Men are like a chest of drawers - women are like a wardrobe

- A qualitative comparative study about gender structure within The Church of Sweden -

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Män är som en byrålåda - kvinnor är som en garderob
- En kvalitativ jämförande studie om genusstrukturer i Svenska Kyrkan -

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1958 was the year women became recognized as priests in The Church of Sweden- this event formed the initial idea for the study. This is a qualitative comparative inquiry, which seeks to understand gender structures within The Church of Sweden. It has its focus on men and women’s working conditions, which includes their experience of reality and their experienced differences and similarities in their role as priests. Six priests from one concealed diocese have been interviewed and the methodological approach is induction, which has been applied to best ability. Cross-case analysis has been implemented to enable comparison of gender conditions. Through the stage of analysis the data have been interpreted with an open mindset and was not structured in groups by male vs. female. This allowed patterns to emerge with all possibilities, not only with gender taken into consideration. Organizational and gender theories along with previous research have been the main resource for this project. The historian Yvonne Hirdman and the scientist Rosabeth Moss Kanter are two theorists in whom the results are mainly based upon, together with statements and quotations from my informants. The findings in this thesis are due to structural and gender mechanisms. A suggestion to discard the theological conviction and defining resentment against female priests as an issue solely determined by working environmental problem is to be considered. The main differences found in gender due to a structural consequence are the experience of career opportunities and discrimination. It is clear that the structure of The Church of Sweden limits ones career opportunities within a position but also sets limitations due to the lack of higher alternative positions. The women in my study have been victims of the structural powers of men and/or organizations, which could be understood through Kanter’s three-factor theory. The female priests are all struggling with their working description, the assumption of gender difference in this issue is to be drawn. This is also true when it comes to the informant’s role as priests. There are expected differences in leadership between men and women and women are being compared to their male colleges which is an indication of Hirdman’s theory A vs. a. Female vicars working conditions as well as the hierarchy system of The Church of Sweden are suggestions of further studies in the field.

Gender, priest, women, discrimination, career, leadership, resentment against female priests, organisation
Abstract

1958 was the year women became recognized as priests in The Church of Sweden- this event formed the initial idea for the study. This is a qualitative comparative inquiry, which seeks to understand gender structures within The Church of Sweden. It has its focus on men and women’s working conditions, which includes their experience of reality and their experienced differences and similarities in their role as priests. Six priests from one concealed diocese have been interviewed and the methodological approach is induction, which has been applied to best ability. Cross-case analysis has been implemented to enable comparison of gender conditions. Through the stage of analysis the data have been interpreted with an open mindset and was not structured in groups by male vs. female. This allowed patterns to emerge with all possibilities, not only with gender taken into consideration. Organizational and gender theories along with previous research have been the main resource for this project. The historian Yvonne Hirdman and the scientist Rosabeth Moss Kanter are two theorists in whom the results are mainly based upon, together with statements and quotations from my informants. The findings in this thesis are due to structural and gender mechanisms. A suggestion to discard the theological conviction and defining resentment against female priests as an issue solely determined by working environmental problem is to be considered. The main differences found in gender due to a structural consequence are the experience of career opportunities and discrimination. It is clear that the structure of The Church of Sweden limits ones career opportunities within a position but also sets limitations due to the lack of higher alternative positions. The women in my study have been victims of the structural powers of men and/or organizations, which could be understood through Kanter’s three-factor theory. The female priests are all struggling with their working description, the assumption of gender difference in this issue is to be drawn. This is also true when it comes to the informant’s role as priests. There are expected differences in leadership between men and women and women are being compared to their male colleges which is an indication of Hirdman’s theory $A$ vs. $a$. Female vicars working conditions as well as the hierarchy system of The Church of Sweden are suggestions of further studies in the field.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Resentment of female priests</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Diocese division</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Aim</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Terminology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.1 Priest and vicar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.2 Gender- a linguistic dilemma</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Limitations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Literature review</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Stereotypes of men and women</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Structure in organizations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Method</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Induction</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Grounded Theory</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Pre-knowledge</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Sampling</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Ethical aspects</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Interviewing</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Transcribing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Comparative analysis</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 Methodological considerations</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Analyze and Result</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Uncertainty in choice of profession</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Identity – a continuum on a gender scale</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 a- is the women of The Bible</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 …what is the woman of today?</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Contextual interpretation- an argumentation for the acceptance of female priests</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 An excellent excuse for underlying aspects of power in discrimination</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Discrimination- a common phenomenon</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Minority position- an advantage</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 Structure sets limitations</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10 Pursuing a career- not gender related</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11 Three women- three structural factors</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12 Women are like a wardrobe</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13 Leader skills- preferably soft and caring</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14 Conclusions- a summery</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Concluding discussion</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Further studies</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 References</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1 Printed references ........................................................................................................ 51
6.2 Webb references ........................................................................................................ 52
7. Appendix ................................................................................................................................... 53
  7.1 Swedish Interview guide .............................................................................................. 53
  7.2 English Interview guide ............................................................................................... 55
1. Introduction

The thought behind this thesis came about when a newsletter was dropped in my mailbox late one afternoon. It was the monthly newsletter from The Church of Sweden in which congregation members are notified of the upcoming services and events taking place in the church. On the cover, three women were introduced and interviewed with the headline stating the following; “50 years with female priests”. This caught my attention and I started to read about September 27th, 1958. My interest was awakened by this, the 50th anniversary of women being recognized as priests, and thus became the start of a qualitative research thesis that has its core in gender structure. The title *Men are like a chest of drawers- women are like a wardrobe* reveals and reflects the content of this study and indicates the aim being to compare the conditions between male and female priests in a gender perspective.

1.2 Background

To understand the notable occurrence that took place in September of 1958, we need to start at the beginning by examining Sweden’s history. This country became prominently Christian centuries ago, and many priests have served our nation’s churches throughout the years. Up until 1958, priesthood was closed to women. The process of reaching across gender boundaries of this issue started in 1909 when the first Swedish woman graduated from seminary school with a degree and major in theology. Although this was one of the first steps towards the change that would later take place in 1958, it did not emerge to have any immediate effect on the acceptance of female priests. Forty-nine years were to pass until women were allowed into the priesthood. In 1945 however, the government agreed to accept women into all governmental positions, with the exception of priesthood. This meant that women with a priest calling had to wait thirteen more years in order to pursue their dreams. In September 1958 the council of The Church of Sweden recognized female priests inside the walls of the church and two years later three women followed-through with their ambition of becoming priests and thus were ordained (*Svenska kyrkan, Linköping med omnejd* newsletter number 15). Prior to this acceptance researcher argue that the government was reproducing women’s subordinate position in society by deliberately legislating laws to prevent women into certain positions, one of which could have been priesthood. This is relevant in this thesis since it portrays the way women was given an unequal start in this professions. Since year 2000 The Church of Sweden is no longer state run, the possible structural effect of this phenomenon is to me unknown. Today, women represent almost 70 percent of the students at the seminary, (URL 1) however the labour market has not yet caught-up with this statistic as less than one third of the priests in The Church of Sweden are women (URL 2). Taking a closer
look at the organization The Church of Sweden and how it works brings us to talk about its structure. The Church of Sweden has a long history, which has an effect on today’s formation of The Church. From cleaners to youth leaders, deacons to priests, vicars to bishops and all the way up to the Arch Bishop and the Church council- this organization is very much built on a hierarchy system. Decisions and regulations are made in the higher levels and the work along with career opportunities is strict and firm. Responsibilities are usually connected to a higher position and routines are a key word.

1.2.1 Resentment of female priests

The Swedish phrase *kvinnoprästmotstånd* is being translated in this thesis as *resentment of female priests*. The definition of this phrase needs to be understood through the contextual setting it belongs to, since it is culturally related with the Swedish history of female priests. As stated above female priests have been accepted in The Church of Sweden no longer than 50 years. Prior to 1958 it had been forbidden because of the church’s theological conviction. It reveals a strong biblical connection to the subject matter and has closely been associated with a number of bible verses throughout history. Paul wrote in Corinthians 14:34-35 that women should not speak in church, (The Bible, 1981). This has been, and still is, one of the strongest arguments against women working in priesthood and the resolution in 1958 contributed most likely to an increase of the resentment of female priests. Women now had the legal right to work as priests in The Church of Sweden but an exception *The Conscience clause* was established by the Church. This entitled male priest colleagues, which had opposed the law, the right to keep their beliefs. They were not forced to either work nor celebrate Holy Communion with a female priest colleague. The Conscience clause was abolished in 1982 (URL 1) and today, prior to ordination, every priest has to sign a contract with their acceptance of female priests, given that it is in accordance with the regulations of The Church of Sweden, (URL 1). The declaration, as it is stated in the regulations:

*The Cathedral chapter may declare one who is eligible to practice the commission of priest if one is prepared to serve, in every assignment, together with those who in other commissions within church have been ordained, no matter sex.* (Authors translation)

(Kyrkoordning- med avgränsande lagstiftning för Svenska kyrkan. 1999, 31st chapter 2 § 5 paragraphs, page 104). Resentment of female priests if experienced today is considered to be a work environmental issue and is to be treated with appropriate law (URL 3).
1.2.2 Diocese division

Statistics show that nationwide more than two thirds of all priests in The Church of Sweden are men. Therefore priesthood is considered as being male-dominated and this is also an indication of a difference in choice of profession regarding gender. The Church of Sweden has 13 dioceses (URL 4) and amongst these there are significant diversity regarding the proportion of women working in this profession. The number of female priests varies from 29% up till 55% depending on diocese, (Nilsson, P. 2008, page 10). The low percentage dioceses, which are located throughout the nation, are traditionally known as areas of resentment against female priests. For reasons of confidentiality and ethical aspects I cannot disclose the exact percentage of the diocese studied but it is of importance to bring up the approximate number. Hence, this thesis has its focus on one diocese in which women are, statistically, someplace in the middle of the two extreme cases mentioned above.

1.3 Aim

This qualitative comparative inquiry intends to study gender structure within one diocese of the Church of Sweden. The aim lies in the examination of comparing the conditions between male and female priests. This includes the aspect of looking at how women and men experience their reality of gender in the organization. Moreover it consists of the experienced differences and similarities between genders among priests, even though a focus will lie on women in their role as priests in the Church of Sweden.

1.4 Terminology

Definitions and terminology is of great importance in this thesis. The described terminology below is the key words both in the purpose and interview guide and therefore throughout the thesis. If not examined closer the vocabulary used can complicate the process of analyze with the consequence of jeopardizing the results. In this paragraph I will not only discuss the correct meaning of the word but also the issue in process of translating, this matter will also be discussed in the section transcription. Certain words are culturally and/ or in this case denominationally determined, hence it is essential to look deeper into areas such as Christian terminology and its traditions. The paragraph below will show how the terminology will be used in this thesis.

1.4.1 Priest and vicar

In Sweden there is a differentiation between the word priest and pastor. Priest is merely associated with the former state run church The Church of Sweden
and for that reason the word pastor is used when referring to all other denominations within Sweden, hence the word priest is going to be used in this thesis. Furthermore neither the word priest nor vicar is, in this thesis, related to the Catholic Church, which it in many other situations can be mistaken for (Nordstedts ordbok. 1994, page 632, 233). When using the term priest one can argue that it has a general meaning and includes a number of posts within the Church of Sweden. In addition to the English vocabulary the Swedish language has one more dimension of the word priest; komminister. Komminister has its explanation in the hierarchy system of The Church of Sweden in which it is determined by the contents of the job being without staff responsibilities. When using the word priests, this position is what I am referring to from here on. I will exemplify this by putting it into relation with the word vicar, which is another frequently used word in this research. If we by vicar mean the head of the congregation and the staff manager we can agree that it would be the equivalent of the Swedish word kyrkoherde (Nordstedts ordbok. 1994, page 632, 233). To bring it all together, vicar is the employer and priest /komminister is the employee. This definition is of great significance when discussing and comparing working conditions between male and female priests in this thesis. Read more about this issue in the paragraph limitations.

1.4.2 Gender- a linguistic dilemma

While genus is a fairly new vocabulary in Scandinavian languages brought to us by the Swedish historian Yvonne Hirdman during the late 1980s. The English natives have a more established relation to their word gender. In the Swedish language the heart of the problem lies in the lack of legitimacy since genus is not yet customary to the general public. As a result the terms are not ultimately comparable with each other, which complicate the translation process further (Hirdman, 2001). Awareness in this issue is essential and a way to avoid misunderstandings.

