chapter two – literature review) meant there is little from which women could draw to make sense. As we have already seen what there is invariably also uses the discourse of “affair” and “adultery”

One woman said;

I was in conflict for all those years, and – also, I didn’t have a name for anything, I didn’t know that it was sexual abuse. I know – I mean the word “affair” never crossed – never entered my head, I – I ‘d never [think] of that. Because it wasn’t. I think if I had been able to stick a label on it I would’ve realised I could have done something about it. You know? It would’ve given me the power, it would’ve given me a way of seeing it, but I didn’t have any way of seeing it. I had no name for it, I just knew that I was going through this awful conflict and I don’t know what to do about it. (26/House Church)

For this woman ‘a name’ was information, knowledge and power. It would have given permission her to complain, a framework for action. Table 5.2 records how women perceived/named the sexual contact when it began and now.

Table 5.2: Perceptions of sexual contact at the time and now

Perception at beginning			Perception now	
	Number of cases	%	Number of cases	%
As a love relationship/affair	29	45	5	8
As abuse	9	14	29	45
As exploitation	6	9	24	37
Something else	19	31	7	11
Unknown	2	2	0	0
Total	65	100	65	100

*Based on 65 cases. Percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding

At the time, just under half (n=29 women, 45%) saw the sexual contact as part of a love relationship. They had no other way of conceptualising it. One felt it was both consenting *and* exploitation. Only 15 (23%) were able to call it abuse or exploitation at the time.

Those (n=19) who could not ‘fit’ their perceptions into the above categories chose to describe how they saw the situation *at the time* in their own words (see fig 5.3 below, p153). They provided in the questionnaires a range of understandings: “felt responsible”, “desperate

behaviour", "helping me mature", "price I had to pay" "healing", "helping", or simply could not understand it at all "too poorly to know", "kept trying to work it out. Though only two put rape in the 'something else' category, on close inspection of questionnaires nine women said they were raped.

Some women had made excuses, or re-named the sexual activity. It was 'fatherly' (14/Ang), or touch was an 'accident' (3/RC).²⁸ One woman chose to deal with the situation by believing she had "misinterpreted his touch" (Q34/RC), another said the initial kiss on the back of her neck was "because he probably felt sorry for me" (40/RC). For the majority it was either a big mistake or an (extra) ordinary "love affair".

'Love/Affair' – the wrong name

Since only five at the time of participating in this study saw what happened as love/affair, some explanation of why this was the predominant view at the time is needed. Clergymen often used a 'mixed message' approach; it was 'Love and Spiritual', 'Love and therapeutic', 'Love and mutual'. Women tried to believe in these meanings and they *were encouraged to believe* it was 'reciprocal/mutual' and for their benefit. Many of the interactions looked like real relationships, albeit illicit. Some women did love the clergyman and used language such as 'adored' [him], 'mad about him', 'in the throes of passion', and 'infatuated'. Whilst these feelings cannot be ignored, they need to be contextualised.

As has already been established many of the women who 'loved' came from difficult circumstances had a profound need for care and nurturing and were being supported by the clergyman in his professional/pastoral role. Naming the 'relationship' as abusive at the outset would have required knowing that you had been duped, swindled, coerced, manipulated, in others words that you were a victim. Kelly and Radford (1998:61) suggest:

... naming oneself as someone who has been victimised may encompass significant costs that women attempt to limit or escape by avoiding the label .

The 'costs' included losing the feeling of being cared about or 'loved'. Some were given roles and duties within the Church, which boosted low self-esteem; indeed being made a 'co-worker' of the clergyman was a felt privilege. Some were in real hardship financially and three were

²⁸ Priest later jailed.

homeless. Clergy were helpful in these circumstances providing economic support and a sense of being valued both practically and emotionally.

Consent

For some women the issue of consent was not relevant as they were assaulted. When women reflected on their part in the sexual contact compliance was often confused with 'consent'. Consent requires more than compliance. Paterson (1992:124) clarifies the issue of consent with respect to sexual contact between therapists and clients thus:

In order for a non-coercive relationship to occur, consent has to be informed, mutual and meaningful. 'Consent' means to agree, to be of same mind, or to give permission. 'Informed' means that all possible risks and consequences have been communicated and understood. 'Mutual' means that the relationship is equal. 'Meaningful' means that the client can say no without the possibility of harmful consequences to self, treatment, or the relationship. Clearly the unequal power balance in the relationship and the omnipresent threat of consequences to the client makes consent possible. (Original emphasis)

Eleven of the nineteen women interviewed (58%) mentioned 'consent', over half (n=7) of this group (63%) said they were 'consenting'. Others clearly understood the sexual involvement was inappropriate:

Looking back, I wouldn't say that – you wouldn't call it informed consent, because ... I think I was too influenced by his position, my belief in his kind of spiritual, qualities... and I was at a very low ebb anyway, and very lonely. (63/RC)

One woman (1/RC) illustrates the complexity of what she perceived as 'consent'. She declared she was "madly in love with the priest", and therefore perceived this love to mean 'consent', yet when asked about her status, power with respect to him, she was very clear she was not equal nor did she have power. For her 'love' was the sole marker of consent.

A marker for another woman was her resistance. She took the position that she did not consent and was confident about this. She had been grabbed and molested with force in her house by a pastor, on three occasions. She was going to go to the police, until a male friend subjected her to a mock trial.

I couldn't go to court with it because it sounded as if I had been – I had been complicit, that I had complied, which I- I had not, but it sounded as if I was.
(6/House Church)

This 'friend' had persuaded her that letting the pastor into her house would be viewed as complicity, therefore consent. Thus framed sexual consent becomes *any ongoing contact* (three times she let the pastor in), or an apparent willingness to have the man present, as is commonly found in 'date' rape discourse (Gavey, 2005). Until this point she had not seen her behaviour as complicit. This echoes research that suggests the response of others to abuse affects outcomes, including willingness to report and perceptions of responsibility. (Kelly, Lovett & Regan, 2005).

A nun believed *returning* to see her spiritual director priest constituted consent. Another believed the fact the 'relationship' went on for so long meant she had allowed it and therefore was responsible. Her self-blame and guilt became enmeshed with consent, as if these feelings were proof that she consented.

Another nun, sobbing throughout her interview, said she consented but her feeling "as shit as I do now" was an indicator of not "freely consenting". (70/RC)

Being an adult (15/Ang) confirmed 'consent' for one woman. Another (83/RC) spoke of her maturity saying she "knew the rules of the Church" and had flouted them so this amounted to 'consent'. She does not mention his 'flouting' of the rules of the Church. For her and for another woman (70 & 83/RC), explicit physical force was not used so this was also another marker of consent.

The 'markers' women believed proved they were consenting are precisely those which police, prosecutors and juries use when deciding whether to believe a woman's account of rape (Kelly, 2002; Finch and Munro, 2004). These ideas are replete within contemporary culture, and it is no wonder that many women absorb them and internalise them.

From the women's perspective, 'consent' is *defined* by what they do (or feel) or do not do, *not* by the clergyperson actions, role, status or profession. Having decided that they had 'consented' what happened could not be exploitation/abuse, thus defining the meaning of the sexual contact. They focused on their 'adulthood' not their position of 'clients in need'.

Church institutions appear as confused as the women about the meaning of consent; albeit that sometimes this 'confusion' is deliberate, to protect the clergyman. Church logic includes the belief that women *can* consent, and that *staying* in the 'relationship' is proof of 'consent'. If they consented then *ipso facto* it is not exploitation or abuse. This has a circularity and looks plausible but it is simplistic, lacking focus on the power men/clergymen have.

Susan Brownmiller argues

To make a woman a willing participant in her own defeat is half the battle...it is a belief in the supreme rightness of male power (cited in Cooper-White, 1995:86).

The late Mary Edwardes²⁹ explored the confusion between consent and compliance in her work with women exploited by therapists:

Compliance should never be confused with consent. Assuming that clients have a choice is to completely misunderstand the nature of these relationships. There is no such thing as consent within these sorts of relationships (Unpublished paper).

Discussing whether or not women consented, whether or not it was 'informed consent', or whether the women wanted or desired the relationship should not therefore be the primary consideration rather one should be looking at women's vulnerability, the confused vortex of meanings and the tactics of entrapment used by clergymen. Another route could be recognition of clergy as professionals abusing duty of care. However the law has not reached legislation for clergymen who exploit in pastoral ministry (see also appendix 9).

Consent does not determine whether or not there was sexual exploitation of a woman who was *seeking a clergyman's professional care*.

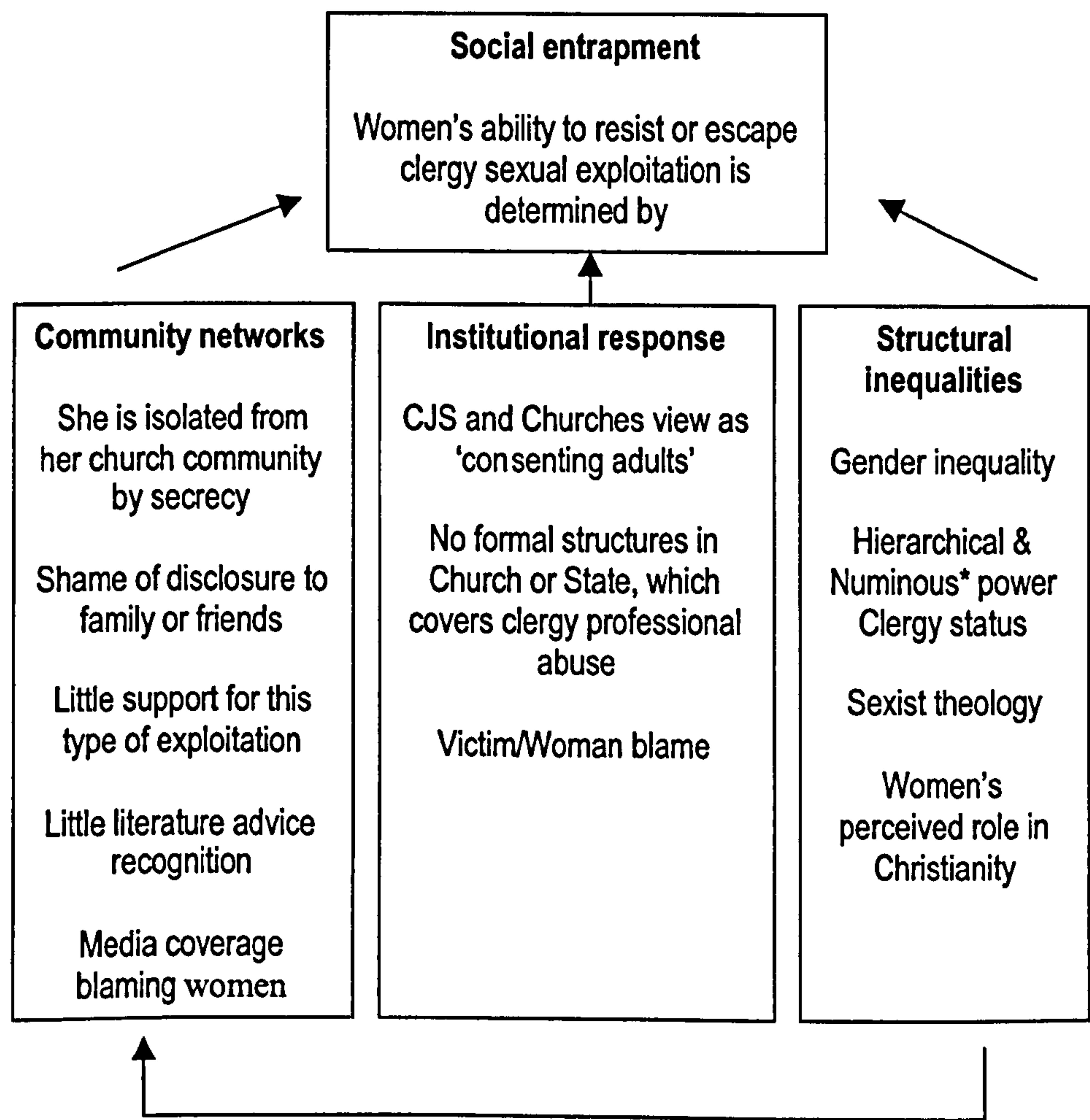
Social entrapment

Besides the personal entrapment described above and in previous chapters there is also evidence of 'social entrapment'. Flynn (2003) notes the lack of cultural context within which women can make sense of their situation and this is combined with an absence of social support. This leads to intense dependency on the clergyman and isolation. James Ptacek (1999, appendix 8) describes this process for women experiencing domestic violence, it has

²⁹ Co-founder with Jenny Fasal of POPAN (Prevention of Professional abuse network) now 'Witness'.

been adapted here (fig 5.2) to show how women abused and exploited by clergy have very little room for manoeuvre, little space to understand and take stock of their situation.

Fig 5.2: Social Entrapment in Sexual Exploitation by Clergy



* Means that of the 'holy'.
© Kennedy M

Despite personal and social entrapment many women tried to extricate themselves and to find the space to make sense of what had happened. The second half of this chapter explores ways in which women expressed their resistance.

“Nailing jelly to the ceiling”: Resistance and challenge

Ellen Wondra quoted in Poling (1991:32) describes resistance as:

The maintenance by the victims of any shred of humanity in situations of massive and systemic dehumanisation.

Why women take so long to understand the situation as exploitative is illustrated by the resources and strength women needed to marshal to face the issue of exploitation. Herman (1992) and Flynn (2003) in their work on legacies of abuse, describe ‘capture’ of women, Jenny Fasal, founder of POPAN, interviewed for this study, described women being ‘paralysed’ or ‘gaoled’ by the professional. She notes that whilst women can confront in all sorts of professional scenarios in these sorts of ‘relationships’ women have specific layers of constraint:

I think it says something very special about psychotherapy or clergy abuse relationships, or medical ...the very particularity of psychotherapy or treatment or counselling.

People would tell you “Oh yes, there’d been a policeman who had behaved badly over a car offence,” or their child had not been getting on at school and they had had to go to, the Parents’ Evening and then they’d have to take it up with the school, and then they’d had to take it up with the Local Education Authority. Other people who had had lousy lawyers or lousy accountants, or somebody in the local council had messed up over this or that or the other. And they had absolutely confronted it and pushed it and done everything.

Asking victims whether they’d dealt with other professionals successfully

...would help them to begin a greater sense of what it was that was going on that was different about this situation, from other areas of their life where they had not been disabled by somebody else’s frankly often appalling conduct.
(Emphasis added by Kennedy)

The questionnaire asked women how long it took to understand what was happening was exploitation.

Table 5.3: Length of time it took to name exploitation

Time	Number (n=65 cases)	%
Immediately	3	5
Within a few days	12	18
Within a few weeks	4	6
4-6 months	1	2
7-12 months	4	6
More than one year	36	55
Not known	5	8
Total	65	100

Almost a third (n=19) knew within days or weeks that what had occurred was exploitation or at least inappropriate, other women declared their experience was in the rape/attack category.

Understanding exploitation at an early stage did not necessarily prevent the ongoing sexual contact. Six women were exploited for one to five years, two for over five years; one is still in 'relationship' (even though he is her spiritual director). Three lasted months and those of assault (rape n=5) days or weeks. In some cases the coercive and manipulative nature of the relationships override women's ability to escape despite knowing their situation is exploitative.

More than half (n=21, 58%) of those who took longer than a year to name it as abuse/exploitation (n=36) did so within ten years, but 11 had lived with confusion and distress for longer than this.

Only two women who participated in the interviews continue to see the involvement with the clergyman as a loving/consensual relationship, although one of those women maintains it probably shouldn't have happened. Five, in the total sample of 63 women, continue to define the involvement as 'love/consensual'.

Table 5.4: Length of time interviewed women took to decide sexual contact was exploitation/abuse

Denomination of clergy exploiter	Time to decide it was exploitation	Length of 'relationship'
RC	Within weeks	3-6 months
Church of Scotland	4-6 months	3-6 months
Anglican	7-12 months	6months – 12 months
Anglican	7-12 months	1-2 years
House Church	1-2 years	1-2 years
Roman catholic (nun)	3 years	Over 5 years
Roman Catholic	4 years	
Quaker	6 years	6 years
Anglican	7 years	2-5 years
House Church	9 years	Over 5 years
Roman Catholic *	9 years	Married, ongoing
Roman Catholic (nun)	15 years	2-5 years
Anglican	16-20 years	1-2
Roman Catholic	16-20 years	6 months
Roman Catholic	16-20 years	1 – 2 years
Anglican x 2	20 plus	2-5 years /over 5 years
Roman Catholic	20 plus	2 assaults
Anglican *	From the start, but now more towards 'love'.	Over 5 years
Roman Catholic	Several years with periods of uncertainty	ongoing

*Women who called it as 'love'

Many women in this study were 'dehumanised' as they became objects of sexual attention within the 'relationship' where their needs were secondary to the clergyman's. Many, often due to childhood trauma or adult crises, did not see initially what was happening as exploitation, injury or even violation. Whilst up to a certain time they complied (not consented) most eventually challenged the basis of the 'relationship'. Doing so whilst their own subjectivity and sense of self was diminished can be seen as a revolutionary act. Women who resisted described the surrounding 'confused' state, and worried about the implications.

Resistance or challenge took different forms. Women were anxious to 'talk through' the situation with clergy but this was seldom reciprocated: "I'd try to talk with him but he would just get angry with me and walk away" (18/Ang). One woman, distraught about the kiss her priest had given her, said: "have you any idea what you did to me when you kissed me like that?" (2/RC). Another said to a pastor who had sexually assaulted her that he made her feel like the "shit" that he shovelled on his garden (6/House Church). An Anglican woman (14/ang) asked her vicar whether he "did this to every woman?" The question alarmed him and he replied, "Nobody must find out". Her question conveyed to him that she was not as compliant as he thought.

One priest's live-in housekeeper describes her resistances:

I went to my own room and he came in and... he asked me what was wrong, why I didn't go to his room, I said I didn't want to. He probably asked me why, but I – I didn't know why. I didn't want to. I didn't – I don't know. I think I said I had a row with [boyfriend]. (1/RC)

Another tried to draw on the pastor's commitment to his wife, to question their 'relationship'; "I would say 'well what about your wife?'" (26/House Church). This appears to have had limited effect and she estimates he sexually exploited at least thirteen women.

One nun told of her valiant but ineffective resistance. She said she was trying to *consider his feelings*, and this probably got in the way of protecting herself. *His perception and his feelings* were vitally important to her:

And I tried to tell him how I felt and that, just to hug, that was fine, just friendly but I really found all the other stuff very – very hard to handle and I felt it was wrong . But I didn't want to hurt his feelings or [for him to] feel I'd been playing around with him or using him or that. (70/RC)

His response was that *she* could just stop things if she wanted:

He – he always said I could say enough was enough, but that – it – it didn't work like that. (twelve second pause) He – I was always frightened. (70/RC)

In this case the clergy perpetrator abdicated control of the contact to her, knowing she was utterly unable to stop him, thereby increasing her shame and guilt. This nun was able to exert resistance by developing a new strategy of making excuses not to meet with him.

One woman believed a priest's unwillingness to 'regularise' the situation in marriage, in itself, constituted the abuse and exploitation of her.

I decided that I was going to try very hard to get out of it, sort it out, and confronted him that we should be married... He was absolutely horrified and said he couldn't possibly do that; he was a priest and so on. I said, "but you're having an affair". "No I'm not, No I'm not". He thought, that because he wasn't having full sex with me it wasn't an affair ...I never felt he had a conscience about it. He wasn't having full sex so he was still celibate, and he was doing his work and everyone was happy, therefore it was OK. (40/RC)

This priest had had "affairs" with four previous women but he did not consider these sex either so he may have considered them transitory forays of sexual activity that could easily be 'incorporated' into his priestly life with no real impingement on his personal or theological conscience.

Resisting was, "like nailing jelly to the ceiling" an Anglican woman said. Attempts were sometimes feeble or could not be sustained, even where women who were comparatively strong. The clergy had no intention of regarding anything the women said with respect. Resistance alone *seldom* resulted in a cessation of sexual contact.

Changing perception

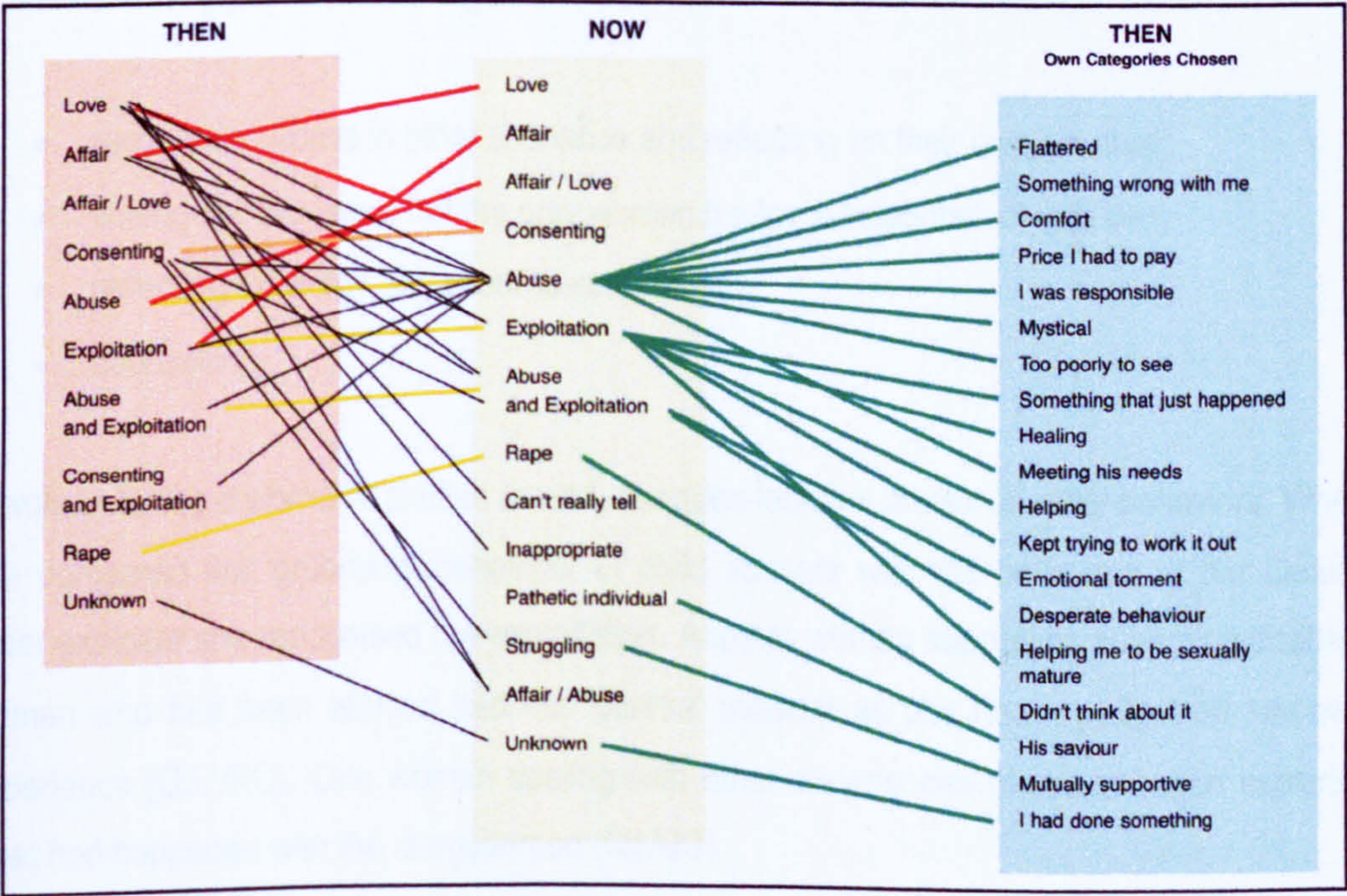
Figure 5.3 is a visual version of table 5.2 above depicting the changing ideas and beliefs of how women in the full sample perceived their situation. It demonstrates that despite confusion over the years, how the majority of women at the time of the study perceived the sexual contact as exploitation/abuse.

Two columns describe how women perceived the sexual contact at the time (then – right and left column). The column on the right shows descriptions given by women themselves in the 'other' category in the questionnaire.

The central column is how women perceive the situation now. Those who were unclear at the time (right column) appear to have a clearer idea today gravitating towards a perception of abuse/exploitation; none in this column chose love/affair as a final (now) perception.

Those on the left column also in the main have gravitated towards abuse/exploitation, but several chose love/affair, two chose 'affair' and 'abuse'. What this diagram does show is that with time and thought, women's perceptions change towards a more relevant 'naming' of the position they were in.

Fig 5.3 Changing perceptions over time



One woman said: at the time she did not think about it but her journey was more complex than this:

Did not think About it → Exploitation → Therapy → Two pathetic individuals

It transpired that *after therapy* she perceived it as more 'equal' and that they were just two individuals in trouble.

Eureka moments/turning points/awakenings

Overall women described spending many hours, months and years in 'working it out', including paying counselling fees to deal with confusion and the aftermath. The emotional energy required in 'making sense'; dealing with the turmoil and feelings evoked was enormous.

Each woman had individual 'eureka' moments when exploitation was recognised. Patton (2003) calls these 'turning points', Van Wormer and Berns (2004:62) 'awakenings'. Eureka moments/turning points/awakenings included:

- recognising abuse in other scenarios and reflecting on their own situation;
- finding out they were not the only woman having a 'relationship' with him;
- reflecting on clergy behaviour towards them;
- counselling.

A woman taking a women's studies course, attended lectures on sex offender behaviour. When she compared the 'grooming' behaviour of child abusers with the behaviour of her Quaker Elder exploiter she recognised the exploitation. Another woman supporting a learning-disabled woman who had been abused had her 'eureka' moment as she had to reflect on her own experience (Q37/RC). One woman dealing with other experiences of abuse began exploring what had happened with the clergyperson (Q1/RC).

In some cases, the behaviour of the clergyman was instrumental in helping women realise they were not respected or loved. Finding out they were not the only women targeted was helpful in clarifying the exploitation. One woman felt 'used' by the priest within the parish, as he piled on more and more parish work (2/RC). Another realised the clergyman did not 'love' her when she

heard him denigrate her in court, realising the Clergyman never intended to leave the priesthood helped another Anglican woman.

One Catholic priest wanted intercourse following a woman's hysterectomy. She then realised sex had nothing to do with touch helping her spiritual life - the previous rationale given. When a priest offered money to one woman she says; "I began to feel he was paying me for sexual favours". After threats another woman realised:

He rewarded me in work for sexual favours, but I only really began to recognise it as abuse when the threats began and I realised my career was in the balance. (Q5/Ang)

Two women started noticing lies from the clergy perpetrator and one said;

How could I be tempting him when he was locking the door? (Q80/Ang)

For one elderly woman the response of her Bishop crystallised everything.

... but it then dawned on me that these bloody men in the Church had all this power... but it was the fact I'd been put down, I'd been rejected again by a man of the Church, in other words the Bishop, who didn't even know me. So I was really incensed with this... that's what got me in touch with the anger. And I realised that I had been exploited, that this man had actually gone against all the boundaries that he should've kept. And that made me really, really angry.

Then she had seen the advertisement for this research:

I said, that's just what I need! And so, I mean, it was a godsend that I could write to you and say, "Yes, I want to be part of this". It all came together at that time. (64/Ang)

The ability to identify exploitation did not prevent women 'slipping' into self-blame or vacillating between "affair" and "exploitation". It is possible to 'love' a clergyperson and even to blame oneself and yet know he sexually exploited you. Even at the point of interview some were still negotiating these possibilities and different feelings.

Help from others

In research on child abuse or domestic violence it is often the friendship networks that are most important and where the first disclosures are made (Kelly, 1996). For some women, friends or

other professionals precipitated Eureka moments. One woman received a newspaper article on the trial of a Catholic monk from a friend, who knew she visited his monastery. It was to act as a catalyst to understanding what happened to her. In another case a churchwarden asked a woman if the pastor was touching her and this question made her suspect that others were also involved. For another woman a female tutor told her the priest-tutor 'relationship' was exploitative.

She would say, "That's abuse". And I said "But – but what's abusive about it?" I've had to learn what abuse was. And when she talked about an equal relationship, I was going "but what do you mean - an equal relationship?" (83/RC)

Counselling also helped some women; they spent considerable time and energy (and money) exploring their hurt, pain and confusion. Therapists were able to explain why it was called 'abuse' or exploitation.

The counsellor said "do you know you could have reported him for indecent exposure?" and that thought had never occurred to me before. (73/RC)

My counsellor said that what I'd described was abuse. Was shocked because I didn't know it was abuse. (Q85/Pentecostal)

Therapy enabled a nun to write to her abuser priest about how she felt about him and that she did not want further contact.

A catholic woman declared love for her priest/employer but when she sought counselling about child abuse her experienced rape counsellor explored how the clergyman exploited her vulnerability. Another woman, who was sexually abused in childhood, said.

I was able to piece it together [in therapy] with what had happened to me as a child with... I was obviously still in that emotional state, where I was immature and unable to, really determine what was right for me and what was wrong. (15/Ang)

One counsellor 'role-modelled' professional behaviour with a woman, which led to her eureka moment.

Until then I had no idea how a high level of care and yes, love, could be communicated and demonstrated without a sexual involvement. (Q14/Ang)

Those who support women as friends or counsellors clearly played an important role in helping clarify the nature of their circumstances.

Endings- Getting out

There was a wide range of 'separation'/endings, so diverse that it was difficult to develop analytic categories.

Table 5.5: How it ended

	Number	%
I ended it	35	54
He ended it	10	15
Outside forces ended it	10	15
Unknown	10	15
Total	65 Cases	100

In the interviewed sample, 'outside forces', other people or circumstances ended the sexual contact in (n=10, 53%) of cases. In the full sample the women (54% n=35) ended the contact themselves, often with support from others.

Physical separation was one route. Several simply "never went back". One left her job where the clergyperson was also employed. One who had been living with the Quaker Elder moved out. Family circumstances or new jobs meant a move was necessary, geographical distance helped sever the links. One woman once spotting his car in the village drove away and "drove for hours" before returning. A nun refused to work for the priest any more, he went abroad.

Re-investing in other relationships prompted emotional separation: one woman deliberately became pregnant by her husband, two decided to marry their boyfriends. And other women had other relationships. They created safety by making themselves legitimate partners of another man.

Separation strategies created physical and emotional distance between themselves and the clergyman.

Help from others

The support of others was, on occasion, very directive, with the confidante providing not just advice but also instructions and even 'scripts' of endings.

One young woman told an American visitor what was happening and she gave her very clear instructions.

"You're never to speak to that man again. Don't ever talk to him again." So I didn't and that was it. I kept putting the phone down when he called, and I just said "I don't want to speak to you" and put the phone down and I've never spoken to him again. (26/House Church)

Given permission by a woman whom she described as a "lovely lady", she was freed from protecting the pastor from scandal and a breakdown and was able to put herself first.

