Postsecular Rapprochement: A Strategic Model for Church Engagement in a Postwelfare, Post-regeneration Age

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Chester for the degree of Doctor of Professional Studies in Practical Theology

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Declaration

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.

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Abstract

Since the global financial crisis of 2008-9 and the deficit reduction measures introduced by the British government from 2011, a new strategic deinstitutionalized model of community engagement has begun to emerge to address issues of social justice and environmental concern. Cloke (2011) identifies this new space of engagement as 'rapprochement'. This research develops this concept, arguing that this organic, radical, social enterprise form of partnership offers the Established Church[1] a potential means to engage in community-based social action in a postwelfare, post-regeneration age. A redistribution of power that seeks to enable agency and release enterprise, innovation and hope is at the heart of this new community-based model of partnership. These innovative enterprises are particularly evident in inner urban areas, although it is a model also appropriate for suburban and rural communities.

This fresh model of partnership is a consequence of a developing nexus between rapprochement and austerity. Rapprochement emerges in what Habermas (2001 onwards) identifies as the postsecular. This acknowledges that religion, despite expectations to the contrary (Wilson 1982; Bruce 2002), continues to have a significant role in the public square. The global financial crisis and austerity measures imposed by the last two governments (2010-2015; 2015-2017) reflect a neo-liberal ideology leaving those least able to cope increasingly vulnerable and in need of support.

A hermeneutic ethnographic approach accesses the experiences of leaders engaged in public, private and third sector organizations in a time of on-going austerity and considers their knowledge and understanding of partnership working. Data consists of 14 interviews and is triangulated with participant observation in two partnerships identified as examples of rapprochement. Case study helps clarify understandings of this new form of partnership.

[1] Specifically the Church of England, though pertinent also to other mainstream denominations.

Dynamics characterizing these organic partnerships include a deep respect for hermeneutical integrity; a desire to create a sense of place, rather than space; a transformative form of hospitality and a style of leadership that enables the different stakeholders to acquire and develop a sense of agency. Innovative frameworks clarifying these dynamics include ideas of postsecularity, progressive localism, smart pluralism, and enablement. Alongside terms like personal responsibility, passion and vision, usual in partnership vocabulary, the research uncovered a more nuanced and sophisticated lexicon. This includes terms such as autonomy, brokering and process enablers.

Rapprochement primarily encapsulates a person's love for their neighbour. Those engaged in these partnerships practise a welcome engendering inclusivity, which offers a fresh theological understanding of hospitality. It also suggests a distinct theological understanding of leadership, espousing a model that draws others in, helping them to discover their gifts and constantly expanding and sharing leadership. This strategic deinstitutionalized model of partnership offers the Established Church an opportunity to join with others and to show, through praxis and community engagement, God's bias for the poor and his longing for their enablement.

Summary of Portfolio

Having taught for over twenty years in inner city Manchester I have learnt to care and be concerned for the ethnically diverse communities living there and particularly for those struggling in the margins of society. My initial purpose in undertaking this professional doctorate was to consider how the Established Church could respond in this context. The portfolio that precedes this thesis frames the way that surveying relevant literature and engaging with these communities have shaped and developed my understanding of the distinct role the church can, and should, now play, in inner urban areas, but also in suburban and rural communities.

In my literature review, I used a hermeneutical lens to explore the need for communities to celebrate the 'dignity of difference' and create an environment where 'strangers' can become 'neighbours'. It highlighted the challenge the church faces in finding ways to create spaces in which those without power are accepted, valued and able to attain their rightful place in society. In my publishable article, I suggested reappropriating a paradigm of hospitality, in which dialogue creates a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 2004), offers the church an opportunity to make a significant contribution in building cohesive communities celebrating difference. I also acknowledged that Cloke's (2011) emerging rapprochement of ethical praxis encourages the church to assume a more public role in society.

I identified an innovative network developing to assist the struggling Manchester Somali Women's Forum (MSWF) as an example of Cloke's concept. Working with these women, I realised the close link between leadership and power and considered this in my reflection on practice piece. I reflected that for the women to flourish, members of the network needed to work *with* them and not *for* them and thus enable them to find their voice.

In approaching my research design, I chose to focus on MSWF and the significance of rapprochement as a means of assisting these women and as a potential model that the Established Church could engage with in the hybrid culture of inner urban Manchester. Adopting an ethnographic approach, I developed a methodology that included participant observation, focus groups and interviews to investigate and evaluate these ideas. Soon after completing my research proposal, however, the Somali women stopped meeting but, retaining my commitment to Cloke's concept as a potential model for church engagement, I found another example of rapprochement to research and sought others actively engaged in inner urban communities to interview. Thus, my thesis critiques and develops notions of rapprochement, recommending it as a strategic model for church engagement in a postwelfare, post-regeneration age.

Introduction: Locating the problematic

In March 2011, the Manchester Somali Women's Forum (MSWF) organised and hosted an International Women's Day Celebration in the Parish Centre of a Roman Catholic Church in Moss Side, Manchester. More than two hundred and fifty people attended, many Somalians, but also people from other communities, including African Caribbean and Asian groups. The event comprised workshops, a display of Somali artefacts and a veritable feast of food, including *muuffo* (pancakes), *kalankal* (chicken) and *shigni* (green pepper salsa). As the Somali women shared their poetry and danced to the beat of the drum, there was a sense of excitement and enjoyment. Space only allowed a small number to participate in the dancing but the drumming was infectious and people clapped along even if they could not dance. For the Somali women, many of whom have arrived in Britain as asylum seekers and refugees, this was a celebratory occasion, and the enthusiastic and supportive comments of other attendees as they left suggested that they had found it an enriching experience.

My involvement with the event came after a Gingerbread worker[2], funded to work with the forum, had spoken about her work at the Rotary Club in Moss Side where I am a member. I expressed interest in her work and as a result, received an invitation to do a flower-arranging workshop with a group of the women so that they could create arrangements to sell at the International Women's Day event. I was concerned that as many of the women spoke very little English and I spoke no Somali, this might be a barrier. Yet, as the women watched me create three simple floral designs, it seemed that the flowers spoke for themselves, and when they began to produce their own arrangements, they sang traditional work songs and a real sense of camaraderie developed.

[2]Gingerbread is a UK charity that provides expert advice, practical support and campaigns for single parents.

MSWF was launched in December 2009 with financial support from agencies including Gingerbread and Oxfam. Its prime objective was to improve the wellbeing and prospects of Somali women living in the Manchester area. Initially, due to a lack of basic English skills, the women were reluctant to become involved, but as the extent of their complex needs was realised, a Somali professional collaborated in helping to find ways of addressing them. The forum started positively but the introduction of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government's first measures to address the country's deficit (2010) led to funding cuts for many organizations. This included, at the end of March 2011, the post of the Gingerbread worker supporting the forum disappearing. Oxfam's resources also became more restricted, and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, which the Somali women often had trouble accessing, ceased.

Without these resources, it seemed inevitable that this relatively new forum would flounder before it had even begun the task for which it had been established. However, a number of individuals who had helped at the International Women's Day Celebration recognized the dilemma and volunteered to help by joining the forum's executive committee, which then consisted primarily of a small group of Somali women. Several of these volunteers were Rotarians, including myself, and we used our contacts in local churches, schools and other community organizations to generate interest and harness support, which led to the setting up of an organic inter-sector network to work with the Somali women.

It was in the year prior to my becoming part of the MSWF network that I embarked on this Doctor of Professional Studies in Practical Theology. Having taught in Hulme for over twenty years, I already had a care for those living in the inner urban and I began to develop an understanding of the challenges faced by those living in the margins of society in a rapidly changing world (TH8002 portfolio). As an Anglican priest, I also began to explore what this might mean for the Established Church and the response it

might make. One aspect I had not considered at this stage was the impact that the global financial crisis of 2008-9 and the subsequent deficit reduction measures introduced from 2011 would have on poorer communities and the additional challenges this economic upheaval would present. It was only as I became actively involved with MSWF that I became more aware of the additional challenges this created for those seeking to support the disadvantaged.

I identified the organic network evolving to support MSWF as an example of 'rapprochement', a postsecular concept proposed by Paul Cloke (2011) to describe radical, innovative partnerships developing, particularly in inner urban areas, to support social justice issues (pp. 237-252). Building on Cloke's theory, I recognize rapprochement *as an emerging strategic deinstitutionalized social enterprise model of community engagement evolving organically in an age of on-going austerity at the heart of which is a redistribution of power that enables agency*. Dynamics that characterize this emerging model of partnership are:

- a deep respect for hermeneutical integrity, which allows the experience and wisdom of multiple stakeholders to interpret and shape processes of co-production
- a desire to create a sense of place, rather than space
- hospitality that is transformative, valuing the role of both host and guest
- a social entrepreneurial form of leadership that enables the various stakeholders to acquire and develop a sense of agency.

Innovative frameworks that help to clarify these dynamics include:

- postsecularity, which focuses on the evolving material, cultural and political relationships between the religious and the secular
- progressive localism, which describes spaces for those desiring to work for the benefit of the local community to come together

- smart pluralism (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007), which identifies ‘knowledge exchange’ as a way to achieve a synergy between stakeholders holding significantly different views
- enablement rather than empowerment, since, although the latter hints at giving the less privileged a greater responsibility in decision making, it is still closely bound to ideas of power. Enablement, on the other hand, speaks unambiguously of co-production and an environment that helps all to attain their potential as members of an autonomous group.

At the heart of these dynamics and innovative concepts lies a very simple mission, generated by austerity, but also by a wider cultural blurring of boundaries characterised by those elements of what we might call a postsecular pragmatism. This is a desire to re-connect people to people and public life back to deeper narratives of compassion, purpose and ethics (Baker 2016). The mission is to create spaces in which stakeholders respond to the call for social justice, and to the creation of places (not spaces) in which those who have been disempowered through marginalization or exclusion, are re-connected to meaningful participation in their communities. It also allows key environmental issues that create flourishing and sustainable communities to be properly addressed. These more inclusive, fair and connected societies are particularly evident in inner urban communities, but it is a model that suburban and rural communities are also adopting. It is my contention that the organic nature of these emerging community-based partnerships and the way in which they collaborate in social action offers the Established Church a model for engagement, mission and the opportunity once again to attain a significant role in the public square. This was the focus of my research proposal (TH8005 portfolio).

My intention had been to gather data through participant observation, interviews, and focus groups with MSWF and the partners who had come together to assist it. Unfortunately, despite an encouraging start and

everyone's efforts, MSWF failed to flourish and after about a year, the women stopped meeting. The loss of the forum was disappointing and although it had seemed that these new, creative organic partnerships of rapprochement offered beneficial ways of supporting disadvantaged and marginalised groups, the failure of MSWF challenged this view. I remained committed to rapprochement as a concept worth exploring in detail, particularly recognizing it as a potentially viable model for church engagement in inner urban communities, and decided to continue with it as the focus for my research.

Becoming aware of other creative partnerships emerging in the city and in inner urban communities endorsed my decision to continue to explore this concept. One of these partnerships was the South Manchester Enterprise Network (SMEN), set up by several Hulme and Moss Side businesses following initial discussions about their approach to corporate social responsibility. I became a participant observer of SMEN and began to explore the organic way in which this model of partnership was developing. At the same time, I identified leaders of other organizations engaged in supporting the more vulnerable as potential interviewees as I sought to understand the potential of Cloke's concept of rapprochement for the Established Church.

Rapprochement offers the Established Church an opportunity to engage with others in local communities to address social justice and environmental issues. The case studies of MSWF and SMEN resonate with what Christopher Baker and Justin Beaumont describe as "the new blurring of space between religious and secularizing forces" (p. 259). In the Bible, a clear theme that runs throughout the Old Testament is God's bias for the poor and disadvantaged. In the Gospels, the life of Christ exemplifies the incarnation of 'caritas' and it calls for a response from his followers. I argue that this new community-based social enterprise model of partnership offers Christians a practical way of showing love and care for the vulnerable by

joining in solidarity with others in responding effectively to social justice and environmental issues in this age of ongoing austerity. Further, by offering 'caritas without strings', Christians are able to witness to God's concern for those who are struggling.