Looking past these differences to their common ground leads us into the actual meaning of the words. Gender is not to be confused with sex and it is vital to put these terms in relation to each other, given that sex stands for the biological part and gender would be looked upon as socially constructed. Although these terms can be defined as above it is vital to keep in mind that there is not a clear line between the two. Furthermore it includes the theory that men are norm in our society and women therefore inevitably subordinate (Brante, 2001). When coming across the word gender in this thesis the usage will consist of, and refer to, the definition made above.
1.5 Limitations

The necessity of narrowing down the study has leaded me not only into geographical limitations but also boundaries when it comes to denominations. Hence, the focus, and the interviews has been conducted on three female and three male priests working in one of the diocese within The Church of Sweden. In addition I have set a limitation from which perspective this phenomenon is seen; through the eyes of priests. To increase the guarantee of equal comparison between the interviewed priests I have therefore actively chosen to exclude interviewing vicars because of the difference in responsibilities that do them part. I believe this was an act necessary. Furthermore the result of this study is not to be used as a generalization but more so to understand the interviewed priest’s experiences as they are explained, understood and interpreted through the analyzing stage. The argumentation of these limits can be described through the method that enables the study to focus on details, contexts and fine distinction rather than a quantitative approach, which emphasize lies in the amount and quantity. One of the most significant strengths in this thesis is the ability to find in-depth data. Although some researchers argue we can never learn the true depth of another human being, this study attempt to seek a greater understanding of the interviewed priest’s reality and experiences (Patton 2002, page 227) and these limitations and possibilities will allow this to take place.
2 Literature review

Already existing theories that are applied to the data will in this paragraph be explained. The theories have been carefully studied alongside the analyzing stage in this qualitative process and have been applied after the data collection, in other words, theories were not chosen prior to this stage. Gender and organizational theories are the main recourses of reference in this thesis, as well as the Bible in which some data from the interviews play an important role. Some additional research will also be taken into consideration but will mainly be referred to intertwine in the analysis text.

2.1 Stereotypes of men and women

Yvonne Hirdman is an historian with a structural perspective on gender. Hirdman brings up the important issue of how society constructs the stereotypes male and female. Being a historian, she is influenced by the past and brings up the matter through a historical perspective. In her book Genus-om det stabila föränderliga former (Hirdman, 2001) she distinguishes stereotypical historical models of male/female. The following passage will stress the aspects of her theory that is significant in this study.

Early on in Hirdman´s book, she lets the reader know that constructing gender is to understand the world. To fully understand this she takes on three stereotypes of gender, (Hirdman 2001, page 25). Hirdman chooses to call one of her stereotypes A vs. a and this is chosen and applied in my study. This model can be described as of how women are portrayed. Female was looked upon as being on a continuum on the same scale as male, the same kind of sex as male but less and not as developed. This historian way of looking at women is not yet abandoned fully, claims Hirdman. It is in a constant comparison which a is created, constantly measured and evaluated in relation to A, (Hirdman 2001, page 28-35). To understand what Hirdman means by comparing a vs. A, an explanation is here presented of the male description.

*A- male* is determined by who he is not. A can be described as the sun (male) in which the earth (female) is circling around, (Hirdman 2001, page 47-48). A as in A vs. a has issues with nervousness which has its core in the fear of becoming too much like a. It is not enough being born as male; he also has to live up to it through a lifelong battle to keep his position, (Hirdman 2001, page 53).

Hirdman continues to describe a model called A vs. B. This model emphasizes the contrary positions of gender where partition and differences defines gender. As shown by different letters, gender is here defined as two different
kinds of sexes. The biological fate of female stereotypes such as reproduction and giving birth is in contrast to male skills such as hunting and common sense. In other words, differentiations are emphasized in this model, (Hirdman 2001, page 36-42). As mentioned earlier, Hirdman claims that many women live the lives as A, although today’s society strongly reproduces B-model as well, (Hirdman 2001, page 44).

A as in A vs. B creates less anxiety and greater stability since gender is made of two different kinds, A can never become B. Patriarchal society exists in this model but also the explanation of biological differences that can simplify the gender differences and issues. Again, to be male is determined by not being a female. Comparison between the two is necessary to keep the masculinity, (Hirdman 2001, page 54-55).

Hirdman claims that when women enter historically male-dominated work fields they tend to take on the discreet role of A. When a woman does traditionally male tasks, she has to change. Men dominate all of mankind’s history and the Bible is an evidence for this, (Hirdman 2001, page 66-71). Gender works in a structural way on different levels claims Hirdman. He is male because she is female. The categories and diversity maintained through props such as the hat, the dress, the pink and light blue, the car engine and the sewing machine, all of this became filled with gender.

Hirdman brings up the Bible when talking about women’s conditions throughout history. The Bible is also essential when it comes to the discussion about resentment against female priests. The resource from The Bible in this thesis is mainly based off of one verse; from First Corinthians 14:34-35 where Paul is writing about how women should behave in Church. His main point in this passage is that it is shameful for women to speak in Church.

2.2 Structure in organizations

Organizational theories in this thesis has also been chosen on the premises of what data have shown, this lead me into narrowing down the field with the criterion of having a gender approach on organizational theories. I have, as you will discover in the analysis later in this thesis, mainly relied on two books that deals with organizational theories; Kön och organisation and Det ordnar sig. These books are applied in areas such as governmental control, discrimination and career as well as on the issue of women’s role as leaders. The text below is an attempt to introduce these theories in an explanatory and summarized way. These books have similarities that are worth mentioning. They share a support in all their statements and theories that are supported by previous established empirical research.
An organization that has tendency of being male-dominated and based on a hierarchy system is by some researchers called and labeled as a *Bureaucracy* organization, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 72). The characteristics in this kind of organization are that the majority of the employees are male and the decision-making and policies are regulated from the top positions. The liability is also directed towards the higher levels in this organization and career opportunities are often strictly regulated and controlled, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 72).

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a prominent American researcher in the field, emphasises the fact that a person’s position in an organization and its structure is essential for the conditions of that individual. (Wahl et al. 2001, page 67). She claims that structure, and not solely gender in itself, is the determine factor. Furthermore Kanter means that the individual cannot by changing his/hers behavior change the gender conditions in an organization that do them part, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 59). Moreover Kanter claims that it is the structure of the organization itself that determines and decides the workers opportunity to pursue a career within the organization, (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 79). These possibilities vary from organization to organization but also between different positions. (Wahl et al. 2001, page 68)

Kanter has as well as Hirdman a structural approach on gender but unlike the Swedish historian she examines the additional perspective of how organizations and gender interrelate. Kanter emphasizes the sociological structural rule in a patriarchal society being that; men rule while women obey (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 153). Furthermore Kanter believes that power stands for a person’s ability to mobilize recourses, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 70) and when talking about discrimination she claims that it is the variation in power that is the dominant factor. She disregards the theory that gender differences are the main reason. Kanter means that a person who has a limited amount of power needs to be in control since he usually is in minority and feels threatened by women’s accomplishments, (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 81). Kanter also claims that men who have more power tend to co-operate with subordinate colleagues because their position is not at risk, due to the fact that their work place is male-dominated and thus these men are in majority. (Wahl et al. 2001, page 70).

When talking about structural perspective, she discusses the factors that affect women’s leader abilities. Her theory relies on three issues, which become transparent when women take on a leader position. *Assimilation* can be described as a female stereotype being projected on the woman and leads her into taking on the label, which indirectly creates limitations on how she is able to show her competence. *Visibility* is explained through the woman’s pressure to perform better than her male colleges; since she is in minority she has the
attention towards her. The majority vs. minority relation is in focus when talking about the third factor *Contrast* that Kanter brings up. The problematic relation occurs when the male-dominated group is threatened by a newcomer; the woman. It’s not only the woman that brings uncertainty to the group; it’s the fear of losing the values and culture of the group (Wahl et al. 2001, page 108).

Another aspect of Kanter’s theory is *Homosocial reproduction*, which is a phenomenon created when men in recruiting positions hire men as managers. The explanation is conformity, and simply means that security and choosing candidates that are similar to oneself is the determining factor, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 107). Moreover Kanter suggests that individuals that find themselves in subordinate positions usually have low self-esteem and also underestimate their own capabilities and competes, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 68).

Anna Wahl and her research colleagues that wrote the book *Det ordnar sig* came to the conclusion that even though both men and women experience stress in a working environment; women have shown higher tendencies of stress. For women it is due to two additional factors, (compared to men), those of family responsibilities and also the fact that women often are in minority as a leader in their workplace, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 104, 111-112). Furthermore previous studies show findings of minority groups experiencing advantages with their lack of numeric dominance (page 117). The positive experience of being in minority tends to be the dominant feeling among these men/women, (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 80).

The book *Äntligen stod hon i predikstolen* by Hössjer Sundman talks about the fact that people still today have, both in church and in other institutions in society, expectations of leaders being a male, (Hössjer, Sundman 2008, page 198). In his study findings are pointing towards experienced discrimination being a common occurrence among women, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 88). He found that 60% of women working as priests in The Church of Sweden have experience from discrimination, (Hössjer Sundman 2008, page 40).

Gerd Lindgren explains her theory about *Gender Segregation Processes* with the words *Differences* and *Closeness*. The overall idea is to describe the process in which a field of work is transforming to become either male or female dominated. When women enter male-dominated organization the two words becomes transparent. In this organization closeness among gender exists, meaning men and women are competing for the same jobs as well as a physical closeness appears in the work place consisting of common diner areas etc. The organization also carries an attitude among the male workers,
where they look upon the women as sub group- defined as different. Theses two components: closeness and differences, creates a gender system of power. Lindgren claims that women tend to take on either one of three characteristics in which they show ways to handle the situation. These strategies are developed mainly due to the minority situation women find themselves in. The first strategy is described through when a woman tries to emphasise the similarities she possesses with the majority group- the men. The second strategy is developed through isolation from the majority group and a woman who used this strategy tends to strictly follow rules of the organization. The third strategy is defined through an escape from the work place, often used after trying the other two strategies, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 79-80).
3. Method

When formulating the aim and specifics in the initial stage of the study, issues such as limitations and new information about the topic occurred. Shortly after that the course changed slightly and the purpose was reformulated. One of the first things I chose to do, although I had a reasonable amount of background knowledge, was to study the celebration of 50 years with female priests. I followed news and discussions and expanded my knowledge in the field; this took place prior to me conducting the interviews. After the interviews had been performed I transcribed the interviews and started to read and write the method paragraph. Six interviews have taken place and the subject population is based on the sampling methods used when working with a qualitative thesis, see paragraph sampling below. During the collection of empirical data through interviewing, the transcription and interpretation slowly begun as a parallel practice. When all the data had been collected the analyzing stage stared. Coding the material by classifying patterns and discovering underlying themes was a part of this method and mainly applied after the data collection was completed. When patterns had emerged literature in the field was studied on a deeper level and eventually applied in the study. Lastly I was ready to write the results and conclusions could be drawn.

3.1 Induction

The design is based on an inductive approach, which has been applied to best ability. The discussion about how one can truly practice this technique is an ongoing dialog in terms of defining induction. When looking closer we can find the following definition;

-An approach in which the relation between theory and praxis is closely intertwined were theory is generated from reality. Author’s translation.
(Bryman 2001, page 467)

There is more than one way to explain inductive method. Patton claims that the characteristics of this method are patterns, themes and categories discovered in data and findings emerge from the process, (Patton 2002, page 453). The problem with induction is, among many researchers, to what extent it should or could be practiced. Researchers try to apply this approach more or less depending on the possibilities offered by methodological circumstances. In this thesis, as will be described below, an inductive approach has been used but with some exceptions. In this thesis background knowledge in the field alongside having an idea of the aim of the study is noticeably different from a strict inductive technique. It is still to be considered as an inductive approach
with the argument that data have been the source in which patterns and theory has had the possibility to emerge.