Some women were so fearful they felt they had to end contact. A Baptist woman went to Christian friends who;

... told me to forgive and forget, delivered my demons, cut soul ties and broke family curse. I then moved away because I was frightened of him finding me and killing me. (Q43/Baptist)

Whether this 'deliverance' ministry to 'deliver her demons and break the family curse' was a subtle way of blaming her is not clear. However the injunction to 'cut soul ties' helped her separate and find safety. However in doing so she lost her social networks, friends and Church community.

One woman's mother was instrumental in breaking her contact with an evangelical Catholic 'cult' like group in which the chaplain was the abuser.

I was in a psychiatric hospital in the lock up ward sitting opposite my mother one day and two people came in, a woman and a man with bibles...They sat beside me, they were dressed in black, all black from top to bottom and my mother was there and they started to say that [name] had sent them, and that I was to repent, turn to God and that my...my difficulties would all be over if I turned myself over to God and relinquish evil. My mother just said, "Get out of here and don't come back!" and she went up to the sister and said "do not let anyone like that in near my daughter again!" (9/RC)

Later her psychologist was to give her a choice "either [name] or me, which are you going to chose?" She chose the psychologist and never saw her priest abuser again.

In another case a probation officer removed a single parent from a live-in housekeeper post in a Catholic presbytery when the woman told her "this man is not a man of God".

These interventions are far removed from many, including feminist, models of counselling which stress being non-directive. That they were effective and valued by women raises important questions about how to enable safety in contexts where women have been systematically disempowered.

Withdrawal by clergymen

Some women talked of how some clergy were 'encouraged' to end contact with them, actions they may not have taken but for pressure from others.

A Churchwarden spoke to one victim about a pastor's activity with her after which he was moved to a parish in Wales. There is some suggestion he was asked to go or was moved by the Church before public disclosure.

In another case an Anglican priest moved abroad but still harasses the woman to this day. This upsets her: "he's like a burr in a woolly jumper". A Catholic priest also went abroad, "I was dumped", said this woman (he may have been 'sent'). The wife of one Anglican clergy offender chose a location for their retirement miles away from the woman he exploited. She was heartbroken but he bought her a ring, which she still wears. This clergyman had told her for years his wife was 'neglectful' of him, but she declares: "She improved when he retired".

One clergy therapist (who made the woman pregnant) agreed to leave his wife but he reneged on the promise, *after* she had told her husband she was leaving him for the clergyman. He retired, with his wife, whilst the woman's husband divorced her for 'infidelity'.

A Catholic priest gave one woman a wonderful day out, such that she felt the relationship was 'marvellous', only to receive a letter a few weeks later to say he was marrying someone else.

One clergyman tried to find another 'helper' for the woman he was supporting.

He made it clear that, - it was too much of a risk to his job [to support her], and so he was finding me somebody else I could go to. I'd like to think he had my

welfare at heart, but really it was only because he wanted me out, basically he wanted rid of me, I was becoming a nuisance to him, a threat. (15/Ang)

One Catholic priest had a "crisis of conscience" and ended the sexual contact after advice from his spiritual director.

After a Catholic priest had a heart attack a nun was to feel great relief; her first thought was "Oh God, that's it, that's it – it's over". When he tried to get her to visit some months later she refused. It had given her the necessary impetus to not accede to his requests.

Dangerous Times

For some women in this study ending contact with clergy was potentially dangerous, echoing findings from domestic violence research. In Kirkwood's (1993) study one third of the group interviewed experienced an attack, attempted attack, or explicit threat from their ex-partners after leaving them.

In this study if women shared with their husbands what had happened with the clergy some became abusive, two needed restraining orders and one woman had to flee to a refuge. Other women's husbands were helpful and supportive in confirming and validating the exploitative nature of the sexual contact.

Some women expressed shock that 'religious' men were violent as the Church portrays itself as a sacred safe place. Nevertheless 'God's name' alone does not confer indemnity against violence (The Anglican Report, 1994:50). A number of women tried to separate from clergy they described harassment, fear, and threats. Some experienced forms of abuse and intimidation such as public humiliation or damage to further employment. Two were 'stalked'.

I asked for a transfer in my job. After that he harassed me, I moved from my accommodation but he found my new address through friends, after a few moves I broke my relationships with all friends from that parish, so he would not get my address. (Q37/RC)

I ended it. I realised that he was only ever going to "use me" and that he wanted the respectability of his position with me in the background. I moved on and became much stronger. When I ended it he threatened, stalked and harassed me for over 10 years, until I met my present husband. (Q87/Ang)

The anger displayed by some clergymen when women marshalled the resources to end contact was a source of subsequent fear and unease.

I ended it. I couldn't stand it any more. I was scared of him. I told him in Church after a service so there were other people around and he couldn't hurt me – he prayed for my forgiveness and then walked away. He was very angry. (Q80/Ang)

At first I felt I was misjudging him and that I was misinterpreting his touch. I tried to escape from the relationship and he was very, very angry. He punished me. I could not eat or sleep and became depressed and desperate.” (Q34/RC) (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

There were various routes through which women were punished for acting to protect themselves. When one woman ended the “affair” which the Pentecostal pastor had initiated, he told the fellowship that it was *she* who pursued him thus tarnishing her reputation a view consonant with the Pentecostal ‘Eve’ discourse.

One Anglican clergywoman who was sexually abused in her workplace paid a heavy price for ending the sexual contact.

I ended the sexual aspect, but wanted to continue working for him; although he made the workplace increasingly unpleasant for me, and he eventually made false allegations against me to justify dismissing me. Most of the women harassed simply resigned. I needed the work. He also acted on his threat to ruin my career, displaying an amount of influence, which staggered me and has been very damaging professionally. (Q5/Ang)

Two women (6/House Church, Q60/Assemblies of God) were sexually assaulted when trying to end contact confirming the dangers women face when trying to remove abusive men from their lives.

Conclusions

At the time of the research, in the majority of cases (92%, n=55 of 62 where the question was answered) women were known to be no longer in the ‘relationship’. Of the five who were, one said she “can’t get out”, another was “trying to get out” and a third “did not want to get out”. Only five now viewed the sexual contact as consenting/affair or love, whilst the majority (n=51

of 63³⁰, 81%) now believed it was abuse/exploitation or rape. Of the remaining seven who viewed it in a different way, four were still confused and unable to untangle the past at all.

Most of the women had difficulty getting out of the sexual involvement but many eventually had 'eureka' moments. At first there was confusion, complicated by ideas or views about 'consent' and their adult status, and many believed they caused the exploitation or it was "their fault" as they could have taken power: the "I should have..." discourse. Some women resisted in various ways, often characterised by vain attempts to end the sexual contact by challenge or making excuses not to visit. This was rarely an 'ending' strategy in and of itself. Physical and/or emotional separations were necessary.

Others with support came to re-evaluate their position, which in turn encouraged separation. When contact was ended by the clergyperson, this was often experienced as a deep betrayal at the time.

What is difficult to convey is the time and multiple costs of this process, which could last twenty years, during which women would have to labour intensively to understand what had happened. A few, only at the point of this research or fairly recently, realised what exploitation meant. Even if separation ending had occurred, it did not mean, necessarily that either the women understood exploitation had occurred or that emotional or physical harm ended.

Sometimes the victim had to endure harassment, vilification from Church community, Bishops, Church leaders and ongoing harassment from the clergy perpetrator. Getting free incurred costs; women's lives were often irreparably changed with marriage break-ups, nervous breakdowns, and loss of jobs (see chapter 7).

Feelings were to endure for many years and even when interviewed, these emotions were sometimes raw and there were tears, shame and guilt in speaking of what happened. It is also important to note here that not all the women found the ending so difficult; some were greatly relieved (N=18, 31%) and 'safe at last'.

³⁰ Of the two women who were abused by two different clergy, one recognised both experiences as abuse/exploitation, whilst the other at the time said it was an 'affair' and now, under the category 'other', defined it as 'loving'.

Some women chose to take action in officially reporting or telling others. For some this became another abusive situation to be endured. Moving from the 'private' personal sphere to the 'public sphere' is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: “The well from which we drink is poisoned” From Private to Public

This chapter looks at how women broke ‘secrecy’ and made their experience ‘public’. Chapters 3 and 4 outlined how women struggle to understand what was going on and their sense of shame and guilt often prevented them from taking action. Yet despite the multiple social, psychological and emotional factors that entrap, women in this study worked hard to understand the nature of their situation and most came to free themselves. ‘Telling’ (in the private sphere) or ‘reporting’ (in the public sphere) was a risk for those who felt shame and humiliation. That they were often responded to in unhelpful ways compounded the abuse and isolation.

It is testament to their *active* strength that three quarters of the interviewed women, (n=14 of 19, (74%)) told someone *at the time* about the ‘relationship’. In the whole sample of 63 women, in over half of the cases (54 %, n=35) ended the relationship themselves.

Private and public exposure of the clergyman

There were two different types of ‘telling’. One that preserves the privacy of the exploitation so that both woman and exploiter are kept ‘safe’ (private) and there is ‘reporting’ (public) a telling which breaks the secret and exposes the perpetrator to potential sanction. Telling appeared to be an ‘intermediate’ stage from the private to the public sphere.

Telling – at the time

By speaking to someone women wanted to gain support, not necessarily to end the relationship, though in some cases this was the aim. One woman said she “had to tell someone” (original emphasis) which suggests the secrecy was enormously difficult for her.

Fifteen of the 19 interviewed women told someone *at the time*. Women chose relatives and friends (n=8), Church people (n=4) and professionals (n=3). This echoes the research on domestic violence, which shows that many women seek support from informal networks (Kelly, 1988). Responses can be critical in woman’s decisions to report (Lovett et al, 2005)

Women described reactions from others as: “shocked”, “angry”, “horrified”, “hurt”, in “pain”, “appalled”, and “surprised”. The word ‘horror’ was most frequently used. Responses might be

muted if the clergyman was well known to the listener, anger if not known. Some were not surprised because of the clergyman's established dubious reputation. One woman described mixed reactions:

Sadness from a friend who used to know this man, and anger from another who didn't. (RC)

One sibling was angry about the way the Catholic priest was treating her sister. One woman's partner reacted badly and they parted during the criminal trial of her abuser, (3/RC).

One friend's advice was instrumental in helping her (26/House Church) to stop the abuse. Another woman said her friend agreed to pray when the Pastor visited and she felt supported by this. An Anglican woman in 'love' told her friend, she felt this lessened her isolation (6/Ang).

Two women told their husbands/fiancée (88/CofS, 26/House Church) received support, confirming the exploitative nature of the contact, and throughout the eventual reporting stage.

Responses from Church officials varied from neutral, to anger, to horror, and some caused more pain for victims. A nun told her Mother superior she had "fallen in love" with a priest, expecting help and direction. However she was sent to a country convent, which she described as a 'punishment' and felt she had been banished. Another nun told priests in confession, one was "very nice", another "awful". In another case a Catholic priest seemed to condone the relationship a woman was in with her priest but advised she must not let it go so far as getting into his bed. It was her responsibility to control the priest. He did not tell her it was inappropriate behaviour on the part of the clergy. A different Catholic priest suggested to one woman, that a previous woman had provoked the priest sexually and he blamed her for her exploiter's behaviour.

A Catholic woman had negative experiences from two counsellors; one, (a former catholic priest), questioned why she had not availed of the priests suggestion of sex, whilst the second breached confidentiality and told her husband (whom he was also counselling) that his wife had an "affair" with the priest. Following this her husband's violence towards her increased and she had to get an exclusion order. In an Anglican case a 'Relate' counsellor inappropriately approached the situation as "break-up of an affair". The woman's exploiter was a clergy-psychotherapist whom she paid.

In a study on trauma following clergy sexual abuse Flynn (2003) noticed there was:

An absence of willing, informed, emphatic listeners and those who sought therapy had difficulty locating the right therapist employing appropriate language (p133). (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

She refers to listeners framing exploitation as “affairs”, or “adultery”. These findings are replicated in this study.

Only six interviewed women were fortunate to have an ‘aware’ listener (5 female helpers, one male), one woman (14/Ang) told a counsellor and her husband and both confirmed the exploitative nature of the sexual contact. A female spiritual director recognising abuse referred another Anglican woman to a specialist counsellor. In another case a female Minister, a tutor of one catholic woman explained the nature of exploitation. One woman’s sister said what had happened was abuse but her friend was horrified by the revelation because she had known the Catholic priest in question. A Quaker woman’s counsellor advised her she did not have to have ‘couple counselling’, and she perceived this as acknowledgement of exploitation. Another woman’s spiritual advisor (18/Ang) simply said, “get out” and told her she was being exploited.

In the whole sample, telling friends or counsellors could be, but was not always, supportive. In only a small number of cases in the whole sample (n=8 of 65, 12%) were women given a clear message it was not their fault and they had been abused and exploited. Concern for the women’s well being was expressed in only two cases. These focused on the victim and supported her, validating the unethical and abusive nature of the experience. With an ‘aware’ listener women had more space to understand (n=8 interviewed women) and to re-frame their experience as exploitation

Many ‘listeners’ however did not seem aware of the nature of clergy sexual exploitation and this resulted in missed opportunities to help women extricate themselves.

No women disclosed that the professionals who were ‘listeners’ took responsibility for reporting the exploitative clergy themselves. Though this would suggest ‘mandatory reporting’, which is contested and not always implemented, the situation at the moment is that police officers are reluctant to take action in anything they perceive as an “affair”, despite new legislation preventing professionals abusing clients (see appendix 9 for a fuller discussion). Many

counsellors would listen but did not comment let alone act; I call this 'neutral denial', or in the case of religious or priests 'collusive collegiality'.

Protecting the clergyman by not reporting

Not reporting is a common feature among women who experience sexual violation (Lovett & Kelly, 2005). So it is not entirely surprising that the women in this study chose, on the whole, not to report. In many cases the fact the exploiter was a clergyman was significant in their decision making.

Some women wanted to 'shield' the clergyman, his wife and children whom they felt sorry for. Some felt it would be spiteful to tell, whilst others were afraid he might commit suicide. Sometimes Church or friends encouraged them not to report. That it might 'ruin his ministry' and that this was a huge responsibility.

I'd be responsible for blowing apart his ministry. This marvellous ministry that he had. How could I take that on myself? So I was too terrified to speak up.
(26/House Church)

Here his ministry becomes more important than and even disconnected from his misconduct, more important than her pain, hurt and exploitation. Sipe (1995:126) uses a metaphor of pregnancy: the woman must lose her life to save the foetus (the priest).

The myth of the woman's duty to sacrifice herself and her life becomes patently and painfully clear.

His culpability is thus minimized in favour of perceived good, valuable and even necessary qualities that he brings to ministry. In this way women negate their own experiences which are less important than his reputation and the welfare of the Church community.

Delay was another barrier, women spoke of time having run out for reporting

By the time I had begun to realise the inappropriateness of the relationship and how he initiated it he had retired from that parish. By the time it had become acceptable to report these things – i.e. fairly recently – and to realise the nature of the abuse he had died. Also I'm still friends with his family and I didn't want to hurt them. (14/Ang)

One woman, felt there had been some good, and it was 'too late' to report, interestingly she felt that by *not* reporting perhaps she held some power over him:

Over the years I've just thought I couldn't pull the plug on him. I think in some convoluted way I know I've had power over him because I could've pulled the plug anytime over the last 17 years. I could've spoken out and maybe that's been my punishing him. He's not known whether I'm going to do it or not. I could've gone to the bishop but I chose not to and I square that with myself thinking, well, he's got himself to live with, just as I have and maybe it's not for me to judge how he's coping with it. Let him sort it out himself. I've got enough to deal with dealing with my own emotions about it. (64/Ang)

Three men intimidated women to the extent that they chose not to report. One 'friend' conducted a mock trial with a woman, which so terrified her she decided not to report. Another male clergyman said it was 'un-scriptural' to report to the civil authorities, citing a biblical passage held in much regard by evangelical traditions:

He said to me, 'You can't take him to court, it's unscriptural to take another Christian to court.' because there are some verses in the Bible in, where the Apostle Paul says that, it's a disgrace for Christians to take another to court". (6/House Church)

Not reporting because of lack of trust in hierarchy

Over half of the interviewed women of (n=11 of 19, 58%) did *not* report officially, they framed this as a need to protect themselves. All had however told someone privately.

Fear was pervasive (see also chapter 5) and is a persistent finding in the literature where women have been sexually assaulted, abused or experienced domestic violence (Kelly, 1988; Poling, 1991; Kirkwood, 1993; Cooper-white, 1995; Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Flynn, 2003; Farrell, 2003).

There's two elements, isn't there? One is the risk to your own family life and your own marriage, and the second is there's always this feeling that , this is either a neurotic or malicious woman who is cooking this up. They'd believe him not me. (18/Ang)

Estrich (1992) says: "no myth is more powerful in the tradition of rape law than the myth of the lying woman" (cited in Du Mont et al:479). This stereotype profoundly affected women, accentuated by Christianity being one of the origins and undoubtedly sustainers of this view.

Women talked of there being was “no point” or that “they [Church/police] wouldn’t understand” or that “they wouldn’t believe me – because he was a priest”. They feared blame and had awareness that “they’d say it was my fault” or “they’d say I was [mentally] ill or something”. One woman had a cynical view of Catholic clergy expressed when she commented; “how do I know he [bishop] isn’t doing the same?” There was little confidence in either Church hierarchies or the criminal justice system.

Some spoke of being “too terrified” or had “no-one to talk to”:

[I] would have been too frightened to report it. (Q69/RC)

I was frightened of anyone finding out. (Q38/Ang)

I was scared; I thought it was my fault. (Q4/Ang)

Fear kept this in me not to say anything till I told a friend in 2001. (Q68/RC)

I once told him I would contact his Bishop if he didn’t leave me alone but he said he would “expose” me and I would be in all the newspapers and I was afraid of that. (Q87/Ang)

I’m not ready yet. I’m scared – I’m frightened of him, of what the Church will say, of whether I was in any way to blame (I was there!) I also have difficulty dealing with vicars/the Church – I’m frightened. (Q80/Ang)

I was afraid – ashamed. (Q70/RC)

I could not have reported it because of the risk to my marriage. (Q65/RC)

Acutely aware of the risks involved in reporting, choosing not to report meant women wanted to keep control and preserved their own stability and privacy, as illustrated by these quotes from interviews.

It would breach my privacy yet again /I do not want other people controlling that area of my life /to keep control of the experience. (4/ang)

Didn’t want to leave the Church and leave friends. (26/House Church)

Couldn’t survive reporting/ not going to sit and tell in front of a load of men. (6/House Church)

The following section explores women’s experiences of reporting.

Official reporting – the public domain

In the interviewed sample (n=19) some women did not frame their relationship with clergy as exploitative or abusive viewing it as benevolent as detailed in chapter 4 and 5. As previously discussed women in the full sample believed they were equally responsible, or loved the exploiter or that it would negate the good the clergyman had done. This is a very significant influence on women’s decisions to report, as Du Mont, Miller, Myhr (2003:480) say: “a woman must believe she is a real victim before she can view the assault itself as real rape”, or in this study ‘real’ assault/exploitation.

Flynn (2003:153) says women need help and support to “alter the internal paradigm to accept an understanding of the boundary violation as abuse”.

Du Mont et al (2003:467) argued that women who made a public statement of their abuse and exploitation indicated the women had a “a sense of restored well-being”. Whilst in some cases this was true in this study, it was more likely that they thought the behaviour was on some level wrong, that they had been harmed in some way, and that they deserved recognition and redress.

In well over half the full sample (n=38, 58%) senior Church officials knew of the activity of the clergyman. In one additional case Church came to know years later.

Where the Church officials knew, in 56% of cases the woman herself (n=22) made the report (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: How Church officials knew

How	Number	%
Women reported it	22	56
Someone else reported	7	18
Media reporting	1	3
Perpetrator told his superiors	1	3
Some other way	7	18
Not know	1	3
Total	39	101

*N=39 where church officials knew

Reasons for reporting

In the women's accounts it is clear that many factors can precipitate reporting.

Well, its about 20 years since it happened. I think probably what precipitated it [reporting] was – was coming here and being my own boss. Having done several curacies and being under men, at last I have my own authority and perhaps that precipitated it in some way. And maturity of age, of having more self-confidence. I think one of the other reasons was disclosures about so many people who are abused by priests, and so much press coverage, I just got to the point probably when enough was enough. I wanted to be part of blowing the whistle on everything, that the full statistics were gathered and all the time that I wasn't talking about what happened to me meant there was one less statistic to count. I just wanted the authorities to know and have something on record about this man, should he ever come back here ...in retirement and get a house for duty or something like that, I wanted him on the blacklist so he couldn't damage anyone else. (4/Ang)

'Whistle blowing' here involved both recognition of her experience and contributing safety for other woman. She had developed her confidence in being her own boss, older and a woman in authority. She had more space for action.

In another case the woman's husband told her children their mother was a "whore". Reporting was a strategy to try to vindicate herself, extract an apology from the priest, having him removed from ministry, seeking compensation she hoped to restore her relationship with her children.

A Judith Herman study, (2005:593) notes that some survivors sought to render abusers 'incapacitated' and exposed, and reporting was one way to achieve this.

The goal was exposure of the perpetrator – it was more important to deprive the perpetrator of undeserved honour and status than to deprive him of either liberty or fortune.

This stance was common among those who choose to make official reports although complex combinations were possible: one Catholic woman wanted to keep other women safe and obtain an apology, not dishonouring him;

I think an apology will be enough, and to understand where he is at the moment, and what he has been doing in the last ten, fifteen or twenty years. To understand his position. (9/RC)

Herman (2005) explores, as others have, whether perpetrators are capable of a meaningful apology and even if they are whether it delivers what women hope for.

MK: Do you think understanding his position is going to help you?

As long as I know that he is on the right path that he is not abusing – he's on another continent, I'd say he's an old man now. As long as other people are safe from him, I'll be happy enough with that. That is the biggest thing, that people are safe from him. (9/RC)

She also wanted:

[Someone to say that] this priest is guilty of sexual abuse against me, which he is. But I need that stated to me...from an official source, from his community, from himself, or from the residential therapy centre or from other women who've been abused by him. From some source, an official source. (9/RC)

Here again the twin themes of recognition/validation and safety recur with many women focused on collective not personal safety.

This woman was aware of the hierarchal system in which the perpetrator was embedded, called both him *and* his community to account. Ten years on from her first report she is still battling with the religious order for 'truth'. Several versions of it have emerged over this time; that her abuser had been in a treatment centre to learn to 'modify his ministry'; another disputed this and said he had been in treatment for depression; whilst more recently some evidence suggests he was in prison. He himself did apologise, not for abuse, but for anything that upset her though he did not remember her. Here recognition is minimal, lacking both acknowledgement of her personhood and his exploitation.

Herman (1992:585) outlines why recognition is so vital:

Community denunciation of the crime was of great importance to the survivors because it affirmed solidarity of the community with the victims and transferred the burden of disgrace from victim to offender.

In summary women 'reported' to achieve many goals; to effect an apology; to keep other women safe; for access to justice and clergy accountability; to restore own reputation; to determine the status of the abuser, where he was and if still in ministry; and to have something on record/recognition of harm.

A Poisoned well? Official reporting to Church authorities

The notion of 'Church' suggests a place of benevolence and kindness, a source of spiritual nourishment and quenching of thirst (a well) from the harsh reality of life. Christians are supposed to replicate the love and care of Christ. One female Christian theologian in *Time for Action* (2002:111) asked: 'What if the well from which we drink is poisoned?'. In terms of official Church responses to exploitation of women by clergy this research suggests largely the well is poisoned.

The policies and procedures of Churches will be discussed more fully in appendix 9. This chapter looks at how women reported and responses received.

That some women saw what had happened to them as criminal is evident in the 22 reporting to police or solicitors, that it was a breach of professional conduct in the reports to Church officials or professional bodies. Of the women who went to a professional body: three went to the BAC;³¹ one to the Nurses Welfare Office; one to CCPAS³²; one to the Samaritans and one to Social services.

Whilst many studies have documented the, often poor, responses of, for example, the police to sexual violence (Kelly et al, 2005), few have systematically explored Church authorities. For this reason this data is explored in detail here, not least because there are separate inquiry and quasi-legal processes used by Churches that operate in parallel to the Criminal justice system.

For example the Church of England now has a process 'The Clergy Discipline Measure' which holds legal status. In other Churches where there are tribunals solicitors and Barristers are often utilised by both parties.

The following table looks at Church responses only, since this study was focused on the context of the women's situation within Christian Communities.

³¹ BAC – British association of Counsellors – they have regulatory powers.

³² CCPAS – Churches Child protection advisory service; A Christian Charity not attached to any Church.

Table 6.2: Responses from Church authorities

6.4 If reported what happened	Number	%
They protected him	16	52
They blamed me	9	29
Moved him to another parish	6	19
They ignored it	5	16
Sent him to a treatment centre/assessed	5	16
Said we were two adults and therefore no offence	4	13
Had a tribunal/disciplinary hearing	3	10
Went to consistory court	1	3
Something else	7	23
Total	56	

*Multiple response – 31 people, 56 responses

It is rare in the UK or Ireland for women sexually exploited by clergy as an adult to have an official hearing or Church court case, no matter the denomination or whether there are official disciplinary structures. Fortune (1999:99) concluded following examining these processes in practice:

... I realised that for some... their agenda of “protecting the institution from its people” differed dramatically from mine which was “protecting people from the institution and it’s representatives”.

Nevertheless Churches were able to tell the researcher who had responsibility to take reports made further:

Table 6.3: Who decides to take allegation forward to official process

Church	Who decides whether to proceed
Methodist	Complaints officer
Anglican	Bishop with advice from registrar
Catholic (UK & Ireland)	Bishop Abbot/Prior/superior (Order priest)
Church in Wales (Anglican)	Bishop
Church of Scotland	Committee of presbytery
Baptist	Regional superintendent
Independent Baptists	Congregation decides process
Congregational	Church meeting
URC	The 'Mandated Group' under Section O. (both men & women)
Quaker	Cleanness /discernment group

In 32 cases women reported to various officials either instead of or in addition to Church hierarchy.

Table 6.4: Whom women reported to officially

Reported to	Number	%
Police	13	41
Senior Church official	11	34
Solicitor	10	31
Professional body	9	28
Vatican	3	9
MP	1	3
Other	8	25
Not known	1	3

* Multiple responses possible, % based on n=32 cases where the question was answered

To be taken seriously

One of the risks to reporting women were aware of was their marginal status in Christianity and some invoked tenets of clericalism and biblical passages that blame women for sexual transgression.

So often it comes down to his word against hers, and “the woman tempted me and I did eat”. (Q65/RC)

So often when these things are discussed in church circles the woman is portrayed as the whore and the minister the victim. (Q17/Ang)

They seem to have this paranoia collectively that all women are after them. (Q74/Ang)

I’m glad to be able to express to you as a survivor that we get the blame. This preys on my mind more than the abusive events sometimes. Even years later I’m having this problem. (Q85/Pentecostal)

I just need to find the strength to overcome the ‘old boys’ network’ which is what is excluding me still. (Q102/Methodist)

No-one, I believed, would take it seriously. I feared I would be blamed and made to look cheap – you know – the old idea of female congregants throwing themselves at priests. (18/Ang)

Patriarchal hierarchy – Always the woman’s fault. (Q83-RC)

Women’s accounts can be dismissed if they are cast as seducers of men, or are perceived as causing their own exploitation (see Chapter 2). Carol Adams (1995) argues there is a double standard of harm, a view echoed by Bartlett:

The degradation of women stigmatises women to the point where that degradation is taken as evidence that there was nothing of value to which harm could be done (1987:1562).

Labacq and Barton (1991:148) further elaborate the cultural construction of women's word as less worthy of belief.

A man's word is his honour, whereas a woman's honour resides in her sexual purity rather than her words. What women say is not believed.

The combination of women's pre-existing Christian constructions of womanhood combine in an exquisite way allowing clergy sexual exploiters and Church hierarchy to dismiss women who report sexual violation.

It is not necessary to conceptualise persons who are exploited as incompetent and child-like. In fact, those professionals who exploit clients often play both sides of the theoretical fence when defending themselves. Exploitative professionals often contend that the person who had sex with them solicited or freely consented to it. In this defence, they cite the competence of the person as an adult able to consent to sexual behaviour. On the other hand they contend that the person making the accusations is severely distorting the facts due to the person's mental pathology, and cite their projective process, influenced by childhood, as the cause of that distortion (Lobovits & Freeman, 1993:36/37).

Many women were met with stereotypically negative responses from Church officials in the dominant male 'culturally appropriate' way. Here Church hierarchy were ambivalent, hostile and dismissive of women's accounts nearly *always* identifying with, or at minimum, protecting the male clergyman. There were a variety of ways Churches protected the institution and the clergyman; hostility, prevarication, buck-passing, stonewalling, denial and resistance. All of these strategies were experienced by women as harmful.

Hostility and Harm

In the interviewed sample, Church officials seemed intent on deflecting women from official processes. If the process is as hard and extended as possible there is a strong disincentive to continue. Each case becomes an example to other women *not* to take this course. Indeed one woman did not report after she saw how the Church and media had treated another.

Officials used variations of blame, ignoring complaints, shame and distress the woman through endless interviews, or patronise the woman. Emphasis was placed on her vulnerability, as the cause of the exploitation, thus shifting the focus from the clergy to the victim. Some would focus on her perceived 'pathology' (mental health, depression) as invalidating her framing of the relationship as abusive.

One Church fellowship put pressure on a woman to disclose in front of panel of male ministers, knowing she would not be able to do so.

I had brought up the fact I was abused by a pastor at a church meeting at which point I was basically ostracised... Five months after I left the fellowship I had a letter from the powers that be to explain exactly what I meant in front of the church elders. And I thought that was downright cruel. I rang up the Pastor's wife and said "I think this is totally cruel and ridiculous "and there is no way I'm going to do it, I'm not going to sit in front of a load of men".

MK: What was the tone of the letter, was it supportive?

No way! No way at all.

MK: what do you think they were trying to do?

Prove that I was lying. (6/Pentecostal/House Church)

Other strategies included offers to pay off the victim, negotiate with her husband (this occurred twice), lose the files, avoid action because of publicity, to take the counselling (euphemistically called a 'pastoral response') rather than disciplinary route; and to move clergy to another parish. These tactics of 'buck-passing', prevarication, delay and distractions increased the likelihood women would retract or cease pursuing their case.

Buck passing

Buck-passing is defined here as individuals denying responsibility and an inability or unwillingness to follow any sort of 'process' and was evident in this research. One woman found no priest seemed to know what to do, necessitating telling her story to many different (usually male) Church personnel which she found extremely distressing.