In Chapter 1, I outline the hermeneutic ethnographic approach I adopted and discuss my role as participant observer and the self-reflexive methodology that runs throughout the research. I explain how I managed the information gathered from interviews, case studies and talks, and the decisions I made about data analysis. At the end of the chapter, I give an overview of the key themes that emerge from the data: the typology of the wide range of organic community-based partnerships developing to address a variety of social justice and environmental issues, and the social entrepreneurial leadership style adopted in these enterprises.

In Chapter 2, to help clarify my understandings of rapprochement, I present SMEN, which I identify as an example of this emerging model of partnership, as a case study. I follow this with a literature review of the concept of rapprochement and its relationship to the postsecular, and to current policy and political debates around the Big Society, localism and co-production. At the end of the chapter, I propose rapprochement is a viable model for the Established Church to engage with in the public sphere in this on-going age of austerity.

In Chapter 3, I critically examine the model of collaborative partnership found in rapprochement. I compare it with a paradigm of collective urban regeneration partnership that emerged at the height of policy discourse around this topic in the 1990s. While this earlier model, innovative for its time, placed emphasis on collaboration, networking and developing local communities, nevertheless, it does not address the fluidity and complexity of the current situation. By comparing and contrasting the two models, I am able to highlight the distinctive aspects of this new one, which include a lack

of bureaucratization, a non-hierarchical approach to leadership and greater community engagement. These new partnerships adopt a social enterprise paradigm that operates within a framework of 'smart pluralism' (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). Thus, I extend Cloke's concept of rapprochement (2011) and suggest that the knowledge exchange of smart pluralism leads to a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 2004), enabling stakeholders holding different ideologies to collaborate successfully. This suggests a deeper hermeneutical principle, and I explore this by discussing Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic circle. It leads me to propose that these community-based partnerships operate as a spiral following similar principles to those of his circle.

Leaders of these new effective community-based partnerships play a significant role, which I analyse in Chapter 4, proposing that principally they adopt a social entrepreneurial style of leadership. I examine how these leaders negotiate and/ or hold in tension the power dynamic that exists in any relationship and consider how this influences the successful development of a partnership. I also evaluate stakeholder interactions and their influence on the efficacy of this model of community-based organization. My analysis of the role of the leaders and their relationship with other stakeholders in these partnerships uncovers a lexicon that is more nuanced and sophisticated than that typically associated with partnership working. Thus, while words such as passion and vision are prevalent in my data, other terms, including brokering, autonomy, community diamonds and process enablers also appear.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I argue that postsecular rapprochement provides the Established Church with an opportunity for strategic deinstitutionalisation and a fresh chance, even for dwindling, aging congregations with diminishing financial resources, to embody engagement and to show God's concern for the poor. In this community-based model of partnership, stakeholders are working *with* rather than *for* those they seek to help, making it inclusive and

welcoming. For the Established Church, I argue that this offers a fresh theological understanding of hospitality, one that decentres the role of host and opens up the possibility of learning from the guest. I also show that the conceptual framework of rapprochement offers a distinct theological understanding of leadership, espousing a model that continually draws more people in, helps them to discover and learn to use their gifts and acknowledges the priesthood of all believers and the practices of shared leadership that that demands.

Chapter 1: Researching rapprochement in the inner urban – a methodology

Introduction: Setting the scene

In this chapter, I outline the methodology I selected for my research into rapprochement in the inner urban, one appropriate for my participant observation undertaken with MSWF and SMEN, and the 14 semi-structured interviews I conducted. My initial plan had been to gather evidence through immersion in MSWF and the innovative network that formed to support it and I had already started making field notes from events and meetings that I attended when the forum ceased. Becoming a participant observer in SMEN provided another setting in which I could gather data, enabling me to continue with my planned approach. However, I recognized that rather than just immersing myself in this new network, it would extend the scope of my enquiry if I sought more examples of these organic partnerships and, by interviewing individuals actively engaged in local communities, explored how they addressed issues of social justice and community cohesion in the current political and economic climate. In this chapter, I also explain how I conducted my research and sorted and coded my data.

Selecting an appropriate methodology

To discover more about rapprochement (Cloke (2011) and to understand what drives those engaged in this community-based model of partnership, I developed a methodology using an ethnographic approach that presented opportunities to listen to the ideas, experiences and stories of people engaged in social action in inner urban communities. Ethnography, which has significantly influenced the development of qualitative research (Geertz, 1975, Hammersley, 1990), is “grounded in a commitment to the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social or cultural setting” (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2001, p. 4). In the research setting, the ethnographer employs her eyes and ears as she endeavours “to get inside the fabric of everyday life” (Silverman, 2011, p. 115). She also uses a variety of qualitative research methods, including observation and qualitative

interviewing, which, as David Silverman (2010) suggests, help to "provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data" (pp. 123-124). A researcher undertaking ethnographic methods "assumes the posture of a learner who wants to be taught rather than that of an expert who possesses the crucial theory for analysing what is going on and what is real" (Scharen & Vigen, 2011, p. 17). As in this project, I sought not just to explain or verify the nature of this new model of partnership, but also to understand and interpret the reasons leading to its development, and the motivation of participants engaged in them, I considered this an appropriate methodology.

Recognizing hermeneutics as a way of interpreting and making sense of experience, including the way ordinary people interpret their everyday life (Kinsella, 2006), a hermeneutic approach further underpins what I sought to achieve. The philosopher Martin Heidegger (1962), who proposes that humans are inherently 'hermeneutical' beings, for whom 'understanding' is a distinctive characteristic of what it means to be human, suggests we interpret our experiences to make sense of them (pp. 182-195). However, Terry Veling (2005) insists that the first act of hermeneutics is to listen, to hear the word and that "[w]hatever 'meaning' I may subsequently discover, its origin is not first *in myself*, but comes originally from *the speaking of another [sic].'* (p. 32). For Veling, becoming 'intimate' with the inner workings of the topic is essential and this was the purpose of my participant observation and interviews.

Hermeneutical activity is practical and we take it for granted because it is "grounded in the already-interpreted world" (Osmer, 2008, p. 21) in which we live. It leads Gadamer (2004) to suggest that it is only when we are "pulled up short" (p. 270) and realise that what we are facing "is not compatible with what we had expected" (ibid.) that we become aware of this interpretive activity. He continues by suggesting that the hermeneutic approach is concerned with clarifying the interpretive conditions in which understanding

takes place and that it is, in fact, within a 'fusion of horizons', that understanding is realised. However, Gadamer is aware that "[t]he horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices … Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past" (p. 305). It follows, therefore, that "as the historical horizon is projected, it is simultaneously superseded" (p. 306) by our present horizon and a fusion of horizons occurs.

Elizabeth Kinsella (2006) acknowledges that in hermeneutics, all interpretation is situated and "all inquiry begins from a particular social location, in which every knower is located" (p. 5). As these social networks influence interpretation and ways of constructing meaning, the interpreter's goal "is not objective explanation or neutral description, but rather a sympathetic engagement with the author of a text, utterance or action and the wider socio-cultural context within which the phenomena occur" (Gardiner, 1999, p. 63). My project explores a new model of organic partnership now evolving particularly in inner urban communities, which I need to understand and interpret. This includes considering the role of stakeholders coming from a wide range of backgrounds, including faith groups, who are working collaboratively to address social justice issues and which is central to my investigation.

Research Design

As appropriate for a hermeneutical, ethnographic approach, I wanted to gain first-hand experience of this new model of partnership and selected participant observation within the cultural setting, first of MSWF, and subsequently of SMEN, as a way of getting right inside these organizations and endeavouring to understand them. This, Silverman (2011) maintains is "fundamental to understanding another culture" (p. 43) and Jennifer Mason (2011) argues, is "the best – although not the only – way of generating knowledge of these" (p. 55). Observation in a specific context allows the researcher to collect "multidimensional data as it occurs rather than relying

on people's retrospective accounts, and on their ability to verbalize and reconstruct a version of interactions or settings" (ibid. pp. 85-86). Participant observation is time-consuming (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 14), as I found when I began to attend first MSWF committee meetings and workshops (September 2011 – February 2013) and later SMEN's bi-monthly network meetings (September 2013 – December 2015). However, I found it valuable as it gave me an opportunity to participate and observe these settings in a way that provided "a nuanced understanding of context that can come only from personal experience" (ibid.).

As a participant observer of MSWF and SMEN, I was both an insider and outsider, since although I supported MSWF and was a member of SMEN I neither live nor now work in inner city Manchester, the location for these organizations. I am also an Anglican priest and as, in the first setting the women were Muslim and the second was a business network, I was concerned that this might affect people's responses to me. Therefore, I did not make my vocation overtly apparent until people got to know and accept me for who I am.

Kim Knott (2010) notes four conceptual frameworks that need consideration when choosing participant observation as a method. She designates these as complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, and complete observer, and she plots them on a continuum (p. 246). Recognizing that my intention was to attend meetings in order to observe stakeholder exchanges and the way these networks function and to participate fully in the social interaction, conversations and discussions that ensue, I identified my role as observer-as-participant. In this role, observation and participation is "integral to understanding the breadth and complexities of human experience" (ibid.) and helps "uncover factors important for a thorough understanding of the research problem" (ibid.). I listened to and talked with members in each setting, and afterwards, wrote

up field notes that included detailed descriptions of what happened, how I felt, and the impression events and conversations made on me. This helped me achieve "as disciplined a picture of what transpired as possible" (Scharen & Vigen, 2011, p. 233). The fieldnotes became a memory aid and helped reconstitute the 'meetings' "in preserved forms that can be reviewed, studied and thought about again and again" (Emerson. Fretz & Shaw, 2001, p. 353).

In keeping with my ethnographic approach of "gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of the inquiry" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3), I also chose interviewing as an appropriate method. This is because it takes account of the social contexts in which research is conducted and allows participants to speak of their lived experiences (Slee, 2008, p. 44). It also enables a degree of mutuality between interviewer and interviewee, and takes "seriously subjects' experience as the starting point for arriving at explanations, instead of imposing prior categories on the experience" (ibid.). Thus, data and knowledge are constructed through dialogue and "meanings and understandings are created in an interaction, which is effectively a co-production" (Mason, 2011, pp. 62-63). It is a flexible process and so is valuable for exploring new ground such as rapprochement (Gilbert, 2011, pp. 247-248). I decided to adopt a topic-centred approach, addressing issues such as partnership working, poverty and austerity, each pertinent to my area of interest, as a starting point for the interviews. This also allowed opportunities to explore "unexpected themes" (Mason, 2011, p. 62).

An interview is a conversation, but, as Steinar Kvale (1996) indicates, it "is not a conversation between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation" (p. 5), introducing the topics and critically following up the answers given (ibid.). The researcher should also "be curious, sensitive to what is said – as well as to what is not said – and critical of … her own presuppositions and hypotheses during the interview" (p. 33). I always endeavoured to respond sensitively to what an interviewee said, but

also, when appropriate, encouraged him or her to expand their answer. I found the process challenging and stimulating but also rewarding as each interview gave me a wealth of information about the exciting opportunities for community-based partnerships emerging in local areas in the inner urban.

Thinking critically about the parameters of my research, I used purposive sampling (Silverman, 2010) to select my interviewees, choosing people in leadership roles whose knowledge and experience of working in the inner urban would help me develop and test my hypothesis (pp. 141-144). I made the deliberate decision to interview 'leaders' from private, public and third sector organizations and including the church, as I considered they would know about and be able to explain any emerging partnerships in the community where they lived and/ or worked, or, if they had a broader remit, talk about this from a wider perspective. Their roles would also mean that they were aware of the problems that the deficit reduction measures were causing, particularly for the more vulnerable in society, and they would be able to articulate those. Although arranging focus groups and/ or interviewing others engaging in this new model of partnership, especially those for whom they were set up, would give greater breadth to my research, there was not sufficient time for this, if I were to interview a large enough sample of 'leaders'.