### 3.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is one way in which an inquiry can follow through with the usage of inductive approach. With the aim taken into account influences of Grounded Theory has been a method in this study. Grounded Theory is described and introduced by Glaser and Strauss and their method can be explained as to organize ideas that are generated from data. Moreover to generate a theory is to discover fundamentally social and structural processes. The emphasis lies in the necessity of having theory being compatible with the data, in other words data cannot be chosen on the premises’ that it “fits the theory”. In Grounded Theory it is important that the theory has practical relevance and can explain reality, although developing an already existing theory through modification is often applied. This paragraph will not contain detailed information on how to use Grounded Theory but this following knowledge is essential. In this method repetitive comparative analyzing takes place during coding processes (Starrin, 1991). In other words throughout this stage it is common to fluctuate between data and theory. In some studies when Grounded Theory is being used researchers realise they need more data. Repetitive collection can then take place; this is called iterative strategy (Bryman 2001, page 22, 375). After reaching theoretical saturation, when new data does not bring new information, the continuation of coding, analyzing and placing data into categories takes place. Lastly terminology and theories emerge from data. Problems such as described when discussing induction also often occur when using the method Grounded Theory; it differs from research to research to what extend it is applied, (Bryman 2001, page 383).

The method in this thesis is inspired by Grounded Theory and utilizes some aspects of the technique but there are exceptions that will be described. In the initial state of the study aim and specifics were preliminary decided although absolutists of Grounded Theory would disagree. Starrin brings up this issue as two sides of a coin in which he claims this being simply a choice of preference (Starrin 1991, page 40). The argument for this choice is that, debatably, it is more or less impossible to start a research without any pre-knowledge or interests in a particular field. Furthermore the aim that was set in the early stage is to be considered as a preliminary purpose and has been reformulated as the work went on. One might notice that this study does not include a multi-methodological approach since interviews are the primarily recourse of data collection. With the exception regarding the already existing statistics that has been brought as a complement to the interviews, this is mainly for the reason of bringing a holistic perspective of the phenomenon. Observation has
not been included as a tool of use. This was for the reason that the aim of the study did not allow possibilities of such a technique without risking the result being biased because of my presence. Moreover an observation would be difficult since priests’ working-assignments often involve such tasks as counselling and confidentiality. While collecting data Grounded Theory stresses the importance of starting the coding and analysing procedure in the initial state, as already mentioned. This criterion has been met to some degree but this is really also a question of definition. It has not been taken into consideration in the way that the coding has influenced the continuation of data collection since the interviews was done in a short period of time. In other words iterative strategy has not been applied. The coding progressed afterwards, but the analyzing state started indirectly the same day the first interview took place -through transcription. The interviewing period was, in my study, very short and after transcribing the interviews the feeling of having more than enough data arose. Maintaining the quality of the study by not taking on too much data enabled me to thoroughly follow through with the analyzing process, (Bryman 2001, page 291-292). Mainly for the reason of timeframe for this project theoretical saturation has not been a factor in data collection, as is the experiences of many other researchers who are faced with priority making, (Starrin 1991, page 34).

3.3 Pre-knowledge

One of the most important aspects to take into account when undertaking a qualitative method is to discuss with oneself the impact of reflexivity. Self-awareness, judgment and a critical eye are crucial skills every qualitative researcher should possess. Using these in the right way is a great strength in qualitative method and may enhance the study, (Patton 2002, page 64-65). The idea of this thesis came about when I received a monthly newsletter from the Church of Sweden. The newsletter is dropped in congregation member’s mailboxes; hence I am a member of The Church of Sweden. This might be of contrary judgment. To argue for the positive impact; it gave me access to the field and equipped me with knowledge I would not otherwise carry. This was a clear advantage when I constructed the interview guide, since I beforehand had an idea of the environment and working conditions a priest normally is surrounded by. The reason for scepticism in this case could be that I came into this research already colored with expectations and values. That might be an eligible concern but I will meet the argument with my awareness of this probable issue and again emphasizing the importance of background knowledge that helped me prepare for interviews in this relatively unknown area of society; the church. Patton, who seems to have a contradicting standpoint regarding this issue, shares this concern. On one hand he claims that reading about the environment of study can bring focus to the questions
but on the other hand he believes it might contribute to a bias in the way the researcher views the phenomenon, (Patton 2002, page 226). Bryman also recognizes this dilemma but brings out the point of getting to know the environment and the interview persons, which will facilitate the interpretation and understanding progression, (Bryman 2001, page 305). In this thesis my knowledge and reading preparation of the field gave me the necessary information to construct the interview guide, as already mentioned. Without these facts I would not have been able to collect the in-depth data that emerge from these interviews. One example is The Conscience clause, which to me was an unknown component of the phenomenon studied and this added another important dimension to the data. One could argue that \textit{ethical distance} is a word that could sum up the dilemma I am currently faced with. It includes these thoughts that Patton, Bryman and myself are faced with. It represents the idea of how balance is necessary in the data collecting process; being close enough to see depth but being distant enough to remain uncolored by the setting studied (Starrin 1991, page 35). Thus far I believe I have achieved such a requirement.

### 3.4 Sampling

A qualitative study and its sample can look very different depending on the focus of study. In this case we have a qualitative comparative study and therefore I chose to use what is called \textit{purposeful sampling}, (Patton 2002, page 230). The advantage with using purposeful sampling and especially in my study was to be able to choose selectively, both male and female priests so that I could get what Patton calls \textit{information rich cases} for the comparison. There are several types of purposeful sampling and as with induction and Grounded Theory there is not a clear category that fits this study in all aspects. Therefore I will instead bring up aspects on a category that are distinctive in the sample for this research; \textit{heterogeneity}. It is applicable because when finding patterns by the maximum variation we will find the core experiences of the interviewed persons, and hence it reflects one dimension of the aim of my study; to examine the experienced differences and similarities between male and female priests (Patton 2002, page 234).

\textit{Time sampling} is an aspect that needs to be discussed amongst researchers within a project. When should the study take place and why is that a good timing for data collection? The results are dependent on the timing and some studies are therefore done in a series of seasons, (Patton 2002, page 229). This study may have been affected by an event more so than a time period but it is not less important as it might be of possible impact. The 50th year celebration of women in priesthood was given extra attention in media during the initial state of the study and as we continue this work throughout the year. This
might inevitably have consequences on the result but the awareness of this aspect was there from the start since the thought behind this thesis arose from this very event. What could be said about the possibilities of such an influenced result? The tendency noticed in the analyzing stage that could be of significance in this matter is the drained attitude I gathered and interpreted from the informants. As if they were tired of the on-going discussion about gender and female priests. Apart from this likelihood I can only see positive effects such as greater awareness in the issue amongst the interviewed priests, which I believe contributed to a deeper dimension of the data.

3.5 Ethical aspects

There are several crucial features to take into consideration when performing a research project and the ethical aspects are one of these vital factors. The Scientific Board has a few principles researchers should take into consideration prior to starting their project. This is important since it is often closely intertwined with the aim of the study and might in many cases complicate practical aspects of the project. The four principles to take into account are to be explained as following. In my study I have followed the advice closely and fulfilled their four requirements to my best ability. The first thing a researcher should make clear when dealing with participants is to inform them of the aim of the study. As I contacted the interview persons I clearly informed them of the purpose of my study. Participators also have the right to know that their participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time. Before I started the interview I informed the priests of their right to withdrawal during any part of the research procedure. In addition the researchers have the obligation to ask for approval of participation, which is an obvious aspect of interviewing in my case but less evident in, for example, an observation. Furthermore confidentiality is to be applied and any personal information such as name is to be concealed. I made sure that they were notified of their confidentiality, and in addition to personal information that the diocese of which they are a part of would not be revealed. This is the strongest reason why I chose to keep the diocese concealed. Moreover the informants also has the right to know that data is kept in a safe place and will not be exposed in any other circumstances outside the study in mind, hence I let them know that the data only would be used for scientific purposes in my study, (Bryman 2001, page 440-441).

3.6 Interviewing

In the initial stage of the interviewing I worked as a parallel process by booking meetings for interviews as well as finished an interview guide. I came to the conclusion of using a semi-structure interview guide since I had a preliminary aim in the start of the thesis, (Bryman 2001, page 301, 304). A
A semi-structured interview guide has been of great value particularly in this thesis since it allowed me to be flexible in my questions. At the same time it gave the interviews a sense of structure, which was helpful since the aim is dependent on comparative cross-case analyzing, which will be further discussed later on in the chapter method (Bryman 2001, page 304). The choice of having a semi-structured interview guide and open-ended questions gave the consequence of great variation among the priest’s answers (Patton 2002, page 353-354). It was an advantage as well as a disadvantage since it allowed the informant to interpret the question and answer after own ability. At the same time it made some of them very confused and with a sense that they did not know what was expected of them in their answering and evidently led me into asking many follow-up questions. I have therefore been attentive to answers and tried to accommodate suitable follow-up questions (Patton 2002, page 372). Since the purpose of my study is relatively specific and since I am studying more than one case (six interviews) it is of great importance and help to follow a similar structure.

Priests often have a busy schedule and are booked a few weeks ahead of time but I successfully followed through with all six of the interviews in a two-week period. I met the interview persons on different locations and I made sure their preference of place where being fulfilled. In that way I could be confident they would not be uncomfortable during the interview, since circumstances like that can jeopardize the data collection. An issue concerning the answers and depth in the interviews is that of which the informants feels the necessity of being loyal to their organization, The Church of Sweden. A few of the interviews when transcribed show that the informants carry an open attitude and open-minded statements have been made about the organization. I believe that since the diocese is being concealed this would not have a negative impact of their honesty in the data nor in the result.

3.7 Transcribing

During the interviews I used a tape recorder to my aid, but did not feel comfortable only trusting one set of technique so I also took notes simultaneously. The choice of using a tape recorder can be discussed in many ways. Some people argue that it makes the interview person nervous and not as detailed in his/hers answers, but since my subject population, priests, are used to having deep conversations I believe it did not have a negative impact in this issue. Looking back in the review mirror I would not want to have been without an extra documentary tool, taking notes does not nearly capture as much data as needed, this I learned while transcribing the data (Bryman 2001, page 310-311). The transcription was done as a parallel practice to the continuation of interviewing process. The interviews took between one hour to
one and a half hour and an estimation of the general transcription time was about 5-6 hours. Several crucial techniques where utilized in the transcription, I did choose to write the transcriptions in oral and not written language. This enabled me to read and analyze the interviewed priest’s actual answers without my own interpretation intertwined in this stage. The language differences in this thesis have briefly been mentioned in various paragraphs and this truly is an important matter. It requires awareness beyond normality since the interviews were held in Swedish but the thesis is written in English. Problems such as translating quotations arose during the analyzing stage; however this problem was handled through the use of dictionary. The quotations are not directly translated; instead they are examined and carefully translated by its context and content (Patton 2002, page 392). The further along I came into the study the more I realized I needed to create fictive names to all my informants. This became even more evident in the phase of transcribing and analyzing when identification and differentiation between the interviews was needed as well as when quotation started to be useful. The names were randomly chosen by the Swedish name-day calendar, I simply took the first few male names and the first few female names that occurred during that week. This is the outcome of the random selection; Isak, Svea, Tomas, Hanna, Adam and Malin.

3.8 Comparative analysis

This thesis is a qualitative comparative study in which interviews has been the primarily tool of use, therefore cross-case analysis have been utilized for analysis. Since variations in the experiences of the priests are the primary focus of the study, I chose to begin straight away with the cross-case analysis instead of creating a case analysis first, which some researcher choose to do. This gave me the further option of either grouping together answers to common questions, or analysing different perspectives on central issues. Since I had used a semi-structured interview guide I noticed that the answers were found in different place in each interview. Because of the inductive approach I was careful not to have any hypotheses about how to group the data; therefore the cross-case analysis in this thesis is not structured in groups by male vs. female. The cross-case technique analyses all data equal and comparing all possibilities, not only comparing gender. This will instead emerge if truly experienced by the interview persons (Patton 2002, page 438). The unit of analyze in this thesis is comparing a demographic group, males vs. females. This constitutes the core of the analyzing unit. Depending on how the aim of this study is constructed the possibility of making The Church of Sweden a unit of analyse is not far from truth. One could claim that the resentment of female priests also could be a unit of analyze since it is based on a particular event and could be considered as a focus of study. One aspect to keep in mind
regarding different analyzing units is that they require different levels of understanding and therefore different conclusions could be drawn, (Patton 2002, page 228).

3.9 Methodological considerations

Working with an inductive method has led me into taking on an open mindset when analyzing the result. This way of working with a research project opens up for ideas that lie beyond the researchers initial thought. For this very reason I have during the whole process reformulated my aim to enable my data to speak for itself. I found this method very helpful during the analyzing process. A curiosity towards what would emerge from the data was constantly present. The down side of this method has been to analyze the results alongside literature studying, since this was more time consuming than expected. The advantage of working deductive could have been the aspect of dividing this important work into two different time periods. But the result would most likely have turned out differently since the deductive method is structured with a more limiting mindset than when following through with an inductive method. In addition to the inductive method, comparative analysis offered a broad outlook on the data. This is also a determine factor for the results not being controlled by a limiting mindset, especially since I compared all of the informants equal and without taking gender into consideration. This gave me a wide range of results and I believe it is shown by the presentation in the passage of Analysis and Result. It allowed me to look at many alternative aspects which also gave me many ideas of further studies, this field is in other words to me very attractive and interesting.