I typed out a three-page A4 letter with the events, you know, dates and everything else. I went to the Dominicans and I told one of the priests there. He said; "you'll have to do something about that because that priest will continue abusing his position, if somebody doesn't stop him." So he said, "go

over to see this priest in [place name]"...So I headed up to [place] and I saw this priest, he seemed to be a very naïve priest, didn't believe... But he gave me the name then of a priest and nun in the Diocese who deal with sexual misconduct [against children]. I had several meetings with this priest and nun individually and together.

She then demanded to see the Bishop, this took fourteen months to arrange and she had to see him in the presence of his male clerical secretary. She felt intimidated:

I had these two men listening to me, and me crying, and they're not really taking a lot of notice. (2/RC)

Three women described veiled threats and intimidation, which in some cases silenced them:

I have been told by his provincial in America, that this priest had actually been in residential treatment twice, as he put it, inverted commas, 'to modify his ministry'. I wrote back and said do you mean he molested other women? And the provincial wrote back and said any further letters that you write will be sent to this priest's solicitor. (9/RC)

She interpreted this as a warning and she did not write again.

Prevarication

Another pernicious ploy was to 'string' women along; giving the impression that action was being taken but ultimately no progress or outcome resulted. In one case an official was to engage a woman in discussion and be supportive, *at first*, then end and respond nastily and without justice.

This same woman above contacted Diocesan officials. At first the Monsignor was caring and encouraged her to send all the paperwork to him. He failed to tell her *right from the beginning* that Archbishops have no responsibility (technically) for religious order priests in their Diocese. He engaged her, extracted as much information as possible but then denied he said he would help her, backed away and did nothing. This was considerable cruelty and distressed her enormously. It also raises the question why the monsignor wanted the information if the Diocese had no jurisdiction over these clergy.

MK: *Did you ever have written correspondence with the Diocese?*

No I didn't. He was very nice, very nice in the beginning...very nice on the phone to me, very nice conversation, it was the same with the Provincial³³, terribly nice correspondence with the provincial, all willing to help me, all willing... I'm on your side sort of thing, I will help you as far...but then the walls came down. (9/RC)

The 'nastiness' began, after a new provincial was elected, with a threatening letter from a solicitor. The Diocese then 'lost' her papers for several years so she reported to the Data Commission that her file was 'lost'. They pursued the finding of her file and gave a deadline for the Diocese to produce it. At the time of interview the Diocese had mysteriously 'found' the file the day before the legal date set by the Data commission for producing the material. The Diocese put 'nothing in writing' which she found 'interesting'. Finally, in frustration and thinking 'enough was enough', after brick walls, stonewalling, prevarication, she went to the police.

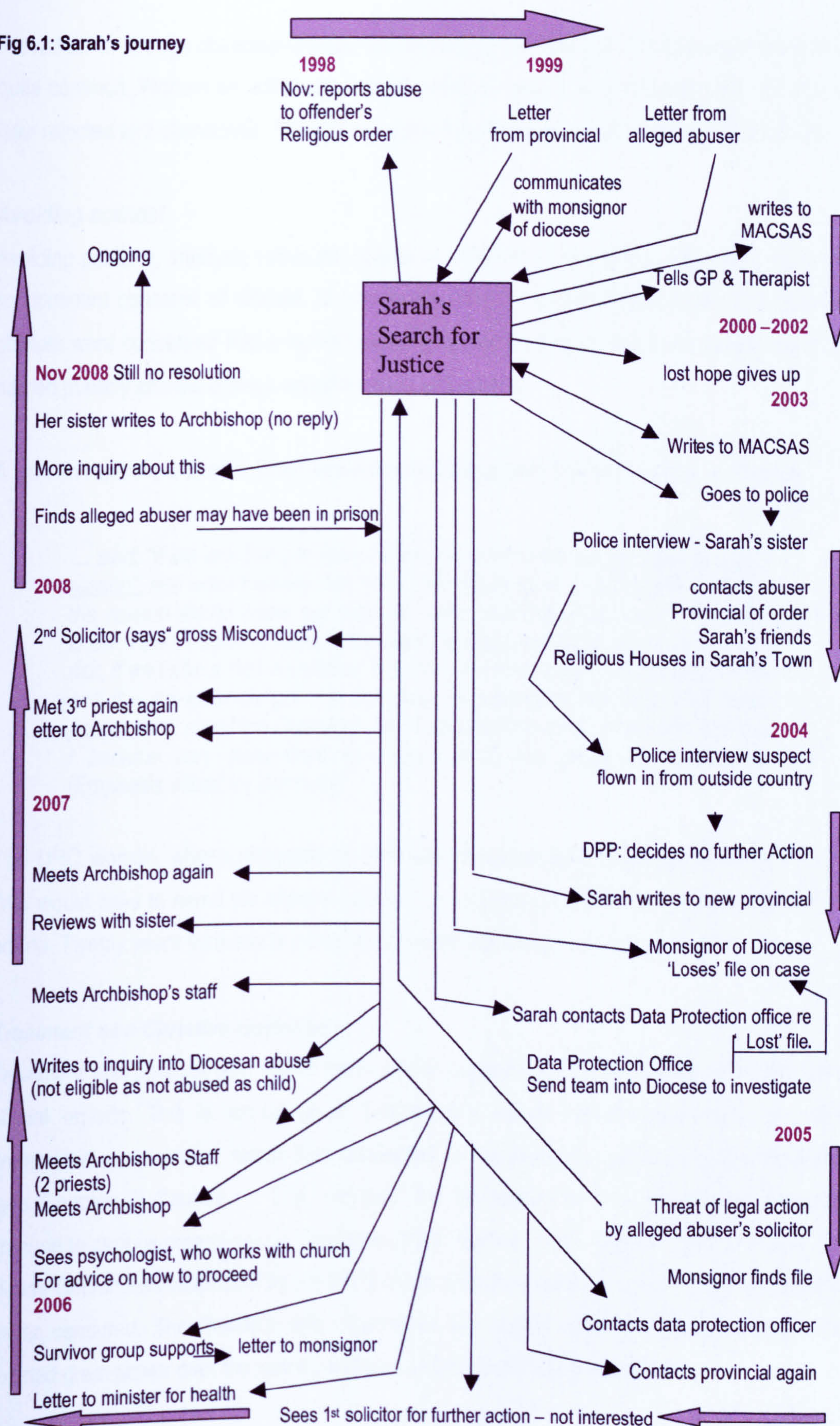
[I thought] "well there's no point in going to the Bishops or Archbishops", I had tried that, I was getting nowhere there, I had come to a full stop with the community where the priest belongs to. So I just picked up all the letters, the correspondence that I had from the community and abuser priest, and the letters I had written to both, and took them down to the local police station. Walking down I was petrified, very nervous, didn't know what to expect, and didn't know how I was going to handle it. But I was determined, and nothing was going to stop me. (9/RC)

The priest in question travelled to Ireland for questioning but unfortunately the Director of Public Prosecutions decided against prosecution. Something she understands, due to length of time but was nonetheless very disappointed. More recently new evidence has emerged which might prove helpful to her case.

She and I co-produced her journey in diagrammatic form (fig 6.1) using a timeline and describes years of seeking justice. This diagram shows the protracted and unnecessarily painful time for her. The diagram should be read from the top left corner [1998] working clockwise around the page. Arrows out from central box; 'Sarah' indicate action she took, those returning indicate others contact with her. The year date heads each part of this journey. Lengths of arrows have no significance.

³³ Provincial: Head of religious order worldwide.

Fig 6.1: Sarah's journey



Prevarication through obtaining as much information as possible but then refusing to help was quite common. Women are lulled into a false sense of support and understanding, only to be later rejected and abandoned. This pattern echoed the betrayal of trust in the exploitation itself.

Avoiding scandal

Avoiding publicity, internally within the Church or externally in the public realm was often the predominant concerns of officials. In two cases, United Reformed Church and the Quakers officials were concerned that a formal response would mean both that the accused would be named publicly and the offence would be disclosed publicly.

A woman reported a Quaker Elder who was a serial exploiter. The woman she reported to:

... said, "if we ask [him] to resign from this committee, we will have to give a reason", she wasn't saying that there wasn't a reason, it was rather more that the reason would come out into the open, and they didn't want anyone to know. I then began to realise this wasn't about whether he was a danger or a risk, it was about their reputation. If it came out that he was doing these things, and it – for example got into the press or something like that, what would people think about the Quakers? We must keep this quiet at all costs and then I became very determined to expose what was going on. (13/Quaker) (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

The URC woman, whose allegation of rape was never officially investigated, was also told: "We would have to name the offence publicly", clearly something they did not want to and did not do. Twenty years later she is still seeking justice; the clergyman has since died.

Treatment as a Christian response

Treatment and pastoral care rather than censure appeared to be a preferred option following official reports. This is logical given that clergy's sexual exploitation/assaults are often understood as 'sickness' rather than connected to malevolence, patriarchy or power abuse (see Chapter 2: Causation). This 'excuses' the clergyman; he is protected and becomes immune to serious repercussions (Davidson, 1977; Karasu, 1980, Russell, 1993). A Pastor of a House Church was suspected by a victim to have sexually exploited at least 13 women but was never censured. The Bishop's wife, counselled the pastor, offering 'healing ministry'. She exerted great power over the victims and was certainly not 'non-directive'!

They took him on to sort of counsel him and “there, there”, you know, “We’ll – we’ll pray for you” sort of thing. But they wrote back to the leaders at our church and said “we’re dealing with things our end; you deal with things your end. We don’t want anything to be said at all by anybody. You’re not to let any of these women that have been affected by [pastor] to speak to his wife. They’re not to say a word to her”. Of course, I was a good girl, I did what I was told, I always did what I was told. (26/House Church)

Christian counselling based largely on ‘healing’ would be considered inappropriate for a serial sexual offender by most experts. Whilst clearly naive about sex offenders the ‘counsellors’ also wanted silence and secrecy.

Women were often told; “Just have some healing”, and felt considerable annoyance that no counselling was offered to *them*.

And to me that felt like they were stroking the wolf and leaving the torn sheep to bleed. You know, that’s what it felt like to me. I was absolutely astonished. (26/House Church)

This clergyman was moved to another Church but the congregation complained, he was removed and went to another Church, until the new Church got wind of his history and then he was taken out again.

The outcome for those interviewed women who reported officially but where the Church took **no formal process** is outlined in Table 6.5. ‘Told’ refers to women who told privately to friends or relatives whilst ‘reporting’ is the *public* and formal disclosure.

Table 6.5: Outcome of reporting to Church officials

Reference	Told	Reported	Outcome
2/RC	Yes	Yes –to Bishop with counsellor	No action taken/priest continues in ministry
4/Ang	Yes	Yes –third party Reported to Bishop on her behalf	Clergy placed in ‘black book’ ³⁴ in Lambeth palace. He had already left country
9/RC	Yes	Yes – Many years later went to police.	Victim felt vindicated by excellent support of police. No Action by Religious Community. Priest still in ministry outside Europe.
13/Quaker	Yes	Yes – To Quaker head office	Defined as an “affair”. Eventually agreed not to re-new his official status
26/House Church	Yes	Yes – other victims and fiancée went to report	Serial abuser treated with spiritual healing/ministry. Remained in ministry.

³⁴ A register of clergy who might pose difficulty if appointed. It assists Bishops in appointing clergy.

In the majority of cases there was no recognition or calling to account, which was what women had sought. Nor was there much evidence of a desire to protect others. Formal proceedings in Church Courts or tribunals are rare. Women could appeal if a decision not to take a case through formal processes was made, but in this study none did. Appeal processes are complex (appendix 10).

Table 6.6: Workings of the protocols under which action could be taken

Methodist	Tribunal system
Anglican	Tribunal
Catholic	Canon Law (but never used) Treatment (no disciplinary process)
Church in Wales	Tribunal
Church of Scotland	Presbyterial committee
Baptist	Hearing
Congregational	Nothing
URC	Hearing
Quaker	Clearness/discernment group No formal structures
House Church/Pentecostal/Black Majority Churches	No formal structures Biblical Guidance

There is also a different ‘burden of proof’ depending on the denomination.

Table 6.7: Churches ‘Burden of Proof’ in official proceedings UK & Ireland

Denomination of Church	Burden of Proof
Methodist	‘Balance of probability’
Anglican	‘Balance of Probability’ but in such cases likely to be ‘Beyond reasonable doubt’
Catholic (UK & Ireland)	Canon Law, but never used therefore not applicable
Church in Wales	Officially ‘On the Balance of Probability’ but in reality ‘Beyond Reasonable doubt’
Church of Scotland	‘Beyond Reasonable doubt’
Baptist	‘Balance of probability’
Congregational	Likely to be ‘Balance of probability’, if case ‘tried’ at all.
URC	N/K
Quaker	‘Balance of probability’

Official Proceedings - Court cases

Four interviewed women gave evidence in a formal setting. Two were Church consistory courts and two were criminal proceedings. In both Church consistory court cases there was a ‘not

guilty' finding whilst in the criminal setting another offender was convicted and jailed for six years.

Three additional women, full sample but not interviewed, gave evidence in criminal proceedings where the same priest (as above) was found guilty of sexual assault was jailed and dismissed from priesthood. In one criminal case the Pastor of a Pentecostal Church was found guilty of molesting women, was jailed, after which he returned to ministry. A Catholic priest was jailed for child abuse with the adult assault/rape cases 'left on file' and not proceeded with.

In the full sample three women [not interviewed] gave evidence in Church tribunals. In all Church tribunal cases the clergymen (one Catholic, one Church of Wales, and one Church of England) were found **guilty**, the first of abuse the second of sexual harassment (though the woman had alleged sexual assault, the Bishop re-named the offence). The Catholic and Church of Wales clergy remained in ministry.

The Anglican vicar was charged with 'conduct unbecoming ministry'; which included sexual harassment of 7 women, intimidating behaviour, mental abuse and financial irregularities had his **licence revoked**. He vigorously contested his 'revocation of license' but lost his appeal.

It is worth noting that four of the outlined above involved clear incidents of sexual assault within a pastoral relationship.

Church Trials

Church 'trials' refer to the official processes used by some Christian denominations. The Church of England for instance has a trial procedure much like a criminal trial (See also appendix 9). Here the specific issues associated with these processes for women are explored.

Some women believed they were 'in relationship' a concept very far from the 'real rape' template (Kelly, 2002). Kelly notes that sexual violence involving any voluntary, consensual or prior relationships tends to be treated less seriously by the criminal justice system, and have higher attrition rates (ibid:28).

This can be applied to Church cases, though often, here trials are judging the moral behaviour of the clergyman, whether he transgressed his vows of celibacy (Catholic priests) or marriage

vows (married clergy) rather than any criminal responsibility. Most Churches use the phrase ‘conduct unbecoming of the ministry’ to describe the offence (see Chapter two for discussion on language and naming). Unlike the criminal court where the offence is a description of the behaviour alleged, much of the Church naming served to disguise or minimize what had taken place. This can be understood as a way of simultaneously protecting the reputation of the clergyman and institution, often, women thought at their expense.

Table 6.8: Church trials *in this study* and how offences defined

Case	Type of court	Description of offence
Anglican	Consistory court	Conduct unbecoming
Anglican	Bishop under Canon C12 revoked license. Appeal heard in special formal hearing/court.	Sexual harassment Intimidation Mental abuse Financial Irregularities
Church in Wales	Tribunal (in reality just the Bishop)	Harassment/conduct unbecoming
Catholic	Ad hoc Tribunal	Pastoral Sexual Abuse)
Church of Scotland	Consistory Court	Presbyterian committee

Though several women gave evidence in both criminal and Church trials, in this section three case studies (Alice, Megan, Church trials) and Mary (criminal trial) will be explored to highlight similarities and differences in process. Neither Consistory court cases reached a finding of guilt, but in one criminal court case the abuser was jailed.

Church courts appear far more complicated than criminal ones with a great many preliminary stages. Women describe being ‘told what to do next’ and having no control. Though activists in the violence field understand the mechanisms by which women are disregarded in the Criminal Justice System the victims in the Church cases were astounded and shocked to be treated with similar contempt. They truly expected Church processes to be more caring and considerate. Female victims were manoeuvred as required by male clerics, solicitors and barristers. Such ‘disrespect’ was a shock and caused considerable pain to the women. They expected that their experience of abuse would be the major factor; they would be the focus. However they quickly understood they were marginal in the process as mere witnesses with the offender and defence being the focus.

Alice

Alice had a senior post in her Church and spoke to another senior Church official about the “affair” she had with her Clerical ‘boss’. The Church official persuaded her to report officially and from there on she felt she had no say in the process. She wanted to stop proceedings but was told she would then be seen as lying.

Alice felt her case was used to try to rid the Church of a ‘difficult’ clergyman. The charge was ‘conduct unbecoming’ meaning having an affair/adultery which breached religious rules rather than her rights. Had Alice appreciated what the consistory court process would be like she would not have pursued this route.

I wanted it to stop, I wanted to pull out, but I was at a stage where they said that if I pulled out it would look like I was lying, and because I was telling the truth... I couldn't pull out because I didn't want people to think I was lying. And that the shame that would bring would be worse than carrying on with this, even though the pressure was pretty unbearable. (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

Alice received no support during this process from the church, but felt the ‘high ranking’ clergyman received much. At court she had to sit in the corridor whilst the clergyman was given a private room. She described the court case as humiliating, degrading and abusive, ‘a theatre of shame’ as Herman described (2005:81). The only saving grace was that the defence barrister’s strategy helped further understanding that she had been exploited

She played very much on my ... she felt that I was of lower intelligence, that I had a job to follow his bible studies, that I obviously lived a very downtrodden, boring life. I was still single, still living at home, and that I just made this whole thing up for entertainment value.

The defence barrister was suggesting that Alice was emotionally and intellectually ‘deficient’. Here as Jan Jordan (2001:84) notes with respect to criminal proceedings:

Intellectual disability and psychiatric instability... tend to be viewed as diminishing the victims credibility rather than enhancing her vulnerability.

Defence strategies ultimately depend on the court system allowing them to stigmatise and shame the victim publicly through raising questions about her credibility and motives (Temkin, 2000), this is more pernicious in Church trials as the women do not have anonymity and the

media can photograph witnesses during the proceedings of the trial. Furthermore since Christian women are supposed to be 'virtuous' that her behaviour is so routinely questioned can have profound consequences. The clergyman is believed always to act ethically so his character is never in doubt.

Just as the crime is intended to defile and shame her, the court system and defence barrister can add to this. Temkin (2000) reveals blatant mistreatment of victims by defence counsel and acquiescent attitude on the part of prosecutors and judges. Kelly (2001:32) says: "the key elements in defence tactics was to discredit the complainant, and this was much more important than the facts of the case". This was echoed in Alice's experience.

Megan

In Megan's case she had asked her priest to help her trace a relative whom she longed to hear from. He was conversant with genealogical tracing and agreed to help her. He visited her home and there, Megan alleges, he sexually assaulted her on several occasions. She never perceived this as "an affair", always as sexual abuse. She was able to share what happened with her husband, he was very supportive and after a time Megan decided to officially report.

Megan was subjected to a convoluted process, which took a year to get to trial. She had to speak to people from three levels (six levels of scrutiny) before the seventh level, when the Court Case convened.

Two men first interviewed her, whom she described as "very kind" and they decided whether there were grounds to proceed. Interestingly she welcomed the sight of their 'dog collars' as taking her account seriously. She had a further meeting with another two men and a woman.

The panel judging the case comprised of the convenor, a male senior QC, a male minister, and two male Elders. Megan noted the fact that all four were over the age of 65 and a fifth person, a lay female lawyer; and a member of the Church was in her thirties.

I think it's significant that the majority verdict at the end was four to one, and it doesn't take a great deal to work out that the one was probably the woman who thought that he was guilty and the four men didn't. (Megan)

The defence solicitor tried to intimidate Megan prior to the trial:

We went through a lot of time with his lawyer doing all sorts of things to try and make me pull out and, back away, and this delayed a lot of what was happening... because of what they were doing it was held up. (Megan)

At a meeting for ministers and elders, which her husband attended, the defence lawyer said, “we intend to take this woman to court for defamation of character”; this was threatened *before the court hearing but after a formal complaint* had been made. Was this threat deliberately made in the hearing of the husband so that he might relay back to frighten her?

Similarities and differences with Criminal Courts

In Church court cases it is the Church that is the complainant, whilst simultaneously it would be the Church that would be tarnished with guilty verdicts. In Church trials the Church pays for both defence and prosecution. In Megan’s case the Church’s lawyer had received weekly intimidating letters from the Minister’s lawyer when the case was still in the investigative stage. Churches, therefore, have a financial interest in cases not proceeding to trial. Some (see for example, Lees, 2003) have argued that the evidential and public interest test for the crown prosecution service also acts as disincentive to taking cases to trial, and that costs come into play in which barristers are instrumental there again the difference between a criminal offence and breach of Church rules creates a context in which measures to provide victims with rights and protections in court are absent.

The Anglican Church has recently abandoned the consistory court proceedings, which was used in one of these cases, for a tribunal system, which they see as less costly and fairer (See appendix 9 for discussion on new processes). In these procedures there is an appeal protocol.

Both Megan and Alice believed their barristers were neither skilled nor interested in conducting a rigorous prosecution.

Neither had an independent judiciary panel in court. In Megan’s case three of the five judges were Church officials. In Alice’s case the jury were taken from Church attendees.

There are further similarities between the Church trials and criminal processes. In Megan’s case one very relevant witness who had crucial evidence was not called. They felt the barrister was not cognizant of all the facts. One alleged abuser was in the witness box for

an hour; Megan was there for a day and a half. She felt her barrister could have challenged the accused testimony more carefully (see Kelly et al, 2005 for parallels with criminal courts).

Both women felt the accused had greater access to their barrister who was then aware of all the facts. The prosecution barristers did not meet one woman at all and another only once.

The case studies illustrate that, as in criminal courts, the women were placed under considerable scrutiny. The lack of anonymity created considerable distress.

Open Season

The reading of personal diaries as evidence in both Church cases was a humiliating ordeal for Megan and Alice, more so because of media presence.

... and the thought of having to give evidence with the press, with it being, well almost like a media sideshow really – was very frightening. (Megan)

... by that time they had copies of my diary... with everything that was written in it, which I had to submit, and obviously having to sit there with – not only did I have press sat around – right round the outside, but there was a large audience there as well. (Alice)

Megan was made to read her entries about sex with her husband making her feel shamed and humiliated. Brown et al (1993) in a Scottish study say: that “sexual history evidence is invariably used to ‘create a smokescreen of immorality’ which serves to veil the fact of the case that do not support their defence’.

They also note that in Scottish Criminal Courts that defendants rarely take the stands and if they do are rarely questioned about their sexual history. This focus on women's supposed immorality could be said to have more serious repercussions within a Christian Church/Tribunal system given ‘Eve based’ theology (see Chapter 2). That combined with the lack of anonymity is a potent cocktail that has the potential to further harm the female complainant.

Legislation in England and Wales, and separately in Scotland to prevent sexual history was intended in both jurisdictions:

To prevent the introduction of evidence that would lead a jury to believe that the victim was promiscuous and readily consented or that her evidence was less likely to be sound (Home Office, 1998).

This legislation is easily circumvented with applications to present sexual history evidence much used and allowed (Kelly et al, 2006).

Media intrusion

Both women were identified in both local and national newspapers. This is prevented by regulation in a criminal trial, and the General Medical Counsel. Complainant anonymity is not mandated in the Church Courts and there were no safeguards. One accused clergy may have been instrumental in facilitating the press camping outside the witness's home. Both victims were photographed and door stopped throughout the trials. Megan got a copy of the Court findings from the local paper's website.

Mary agreed to talk to the press after her criminal trial but regretted this; she was profoundly upset by the way she was portrayed. Two women tried to take press complaints procedures but were unsuccessful.

Reading the newspaper coverage of these cases it becomes abundantly clear that the women were on trial, both in the media and in court. They were variously proclaimed as sexually starved or sexually veracious, mentally ill, disabled and liars.

A letter in the Church times³⁵ from a woman supporting one of the victims writes;

The suggestion has been made that [the alleged victim] veracity was in doubt because she had mental health problems .One wonders how the people concerned had acquired the necessary expertise to make such a judgement, as from other press reports there seems to be some confusion as the whether [she] had mental health needs or mild learning disabilities. The consequence of this unhappy debacle is that [she] has been publicly stigmatised because she presumed to challenge a clergyman.

Safeguards offered to women during Church trials or tribunals were deficient and women felt even more shame that could have been avoided. Support through processes was poor (appendix 11) for most women.

³⁵ Not dated to preserve anonymity.

Table 6.9: Safeguards for women giving evidence in Church trials/tribunals

Church	Screens & Video link	Media Privacy/protection
Methodist	No experience of this happening. Would be taken very seriously if requested	Not mentioned in policies.
Catholic (UK & Ireland)	N/A (no formal structures of hearing or courts)	No policies, but no attempt to protect alleged victim
Anglican	No provision for in policies however chair of tribunal might decide on case to case basis	Yes Follows Criminal law and will not allow alleged victim to be named.
Baptist	Not known	N/K
URC	Not known	Private hearing. No reference to media in policy.
House Church	No procedures so N/A	N/A – No
Evangelical/Pentecostal/Black Majority Churches	No procedures so N/A	N/A – No
Quaker	No formal process so N/A	N/A – No
Congregational	No formal process so N/A	N/A – No
Church of Scotland	On the decision of the Commission	Yes
Church of Wales	Up to discretion of tribunal	No

Church tribunals

Tribunals are different from consistory courts in that the judge is replaced by a group of church officials, is bound only by procedures and tribunals are regarded as not adversarial.

Two women completing questionnaires had experiences of tribunals

Case one: Catholic Nun and Catholic priest

A Religious Sister officially accused her clergy spiritual director of serious sexual assaults whilst she was on retreat. As a religious sister her superiors arranged proceedings with clergy canon lawyers. There familiar emphasis on the clergy’s reputation and the complainant’s mental health recurred meaning she had to undergo psychiatric assessment in a religious facility. Several issues arose even before the Tribunal sat. The complainant’s religious order requested a Canon Lawyer, a priest, to advise them on their sister’s complaint. He advised:

- the priest’s reputation is paramount/the accuser’s lawyer must be present in case of ‘defamation’. The sister felt this constituted threat;

- he remarked before the tribunal was arranged; *“The [complainant’s order] cannot sit back and let themselves be threatened by Sister [name]”*;
- he also said the Sister might be revengeful because of a possible rejection of marriage; something the complainant said was never a part of this scenario.

The complainant’s religious order did all in their power to stop official Church proceedings:

- the sister was told via her Superior that if she went public *her* reputation would be questioned;
- the Sister’s credibility is questioned. Indeed she had to have [by order of her community] an inpatient psychiatric assessment before proceedings began;
- the religious order did not want a public/secular process thus secrecy about precise charges was paramount.

There was a convoluted process involving hearings in two countries. The nun was allowed an advocate priest but her sister was not allowed to be present. Previously the above Canon lawyer had raised the possibility of a “reconciliation” so as to “resolve the case”. The woman’s advocate (a canon lawyer) also asked whether she would agree to “reconciliation” half way through the hearing. This she stoutly rejected.

The panel, not an Ecclesiastical Tribunal of Judges, were all members of the religious order of the accused. The religious Sister won her case when the priest admitted “one charge of pastoral sexual misconduct: fondling and sexual intercourse”.

In the final report the tribunal reported the accused comments:³⁶

He admits to some sexual contacts which he feels affirmed his “normal sexual orientation”...finding in the process that women like him and wanted to be friends.

The tribunal found him guilty of one count of pastoral sexual abuse though this does not acknowledge eight years of exploitation. In the logic of the tribunal after the first incident the nun should not have gone back and by doing so had ‘consented’. They *did* however admonish

³⁶ No reference to protect confidentiality.

the offender's order for not addressing other reports of the priest's sexual abuse of nuns made by the superior of *another* religious order in another country.

The Religious Sister left her order and the Church soon after the case was concluded. The abuser recently died, he had returned almost immediately after the case to ministry. The Canon Lawyer who prosecuted the case was subsequently jailed for child sexual abuse.

Case two

This case illustrates how powerful Bishops can be in the process. A woman accused a clergyman of sexually assaulting her. She and another woman (also assaulted) complained to the Archdeacon who said he would pass the complaint to the Bishop. Six weeks later she was informed there would *not* be a consistory court session.

The Bishop asked the two women to write down what had happened for his benefit. This was not an official statement, and no legal advice was given as to its status to the women. Three other women made complaints but these were not (inexplicably) included in the proceedings that eventually took place.

A newspaper reporter published a story based on what he was told by the Diocese; that *they* had *received advice from the police*, which apparently advised reporting to them, was not indicated. A Detective Chief Inspector investigated this claim and wrote to the victim:

It does concern me that the serious nature of the incident complained of has been dealt with under Tribunal Rules .As I discussed with you over the telephone, it could have been dealt with by the Police as a criminal matter.

The Diocesan Press office subsequently argued the reporter had misunderstood and admitted they had never contacted the police.

The woman was told there would be a preliminary hearing and that her presence was not required, so she did not attend. Her accusation of sexual assault was 'downgraded' to sexual harassment upon agreement, she has no idea who 'agreed' as she was not party to this nor was she legally represented. She wrote no official statement for perusal at this 'preliminary hearing' nor was she legally represented at it. A press reporter who rang her for her views on

sentencing informed her that the so-called preliminary hearing was in fact the full hearing. It appears she had skilfully excluded her from the Church legal process.

The clergyman pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of harassment and was returned to ministry in another parish. The 'Tribunal' ruling refers to mitigations:

- the valuable work done in the past by the clergyman;
- that his conduct should be seen against a background of distress brought on by a heavy workload and worry over the illness of his wife;
- that credit should be given for the clergyman's admission, which spared the victims from having to give evidence;
- the Tribunal was unaware of any complaint against the clergyman with respect to the performance of his pastoral duties.

The tribunal marked the seriousness of the complaint in a *significant* (sic) way': by retracting two honorary positions, how this 'marks the seriousness of the case', was not clear to the complainant. It also ordered the Bishop to lift suspension from ministry, and to offer the offender a spiritual and Pastoral Advisor. He returned to ministry in another parish.

The Bishop 'retired' after the press furore but not before giving a 'glowing reference' to the clergy offender, which facilitated a post in another county. The parish was not informed of the prior history but on discovering it, the local Bishop enjoined the community to, in Christian spirit, forgive. They did.

One of the victims, meanwhile, received hate mail from the parish, and was exposed in the press. She left her denomination and joined another remarking that what 'destroyed' her was not what the clergyman had done but how the Church dealt with her case.

Criminal Trials

Three women gave evidence against a Catholic clergyman at a criminal trial; he was convicted and jailed on eleven counts of sexual assault of four women. Two of these women completed questionnaires and one was interviewed for this study.

Mary lived in Ireland but was sent a press cutting from a friend in England about the forthcoming trial of her abuser there. She contacted the police and was subsequently one of many victims who gave evidence at his trial for sexual assault. His assaults took place under the guise of charismatic 'healing ministry'. He was convicted and jailed.