My initial list consisted of twenty possible interviewees, including clergy from Manchester Cathedral and churches in Hulme and Moss Side, city councillors, the leaders of the organizations that had helped to develop MSWF, the initiators of SMEN and third sector groups and charities working in the inner urban. However, once I started my interviews, interviewees suggested names of other people, whose experience of partnership working could potentially offer valuable insights into my area of research. Based on this, I used the snowball or 'network' sampling method (Gilbert, 2011, pp. 179-180) to amend my original list. During the initial interviews, for example, there were frequent mentions of food bank, which led me to interview a

trustee of a local food bank set up by three church communities and to explore why and how this partnership developed and the ways in which Christians were engaging in this activity. A potential problem with this method is that it can limit the sample simply to those within a connected network (ibid. p. 180), but I found that it broadened my initial list by introducing me to individuals with a greater experience of the growing community-based partnerships I was researching.

In trying to ensure the interviews generated meaningful knowledge, I was aware that, "the informal and conversational style of [qualitative] interviewing belies a much more rigorous set of activities" (Mason, 2011, p. 67). I adopted a semi-structured approach. This allowed interviewees to answer freely and gave scope for further exploration as I made choices about which aspects to follow up and which answers to interpret (Kvale, 1996, p. 147). In this way, I learned more about each interviewee, as an individual, as a leader, and about their attitudes and understanding of rapprochement. This added richness to the data.

Conducting the Research

I contacted each potential interviewee by e-mail and explained the purpose of my research and reasons for wanting to interview them. I advised participants that I expected the interview to last for between forty-five minutes and an hour. I also attached a copy of the Participant Information Sheet,[3] which, as described in my application for ethical approval (27 April 2012), further outlined what I was endeavouring to achieve by my research. At the start of each interview I asked the interviewee to sign a Participant's Informed Consent Form[4], which on the face of it, seemed straightforward. However, as Mason (2011) acknowledges, it "is actually quite a complex and difficult business" (p. 80). Although each particpant received a Participant Information Sheet, there were aspects of the way I might use the data

[3] See Appendix 1.
[4] See Appendix 2.

generated, such as the way I analysed and interpretted it or made comparisons, that I was unable to articulate at that early stage. This is because, while the concept of informed consent (Kvale 1996, Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, Gilbert 2011) implies knowing beforehand what will transpire, it "is hardly feasible in … explorative studies, where an important tactic is to follow up unanticipated leads" (Kvale, 1996, p. 114). To address this I checked before an interview started that the participant was fully aware of the requirements of involvement.

I conducted 14 interviews between September 2013 and April 2014 and found each of them a stimulating and enjoyable experience. As an interview is "a co-construction of knowledge, in which researcher and participant collaborate in seeking to produce understanding" (Berry, 2009, p. 36), setting it up and establishing a mutual relationship in which we could talk openly and freely was important. The first interview took place in a café, which proved noisy and far from ideal and it was clear that negotiating somewhere quiet, where interruptions would be minimal, was important. Subsequent interviews took place either in the person's home, at their place of work, or on two occasions in my home. I used a digital voice recorder to record the interviews, with the interviewee's permission.

Listening is a key factor in the whole research process. Nicola Slee (2013) suggests, "We listen with our lives. We bring our whole selves to the act of listening … We listen with emotional as well as intellectual intelligence, on the look-out for patterns, resonances, allusions" (pp. 18-19). During each interview, I focused all my attention on the interviewee, conscious of using my "feelings, body, intelligence, intuition – to assist [my] listening" (p. 19) as I waited for the participant to disclose what they wanted to say (ibid.).

I transcribed the interviews verbatim, a time-consuming process, but it was "a way of embodied, visceral listening" (Slee, 2013, p.20). Through the process of transcribing, Slee claims, "We imbibe and ingest the words of the

interview, they enter our bodies and live inside us, where the voices continue to talk, to each other, as well as to us, generating their own internal conversations and meanings" (ibid.). By transcribing each interview, I became very familiar with the material.

After completing 14 interviews, each producing rich and valuable data, similar themes and topics emerged, suggesting that the sample was "nearing sufficient quantity to merit validity" (Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p. 145). Whilst conducting further interviews offered the potential for uncovering new ideas, the 'new' would not necessarily add anything to the overall research and could be counterproductive if it made the quantity of data harder to analyse.

Two case studies presented at *The Urban Shifts 2 Conference – Desire-Lines? Joining dots in local communities* held at Chester University on 19 February 2014, a conference for urban practitioners and missioners to share insights, theory, theology and good practice around what it is to be 'church' in our rapidly changing urban contexts, provided further information relevant to my research[5]. I also recorded and transcribed these presentations.

Extracting the data

I immersed myself in the transcripts, as "[k]ey to successful qualitative analysis is the need to become thoroughly familiar with the data" (Fielding & Thomas, 2011, p. 259). I read each of the transcripts attentively, reading and re-reading it, "searching beneath the surface for what is going on, [looking] for signs, patterns, repetitions, as well as gaps, contradictions, difference" (Slee, 2013, p. 21). Slee suggests this requires an attitude similar to that adopted by someone practising *lectio divina*, and one that took me "beyond a mere cognitive or analytical reading of the text to a profound inhabiting of the [transcripts] in such a way that they form the heart, mind and will" (ibid.). It was only in this way that I was able more fully to appreciate and

[5] See Appendix 3 for details of these presenters

interpret what each interviewee was saying and to use it in developing my thesis. It is an on-going process and after transcription, I reviewed the information it contained in the light of my research question (Silverman, 2010, p. 221). This, on occasions, influenced the questions I asked in subsequent interviews. For example, in the early interviews it became apparent that the style of leadership adopted in these partnerships played a significant role in their development and success. This led me to ask questions that were more specifically about the way leaders manage these emerging partnerships.

Each transcript contained countless stories, reminding me that life "is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in stored moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 17). Story is "one of the most basic linguistic means of meaning-making" (Slee, 2008, p. 67). It helps to make sense of experience, which, Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer (2010) propose, is "what happens to us; what happens in which we are active or passive participants" (p. 21). Thus, by "weaving together the many disparate images and metaphors which capture different aspects of experience into a patterned whole" (Slee, 2004, pp. 67-68) I began to make sense of all that I had heard and observed.

To analyse my data, I developed a broadly thematic framework, which identifies and evaluates salient patterns of meaning and includes affective, cognitive and symbolic dimensions (Joffe & Yardley, 2004). It also simultaneously "looks at manifest themes as a route to understanding more latent, tacit content; its uses existing theoretical constructs to look at data while also allowing emerging themes to 'speak' by becoming the categories for analysis" (Joffe, 2012, p.209).

My long history of working with and concern for people living in the inner urban and my participant observational role in MSWF and SMEN meant I

was implicated in the data generation. Consequently, the interviews, case studies, conversations and observation had become a patchwork of experiences, "pieced together in a pattern shaped by my interpretation and understanding" (Berry, 2009, p. 36). To make a reflexive reading of the data (Mason, 2011, p. 149) that expresses those relationships had implications for the confidentiality and anonymity of interviewees and other participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity

In seeking ethical approval for my research from the University of Chester's Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee, I had noted that confidentiality and anonymity were important for participants. The people I interviewed included public figures, such as city councillors and church leaders; individuals who could be identified. This presented a dilemma as there were others whose anonymity, due to their role, needed to be maintained. This was important because during an interview an openness and intimacy develops which the interviewer should respect. This includes sensing a commitment to "acting appropriately" (Kvale, 1996, p. 117). Therefore, all contributions from participants appear anonymously and they have pseudonyms.[6]

Creating a codebook

In my research proposal (TH8005 portfolio), I identified several concepts to explore in my research. These included postsecular rapprochement, God's hospitality, and leadership, power and empowerment. Having decided to use a broadly thematic framework for sorting my data, I started by looking for themes and ideas that occurred repeatedly in the transcripts. During the interviews and the transcription process, I had already developed hunches about the data. I, therefore, needed to explore it "by looking more systematically through [it]" (Cameron & Duce, 2013, p. 103). However, I also had to be aware of "the possibility of being surprised by the complexities of

[6] See Appendix 3 for details of interviewees.

[it] and the sophistication of participants' skills in doing whatever they are doing" (Silverman, 2010, p. 70).

Selecting one transcript, almost at random, I read it through, manually coding themes that occurred in it. Repeating the exercise with a further two scripts, created a set of what I considered key themes. However, it generated an unwieldy amount of text and I decided that creating a codebook, using an Excel spreadsheet, was the most manageable way of handling the data and recognized as good practice in qualitative research (Gilbert, 2011, p. 341). It also enabled me to use the same lens to identify patterns and themes that occurred across all my data (Mason, 2011, p. 165) and meant that I could see at a glance where significant clusters of interest that would shape the rest of this thesis occurred. I was aware of data analysis software, such as NVivo, developed for use in analysing rich text-based information, but considered that would limit my ability thoroughly to inhabit the transcripts.

Key themes emerging from the coding

A new typology of partnership

The evidence from my data indicates that although partnership working is not a new phenomenon, the emerging alliances show a fresh impetus. It reflects a developing nexus between these organic partnerships and Cloke's postsecular rapprochement, which I expand during the course of this thesis. A proliferation of partnerships of varying sizes developing to address social action and environmental issues in this ongoing time of austerity attracts a broad range of stakeholders from public, private and third sector organizations, including the Established Church. These partnerships are usually community-based, and operate on a strategic, deinstitutionalized social enterprise model as they respond to the challenges and opportunities that this post welfare age presents.

A social entrepreneurial style of leadership

Despite concerns about austerity and the far-reaching changes to the welfare system, the 'leaders' I interviewed, rather than being down hearted about the situation, exhibited a real spirit of optimism. They, and others they spoke of, are individuals with vision and passion, motivated by faith and/ or a concern for social justice. The term that most adequately describes these 'leaders', adopting an asset-based, can-do approach as they endeavour to meet the changing needs of local communities and promote community development, is 'social entrepreneur'. That is someone who "habitually creates and innovates to build … something that has a sustainable and meaningful impact on the lives of others" (Bolton & Thompson, 2013, p. 267). The data also suggest that these partnerships generally operate in a non-hierarchical way and by working *with* rather than *for* those the action seeks to help foster enablement. A more nuanced and sophisticated lexicon than that typically associated with partnership working also surfaced in the data, with terms such as brokering, autonomy, community diamonds and process enablers appearing alongside the more familiar terms of passion and vision.

Summary of my thesis

The main thematic codes shaping my hypothesis suggest that rapprochement is a new social enterprise type of partnership that provides a model for the Established Church to engage with in their local community in the inner urban, and in other areas, in this postwelfare age. It enables strategic deinstitutionalization as it works collaboratively with others on local social justice and environmental issues. I develop my arguments in the following chapters. However, before that I consider the theoretical perspectives on which this research is based.

Chapter 2: Mapping the spaces of postsecular rapprochement

Introduction: Locating rapprochement

I propose that rapprochement, which surfaces within the concept of the postsecular, a multi-faceted and contested term that Jürgen Habermas introduced in 2001, is a model for church engagement. In this chapter, I focus on the relationship between the religious and the secular before exploring Cloke's understanding of postsecular rapprochement. I then discuss the ways in which MSWF and SMEN meet his proposed criteria and the potential opportunities this model offers the Established Church.

Arguing that this new model of community engagement is emerging because of the austerity measures introduced by the Coalition government (2010 - 2015) and continuing under the present Conservative government, I consider the public policy measures and other initiatives they have adopted, such as Big Society, and their bearing on the response of local communities. I propose that engagement with this new model of partnership offers the Established Church fresh opportunities for mission and ministry in this age of ongoing austerity. I further suggest that it is an appropriate model not simply in the contested space of the inner urban, but in suburban and rural areas as well.

First, however, I present as a case study the South Manchester Enterprise Network (SMEN), describing how it came into being and the way it has subsequently developed. It provides a thick description of an organization that I identify as an example of rapprochement and helps to clarify my understanding of this emerging model (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 234). This case study draws on fieldnotes from my participant observation and from interviews with two of the founding members of the network and frames my research and the context within which it is set.

South Manchester Enterprise Network (SMEN) – a new model of partnership

The origins of SMEN

On 25 September 2013, some fifty people gathered at the Macdonald Hotel in Manchester to celebrate the first birthday of SMEN. The leader of the City Council, congratulating this network on its success, said that in terms of corporate social responsibility it was a remarkable achievement. He applauded the way big companies were working with smaller businesses, noting that this also included the third sector, and he saw it as a model to replicate across Manchester. Speaking about the cuts in public spending the councillor admitted that the City Council was no longer able to support communities in the way that it had done and that this, coupled with the recession, necessitated finding ways to do things differently, stressing:

> We need to promote growth and it is a sad indictment that we need food banks etc. Productivity in Manchester is lower than in other places due to a lack of skills so we need work that is skilled, enables growth and is green and sustainable. People need to benefit.