Considering this is a qualitative study, the interviews that were conducted shows awareness in this choice of method, (qualitative) since data did not exceed an unworkable amount. I was able to manage the amount of data even though it was an extensive material. Data was not neglected in analyzing stage due to unrealistic collection but rather because it was not relevant looking at the aim of the study. The amount of data did take me by surprise but I still managed to carry out an in depth analysis and the risk of having a shallow interpretation due to lack of time was not very likely I believe.

The interview guide gave me interesting data to base my results on, but a concern and curiosity of mine is; how would the result have varied if asked differently? This is a complicated speculation but looking at my interview guide and comparing it to my results, one can gather that the first few questions turned out to be irrelevant for this thesis. Education and background knowledge was assumable interesting facts, but it was surprising to see how little relevance it had in this study. It is a learning process and hard to predict
the relevance in advance, especially considering an inductive method was being used. Looking back to the initial state of this project I would have performed differently, I would have formulated the questions in a more indirect way. Critique can be directed towards questions being formulated with a general outlook and questions encouraging interpersonal aspects instead of a structural focus. This will evidently have had an impact on the data I collected but I still do not consider this being a significant problem since I have been able to come to conclusions regarding structural issues.

Seeing structural patterns and tendencies of gender issues emerge was very fascinating and I am amazed of how much of the informant’s answers that could be interpreted and analyzed through scientific terms. Connecting these to relevant theories was a challenging part of the project and more time consuming than expected although I would agree on this being a crucial moment of the research in which time cannot be forced. Thus, patterns have emerged from the empirical data during the process of analyze but these patterns found has not developed into a theory. Due to the decision of utilizing Grounded Theory only as an inspiration of the study it was not my ambition to generate a theory. I believe patterns are adequate to draw conclusions from and will reflect the depth of the data in a descriptive way.
4. Analyze and Result

In this following passage combining interpretation and applied theories along with conclusions intertwines the text. The data that was collected has been analyzed and the results will be presented mainly by descriptions and quotations. The results presented will reflect a message including structural and individual factors which both have a significant impact on this phenomenon (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 156). This is for the reason of the inductive method that encourages interpreting the data in an open way.

4.1 Uncertainty in choice of profession

Surprisingly many, four out of six, of the interviewed priests had chosen a path of Natural science when studying at high school. They describe priesthood as a creative and esthetical type of job and inspiration is often needed to perform for example a sermon. This is not often combined with a technique or biological mindset. Contrary intentions between genders are shown were the men come to the conclusion to pursue their future job earlier than the women did. Isak started on the seminary right after high school with the thought of becoming a priest, Adam and Tomas both knew since they were children that they wanted to work as a priest. All three women where at first determined to walk a different path in life, with jobs in areas such as technique, biology and law in mind. Svea and Hanna even started theology studies without pursuing priesthood at first. The following is a statement from Malin when she was a student in high school;

... I said; “are you insane, I am not like that, for one knows how they (priests) are”. No, it took a long while before I decided I actually wanted it anyway...I ignored it... (Malin)

Gender differences among my informants regarding their choice of profession can be seen in the results. The three women were to a greater extent undeceive compared to the men in my study.

4.2 Identity – a continuum on a gender scale

During the interviews the discussion about the informant’s role as priests came up and many of them talked about how they see themselves. Two of the men (Tomas and Adam) describe their identity as a continuum on a gender scale with different levels. Adam believes everyone has a dimension of both male and female attributes. Both Adam and Tomas strongly emphasizes that their primarily identity is as a person, secondly being a Christian and thirdly being a priest. Adam also mentions the importance of people getting to know
him as a person first and later being introduced as a priest, this because of the pre-conceived notions that are associated with this profession.

I am always first and foremost Tomas, a human being, so to speak...
Tomas

It is important for people to get to know me as a human being to realize I am first and foremost a person, secondly a Christian and thirdly a priest, yes, that's how it is...I identify myself both with the womanly and manly perspective since I believe every person has a dimension of the two...
Adam

Two of the women, Svea and Malin, struggle with their identity as a priest. Svea, who wasn’t seeking to become a priest when the seminary school changed the conditions of the education, was all of a sudden eligible to ordination. She struggled two to three years before she had come to the acceptance and felt secure in her role as a priest. Malin on the other hand are facing difficulties with her identity at her current job

I really do enjoy being a priest, the problem occurs when I, when one, doesn’t get to practice it enough, there are so many other things I am supposed to be doing, some sort of identity confusion has taken place...

The conclusions drawn from this passage can be summarized as following; gender differences in my data are transparent when it comes to my informant’s role as priests. The male priests tend to have a more established thought of themselves and the female priests tend to fluctuate between uncertainty and confusion. This is my interpretation of the matter and if asked another time the result might have turned out differently.

4.3 a- is the women of The Bible

Hirdman’s argument about female stereotypes and more specific; A vs. a could be true for the biblical society that Malin presents in her interview. Malin describe her thoughts of how she interprets these texts; they portray a world and society prior to the centralized kingdoms and the tasks and roles of men and women were clearly divided into a private and public sphere. Men had the role of the public sphere and women were only engaged in the private sphere. The reason for men’s numeric dominance in the bible is according to Malin a result of these texts, which only portray the public sphere. She explains how women depict in the Bible and in other texts around that time are the women that do not carry a traditional female role, since they were on the men’s “courtyard”. Malin continues to explain that these women had
abandoned their expectations and societal norms and were leaders, judges or queens. Thus these texts are neither a fair picture of the “normal” women at that time nor a fair picture of how society was formed. I gather from Malin’s statement that these women were constantly compared with men in their surroundings, just as Hirdman claims stereotype $a$ to be, (Hirdman 2001, page 28-35). Wahl and her colleagues claim that this phenomenon has consequences on how power between women and men in organizations are being dealt with today. Men have an advantage of having the public word as his tool, (Wahl et al. 2001 page 55). The conclusion of this passage can be presented by Hirdman who, historian as she is declares that all of mankind’s history is dominated by men. My interpretation and analysis about Hirdman leads me into believing that she, because of her many examples from the bible, would see the bible as an evidence for the male-dominance throughout history, (Hirdman 2001, page 70-71).

Malin’s thought differs from many researchers in this field of gender studies, since she believe that women did have a position- but it was not the position of writers and politicians, it was not in the public sphere. Malin believes this gives the reader a misleading picture of how society was shaped back in Biblical times and thus an unfair picture of The Bible. Malin does not see this division of sphere as a problem since she believes God created men and women to complement each other.

...even if women were not allowed to become leaders or speak in Church for example, they had other assignments and this is not an issue we can translate to today’s society...
Malin

Malin’s view of women and men being complementary to each other are also found in Hirdman’s theory where she by defining the model $A$ vs. $B$ talks about these underlying mechanisms. Malin stated in her interview that women and men have different tasks and she seems content with this approach on gender issues. Malin does realise that men and women are different but she does not necessarily emphasise a negative attitude towards this idea. The model $A$ vs. $B$ is used to emphasize the contrary positions of gender where partition and differences defines gender, which is exactly what Malin seems to be doing, (Hirdman 2001, page 44). An interesting aspect of this argument is that women and men’s differences are recognized as equally worthy. If we take the discussion one step further to look at how the respective spheres are looked upon by mainstream; Are one field more established and more worthy than the other? I think the question remains; weather or not equality can exist in this perspective of looking at gender? Hirdman claims, which Malin seems to have recognized, that today’s society strongly reproduces B-model, (Hirdman 2001, page 36- 42). Thus, the results are that men and women in
Biblical times were divided into two spheres. Men had access to the public word while women in the public sphere took on the role as a. Furthermore, Malin brings up the perspective of how gender created in Biblical times, as well as today, shows tendencies of reproducing A vs. B.

4.4 ...what is the woman of today?

The authors of the book *Det ordnar sig* means that since women were excluded from the public sphere in historical societies—women are today subordinate (Wahl et al. 2001, page 74). I interpret Malin’s statement above as if she does not agree with women being subordinate back in Biblical times—they had a position she claims. My assumption is that she will disagree with Wahl and her colleagues about women’s position today being subordinate. Despite Malin’s thoughts, there are tendencies in my material that show these women of my study being subordinate. The support is among other things based on the female priests working conditions, which is one of the common ground they share. They all have had to fight with their work descriptions; Malin feels she is more like a youth leader than a priest and has to take on kitchen responsibilities although it is not stated in her working description. Hanna has too much in her work description so she has to make priorities with the risk of becoming a poor priest and Svea has been refused to work with confirmation although that was her primarily focus. Not only has she met this in her previous job, Svea is also currently struggling with her working description and responsibilities she is supposed to carry out. Due to a male vicar who cannot accommodate her actual job tasks, she is now left with her own initiative taking to be able to perform the job she is supposed to. These difficulties were not found in the interviews with the male priests and whether or not they have had similar experiences is not to be found in my data. This could be an indication that the women in my study carry a subordinate position and furthermore that the assumption of gender difference in this issue is to be drawn. If we look beyond the biblical interpretation of female injustice and instead look to the structural factors, the conclusion is that history still has an impact in our gender relations today since the women in my study could be described as subordinate.

4.5 Contextual interpretation- an argumentation for the acceptance of female priests

Many of my informants emphasize the contextual and situational importance when interpreting The Bible. It is interesting to see how they show skills in utilizing a Hermeneutic method, a perspective that is often used when interpreting and analyzing theological texts. The purpose with this method is to interpret the true meaning of the text through the eyes of the writer and
trough the historical and contextual sense in which it is produced, (Bryman 2001 page 370).

...a historical portrayal which tells us something about our view of men and women and one can look at it from our society today, but to give justice to the text one needs to look at it from the prospective of the past and its society and compare with other texts that was written at that time, and then we can see that women in The Bible were portrayed in a much more visible and fair way than in other texts at that time...

Svea

Svea has gathered her thoughts about interpretation and finds that other texts around that time portrayed women in a more unjust way than The Bible did.

I believe there is a message in The Bible saying that we are all human beings with the same value and that message is bigger than the single word

Tomas

I interpret The Bible as contextual; one cannot take the single word from these situations, I think one should interpret through its situations and one has to realize that these texts were written 2000 years ago and that the view of men and women has changed which is influencing our way to look at The Bible as well.

Hanna

Well, the Bible is written in a whole other situation, worldview and society...

Malin

These statements can be defined as a Hermeneutic perspective of contextual reading. This way of interpreting The Bible could be questioned by the people who do not agree with the acceptance of female priests. The most frequent bible passage used by resentment of female priests is the same verse they use to strengthen their argument with. It is written by Paul and found in Corinthians 14:34-35 (The Bible, 1982). The text is talking about how shameful it is for women to speak in church. Isak who means that the background knowledge of this text is essential to bring to the discussion since it tells the reader about the conditions and circumstances in that very context is here questioning this passage.

Women were only allowed in the back of the church behind a sheet where they could not see or hear very well and they started to chitchat and talk to each other and therefore Paul wrote that women should not speak in church.
With a Hermeneutic point of view the Bible is interpreted with the context in mind, as we can see from above statement. I believe that the informants, based on the quotation, would argue that the foundation of the resentment of female priests is relying on a weak theological standpoint. And with an interpretation of this kind, this could be seen as an argument against the resentment of female priest for not having eligible reasons supporting their beliefs. Moreover, the issue of resentment of female priests is being dealt with through appropriate law in accordance with working environment, (URL 3). One could claim that this supports the idea of this problem being based only on working environment and based on that reason one could discard the theological intervenient in this discussion. With this argument in mind this is how the issue will be dealt with from here on in this thesis. Svea also touches this subject since she has personally experiences of resentment of female priests.

*It is not about the theological conviction...it all comes down to behavior- action speaks louder than words...*

My informants read the bible with a hermeneutic perspective, which includes a contextual interpretation. A suggestion to discard the biblical argumentation of the resentment of female priests could therefore be brought to the table. Working environment is a substitute for how this issue of female priests will be dealt with.