Unlike the Church processes her anonymity was safeguarded throughout and after the trial process. She did however feel pressure from the police to continue when she felt unable emotionally to do so.

'Mary' found the criminal trial completely terrifying and waiting more than she could bear. She felt the police abandoned her and gave her little support. When the trial date was cancelled she "lost it" and ventured into a wild wet night in darkest countryside:

I knew if I went home I'd got to face the plane and the only other way was the water and... I couldn't get my legs to work and I stood there and cried and thought, "what in the world is happening to me"?

Going into court she recalls feeling "as if I was walking to the gallows". She had insisted on screens but the defence barrister (unsuccessfully) tried to have them removed. She then tried to imply the victim had fabricated her abuse to claim compensation.³⁷ She felt proud of herself in the way she answered the barrister.

Support for all women giving evidence was reasonably good; husbands and partners were loyal and supportive. Police and solicitors were kind, positive and encouraging. However there was no church support for the women in this criminal case; indeed the Abbot of the accused community left the country for the duration of the trial:

I feel that somebody, somebody should have come along to the court room and just talked to us and said, "I'm sorry you're going through this, and I'm sorry that, we let you down and we didn't do – anything". (Mary)

Support for the alleged abusers was also very good. In Mary's case Church congregations formed supportive groups around the accused, often throwing glances of rage and contempt at the complainants/witnesses. Women were accosted with "I hope you are happy now"

³⁷A persistent strategy in Catholic trials. There is an endemic belief that Catholic victims are 'band-wagoning' after huge compensation payments in America.

statements spoken with a viciousness and vehemence, which was very frightening. The police warned these people that they risked being charged with 'contempt of court'. In the coffee breaks the offender had tea and cakes with his coterie of church supporters in the same café as the victim/witnesses.

After conviction this priest served a short time of his 6-year sentence, being released early because of 'ill-health'. Though dismissed from his order and priesthood his congregation bought him a house and he set up an altar where he continues to conduct his healing/clerical 'ministry'.

Table 6.10: Outcomes of cases with official processes

Cases	Church Court/Tribunal	Criminal	Outcome
Anglican	Consistory Court		Not Guilty/Retired but still in ministry
Church of Scotland	Consistory Court		No verdict
Church in Wales	Tribunal		Guilty/demoted, returned to ministry
Catholic	Tribunal		Guilty/returned to ministry
Anglican	Bishop and Tribunal		Guilty. Dismissed from ministry following an unsuccessful appeal
Catholic		Prosecution	Guilty of child sexual abuse – jailed. Adult assault/rape cases 'left on file'.
Pentecostal		Prosecution	Guilty/ jailed then returned to ministry
Catholic		DPP decided not to proceed	No action. Priest continues in Ministry in another country
Catholic		Prosecution	Guilty/Jailed for 6 years/dismissed from monastic community but continues Ministry privately with cohort of supporters

**Case references not provided to protect identity*

Lessons learnt

Women commonly spoke about being 'unsupported', 'abandoned' by Church personnel during Church proceedings. Only one woman received an allocated Church supporter. There was great anxiety when waiting for court cases and many were shocked at how little they mattered; as mere witnesses, they had little power to appraise or instruct barristers concerning all the facts. The consequences in terms of ineffectual advocacy, is also a feature in research on criminal prosecutions (Kelly et al, 2005).

There were protections available in criminal courts, screens or video-links. These were not available in Church consistory courts or Church tribunals. Moreover, the absence of anonymity left women open to be freely photographed and displayed in all national newspapers. Church rules have nothing to say about this intimidation and vilification.

Communication between complainant and Church personnel officials was often curt, precise and cold. There was much attention paid to processes but not to the woman. The fact that in consistory courts Churches paid legal fees for both sides created complex, and unquestioned ambivalences.

The processes were even more inconsistent when cases went through a tribunal process with women saying that it was *“made up as they went along”*.

Criminal Court cases also resulted in much pain and distress rather than resolution or peace. Courts of all shades were experienced as validating but as ‘publicly humiliating’.

How women assessed Church responses

Clergy are more important

They won't shaft their own – you know

Most women in this study thought their needs had been secondary to the perpetrators; as evidenced by the disparity of care offered.

They were more interested in protecting the wolves than the sheep. (Q6/Ang)

They stroked the wolf and left the torn sheep to bleed. (26/House Church)

This led to feeling their Church blamed them and took the side of the perpetrator. One described ‘male clergy solidarity’ another that her treatment was a form of re-victimization.

There was no acknowledgement that he had done anything wrong. I was made to feel I was the one to blame, due to my mature adult age, and that I acknowledged that he was going through a divorce, a difficult time. I then had the brutality of that to deal with as well as the original abuse. I feel that I was dismissed and blamed – his version of what happened was taken as the true one. I felt abused all over again. (Q17/Ang)

This woman provides more evidence of how the clergyman was prioritised.

... they wouldn't take it on board... they weren't making the priest accountable for what he did... they backed the priest, there was no way they were going to back me. The priest came first, [his] confidentiality came first, not my confidentiality, I exposed everything about what happened, he knows where I live, the provincial knows where I live, the Monsignor knows where I live. There was no question I could keep anything secret... I had to reveal all.

MK: *Does that worry you?*

It does worry me that I had to reveal all, yes, it does, because I said a lot... I got nothing back, nothing back ... for all my efforts and my exposure.

MK: *So what would you say your overall feeling is about the Church's response?*

I just think contempt, complete and utter contempt...I had a blazing row with the Monsignor about the stance he was taking. (9/RC)

In these processes women are required to relinquish much information without any safeguards of confidentiality or support or action.

In one case a senior clergyman told one woman that her abuser could have molested up to 100 women. There had been previous evidence his abusive behaviour was known to the hierarchy but he was allowed to continue in ministry. She angrily said;

I think the monastery should have... recognised it and they should have hauled him in and they should have got rid of him there and then and they should have acknowledged it. Then they should have apologised to the women. (3/RC)

Many women talked of Church authorities being unwilling to take responsibility and overly concerned to keep issues out of the papers. Church leaders were fearful of compensation litigation; by taking no action, there could be no 'guilty' findings, which in turn protects the church from compensation claims. In other instances the reputation of the clergyman as a 'good priest/minister' and/or their willingness to take on difficult ministries meant they were 'worth' more to the Church than the women they exploited.

Some women, whilst rating their Church as 'inept' sought to exonerate their failures.

I don't think the church knows what to do with it, I don't think they have any idea of the effect on...the women. ... more should be put in training, perhaps, on clergy and ministers boundaries and ethical issues ... to me, being a believer it is about being alongside people, understanding pain, enabling people to become freer, and I don't think a lot of the clergy know how to do it ...a lot are inept pastorally... they just push it away. (64/Ang)

Repercussions of reporting

Experiences of reporting in this sample show that women's wariness was justified as the repercussions could be damaging. Whilst some partners/husbands were incredibly supportive others experienced an increase in the violence that they had already been suffering.

Husbands meeting with the accused clergy were not an unusual. One woman's husband visited the priest-psychotherapist who had made her pregnant and she said they went "for a walk with the dog". She never knew what transpired or what had been discussed, but her husband subsequently left her. A Catholic woman following such a meeting reported escalating violence that resulted in her seeking an injunction.

Another husband who was supportive and believing talked with the accused clergyman on the phone and face to face *at the request of the alleged abuser*. Whilst he apologised, he also took the opportunity to assert that the sexual contact had been consensual. Some husbands took control of events and one went to the Elders and Pastor as if he needed to hear from these men whether his wife was telling the truth.

Several partners failed to respect their wives confidentiality and, often without consultation, shared what has happened with others. One told their children about the trial in which their mother was giving evidence, whilst she was away in another country giving evidence. Another "insisted" the woman tell their children and parents about the clergy involvement and abortion and then he left her. The implicit message being he had full justification for his actions.

Some women were blamed, 'attacked' verbally by congregations, or wives of the accused, and a few were threatened. In these situations accusing of seducing the clergyperson, of being equally to blame and of being 'trouble-stirrers' was common. Exploiters persuaded their wives to support the clergymen and this was especially effective in facilitating rejection of the victims.

The man's wife spread it around that it was all affairs and that we were just as guilty. So everyone who heard that believed it and I lost a lot of 'friends'. People didn't ask me. (26/House Church)

Mostly people at the Church went against me, saying I was a trouble-stirrer. They accepted the Pastor back even after he had been to jail, and abused others. (Q85 /Pentecostal)

Both Church and the Criminal Justice System were based on "phallocentric assumptions". Smart (1989) argues that the rape trial is a celebration of phallocentrism in which men's sexual urges are the natural order of things. The trial is structured to affirm the masculine imperative (Temkin, 2000:225). One woman described it as being "publicly raped". Some women were so damaged by the systems they required medication post trial, for depression, anxiety and insomnia.

One woman still self-harmed after the minister was found not-guilty. She sees her GP weekly and takes tranquillizers and antidepressants.

Alice (above) believed that her case had been decided from the outset, that the 'jury', all Church personnel, could not be objective enough to afford justice. For her nothing positive came out of the process.

because I think that – a jury... people off the street would be more likely to've listened to what I said and to what he had to say, and believe what I said as the truth.

The attrition rate in adult cases in criminal courts (Kelly et al, 2005) suggests this is not the case, as does recent research on mock jury trials (Finch & Munro, 2004).

Not one woman in the interviewed sample thought officials in Church hierarchies had treated them with respect, understanding or with any degree of concern about what had happened to them. This led to a sense of deep betrayal.

The moves by some Churches to offer explicit support to sex offenders through official policies and procedures, allocated resources and 'Circles of Support',³⁸ was noted by some the women.

³⁸ A system founded by Quakers in America whereby members of the congregation form groups (circles) to support the offender within the community in order to reduce re-offending.

No Church organisation is addressing needs of the victims. Some churches have set up buddy systems for perpetrators. There is nothing for victims. The Church of England has done a report for perpetrators, none for victims. Lots of money being put into treatment for perpetrators, none for the victims. (Q43/Baptist)

As this woman observes counselling and practical support for survivors are thin on the ground. One Anglican woman was offered counselling paid by the Church, which was withdrawn after one session when the Church solicitors said the clergyman would have to be found guilty before further payment was made. Another felt let down by promises to help, which never materialised.

One woman was so harmed by the abuse her career collapsed, she is now on the breadline and the Catholic Church offers no support. When a Catholic priest was dismissed following convictions for sex offences his monastery argued that since he was no longer a priest they were not obliged to help one of his victims. Another victim was awarded £75,000 compensation by the court, but the religious order said the priest had no money having taken a vow of poverty and they could not use the Order's money since it was in a charitable trust. She received nothing.

Re-instatement of clergy caused, for those who reported to safeguard other woman, disbelief at the irresponsibility of Church authorities.

Some made remarks that echoed Penny Jamieson's concept of 'brotherhood'.

...on the whole the Church is predominantly male and I think they're covering their own backs all the time. You know, stick together lads. (64/Ang)

Although Criminal cases can be harrowing for women in this research two clergy (Pentecostal and Catholic) were jailed for sexual assault. Both offences were within a 'healing' ministry context, which juries appeared to conclude were manipulative strategies. This is unusual but bodes well for the future if the police and crown prosecution services (CPS) could be made aware of the dynamics of clergy sexual exploitation.

Conclusion

That a finding of guilt in a formal process is a vindication, Mary still focused on her 'stupidity' in 'allowing' herself to be assaulted, *even when a court declared her abuser to be a serial sex offender* demonstrating that even if the wrongdoing was affirmed to be the abuser's this was not always felt by the women. Going to court however, had been worth it to protect other women.

Alice was less ambivalent.

I'm the person I am because of that, because of what happened, because I was able to eventually turn things around. That it changed the person I was for the better... if I had just left things as they were it may well have affected my life more detrimentally, if I hadn't tried to at least seek justice of some sort. I still felt that was important at all stages that the truth had to be made known, that I needed to be seen to achieve justice, even if it's just for myself, so that I could live with what'd happened. (Alice)

Women were still angry about the way they were treated, resenting the blame, the loss of faith community and the absence of belief, support and compensation. The sense that Churches were 'watching their back' rather than dealing with the abuses of power and harm to them was strong and enduring.

It was in both official Church responses and the responses of other congregants that the longevity of the Madonna/whore binary was evident with women viewed as both seductive and malicious. 'Eve' discourse was also evident in some of the interviews with Church leaders (see chapter 2).

During the process of disciplinary action complainants had to rely on representation by male, usually cleric, canon lawyers or civil lawyers, employed by the Church. Panels in tribunals, juries in Church Court cases were predominantly male and Church personnel. The conflict of interest inherent in these processes raises questions about whether they can adequately protect the needs of human rights of victims of sexual exploitation.

Church leaders asked about whether screens and video links should be available in courts/tribunals were rather surprised by the question. The lack of safeguards against identification in the press, door stopping or Church Community vilification and scapegoating,

added to women in this study feeling that Church officials of all denominations did not take them seriously.

Koss & Cleveland (1997:20) outline how the power of sexually coercive professional;

The sexually coercive man is supported by his peers, is often successful in his aggressive behaviour, and is rarely ever punished or even reported. Similarly, the female victim is surrounded by male coercion, high levels of male aggression, and the likelihood that she will not be supported if she chooses to report her victimization. Women will avoid censure from peers and social institutions by hiding sexual victimization.

Within the Christian culture theological discourses of victimization have either stressed women's sinfulness and culpability or their failure to measure up to the feminine ideal of 'faith, love, and holiness with modesty' (Schüssler, Fiorenza & Copeland, 1994). In a perverse way her perceived vulnerability, pathology and sinfulness becomes evidence of having *more power* than the clergyman who is both pastor and helper. In this construction women appear to have more agency than men.

This chapter and previous ones, have demonstrated women's space for action was often severely constrained.

Whilst women were often supported in 'telling', friends, relatives and counsellors evidencing positive responses, when women took their case further to report using official structures and avenues open to them the response was at best mixed, at worse damaging.

Failure to take effective action supports the belief that violence and sexual exploitation of women is implicitly condoned within the male clerical system and it bolsters the notion that sexual exploitation is not a serious crime Hopkins (2005).

Comparing Church processes with the Criminal Justice System reveals a number of important shortfalls for the former.

- Church processes, if there are any are unclear;
- There is limited, if any, independent judge and jury as Church personnel and the prosecution barrister is a Church person or paid/appointed by the Church;

- Given that Churches may be liable for compensation, there is a vested interest for cases not proceeding;
- Processes lack many of the protections victims have in criminal courts;
- Church systems have no mechanism for supporting victims

At this point in time it would seem there are no advantages in reporting clergy sexual exploitation of adults to Church officials.

Chapter 7: Impacts and Consequences: Disconnection and re-connection

This chapter explores how women coped after they managed to extricate themselves from their exploitative situation. The chapter has a particular emphasis on issues of faith, and the doctrine of forgiveness. These are core aspects of Christianity and have particular resonances, which women had to negotiate, in the aftermath of sexual exploitation.

Only one woman said that her relationship with the priest, since they married, was no longer exploitative. Most women experienced harm in some shape or form.

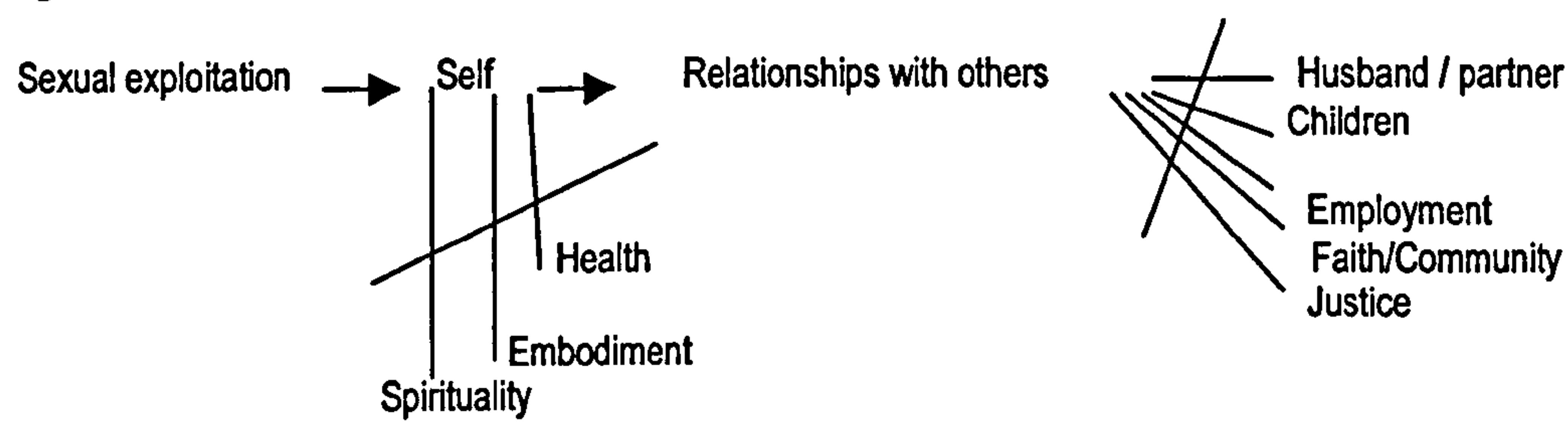
My focus is on the *impacts and consequences* of clergy sexual exploitation. These concepts are preferred to “effects” which Dobash and Dobash (1998) suggest narrows investigation to a medical and psychological arena to the exclusion of social and cultural context. ‘Impacts and consequences’ allows for a more inclusive framing not just social and economic costs and broader health issues but the social and community legacies that women experience. The social costs have a particular resonance in this research as women belonged to particular cultures and communities.

Werking Poling (1999:xii) says “these things were not lost they were stolen”, ‘taken’ by an active agent, the clergy perpetrator. Thus a wider focus on the social/political dimension of harm is explored in this chapter.

The consequences of both the exploitation, abuse and the harms of Church responses increased financial difficulties, led to loss of jobs, and banishment and ostracism from Christian communities. These processes of social discrimination are discussed

Judith Herman (1992:51-52) emphasises that one of the most profound harms of violence against women is the victim’s sense of attachment and links to others. Her ‘self’, which Herman bases in relationships, is fractured. The concept of ‘disconnection’ - from many aspects of life - is a way of encapsulating the range of harm done: disconnection from the body, from well-being, from joy, from a sense of safety, and wholeness from relationships and connections to others. This can be shown by a simple diagram

Figure 7.1: Disconnections



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This is a different approach than ‘diagnosing’ PTSD, or ‘Personality disorder’ (See literature review chapter 2) but rather recognises the inherent harm of exploitation and how this is amplified or mitigated over time.

Physical, emotional and psychological disconnections

When the involvements ended, women reported feeling shamed, confused, guilty and fearful. They were not far enough away from the events to conceptualise their feelings other than a loss of a relationship. (See fig 5.1, ‘space for action’, p137). They felt ‘orphaned by the professional... still in need’ (Paterson, 1992:103).

The following table (7.1) illustrates the range of responses when contact ended. In brackets are the numbers/percentages relating to the same feeling when sexual contact initiated (see Chapter 5). There was less confusion, guilt and fear when the contact ended as women did the emotion work to make sense of their experiences. However less women felt shame and may have felt relief.

Table 7.1: How women felt when contact ended

How felt when contact ended	Number	%
Shame	32 (22)	55 (34)
Confused	29 (51)	50 (80)
Guilty	28 (31)	48 (48)
Fear	26 (36)	45 (56)
Rejected	23	40
Contaminated	23	40
Sadness	21	36
Angry	20	34

One woman describes why sexual exploitation can have severe consequences.

This man has 100% engaged my emotions and I'm left with that. When I read stuff I can say "this man had no right to engage these emotions in the first place". But he did, for a long time, and very intimately which for me, was a huge thing, given my past, it wasn't like somebody who's had ten partners and he was just another one, it wasn't like that ...I will always have difficulty with intimate relationships. (83/RC)

Ninety-four percent (n=61) of the whole sample thought that they had suffered consequences from the relationship.

I don't think he will ever realise the emotional suffering that was caused. I thought I would go mad, and felt very, very alone. (Q70/ nun)

For one group their whole lives had been changed, turned upside down as memories 'blighted or dominated their lives'.

I will never be normal. (4/Ang)

[I am] Severely damaged. (6/House Church) (73/RC)

It was a pivotal point of my degeneration as I call it, or disintegration. (9/RC)

I have been utterly shattered. (83/RC)

It's blighted my life spiritually, mentally and physically. (6/House Church)

The past overwhelms me. (70/RC)

However, less than half (n= 29, 46%) reported the frequently cited symptoms of traumatic stress; depression; anxiety and nightmares; flashbacks; insomnia; self-injury; panic attacks; and suicidal feelings. Some of this group were receiving psychiatric care or counselling. For many of these women life was a 'mess', chaotic or of poor quality leaving them feeling fragile and vulnerable. Some described how, in order to survive they 'put on a front' as they felt that at any moment things would come crashing down or were fearful that something dreadful might happen any day.

I feel my life has been blighted and it's taking a very long time to recover from it, and sometimes I wonder if I'll ever be the same as I was. [therapist has said] "you will move on, you won't go back to where you were, you will just be

different" The actual happening, I guess I'm coming to terms with, but it's the aftermath that is so hard to live with. (6/House Church)

Claiming this is abusive and part of my story is a step but I am still very vulnerable and insecure. (Q71/Ang)

Very poor [Quality of life]. I feel bullied, intimidated – have felt suicidal – only functioning on a very basic level. Traumatized, powerless and astonished that someone I thought I knew reasonably well and who said he would die for me (not that I wanted this) could so rapidly turn against me and treat me like public enemy no 1. (Q78/Ang)

Having psychotherapy once a week for two years. On anti-depressants. I feel very vulnerable and having to sort out my whole life. It feels I am having to start from the beginning again. (Q43/Baptist)

Seven women spoke of having a 'breakdown'. Another had spent a year in a residential treatment centre for intensive therapy. Some women (n=11) thought they were now, at the time of the research, stronger but this was never entirely secure.

Whether these constructions of pathology/fault and blame' was reinforced by their non-feminist therapists is not known. It would be worth exploring the effect of therapy on women's perceptions and self. It was clear however, that these senses of personal worthlessness affected the women's wider relationships.

Disconnections and reconnections in relationships

Disconnections in women's social world were initially in personal relationships. In the full sample over one third (n=23, 37%) said trusting men and having relationships was particularly difficult (see also Kelly, 1987). Relationships with husbands or partners were affected. Seven described compounded difficulties in their marriage. Some women experienced domestic violence, with one woman needing to go to a refuge. One interviewed woman whose marriage broke down wept for the harm *she* did to her husband and children. Several women during interviews talked of how they let their husbands down.

In some cases (n=21, 32%) the clergymen were aware of pre-existing marital difficulties (see chapter 4) that this had been manipulated contributed to difficulty trusting *anyone*, with confusion about how people 'tick', or how to 'read' people. In this context women felt *they* must have mis-read the situation, which led to less confidence in their relationships.

I don't want to be around people and especially "Christians". I don't trust anyone and apart from work or shopping I stay at home. (Q20/Baptist)

It [taught me] never ever to trust another man again, particularly one in a position of trust and responsibility. (Q30/RC)

I will always be suspicious of people, people's motives. I never married ... I will always be single. And the experiences that I've had since knowing him, have been a direct result of what he did to me... I cannot trust any man, and am terrified of physical intimacy. (4/Ang)

I could not have any other relationships with men and now I expect to be alone for the rest of my life really... I am more fearful of men than I ever was ... he destroyed my life. (13/Quaker)

I'll never be free...Freedom would be... to...let go. Let go, live for the moment, and not think of the consequences. I'm here. And I stay here. You know. I'm safe. I stay where I'm safe. And I won't take chances. (3/RC)

Some women were lonely, isolated and depressed and expected to be alone for the rest of their lives, all of which they attributed to the abusive relationship.

Work and Career

Thirteen women from the whole sample described losing their job as a direct result of the exploitative relationship. For others career and work are sabotaged, for instance, some lost their jobs due to mental health difficulties. One woman's career was seriously affected when her prayer group friends told her college about the sexual exploitation.

For women in ministry, exploited by their tutors or clergy employer, there were inevitable consequences affecting their lives.

I feel there is good reason to believe I have been 'blacklisted' in two significant work areas. I have now lost 13 years without regular employment. (Q5/Ang)

I had just reached a point where I felt I could seriously become involved in the Church – undergone a hospital chaplaincy course and various other courses – all with his [abusers] backing. I had planned to proceed with an MA in theology. I feel the years now count for nothing. (Q78/Ang)

A few directly attributed homelessness or severe financial difficulties to exploitation. Two women described further humiliation in the jobs now recommended by Jobcentres.

I've run the whole department for a government department, and now I would be reduced to picking up golf balls. I just recently went to a meeting at the local job centre, and that was about all they offered me. One was to fill up sweet machines and the other was to pick up golf balls from a local golf club. And I thought great, so I've lost six years' wages because of this, the aftermath of what this guy did. And there he is living in the lap of luxury, which also I find quite difficult. (6/House Church)

Other consequences of the abusive relationships include difficulties in **Faith and spirituality**.

“Loosing my religion”

Faith as the context for abuse is what is specific about this study and the women in it. Women in this study had had very strong connections to their faith community and had been engaged in a spiritual journey prior to sexual exploitative relationship with clergy.

Table 7.2: Women who said they were practicing Christians at time of research

Practising Christian	Number	%
Yes	53	84
No	8	13
Unknown	2	3
Total	63	100

Twenty (n=20) mentioned faith issues following exploitation. Women described how something meaningful was ‘taken’ from them. They struggled with their own sense of complicity and how God / Church / other Christians might perceive *their* behaviour.

Other impacts and consequences were therefore related strongly to their faith and the cultural/social Christian context of their lives.

What is currently missing in the literature is recognition that these women were/are Christians with a belief system that truly gave them a way of searching for meaning, particularly after a childhood hardship, trauma and pain. Bishop Geoffrey James Robinson (1998) explains;

Sexual abuse by a direct representative of that religious belief, e.g. priest or minister, destroys the answers that the religious beliefs have given up to that point... the search for perfect love within that system of belief becomes impossible (ISTI SUN; 4.4, Oct ,1998).

This is the ‘existential phenomena’ that Farrell (2003) refers to where the perfect love (meaning) is God. Abusive and exploitative clergy conflate ‘search for meaning/God/perfect

love' with themselves and suggest women can find meaning in the clergy/minister. Clergy/ministers portray *themselves* as the only route to 'meaning', which, is transformed into a need for rescue, therapy, and love, provided by him the 'lover/therapist/healer'. He, and what he provides, becomes the essence of 'spirituality' particularly as God is so incorporated into the deception. Because this pseudo-meaning is so powerful, so spiritual, the depth of loss, when all becomes clearer, is great (see chapter 5).

Hall (1995:87) suggests the spiritual effects following child sexual abuse for adult survivors. There was a negative impact on spiritual functioning in three areas:
They have far less:

- 1. *sense of being loved and accepted by God;*
- 2. *sense of community with others;*
- 3. *trust in God's plan and purpose for the future.*

The loss of trust so commonly documented in all studies on the impacts of sexual violence becomes a loss of faith. Women in this study 'disconnected' from Church or faith in various ways:

- some left a Church but maintained faith;
- some went to Church, had faith, but with ambivalence;
- some maintained faith but went to Church only occasionally;
- some maintained faith but changed denomination;
- others left Church and lost faith.

In this study the majority (n=53, 84%) declared they were practicing Christians. However, only 51% (n=32) went to Church every Sunday, indicating that faith and Church have been disconnected (see table 7.3).

Table 7.3: Church Attendance

Attend Church	Number	%
Every Sunday	32	51
Occasional Sundays	10	16
Never	10	16
Pray at home / informally with others to pray	6	10
Not known	5	8
Total	63	100

*Total % may not sum to 100 due to rounding

Those women still in touch with a Church community were now more discerning and questioning, sometimes creating a strong inner self-power about the practice of their faith. Going to Church only when they wanted, and how they wanted, questioning patriarchal directives.

I feel I choose for myself now. I decide when I'm going to Church. Nobody tells me now like they did when I was younger the "you'll go to mass on a Sunday at 9 o'clock". I decide and If I feel I want to go, I'll go, If I don't, I won't and the priests to me now have no power. They're just ordinary people. (3/RC)

Sandra Schneiders (2001:74) says that

It is not surprising that women, once their consciousness has been raised, have problems with the living of their faith in terms of the principle co-ordinates of traditional spirituality In other words, Christian spirituality will become problematic for any woman who becomes a feminist....

Others were less confident, with narratives of self still taken from the dominant discourses, but remained on a threshold of spiritual independence, questioning patriarchal directives and still, sometimes, bound by them.

'Raised consciousness' did not eliminate all self-blame, shame or guilt. In a rare example of extreme self-blame one woman aligned herself to the 'prostitutes' in the Bible whom God had forgiven: this view of God helped her cling to her faith.

(Crying) Because I still believe in a loving God. I believe, like the woman caught in adultery, the woman at the well, he doesn't judge me... and I – I need to be accepted, warts and all. (64/Ang)

This woman proudly and energetically later spoke about her 'confrontation' with her Bishop and her display of anger, which showed her progression from 'prostitute' [her perception] to empowerment.

Some chose to separate God from the Clergy person: "In a sense, you know, the person to be angry with is not God, but the perpetrator" others sought to re-vision God.

I threw [away] the model of God I'd been given and when I went to [college]. I did take on board a completely different model... the whole of creation is a

symbol of God, and seeing God in everything, not this, transcendent being... that's been hugely, hugely, helpful So that saved my life. (83/RC)

Whilst some women had flashbacks in Church and chose not go (6/House Church), another saw her visible presence in Church expressed her resistance to the 'backlash' against her.

I said [to GP] "I feel I've got to go back, because this man could come back and if I'm still going there it might put him off coming back", if he thinks I'm still going to be sitting in the congregation...But when I go back a lot of people ignore me, I'm persona non grata there. They don't want me in the Church. Not that Church and I find that very, very hurtful.

I only go because I need to. I still have diazepam [valium] and occasionally I take them, if I feel I need them, [if] I decide to go to Church. (88/Cof S)

She subsequently sold her home and moved away.

In establishing their spiritual autonomy a number of women distanced themselves from advice or sermons from clergy. They built their own beliefs; view of God through prayer and bible reading, 'thinking for themselves'. One referred to "vulture priests", whose advice and support she would never seek, revealing a wider loss of trust for male clergy.

With female clergy I'm fine. Male clergy I can still see the male dominance bit. I'm not afraid of men clergy now. (64/Ang)

Clergy abuse survivors had to deal with extreme ambivalence about faith/spirituality but many used this as an opportunity to explore and build belief systems no longer rooted in male dominance.

Connections to Church Communities

Studies on faith and domestic violence have found social support from religious institutions can be a key factor in many women's abilities to rebuild their lives and relationships, see for example (Gillum, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2006). Other studies (Boehm et al, 1999) found that women who sought comfort from their faith communities and religious leaders often found this support lacking (p241) and disconnection from Church communities was common if the abusive relationship was publicly exposed.