SMEN came into being after individuals from several large businesses in Hulme and Moss Side began a dialogue about their approach locally to corporate social responsibility. The organizations included an international construction company, a large not-for-profit housing association, a leading UK brewery and a private hospital. They discovered that whether they were a public or private sector organization there was a lot of common ground and they agreed that they could achieve more in and for the local community if they did things together. Caroline, one of SMEN's founding members, commenting on these discussions, said that they recognized:

> There's no point in us all doing pockets of stuff, really good stuff, but it's not measured, it's not monitored, it's not strategic and in order to get the recognition for it in the eyes of the people that can promote local business in the right way we need to talk their language and we're not.

Although the approach to corporate social responsibility was a driver in the initial conversations, a significant motivating factor in the bringing to birth of SMEN was, as one of the initiators explained at the birthday celebrations, the recognition of the ongoing importance of growing their businesses and those of others in the locality. Members from the large businesses, she explained, acknowledged there was a lack of communication and common ground with local people, which created a division, and to build links with this community they needed to bridge this divide. They appreciated that these smaller businesses faced different issues from theirs and while local people trusted other local organizations, they often lacked the resources needed to enable growth. Thus, a network that embraced both would be mutually beneficial. The small local businesses could help the larger players to establish better relationships with local people and the large businesses could help smaller businesses by providing them with resources, management and strategy. It would help to bring the many diverse businesses in that locality together to "speak with one voice" and build resilience in a time of austerity in the local community. Dialogue about the advantages of setting up this network included recognition that it would support the growth of linking social capital by "allow[ing] people to leverage resources, ideas and information from contacts outside their own social milieu" (Field, 2008, p. 73). This would help smaller businesses to develop their potential and could be a valuable opportunity for such organizations joining the network.

The founding members of SMEN included the large businesses already mentioned, the City Council, a local community garden centre, a window-cleaning firm and an independent travel agent. It was a very diverse set of businesses but what made it work, the founders claimed, was the shared passion they had for the local community and a wish to offer it something more than simply the service they provide. One of their first initiatives was to engage with Manchester Academy, a local High School, and to work with staff on a project entitled *My Destiny, My Legacy*, which helped students develop their career plans. Speaking about this at SMEN's First Birthday celebrations, the Head Teacher expressed appreciation of the projects'

achievements. The Head of Marketing of a large chartered accountants said that this project had given the businesses a real sense of belonging to the local community and they had benefitted from being involved in it, helping them to understand and begin to address the issues young people in that locality face. Such initiatives have been key to the strategies they have developed and, as more organizations have heard about the network, to their success as a network. After eighteen months, SMEN had grown to a membership of some forty private, public and third sector businesses and organizations. A year further on that number had doubled.

Approach to organization

While the numbers of businesses and other organizations wishing to join SMEN continues to grow, membership is not automatic and applicants have to be able to demonstrate the contribution they will make to the network, in terms of skills and expertise. Mutuality is an important aspect of the network's philosophy, as it guards against organizations simply joining for the benefits they can gain from membership. When the Rotary Club to which I belong applied for membership, a colleague and I were invited to make a presentation to a panel of six of the founding members of SMEN on the skills and expertise our club members could offer the business community. They were not interested in the opportunities there would be for members of SMEN to contribute to the work of Rotary.

The network holds a bi-monthly lunchtime meeting, hosted by one of the member businesses or organizations, and it consists of a time of information sharing and an 'open mike' session followed by an opportunity for networking over a buffet lunch. An example of the way businesses offer help and support to each other, recorded in my fieldnotes (4 December 14), was an offer of skills training to meet the needs of businesses with between two and 49 staff from a representative of the Chamber of Commerce. Another was the offer of a weekly coffee morning for potential entrepreneurs to meet and

discuss ideas and initiatives at a resource set up by a Housing Association in partnership with two other local enterprises.

The benefits of partnership working

Meetings are upbeat as people share success stories and present opportunities for further partnership working. At one meeting, a young woman described how her baking tins business had begun to grow after she had attended a six-week 'Women in Business' course organized by a local Housing Association. She had been able to implement what she had learned and she believed it was that that had led to her winning a North West Entrepreneur Award and a prize that included rent free premises for a year (24 September 2014).

At another meeting a member from a creative arts centre spoke with passion about a project entitled 'Hulme is Where the Art Is' that they were running in partnership with other associates both from within SMEN and beyond. Her message was an emphatic one of come and join in – collaboration is the way to achieve success. The event when it took place in the area around Hulme Park was well supported by various large and small enterprises, who provided a wide range of activities and displays that helped to promote the breadth of options and opportunities available in the area. The local community also showed enthusiastic support and interest by attending the event and taking part in the activities.

The network is engendering a growing level of trust and respect between members. This is apparent in the readiness of individuals to showcase their businesses and projects in the few minutes they are allowed during 'open mike' sessions and as observed in the conversations that subsequently follow. At one meeting, a young woman spoke animatedly about the workshops that, using food as the focus, she was running, in conjunction with a Housing Association. The aim of the workshops was to upskill young people so that they became more employable. She had started her initiative

with five youngsters for whom English was a second language and who were on Job Seekers Allowance. At her workshops, they learned some basic skills in food preparation and presentation and subsequently four of them had found jobs. Following this success, she was now seeking organizations to partner with her in opening a community café in order to offer greater hands-on opportunities to other unemployed young people (4 December 2014).

SMEN's success criteria

Conversation, communication and collaboration, each of which enables and helps grow positive relationships, are essential ingredients of this successful example of the way spaces of rapprochement can develop. The initiators of SMEN addressed the issues of being *in* a community but not *of* it by developing ways to work *with* local businesses and organizations to build up and grow the local community. They adopted a non-hierarchical, social enterprise model, thus deinstitutionalizing and developing a post-regeneration type of partnership that was enabling for all, as I discuss in a later chapter. In this new model of partnership, the bi-monthly meetings are important opportunities for people to meet and to network, but interaction between members is not limited to these meetings. Good use is made of social media, with many members signed up to Linked-in and using that and Twitter as ways of sharing upcoming projects and events that others can share in or benefit from. Neil, a founding member and, at the time, Head of Regeneration of a Housing Association, commented, "There's a lot of things happen between meetings that none of us know about really, just by people getting in touch with each other." He then went on to describe how a sole trader fashion designer had visited a big hotel and had persuaded the management to incorporate some of her mannequins as part of the hotel design. He continued, "But, you know, that wasn't part of some action plan; that was just them talking together and quite a lot of that goes on really and that's hugely important actually."

Mapping the postsecular

SMEN is creating a new, imaginative space for shared discourse, with people from public, private and third sector organizations coming together to act on behalf of and engage with others in business and social action in a deprived inner urban area. This strategic social enterprise model of community engagement, evolving organically in Hulme and Moss Side, is an example of rapprochement, which Cloke (2011) identifies as a postsecular concept. Recognition of a changing dynamic between the secular and the religious is a notion that has been growing in prominence in the academy across a range of disciplines, including theology and religious studies, sociology, anthropology, geography and political science since the beginning of this century.[7] The writings of Habermas are prominent in discussing this concept and so, drawing on his thinking, and to set rapprochement in context, I focus on the way religion is now gaining influence in the public sphere. This is "both as a community of interpretation – contributing to public opinion on moral and ethical issues – and as a community of service and care, carrying out welfare tasks both without and outside of formal systems of governance" (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012, p. 36). I explore the implications of this for these partnerships of rapprochement and the fresh opportunities this brings for church engagement.

Habermas and the postsecular

Habermas' commitment to the notion of rationality means that he is initially sceptical of religion, believing:

> [A] communicatively achieved agreement must be based in the end on reasons. And the rationality of those who participate in this communicative practice is determined by whether, if necessary, they could under suitable circumstances, provide reasons for their expressions (1984, p. 17).

[7]See Habermas and Mendieta (2002); Habermas (2005); Habermas and Ratzinger (2006). Also *Postsecular cities: space, theory and practice,* edited by Beaulmont and Baker (2011); *The post-secular in question: religion in contemporary society,* edited by Gorski, Kyuman, Torpey, and VanAntwerpen (2012)

Habermas further expects that any role religion plays in nurturing social interaction will essentially be transferred to secularized communicative reason (1987, p. 77), since “religion ultimately appears to belong to a historical developmental phase along the path to the modern democratically constituted society” (Reder & Schmidt, 2010, p. 5).

In light of Habermas’ position, it is significant, therefore, when, from 2001 onwards, he begins to endorse the role of religion in the public square. He acknowledges that religious communities participating in national debates over moral and ethical questions “can promote a post-secular self-understanding of society as a whole, in which the vigorous continuation of religion in a continually secularizing environment must be reckoned with” (2005, p. 26). This satisfies “their own interests in asserting themselves within modern society and in exerting their own influence on the society as a whole through the political public sphere” (ibid.).

Like Habermas, sociologists such as Bryan Wilson (1982) and Steve Bruce (1995) predict the gradual disappearance of religion from the public square during the twentieth century. They argue that as society becomes more modernized, religion has a diminishing social significance for individuals and for society. This leads to “the decay of religious institutions; the supplanting, in matters of behaviour, of religious precepts by demands that accord with strictly technical criteria; and the gradual replacement of specifically religious consciousness by an empirical, rational, instrumental orientation” (Wilson, 1982, p. 149).

Religion, however, did not disappear as predicted and for Habermas (2008) the postsecular describes societies, particularly in Europe, where public consciousness is still adjusting to the continued existence of religion in what is an increasingly secularized environment (p. 19). Indeed, he suggests that to describe modern societies as postsecular refers to “*a change in consciousness*”, which he attributes to three phenomena (p. 20). First,

Habermas suggests that the global conflicts associated with religion, such as those in the Middle East and North Africa, are changing public consciousness, which "undermines the secularist belief in the *foreseeable disappearance* of religion and robs the secular understanding of any triumphal zest" (ibid.). Second, he notes the way religion is gaining influence in the public sphere, with churches and religious organizations playing an increasingly significant role in public policy debates, "assuming the role of 'communities of interpretation' in the public arena of secular societies" (ibid.). He also acknowledges the increased "visibility and vibrancy" of religion in immigrant, primarily Muslim, communities which he suggests also leads to a change in public awareness. This includes, he suggests, challenging Christians "to face up to the practice of a rival faith" and encouraging secular citizens to become more aware of the "public presence of religion" (ibid.). Third, Habermas suggests that the immigration of refugees and asylum seekers, "specifically from countries with traditional cultural backgrounds" (ibid.) encourages a change of mind set. This is because in Europe societies "still caught in the painful process of transformation into postcolonial immigrant societies" (ibid.) need to find ways that enable the tolerant coexistence of religious communities and the successful social integration of immigrant cultures.

While Habermas proposes that a change of consciousness has prevented religion from disappearing from the public sphere, Casanova (2013) questions whether his conception of secularization is still tied to the European model in which secularization and modernization are correlated (p. 33). However, he accepts that there is an "obsess[ion] with religion … particularly as a public issue" (p. 45) and concludes that Habermas is "reading the 'signs of the times' and interpreting the zeitgeist with a prescient accuracy" (ibid.). Casanova, therefore, concedes the re-emergence of religion as a public issue in some societies indicates that the world may be becoming postsecular and his reasons echo those proposed by Habermas: globalization, European integration, and increasing religious pluralism, a consequence of immigration (pp. 45-47).

Habermas' reading of the postsecular identifies religion as having a significant role in today's world. However, this is not because he envisages "a return to the dominance of religious ideas or an end to the importance of secular reason" (Calhoun, 2011, pp. 78-79). It is rather, as Craig Calhoun suggests, that he is aware of the emergence of considerable difficulties, first, in "the assumption that progress (and freedom, emancipation, and liberation) could be conceptualized adequately in purely secular terms" (p. 79) and second, in the view that "a clear differentiation could be maintained between discourses of faith and those of public reason" (ibid.). The challenge these difficulties create leads Habermas to conclude, "[T]he exclusion of religious argument from the public sphere may be impoverishing" (ibid.). As in this country and in many other parts of the world, Christianity's social gospel has formerly informed public discourse on issues such as slavery, poverty and peace, this would indeed be the case.