### 4.6 An excellent excuse for underlying aspects of power in discrimination

Svea and Hanna have both had personal experience from two types of male colleagues, which are against female priests. The first type is he who has no problem working alongside female priests since he accepts the rules of his organization; The Church of Sweden. His personal beliefs may be of contrary opinion regarding female priests but is put to the side. The second kind of male priest is he who claims he accepts female priests but has great difficulties working together with them. Rosabeth Moss Kanter can explain these two behaviors with a structural perspective. Her aid is the word *power*, which she defines as a person’s ability to mobilize recourses, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 70).

Kanter believes that variation in power is the dominant factor in issues like this and she disregards the theory that gender differences are the main reason. The type of man that is described as one who cannot work alongside female priests but who says he is not against them is, by Kanter, associated with a person who has a limited amount of power. He needs to feel that he is in control since he usually is in a minority, which is true for those who resent female priests. These men are usually more critical and are likely to monitor...
subordinate co-workers. By looking closer at Svea’s quotation below the conclusion is that Kanter’s idea, of how these male colleagues’ deals with power, certainly is applicable in Svea’s life.

... one of my male colleagues, the other priest, was working with the High School nearby but he forbid me to go there since he alone had started the project there and he had good contacts, he did not want anybody else to go there, “you cannot come here and destroy what I have built up here”, he gave me no other reason...

I believe power does have an effect in Svea’s experienced situation above. A reason for that could be that men, like her colleague, can feel threatened and sometimes portrayed as a failure by women’s accomplishments and therefore behaves in this way, (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 81). This is also evident in the book Äntligen stod hon i predikstolen (Hössjer Sundman, page 178) which talks about how men in power is threatened by subordinate female who sometimes possess more knowledge, competence and experience. The lack of insight from these men not to use these recourses to their advantage is again shown through Svea’s experience.

Everyone had to use the small resources which had been given to us and when I look back on it I think it is a bit strange; a third priest came along (me), willing to help in both youth work and with Sunday services but instead of utilizing those two extra hands I was excluded, “no, you are not welcome here”...

The other type of man that Hanna and Svea have met is the one who has a theological conviction. For the sake of his organizations policy he puts his personal believes aside and can work alongside female priests without any appearing conflicts. Kanter means that these men have more power since they obey the rules and also due to the fact that their work place is male-dominated and thus these men are in majority. Kanter claims that these men tend to co-operate with subordinate colleagues because their position is not at risk, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 70). Yet again we can see this is true for in the experience of Svea

When working together you get closer to each other and get to discuss these questions and life in general and it is so interesting and one becomes so happy when they, as a privet person of duty, voluntarily receives communion from me, they did not have to... that makes me so happy...

Svea

Some supporters of resentment of female priests tend to hide behind their biblical conviction as an excuse for underlying aspects of power in discrimination. Men who put their beliefs aside don’t have any problems
working with women. This is clearly applied today as seen in Svea’s situations above.

4.7 Discrimination- a common phenomenon

The two statements made above by Svea are interesting in the way that her reaction reviles the attitude she is carrying towards this kind of situation. The quotation is to me an indication of something being beyond normality and daily routines of her life. It is clear that the experience of sharing communion with a male colleague is especially joyful to her. The underlying appreciation of her being treated equally is clearly not expected by Svea, looking at her reaction. This problem is, as made clear earlier in this thesis, a matter of working environment, which can be carried out by discrimination, and not an issue that can be explained or defended through theological conviction. Discrimination can be evident through various signs and situations and the structural explanation is shown through statistics; women in minority tend to experience a greater deal of discrimination than those in majority, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 86). Svea’s experience of discrimination is according to her own definition a result of resentment of female priests.

*I came to a isolated congregation located on the countryside in the north part of Sweden and I think that matters because if one is surrounded by other colleagues and have them closer I think it is more difficult to have this attitude and opinion and especially to put it into practice, but now there was no one to react, I had no other colleagues...*

Her quotation affirms the idea that being in minority can be a result of a higher level of experienced discrimination. More importantly studies show that discrimination is not a rare experience among women, it is in fact frequent, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 88). A recent study show that 60% of women working as priests in The Church of Sweden have experience of discrimination, (Hössjer Sundman 2008, page 40). Svea realizes this and tells me during the interview that she thinks it is important to bring light to this issue in a thesis since she believes she shares this experience with many women, and looking to the above study- her intuition was right.

Discrimination can be explained through structural factors in an organization. Even in organizations where the number of men and women is balanced, women have been the victim of discrimination and this supports the thought of structure being the determined aspect, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 88). The discrimination Svea met can be described in two ways and have been accumulate from two of her work placements. Male colleagues or vicar did as described earlier, not recognize the effort and job she put down in the first
congregation where she worked and this can be defined as discrimination. The congregation she currently is working in is discriminating her through low salary. In a previous study these two aspects where most common when experiencing discrimination, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 86).

I am not happy with my salary; I earn less than what a newly graduated priest does. It is because I have been a stay-at-home-mom for 4 years and I have come behind in the salary development and according to law it is illegal. Those who graduated 10 years after me hold a better salary than me. I think it is due to the maternal leave and it is a question of gender since it is the women who usually take care of the children. I don’t think the same thing would have happened if I was a man since it did not occur the first few years I was at home, it annoys me greatly.

Note that Svea believes it is due to gender issues and does not mention the result of structural factors, which could be said, is the underlying reason for gender differences. According to Hanna, who is engaged in the union, Svea’s situation is unusual

Since I have a great deal of insight in this issue, and check-ups are constantly carried out by the union to discover possible discrimination, locally as well, therefore I can say that gender is not an issue when dealing with salary discussion, salary does not differ because of gender...

To bring light to the contradicting statements between Hanna and Svea we can look at how to define priesthood by salary. As stated earlier on in this thesis, history tells us that women have been excluded from positions such as military, judges and priesthood- all which can be considered as high paid jobs, (one could claim that numbers of years in education could be the measurement for definition and since the seminary school is five years, priesthood could be considered as a high paid job). The theory that the public patriarchal society exists and that this has the effect on women being segregated to low paid jobs could be connected to priesthood (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 76). If this is true, the conclusion could be drawn that female priests are (or at least have been), excluded from priesthood because of their gender. This seems to be a dilemma of structural and gender factors combined, but a different dimension of this matter arise when looking closer; what speaks against this are the high percentages of women studying in seminary today. As mentioned, statistics show that 70% of the students studying on the seminary are women but only one third is in labor market thus far (URL 1). This will instead support the thought of priesthood becoming a “female job” and according to some theorists - salary might drop. Some men appose women working in their field because they believe that the overall salary will decrease due to women’s
presence in “their” industry, but this attitude is not found among the men in this thesis, (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 81, 128). Gerd Lindgren also touches the topic of male-dominated work placements. As seen in this thesis The Church of Sweden is an organization in transformation, but today it is still dominated by men, with percentage up to two thirds being men. Lindgren’s theory about Gender Segregation Processes means that the two components closeness and differences -creates a gender system of power, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 79-80). Again we see that power is a dominant factor when women are in subordinate positions. Will this change when women become the dominant gender in priesthood? That is a question we have to follow closely the upcoming years. Again, Hanna is sceptical; she does not believe gender plays a role when it comes to salary

   But when it comes to the issue of salary one can hear “it is going to become a job dominated by women and the salary will drop” and I don’t think that argumentation is very logical- it is weak in many ways. I believe that the salary development was not that great even when men dominated this job...

Hanna

Note that Hanna does not recognize her job as male-dominated any longer, furthermore she would probably not agree on priesthood being a high paid job since she does not recognizes the history of salary development. Adam and Isak, on the other hand, discuss the possible effect of this issue.

   There are more women than men today that are studying to become a priest; it is clearly and quickly becoming a "female job"

Adam

   During the education women were numerically superior, but in the life of the church it was less women. When a few year have passed the labor market will eventually catch up”

Isak

Discrimination is a common phenomenon and it is due to structural facts such as minority. We can establish the fact that the majority of my male informants do recognize this job becoming female-dominated in the nearest future. Their statements are too vague to draw any conclusion from regarding whether or not they believe salary will drop.

4.8 Minority position- an advantage

Being a minority group within the organization can have several effects on the individual. In The Church of Sweden women are in minority if looking nationwide. According to Hanna’s statement above assumptions can be made
that she does not experience her organization as male-dominated, as already mentioned (Wahl et al. 2001, page 71). Malin is of contrary opinion and would not agree with Hanna, she brings out some interesting details about her views on the experienced minority aspect

...at the same time one can get a lot out of being a young female priest cause priesthood is associated with so many preconceived notions and prejudices; that being a priest should only be older men such as Emil in Lönneberga type of priests and if one breaks the norm by being both young and woman one has also broken down many walls which people carry, simply by being who you are and those people might have seen many obstacles otherwise, so overall I think it is not so often I look upon being a priest and a women in a negative way

Malin

Earlier research supports Hanna’s experience, which shows that even when resentment is being experienced by a minority group, in this example female priests, the positive experience of being in minority tends to be the dominant feeling among these people, (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 80). This statement can also be seen in the book Det ordnar sig where a previous study also show findings of minority groups experiencing advantages with their lack of numeric dominance (page 117). Malin is experiencing positive effects on her being in minority, she shares this with previous studies made in the field.

4.9 Structure sets limitations

Kanter talks about structure within an organization and claims that it is the structure that gives the worker opportunities to develop and to move towards a higher position. These possibilities vary from organization to organization but also between different positions. Kanter claims that these structures are what ultimately determine a person’s ability to make a career and again that it is not gender in itself that is the main factor. (Wahl et al. 2001, page 68) (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 79). In the collected data I have found interesting statements from the informants talking about these mechanisms. Many of the priests see difficulties expanding and/ or developing within their current position, this could be seen as an evidence for Kanter’s theory being true in this case. Some of them are positive when it comes to making a career by changing position and moving towards a job with more responsibilities and leadership, while many of them have a more negative standpoint and lets us know that one of the few ways to make a career within The Church of Sweden is by taking on the position of being a vicar, which always includes staff responsibility. Having the definition of The Church of Sweden being influenced by the organizational model Bureaucracy is evident in this explanation of career making. The Church of Sweden is shaped by a hierarchy system and a Bureaucracy organization. The consequences of this structure
provide the individual with the basic conditions which inevitably controls his/hers possibilities and limitations. Isak talks about his possibilities and limitations when it comes to making a career

I do not have any possibilities to develop in my current position but if I change position within the church I do have opportunities. It is a bit limited though, if one wants to make a career there is not so many options... there is the possibility of becoming a vicar, but it’s always combined with a responsibility of staff manager. If one would like to make a career without becoming a boss, there are not so many roads to go down... That I believe is quite limiting and boring.

Hanna shares Isak’s standpoint and would like to see more specialized positions within the Church. Today The Church of Sweden offers the position of being a regular priest with focus on the congregation (komminister), on school, hospital or a focus on business and corporation. Hanna would like to see more options for a career within this organization since I believe she also thinks the conditions are limiting

I can see that The Church have a lot of work to do, I would like to see more specialized positions so that the Church would utilize the gifts and talents that many priests hold. Today there are few ways to take on a career within the Church, one could be a priest with a focus on congregation or responsibilities of a diocese and then there is the position of a vicar, but it always includes a responsibility of staff... But everyone is certainly not called to become a staff manager...

Malin shares their concern when it comes to developing within her current position. Furthermore she talks about the down side of the career possibilities offered within The Church

I think it is quite difficult to keep ones current position and yet develop, because it is not easy to change responsibilities and tasks considering the other positions in the team, it is like a puzzle. It is just to realize that one can only pursue the position of being a vicar, and I have no such ambition what so ever. Well, one can make a career, but it is a pre-decided road and within an already decided framework, with given hierarchies.

Isak, Hanna and Malin all agree on the difficulty of developing within their current position and how pre-decided their career already is. The structure sets limitations and possibilities in their current positions just as Kanter suggests, in this issue I cannot see a distinction between genders in my data, but this has thus far mainly been discussed on a general level. The informants have not talked about the career in a personal manner and we are yet to discover differences in gender regarding possibilities in career, if experienced.
4.10 Pursuing a career- not gender related

Malin is struggling with her working conditions being of other kind than what is described in her working description, as already pointed out. She has had to take on tasks that would normally be carried out by a youth worker or a kitchen assistant. This in combination with her being a woman indicates that she has a subordinate position within The Church as well as in her working place. Malin’s attitude towards making a career can be explained through her own words as following

> There are plenty of jobs to apply to and I don’t think my age or my gender is of any hindrance. I do not want to become a vicar, never in my life, it is the last thing I would like to do...