Whilst most women in this study did not say they were feminists; they had resisted and developed an *awareness of male power* within churches. Women's consciousness *had* been raised. This was most evident by the comments made about how they had been treated by the Church (See also Chapter 6 & appendix 9). One woman put it bluntly; "They won't shaft their own" and directives to 'forgive' (see below also) viewed as protecting male hierarchy. This profoundly disturbed women's understanding of the faith is supposed to embody, affecting their sense of belonging.

This was most intense where the wives of their exploiter orchestrated a campaign against them.

[wife] was going to take revenge on us four... She went around everywhere not just in [village name], everywhere telling people – anyone she met, that she knows us – that we'd all had affairs with [her husband]...She phoned up people where I worked and told them, and people just turned away from me. I had no way of counteracting the story that she was putting about, so I was just branded as, a whore, adulteress, and people just cut off from me... it went on for years. (26 House Church/Anglican)

Women were shocked that fellow female congregants were especially vicious. Fortune (2001) argues that this dis-connection with victims is a way women try to keep themselves 'safe' (p93).

Whilst just under half of the full sample were confused (n=29) on ending of the sexual exploitative relationship they had struggled understand, make themselves safe, find strength and be feel less isolated. For many this required working out a new perception of Christianity, faith, and how they negotiated patriarchal community. One particular challenge here was the Christian doctrine of forgiveness. Since this is another dimension particular to Christian contexts it is explored in depth in this chapter.

Forgiveness

This section reflects on the role of forgiveness had in either helping or harming women. It has a specific resonance in this study given that forgiveness is a 'cog in the wheel' of Christianity, reiterated in teaching and scripture.

Forgiveness is not merely one choice among a host of Christian themes... Forgiveness is rather Christian faith itself – whole, complete" (Barber ,1991).

Forgiveness is considered to be beneficial, *the* Christian response to harm done and the duty of every Christian. Theologically the Grace of God or the power of the Spirit can override all human feelings or memories of harm or hurt. Forgiveness is not only “good” and possible, but the *highest aspiration* in situations of offence, since it heals but must be unconditional. Horsfield (1992:54-55), (Horsfield challenges this concept). Forgiveness frees the harmed and the accused, allows God to forgive the harmed and the harmer, and ultimately allows redemption and passage to heaven.

This is the dominant thinking on forgiveness, which holds considerable power within Christian communities and is strongly felt by many Christians.

Whilst twenty women (34%) had felt anger, many others suppressed such as they struggled with the Christian beliefs about loving your enemies. Given that in some versions of Christianity anger is viewed as ‘sinful’, or as an inability to forgive, it is considered a selfish emotion. This is contested by some clergy; Bishop Geoffrey Robinson (1998) for example, says of anger:

When memory of sexual abuse comes to mind, the anger that is spontaneously felt is positively good and contributes to a sense of meaning because it is in fact part of the love of oneself. No one is ever justified in telling victims that they have a religious obligation to forgive the offender.
(ISTI, Sun, 1998)

Cooper-White, an Episcopal priest, (1995:99) concurs saying it is not necessary for “Christians to swallow their anger in order to be a good Christian”, and points to biblical passages of ‘righteous’ anger. However, the dominant discourse about the necessity for forgiveness continues.

There was considerable anger at Churches for rejecting them, for constructing the exploitation as “affairs”, and the lack of support. Women felt let down and betrayed. Some were also angry at how the offender treated them. Others felt powerless to ‘do anything’ and this made them angry. It is worth noting that it was often at the time when women are ready to report or challenge their abuse that directives to ‘forgive’ come to the fore.

The theological place of forgiveness means many of the women were struggling on a daily basis with the Christian demand to forgive and reconcile their anger. Twenty-three (36%)

reported *trying* to forgive their abuser, whilst only two (3%) gave a definitive ‘I have forgiven’. Those ‘trying’ testify to a range of ways they do this, often in confused and painful dialogue: from asking God to help, to ‘letting go’. Some who won’t or cannot forgive spoke about this with a deep sense of failure or guilt, whilst others were angry and this was a measure of their new strength. Few women were able to state that deciding *not* to forgive was a healthy position.

Table 7.4: Views on forgiveness

Views on forgiveness	Number*	%
Trying to forgive	23	36
Need to forgive self	23	36
Can never forgive	11	17
Forgiving won't help	7	11
Not relevant	6	9
Nothing to forgive	2	3
I have forgiven	2	3
Other	14	22
Total	88	

*Multiple responses

But not forgiving can be viewed as a rejection of their own culpability, a realisation there has been harm done. Some *did* recognise that if the perpetrator has neither repented nor apologised then there is no justice, therefore no grounds for forgiveness. In these situations, they felt, forgiving an abuser would be tantamount to ‘letting him off’ both morally and spiritually. As Fay Weldon (1975) remarks;

“Women have been taught to forgive and accept where they should have been taught to resent and resist”.

Others were aware that by not forgiving, they were regarded as not ‘whole’ or ‘well’ spiritually or psychologically and carried the blame of non-resolution.

When Churches press for forgiveness they increase guilt and shame when a woman cannot, since she is regarded as the only person who can ‘free’ the abuser and thereby free also the Church to take a more lenient position. The clergyperson can then feel exonerated by the victim – his guilt and shame released, meaning he does not need to do anything more for his own salvation.

Women who sought accountability could be cast as unforgiving.

I have been constantly forced by the Church into forgiving him and trying to forget. But now I see that this is not possible or relevant if his behaviour is not confronted. (Q43-Baptist)

Just over a third (N=23, 36 %) of women talked of needing to forgive themselves. To forgive themselves was to let go of some of the guilt of self-blame.

I have forgiven myself knowing I was vulnerable. (Q40/RC)

I spent years trying to forgive myself for being so stupid. (Q17/Ang)

And to forgive myself, which has been harder. And realise that if I don't forgive myself, then God's forgiveness doesn't mean anything at all. (26/House Church)

The hardest thing over the last 20 years has – has been forgiving myself and that's...taken a long time. I think I virtually have. But, it's difficult when you're damaged because the damage won't heal, the scars won't heal. (4/Ang)

Some women had not managed this and the fact that there were layers of 'sin', 'immorality' involved made this even more complex as this longer extract illustrates;

I did feel I needed to forgive myself, in that I had transgressed – I know he had, but I had transgressed. Transgressed the rules. And this – this worried me for a very long time.

MK: *What rule was that?*

The rules of the Church "thou shalt not" although our sexual relationship had never gone as far as penetrative sex, I still felt it had been adultery, I [see it] as adultery and thou shalt not. I needed to forgive myself. It was a long time coming, a very long time. And I don't think I really lost it until he had died. Once he died I felt everything had taken on a different perspective... I only forgave myself when I went to confession after his death. I never needed to forgive him". (61/Ang)

Manlowe (1995), a psychologist, argues forgiveness needs to be "deconstructed" (p66). In examining victimization she notes how the perpetrator interjects guilt into the woman to absolve himself : "His sin is now her sin" (p68). This raises a number of fundamental questions, rarely addressed in theological discussions: who does the forgiving?; Who does the repenting? (p66). Both she and Marie Fortune insist that the complexities of sexual violence are considered within doctrines of forgiveness. If that were to be the case it ought to change this women's experience.

I regularly go to confession at [the feast of] Corpus Christi...and I regularly have to include that I still cannot yet forgive [him] for what he did – and the mess he made of my life. I keep coming back to [him] turning up at my house at ten o'clock at night with sex on his mind. I used to let him through the door and he would already have an erection.

MK And what does [your spiritual director] say?

He persistently says, "I think you were more sinned against than sinning" and he gives me something gentle, I'm usually given a hymn to read or a psalm to learn or something. I don't have to go down [the road] on my knees or anything like that, penances are gentle on me, I will say that. (18/Ang)

Whilst this spiritual director might be "gentle" he nonetheless reinforces there is something *she* needs to do to repent. The exploiter has 'sinned' (sic) more, but she carries some of the sin. The strong 'it's not your fault' message of feminist and much therapeutic practice in the aftermath of sexual assault is not evident here.

The Lord's Prayer – equality of sinning

***Forgive us our trespass as we forgive those
who trespass against us.***

In Christian doctrine there are two models of forgiveness, one a "repentance required" model and the other the "unconditional" model (often referred to The Lord's Prayer). Most Churches prefer the unconditional model. Meaning forgiveness must exact no conditions. This featured in women's accounts and is worth exploring here in more depth.

Since forgiveness is seen as the 'all purpose' Grace of God, if it is given the Church, hierarchy/leadership need do no more. Once the victim offers forgiveness she is then perceived as having no right to expect more from the Church or abuser.

This has obvious benefits for the Church, congregation and abuser. The Church congregation can 'feel comfortable' that both victim and exploiter are now 'reconciled'. The church can avoid scandal and possible legal action (Horsfield, 2002), and since forgiveness should heal all there is no need for Churches to provide support to the victim.

The Church can ignore the woman's suffering. The Church does not need to provide any help as 'forgiveness' should heal all. Finally no one, now, has to think or hear about what has happened.

Horsfield (2002:54) challenges this simplistic theological position:

[There is] expectation that a woman who has been sexually assaulted should be able simply to decide by an act of conscious choice to forget she has been assaulted and carry on her life as if nothing happened.

Pamela Cooper-White (1995:253) a clergywoman and feminist expands:

... as if it were something which, if they tried hard enough, they could simply will into happening. If the survivor tries to forgive, she can only fail, and her failure will reinforce all the self-blame and shame of her original abuse This message is not only said directly to victims. It is sometimes conveyed in ways that are manipulative and intrusive and that in the end only produce guilt and confusion.

The confusion that was so common and long-lasting in this sample of women, can, therefore, be understood as caused, or at very least exacerbated, by the doctrines and practices of traditional Christianity.

The Lord's Prayer has a powerful influence on Christian survivors as it suggests that if we do not forgive those who have harmed us then God cannot forgive the sin we commit. There is no mention of justice, repentance or conditional forgiveness. Here the Christian belief that we are *all* sinners is crucial.

Rev Pamela Cooper-White (1995) returns to the original Greek word for forgiveness *aphiemi*: to send or let off or away. For some (n=5) the notion of 'letting go', 'to release' has been helpful, but work on forgiveness connected to some inner fault, dysfunction *within themselves* that had to be corrected in counselling, therapy or spiritual reflection and prayer.

The absoluteness of doctrine limited the extent to which women could see a *process* of forgiveness, stages of 'letting go'; which Cooper-White recognises.

She argues this requires: *justice*, which releases from self-blame and then allows a letting go. Once 'letting go' has taken place forgiveness can be achieved followed by the restoring of connections to the community and peace for the victim.

In this analysis there must be justice Cooper-White's before 'letting go'. In its absence some women had to find a *rationale* (excuse) for why the clergyman sexually exploited them and thus exonerate him.

I have forgiven him because he was naïve and had been processed to only ever be a priest. (Q40/RC)

I have forgiven him as he was obviously a man with great problems, and very weak. When he died, his mind had gone completely. (Q65/RC)

Leaving forgiveness to God

There are theologians developing a discourse that challenges the patriarchal tradition but women in this study had little or no access to these ideas.

Keene (1992:2), a theologian, suggests only the more powerful can forgive the less powerful. In this construction powerless people cannot forgive those with more power. He adds:

Thus the hierarchy is that we forgive those over whom we have power, therefore we can ask God, who has infinite power, to forgive us. Nothing is said [in New Testament] about those who have power over us and against whom we have a grievance .In this situation forgiveness flows down, from the more powerful to the less powerful (p6).

Keene supports this analysis by arguing that Jesus' cry on the cross was to his powerful father "**Father** forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing". Applying this theology suggests that women, who are the 'weaker' in the sexual exploitation context should not be enforced to forgive the more powerful abuser. The resonance of this can be seen in the extent to which women perceived clergy as professional and felt they did not have the authority to forgive; they were leaving it to God, clearly more powerful.

Conditional forgiveness – Repentance and justice required

There is another Biblical mandate, which places a condition on forgiveness: 'If your brother sins, rebuke him, *and if he repents*, forgive him' (Luke, 17:3).

Both Keene and Cooper-White draw on Liberation theology and Feminist thought to introduce social and communal justice into reflections on forgiveness. Here the Church and perpetrator have a responsibility to create justice, before forgiveness can be considered. Fortune's (2001:108) outlines four 'justice-making' acts:

- truth-telling/acknowledgement of the harm done to the victim;
- compassion: willing to suffer with survivor;
- accountability for the abuser: calling to account;
- restitution: Material payment to cover therapy and medical expenses;
- vindication: To be set free from burden of memories and scars of victimization;
- protection of the vulnerable: steps to ensure no one else is harmed.

This model of forgiveness had much stronger resonances with women's accounts and two even cited the biblical reference above.

I can't forgive him at the moment. Don't know what the future may hold. It is not an issue as he hasn't asked for forgiveness. (Q21/URC)

It is difficult when the offending party does not acknowledge they have done anything wrong. (Q76/Ang)

... but unless, someone admits that he's done wrong...how can you forgive? I think that there has to be an admission of wrong-doing...and then you can think about whether you want to forgive and I think it's probably best to forgive... I mean we go to confession to confess our sins which are considered wrong-doing and we are forgiven because we have confessed, so there is no difference because he's a priest [if he] confesses his sins of abuse then he – I will forgive him. (9/RC)

Even though some women were still experiencing guilt and shame, most were also challenging the status quo, in Fay Weldon's terms 'resenting and resisting'. They wanted acknowledgement from the offender of what he had done a change in behaviour and even compensation. They called both the abuser and the Church to account; such a call for justice could be seen as the 'stem-cell of feminism'. Certainly many of this group had come to value themselves and others, as women, through this process.

Caring for oneself: challenging and re-connecting

Caring for oneself is often portrayed within Christianity as 'selfish' or 'self-pity' or against the Christian tenet to carry one's cross bravely as Jesus did. Such injunctions limit the space women had to recognise injustice.

I've tended to think, "Oh well, It's not that bad, other people have had it far worse than me". Whereas I'm beginning to recognise that what I've been through has been quite – well, life-changing, absolutely major for me. (64/Ang)

"Not that bad", here includes being pregnant and pressured into an abortion by her therapist-priest. Acknowledging it had been "absolutely major" was part of enabling her to re-connect. The interviewed women found fulfilment in their lives through further education/degrees (four women), work (one woman), working in the Church and voluntary agencies (two women), and caring (three women). Others used creative activities to finding meaning in their experiences (three women).

I wrote and drew and I've got stacks and stacks of writing, of poetry, of drawing particularly. I make banners [for Churches]... something gets worked [out]... I've drawn dreams and written and written and written... it has been a positive aspect, because all the way through... only on Sunday somebody looking at the banner in Church came up and said "you know I just keep having to tell you how much that banner means to me. (72/Ang)

Some found new ways to empower themselves, changing living arrangement (one woman), better self-care and nutrition (two women), and overall a sense of taking control (five women). The next section shows how challenging abusers was experienced as taking control.

Taking control, challenging abusers

Taking control meant different things to different women. One went to report to the police, while another chose whom she wanted to tell about her abuse. One former nun focused on changing her thinking. A woman in an exploitative relationship with a Catholic priest ended it, when he had a breakdown, she felt the stronger of the two and this sense of additional power allowed her to continue in the relationship and they eventually married. A nun living in a religious community chose to leave and live independently, a choice that proved immensely positive for her.

Importantly expanding their space for action did not negate women's pain and difficulty. One woman during the interview spoke of how she chose not to think about abuse, preferring to focus

on beauty and self expression and the arts. (9/RC)

After the interview, however, she reported her exploiter to the police and he was required to fly back from another country for police questioning. Although the case was not prosecuted she felt she had done *all she possibly and humanly could* to call her abuser to account; this was an empowering experience.

When a nun received a letter from her abuser, her ability to reply strongly and challenge his behaviour was both resistance and empowerment:

[Receiving the letter] was beneficial in that it gave me the catalyst to actually write to him, to explain very clearly what he had done, what – damage it had caused me, and to say that I didn't wish to have further contact. All this period in therapy was very difficult but the sending of that letter was a great thing for me. I told him I could have reported him for indecent exposure. (73/RC)

She found her 'liberation' in not living in a religious community but on her own (as a nun) where she was able to control everyday practices which were fulfilling and empowering.

My life is so much better. I have enjoyed so much looking after a house, though some people would hate it and I [enjoy] normal, ordinary things, doing my own shopping, and cooking. (73/RC)

Other routes to control

Eighteen of the nineteen interviewed women sought professional help from a wide range of professional 'helpers' or supporters including: clergy; therapists; GP's; counsellors; psychiatrists; Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPN) and psychologists. Overall women had more male 'helpers' than female. Interestingly, more than half of the identified professionals were male.

Seeking professional support was an active step in self-care and taking control.

Feminists' have been staunchly critical of professional care, partly on the grounds that 'women confiding in therapists stops them from confiding in one another' (Daly 1979: 256) Ussher (p187). But also to stop the medicalisation and individualism involved.

A narrow therapeutic focus means the problems of individual women are not seen in the context of male domination, and the social problem of violence against women is reduced to the troubles of unique, deviant women, and not linked to the nature of the wider oppression and experiences of all women (Dobash & Dobash:229).

This is an irresolvable tension when working on men's violence against women. Individuals need recognition and support, it can literally save and change lives, but this will not change conditions in which abuse takes place and is tolerated.

While some women did say counselling or therapy had been useful, counsellors/therapists were not always fully aware of the issues. Several did feel counsellors counselling was 'reduced to the troubles of unique, deviant women', in being made aware of *their own characteristics that contributed* to exploitation. One nun was encouraged by her counsellors to see that her exploitation occurred within a context, not of gender oppression, but of her previous childhood abuse.

So I suppose, you know, you could say that the kind of childhood and my image of Church and so on all kind of prepared me to be vulnerable to that kind of experience. (73/RC)

When the abusing priest was himself contemplating coming to the same treatment centre, this woman discussed her fantasy of having the residents line up on the driveway and spit on him as he arrived. The response of her therapists was to look how at the alleged 'cycle of abuse' theory rather than her anger.

Have I ever been victimiser? The group work went on we were encouraged to look at how a victim might become a victimiser. (73/RC)

Another woman (64/Ang) was 'counselled' by her parish priest to understand *her role* in her sexual exploitation, to see the patterns *she* repeats, a rationale she absorbed.

He's walked me through it from childhood ...why certain things have happened and patterns that I seem to repeat and so on. (64/Ang) (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

This clergyman implies *her* vulnerability explains her abuse; with cause (and responsibility) located within *her*, rather than her exploiter. Similarly another woman explains how counselling has taught her about necessary changes in her own behaviour:

I understand now what's appropriate and inappropriate ways of relating. And I also know that I need to conduct myself in a way that doesn't let this sort of thing happen. (72/Ang, emphasis added by Kennedy)

Another woman who had a 'breakdown' following a not guilty verdict in a consistory court against the clergyman found therapy positive. It enabled her to take back control:

My therapy just really taught me to try and gain my own sense of independence as much as I possibly can, which I do now do.

Yeah, I'm a stronger person, I don't believe people in positions of power can be trusted, I don't think they're altogether, worth looking up to. I certainly speak out if I feel like I've been... [wronged], which I never would've done at one time, I just never would've spoken out about anything. Now I'm far more outspoken, extravert and, and a lot stronger really. (15/Ang)

Finding strength through coping was a theme in a number of interviews. Another woman was diagnosed with a cancerous tumour that she felt was her mother punishing her again (she had been physically abused by her mother as a child) but her therapist was able to re-frame the surgical removal as removal of her mother's power over her. After counselling she made the choice to care for herself.

This [cancer] was the last straw and I found that [therapist suggestion] helpful, cause now I know I've got choices. I can either go down one slippery slope and back on the psychiatric ward or I can say, "No, I'm not doing that" and I force myself to look at things positively... So that's how I'm trying to live. After the cancer I saw a nutritionist, so I'm eating very well, I'm juicing stuff, and I'm physically beginning to feel stronger. I now feel I have a contribution to make, I know I have, but I'm not sure what, you know. (83/RC)

Becoming free: Death of offender

For some women death of an abuser enabled freeing of themselves from the legacies of the exploitation. Indeed one woman wished for this:

All I want to see is his obituary notice. If I saw his obituary, then I would be able to...close the door. That's what I want to see. Because then I'll be free of it. (4/Ang)

Another woman who described herself as 'in love' with her exploiter found relief in his death, as he would not be found out, he was safe, and she could not be blamed.

Once he died I felt everything had taken on a different perspective that, there was now no question that he would ever be blamed for anything, there was no question of scandal. There was no question of his wife coming up at me and accusing me of anything – not that I thought that she ever would. But everything took on this – this very different, sort of feeling, once he died. That everything sort of fell – fell from my shoulders. (61/Ang)

Hopes for the future

Towards the end of the interviews and questionnaires women were asked about their hopes for the future. While some were still unhappy and even hopeless, others hoped to form meaningful connections with others.

I'd very much like to be special to somebody and to have someone special in my life. (64/Ang)

Just to stay alive, maybe finding a bit of happiness...I'd like to feel fulfilled. (9/RC)

I don't see anything [hope]; I just carry on as I am. (3/RC)

...just hold my head up. Not to be ashamed of what happened. To talk about it.. (1/RC)

Many women who participated in the research were actively engaged in the world, often in a caring capacity. Their activities included: working full time with learning disabled adults; undertaking further training; a degree course in counselling and psychiatric nursing course; qualified counsellors; a Cruse counsellor; a priest in a parish; a successful full time artist; community work full time; married women were actively involved in the community; working in administration full time; were teachers; retired but an active carer for others.

Others were thinking positively about change, in terms of moving on and described their hopes: to 'be me', to overcome the experiences and name what happened as abuse. Some identified changing their relationships; either forming new ones or leaving violent husbands. Caring for others was important for some as was strengthening faith. Finally some women wanted to support other survivors through supporting the organisation MACSAS, raising awareness of abuse in the Church or starting a 'friendship group' for survivors. In the words of one woman "I'd like to use my experiences as strength".

Many of these hopes are 'moving on' but not moving away from their experience of sexual exploitation rather it had become a resource and/or a personal development for the benefit of others.

Most women had aspirations for better careers, better relationships and a happier future and were *actively working* towards making these things happen in their lives.

Most of the women taking part in this study were still conscious of their hurt and pain but resolved to give of themselves through caring work, careers and a commitment to make their lives more bearable. There was justifiable anger and a consequent deconstruction of the Christian imperative to forgive. For many a notable personal independence and sense of power had emerged. They were working on the new meaning of their exploitation, their faith and their Church.

In chapter eight the research will conclude by exploring the journeys of the women to learn lessons in order to stop the sexual exploitation of women by clergy/ministers so that no other woman should bear this legacy of harm and pain.

The experiences of these women allow us to see their testimony as being of pain, suffering and confusion alongside resistance, seeking freedom and safety for themselves and others.

Chapter 8: Called to Account? Unpoisoning the Well

Introduction

This study with women who were sexually exploited by clergy is one of the first to explore the process from the outset to the aftermath. Such a holistic approach has not been previously attempted. Additionally it compares Church disciplinary to criminal processes, highlighting the inadequacies of both systems.

Sixty-three women reflected on their journeys within questionnaires and nineteen women were interviewed in depth. While many found this a painful experience, they hoped they would be contributing to the safety of other women in Christian communities. Both women and clergy came from a range of Christian denominations but the largest groups were Anglican (n=25) and Catholic (n=25), undoubtedly reflecting the size of these faith communities and thus larger numbers of ministers in the UK and Ireland

This concluding chapter summarises the key findings and makes recommendations for change in both framings of the issue of sexual exploitation and church policies.

Christian gender orders

Clergy sexual abuse/exploitation of women occurs in the context of a hierarchical gender order, which privileges men. This is further underlined in Christian Churches by male theological exegesis. One element of gender ideology is a mental 'script' in the minds of Church leaders whereby women are cast as the instigators of sexual exploitation, as they follow Eve. The alternative is that women are 'mad' or 'bad' in reporting abuse. Alongside these a secular/modern 'script' is evident, representing such sexual involvements as "affairs/adultery": by definition consensual and equal.

Whilst the sexual exploitation of women in pastoral ministry is simply not recognised by most Christian Churches, it does not occur within a vacuum. It is 'allowed' through constructions of clergy as special, God-like, holy, and the exclusion of women from those echelons of power. It also reflects 'the bonds of brotherhood' which Jamieson (1997), describes, whilst misconduct may be recognised, this invariably relates to a breach of morality rather than the violation of women. That the majority of clergy sexual exploitation takes place within a pastoral setting, with clergy acting as professionals and women in the role of 'clients' is rarely acknowledged.

Though more women are now in ministry within Christian communities (although not in the Catholic Church), they continue to be targeted by male clergy in misogynist abuse (Lynas, 1997). Future research will need to determine whether their increased presence will better safeguard women and encourage more effective procedures to address the issues this thesis is concerned with.

Summary of Main Findings

Many women in this study had experience/histories of deprivation or abuse in childhood and/or current mental health difficulties. These 'vulnerability' factors made women susceptible to clergy intent on exploiting them. Church authorities determine 'vulnerability' under the government policy *No Secrets* (Department of Health, 2000) as those who are elderly, mentally ill, or learning disabled. If women do not fit these criteria they are deemed not to be 'vulnerable' no matter their circumstances. Whilst women's vulnerability is not the focus of this study, it was impossible not to address it insofar as clergy perpetrators used their role and status to target women, many of who had sought guidance counselling for current difficulties.

Clergy were adept at techniques of entrapment, using a range of spurious explanations to justify the sexual engagement of/or trapping women into loyalty. These techniques included offers of care, gifts, or resources. Therapeutic, spiritual, or romantic deceptions were also commonplace. Often multiple strategies were employed. Whilst some of these replicate dynamics in professional abuse (Penfold, 1998) there were significant differences especially manipulation of belief and faith. The continuities and differences with other forms of violence against women are summarised in the clergy sexual exploitation power and control wheel (see p119).

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 'grooming' is now a criminal offence when used on a child with the intention of sexual abuse. The concept of grooming has named behaviour of perpetrators through which they seek to win the trust of potential victims and create contexts in which they hope to abuse with impunity. The concepts of grooming and entrapment are both used in this thesis, with grooming seen as part of the wider entrapment process. Grooming is often insidious and gradual, and in relation to children has been defined as including (SOA, 2003):

- gaining the trust and confidence of future victims and their families;

- introducing the child to sexual types of touch, with escalating inappropriate behavior;
- manipulating children with trickery or threats to keep the assault secret.

These are similar to the tactics used by professionals who abuse clients/patients described by Penfold 1998, (Fig 4.6, p131).

In this study grooming tactics were also identified and included in the adapted and power and control wheel (Fig 4.3, p119); they are understood as manipulative forms of power and control which should be seen as part of the egregious nature of sexual exploitation by clergy.

Interviewed women were articulate in trying to convey the complex ways in which they became entrapped, only truly recognising the process when they had extricated themselves and often then only after many years. They experienced paradoxical feelings and emotional confusion when involved with the clergyman. Cumulative pressures silenced women as well as further entrapping them. They felt the power and control of the clergy through: threats and fear; demands for secrecy; guilt and shame; and feelings of conspiracy and complicity. For some women these jarred with feelings of love, gratitude, and loyalty leaving them with little or no 'space for action' (see chapter 5 and fig 5.1, p137).

Making Meaning

Women did make sense of the exploitation and moved on from confusion and turmoil. Naming the contact as abuse/exploration was limited by the available discourses. This research illustrated the *personal/individual* entrapment of women by the deceptive and manipulative strategies of clergy but there was also evidence of 'social entrapment'. James Ptacek's (1999) 'social entrapment' framework was adapted to highlight how Church communities generally respond to women who were exploited by clergy (Chapter 5, p148). The absence of an environment of support leads to intense dependency of women on the clergyman allowing his control and 'meanings' hold sway.

It is no surprise that, at the time of the sexual exploitation, most women defined it as a 'love relationship'; a 'love relationship' in which the gendered power dynamics of professional

authority and Christian theology coalesced. However a substantial group n=19, could not define the experience as either love or abuse.

The research findings also demonstrate that despite some women's resistance, both personal and social entrapment served to narrow their space for action, making it difficult for them to extricate themselves.

Violence within sexual exploitation

Though violence is *not* a criteria for whether exploitation has occurred, this study is the first to document a group of clergy who raped and assaulted women. A large cohort of women, more than a third of the whole sample, (40%, n=26),³⁹ who experienced violent assault, highlighting that sexual exploitation by clergy involves not just abuse of power, but also threat, coercion, intimidation, injury and rape.

It is clear from these findings that sexual exploitation by clergy of adult women should be placed on the continuum of violence against women (Kelly, 1987). It also challenges the construction of these events as 'affairs'.

The moment of awareness

At the time of the research most women were no longer in the exploitative situation and the majority now conceptualised what happened as exploitative. It had taken many a long time to reach this point. This testifies to the power clergy had to 'hold' women emotionally and psychologically, sometimes long past the ending of exploitation. More than half of those who took longer than a year to name it as abuse/exploitation (n=21 of 36) did so within ten years. However, 11 women said they had lived with confusion and distress for even longer than this. The journeys women made were a combination of cognition; emotion work and action (see also Enander, 2008 with respect to domestic violence). One woman said challenging her abuser's justifications "... was like nailing jelly to the ceiling". Ridding herself of the clergy offender; "was like [removing] a burr in a woolly jumper".

Counselling was usually seen as helpful, as were friends who advised women to cease contact with the clergyman. The tendency within the Church hierarchies to reduce these encounters to

³⁹ The proportion was similar in the interview sample (37%, n=7).

consensual affairs, however, meant that few women were given the key messages now recognised as important in responses to violence against women: responsibility lies entirely with the offender; it was not the woman's fault. Only eight women in the whole sample (12%) were told it was not their fault. These findings support Flynn's (2003) observation that those who heard what women reported were 'unaware' of the issues, and therefore less able to support her effectively.

Getting out

'Getting out' was for some, facilitated by geographical movement, for others, social support and more understanding which extended women's space for action (See fig 5.1, p137).

Two pathways for breaking silence were identified. Those women who chose to keep the 'telling' private between relatives or friends, sometimes counsellors and others who chose to make an official report taking the matter into public domain. Just over half (11 of 19) of women interviewed did not report due to lack of trust in their Church's leadership. Fear was pervasive. For others the decision not to report was a way of keeping control and preserving their own stability and privacy. Those who did report first did so to Church authorities, demonstrating a trust that their case would be dealt with seriously and their best interests protected.

Three main reasons were given for making an official report: to protect other women; to deprive clergy of undeserved status and honour; to transfer the burden of disgrace from the victim to offender. There was little evidence women sought incarceration of the offender or even compensation, but most did want justice, especially if they had been vilified or humiliated by their Church community, families or media.