Although Habermas acknowledges a continuing role for religion in the public sphere, he is clear that it requires a "reflexive consciousness", particularly when it is necessary for religion to relate "its articles of faith to competing systems of belief and to scientific monopoly on the production of factual knowledge" (2010, p. 21). He is also adamant that religious norms need to be translated into secular idioms "if they are not to fall on deaf ears" (2011, pp. 25-26). Calhoun (2011), however, argues that translation alone will be insufficient to bridge the "hermeneutic distance" between religious and non-religious arguments "commingl[ing] in the public sphere" (p. 85). It leads him to speculate that Habermas is using "translation" as a metaphor "for the activity of becoming able to understand the arguments of another … when we understand more of their intellectual and personal commitments and cultural frames" (ibid.). The significance of these 'conditions' set out by Habermas means he:

> not only establishes a framework of mutual tolerance as the foundation of postsecular rapprochement, but he goes further by opening out the possibility of distinct crossover narratives between

> the secular and the religious and vice versa, on which this foundation can be built (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012, pp. 36- 37).

If the Established Church is to embrace the notion of rapprochement these ideas will be important because they enable secular societies to engage with religions in 'constructive dialogue' (Reder & Schmidt, 2010, p. 7). This facilitates a process of 'mutual translation' and encourages a "complementary learning process in which the secular and the religious sides involve one another" (Habermas, 2010, p. 21). Habermas further notes that in any endeavour towards a mutual understanding there has to be a "willingness to de-center one's own perspective" (2013, p. 375). This means not trying to convert others but is about engaging "in a process of reciprocal learning in which each participant's particular view becomes fused with that of everyone else in an ever more enlarged and shared horizon (Gadamer)" (ibid). This does, however place a further burden on religious people because they have to justify "the secularly grounded constitutional principles once again within the context of their faith and … recogniz[e] the difference between fallible public reasons (that is, those which can be accepted by everyone in principle) and infallible truths of faith" (ibid). Taking seriously the contributions different participants make in public debate also makes possible the formation of "broad-based alliances built on a willingness to focus on ethical sympathies and actions, even if that means setting aside potential moral differences" (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012, p. 38). This proposed acceptance and appreciation of differing viewpoints is evident in the broad-based membership of SMEN that concentrates on developing ways that will enrich the local community. This includes providing opportunities to help grow local businesses, upskill workers and engage in social action. Within SMEN, there are people of faith and so I argue that these new alliances offer the church fresh opportunities to engage with others in the public sphere.

Opportunities arising from a renewed visibility of religion in the public sphere

While Habermas acknowledges the continuing significant role religion has in the public sphere, Beaumont (2010) suggests there has been a public resurgence of religion, which "is arguably one of the defining features of the twenty-first century" (p. 8). However, a 'resurgence' of religion does not equate to religious revival since membership in mainstream Christian denominations continues to fall.[8] Graham (2013) suggests that with fewer people now professing religious faith, there are indications of an apparent increasing public scepticism towards religion, with religious institutions "viewed with distrust at worst, indifference at best" (p. xv). Yet, this notwithstanding, it is evident that religion, and certainly faith-based organizations, are once again assuming a more significant role in the public square, particularly in the provision of welfare and care (Cloke, Thomas & Williams, 2013, p. 1). Habermas (2008) suggests this is a consequence of a changing public consciousness (p. 20). However, in the global north, the neoliberal turn and immigration from the developing world that is creating multi-faith societies is also returning discourse about the place of religion back into the public realm (Ley, 2011, p. xiii). This challenges and renders permeable Cloke, Thomas and Williams (2013) claim, "[p]reviously assumed divides between the secular (=public) and the religious (=private)" (p. 16). This then opens up "new opportunities for both professional and voluntary social participation that transcends the secular/ religious divide" (ibid.) and offers, "a meeting place between the discursive and praxis arenas of postsecularism" (p. 18). As such, it is a creative postsecular space with which the Established Church should clearly engage if it wishes to assume a significant role in the public square.

This ability to bridge the divide between the secular and the religious has become particularly significant with the paring back of the welfare state, one of the consequences of the neoliberal turn. The large numbers of people

[8] Research carried out by Brierley Consultancy in the UK indicates the number of Anglicans has fallen from 1,536,879 in 2005 to 1,336,130 in 2015; the number of Methodists from 294,819 in 2005 to 180,921 in 2015 (Introduction:UK Christianity 2005-2015)

needing to access food banks (Trussell Trust 2017)[9] gives an example of the renewed need for public charity. Charitable welfare has always been in the remit of faith groups and so, in response to this need, faith-based organizations are taking the opportunity to fill the gap (Cloke, 2010, pp. 227-228). However, there has been a significant shift leading to many of these organizations and institutions now being willing to come together on crucial social issues and to put aside "frameworks of difference involving faith and secularism" (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012, p. 28).

One of the effects of neoliberalism may be that gaps in welfare provision, including those linked to the government's deficit reduction measures, open up new spaces of opportunity to which religious institutions and faith-based organizations, out of concern for the poor and vulnerable, are responding. Bretherton (2011), however, places emphasis instead on the role religious groups can play in mobilizing people to be "active citizens". He suggests the postsecular is "a period in which, for the first time, multiple modernities, each with their respective relationship to religious belief and practice, are overlapping and interacting within the same shared, predominantly urban space" (p. 354). He recognizes religions as a key catalyst in public politics because they offer "one of the few means of mobilizing people for common public action" (p. 372). Religions also keep alive ultimate questions about what constitutes the good life and are able to uphold "the idea that the state and the market have limits and that persons are not commodities but have an infinite value" (pp. 372-373). This suggests that particularly in the realm of civil society, the public presence of religion should be taken seriously.

While there is evidence, which includes work with the homeless and young people (Cloke, 2011; Cloke, Thomas & Williams, 2013), to support a view that religious institutions and faith-based organizations are once again beginning to assume a significant role in the public sphere, this is not to

[9] Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017**,** The Trussell Trust's Foodbank Network provided 1,182,954 three-day emergency food supplies to people in crisis compared to 1,109,309 in 2015-16.

suggest that the religious is simply replacing the secular. Thus, Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and VanAntwerpen (2011) argue that it is more helpful to define secularism in tandem with its twin concept, religion (p. 6), since the way "we think about one of these paired concepts affects the way we think about the other" (ibid.). This questions the boundaries that exist between religious institutions and secular organizations. Indeed, Cloke, Thomas and Williams (2013) note, there is "an urgency about faith praxis that allows a broader coming together that can to some extent blur the public/ private boundaries of religion and secular action" (p. 19). This blurring of boundaries offers significant opportunities for the development of postsecular rapprochement because it opens up the possibility of faith-based organizations and secular bodies working together and engaging in collaborative ethical praxis that supports vulnerable and marginalized groups and builds up community.

The explanations of the postsecular that I have so far discussed do not satisfy James Beckford (2012) who argues that the visibility of religion in the public square is actually due to "the state's 'interpellation' of selected religions as partners in the delivery of public policies for managing diversity, combating inequality, and promoting social enterprise" (p. 1). Although this is one way of interpreting what is currently happening and of explaining the partnerships that are emerging, I suggest 'postsecular' offers a more nuanced approach to religion denoting "an attempt to overcome the antinomy of secularism/ religiosity in a manner which recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the two elements" (Georghegan, 2007, p. 1). Further, as Mike King (2003) maintains, it is a term that implies "a quality of thought that goes beyond the secular … but which is more open to the spiritual than the secular mind has generally been" (p. 10). It is within this context that the organic partnerships of postsecular rapprochement emerge.

Earlier in this chapter, I identified SMEN as an example of postsecular rapprochement (Cloke 2011) and likewise the innovative group that came

together to support the floundering MSWF. Both examples show rapprochement as commitment to a locality and to a cohort of citizens in the inner urban. They also reveal that, regardless of the diversity of political, social and religious backgrounds of those engaged in these partnerships, communication and a significant level of trust and respect are important features of this concept. To substantiate my use of the term postsecular rapprochement in relation to these two organic partnerships, I consider Cloke's meaning of the term. His account of postsecular rapprochement and the relationship between society and religion is particularly pertinent to the development of my theological and strategic model. The political-economic links he addresses are also important as I develop my thesis.

Defining postsecular rapprochement

When working as a researcher and volunteer among Bristol's homeless, Cloke identifies "an important impulse of care in the contemporary city" (2011, p. 237). Significantly, although some facilities were set up by faith-based (mostly Christian) organizations and others by people with no specific faith, "[i]n almost all cases, there was a mixing of different faith, religious, political and ideological motivations among organizers' staff and volunteers" (ibid.). A key characteristic was a "willingness to work together *with* different people *for* different people" (p. 238) in "a rapprochement of ethical praxis forged out of necessity to provide a response to the needs of homeless people in the city" (ibid.).

Similarly, when involved with local fair-trade activities, Cloke found people working together "on a particular ethical issue despite the probability that political and moral stances on other issues could prove problematic unless kept very much in the background" (ibid.). He identifies this as significant, not because they are voices of protest and service providers, but because "they demonstrate a rapprochement between groups previously thought to be separated by a powerful secular/ religious divide" (ibid.). This, Cloke suggests, challenges and reshapes the stereotypical binary of the secular

public sphere and private religion, indicating a postsecular era, an age in which religion is re-emerging and once again assuming a role in the public sphere.

For Cloke, rapprochement signifies the new opportunities offered by the postsecular. This includes a "moving away from the fundamentalisms of secularism and religion and a moving into new forms of collaborative ethical praxis" (Cloke, May, & Johnsen, 2010, p. 41). It reflects, as Cloke and Beaumont (2012) suggest, "a particular form of 'crossing-over' in the public arena between the religious and the secular" (p. 28). It also suggests that "the current mix of neoliberal governance and postpolitical public engagement is opening out opportunities for professional and voluntary participation that transcends previously divisive boundaries of involvement between religious and secular motivation" (ibid.). This also builds links between care work and politics "through the intersections of multiple identities and axes of power" (ibid.).

Faith-based organizations and the provision of welfare

In the United Kingdom, as the Welfare State developed after World War II and the government became increasingly responsible for the provision of welfare, a few faith-based organizations, such as the Salvation Army, continued to provide social care. More recently, the neoliberal turn has led to the state shifting responsibility for the provision of welfare away from itself and "onto the shoulders of personal and collective citizenship" (Cloke, Thomas, & Williams, 2013, p. 3). This is opening up fresh opportunities for faith-based organizations to become "major players in the welfare landscape" (ibid.). This also offers significant opportunities for the Established Church to engage with others in showing care for the vulnerable. However, any discussion about the public positioning of faith must take account of the multicultural and multi-faith nature of contemporary cities (Cloke, May, & Johnsen, 2010, p. 47) and show sensitivity to it.

Where Christians join others in rapprochement, faith-by-praxis is replacing faith-by-dogma (Cloke, 2010, 2012, and 2013) and "many faith-motivated people are being encouraged to discover the meaning of their faith *as they practise it [sic]* rather than as part of an enclosed and individualized relationship with God" (Cloke, Thomas, & Williams, 2013, p. 19). However, it comes with the proviso that this means embracing the demands of postsecular faith-ethics "characterized by the performance of caritas without strings (Coles 1997) rather than by conversion-oriented evangelism" (Cloke, May, & Johnsen, 2010, p. 47). For evangelical Christians this may be a challenge. Yet, when faced with the possibility that "doing something is better than doing nothing" (Cloke & Beaumont, p. 43), faith-by-praxis becomes attractive because it "spills out agape and caritas into situations of need" (ibid.).