Looking at the two above statements, she seems to realize that the structure and hierarchy of the organization she is working in is what determines her possibilities and limitations when pursuing a career. Kanter would explain Malin’s behavior with the argument that it is the structure that leads her into this attitude more so than gender. Malin has a subordinate position and therefore she creates an attitude towards her career making that differs from her colleges in a stronger position, (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 79). Moreover Kanter suggests that individuals that find themselves in subordinate positions usually have low self-esteem and also underestimates their own capabilities and competes, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 68). This is clearly found in Malin’s interview material

> My security in being a priest has decreased and I, yes, I think the competence I posses is weaker, and in areas like that now a days...

A parallel theory to Kanter’s suggestion that the structure is of importance when discussing career opportunities is seen in the book Äntligen stod hon i predikstolen. Hössjer means that gender is what determines a person’s interest in “climbing the ladder”. Women are less inclined to pursue a career than men are, that is the explanation of the low percentages of women working as vicars (Hössjer Sundman, 2008, page 198). When asked what differs in gender within The Church of Sweden Malin thinks that men have a stronger preference than women to pursue a career. The statistics show females that hold the position of a vicar in 2007 varies (depending on diocese) between 7 to 30 %. But in my data this gender difference in career interest was not clear. The reluctant attitude towards pursuing a career was shared both by male and female in my study. As shown above, Malin was hesitant moving towards a career and Tomas would agree;
Right now I have no such ambitions of pursuing a better-paid job or a position with more power; I really am not in need of that.

The conclusion in this matter is therefore; if gender is the factor in this issue-it does not have any support in my data, also due to the fact that the other women, Svea and Hanna, did not have the same attitude as Malin towards a career.

I am interested in areas such as organizational issues and staff responsibilities and there are courses within The Church that equips one to become a vicar and there are specially designed course that encourages women. I would like to study these...these issues interests me and I would like to grow into a vicar position.

Svea

If I look to my own career I would like to do research and I would take leave from my current priest position and study theology and after that I would consider, I would like to have, it would be interesting to try some sort of staff manager position..

Hanna

The conclusion is thus; Malin’s statement could be interpreted and connected to structural factors, due to her negative attitude towards a career, but this was not evident in the other women’s interviews. Hence, a factor such as gender or structure does not differentiate the informants’s view of their own interest in pursuing a career.

To continue on the matter career, women’s role as a vicar is in the spotlight in some of the interviews. It appears to me like the general attitude towards women in higher positions are different compared to their male colleagues; this becomes clear during the interview with both Adam and Svea. Adam talk about his personal experiences with female vicars and his thoughts on this issue show great disparity in gender.

Women have a harder time both becoming a vicar and maintaining their position; it’s harder because not so many women want to pursue a vicar position...

Adam continues to describe the problem for women in vicar positions as following

...if I look to other female colleagues who has had a negative experience, and I have not made an analysis of the problem, but it seem like it is more difficult to be taken seriously, to have people listen to you, to practice power...
Furthermore he believes the majority studying on the seminary school today is women but the majority of vicars and bishops still are men, this concerns Adam who would like to see a more equal number of male and female in all positions. He believes there are still great obstacles and difficulties associated with this issue and thinks it is because we are too narrow-minded. This mindset Adam talks about is being confirmed by Hössjer Sundman when he underlines that people today still have, both in church and in other institutions in society, expectations of having the leader be a man (Hössjer, Sundman 2008, page 198). The association people carry- that leaders are men, with the combination of low percentages of female vicars could result in what Kanter calls homosocial reproduction. This phenomenon is created when men in recruiting positions choose men as for example vicars. The explanation is conformity, and simply means that security in choosing a candidate that are similar to oneself is the determining factor, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 107). It is important to be aware of that the experience of Adam in this matter is not first hand- he is himself a man and interprets his female colleague’s conception of their role as (female) vicars. A factor such as gender does not differentiate the informants’s view of their own interest in pursuing a career. Men are associated with vicar positions and structural factors are a probable consequence in this issue due to homosocial reproduction.

4.11 Three women- three structural factors

As mentioned in the paragraph literature review Kanter talks about three structural factors that become visible when a woman is in a minority-leader position. Before discussing this deeper I will point out that this discussion is not only applicable on women as vicar, which is what Adam foremost, talks about, but also on regular female priests positions. This could in that case be applicable to my female informants; Svea, Hanna and Malin, with the argumentation of priests being leaders but not necessarily staff managers. Priesthood is related to tasks such as leading the congregation to growth, both by individual guidance and percentage wise. Tomas, Isak and Hanna labels priesthood as being a leader position

*I believe that I can make it possible for the congregation to grow and where people can meet each other and God, I have an assignment to run certain things forward...*

*Isak*

*One is supposed to lead the congregation in prayer and in service; it is the priest’s assignment to make sure growth can take place in the congregation...*

*Hanna*
There has been many scientists debating on weather a leader at all times necessary are a manager and weather a manager necessarily is a leader. Now research is showing that this is not the case, hence the conclusion can be drawn to my informants being priests and leaders (Wahl et al. 2001 page 100).

Now back to where we started to talk about Kanter’s ideas of structural factor in women’s leadership. The three women I interviewed each have a tendency towards one of these factors. Assimilation can be described as a female stereotype being projected on the woman and leads her into taking on that label which indirectly creates limitations on how she is able to show her competence. This is transparent in Malin’s life. As mentioned earlier she had troubles with her work description and had to take on tasks that did not belong to her job as a priest.

...so I have had to take on those tasks quite a bit and during a few years now I have felt that I am not a priest, I am a youth leader that is in charge of Sundays service every other week...It feels like, this is not what I am supposed to do, its not my actual job really...I have struggled with this; what is my role as a priest, really, and I think this might both be a gender issue as well as a generation issue. I have cooked food surprisingly much for being a priest and I don’t think my older colleagues have done that as much... It has been expected of me and I have done it without any argumentations, I have never said no...

Malin expresses this issue in a direct way, she is aware of this being a problem of gender and/or age and she realizes it is expected of her although it is not included in her working description. As she says herself; she takes on the tasks on her own without arguing. Kanter’s idea about assimilation is, in this part of Malin’s life and behavior, very true from my point of view. She takes on the stereotype projected on her and although she does not seem to like it, she does not say no. According to Hössjer Sundman this is a common problem, when talking about how women and men differ in their role as priests. Women are more likely to have these expectations projected on them and to meet them to a larger extent. He mentions kitchen tasks such as making sure the coffee pot is filled and clearing the table etc. Malin is bothered by this and asks herself why she is expected to do this when she, as well as her colleges, does not have an education in cooking for example, (Hössjer Sundman 2008, page 36).

Visibility is explained through the woman’s pressure to perform better than her male colleges; since she is in minority she has the attention towards her.
Looking closer at Hanna’s job description and her working conditions we can see that she has a lot on her plate. If this is for the reason of visibility; that she has the attention towards her and has to perform better is hard to say, but one can claim through following statements that she certainly has difficulties with overtime.

At first a man held this position and the title was “youth leader”, he had the focus towards schoolwork and when I applied to this job the working description had been extended. It had now become a job with the title “priest” and with the focus of not only school but also children, youth, families and towards the congregation with all that is included such as Sunday services, funerals, baptism, and all the regular stuff. What needs to be done has to be done and that includes a lot of overtime. At the same time priorities has to be made because otherwise one becomes a poor priest since there are so much to be done and the risk is that nothing is done properly...

Reading between the lines one can assume that Hanna’s feeling about becoming a ”poor priest” is a great worry of hers. She tries to make priorities to lower the risk of losing quality in her role as a priest and this could be interpreted as the result of visibility. This analysis is based on interpretation and when comparing her conditions with the male priests interviewed there are no clear differences but the fact that she is in minority (at her workplace and in the organization nationwide, not in her current diocese) can be a possible reason for this effect visibility to be explained.

The majority vs. minority relation is in focus when talking about the third factor Contrast that Kanter brings up. The problematic relation occurs when the male-dominated group is threatened by a newcomer; the woman. It is not only the woman, who brings uncertainty to the group; it is the fear of losing the values and culture of the group (Wahl et al. 2001, page 71, 108-109). Svea’s experiences with the resentment of female priests can be an example of this. As already pointed out, she came to an isolated small congregation with two male colleges, in other words she was in minority.

...and I was not welcome but yet they told me to be present on the Wednesday meeting at 9.30 sharp and I was supposed to be ”funny and nice” as they said...and all those years of ignoring me, when we gathered for discussions my opinion became totally irrelevant, the behavior between them that made me quiet, it has taken a long time to work this through with my therapist...

The men at Svea’s previous work place treated her badly because they were threatened by her presence and where afraid they would lose their dominance and atmosphere in the group. What we have seen so far is that the women all
have been victims of the structural powers carried out by men and/or organizations in one way or the other.

4.12 Women are like a wardrobe…

The following passage is not to be confused with a direct experience of a female priest. This is simply based upon the experience of one of the interviewed male priests who has been in contact with female priest’s colleagues and heard their story first hand. It is an interesting discussion in which support can be found in literature but since my aim and limitation is towards priests and not vicars there is in my data nothing that can give direct support to this quotation. It is still relevant since it is a true experience and beliefs of one of my informants.

I think women to a greater extent bring their job with them home and there is a saying that “women are like a wardrobe and men are like a chest of drawers”. Women have one door and one space, which hold everything. If something happens at work it effects everything and if something happens at home, a sick child, it effects everything at work, one does not have as easy of a time to switch between the role as a parent, employee, daughter or wife while the man can be portrayed as a chest of drawers; he goes to work and opens one drawer, he goes home and closes it and opens another drawer as husband or father.

Adam continues with his thoughts about what differs him from his female colleagues and stresses the fact that women more often worry at night.

The man sleeps at night while women can lie awake worrying about their children or how to meet the next conflict at work. This is how I see it, the women has to answer for themselves how they experience the situation…

Adam shows great insight of not carrying this interpretation of the situation first hand; lastly he leaves the discussion open by giving the women a chance to explain her view of the issue. There are several important researchers who would agree with his statement that women in a higher position (may it be a priest who can be defined as a leader, or a vicar with staff responsibilities) tend to stress more than a man would in that position. It is a combination of the woman’s home environment and their working environment and they experience a great deal of pressure within their role as a female leader (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 155, 162). According to Wahl and her colleagues men also experienced stress in their jobs, but for women it can include two additional factors, those of family responsibilities and also the fact that women often are in minority as a leader in their workplace, (Wahl et
This result is consisting of Adam’s experience with female priests/vicars and the assumption that gender differences are a clear fact in this situation. Women are like a wardrobe and men are like a chest of drawers.

4.13 Leader skills- preferably soft and caring

Since we have already made clear that priests are leaders it is valuable to take a closer look to see if there are any experienced differences in men and women’s leader skills. Some researchers say that there are no significant differences in gender regarding leader skills while a few scientists emphasize the small differences they do see (Wahl et al. 2001, page 158). Since observation was not a part of this method it is difficult to analyze this aspect of priesthood, but there are a few interesting thoughts from the informants that I would like to stress. When asked about differences in leadership both Malin and Hanna bring up their reluctant and hesitant attitude they have towards the stereotypical female characteristics a priest “should” possess.

I strongly dislike when people say “it is so nice having a female priest since they bring such a caring and soft atmosphere” and I can feel that this way of talking is devastating because one does not take personality into consideration of being a determine factor, many women can be straight forward and maybe also caring but I have a hard time categorizing certain characteristics being “female”.

Hanna

Malin have also met this way of looking at a female priest

This goes along with what I said from the beginning, that women are in general more soft and dealing with more social aspects, a women does emphasize different values in a sermon than a man does, women might not even be considered in educating situations such as bible study. But I do not experience the differences being so significant... I do believe I should have more bible study in my job description, because I do not have that role right now...