Responses from the Churches

The literature review provided an in-depth understanding of the background to the 'naming of the offence' within Christian communities. The analysis of language use showed varieties of 'naming', such as 'dalliance', 'naughty', 'intimacy failure' and 'acting out', that obfuscate the reality. The behaviour is rarely spoken of as an offence against the woman with the charge invariably being 'conduct unbecoming the ministry', usually articulated as an "affair"/"adultery" or a breach of celibacy vows.

There were also many examples of lax, and at times deliberately prevaricate, procedures. Files were lost, letters unanswered, promises broken; women were not kept informed of the processes. Some of the women were subjected to rigorous scrutiny in informal and formal settings. In most cases, the manner of the official that women reported to conveyed that they were not going to be taken seriously. In some cases veiled threats were used, such as media exposure and libel suits, if she persisted. Officials were described by women as sceptical, ambivalent, hostile and dismissive. Women found these responses particularly difficult since they expected the process to be informed by Christian values.

A few cases did lead to official hearings but here too, justice was in short supply. The courts and tribunals were not independent; those who 'judged' were invariably Church personnel and male. Prosecution barristers seemed unqualified to understand the complexities of the case whilst defence barristers focused on women's sexual history (see Lees, 1996, for similar analysis of criminal prosecution of rape cases). In these "theatres of shame" (Herman, 1992) none of the protections now available in criminal prosecutions were available and the media were allowed to identify and report intimate details of women's lives.

No woman felt her case was treated either fairly or sensitively; indeed one described the Churches modus operandi, as a fraternity that excluded women.

This study has exposed the gross failures of Church policies and procedures to provide the redress against human rights violations, which the UN commends. Key principles such as dignity, privacy, prevention of degrading and humiliating treatment or infringements of bodily integrity were not in evidence; as a consequence women are further harmed by the processes. Since many Christian Churches espouse human rights this is a serious breach of values and ethics, and needs to be addressed urgently. At a minimum Church procedures must: grant women anonymity; make screens available; employ independent lawyers; and human rights principles must be incorporated into any proceeding.

Aftermath

Rather than focus on medicalised 'effects', this study examined the aftermath in terms of 'impacts and consequences' and 'disconnections', presenting a wider analysis of the social and cultural legacies of exploitation.

One focus was on women's understanding of Church and faith since most were and largely remained professed Christians. All but three women suffered from negative consequences (see fig 7.1, p206) including: a disconnection from the body; loss of wellbeing, sense of safety, joy, spirituality and sense of wholeness. Socially and culturally, women felt ostracised, even banished, from their faith community. Others experienced financial hardship, loss of jobs and in some cases homes. Marriages were severely disrupted including, in a few cases, domestic violence. The more commonly documented effects included depression, anxiety, nightmares, flashbacks, insomnia, self-injury, and suicidal feelings. Seven women had 'breakdowns'.

In terms of faith, the question of forgiveness was explored in conjunction with the guilt and shame reinforced by both the clergy exploiter and Church responses. When Church hierarchies and/or faith communities *demand* forgiveness, this serves to interject additional layers of shame and guilt for those women who cannot or who refuse. Many women struggled with forgiveness. Some declared they would only be 'free' when the clergyman died, and forgiveness was not the issue. Others felt it was impossible if the offender had neither repented nor asked for forgiveness. Some decided to 'leave it to God' and others declared they wanted to forgive and were 'working on it'.

This is not, however, only an account of multiple losses. Some women had a keen understanding of patriarchal structures and control within Churches, and of gender and power. This enabled them to reconstruct their lives. Even though some had been divorced by angry husbands or lost jobs, most women now had satisfying employment. Some, however, were not coping well. Continued hurt, anger and loss of a life worth living were themes here.

Unpoisoning the Well?

This thesis concludes with recommendations women made for improving Church responses to sexual exploitation of adult women.

Women made a range of recommendations, the bulk of them related to dealing with the offender and policies and procedures. Comparatively few focused on the plight of the victim, which may suggest they saw prevention as the most important focus, followed by disciplinary action and some form of justice. At the same time, one has to ask whether, in part, women were accommodating to the 'selfless' femininity which both Christian Churches and abuse positions them in.

Recommendations for supporting victims

The recommendations regarding victims covered a range of issues:

- Reporting;
- access to support, including counselling;
- being heard;
- responses of Churches;
- compensation.

Reporting had been so tortuous and difficult for many that this led to proposals for more open and accessible processes. How reports were received was also a critical theme.

Women and men's allegations of abuse by a clergy person should always be taken seriously. (Bapt)

Such a response is only possible if a further recommendation was implemented: that Churches should not pre-judge either women or the report itself; rather respect should be the order of the day and victim blame avoided.

Being heard was important for many and several made recommendations that would help women talk about their experiences.

It would be easier to talk to a woman. (RC)
find out what [women] need to recover. (Anglican)

Suggestions were also made for responding well and effectively, ranging through advocacy, providing spiritual guidance, and acknowledgement of the damage done.

Take care of the wounded sheep instead of making the shepherds the priority!
(Ang)

The Church needs to provide proper justice instead of throwing out their victims. (Ang)

Access to support was a high priority and women recommended more training of priests so that they might respond well when an allegation is made. Compassion was requested alongside access to practical support and legal advice.

A strong consensus was that counselling should be offered and paid for by Churches, to enable women to *“come to terms with what has happened to her”* (Bapt). In a similar vein financial compensation was necessary in order that *‘repair of life’* could more easily be achieved.

Overall, women were united in arguing that the costs of abuse should be understood as born primarily by victims, and that Churches should seek to recompense and rebuild, rather than reinforce the status quo and protect their financial interests.

I shouldn't have been the one to have made all the sacrifices. (Methodist)

They should look at the long-term effects abuse and scandals have on individual and their trust in God. (RC)

Recommendations regarding offenders

The recommendations with respect to clerical offenders can be summarised as covering;

- investigation including criminal proceedings;
- suspension/monitoring;
- care/treatment/assessment;
- confrontation.

Where investigations are conducted by Churches, at least one person should have a clear knowledge of ‘Clergy abuse of Adults’ (Church of Scotland) and any other relevant policy, and the criminal law. Criminal proceedings were recommended, albeit, many appreciated that the “affair” discourse holds so much sway this was unlikely. The alleged abusers past should be scrutinized, and investigations should be conducted speedily. Across the denominations automatic suspension was considered vital. Where the accusations are founded clergy offenders should be removed from ministry. A policy of moving offenders to a new congregation was roundly criticised

Don't just give him a fresh hunting ground by transferring. (Ang)

Allow no way back into ministry. (URC)

Priest should not be able to practice in any form after being involved in abuse. (RC)

Whilst many women were prepared to recognise that counselling might offer insight, this was not to be a route for return to ministry. Part of 'treatment' must be a requirement that the clergy "*face up to his responsibilities*" (Bapt). All clergy abusers should be subject to monitoring and supervision.

Recommendations on Policies and Procedures

Women's proposals here covered:

- openness and independence;
- publicity and outreach;
- Church responsibilities, including theology and spirituality;
- sexuality;
- selection and training of clergy;
- supervision and monitoring.

Many women felt they had not been treated with openness and honesty, Churches were more often evasive, and dismissive, explicit acknowledgment of the reality of clergy exploitation and the harms involved was a fundamental step, which in all Churches needed to make and publicise. There should be no 'statute of limitation' for reporting and women abused argued for mechanisms by which abusers could be held to account by the wider Christian community.

As both a form of prevention and empowerment Churches need to do more in educating, publishing and distributing material on boundaries and on professional pastoral care to members of the congregations and should support help lines. Complaints procedures should be openly advertised.

Several argued the criminal law, and specifically the Sexual Offences Act 2003, should include clergy as professionals and in the offence of 'abuse of trust' as this would facilitate increased reporting to the police.

Catholic women thought that celibacy contributed to their exploitation and recommended it be suspended and in the meantime training for priests to address sexuality and sexual exploitation was essential. Training of ministers was a high priority and many saw it as offering potential for prevention. Themes to be addressed;

- pastoral relationships and boundaries;
- how to express care and warmth whilst respecting the autonomy of the other person;
- gender relations and misuse of male power and privilege.

Some suggested cessation of clergy doing home visits to women alone and that the Churches ought to have a readily accessible resources manual to advise victims on sources of help.

Many proposed a totally independent body to deal with clergy sexual abuse, arguing that without this the power of 'brotherhood' meant justice would be compromised.

The opportunity of 'free narrative' encouraged participants to think of ways other women could be safer in the future. The recommendations reveal accumulated wisdom, which should be regarded as important resource for future policy making.

Regarding spirituality there were recommendations for more prayer and liturgy for women victims of clergy abuse as part of healing.

Conclusion

There were some limitations in this study, related to the sample. The fact women in secret relationships did not apply to be part of the study meant a comparison between this group and those who had sought pastoral care could not be made. Furthermore, no women from black and ethnic minority communities came forward to participate in the sample, so the study was not able to explore if intersections of race and gender affect women's experiences of sexual exploitation by clergy.

In addition, the questionnaire included a question (section two, question 5) on whether women continued to go to Church on *Sunday* and this assumption may have been problematic for women in Churches where the main worship day is Saturday. While Church attendance was not a requirement to participate in the study, it is possible that women who are part of

congregations that worship on Saturdays did not perceive themselves as eligible to participate. The findings and discussions therefore apply only to the major Christian Churches.

In terms of exploring how women came into contact with clergy, there was not an option of “did not go to him for support” on the questionnaire (Section 4 question 1a) - however an opportunity to describe meetings under “other” elicited the full range of circumstances by which women met the clergyperson. Women who did not approach clergy for support are represented in the sample.

Despite these limitations the study reveals patterns of exploitation across the many denominations in the major Churches, and there is no basis for thinking smaller Churches may be exempt from clergy sexual exploitation of women.

Potential for further research

As well as the limitations of the sample that indicate the need for further research, women in this study have made astute and important recommendations concerning the safety of women who seek the help of clergy in times of stress, crisis, or depression and confusion. These are addressed below in recommendations for future research.

Exploring unanswered questions could lead to fruitful further research and enable Churches to understand the issues more clearly. For instance, it is currently little understood why women trust clergy to help with an array of life's difficulties and more often turn to male than female helpers. Investigations could be usefully undertaken into whether the doctrine or tradition of Christianity fosters male abusive behaviour and why and how are women scapegoated by congregations for being sexually exploited by clergy.

Researchers could usefully develop the findings of this thesis in the following ways:

- Undertake research with women from BME communities and Churches whose main day of worship is Saturday in order to establish if sexual exploitation by clergy occurs and/or takes different forms;
- Compare women who belong to 7-11 (a support group) and are in ‘secret’, wanted relationships with Catholic clergy, to women who declare they were exploited;

- How women could be alerted to the fact of clergy exploitation, especially the tactics of grooming and process of entrapment, and from this develop what would constitute a package of support for women victimised by clergy;
- Further explore Church policies and procedures and whether they meet the civil standards of justice with respect to sexually exploitative behaviour;
- Explore the notion of clergy as professionals and resistance of Churches to name correctly clergy sexual exploitation/abuse/misconduct in order to clarify the barriers to protection for adults;
- Further examine the Sexual Offences Act (2003) regarding the offence of 'breach of trust' by professionals - cases brought to trial may add weight to the argument that clergy are indeed rightfully placed within the cohort of 'professionals';
- Further research on how clergy 'groom' adult women would add to understandings of the beginning stages of sexual exploitation;
- Research is also required into 'cross-over' sexual abuse where clergy have sexually abused children and adults.

Such research is imperative and urgent.

This thesis argues that the well from which Christian women drink is poisoned. An institution founded to empower, love and support adherents in the practice of a faith, which they could find meaningful and strengthening was in the experiences of the women in this thesis is a place, of threat, abuse, and exploitation. Not only were individual clergy exposed as often predatory in their endeavours to manipulate vulnerable parishioners to whom they had a duty of care, they were supported by the toxic frameworks of the 'brotherhood'.

By focusing on women's journeys this study demonstrates the true nature of clergy sexual exploitation and insists it must be separated from the narrative of "affair/adultery". It exposes the 'lie' perpetrated by the 'brotherhood', which in all its dealings relegates the victim to the margins whilst pondering on the woundedness of the brothers rather than the evil they perpetrate.

Such a strategy was exposed within child protection when in the 1990's clergy sexual abuse of children came to the fore. It was found that Churches ignored repeated reports of abuse,

moved clergy to new parishes or overseas and silenced victims and their families. To see the patterns replicated in this study can only suggest that Christian Churches fail to consider the harm done by their clergy, and in the process support male privilege at the expense of women and children's bodily integrity.

If Christian Churches fail to protect it surely falls to the state to legislate: to include this form of professional violation within the remit of abuse by trusted professionals.

Churches cannot now argue that they "did not know" clergy sexually offend against adult women, nor that the harm is minor or of no consequence. Many key informants confessed to knowing of such cases, and women's accounts highlighted in precise detail, the insolences of office involved.

Whether the 'well', which is supposed to bring life, can now be unpoisoned is an open question, but women in this study have offered truth, and their call for truth-telling and justice is one that should not be ignored.

Appendix 1: Interviews with Church Leaders

You know I am doing a PhD on Clergy/Ministers who have sexual relationships with women in their congregation or with those who seek help from them?

In your denomination what experience have you had with these issues?

Do you know if other Church leaders in your denomination have had to look at these issues?

What do you 'pick up' as the general thoughts about these issues in your denomination?

How would you determine whether a 'relationship' that has been brought to your attention amounts to misconduct/exploitation?

Can women who seek help from a priest (i.e. as 'client') ever consent to a sexual relationship with her pastor?

In your view is the situation different if the priest/minister has a sexual relationship with a parishioner *who is not seeking individual one-to-one help* but is a member of the congregation?

Would it be different again if the women was neither a congregant nor seeing the priest for help e.g. they had met the priest/minister at the golf club?

Do you think we need policies and disciplinary procedures to deal with priests/ministers who exploit women sexually?

Are you aware of any ethical guidance/values that are in place regarding relationships with female congregants/those needing help and boundaries in those relationships? (*CORI has some*).

Are there Policies/Procedures in your denomination regarding sexual misconduct against adults?

If not, why is this?

If not is your denomination going to develop some?

If yes, would you be able to let me have copies of these?

If yes, can you explain the process to me (e.g. consistory court/clergy disciplinary measure (Anglican)).

Who presently has responsibility for assessing situations where a complaint/report has been made?

How are those responsible to looking into these situations chosen?

What skills or training have they had on these issues?

How would you assess the situation if someone made a report to you?

What would be the issues you would want information about and what questions would you be asking?

In the Catholic Church it is known that priests have secret relationships with women and the women seem to consent, what is your view of these relationships? (7/11)

How do you see these situations in the light of celibacy?

How do you think Catholic priests who are involved sexually justify to themselves these secret relationships?

What is your view regarding the secrecy of these situations?

Why do you think clergy/ministers get involved sexually with women in their parish or with women who seek help?

If the priest or minister is married and engages women other than his wife, from the parish or in a helping situation, in a sexual relationship how do you perceive these relationships?

What should be done in the situation of priests or ministers engaging women in sexual relationships?

Should there be sanctions against priests/ministers who engage women in their parish or women who seek help in sexual relationships?

Appendix 2: Advertisement in Church papers

Clergy & Minister Sexual relationships with women and exploitation of women for whom they are pastorally responsible.

Are you someone or who knows someone in the following situation?

Did you seek the help, spiritual direction, support, and advice of a priest or minister and then were you encouraged, manipulated or coerced into a sexual relationship?

As a parishioner are you, at present, involved sexually and secretly, with the priest/minister of the Church you attend?

PhD researcher is looking for women in Ireland and UK willing to be interviewed or offer written submissions for research study.

All responses treated with utmost confidentiality. Please write to:

Margaret Kennedy, BM-CSSA, London WC1N 3XX UK

(This is the full ad)

**Clergy and Minister's
Sexual Relationships/
exploitation with
women for whom they
are pastorally
responsible.**

Did you seek the help,
spiritual direction, support
and advice of a priest or
minister and then were
encouraged, manipulated or
coerced into a sexual
relationship?

As a parishioner, are you, at
present, involved sexually
and secretly, with the priest/
minister of the church you
attend?

PhD researcher is looking for
women willing to be
interviewed or offer written
submissions.

All responses treated with the
utmost confidentiality.

Please write to:
Margaret Kennedy, BM-
CSSA, London WC1N 3XX
(This is the full address)

*C&E Newspapers
Sept 21. 2001*

Appendix 3: Participants Questionnaires

Research Questionnaire: Margaret Kennedy

This research is being carried out by Margaret Kennedy and involves asking women about their sexual relationship experiences with priests or ministers to whom they went for help, counselling, and spiritual direction or in other similar contexts. Some women were parishioners who met the priest or minister in that context. I have had approximately 60 women write to me in these circumstances. Some women describe their experiences as “affairs”, and perceive the relationship as a secret but consenting one; others perceive the relationship as abuse/abusive or exploitative. I want to hear from all these women, however they have thought about their situation.

For the purpose of this questionnaire, because women describe their situation differently, I will use the word ‘relationship’ or ‘sexual relationship’ throughout and is used to describe both abusive and non-abusive experiences. Some women have told me that there was more than one priest/minister who tried to have a sexual relationship with them, if this is the case for you please write and ask me for a second questionnaire.

Nowhere in the questionnaire do you have to give your name address or any other details that might identify you. All the research data (information) you give will be recorded using a case number.

Only those who fill out this questionnaire for the database will be considered for interview, as the response has been so positive that I will not be able to interview everyone. Interviewees will be selected on the basis of:

- (a) Those of you who are willing to do one
- (b) Reflecting the range of contents, experiences and outcomes that the questionnaires reveal.

This is a specific requirement of the actual research process. This ensures that my research is based on information given to me for the **purpose of the research** and not on previous information I have about your situation from contact with me in times past.

This questionnaire will be used to analyse the common features of these relationships and to see if patterns emerge that might lead to understanding what is happening to women in Christian settings. I hope that 100 women will be willing to fill out this questionnaire so that I have a very full picture of a range of experiences that women have told me about. It is a quite extensive questionnaire, so I hope you’ll not feel too put off by it!

I value very much your contact to date and after completing the questionnaire I will let you know about the next stage of the process; the live face-to-face interviews that many of you have agreed to be part of already.

It would help me if you would be able to return the questionnaires within two weeks in the prepaid envelope supplied. Please do not put any covering letter inside, only the questionnaire, as this will safeguard your anonymity should the postal system fail! If you want to send a letter please use a separate envelope.

Margaret Kennedy is carrying out this research and all those wishing to be part of the research and/or willing to be interviewed face-to-face should fill out this questionnaire.

Using a reference number guards your CONFIDENTIALITY. Your name should not be put on this form when returning it in the prepaid envelope. I am very grateful to you for filling out this form. It LOOKS rather long but, in fact, many questions require only a tick in a box. Thank you for participating.

Section 1: About yourself

1. Reference number: _____

2. How old are you?

18-20	<input type="checkbox"/>	21-30	<input type="checkbox"/>	31-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	41-50	<input type="checkbox"/>
51-60	<input type="checkbox"/>	60+	<input type="checkbox"/>				

3. How would you describe your ethnic background?

Black British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black other origin	<input type="checkbox"/>
White British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
White other origin	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____ (please write in)	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____ (please write in)	

4. Where do you live now?

England	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wales	<input type="checkbox"/>	N. Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Republic Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/>		

5. Are you:

Married	<input type="checkbox"/>	Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living with a partner/same sex	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Living with a partner/opposite sex	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious Sister	<input type="checkbox"/>
Priest/Minister	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. Do you have impairment (disability)?

Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, what kind of impairment (disability)? _____

7. Do you have an illness?
Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, what kind of illness? _____

8. How would you describe your sexuality?

Heterosexual (straight)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Are you in paid employment?
Yes ☐ No ☐
What kind of employment? _____

10. If not in paid employment are you?

A student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed (on benefits)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring for children/dependents	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Something else (please tell)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

Section 2: Your Religious Faith

1. What is your religious denomination *now*?

Anglican	<input type="checkbox"/>	Baptist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Congregational	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Church	<input type="checkbox"/>
Methodist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pentecostal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quaker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roman Catholic	<input type="checkbox"/>
URC	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please tell)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

2. If you have changed your denomination what was your *previous* denomination?

Anglican	<input type="checkbox"/>	Baptist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Congregational	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Church	<input type="checkbox"/>
Methodist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pentecostal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quaker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roman Catholic	<input type="checkbox"/>
URC	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please tell)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/>	

3. Why did you change your denomination?

4. Would you describe yourself as a practising Christian?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No', go to question 6)

5. Do you attend Church or other meeting?

I go every Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>
I go on occasional Sundays	<input type="checkbox"/>
I never go	<input type="checkbox"/>
I pray at home	<input type="checkbox"/>
I meet informally with others to pray	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. If you no longer go to Church/meetings why not? (Please say)

Section 3: Your Childhood history

1. What was life like for you as a child?

A happy childhood	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasonably happy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very unhappy	<input type="checkbox"/>
A nightmare	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please say)	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Were you abused as a child?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No,' go to question 3)

If yes, was this (tick all that apply):

Sexual ☐ Physical ☐
Emotional ☐ Neglect ☐

Was your abuser?

Male ☐ Female ☐

Were they?

Family member ☐ A stranger ☐
Someone else you knew well ☐

3. If family life as a child was unhappy, please say a little bit about this:

4. Was yours a 'religious' family i.e. a family that adhered to a faith/denomination?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No,' go to question 6)

5. How would you define the religious practice in your family when you were a child? (Tick all that might apply)

Traditional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oppressive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relaxed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Liberal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evangelical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charismatic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pentecostal	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. How would you define your parents/family's attitude to sex/sexuality when you were a child?

a)	Never discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Often discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Too often discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Rigid	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Liberal	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Did your parents have traditional gender roles (for example, father worked/mother at home)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section 4: Meeting the Priest/Minister

[To be filled out with the details of one priest/minister relationship only. If you need another questionnaire for additional priest/minister relationships, please write to me]

1. How did you first meet?

a) What did you go to him for?

- Help during marital difficulties☐
- Spiritual direction☐
- Support and personal difficulties☐
- To discuss past childhood difficulties☐
- To discuss childhood sexual abuse☐
- Advice☐
- Other☐
- _____ (please say)

b) Was he?

- Your parish priest/minister/leader of the Church/meeting you attended☐
- Your employer☐
- Your course supervisor/ tutor☐
- Your work colleague☐
- Other☐
- _____ (please say)

2. How would you describe yourself when you first met him? (Tick any box that applies)

- Very Strong☐
- Strong☐
- Weak☐
- Vulnerable☐
- Shaky☐
- Life falling apart☐

OK

Other

☐

☐

3. What did you see the priest as? (Chose one tick box)

Professional

Friend

Colleague

Other

☐

☐

☐

☐

(like a doctor or counsellor)

Section 5: The sexual relationship

1) How soon after knowing/meeting the priest/minister did the relationship become sexual?

At the first meeting

Within weeks

In the first three months

Between 3-6 months

Between 6-12 months

After about a year

Longer than a year

Some other time (please tell)

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

2) What were your feelings when the relationship turned sexual? (Tick all boxes that apply)

Horrificed

Overjoyed

Shame

Guilt

Confused

Loved

Don't know

Something else

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

(please tell)

Scared

Frightened

Happy

Fear

Contented

Cared about

Felt nothing

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

3) How did you perceive the relationship at the beginning? (Tick the most appropriate box)

One of two adults consenting

An "affair"

☐

☐

A love relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>
As exploitation	<input type="checkbox"/>
As abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Something else (please tell)	<input type="checkbox"/>

(a) Did your perception of the relationship change over time?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No' go to question 5)

If 'yes', please say how:

(b) How do you perceive the relationship now? (Tick the most appropriate box)

It was/is a consenting adult relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was/is an "affair"	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was exploitation	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

(c) Did the priest/minister describe how he saw the relationship to you? (Please say)

4) Are you still in the relationship?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No', go to question 5)

Trying to get out	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't get out	<input type="checkbox"/>
Afraid to get out	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't want to get out	<input type="checkbox"/>

5) Did/do you have to keep this relationship secret? (if 'No,' go to question 8)

- He told me not to tell anyone ☐
- We planned together how to keep it secret ☐
- He threatened me to keep it secret ☐
- I just decided it was best kept secret ☐
- I was too afraid to let anyone know ☐
- I instinctively knew it could not be open ☐
- I wanted to tell, but did not know how and to whom ☐
- Anything else (please tell) ☐

6) Did/does anyone else know?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No', go to question 10)

7) What was their response? (Please tell)

8) How often did/do you see each other?

- Once a week ☐
- More than once a week ☐
- Once a month ☐
- More than once a month ☐
- Very sporadically ☐

9) How long did the relationship last?

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3-6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 months – 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1 – 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2-5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Over 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | Still going on | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10) What sexual activity took place?

No intercourse involved ☐ Intercourse involved ☐

a) Did/do you use contraception for this relationship?

I was already on contraception when I met him	<input type="checkbox"/>
I went on contraception for this specific relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>
He used a condom	<input type="checkbox"/>
We never thought about it	<input type="checkbox"/>
He made me take contraception	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not necessary/no intercourse involved	<input type="checkbox"/>
He said it did not matter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anything else: (please tell)	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Did you become pregnant with this relationship?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No', go to question 11)

If yes, what happened?

He made me have an abortion	<input type="checkbox"/>
I decided myself to have an abortion	<input type="checkbox"/>
We both decided abortion was best	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Church Hierarchy suggested abortion	<input type="checkbox"/>
I miscarried	<input type="checkbox"/>
He made me have the baby adopted	<input type="checkbox"/>
I decided myself that the baby be adopted	<input type="checkbox"/>
We both decided on adoption	<input type="checkbox"/>
I kept the baby	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anything else (please tell)	<input type="checkbox"/>

c) Did the priest/minister find out/know about the pregnancy/baby

Yes ☐ No ☐ Only years later ☐

d) Did the Church Hierarchy find out about the pregnancy?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Only years later ☐

11) How did your relationship with this priest/minister end? *[If your relationship continues go to section 6; question 1]*

- I ended it☐
- He ended it☐
- Outside forces ended it☐ (Bishops, friends, relatives, media etc)

Please give brief details of how it ended:

12) What did you feel when it ended? (Tick all boxes that might apply)

- Safe at last☐

Bereft☐
- Loss☐

Confused☐
- Guilty☐

Shame☐
- Angry☐

Fear☐
- Abandoned☐

Rejected☐
- Contaminated☐
- Something had been destroyed☐
- Sadness☐
- Something else:☐

Section 6: Response of Church

1. Did/does the Church Hierarchy/Leadership know about the relationship?

- Yes☐
- No☐ *(If 'No', go to question 3)*

2. If yes: How did this happen?

- He made me have an abortion☐
- I reported it to them☐
- Someone else reported it☐
- It got into the newspapers☐
- He told his superiors☐
- His wife found out & reported it☐
- Some other way; (please tell)☐

3. If you could not report it, or the hierarchy/leadership did/do not know about your relationship with the priest/minister, why not?

Please say something about this:

4. If you reported/complained about what happened to you to the hierarchy/Church leadership what did they do with your complaint? *[If you did not put in a complaint, go to question 7]*

- They ignored it
- Said we were two adults and therefore no offence
- They blamed me
- They protected him
- Moved him to another parish
- Moved him to another Diocese
- Sent him to a treatment centre
- Had a tribunal/disciplinary hearing
- Went to consistory court
- Had him assessed by therapists
- Something else, or add more if necessary

5. If there was a Church disciplinary hearing/tribunal or consistory court proceeding what was the outcome?

- Nothing
- He was found 'not guilty'
- Minor sanctions imposed
- Found 'guilty' but no sanctions imposed
- Moved from post
- Removed from ministry completely
- Not allowed to do work where he'd meet woman individually
- Sent on retreat
- Sent to treatment centre
- Something else (please tell)

6. What do you feel about the Church response to your complaint/report? (Please tell)

7. Aside from the Church officials **directly** responsible, did you report it to anyone else?

Yes ☐ No ☐ *[If 'No', go now to question 8]*

If yes, whom did you tell?

- I went to a more senior Church official☐
- I wrote to the Vatican☐
- I wrote to papal Nuncio☐
- I wrote to my MP☐
- I reported it to the police☐
- I went to a solicitor☐
- I went to professional body (e.g. British Association of Counselling; BAC or psychology board etc)☐

Please tell which body you reported it to:

Did you report it to anyone else? (Please Tell)

8. Did you sue the Church? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Are you in the process of suing the Church? Yes ☐ No ☐

10. Is there any further action you'd like to take? (Please say)

Section 7: Response of other bodies/agencies

1. If you wrote/went to MP what was the response?

- He/She said nothing could be done ☐
- A kind response but seemed totally adrift with the issues ☐
- Took action and wrote to Church authorities ☐
- Wrote to home office about the professional breach of practice/ethical issues involved ☐
- No response at all ☐

2. If you went to the police what happened? (Please say)

3. If you went to professional bodies, such as disciplinary hearings or counselling ethics committees, what happened? (Please say)

4. Did your relationship become public knowledge?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No', go to **Section 8, question 1**)

If yes, in what way?

- The media got hold of it and reported it ☐
- My family/friends found out ☐
- My Church found out ☐
- The official proceedings made it public knowledge ☐

5. Who told the public?

I did ☐

He did	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Leadership/Hierarchy did	<input type="checkbox"/>
His friends/supporters told	<input type="checkbox"/>
My husband/partner did	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another way (please tell)	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What happened next? (Please say)

Section 8: Aftermath/conclusion

1. Do you receive support from any of the following groups? (Tick all that apply)

MACSAS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CSSA	<input type="checkbox"/>
PCCA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety Net	<input type="checkbox"/>
POPAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	7-11	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Sunflowers'	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rape Crises	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women's Aid	<input type="checkbox"/>	A survivor's group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other group(s) (Please name)			

2. Did you find any of these groups helpful? Yes ☐ No ☐

a) If yes, which group (s) was helpful?

b) What was helpful?

3. If the group(s) you contacted were not helpful, please name the group(s)

a) Why were they not helpful?

4. Has there been any negative impact on you as a result of this relationship?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes please tell me a little about this:

5. Were there any positive aspects of this relationship?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if 'No', go to question 6)

If yes, can you describe what these positive aspects were/are?

6. What are your views about forgiveness in relation to your experience?

Not relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is nothing to forgive	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can never forgive him	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm trying to forgive him	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forgiving him won't help	<input type="checkbox"/>	I need to forgive myself	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/>	

7. What is your emotional/psychological state right now? (Please tell)

8. Do you have recommendations for how the Church should deal with these issues?
(Please write in spaces below)

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

9. How did you find out about this research?

I saw an ad in a newspaper/journal ☐
Name paper/journal

There was a newspaper article/journal article ☐
Name newspaper/journal where you saw article:

I was already in contact with Margaret Kennedy through CSSA/MACSAS ☐
A friend told me about it ☐
My counsellor told me about it ☐

Some other way (please tell)

9. Is there anything else you'd like to say? (Please use additional sheet if necessary)
Thank you very much for completing this very long questionnaire. It will help other women very much in the future and your contribution is a valuable and important one. I am grateful for your help.