Romand Coles (1997) suggests agape (love) and caritas (charity) provide an ethical framework for the way we live in the world. This is because God's Son, "through the Gospels exemplifies the incarnation of *caritas [sic]* and teaches us how to receive God's love and in turn proliferate giving" (p. 2). In their research among the homeless, Cloke et al. (2010) identify Christian caritas as motivating much of the emergency provision delivered to homeless people and acknowledge that this is charity associated with forms of evangelism that make connections "between biblical precepts of love and care, and the practical need to serve homeless people" (p. 53). It is "caritas without strings", an idea that Andrew Williams (2013) explains when he describes the Christian caritas of a church in Rotterdam that is a shelter and day centre for the homeless, drug users and illegal immigrants. In this church, "practices of hospitality and solidarity with 'the other' build relationships of trust, openness and belonging" (p. 60) and provide an environment in which individuals feel accepted for who they are. It also "helped facilitate more honest relationships between service users and mainstream social workers, and connect 'hardest to reach' individuals with health and social services" (ibid.).

Postsecular rapprochement offers faith-based communities, including the Established Church, opportunities to become increasingly involved in providing 'caritas without strings' to those disadvantaged by current ongoing austerity. The reason these spaces are emerging may simply be the politicized ways the state is incorporating the resources of religion into "the wider governmentalities of neoliberal politics" (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012, p. 45). However, it seems plausible to understand these spaces "as a mix of the pragmatic and the liminal" (p. 46), which allows progressive faith-based and third sector organizations to take a lead and enables "new positions, structures and initiatives to emerge" (ibid.). My thesis explores the ways in which these new partnerships of postsecular rapprochement surface as a consequence of "the ethical frames, attitudes and performances of [individuals and organizations] whose reflexive, routinised and improvised practices solicit affective encounters between religious and non-religious bodies" (Williams, 2015, p. 204) and addresses the implications for the Established Church.

Spaces of postsecular rapprochement beyond the city

Postsecular rapprochement identifies spaces in the city where groups from faith-based, third sector and other organizations work together to address particular needs, often relating to social action. SMEN, located in Hulme and on the borders of Manchester's central city, evidences "the between-spaces close to, but not encroaching on, the central city" (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012, p. 45) where examples of rapprochement are found. As many of SMEN's members do not live in Hulme or Moss Side, this also typifies Cloke and Beaumont's evaluation that there are "more complex spatial connections, for example between affluent suburban areas and the deprived inner city" (ibid). Thus, they recognize that the whole picture of "emerging postsecular spaces in the city [is] more complex in form and geography" (ibid.) than is often suggested and suspect that other kinds of postsecular rapprochement are likely not only in cities but also in rural areas. Although my research focuses primarily on examples of these new partnerships evolving in a city context, I identify in my analysis that the principles on which they are based are

transferable, making it a model that the Established Church could valuably embrace in all contexts.

Evaluating whether MSWF and SMEN meet rapprochement criteria

I have already suggested that MSWF and SMEN are examples of rapprochement. I argue that the neoliberal turn and the shift of responsibility for welfare provision away from the state, led to the formation of the alliance to assist MSWF. Much of the initial support for the forum came from people who lived in the suburbs of Manchester rather than in Hulme and Moss Side. This reflects the complex spatial connections between the wealthier suburbs and more deprived inner urban communities with "the flows of people and finance into these specific zones to establish and sustain services and facilities for marginalized people" (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012, p. 45). In this example, those who became part of this network were concerned for and wanted to help the Somali women, but not being part of the local community or understanding the complexities of the situation, they did not offer the support the women wanted rather than needed. I argue that this is a reason for MSWF's failure and suggests that the 'complex spatial connections' between different communities needs negotiation if rapprochement is to be successful.

SMEN was initiated as a response to the recognition of the benefits of delivering corporate social responsibility through involvement in their deprived local community. Again, many of those involved in the initiation of this network did not live in the immediate vicinity. However, because SMEN was set up primarily by businesses for businesses, I suggest that that imperative helped those who simply worked in the locality to research and begin to understand the needs of that community. From the outset, SMEN has readily included third sector groups and charities and the breadth of membership has led to greater involvement in local events and activities and, particularly, in support for vulnerable groups. This has included assisting with a local church-based foodbank, the collection of festive food for

Christmas parcels for deprived families and the running of a Christmas Day dinner for needy and lonely people.

Within SMEN, people come from a wide range of political, social, moral and religious backgrounds. This includes Christians and people of other faiths, who through their engagement in its activities are showing 'faith-through-praxis'. This, as Cloke and Beaumont (2012) suggest, "enables crossover narratives that in turn relate to crossover practices that are capable of blurring some of the boundaries between religious and secular action in the public sphere" (p. 44). This collaborative ethical praxis was seen in the case of MSWF in the way Christians, members of other faiths and non-believers willingly cooperated to try to find ways to encourage and support this Muslim group. For SMEN, faith issues are not pertinent to the programme and remain in the background, but a few faith-based organizations are part of the network and, through conversations, I am aware that others, like me, are practising members of various religions. My analysis of MSWF and SMEN suggests they are examples of rapprochement, which I define as a strategic deinstitutionalized model of community engagement evolving organically in an age of on-going austerity. This type of collaborative partnership provides the Established Church with a significant opportunity to engage with others who share a passion for supporting and growing the local community. It further offers congregations opportunities to offer their skills in service to those who need them in ways that limited time and financial resources might otherwise inhibit.

As rapprochement is the response of organizations working together to meet specific community issues, frequently, in areas where gaps in welfare support are failing to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, political issues come into play. This, as I have shown in my two examples, includes the roles played by local councils and public institutions.

Engaging with public policy and political challenges

Since the beginning of 2011, the debt crisis Britain faces, has led to spending cuts on an exceptional scale. Colin Hay (2013) argues it is the "domestic effect" of the "(mis)management" of the global financial crisis of 2008 that resulted in the "crisis discourse" in Britain, following the 2010 General Election, indicating austerity and deficit reduction as the solution (p. 24). Local government have faced and continue to face a major share of the cuts, but the impact of these austerity measures on communities is significant. It leads Vivien Lowndes and Lawrence Pratchett (2012), to suggest, "It is at the local level that most of the social and welfare issues that arise from cuts and unemployment will be experienced from rising crime rates through to extensive poverty among more vulnerable communities" (p. 24).

The introduction of the 2012 Welfare Reform Act and the ongoing capping of a range of welfare benefits are exacerbating the situation for the poorest in our communities. Research by Vivien Lowndes and Kerry McCaughie in 2013, for instance, found that their case study neighbourhood, backed up by a national study of 2,000 families, indicated that "70% of families were close to 'financial meltdown', with one in five mothers regularly missing meals so that their children could eat" (p. 536).

The neoliberal effect

While it is possible to argue that the government's cuts to public expenditure are essential measures for addressing the country's deficit, other policies, such as the welfare reform programme, the privatization and outsourcing of public services and the creation of competitive markets are, I suggest, ideologically driven. They are, the *NCIA Inquiry into the Future of Voluntary Services* (2015) contends, "the expression of a more radical programme of action aimed at transforming British society and the role of the State" (p. 12). A neoliberal ideology espoused by successive governments in recent years has led to a dismantling of the welfare settlement agreed post World War II. This ideology disparages welfare programmes because it considers them

uncompetitive, and instead argues for investment in "productive economic enterprise … not unproductive social handouts" (Purcell, 2008, p. 17). Thus, rather than society having a collective responsibility for the welfare of its members, it adopts a neoliberal argument that individuals are responsible for their own well-being and that social needs are met "through the efficient allocation mechanism of the market" (ibid.). Further, a neoliberal ideology holds the view that human well-being is progressed by "[a]n institutional framework based on free markets, free trade, and private property rights and in which the government's main role is to create the conditions for profitable market activity and then to step back" (Abramovitz, 2012, p. 33). The drive to move people off benefits and into work then, as Mark Purcell (2008) argues, "significantly reduce[s] an important commitment to public spending, [which also] makes it more feasible to reduce the tax burden on capital" (p. 17).

Purcell (2013) recognizes that by the 1990s, neoliberalism had become so taken-for-granted that "it had become hard to imagine anything other than neoliberalism" (p. 7) and it was only the global recession from 2007 that caused the neoliberal consensus to begin to weaken (ibid.). However, faced with the problem of how to end the recession crisis caused by neoliberal deregulation, one surprising response "has been to remobilize the austerity approach in the global north … by pushing neoliberalization still further" (p. 8). This has led the Coalition government and the present Conservative government, faced with a financial crisis and a crippling deficit, to extend their neoliberal approach, positing a revised relationship between the individual and the State. The consequence is that "the Keynesian social contract in which citizens could expect to be supported in times of adversity has given way to an atomised view of society in which the individual is expected to provide for his or her own needs" (NCIA, 2015, p. 13). Those least able to support themselves are becoming increasingly vulnerable and it is in such areas of need that examples of rapprochement emerge. It is this sort of situation that I argue the Established Church can identify with and, recognizing God's concern for the poor and vulnerable, its members can

seek associates with whom to work in partnership to address issues of need and social justice.

Big Society and localism

The consequence of the measures adopted by the Coalition government with the "largest cuts in living memory to public services and support" (NCIA, 2015, p. 13), and more still coming under the present Conservative government, has led to significant cuts in living standards for the poorest and most vulnerable in society. However, the introduction of the austerity measures went hand in hand with the idea of the 'Big Society' which was seen as "a defining policy of the Coalition government and David Cameron's big idea" (Coote, 2010). It was designed as a programme for structural change and its aim was "to devolve powers to communities and establish a greater role in public services for voluntary and community organisations" (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012, p. 30). However, in line with neoliberal ideology, Big Society is concerned with much more than simply decentralising government and Cameron (2010) acknowledged it would involve "huge cultural change" (Big Society Speech). It would create a society in which people "don't always turn to officials, local authorities or central government for answers to the problems they face but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities" (ibid.). It is about moving from "Big Government to a Big Society", which as Lowndes and Pratchett (2012) point out reflects the government's "belief that depending considerably on the state has taken away individual personal responsibility, increased bureaucracy and led to community breakdown" (p. 30).

It is, however, not the government's rhetoric that impacts on my research but its neoliberal approach to public spending, adopted "under the guise of empowering people" (Walker & Corbett, 2012, p. 4). The enormous cuts to local government spending since 2011 are a direct contradiction of the Big Society agenda and "[t]he predictable knock-on impact of … cuts of this

magnitude is closure or substantial down-sizing in many voluntary organisations" (ibid.). It was funding cuts leading to the MSWF worker losing her job that resulted, as stated earlier, in a partnership of rapprochement forming to help the Somali women.

Kathy Evans (2011) suggests that one of the aims of Big Society is "to mend 'societally broken' Britain by nurturing people's altruism, generosity of time and spirit, and sense of agency to change the things they feel most strongly about" (p. 165). To ensure this happens, David Cameron, the then Prime Minister, promised:

> We will want to do everything we can to help what used to be called, rather condescendingly, the third sector but I believe is the first sector: the excellent charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that do so much for our country … so often these first sector organisations have the right answers to the social problems in our country (The Rt Hon David Cameron, Prime Ministers Questions, 14 July 2010, Hansard).

Whether this is political commitment or simply political rhetoric, the narrative of Big Society giving greater power to the third sector and particularly to social enterprises is pertinent to my research and its findings.

Allied to Cameron's Big Society is the notion of 'localism', embodied in the Localism Act (2011), which brings new freedoms and flexibilities for local government and new rights and powers for communities and individuals (CLG, 2011). This, as David Featherstone et al. (2012) state, "is constructed as an unequivocally positive phenomenon and … elided with notions of civic enterprise and social responsibility" (p. 177). It supposedly mitigates the austerity measures challenging local authorities and other bodies who "at the local level will not have as much money, [but who] will have much greater freedom to be innovative in the way that they work with and support their communities" (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012, p. 25).

This new focus on the 'local' offers openings for the church to be proactive in identifying local needs and to collaborate with others in endeavouring to meet them. However, whilst 'localism' may appear to be empowering for local communities, Featherstone et al. (2012) are clear that it is not "politically innocent" but is, in fact, "part of a broader repertoire of practices through which the government has constructed the local as antagonistic to the state and invoked it to restructure the public sector" (pp. 177-178). They term this project "austerity localism" and suggest that the "renewed invocation of localism and community offers a crucial supplement to neoliberal discourses, serving to fill the void created by the privileging of market rationalities over social needs" (p. 178). This notwithstanding, it is hard to ignore the pressing issues of social injustice and needs that abound, both in inner urban communities and many other localities. It is this challenge that these new partnerships endeavour to meet as they create new models of engagement. They enable capacity-building and, as Peter Matthews and Dave O'Brien (2016) suggest, offer 'power to' rather than 'power over' those involved and move "beyond the simplistic dichotomy between an over-mighty state and communities as its subjects or, indeed, its victims" (p. 38).