These stereotypes of how a female priest should act is not only experienced by Hanna and Malin, it is also brought up by Hössjer who claims that prejudice and expectations on female priests is of that very same character; being “womanly”. What does it stand for? Words like soft and caring is common in this discussion, as seen in the statements from my informants. A leadership carried out by a women is supposed to be more of a soft leadership while a man is expected to be more direct and strong, (Hössjer Sundman 2008, page 198). Certain jobs are often related with either male or female attributes and this gives the minority group a feeling of being looked upon as “womanly” or
“manly” in their job. For example a female priest would be looked upon as being manly since priesthood is male-dominated (Alvesson, Billing 1999, page 84). Lindgren claims that women tend to take on either one of three characteristics in which they show ways to handle the situation. These strategies are developed mainly due to the minority situation women find themselves in. One of the strategies is described through when a woman tries to emphasise the similarities she possesses with the majority group- the men. (Wahl et al. 2001, page 79-80). I believe this is what Malin does when she claims that the differences in gender are not so significant, maybe she does not want to emphasise the differences that are there. Because clearly one can in her description find differences in how a male vs. a female priest is expected to be. Hirdman would in this discussion most likely bring up the discussion of her A vs. B model with the argument and the emphasises on the contrary positions of gender shown in this dialogue, where partition and differences defines gender.

There are no indications of women in my study having the expectations of being manly projected by outsiders. Instead Malin is one to bring up her attitude in this matter- she is more likely to identify herself with men. When talking about priesthood being considered as a manly job, according to this theory, it is in contrary with the opinion of my informant Svea. She believes that since the job has a social aspect it should logically be considered as a female job. It is interesting that Svea brings light to this discussion since priesthood is a male-dominated field and includes a leader position which usually is associated with men, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 100). As stated above some researchers believe women bring something different to a workplace simply by being of another gender, (Wahl et al. 2001, page 117), this is evident for Isak’s thoughts in what a woman can bring to his working environment

When in counselling it is important to have both gender represented and it is a big resource and asset to have both men and women being member of staff, especially looking back 50 years...

When women enter the field of previously male defined work placements they tend to take on the role as a, (Hirdman 2001, page 66-67). A brief summary of a can be described as a women on a continuum, a scale always compared and measures in relation to men, (Hirdman 2001, page 28-35). This is evident when looking at two of Malin’s incident with people’s reactions of her being young, woman and a priest

It is quite interesting...when I came home to a family for a baptism their three year old daughter was really shy and afraid and she cried while the mom said “you don’t have to be afraid, it’s only a girl-
Another time when I was working and the event ended with a summer café and the vicar could not come because of changed plans people said “well, it’s the girl-priest today, I guess that’s alright too” one does not really have the same status...

It is important to not look beyond the aspect of generation differences and job responsibilities which most likely can have an impact on this issue, like Malin herself realizes. But this does not necessarily exclude the fact that gender also can be a consequence of this issue. The female priests are being compared with the male priests, just as on Hirdman’s continuum. In comparison it seems like it is not more than “ok” for them to be replacing the vicar or the male priests. Malin is in these situations a victim of the a-women in today’s society. Researchers as well as Malin and Hanna claim that a female leader is often looked upon as one who should carry soft and gentle leader skills. Priesthood being a womanly job is being debated and contrary opinions are brought to the table. Malin is compared with male leadership and thus the victim of an a-woman.

4.14 Conclusions- a summary

In the field of priesthood women’s initial conditions are being determined by structural factors such as the government and the type of organization The Church of Sweden is labeled as. Through history and the bible women have had a subordinate position and men have had access to the public word, which is a result of today’s society as well. Women portrayed in the Bible had the form of the stereotype a, constantly compared with men. The foundation of the resentment of female priests could be said relies on a weak theological standpoint since they do not take context into consideration. Hence, a suggestion to discard the theological conviction and defining the issue as solely a working environmental problem is to be considered.

Discrimination can in this thesis be seen as a structural issue. Variation in power is the dominant factor for men discriminating women in their workplace. Discrimination is evident both through salary but also by the lack of appreciation in job effort. The structural explanation is shown through statistics both considering that women in minority experience discrimination but this is also evident in a workplace where a balance of gender is apparent. Priesthood becomes female-dominated although female priests have been excluded from priesthood because of their gender. It is too vague to draw any conclusion regarding whether or not salary will drop due to this phenomenon. The positive experience of being in minority is a common experience among women in a work place and in my thesis it is evident in Malin’s life.
The structure sets limitations and possibilities in the priest’s current positions. A factor such as gender does not differentiate the informants’s view of their own interest in pursuing a career. The negative attitude towards career was shared both by male and female in my study. Individuals that find themselves in subordinate positions have low self-esteem and also underestimate their own capabilities and competence- we can see this being true for Malin. Furthermore priesthood can be defined as a sort of leader position and not always connected to staff manager responsibilities. The association people carry- that leaders are men, with the combination of low percentages of female vicars could result in homosocial reproduction.

Women in leader positions suffer from three structural factors. Women are more likely to experience projected expectations on them and assimilation is true for Malin’s life since she takes on the stereotype projected on her. Visibility means that the woman has the attention towards her and she is forced to perform better at work. This could be true for Hanna although it is hard to say, she does have difficulties in priority making and wants to be a great priest. Although when comparing her conditions with the male priests interviewed there are no clear differences. The men at Svea’s previous work place treated her badly because they were threatened by her presence and where afraid they would lose their dominance and atmosphere in the group. This is supported by the idea of contrast. Kanter’s three structural factors seem to play a role but all three factors is not evident in all three women’s lives.

Women in my study are struggling with their working description. These difficulties were not found in the interviews with the male priests; hence the assumption of gender difference in this issue is to be drawn. Stress is a women’s problem, especially for women in a higher position. Women tends to stress more than a man would in their position, due to family responsibilities and also the fact that women often are in minority as a leader in that workplace. This is supported by Adam’s indirect experiences of his women’s colleagues, but is not evident in my female informant’s interviews. There are expected differences in leadership between men and women. A leadership carried out by women is supposed to be more of a soft leadership while a man is expected to be more direct and strong. Words like soft and caring is common in this discussion. This is shown through Malin and Hanna’s statements. Furthermore research show that a female priest would be looked upon as being manly since priesthood is male-dominated. There are no indications of women in my study having this being projected by outsiders. When women enter the field of previously male defined work placements they tend to take on the role as a and this is carried out by Malin who is struggling
with her status being lower than her vicar. The female priests are being compared with the male priests, just as on Hirdman’s continuum. Age and gender might both be a consequence of this issue. Contrary intentions between genders are shown were the male priests come to the conclusion to pursue their future job earlier than the female priests did. All three women where at first determined to walk a different path in life, with jobs in areas such as technique, biology and law in mind. Two of the women, Svea and Malin, struggle with their identity as priests. Two of the men, Tomas and Adam, describe their identity as a continuum on a scale with different levels of male-female attributes. Gender differences in my data are transparent when it comes to their role as priests. The male priests tend to have a more established thought of themselves and the female priests tend to fluctuate between uncertainty and confusion.

The main differences in gender due to a structural consequence are the experience of career opportunities and discrimination. It is clear that the structure of The Church of Sweden limits ones career opportunities within a position but also the lack of higher alternative positions. Discrimination is being projected mainly on the women and is also due to structural factors. Power is the main resources male colleagues use to discriminate either through salary or through lack of recognition in ones job performance.

The findings in this thesis are due to gender differences as well as structural differences in which a gender dilemma is included. Some of these conclusions are based on a single informant’s statement while some conclusions are based on several priests’ experiences. These are all established and supported by previous research and/or statistical findings and interpreted through a critical eye.
5. Concluding discussion

The result and conclusions found in previous paragraph will be discussed further in this text. The conclusions drawn are based on above support from previous research and/or from theorists in the field and will in this passage not be further referred to; instead discussion only will be the base for this passage.

The aim of this qualitative comparative inquiry was to examine gender structure within one diocese of The Church of Sweden. The organization has been studied and analysed through theories about bureaucracy and hierarchy. Men and women’s conditions were the overall focus and portrayed through the informants experiences of gender. In during so the results show disparity between gender in some issues, such as identity, choice of profession and experiences in leader positions. Included in the aim was also the perspective of women’s role as priests and this has had an impact of the results. Discrimination and expectations of female priest’s leader skills are factors in which women are portrayed differently than men and in some cases treated unjustly. I believe that the result of this study reflects the aim formulated and the ambition of having the conclusions drawn contribute to the field of Sociology.

A key component in the result has been the relation between minorities vs. majority groups. In discussions such as discrimination and leader positions this has been of great significance. The organization The Church of Sweden is in a transformation stage right now, where women are about to enter as the dominant gender. How will male priests react when this is taking place? What effect will it have on the women? The dilemma of salary has been brought as a component in this issue but the direction in which it will lead is still unclear. History tells us that salary might decrease when women take over the field, but are we in a different stronger position today? I believe that, arguably, since priesthood could be seen as a manly job (due to the leader position it holds and the male-dominance) or as a womanly job (because its focus lies on social aspects) it could develop either way. Adam, whose worry lies in the reproduction of women becoming priests and men becoming vicars, shares the concern I do have. This is an issue that, if taking place, ultimately will maintain women in a subordinate position. This worry is being met by my informant’s equal interest (or lack of interest) in pursuing a career, which encourages my thoughts for the future. Another enjoyable piece in my result regarding minority vs. majority is Malin’s experience of being young and female. Hearing her talk about the strengths there are in not following the norm of society take over. The positive reactions she has met as a result of
that makes me realize that words such as common, ordinary or normal is not always what we should try to achieve.

The Bible is a very sensitive matter and the interpretation of The Bible is even more so a topic of vulnerability. Handling this in a delicate manner is therefore crucial. The bold suggestion of discarding the idea of the resentment of female priest is therefore to be considered as just that- a suggestion. It is neither to be confused with the actual belief but instead the method of interpretation, which is supported by the technique Hermeneutic. On this basis the issue was dealt with, and labeled as, working environment issues such as discrimination. The argumentation for this conclusion could have been developed and looked deeper into if time would have allowed repetitive data collection. It is a matter in which I would like to bring more focus to the opposing opinion (the resentment of female priests) to the table as well, but unfortunately this did not emerge from my data. The resentment of female priests and women’s injustice inevitably goes hand in hand due to the history although they do not always interrelate. It would be interesting to see an analysis made by the separation of the two, if even possible. In my thesis the consequence of the interview guide resulted in the two topics intertwined. The interview guide was created in the initial state of the study when the aim was not yet set permanently. I did not, at that time, fully realize the differentiation between the issue of resentment of female priests and working environmental issues such as women’s unfair conditions and discrimination due to structural factors. It has been interesting to see how much this inquiry has given in the form of a learning process, not only to the field I hope, but also to me as a researcher.

As stated in the passage analyze and result all three women in my study had a different future in mind. They where interested in areas typically (to me) known as the left side of the brain- technique, biology, law, etc. Furthermore these fields are typically male-dominated. This is also striking since I personally define priesthood being a job that demands a lot of creativity and inspiration- the esthetical right part of the brain. Malin says she defines herself with men rather than women. Could these components altogether be an indication of women, who define themselves as manly, being drawn to this profession? I do not have the answer to this question and support for this cannot be found in my data, but further speculation might lead to supplementary studies.

The conclusion of women being subordinate throughout history as well as defining the informants in my study subordinate, along with previous research pointing towards the same phenomenon makes me wonder; where is the spirit to fight this issue? Where is the willingness to be defined differently? This is a
question I do not have the answer to, but I do know it is out there, among all of you. This is a time for you to ask yourself, and I will let Hirdman have the last word;

How could/can women be satisfied by being described and treated as secondary?
(Hirdman 2001, page 75) Author’s translation.

In the aim formulated of this thesis women’s role as priests are said to be a component of the study and this emphasis came to be more dominant than expected. I wonder if women’s injustice portrayed in this study is experienced to the same extent as the reader presumably interprets it? Is this a fair picture of how these women in reality see their conditions? I do not believe so, but this is not to say that the result and findings presented are incorrect. Instead my suggestion is that women seldom want to admit their conditions being dependant on gender and/or structural issues. Maybe this is because the discussion about gender is a sensitive topic or because, if the explanation is structure, the individual cannot improve his/hers situation. This might be too intimidating to realize. I believe it is up to the scientific world to discover underlying patterns which people seem to repress in their daily lives. Is this due to the long time women have had to fight for equal conditions? In priesthood 50 years have passed since women was accepted into priesthood and today result from my study show that discrimination is experienced and common among women and that comparison between men and women are still taking place. Are people tired of the slow development? Or does one not experience this issue as a problem? In the interview with Malin she said that she did not see women’s difficulties since she did not choose to wear those glasses and in the interview with Hanna she let me know that she did not experience women’s injustice in her own life as dominant. How could these contrary statements vs. findings go hand in hand? Could it be explained through a lack of interest in this field or a lack of willingness to fight these issues?! This attitude is briefly described when talking about time sampling but speculations about what the cause might be is not deeper discussed. By speculating about the cause of this problem we can only go so far, instead to reach the core in this concern one needs to follow through with a major research project and ask the informants underlying and indirect questions to establish the true relation between the attitude among my informants and the results found in this thesis.