Second questionnaire

Please fill out those questions that are relevant to your situation

Your Reference Number_____

1. The Priest/Minister that I referred to in my last questionnaire was of the following denomination: (Please tick box)

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Anglican | <input type="checkbox"/> | Baptist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Congregational | <input type="checkbox"/> | House Church | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Methodist | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pentecostal | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quaker | <input type="checkbox"/> | Roman Catholic | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| URC | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unitarian | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please tell) _____ | | | |

2. The priest/minister at the time of the sexual involvement was age (or approximation) _____

3. I was age _____ at the time of the sexual involvement.

4. At the time; he was:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Married | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Single | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Divorced | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In another (non-married) relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (please describe) | _____ |

He was a RC priest, therefore had taken vows of celibacy ☐

5 At the time I was:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Married | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Single | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Single parent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Divorced | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In lesbian relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. Did the priest discuss his personal situation with you? (e.g. Marriage or Celibacy)

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, can you tell me how he did this and your reactions at the time? If no, what did you know at the time, and what did you think about it?

7. Do you know if the priest/minister had similar involvements with other women either before, at the same time or after his involvement with you? Please tell me something about this;

- Yes; Before ☐
- Yes; at the same time ☐
- Yes; afterwards ☐
- Don't know ☐
- No ☐

a) When did you find out about these involvements?

- Before your own involvement ☐
- During your own involvement ☐
- After your own involvement ☐

Please tell me how you found out, what it made you think at the time and what you think now?

8. If you replied in the last questionnaire that you had been abused in childhood did the priest/minister know this?

Yes ☐ No ☐
This question does not apply to me ☐ (please go to question 9)

a) If yes, did the priest discuss this part of your background with you?
Yes ☐ No ☐

b) What did the priest/minister say to you?

c) Was any connection made by him between the sexual involvement with him and your abuse background?

9. If you mentioned marital difficulties did the priest/minister know you were having marital difficulties?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (if no, go to question 10)

a) If yes, did the priest/minister discuss this with you?

Yes ☐ go to (b)
No ☐ go to Question 10

b) What did the priest/minister say?

c) Was any connection made by him between the sexual involvement and your marital difficulties?

10. If you described yourself as vulnerable, weak, shaky when you first met/saw the priest/Minister, do you think this had any relevance to being involved sexually with the priest/minister?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐
Please tell me why you think this:

11. If you had to keep this sexual involvement secret, please tell me a little about how you felt about having to keep it secret;

12. If you now define the sexual involvement as abuse/exploitation/inappropriate, how long did it take you to arrive at this conclusion?

- Within a few days ☐
- Within a few weeks ☐
- 1-3 months ☐
- 4-6 months ☐
- 7-12 months ☐
- More than one year ☐ how many years? _____

Tell me something about this;

14. As a result of filling out the last questionnaire have you any new thoughts/ views/information that you'd like to share now? (Please write as much as you want – add sheets if required)

Appendix 4: Ethical Guidelines/Safety for Participants

Research: Mphil/PhD Margaret Kennedy

Clergy/Minister Sexual Abuse of women in the pastoral relationship.

The Safety of interviewees/participants in study

Thank you for thinking about taking part in this research study. In order for me to undertake this study I must conform to strict ethical guidelines laid down by my University and research guidelines. My supervisor ensures that I am operating within these guidelines.

To help you understand what measures I will be taking to safeguard the information that you give to me I have designed this question and answer format that may be helpful. Please do discuss with me any worries or concerns that you have.

Questions interviewees may have:

Why are you doing this study?

In the last 12 years I have been supporting survivors of child sexual abuse and clergy abuse survivors in Christian Communities. More recently, in the last 5 years I have had increasing numbers of women (mainly) who have written to say they've been sexually molested/approached/coerced when they went to priests or ministers (and some nuns) for help. I am very concerned about this professional boundary violation and I want to examine what is happening in the UK and Ireland. I'm will be focusing on the experience of women and endeavouring to take from these experiences some recommendations for Churches to prevent such occurrences happening in the future. I will also be suggesting a Pastoral Care plan based on woman's suggestions and recommendations. In this respect it will be survivors informing Church.

How will the research be undertaken?

I will be contacting women who have written to me over the last few years asking if they'd like to participate in one-to-one interviews of approximately one and a half hours. ***There may be two interviews.*** These interviews may take place in the chosen location of the interviewee. These interviews will be taped.

If you do not want to be interviewed in depth, you may like to give me sufficient information to compile a database. This would be a shorter discussion or a questionnaire, or you could write details of your experience. I will contact you about exactly how this will be organised.

What is a database?

As part of my study I want to look at certain features of women's experiences. A database is a way of recording these on a computer which means I can easily see for example, how many different denominations and settings there were. Databases are very good ways of ensuring confidentiality, since names, addresses, and geographical locations are never used.

For example one bit of information that would be useful to know is what proportion of respondents (survivors) had sought help for child sexual abuse from the priest or minister in question.

If you chose not to be interviewed face-to-face but want to give details of your experience you will be given a code and asked to use this in correspondence instead of your name. You will be asked to post the details in a safe way, perhaps recorded delivery, (you will be reimbursed) without identifying details of either yourself or your alleged abuser in the envelope (in case of loss). I will give you more guidance at the time of posting.

Interviews- Might I be upset by an interview?

Interviews of necessity will be in depth. However you are perfectly entitled not to answer any questions that you feel unable to answer and to leave out information that is too difficult to give. You will also have full permission to tell me to “back off” if you feel I’m being too insensitive or intrusive.

It is quite possible that taking time to sit with a person going through your experience may bring up painful and distressing issues for you. You might like to think about who will support you and to have someone to talk to afterwards. It is equally possible that there will be relief and catharsis for you in sharing with someone something that you may have had to keep secret for a long time. Interviews can be a very useful way of clarifying issues and understanding how things happened.

After the interview do you just ‘disappear?’

No. No participant will be ‘abandoned’ after the interview. There will be opportunities to ‘de-brief’ and to look at the transcription of your story at a later date. Indeed after the interview you may want to add more information as you reflect on what you said to me first time around. This is all possible. Contact details will be given to you.

What will happen to the tapes?

Every woman will be given a reference number so each tape will be marked with that reference number, not their name. Although I will be carrying this tape in public to take back to my office, the tape should have no identifying features in the unlikely event of loss or theft. Once back in my office the tape will be kept under lock and key and no other person will have access to the filing cabinet as I work in an office that is not shared. The office has a steel grill door and the entrance to the office block has a security gate with coded entrance.

The tapes will need to be transcribed to written form. Only I will transcribe them. If, for reasons of my hearing impairment, I need assistance with this transcription I will inform you of the steps I will be taking to obtain an assistant to do this. When my PhD is completed tapes will be wiped unless you wish to have them.

Will anyone else hear these tapes?

It may be that my research supervisors will listen to parts or whole tapes. An assistant transcriber may also hear tapes. In these cases neither will have your identifying features such as names or addresses etc.

What do you intend to do with my story?

Women’s stories have always been a powerful tool for change. As we learn of the harm and damage done by certain people’s behaviours we can attempt to change individual or systems responses. Not only this, women telling their stories have broken taboos and secrecy that make it harder for such abusive behaviours to continue. Your story will be a valuable contribution to this ongoing process of change. What I will do is analyse your experience to see if there are

things we could learn. This entails transcribing the tapes and closely looking at what you have shared. After transcription you will receive a copy.

The final part of the research entails writing up all the analysis for a thesis, which is presented to the University examination board. I may also present material in papers at conferences or in journals, and might publish a book.

How will my story be kept confidential?

Firstly your name will never be used. Neither will your geographical location be identified. It may be necessary to say something like “an Anglican woman.....” or “A Baptist woman.....” but in discussion with you any features of your story which you think might identify you can be changed.

What will you be doing with your research thesis?

At the end of my research, which is likely to take anything up to four years, I will be writing a thesis, which will be examined by my University. Theses lie with University libraries for the benefit of further students. Many people on completing their Mphil/PhD often write books based on their extensive studies.

Contract

If you are interested in proceeding with face to face interviews after reading this I will give you a contract which we will both sign at the start of any face to face interviews. This will state the confidentiality under which this research will progress and terms of agreement in our working together. With Many Thanks.

Detach this portion and post in the envelope supplied

If you are interested in this research and want to participate the following boxes should be ticked & form signed. Some may not want face-to-face interviews (that's OK) but I must have agreement to put information from the questionnaires onto my database. However NO identifying details will be included and your reference number will always be used. Many Thanks.

I am willing to be interviewed face-to-face ☐

I would be willing to give written details for a database ☐

I am sorry but I do not feel able to help you right now with either an interview or written material ☐

Name_____

Address_____

_____Postcode_____

Tel_____

Appendix 5: Contract for Participants

Research interviews & Database information from written contributors for Margaret Kennedy's Mphil/PhD studies.

I have read and understand the proposed research and plans for the safety of interviewees and participants in the above study.

I agree to be part of this study in the following way:

To be interviewed face-to-face ☐
(I understand two interviews might be necessary)

To contribute in written format to the research database ☐

In turn, I understand Margaret Kennedy will;

- 1. Ensure confidentiality of all information - no identifying details given when used in her thesis, academic papers, or a future publication.
- 2. Send a transcription of the interview(s) so that I may make further comment or amend.
- 3. Destroy or return to me the audiotapes of the interviews on completion of her studies

Signed_____ (interviewee/participant)

Signed_____ Researcher

Date:_____

Return to: Margaret Kennedy, BM-CSSA, London, WC1N 3XX (this is the full address)

Appendix 6: Interview Topic Guide for those Women Interviewed

Details of participant

Participants reference number_____

Ms/Miss/Mrs/Rev/other _____

Denomination during time of relationship _____

Denomination now_____

Practicing Christian : Yes _____ No _____

Married/Divorced/single/partner/parent _____

Ethnicity/Race_____

Age when relationship started_____

Age when Relationship ended_____

Length of Relationship_____

Details of Clergyperson

Reference number _____(same as interviewee)

Age (now)_____

Male/Female _____

Religious order priest _____ Name of Order_____

Secular Priest ☐ Minister ☐ Elder ☐ House Church Leader ☐ Brother ☐

Other _____

Context of Relationship

Parish Priest/Pastoral Situation ☐

Parish Priest (no pastoral situation) ☐

Parish Priest/worked with interviewee in parish ☐

College Chaplaincy priest ☐

College tutor ☐

Counsellor/therapist ☐

Hospital chaplaincy priest ☐

Supervisor/tutor/mentor in seminary or ordination college ☐

Not in any ministry ☐ other _____

Age of clergyman when relationship began _____

Age when relationship ended _____

Interview questions guide : beginning of interview

- Background; growing up
- Before relationship began

Growing up what role did religion/faith play in your life?

What messages did you receive about clergy?

Growing up what messages did you get from your Church/denomination about the roles of women?

What was your relationship with Church like?

What was your relationship towards priests/clergy like?

What was your relationship towards God/Jesus like?

As a young person how would you describe your family/education/ambitions and aspirations?

What was life like for you before this relationship?

Do you think you were vulnerable in any way?

At the start of the relationship

Tell me a little bit about how you met.

Did you specifically seek out this priest/minister for help/advice?

If no...

Did the priest/minister suggest you come to him for individual help/counselling/advice?

When you first met this clergyperson did you perceive him as a professional or friend?

How would you describe the initial contacts between you and the priest/minister?

When the relationship turned sexual

At what point did the relationship turn sexual?

What did you think was happening?

Did the relationship seem ok to you at this time?

Did you want it?

Why do you think you might have acquiesced?

Did the clergyman encourage you in any way?

What reasons did he give for this relationship becoming sexual?

What did you think of these reasons?

Was God/Jesus ever used to encourage the sexual relationship?

Did you think it was an equal relationship based on mutuality?

How do you understand consent?

How long did the clergyperson wait before the relationship turned sexual?

Practicalities

Where did you see the clergyman?

Were you alone in the building/place?

Would you like to tell me what happened sexually?

How did you experience the sexual intimacy?

Did your feelings change at any point?

If yes....Why?

Secrecy

Were you asked/threatened to keep it secret?

Why?

What did you think about this at the time?

Did you think there might be repercussions if people found out about this relationship?

If secret – how did this 'secret' nature of the relationship affect you/your life?

What do you think about this now?

Discomfort

Was there any point where you thought that this relationship should not be happening?

If yes ...at what point did this occur to you?

Why did you become uncomfortable?

Feelings during relationship

What were your 'main' feelings during the course of the relationship?

If you were uneasy/disliked what was happening how do you understand why you continued to be involved?

Did anyone else know at the time that you and the clergyman were involved?

If yes...who?

What was their response?

Threats

Were threats ever used?

Was God/Jesus/Faith ever used to threaten you/or convince you to stay in the relationship?

After the relationship

How did the relationship stop?

Do you know if any other woman has been involved with this clergyman in a similar way to you?

If yes...when did you discover this and how?

How did you feel when you discovered this?

How did you feel when the relationship stopped/ended?

Did the situation become public? (Church, community, family, media)

How did this affect you?

How were you and the clergyman presented?

Reporting

Did you report your experience to anyone as exploitative/abusive?

If yes...to whom?

At what point?

If delayed what prevented you doing it sooner?

What made the difference?

What happened after reporting?

Were you blamed?

How do you feel about what happened/did not happen for you after reporting?

How do you feel about what happened/did not happen to him after reporting?

Do you regret ever reporting?

If you did not report, why not?

Role of the Clergy/Church

Do you think your Church understands what happened to you?

Do you know of any policies/procedures/literature concerning this issue?

What do you think the Church should/could do ?

What should happen to clergy in this situation?

How would you describe the role of clergy?

Did the Church pressurize you to forgive?

Now

What has happened to you since?

How did you survive?

How do you understand what happened to you now?

Has it changed? If so, How?

Do you ever feel to blame for what happened?

Why?

How would you describe yourself and your life now?

How would you describe your relationship to clergy now?

How would you describe your relationship to Church now?

How would you describe your relationship towards God/Jesus now?

How do you feel about celibacy? (if Catholic)

How do you feel about the role of clergy?

What are your views on forgiveness?

Did you receive MACSAS leaflet? *(on clergy abuse of adult women)

If yes, how did reading it affect you?

Is there anything else you want to say?

Are there any questions you think I should have asked?

How has it being doing this interview?

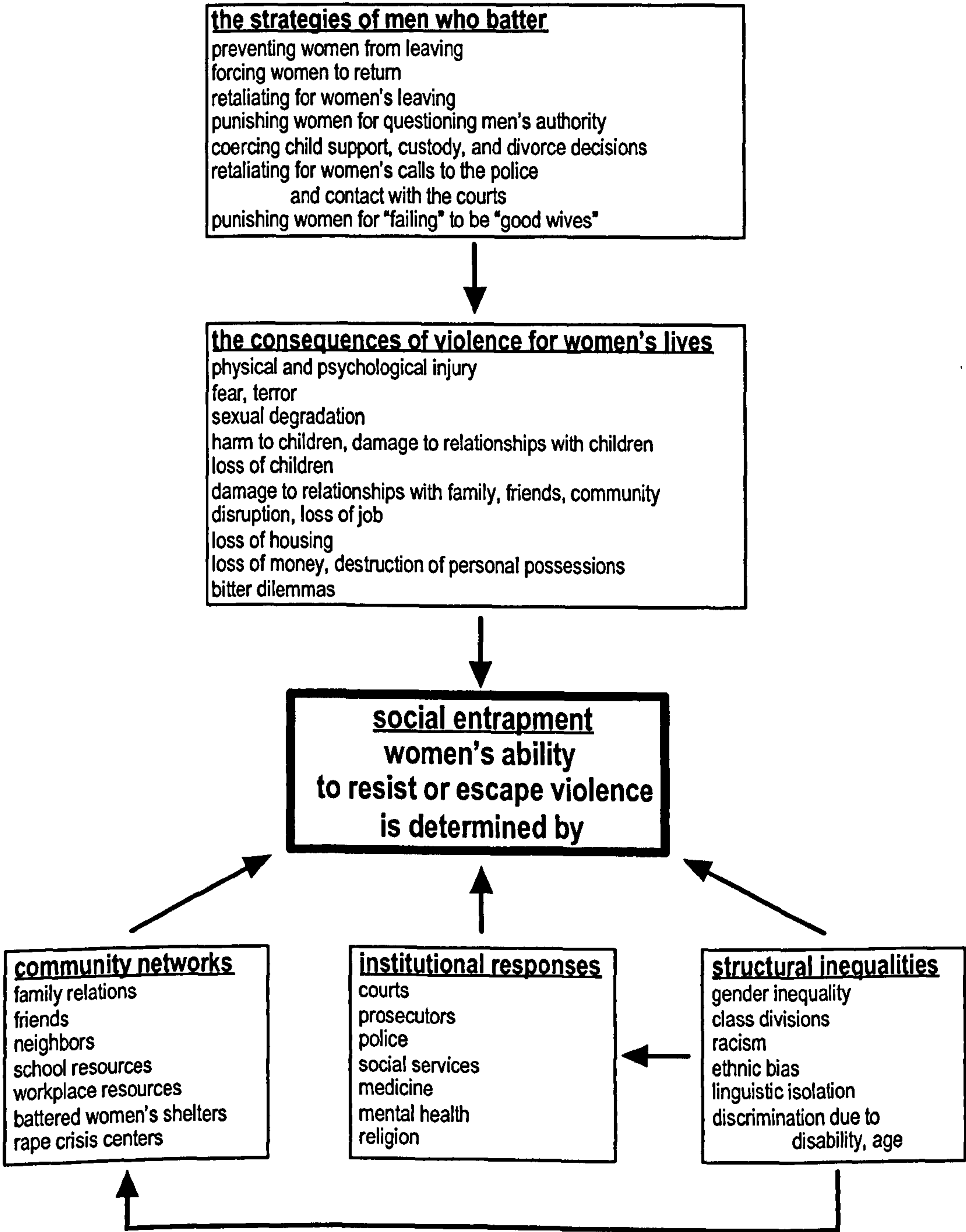
Turn Tape Off

Are there any identifying features on this tape and how would you like them changed?

Appendix 7: Power & Control Wheel (Duluth, Minnesota, 1979)



Appendix 8: James Ptacek: Battering as Social Entrapment



From James Ptacek, *Battered Women in the Courtroom: The Power of Judicial Responses* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999:18).

Appendix 9: Insolence of Office, Policies & Procedures ⁴⁰

This research covers several different denominations of Christian Churches. In this appendix a short overview of present policies and procedures are described.

Church leaders I interviewed *do* know that exploitative relationships between clergy and congregants do happen. In this research a Catholic Bishop, a senior Baptist official, and comment in a Methodist document (1997) all noted cases.

Codes of conduct

Five out of twelve denominations (Churches) had a code of conduct. These have limitations as they do not include disciplinary procedures. The presence of ethical codes or guidelines does *not* denote that Churches take reports any more seriously (see chapter 6). However if discipline is to be imposed then guidance concerning parameters of behaviour must be established

Churches Ethical Codes of Practice

Church	Ethical Codes of Practice
Methodist	Group looking at the issues
Anglican	Guide available for professional conduct of clergy
Roman Catholic (UK)	Draft Code Rejected by Bishops Conference in 2006. Cumberlege report 2007 recommends one.
Roman Catholic (Ireland) (religious Communities only).	Guidance established by CORI: 'Conference of religious Ireland'; for Religious Orders called 'Ministry with Integrity'. None for Diocesan priests.
Church in Wales (Anglican)	Book "Cure of Souls" has code of ethics concerning behaviour & expectations
Church of Scotland	Established code
Baptist	Not finalised at time of research
Independent Baptist	Congregation defines
Congregational	Voluntary only: looking at best way to provide such a code
URC	Resolution 6, which is a 'Declaration of a Safe Church'
Quaker	Book; 'Guidance, Advice and Queries' Chapter 10 looks at ethical practice
House Churches Pentecostal Black Majority Churches	Not known but speculate not.

Three ethical codes were available for this research.

⁴⁰ Hamlet.

The Anglican code (2003)

The guide for behaviour includes clergy needing to keep 'appropriate boundaries', (2.9:2) the need to use the power they have without abuse, bullying or harassment (3.2:3) and says "Improper questioning or physical contact can be emotionally or sexually abusive. (3.5:3) Whilst this code has some positive elements it never directly names the offence of clergy sexual misconduct. The additional paper by Bridger at the end of the code does give guidance on pastoral counselling placing it within 'a theology of professional responsibility' (p15).

Profession, in a clergy context, must therefore be seen as possessing a dual meaning: on the one hand to describe the sociological reality of a group of people who operate according to conventions and practices developed by the group for functional purposes; and on the other, as an indication that this group stands for – professes – a set of transcendent values and principles which derive from a theology of vocation. Both senses of the term 'profession' must be kept in mind (p15-16).

Bridger uses secular principles of counselling as a guide for clergy and also addresses the issue of power and how crucial it is to appreciate asymmetrical dynamics between clergy and parishioner. That is to say the clergyman/woman is more powerful than the person seeking help (p18).

Bridger tries to marry both 'profession' and 'vocation', arguing society today requires accountability and evidence of integrity and trustworthiness.

The Church in Wales, 'Cure of Souls' (2000)

This 'moral guide' begins with " The Church is a community of forgiven and forgiving sinners' thus deviation from moral/ethical principles constitutes sin which can be forgiven and implies a pastoral response rather than a disciplinary one for 'temptations' and breaching moral boundaries (p2). The Bishops prefer the words 'pastoral problems' rather than 'sexual exploitation'.

With lives thus grounded in the truth and love of Christ, they may confidentially hope and pray that they will become living channels of God's grace.

This reflects the belief that Christian living changes behaviour. 'Cure of Souls' acknowledges 'relationships of special dependence and vulnerability', it calls for more than usual careful observation of the *moral principles* deriving from a respect for persons. It mentions (2b) adults

with exceptional and extended vulnerability and dependency, grown-ups in a state of emotional confusion and distress' (p5). It also says clergy should act with 'temperance and self-restraint' (p6). Clergy are reminded *they* can be vulnerable with certain persons:

...he can himself become vulnerable. He can naturally be drawn to some persons rather than to others. He must therefore be aware of his own feelings and emotional needs, and not allow them to cloud or distort the pastoral relationship. Sensitivity must be combined with reserve, empathy, with detachment (p13).

And advises the clergyman, for *his own protection* he should limit time allocated and have a third person in the vicinity. This suggests notions of women as sexually predatory and posing a danger to clergy.

The document gives little information on sexual exploitation of adults but does say,

It is a serious abuse of privilege to use his [clergyman] professional and pastoral position to further personal relationship of an emotional or sexual nature. Such abuse damages the relationship between the parish priest and the parishioners, brings discredit upon the Church and is a breach of duty (p14).

However the comment "damages the relationship between the parish priest and the parishioners, brings discredit upon the church", leaves out the actual victim. Those harmed by this 'serious breach of duty' are not mentioned.

The Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI)

'Ministry with Integrity' is a guide for Catholic religious orders in Ireland (it is not a universal Catholic document). There is none for secular clergy. Based on Gula's work (1996)⁴¹ the code covers theological and professional competence, service of people's need for salvation, commitment to other's best interest, care for self, and use of power, accountability, **boundaries**, and confidentiality.

An eleven bullet point guidance covers clergy sex with a parishioner or person they are responsible for, but fails to address the harm done. It states baldly:

⁴¹ See appendix 12 for Gula's proposed template for a code of ethics relating to sexual conduct by clergy.

- ministers never initiate sexual behaviour and refuse it when another initiates it;
- ministers always satisfy their needs for affection, intimacy and friendship outside the pastoral relationship (p16/17).

In the appendix of the document there is a contradictory statement, the clergy person has more power and is therefore more responsible for his behaviour yet the victim is equal in 'fault'.

Although the breaking of boundaries can be a complex matter with fault on both sides, because of the inequality of power in a pastoral relationship, the greater burden of responsibility falls on the minister to keep the boundaries clear (p20, emphasis added by Kennedy).

The idea that the person in distress seeking help is in any way responsible for a clergyman breaching professional boundaries; 'fault on both sides' is offensive and worrying. As stated elsewhere most research in this area show clergy nearly always initiates the sexual contact.

The Catholic Church UK

The Catholic Church's ministry worldwide is governed by codes of Canon law. These include laws on clergy sexual behaviour. Nevertheless the daily moral and ethical guidance is largely absent.

In July 2007 The Catholic Church set up another review body to examine its Child Protection procedures (The Cumberlege Commission). Its report recommended a 'code of conduct' in the Catholic Church. No reference was made to the one already rejected by the Bishops Conference in 2006.

The report states (2.34:26/27) that such codes could

Breathe freedom and energy into its practitioners...an aid to help those who belong to a profession – or calling- to flourish. It is about ways in which they preserve their dignity whilst respecting the dignity of whom they work and serve'.

There is no mention of sexual safety for the parishioner/person seeking help, only a reference to 'respecting dignity', Cumberlege writes for the benefit of clergy 'flourishing' in their

profession. The report suggests the code would be enhanced 'if' there were a complaints procedure, but does not recommend one or recommend a disciplinary process.

Catholic priests worldwide are warned (canon, 277:2)

Clerics are to behave with due prudence in relation to persons whose company can be a danger to their obligation of preserving continence or can lead to scandal of the faithful”.

Clearly other people cause the problems and are considered 'dangerous' and whilst scandal of the faithful is mentioned this does not necessarily mean harm to the victim.

An interesting Canon 1324:3 suggests that penalties for actions can be diminished if:

[act was committed] in the heat of passion which, while serious, nevertheless did not precede or hinder all mental deliberations and consent of the will, provided that the passion itself had not been deliberately stimulated or nourished.

Canon 1395: seems the closest in terms of sanction pertinent to this research and it is quoted widely.

[apart from the case mentioned in canon 1394] A cleric living in concubinage, and a cleric who continues in some other external sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue which causes scandal, is to be punished with suspension. To this, other penalties can progressively added if after a warning he persists in the offence, until eventually he can be dismissed from the clerical state.

Codes of ethics/conduct are a step in the right direction but remain redundant in the face of the hierarchy refusing to discipline clergy for sexually abusing a woman who seeks help. One of the biggest difficulties is the 'naming' and perception of the offence.

Naming offences

If there is no definition of clergy sexual exploitation, no disciplinary action is possible when no apparent offence has been committed. (See naming/language, Chapter 2). It is to be wondered whether this is deliberate and purposeful.

How Churches officially name sexual misconduct/abuse allegation

Church	Official description of offence
Methodist	Conduct incompatible with ministry/ sexual harassment
Anglican	Conduct unbecoming (if recognised) but often seen as "affair"/"adultery" and clergyperson would be tried on this.
Catholic (UK & Ireland)	Affair/sin/sick (in need of treatment)
Church in Wales (Anglican)	Bullying/sexual harassment
Church of Scotland	Conduct which is declared censurable by the Word of God or established custom of the Church or a breach of lawful order of any court of the church
Baptist	Unbecoming conduct
Independent Baptist	Congregation defines
Congregational	No processes
URC	Conduct unbecoming
Quaker	Sexual Harassment
House Churches/Pentecostal/ Black Majority Churches	Likely to be seen as affair, adultery, or spiritualised as 'spirit of lust' (perpetrator) "spirit of enticement" (victim)

All these descriptions suggest wriggle room for denial of sexual exploitation. One would suppose that *"improper physical contact"* was always sexually abusive, when the clergy is in their role as pastor and in the context of pastoral counselling/advice or spiritual direction.

Effective policies and procedures

It is important to recognise that Churches do not always follow their procedures, and having official policies does not guarantee Justice.

The Anglican Church

The previous consistory court system of the Anglican Church, ceased in January 2006. In the new system the alleged victim is not just a witness; she will now have a legal representative appointed by the Church. This is not sufficiently 'independent' representation and indeed it could cause conflict of interest. In the new Tribunals the press will be excluded from the final hearings. The balance of proof was previously "beyond reasonable doubt" whereas in the new Clergy Discipline measure it is "on the balance of probability", though I was advised by the Church Lawyer *who would represent women* that this might shift to "beyond reasonable doubt" in serious cases. I conclude therefore that this will be the case in sexual misconduct cases. There are several worrying features of the new processes:

- The closed tribunal with no media present ensures that the Anglican Church will not be publicly scrutinised. The fact survivors are concerned about media presence could be circumvented by laws which prevent victims being named in Church proceedings as is the case in criminal trials. (This is the woman's fear and has not been addressed)
- The issue of victims being represented by legal personnel *employed by the Church* does not secure a truly independent representation for victims.
- There is lack of clarity concerning whether a clergy sexual exploitation/assault case would be conducted in tribunal on 'the balance of probability' or 'beyond reasonable doubt'.
- There is a 'statute of limitation' of one year.

In 2003, an Anglican priest's license was revoked by his Bishop following multiple sexual *harassment*⁴² allegations. This was an important case. There were seven female victims and one man. One victim was part of this research. The clergyman was also charged with intimidating behaviour, mental abuse and financial irregularities. Details of the archbishops 'summing up' of the procedures can be found in appendix 17. Key points include the credibility attached to the women's behaviour by the Archbishop who also suggested there needed to be formal complaints of sexual harassment before action can be taken.

This means a bishop may know a certain clergyman has allegedly been a multiple 'harasser' (sic) of women but won't address the issue if women don't formally complain. The first Bishop apparently failed to secure written complaints because he was dealing with the issues *pastorally* (favoured by the Catholic Bishop, case below). This was a deliberate strategy perhaps. This illustrates the problems for women. Bishops who prefer a 'pastoral' approach (which the archbishop felt unable to condemn) circumvent policies and procedures and leave women without course for action and other women at risk.

The Anglican adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury was not aware of any statistics kept on clergy who sexually abuse/exploit but explained 'The Black Book', a record of clergy at

⁴² Harassment used here to cover a range of sexually abusive acts.

Lambeth Palace that Bishops can check when a new vicar is seeking a license. Clergy can still be working but registered in the 'Black Book' under three main categories; unable to exercise orders, permission to officiate; which means he/she cannot be licensed in a parish warning Bishops to be aware before they license.

The Catholic Church

The Bishop interviewed would *"prefer to deal with ...[priest sexual exploitation] pastorally"*. This is an administrative route and is only helpful with a compliant cleric but the Bishop has no power to remove a priest from ministry. The Bishop was convinced by the 'sick'/addicted' model of clergy sex offending and that 'treatment' not discipline or punishment was required. Such a 'pastoral' response is a 'silent process', with no public accountability or scrutiny. This was a common route for many denominational leaders. It was seen as more 'caring', more 'loving' of the clergyman regardless of the impact on women.