A significant challenge that the new partnerships of rapprochement attempt to address is the broad assumption often made about localism that all communities are alike. There is a failure in policy agendas to recognize the inequalities that exist between different local communities. Further, as Featherstone et al. (2012), writing during the Parliament (2010-2015), note, "Middle-class voluntarism underpins the utopian vision at the heart of Coalition "Big Society" localism [which] is particularly problematic in the disadvantaged areas that are being hard hit by state retrenchment following previous processes of deindustrialisation" (pp. 178-179). Indeed, they see it as risking "deepening inequalities in material resources and social capital between and within communities" (p. 179). In fact, as I have already suggested in relation to SMEN, these new partnerships offer opportunities particularly for building linking social capital. They also promote resilience, which means adopting a proactive attitude that anticipates, prepares for and

responds effectively to changing circumstances (Adapting to change: the role of community resilience, 2012).

Progressive localism

The rhetoric of localism suggests that decentralizing power will bring greater autonomy to local communities, but Featherstone et al. (2012) fear that in practice central government will continue to outline the priorities of localism. They are also critical of the assumption that "localism is something with uniformly positive political force" (ibid.) and of the "little attempt to think through a set of crucial political questions about how localism is articulated, generated, mobilised and envisioned" (ibid.). Their argument is that localism needs to be thought of in relational terms and rather than the austerity localism so far presented, they outline an agenda for what they term 'progressive localism' (ibid.).

By this term, Featherstone et al. (2012) suggest "community strategies that are outward looking and … expansive in their geographical reach and productive of new relations between places and social groups" (p. 179). In other words, they present progressive localism as creating spaces in which anyone outward looking, who desires to work for the benefit of all in a local community, is able to come together with like-minded people. This then offers the potential of reconfiguring existing relationships "around emergent agendas for social justice, participation and tolerance" (ibid.). The spaces that progressive localism create are spaces in which people can interact, and, significantly, in the context of my research, where groups find an affinity to work on specific projects despite coming from different ideological perspectives. Featherstone et al.'s concept of progressive localism resonates with opportunities offered by Cloke's concept of postsecular rapprochement.

Public service delivery and co-production

For the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) progressive localism helps to address their recognition of the necessity for individuals and local communities "to come to terms with a different operating environment for local public service delivery" (What next for localism?, 2012, p. 40). NALC suggests this means engaging, not just with local authorities, but also with a range of service delivery organizations including private and third sector groups. The report likewise suggests that citizens and communities need "to adapt and change the nature of their relationship with the council, becoming more active participants in determining what the service priorities are for a given area" (ibid.). Developing this requires local authorities to foster

> a mature dialogue with their local communities to get a more accurate picture of local needs, while articulating and explaining the difficult decisions that will have to be made and the additional responsibilities and levels of involvement that local people will have to assume (ibid).

A further way of addressing the enormous challenges that public services face is to encourage those who use the services to work alongside professionals in the design and delivery of these services through co-production. This term describes a way of working that is inclusive and democratic, and enables those involved to create a service or come to a decision that is mutually agreed. It recognizes the potential of service users as a hidden resource, able to help transform services and make them more effective, efficient and sustainable (Boyle & Harris, 2009). As Steve Pool and Kate Pahl (2016) argue, it requires "a mode of closeness to the everyday and a recognition of different ways of being" (p. 79). Co-production also "involves recognising and reacting to relationships of power [which i]n community contexts, … might mean shifting attention away from preferred ways of knowing and being to unfamiliar ways of knowing and being for all involved" (ibid.). I recognize co-production as a significant feature of these developing community-based models of rapprochement, because it is continually in process, raising concerns and creating new ideas. It draws

together stakeholders from different sectors to collaboratively address and creatively respond to social justice issues, and thus to contribute significantly to “current debates around active and informed participation” (ibid. p. 82).

In this section, I have considered the economic challenges that Britain is facing and the burden this imposes particularly on the poorest and most vulnerable. I have discussed the measures that the former Coalition government and the present Conservative government have and are adopting to address them. Thus, it is in this context and against this background that I propose that the church, following the example of Jesus, whose “ministry exemplified a commitment to the inherent dignity of all, but particularly those who society or the economy have deemed to be surplus or marginal” (Welby, 2015, p. 3), has a significant role to play. Current policies offer increased opportunities for the church to take its place in the public sphere once again and to engage with others in postsecular rapprochement.

Rapprochement as a model for the Established Church to engage with

A case study describing the setting up and development of SMEN and observations as a participant from my involvement with MSWF illustrate my understanding of postsecular rapprochement. My experience of these networks and my growing concern as an Anglican priest for those struggling in this ongoing age of austerity, has led me to consider the potential of rapprochement as a model for church engagement in this area of need. It is a model that is opening up opportunities in local communities for faith-based organizations to take a role alongside secular organizations, particularly in areas associated with care, welfare and justice issues, to engage in collaborative ethical praxis and to show ‘caritas without strings’. Examples of postsecular rapprochement are most evident in inner urban areas, but, as Cloke and Beaumont (2012) indicate, this does not preclude the possibility of rapprochement in other areas (p. 45), an aspect that could be important for the church as a whole if this model is to be encouraged.

In addition, I have considered current perceptions of the changing relationship between the secular and the religious and the re-emergence of the religious in the public sphere, evidence of the postsecular, within which rapprochement emerges. I have examined current political initiatives, which are encouraging public and private sector organizations and institutions, including third sector and religious groups to develop partnerships and engage in the process of co-production and social enterprise. These various lenses lead me to propose that rapprochement is a viable deinstitutionalized model of community engagement for the Established Church to engage with in the public sphere in this on-going age of austerity. It enables Christians to show faith-by-praxis and incarnationally to respond in practical ways to issues of social justice. By transfiguring injustice and transforming lives through care for the vulnerable and suffering, it makes meaningful the church's ministry and mission in the twenty-first century. In the following chapters as I analyse the themes that emerge from my data, I will present my arguments to support this hypothesis.

Chapter 3: A new strategic model of community engagement in an ongoing age of austerity

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I noted that apart from MSWF and SMEN there is a range of multifarious organic partnerships developing in inner urban communities. The enterprises that vary in size, structure and stakeholder involvement, in each instance, involve individuals and groups endeavouring to work collaboratively with others. They play an increasingly active role in supporting and building up their local community and frequently evolve in response to an ethical concern relating to the vulnerable. I argue that this new social enterprise model of community-based partnership, adopting a social entrepreneurial style of leadership, leads to deinstitutionalization and has implications for future models of ecclesiology and missiology adopted by the Established Church in this ongoing age of austerity.

In this chapter, I critically examine the new form of collaborative working appearing particularly in inner urban contexts but also in other areas. I do this by comparing and contrasting my emerging model with an earlier typology of collective urban regeneration partnership that emerged in the 1990s in the New Labour era of centralised and state funded and directed local partnerships**.** Although this earlier model emphasised networking, collaboration and engaging local communities, which was innovative for its time, it does not address the complexity or fluidity of the current situation. I argue that the developing nexus between postsecular rapprochement and on-going austerity, developing from a neoliberal political economy and public policy, frames current urban policy. It represents what I call a post-regeneration concept, and creates the milieu for the initiation of these organic partnerships. I argue that these partnerships adopt a social enterprise paradigm that operates within a framework of 'smart pluralism' (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007), thus developing and extending Cloke's framework of rapprochement (2011).

I bring these themes into focus by concentrating on the processes of knowledge exchange that are a key hallmark of these new innovative partnerships. These new practices point to a deeper hermeneutical principle that needs to be acknowledged and built upon: namely Gadamer's concept of a "fusion of horizons". Critical analysis of this new model of partnership leads me to propose that it operates as a spiral and I explore the relationship between my spiral and Gadamer's hermeneutic circle.

Changing models of partnership – a historic overview

During interviews, participants described partnerships similar to MSWF and SMEN, in which groups and organizations from the public, private and third sector, including faith-based bodies and the Established Church, come together to meet a particular need in the local community. These include the Volunteer Programme initiated at Manchester Cathedral, the Sale West and Ashton Partnership and the partnerships operating at a community church in Old Trafford. They form part of my sample and I will use them purposively in my analysis. These organic enterprises indicate that individuals and groups are collaborating and working for the other. This, as Cloke and Beaumont (2012) suggest, is seen in "the myriad of spaces of reconciliation and tolerance involving individuals and groups who are working across, or at least problematizing, previous divides involving inter-religious, anti-religious or anti-secular sentiment" (p. 33). In these 'spaces', new opportunities for partnership working are opening up. However, this mode of working is not new and has been a significant part of UK governments' urban regeneration policy since the 1970s.

From the 1960s onwards, as successive governments endeavoured to find ways to address the social and economic problems faced by those living in deprived inner-city areas, one strategy established to tackle these concerns

was the creation of a number of area-based initiatives (ABIs)[10] (Taylor 2000; Dargan 2009). They focused on the causes of rising urban poverty, including long-term unemployment and the concentration of racial minorities in these areas, and stressed a need for economic regeneration (Beswick & Tenskova, 2002, p. 11). The culmination of these early initiatives was the adoption of the White Paper *Policies for the Inner* Cities in 1977, which led to the setting up of seven Inner City Partnerships, including Manchester-Salford, "created as mechanisms for coordinating local and central government efforts to tackle urban decline" (Wilks-Heeg, 2016, p. 12). These programmes, which also recognized the need to involve local communities in their planning and execution, were short-lived and, under Thatcher's government, new initiatives that both privatised and centralised provisions (Hastings, 1996) and were "designed to 'lever-in' private sector investment in order to bring about physical regeneration and drive job creation" (Wilks-Heeg, 2016, p. 12) took their place. A major policy initiative during this period was the creation of Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) set up to bring about regeneration in chronically deprived areas.[11] In these and in the Enterprise Zones and Derelict Land Grants, business representatives had a leading role (ibid.).

The emergence of regeneration partnerships

In the UK, regeneration evolved from anti-poverty initiatives in the 1960s and "involves seeking to improve one or more of the social, economic and physical conditions in a given place or places" (Nathan, 2016, p. 62). Typically, regeneration programmes have tried to combine these objectives, developing an integrated strategy of vision and action that endeavours to

[10] ABIs included Education Priority Areas, the Urban Programme, the National Community Development Project and the Comprehensive Community Programme. These early schemes recognized the need for community participation, although they "typically engaged local people as the *subjects* of regeneration" (Dargan, 2009, p. 307). The Skeffington report (1969) and the Seebohm report (1969) both noted the need to build 'community', whilst also noting a lack of co-ordination between service providers (Taylor, 2000, p. 1020).

[11] UDCs were quangos (quasi-autonomous national/ non-governmental organisations), an exclusive arrangement between central government and major private property and development bodies. They were set up to encourage physical and economic renewal, bypassing local authorities and representing redevelopment rather than regeneration. Hastings (1996) suggests, "[T]he imperative of urban policy under Thatcher can be broadly characterised as exclusionary" (p. 254). Other initiatives in this period included Enterprise Zones and Derelict Land Grants.

resolve urban problems and improve conditions in those targeted areas (Roberts & Sykes, 2000). However, overall, although the policies employed had led to the physical transformation of some urban areas, they had had little impact on unemployment and poverty in these locations (Lawless, 2010, p. 25). Thus, in the 1990s, new policies, which moved away from the state assuming sole responsibility for the management and delivery of services, were devised (Dargan, 2009, p. 307). This shift from government to governance (Goodwin & Painter, 1996) led to partnership working "as a means of marshalling different stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors to plan and implement regeneration initiatives" (Le Feuvre, Medway, Warnaby, Ward, & Goatman, 2016, p. 55), and became a key strategy in many urban areas.[12]

The development of these partnerships to address regeneration in inner urban communities formed part of the decision of successive governments to institute policies, based on a neoliberal ideology, that, as discussed in the last chapter, move away from ideas of 'big government' and promote "values of cohesion, solidarity and inclusivity" (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p. 283). Promoting partnership working became part of New Labour's policy in the second half of the 1990s to facilitate local decision-making processes and enable urban communities to participate actively in shaping the way their social and economic environment was developed (Le Feuvre, Medway, Warnaby, Ward, & Goatman, 2016, p. 56). Tony Blair's (Prime Minister 1997-2007) political philosophy, termed *The Third Way* (Giddens, 1998), encouraged a shift in thinking by the public sector towards private and not for profit organizations. It leads Helen Haugh and Michael Kitson (2007) to note that the Third Way "combined neoliberalism with the renewal of civil society and viewed the state as an enabler, promoted civic activism and endorsed engagement with the voluntary and community sector to address society's needs" (p. 983). Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) are more sceptical about this developing politics of partnership in local communities:

[12] The changes to governance also offered more opportunities for local residents to participate in regeneration, as stakeholders, but also as managers of regeneration.