Today there are signs of women not being treated equally within The Church of Sweden. Svea’s statement about her happiness when a male priest colleague voluntarily receives communion from her tells us something about her daily expectations. I believe this is a sign of unequal treatment where
women are grateful and almost surprised if treated just. Unfortunately I believe that this is not only true for the organization The Church of Sweden, but rather a common phenomenon in society. It would be interesting to see if the Biblical conviction has created a deeper tradition of gender structure in The Church compared to other organizations, especially with The Conscience clause taking into account. I personally have great hopes for the future regarding women’s conditions in their work place, as well as in other institutions of the society. Even though women do not always seem to admit their subordinate position, I would like to think that this thesis has brought a further dimension to the issue studied; being that this study attempt was to seek a greater understanding of the interviewed priest’s reality and experiences.

5.1 Further studies

While transcribing data from the interviews several interesting issues came up to the surface and as I listened to the tape recorder I wrote down some of the areas I would recommend for further studies. The first topic of suggestion would be to examine women’s difficulties working as vicar. During the interview with Adam this concern was raised and discussed in the analyzing stage. It would be interesting to look deeper into this issue. Moreover my interest was caught by the hierarchy structure and bureaucracy organization The Church of Sweden. Comparing different positions such as bishops to deacons, priests to youth leaders is of relevance since assumptions about injustice arose during interviews.
6. References

Here follows a list of the references I have used in this thesis, both printed and web-based references have been used.

6.1 Printed references


6.2 Webb references

URL 1
Jubileum för kvinnliga präster
http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_1791645.svd
(2008-09-29)

URL 2
Hur många kvinnliga präster finns det?
http://www.svenskakyrkan.se/default.aspx?di=39533&ptdi=0
(2008-10-05)

URL 3
Kvinnlig sexualitet hotar
http://www.svenskakyrkan.se/default.aspx?di=112784
(2008-11-11)

URL 4
Stiften
(2008-11-23)
7. Appendix

These documents attached are the interview guides in both Swedish and English. This is of importance since the interviews were carried out in Swedish but the analysis written in English.

7.1 Swedish Interview guide

Intervjun

Bakgrundsfrågor
1. Ålder
2. Kön
3. Namn
4. Berätta om din tid innan du började läsa till präst!
   Hur såg dina uppväxtförhållanden ut?
   Var kommer du ifrån?
   Vilka erfarenheter har du innan du sökte till utbildningen?
   Vad har du upplevt?
5. Vad betyder ordet genus för dig?
   Hur ser du på genus inom kyrkans väggar?
6. Beskriv din erfarenhet av Svenska kyrkan!
   Hur länge har du jobbat inom Svenska Kyrkan?
   Har du jobbat inom andra stift/församlingar?
   Vilka positioner har du haft inom organisationen?
   Vilken position har du nu?

Utbildning
7. Berätta om vad som ledde fram till att du sökte prästutbildningen!
   När, hur och varför kom du på att du ville bli präst?
   Hur skulle du beskriva ordet kallelse? Är det ett ord du skulle använda för att beskriva din process?
   Var det en process att komma fram till din kallelse?
   Vilka hinder/fördelar fanns det?
8. Hur upplevde du som präststudent reaktionerna på ditt val av utbildning?
   Från vilka håll upplevde du detta?
   Vilket bemötande möttes du av?
   Hade några av de reaktionerna att göra pga. att du är man/kvinna tror du?
9. Beskriv din tid på utbildningen!
Vad upplevde du?
Vilka erfarenheter förvärvade du?
Vad tänkte och kände du gällande ditt utbildningsval och framtida yrke?
Var några av dessa tankar kopplat till genus?

10. Hur upplevde du atmosfären på utbildningen i förhållande till kvinnliga/manliga präster?
Öppen eller sluten atmosfär? Tolerant eller intolerant? Likgiltigt?
Hur förhöll sig lärarna till genus?
Vilken känsla fick du av lärarnas inställning till kvinnliga respektive manliga präster?
Hur lyftes rollen som kvinnlig respektive manlig präst fram under utbildningen?
Behandlades kvinnor och män olika/lika? Hur?

11. Vad var din upplevelse av kvinnoprästmotståndet under utbildningen?
Upplevde du något motstånd mot kvinnliga präster under utbildningstiden? Indirekt eller direkt!
Var det accepterat att uttalat vara kvinnoprästmotståndare under utbildningen?

**Arbetsvillkor**

12. Beskriv dina arbetsvillkor och möjligheter i din nuvarande tjänst!
Utgå från yrkesvardagen, hur är din verklighet i nuläget?
Beskriv hur du upplever dina karriär- och utvecklings möjligheter/hinder i yrket?
Berätta vad som ingår i dina arbetsuppgifter och hur det kommer sig! (Inriktning i tjänsten?) Eget val eller i arbetsbeskrivningen när du började?
Hur har du bemärkt av det eventuella behovet av föräldraledighet?
Vad har du i lön?

13. Vilka skillnader och likheter upplever du att det finns mellan kvinnor och män i prästyrket inom Svenska Kyrkan gällande arbetsvillkor?
Skiljer det sig lönomässigt mellan dig och dina kollegor? Hur kommer det sig? Beror det på kön tror du?
Upplever du att dina arbetsuppgifter skiljer sig från dina kvinnliga/manliga kollegor?
Varför/Varför inte?

14. Beskriv någon situation där du som manlig/kvinnlig präst har efterfrågats speciellt!
Är det i någon situation där en man respektive en kvinna efterfrågas speciellt? På ett positivt och/eller negativt sätt? Av vilka anledningar?

**Miljö**

15. Beskriv din situation på arbetsplatsen och i församlingen?
Hur ser ditt arbetslag ut? Kön, positioner, inriktningar, antal, etc.
Hur ser din situation ut med arbetskollegor? Jobbar ni i team eller ej?
Vilken typ av församling befinner du dig i? Storstads, liten, etc.

**Bibeln**
16. Hur upplever du och tolkar de texter där kvinnor och män framställs i bibeln?
   Hur ser du på de bibeltexter som berör tema genus?
   Var och vad står det i bibeln om kvinnors rättigheter inom kyrkan? Hur ställer du dig till det?
   Konfronterade/konfronterades du någon gång med dessa bibeltexter under utbildningen?
   Hur mötte du denna reaktion?
   Hur bearbetade du dessa texter?
   Hur upplevde du lärmarnas tolkning av dessa texter under utbildningen?

17. Berätta om samvetsklausulen?
   Märkte du nån skillnad när den togs bort?
   Hur tycker du att diskussionen kring detta ljuder bland präster i din närhet?
   Vad har den för koppling till bibeln?

**Genus i kyrkan**

18. Beskriv för mig hur du ser på dig själv i din yrkesroll!
   Ser du dig själv mer som präst eller mer som kvinna/man, vilket överväger?
   Berätta hur du tänker kring kvinnor i kyrkan, kvinnor som präster, kvinnor som ledare!
   Berätta hur du tänker kring män i kyrkan, män som präster, män som ledare!
   Vad har det inneburit för dig att fira 50-år för kvinnliga präster? Har det pratats mycket om det?

**Kvinnoprästmotstånd**

19. Beskriv dina upplevelser av kvinnoprästmotstånd?
   Från kollegor, församlingsmedlemmar och/eller kyrkoherdar Eller från annat håll?
   Berätta om bemötande från kollegor, församling, kyrkoherde i relation till att du är man/kvinna!
   Upplever du något motstånd mot kvinnliga präster i vardagen? I vilka situationer blir det tydligt?
   Upplever du någon extra hyllning av manliga/kvinnliga präster i vardagen? I vilka situationer blir det tydligt?
   Församlingens syn på kvinnliga präster, hur genomsyras det?
   Chefens syn på kvinnliga präster, hur genomsyras det?
   Hur upplever du/ (tror du att dina kvinnliga kollegor)/ andra kvinnliga präster upplever sin arbets situation med tanke på att prästyrket nationellt sätt är mansdominerat inom Svenska Kyrkan? (med 1/3 kvinnor och resten män)
   Vilka upplevelser har du av uttalade kvinnoprästmotståndare?
   Hur tror du en kvinnoprästmotståndare tänker?

7.2 English Interview guide

The interview guide

**Background questions**

1. Age
2. Gender

3. Name

4. Describe your life prior to you attending the seminary school!
   Tell me about your living conditions as a child?
   Where do you come from?
   What experience did you acquire prior to your priest education?
   What did you experienced in life?

5. How would you describe the word ”gender”?
   How do you define gender within The Church of Sweden?

6. Explain your experience within The Church of Sweden.
   How long have you been working with The Church of Sweden?
   Have you been positioned in a different diocese or position in your previous working experience?
   What position have you had within the organization?
   What position do you hold today?

Education

7. Tell me about the grounds that made you apply to the seminar?
   When, how and why did you know you wanted to become a priest?
   How would you describe the word ”calling”? Would you use such word to describe your process?
   Was it a process to figure out your calling?
   What obstacles and advantages where there?

8. How did you as a student on the seminary experience reactions on your choice of education?
   From whom?
   What reaction did you receive?
   Do you think any of those reactions coincides with you being a man/woman?

9. Describe your time as a student on the seminary!
   What did you experience?
   What experience did you acquire?
   What did you think and feel regarding your choice of education path and future profession?
   Did you relate any of those thoughts to gender issues?

10. How did you experience the atmosphere during the education regarding male/ female priests?
    Tolerant or intolerant? Open or closed atmosphere? Indifferent?
    How did the professors relate to gender?
    What feeling did you obtain from the professors attitude to female/ male priests?
    How was the role of male/ female priest portrayed during the seminary?
    Was there a difference in treatment between men and women? How?
11. What was your experience of resentment against female priests during the education?
Did you, direct or indirect, experience any resentment against female priests during the seminar?
Tell me about people you came across that did not accept female priests, how were they looked upon on the seminary?

**Working conditions**
12. Describe your working conditions and opportunity in your current job!
Describe your current working reality!
Describe your career and development opportunities / obstacles with your job!
What is your primarily focus in your job? Tell me about your work description!
Have you come across the need of maternity leave and what reactions did you meet?
What is your salary?

13. Do you experience any differences and /or similarities between men and women within priesthood regarding working conditions?
Is there a difference in salary between you and your colleagues? Why is that? Do you believe it has anything to do with gender?
Do you experience that your working tasks differ from your female/ male colleagues? Why/ Why not?

14. Describe a situation where you as a male/female priest have been sought after?
Is there any situation where a male or female has been especially asked for? In a positive or negative way? By what reasons?

**Environment**
15. Describe your situation on your work place and in your congregation?
What is significant for the member of staff you are surrounded with? Gender/ positions/ area of focus, amount etc
Describe the situation with your colleges, do you work in teams or not?
What type of congregation do you belong to? Inner city or rural?

**The Bible**
16. How do you experience and interpret the bible text where women and men are portrayed?
How do you look upon the bible text that talks about gender?
What does it say in the bible about women’s rights within the church? What is your opinion about it?
Where you confronted by these texts during your education? How did you meet that reaction?
How did you work on these texts?
What was your experience in the professor’s interpretations of these texts during the education?
17. Tell me about the conscience clause?
Did you notice any difference when it was removed?
How would you describe the attitude towards this discussion among priests in your surroundings?
What connection does it have to the bible?

**Gender in church**

18. Describe how you look upon yourself as a priest!
Do you look upon yourself firstly as a woman/ man or as a priest? 
Tell me how you think about women in church, women who are priests and leaders?
Tell me how you think about men in church, men as priests and leaders?
What has it meant for you to celebrate the 50th anniversary of acceptance of female priests?
Have you heard a lot of discussions about it?

**Resentment against female priests**

19. Describe your experience of resentment against female priests?
From colleges, congregation members, and/or vicar, or from others?
Tell me about how you have been treated from colleges, congregation, and vicar in relation to you being a man/ woman!
Do you experience any resentment against female priests in your daily life? In what situations does it occur?
Do you experience any favorisation towards male/ female priests in your daily life? In what situations?
How is the congregation’s attitude towards this issue clear?
How is the vicar attitude towards female priests clear?
What experiences do you have of outspoken people who are resentment of female priests?
What do you think is true for those peoples believe? How do they think?