There is no Canon Law in which clergy sex offenders of *adult* women could be disciplined. Bishops could use Canon 1395 (above) or 1389 (see appendix 12, for Canons) in which clergy "abuse their office" but this really only relates to solicitation in the confessional. He could use Canon 1399, which is an emergency measure where punitive action could be taken. Largely the only Canons that might be used are those that relate to a breach of celibacy, abuse of office or the General Norm (Canon 1399).

Canon Law is not generally used to investigate sexual misconduct. If Canon Law is used the Bishop would set up an Ecclesiastical Tribunal of Judges (Canon Lawyers). This is not a court system. These Judges would receive submissions and question both accused and accuser and weigh the merits. The accuser would not meet her alleged abuser but with canonical support could question the statements made him.

The abuse of women rarely leads to a canonical process. The nun in chapter six, who reported being sexually assaulted by her religious order spiritual director, went through an 'ad hoc' tribunal, and the preparation before hand demonstrates the consistent features of Church responses to women by preserving the reputation of the priest and Church over belief of women and open and transparent processes.

Religious Order priests are answerable only to their Abbot or Prior, though Bishops would grant “faculties” in the Diocese if the Order priest wished to work in his Diocese. If Bishops/abbots fail to act there is no other place women can go. Even when priests have their “faculties” withdrawn they can often flout this directive. One Catholic (Religious order) priest had *‘No permission to engage in any ministry or counselling within this Archdiocese’* (Letter from Archbishop to victim) yet he had done so.

The Church declared he was not a priest with “faculties”, the Religious Order said he has “lived independently of and outside our Order” (suspicious in the first place, though he was still a member) and the University where he worked having consulted its lawyers declared, “the University has no responsibility for criminal acting’s of its employees” (admitting it was a criminal act). Yet no one took responsibility for his actions.

The Catholic Church in the UK does have a policy group establishing a procedure relating to ‘vulnerable’ adults, as defined by *‘No Secrets’*,⁴³ though after six years no policy is yet in place. Women who are vulnerable but *do not* fit these criteria will not be supported by these procedures.

Church in Wales

The Church in Wales follows a ‘bullying and harassment procedure’ for clergy sexual misconduct, though in the official policy the word ‘sexual’ is never once used. The Church official I spoke to admitted the Bishops had struggles with the concepts of crime versus pastoral care. The policy is not clear on guidance about going to the police.

There is a ‘low-key’ system where an independent person might come in to mediate to resolve a situation informally, and a more formal process of tribunal or Provincial Court system. Bullying and Harassment is considered gross misconduct so the clergyperson would be suspended pending a hearing. The burden of proof would be “beyond reasonable doubt” he said, though in fact the policies say it should be “on the balance of probability”.

⁴³ Mentally ill, Learning disabled, Elderly.

The response to a woman's report of serious sexual assault in chapter 6 indicates some serious difficulties with the Church in Wales, where beliefs and allegiance about Christian brotherhood and a failure to take women's complaints of assault seriously overrode Policies.

The Baptist Union

The Baptist Union of England & Wales comprises Baptist Churches that have agreed to be part of the Union. In any one-year they remove about 8 or 9 ministers where there is 'unbecoming conduct'. Policies and procedures for 'conduct unbecoming' and ethical codes of practice are at draft stage. The Union continues its dialogue with the autonomous Independent Baptist Churches,⁴⁴ and advice on 'best practice' in the case of allegations of Minister sexual misconduct. I was advised they try to have a "gentleman's agreement" (hurriedly changed to "womanly agreement") to make the Church follow professional 'best practice'.

The Baptist Union recognises that there are vulnerable adults and believe in 'degrees of vulnerability'. A vulnerable adult is one where because of age, infirmity, or physical or mental incapacity the person is vulnerable. If a vulnerable adult is sexually exploited the clergy perpetrator will never be re-instated to the Baptist registry of Ministers.

They believe a person can be taken advantage of in major moments of vulnerability such as bereavement, but equally believe some women do not always lack the ability to make the choice to be in the 'improper relationship'. In these cases the situation would be seen as an abuse of pastoral power rather than an abuse of a vulnerable adult.

The case is usually perceived the grave sin of adultery, and it is this sin that the minister is charged with:

Because part of our concern is that we hold to the ideal of Christian marriage as monogamous, lifelong relationship, and to allow back into ministry a relationship that flies in the face of that, we find that extremely difficult: while we would recognise that it might just be possible, we are reluctant to do that...

The focus is on 'immorality' and 'adultery' rather than misconduct *against the alleged victim* or sexual predation on women. The focus is on the perpetrator entirely and *his* reconciliation with the norms of Christianity. The Church official had a continuum of 'seriousness'.

⁴⁴ Independent Baptist Churches : those not within the Baptist Union.

For a 'one-off' occasion we would be much more inclined to consider re-instatement...where it has been a long-term relationship that has arisen out of the pastoral relationship, we would take a more serious line...Where the minister's behaviours have not been about relationships but about sex toys, just interfering with women for the sheer gratification, pleasure, with no sense of who she is, we would take a more serious approach...probably in every case like that, that person would never be allowed back in ministry.

Such a continuum does not focus on the harm to the women but rather on assumptions that a 'one-off' is not harmful, that 'long-term' suggests a relationship rather than 'entrapment', and that both these scenarios do not constitute the third case 'women used as toys'.

Even if a Baptist Minister was removed from the register of accredited Baptist Union ministers, the Congregation can continue to employ him regardless of his removal from the register (even after sexual misconduct), the Baptist Union cannot prevent this.

Any allegation of violent or criminal nature would be referred automatically to the police.

The new Baptist Church official, taking the lead on abuse (2nd person interviewed) assures me the process is held confidentially so as not to alert the congregation for fear of 'false allegations'. He was concerned the reputation of the clergyperson should be preserved and informing the congregation, before proof would tarnish that reputation. He pressed upon me that there were cases in which women had targeted vulnerable ministers and the real problem of 'false allegations'. This person was supportive of the teachers unions call for a criminal statute for 'false allegations'.

There is no official provision to formally support the alleged victim, however counselling if required is offered for 12 sessions.

Congregational Churches

Congregational Churches may be part of the Congregational Federation but each Church is independent. The Congregational Federation can guide Churches how they should respond to allegations of sexual misconduct against adults but they cannot mandate a certain action. If action was proposed the Congregational Pastoral Care Board can advise but not impose. However if the pastor resigned before any disciplinary hearing they would automatically cease

to be a minister. Each Congregation would have a 'Church Meeting' (CM) in which the whole congregation would decide whether a formal process would ensue on an allegation being made. There are no formal structures to support a woman who has alleged sexual misconduct. I was advised the Congregational Federation was "very weak in this whole area". There are no formal structures for any types of 'hearing' so burden of proof not proscribed. The balance of proof is likely to be 'on the balance of probability' ...if any formal hearing is convened. There was scepticism by the Church leader I spoke to that cases would be taken anywhere.

The situation in the Congregationalists would suggest women are not protected and Ministers not challenged.

The Quakers – Society of Friends

The Quakers use the framework for complaints of Harassment, which is applied to anybody within the Meeting, though for anything that might be clearly criminal they would refer to police. They have no clergy or ministers though they have individuals with the role of 'Elder' or 'Overseer'. They believe these roles are not roles of power, since Quakers believe in equality. Although there are no specific policies and procedures for sexual misconduct by Quakers with a position of office, there is a book: 'Guidance, Advice and Queries' which includes various relevant chapters.

Quakers, because of their ethos of equality and peace prefer to use a route of 'reconciliation'. A 'Clearness or discernment' group is convened to consider an allegation of "improper" behaviour, usually led by the clerk of overseers. 'Clearness' denotes a process in which "God's light shows the way forward". They can only advise a Local Meeting what courses of action to take not mandate.

They may meet for "conciliation and forgiveness", though the senior Quaker I spoke to, said, "This is not appropriate for the first step". She admitted that this is the favoured way of dealing with harassment cases and since sexual misconduct is considered harassment this would apply to women making such allegations. She also said "powers of persuasion would be used to encourage the person to resign". She tries to advise Meetings about a proper process but as with the Congregationalists she cannot direct or instruct local Meetings what to do. Each Meeting decides for itself the final outcome for the person charged with 'harassment'. The Elder or Overseer or person at Meeting could resign from Membership before any formal process but

it would be difficult to transfer to another meeting as a 'transfer certificate' would be required from the Meeting House they had left.

Since there is no 'trial' or 'tribunal' as such, there is no provision for screens/video-link should a woman wish to give 'evidence', neither is there consideration whether action is taken on the 'balance of probability' or 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church has for some years been working to improve the situation with regards the harassment, which includes sexual exploitation of adults in their congregations.

A study 'Sexual abuse and Harassment', 1997 highlighted certain concerns (Chapter 2) where issues were dealt with 'pastorally' rather than through an official process or where ministers were allowed to resign rather than face any due process.

Disciplinary processes were established in 2004 'The Constitutional Practice and discipline of the Methodist Church'

The Methodists are doing a great deal of work in this area, however to subsume sexual exploitation under 'harassment' was not an appropriate decision. Nevertheless there is a policy and procedure to deal with allegations. On receiving an allegation there would be a tribunal convened consisting of three people, two women, one man with the chair being female in these cases. A minister is not allowed to resign before a hearing is completed. The Chair of the District would consider suspending a minister if the allegation is serious and if it has criminal implications. The allegation first goes to a complaints officer who decides if the case has merit to go forward. If he/she decides not to forward case the alleged victim could approach another districts complaints officer. Support is offered to the woman. They have not considered the issue of screens or video-link but would be seriously considered if requested. The burden of proof is 'balance of probability'.

United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church (URC) has been forced to consider its procedures concerning the sexual abuse/assault or exploitation of women by their Ministers, largely from the failure to do

justice to a woman who alleged rape by a senior Minister who was her supervisor in Ministry training. Initially the URC did not want to take action because they would have to name publicly the accused, something they were reluctant to do. This held up the case which is still ongoing 20 years later.

The URC policies are contained in a document called 'The Manual' and in a section called 'Section O'. Whilst the procedures appear valid, in reality there is much reluctance to be open and transparent about cases. The URC Prefer a 'pastoral' route as other Churches do.

The Church of Scotland

This Church has a consistory court mechanism. It is a convoluted process with the alleged victim needing to speak to several distinct 'layers' of the procedures before trial. The alleged victim presents her case to an Elder, who speaks to the session clerk, who speaks to the presbytery clerk. The Presbytery convene (two ministers and a woman elder) to begin the investigation, the alleged victim states her case. The committee of Presbytery is the investigating committee and they present findings to the head office who places the case at The Commission (which is the Hearing).

Much of the difficulties in cases above arise from ineffectual policies, mis-naming the offence, or the reluctance to use policies already in place. Examining the policies and procedures, gaps and shortcomings were evident.

Outcomes for clergy: Suspension/resignation

Whilst few accused clergy are taken through formal disciplinary procedures, if they are, suspension is not always insisted upon (appendix 18). Suspension was seen as draconian and since women were adult it was believed there was not so great a risk. This suggests an unwillingness to acknowledge that the clergyperson had harmed a woman or might be harming other women.

In some Churches clergy were allowed to resign before the formal process (appendix 19). In the Methodist research of 1997 the Number of cases where resignation prevented referral to the courts of discipline was 44, though now this is not allowed until hearing is complete. Church officials tell me they have covered this likelihood but the anecdotal evidence of practice contradicts this. This effectively means clergy can leave the Church as an 'innocent' man. .

It has to be noted that procedures are not always adhered to. Those I interviewed tended to be individuals who were aware of the issues and not representative of all Church leaders by any means.

Protection for victims

I endeavoured to discover whether Churches understood the need for safety for witnesses whilst giving evidence. I asked church officials whether there was provision for screens or video-link for witnesses in tribunals or Church courts. Most expressed complete surprise at the question and answered by saying something that would appear caring and reasonable. In essence this probably was the first time such a suggestion was put to them. Media privacy/protection is only offered in Anglican proceedings. (See table 6.9, chapter 6, p190, of safeguards' offered). When compared to criminal courts, Church court cases differ little in respect to attitudes and prejudices about female witnesses, however there are some procedural differences. The 'jury', tribunal panel, or judging panel are not 'independent' or 'impartial'. They are people chosen from the Church community and invariably all male or majority male, though some 'outside' lay people may be part of the judging panel. Intimidation was problematic for all witnesses. In the criminal court case the victim was allowed screens but in the Church court cases this was refused, so that the Church case victims felt vulnerable and exposed.

There are no written policies on the care and support of *adults* molested by clergy as *adults* in any Church, (appendix 10) though in the Catholic Church there will be for vulnerable adults. Even though some churches supply supporters they have no remit to intervene in episodes of scapegoating, media intrusion or other nasty behaviour from others towards victims.

Other safety issues concerned harassment from journalists and the naming of victims. In most processes there are no mechanisms to prevent victims being identified except within the Anglican Clergy discipline measure. There is nothing to stop alleged abusers and their supporters naming the victim to the media, except in the Anglican system where it constitutes contempt of court. One Church leader professed naming the victim was important if there was a not guilty verdict. His position was 'not guilty' meant nothing had happened, and that it meant a 'false allegation' and was adverse to suggestions that the disciplinary process is weighed against a finding of guilt.

The experience of women in Church proceedings was overall negative. There was often hostility towards the complainant woman by Church officials.

Conclusion

Though policies and procedures should be designed to offer a just inquiry, in practice they were male biased, patriarchal and with little regard for victims needs. In some Churches the offence was against Ministry and the Church not against the woman per se. This led to a distorted understanding of clergy sexual abuse and exploitation, with no Church naming or perceiving the offence correctly. The Churches located the causes of sexual misconduct outside of the offender (i.e. 'externalising causal attributions' Coates, 1997), such as wives not meeting clergy sexual needs, clergy were sick, victims seduced clergy, and these were seen as reducing the culpability of the offender leading to lesser negative consequences for him. 'Conduct unbecoming' or 'affair/adultery' were the main descriptions, (see chapter 2 on language use) offering a discourse of moral failure, sin or sickness rather than violence, assault or misuse of power. The prevailing descriptions denied male clergy power or any ethical need for professional standards of practice.

No Christian Church has addressed the wider implications of clergy sexual violence against women. They simply do not regard the discourse of 'oppression' or 'power' as having validity and do not engage any processes to combat it. Certainly issues of 'equality' and recognition of human rights such as prevention of 'degrading and humiliating treatment' or the infringement of 'bodily integrity' was far from Church leaders' mind. The significance of policies and procedures when relationships between clergy and congregants are framed as "affair" does not address the *extent* of the impact and consequences not only for the victim but also on her whole family and social network. Nor is it recognised many clergy sexual exploiters are multiple offenders so many women are victims.

Churches also appear to fail to address the evidence on 'crossover' sexual offences; this is an emerging analysis of the 'intersectionality' of violence. Heil P, Alhmeyer S, and Simons, D (2003) found in one incarcerated group of sex offenders that the majority admitted sexually assaulting both children *and* adults. A previous study by Weinrott, M.R., and Saylor, M (1991), found 12% of child abusers also admitted to attempting forced sex on an adult female. This raises questions about whether Clergy sex offenders assaulting or sexually exploiting women,

may also target children. In this study two clergy (Pentecostal and Catholic) were jailed for child abuse, their adult abuse cases were 'left on file'. A further (Anglican) clergy was jailed for child abuse after targeting a woman for access to her children. Two Catholic priests' groomed teenagers only to engage them in sex post their 18th birthday.

Another area raising profound connections to violence against women is the developing Human Rights legislation. Freedom from violence and abuse is not just a basic human right but is also explicitly recognised in International Law (Horvath & Kelly, 2007:11). Horvath and Kelly (2007:2) argue that 'violence is both a cause and consequence of inequality'.

An important article in human rights that should be incorporated into the analysis and responses of sexual exploitation by clergy is 'the prohibition of degrading and humiliating treatment' (Article 3, Human Rights Act, 1998) also the right to 'bodily integrity' both of which are infringed by sexual exploitation.

This necessarily moves us into 'equality' issues. The definition of equality should include reference to personal safety, bodily integrity and human dignity, (Horvath & Kelly, 2007). In clergy sexual abuse the major inequality remains the sense of entitlement, superiority and grievance among the clergy, which is supported by (perhaps deliberately) poor and ineffectual policies and procedures to protect women.

There was little attempt to *describe* behaviour that would be sanctioned with a reluctance to have ethical codes or codes of conduct.

There was a persistent vagueness about how a disciplinary process would work and some Churches had no policies. Even Canon Law (Catholic Church) was deficient in these situations, and those who did have policies so infrequently used them they were unaware of what to do.

The prevarication, stonewalling and unwillingness to proceed with any formal process detected within this research sample evidenced support for the clergyperson. This often stemmed from an unwillingness to appreciate the 'profession' of ministry in favour of 'vocation', where God and The Holy Spirit alone would inform conscience and make a clergyperson live ethical lives. This was naive and simplistic but certainly a common belief. Furthermore the role of the

clergyman is ill defined in law. For example when he sits with a woman to discuss her marriage difficulties he can often declare he is not counselling merely listening, he is neither qualified nor registered but nonetheless still 'counselling' and the woman perceives it as such. Spiritual Direction is not considered counselling though in fact it is. Because of these confusions clergy were not included in the criminal law covering professionals who abuse/breach trust though it does add "...and others" .

There still remains a reluctance to engage in disciplinary processes and prevarication, women blame and denial is common. 'Neutralisation' strategies to protect individuals continue, with tacit approval to continue deviant behaviour Shupe (1998:18).

There was a preference for "dealing with allegations pastorally" in all denominations, as this was regarded as caring and more Christian. It seemed a "Better route" to avoid complexity and expense. The decision to proceed rested with one man or two, but largely the Bishop/Church leader and his advisor. In all cases the panel to judge are usually male, usually drawn from Church personnel and usually with legal experience. 'Juries' are drawn from Church personnel. A Church of England 'expert' says this is because men generally are ecclesiastical lawyers, not women.

Which meant procedures dependent on an objective; non-biased person is an oxymoron in the Churches, especially in the light of 'brotherhood' (Jamieson), 'cultism' (Parsons) and Clericalism (Sipe). There was often little recourse for appeal if they refused to take a disciplinary process (appendix 10).

Policies are deficient, written to defend Churches against scandal or to safeguard theological or moral conduct. "Scandal" is nearly always applied to Churches reputation *not to the abuse of women*.

Policies are not written to change the cultural and clerical dynamic of 'entitlement' that needs radical re-visioning and re-structuring. The power and violence of the clergyman is not addressed. The harm the abuser has inflicted can be reduced to one woman who can easily be dismissed.

In all respects the cultural beliefs, social structures, flawed policies and procedures, and individuals around the victim militate against any justice or remedy for the sexual exploitation the victim has experienced. When other women see how she is treated they do not come forward.

This offers a chasm of opportunity for clergy sex offenders within our Churches.

Appendix 10: Appeal Options for Women

Table: Appeal Processes if Church leaders/panel refuses hearing/tribunal/court case

Church	Options if case not brought forward
Methodist Church	Can apply to the connexional complaints officer for a nomination of a complaints officer from a neighbouring district Or/ Leave Church Or/ Go to the police
Anglican	Can appeal to president of the Tribunal Or/ Leave Church Or/ Go to the police
Catholic Church in UK & Ireland	Nothing can be done Could write to Papal Nuncio in Britain or directly to Rome (unlikely to succeed) Or/ Leave Church Or/ Go to police
Church in Wales (Anglican)	Nothing can be done, envisioned all cases would be brought to tribunal so believe appeal process not required (!) Or/ Leave Church Or/ go to police
Church of Scotland	Nothing can be done Or/Leave Church Or/ Go to police
Baptist	Can appeal to Baptist Union head office & they would investigate (but cannot mandate) Or/leave Church Or/go to police
Independent Baptists	None
Congregational Church	Could take case to the General secretary of the Pastoral Care Board (but they can only advise Church concerned, not mandate) Or/leave Church Or/ Go to police
URC	The Council of the Church who lodged complaint can appeal 'Notice of appeal'
Quaker	Nothing can be done Or/Leave Quakers Or/Go to Police
House Church/Independent Churches Black Majority/ Pentecostal Churches	Nothing can be done, no procedures, though rely on Bible for responses, usually forgiveness

Appendix 11: Support Offered to Women During Reporting Processes

Church	Support offered
Methodist	Support Group available
Anglican	Bishop arranges support
Catholic (UK only)	Pastoral care policies for adults abused as children not for adults abused as adults. Will be policies for 'vulnerable adults' remit.
Catholic (Ireland)	Ireland has no pastoral care policies for adults or vulnerable adult policies.
Church in Wales (Anglican)	Bishop appoints pastoral care worker
Church of Scotland	Support offered
Baptist	No one specifically nominated to support
Congregational	No formal structures
URC	Not Known
Quaker	Allegedly not applicable as no leadership/Doesn't happen so no structures!
House Church/Pentecostal/Black Minority Churches	No structures

Appendix 12: The Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church

(Canon 1324:3; regarding sexual acts)

[...act was committed] in the heat of passion which, while serious, nevertheless did not precede or hinder all mental deliberations and consent of will, provided that the passion itself had not been deliberately stimulated or nourished.

(Canon 1395; seems the closest in terms of sanction pertinent to this research and is quoted widely)

[apart from the case mentioned in Canon 1394] a cleric living in concubinage, and a cleric who continues in some other external sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue which causes scandal, is to be punished with suspension To this, other penalties can be progressively added if after a warning he persists in the offence, until eventually he can be dismissed from the clerical state.

(Canon 277)

Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and are therefore bound to celibacy. Celibacy is a special gift from God by which sacred ministers can more easily remain close to Christ with an undivided heart and can dedicate themselves more freely to the service of God and their neighbour.

(Canon 277:2)

Clerics are to behave with due prudence in relation to persons whose company can be a danger to their obligation of preserving continence or can lead to scandal of the faithful.

(Canon 277:3)

The Diocesan Bishop has authority to establish more detailed rules concerning this matter and to pass judgement on the observance of the obligation of particular cases.

(Canon 1389)

A person who abuses ecclesiastical power or an office, is to be punished according to the gravity of the act or the omission not excluding by deprivation of the office, unless a penalty for that abuse is already established by law or precept.

Appendix 13: Richard Gula's (1996) Sexual Ethics in Ministry (Catholic)

Gula R, (1996), *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, Paulist Press, appendix:149

- We are to witness in all relationships the chastity appropriate to our state in life, whether celibate, married, or single.
- We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviours with those for whom we have a professional responsibility. Prohibited behaviours include, but are not limited to, all forms of overt or covert seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that sexually abuses, exploits or harasses another person.
- We are to provide a safe place for people to be vulnerable without fearing that sexual boundaries will be violated.
- We strive to be aware of our own and another's vulnerability in regard to sexuality, especially when working alone with another.
- We bear the greater burden of responsibility for maintaining sexual boundaries in pastoral relationships, for we hold greater power.
- We must not initiate sexual behaviour, and must refuse it even when the other invites it or initiates it.
- We must give preference to the perspective and judgement of those who are vulnerable and dependent on us in order to determine whether touching would be an appropriate expression of pastoral care.
- We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, since we cannot control how age, gender, race, ethnic background, emotional condition, prior experience, and present life situation all affect how our touching may be perceived and interpreted.
- We should become familiar with the dynamics of transference and countertransference, which can make us vulnerable to violating sexual boundaries.
- We strive for greater self-awareness in order to recognise the sexual dynamics at work for us in pastoral relationships and to heed the warning signs in our lives, which indicate we are approaching boundary violations.
- We should satisfy our needs for affection, intimacy, attraction, and affirmation outside our pastoral relationship.
- We should seek supervision or other professional help to remain focused on our professional responsibilities and to hold firm to the sexual boundaries of the pastoral relationship.

- We must report clear violations of sexual conduct to the appropriate ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and then do what we can to see that justice is done for the victim, the offender, and the community from which the victim and minister come.

Appendix 14: Survey of Clergy Regarding ‘Profession’ v ‘Non-Profession’ of Clergy (Kennedy 2000 – unpublished)

I conducted a small survey in the UK before my PhD research began with clergy people whom I knew: 21 clergy; 11 female and 10 male about how they saw their role. Using three simple questions:

- 1. Do you think priests or ordained ministers are professionals?
- 2. Do you think to be a priest or Minister is to belong to a profession? (Similar to doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists, etc.)
- 3. Do you think Priesthood or ordained Ministry should be regarded as a profession?

	Question 1: Are they professionals?			Question 2: Is to be a priest or minister to belong to a profession?			Question 3: Should Priesthood or ordained Ministry be regarded as a profession?		
	Yes	No	Not Answered	Yes	No	Not Answered	Yes	No	Not Answered
F	9	2			8	3	8	2	(Unsure = 1)
M		4		3	2	5	3	2	4 (Unsure = 1)

Female clergy appear surer about the professional status of their role with more male clergy more ambivalent. Male respondents had difficulty answering, with three expressing concern about the methodology. Two clergypersons were grappling with how to unite the meaning of “vocation”/”Ministry” and “Profession”.

We feel the survey is not well founded – and needs clarity about “vocation” before you can talk about profession. (Anglican Male Cleric)

This is a very difficult question and concerns not only the meaning of “professional”, but also the meaning of “ministry” and “priesthood”. (Anglican Female Cleric)

Several felt there was no conflict between ministry and profession

I see ordained ministry as both professional and vocation and do not see why there should be any conflict between these concepts. (Anglican Female Cleric)

“Profession” for me means accountability and therefore boundaries. (Catholic Priest)

Another Catholic Priest implies priesthood is more than a “profession”.

I would want to say it’s not ‘just’ a profession, but is at least a profession. At the very least there needs to be professional training, codes of conduct, monitoring. It may be hard to say what a professional priest is, but it is quite clear where professional exercise of ministry occurs. Priests must learn that there is professional (unprofessional) conduct. But “profession” cannot be a Limiting context: the scope of ministry is not necessarily circumscribed. There needs to be a quality describable as ‘adaptive professionalism’.

Appendix 15: Definition of 'Vulnerable' Contained in 'No Secrets'

*A person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against "significant harm" or "exploitation".
(op cit 2.2)*

No Secrets, Department of Health & Home Office, 2000.

Appendix 16: Definition of 'Vulnerable' in The Safeguarding vulnerable Groups Act (UK, 2006)

A person is a vulnerable adult if he has attained the age of 18 and:

1. He is in residential accommodation
2. He is in sheltered housing
3. He receives domiciliary care
4. He receives any form of health care
5. He is detained in lawful custody
6. He is by virtue of a court order under supervision by a person exercising functions for the purpose of Part 1 of the Criminal Justice & Court Act 2006 (c.43)
7. He receives a welfare service of a prescribed description
8. He receives any service or participates in any activity provided specifically for persons who fall within subsection (9)
9. Payments are made to him (or to another on his behalf) in pursuance of arrangements under section 57 of The Health & Social Care Act (c.15), or
10. He requires assistance in his own affairs.

The reference to 'Welfare Service' must be construed in accordance with section 16(5)

A person falls within this subsection if:

1. He has particular needs because of his age
2. He has any form of disability
3. He has a physical or mental problem as is prescribed:

Taken from; The Cumberlege Commission Report , 2007

Appendix 17: Appeal Judgement of Archbishop of York Following Conviction of Anglican Clergyman (2003)

The appeal judgement and decision shows awareness by the Archbishop of York that was quite revealing. The Archbishop upheld the revocation of the License and said:

- *Professional priestly and pastoral sense ought to have told him [accused] that he should ensure a proper “distancing between them” [priest and women].* (Emphasis added by Kennedy)
- *Again even if he himself was not aware of any possible sexual connotations, then he ought to have been.* (Emphasis added by Kennedy)

The onus was on the vicar to both know and observe ethics and professional codes of practice. The Archbishop recognised the truth of the women's testimony and wrote of deep respect for the witnesses. He justifies why he found the women 'credible witnesses' by focusing on *their* behaviour.

- *Women were prepared to write formal complaint and give evidence at public trial*
- *Women were reluctant to come forward, given the public nature of proceedings, this was ‘understandable’; “their reluctance not to be interpreted in any other way”*
- *None of the women had been ‘utterly condemnatory’ about the appellant*
- *“it is significant that in one way or another each of the ladies terminated the meeting as soon as possible”*
- *Clear testimony both oral and written (p7)*
- *Found complainants to be people of integrity and balance (p8)*

One can assume women must *behave* in certain ways to prove credibility. They must be *‘reluctant to complain’*, therefore not to be too hasty and not really want to complain, i.e. nice caring women. Their bravery; *‘prepared to be noted publicly’* by giving evidence indicated validity. *They had terminated the meetings* with the accused proving they did not want the sexual attention of the appellant (therefore cannot be constructed as seductive or consenting). *Their testimony was clear* indicating intelligent women. *They had integrity and balance* in other words were not ‘disturbed’ or ‘wonton’.

Several stereotypical notions of women as hasty, hysterical, disturbed or wanting sexual contact is played out in the Archbishops ‘credibility’ list. He proved they were not ‘nasty’ but ‘nice’ women. The fact the women were middle class, intelligent and articulate seems to indicate women, who are not, would not make credible witnesses. Furthermore it shows how perceptions of women create bias.

This case took from early 1996 to 2003 for full completion, because the original Bishop decided not to take formal proceedings. His response and delay for justice caused extreme anxiety and stress for victims. All women were featured in tabloid newspapers, identified and photographed.

The Archbishop of York was not critical of the delay:

Bishops ought not to rush in to formal action when complaints start to be made... it is not surprising that one diocesan Bishop should decide not to seek formal complaints and to continue to deal with the matter pastorally, but that

his successor, with stronger and more formal complaints should decide that the balance falls in favour of an inquiry (p42).

Taken from the appeal Judgement Report

Appendix 18: All Churches: Whether Clergy Charged are Suspended

Church	Suspension pending formal process
Methodist	If serious & if criminal implications
Anglican	Only on rare occasions
Catholic (UK & Ireland)	Unlikely if adult alleged victim/Yes, if vulnerable victim (mentally ill, elderly, learning disabled)
Church in Wales (Anglican)	Bishop advised to suspend
Church of Scotland	Suspended
Baptist	Suspended both from Ministry & from Ministerial Register
Congregational	No formal structures
URC	Yes
Quaker	Possible but always allowed to worship
House Churches/Pentecostal/Black Majority Churches	No formal Structures

Appendix 19: All Churches: Whether Resignation Allowed Before Proceedings

Church	Resignation before due process
Methodist	Not allowed before hearing complete
Anglican	Allowed but would be regarded as indicating guilt and recorded as such
Catholic (UK & Ireland)	May voluntarily leave priesthood
Church in Wales (Anglican)	If resigns tribunal will still convene to determine fitness to practice
Church of Scotland	Case must be determined first
Baptist	Not known
Congregational	Can resign but would automatically cease to be minister
Quaker	Can resign membership of Quakers but cannot just 'turn up' elsewhere. Needs 'Transfer Certificate' which could be refused.
House Churches/Pentecostal/Black Majority Churches	No formal structures
URC – United Reformed Church	No power to accept resignation.

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