> [It] may be seen as complimenting formal democratic processes or, more radically, as empowering traditionally excluded social groups. On the other hand, partnerships may be criticized as reflecting a broader democratic deficit in which non- elected bodies and self-selected representatives gain power at the expense of elected politicians (p. 316).

Lowndes and Skelcher recognize that this move towards a renewal of civil society and a promotion of civic action is not as straightforward as at first projected. Thus, although the principle for setting up these partnerships in deprived inner-city localities was to use collaborative means to improve the economic and social prospects of those living there and to enable them to have a voice,[13] the new policies brought new challenges (Taylor, 2000). The proliferation of partnerships at local level, which led to power struggles fuelled by the agencies, involved competing for limited resources (6, Leat, Selzer, & Stoker, 1999, p. 25). In some instances, it was simply the attraction of securing funding that motivated organizations to collaborate (ibid.) but in others, it was an actual or perceived threat from competitors or an apparent opportunity to expand their territory (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998, p. 317).

Partnership life cycles

Although regeneration partnerships created to address the challenges of inner urban deprivation have existed since the 1960s, the organizations now emerging operate as a new model, forming and evolving in accordance with the complex and fast-changing world we live in (Caplan & Jones, 2002, p. 1). I suggest that they seek to engage with the community in a way that these earlier partnerships failed to do. In this section, I explore a typology of

[13] Until the 1990s, although attempts had been made to include residents in the decision-making and management of regeneration programmes, it had failed to happen. In 1997, 'community participation' became a significant feature of Labour Government policy and detailed guidance of the role local residents should play in decision making was set out in the manual: *Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration: A Guide for Practitioners* (DETR, 1997).

partnership that emerged from the New Labour era of centralised and state funded and directed local partnerships, using research by Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) that examined the dynamics of multi-organizational UK urban regeneration partnerships at the end of the 1990s. Their inquiry led them to propose that inter-agency partnerships pass through a four-stage life cycle: pre-partnership collaboration, partnership creation and consolidation, partnership programme delivery and partnership termination or succession. I will consider the key elements of each stage of this proposed life cycle and then compare and contrast how and why the new model diverges from it, evaluating, particularly, the developing nexus between rapprochement and on-going austerity and the way it frames current urban policy.

Funding for urban policy initiatives has “never accounted for more than a fraction of public expenditure” (Wilks-Heeg, 2016, p. 12), and so constraints on finance, a serious concern now, has been an issue since the 1970s. During the 1990s, governmental bodies recognized that “the creation of multi-agency partnerships involving public, private, voluntary and community organizations could offer ways of delivering more with less” (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998, p. 315). The model of partnership that is my focus offers the same potential. There was also a view in the 1990s that partnership working was a way, in theory, to increase resource efficiency, “making better use of existing resources by reducing duplication and sharing overheads” (ibid.). Partnerships built on the organizing principles of collaboration and competition developed in “response to current or potential threats from competitors or the perceived opportunity to expand domains and, in the process, extend influence and secure new resources” (p. 317). Cloke et al. and evidence from my research indicate that those engaging in these new partnerships work on the organizing principles of collaboration rather than competition as they endeavour to meet a recognized need in the community.

Phase 1: Pre-partnership collaboration

Under New Labour, partnership working was promoted as a way of enabling urban communities to play a more active role in shaping their locality both socially and economically (Whitehead, 2007), with stakeholders drawn from "a very diffuse and amorphous agglomeration of groups from public, private and voluntary sectors, with different ethea, mindsets, perspectives, modus operandi etc." (Le Feuvre, Medway, Warnaby, Ward, & Goatman, 2016, p. 56). Lowndes and Skelcher, therefore, identify the first phase of the life cycle as pre-partnership collaboration, which was "characterized by a network mode of governance based upon informality, trust and a sense of common purpose" (p. 320). Their research suggests that initially there was a focus on personal relationships and that building trust encouraged a broader group of individuals to become involved, "allowing for a greater variety of inputs, a more efficient use of resources, and a broader sense of ownership" (ibid.). Likewise, 'cost-benefit analysis' influenced a stakeholder's decision on whether to become part of a partnership. However, some respondents viewed network-style relationships built on informality, personal relationships and trust negatively considering that it made it difficult for "new actors to 'break in' to networks" (ibid.), although overall their research showed the value of "facilitation both to stimulate pre-partnership collaboration and to reduce some of the misunderstandings and inequities inherent in 'organic' network relationships" (p. 323).

Phase 2: Partnership creation and consolidation

Lowndes and Skelcher observed a clear trend for these partnerships to become more formalized "as pre-partnership collaboration gave way to more focused activity" (p. 324). They give no indication of how long the first phase might last but suggest that either a project requirement or a necessity when making a funding bid motivated the transition to formal partnerships (ibid.). Formalization was "seen as necessary 'to get things done' in terms both of accessing funds, but also of ensuring probity and effective implementation structures" (ibid.). However, it created added pressures for those involved in

these joint ventures, including, as Maureen Mackintosh (1992) argues, the need to find common ground or compatible interests to accommodate the diverse objectives of stakeholders from different organizations (p. 218). She suggests that stakeholders also felt pressure to alter their own objectives and organization to be more like the other partners and to seek "to extract gains against the interests of the other party" (ibid.).

In these partnerships, formalization was considered necessary to ensure greater transparency and accountability and some form of bureaucracy was considered an essential stage as a partnership "moved from a concern with exchanging information and ideas to a focus on project or policy implementation" (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998, p. 324). Lowndes and Skelcher's research highlights the fact that at this stage in a partnership's development, "[h]ierarchies that had been relatively hidden or unimportant in pre-partnership collaboration became more visible and formalized … [and] the voluntary and community sectors were often relegated to the periphery" (p. 325). Some respondents noted that formalization could limit flexibility and innovation and others maintained that they still "saw networks as the life-blood of the partnership, pointing to the importance of sustaining these 'beneath the surface'" (p. 324). Thus, they admit, "the nature of hierarchy was essentially contested and problematic" (p. 326).

Phase 3: Partnership programme delivery

Although Lowndes and Skelcher acknowledge, "Terms like *partnership* and *network* imply consensus and collaboration" (p. 326), their research "underlined the fact that inter-agency working involves a high degree of competition among organizations" (ibid.). This was due to compulsory tendering, introduced by the government in the 1980s that aimed at driving costs down and improving the efficiency of state funded organisations, including central and local government departments (Pinch & Patterson, 2000). In the context of the partnerships Lowndes and Skelcher researched, the competition revolved around the bidding process for funding from central

government schemes such as City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB).[14] In these schemes, the aim was to stimulate these partnerships "to develop innovative and cost-effective programmes of work and to ensure the funder receives value for money and maximum programme effectiveness" (ibid.).

This competitive bidding system had disadvantages, including a "fragmentation of resources and duplication of effort" (ibid.) as neighbouring areas bid against one another. It frequently damaged wider inter-agency interactions and "weakened the capacity of local authorities … to intervene directly to promote the economic, environmental, and social regeneration of their localities and regions" (Pinch & Patterson, 2000, p. 273). Another disadvantage was "the injustice and inefficiency inherent in allocating resources on the basis of the entrepreneurial skills of partnerships rather than the assessment of relative need" (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998, p. 326). This meant that stakeholders were required to demonstrate their performance and achievement to potential funders, which accentuated the competition for status (ibid.). The increasing controls and rigid procedures of bureaucratization meant that, as a result, "the network-style relationships often associated with partnership working – resting on trust and mutuality – [were] threatened, or undermined" (ibid.).

It is not only the competitive nature of the bidding process that created problems for these partnerships, but also the challenges in distributing funds for programme implementation once they were in receipt of funding (p. 327). Lowndes and Skelcher note, "There had been an assumption that funding would secure and cement relationships, while in fact it had acted as a brake on the building of trust and a sense of interdependence" (pp. 327-328). For

[14] These new policy programmes developed in the early 1990s were designed to address urban social and economic problems in an integrated way, including the promotion of partnership working that incorporated the public, private and voluntary sectors and facilitated the participation of local communities in urban policy. The principle of allocating funding on the basis of social need was replaced by a model in which areas seeking regeneration funding competed for it.

these partnerships, an obsession over the funding proved detrimental to the stakeholders' relationships, leading a City Challenge director to comment, "Money is not a strategic issue but a tactical one. The strategic issues are about people, will, networks and structures" (p. 328). Thus, although this market-style approach to governance, revolving around contractual relationships, impeded the development of collaboration between partners, many stakeholders still recognized the importance of continuing to cultivate initial network relationships, seeing them "as an important resource for 'getting things done' as well as exchanging ideas" (ibid.).

Phase 4: Partnership termination or succession

Many of the partnerships in Lowndes and Skelcher's research, such as those initiated in response to City Challenge, were funding-limited and were also, therefore, frequently time-limited. Consequently, stakeholders tended to adopt one of three stances, and although some were content to 'let the partnership die peacefully' when a project was completed, others wanted to 'keep the partnership going' or to 'support what lasts' (Sullivan & Lowndes, 1996). Lowndes and Skelcher suggest that the stakeholders, who considered termination the only option, adopted this stance because they thought it futile to keep "a structure and programme going without a dedicated budget" (p. 329). Others, however, recognized that keeping their partnership going when funding ceased was important, in part because of the valuable relationships established through their collaboration but also because of the locality's continuing "pressing social and economic needs despite the funded intervention and [contending] that a continued partnership would help to keep attention focused on the area" (p. 328). Between these two attitudes are those who thought that 'supporting what lasts' was the appropriate approach and in some of the partnerships participants recognized a need to maintain momentum following the regeneration programme they had been involved in. For these stakeholders, a next step was to seek "support from mainstream local budgets (for example from the local authority, TEC, health or police) for focal points of activity in the locality, allowing co-ordination to arise from informal networks" (p. 329).

Lowndes and Skelcher's research reveals a diversity of opinion about succession strategies, but they conclude, "[D]ebates about succession strategies focused upon the importance of sustaining network-style relationships in the governance of urban regeneration" (p. 330). This indicates that whether those involved in these partnerships favoured a continuation of a formal arrangement or an end to it, all "recognized the centrality of networking to the future of urban regeneration in their locality" (ibid.).

Comparing the partnership life cycle with the emerging partnership paradigm

Many partnerships at the end of the 1990s went through a four-stage life cycle process, partly due to the competitive nature of the tendering needed to secure funding for particular regeneration projects and partly because these projects and the funding were time limited. However, Lowndes and Skelcher note that at each of the phases some respondents recognized the value of collaboration and networking and saw that as the preferred *modus operandi*. This is because it resulted in a more cooperative and sustainable form of partnerships that continued to evolve and operate effectively despite "a tension between the harsh realities of the resource environment and the need to collaborate" (p. 317). "[T]he aspiration to further public interests rather than private gain" (ibid.) also added a moral dimension to the urban regeneration partnerships and distinguished them from business collaboration in the market place. Therefore, "whether in terms of business leaders' paternalism, councillors' party politics, community activists' demand for empowerment or the professionals' language of sustainability and capacity building" (ibid.), stakeholders in these partnerships expressed their community service motivation in different ways.

During the 1990s, a network mode of governance predominated, characterized by stakeholders from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors cooperating on projects and was the mode of governance

“key to sustaining collaboration” (p. 331). Mackintosh (1992) notes that in instances where there was sustained joint working, partnerships often achieved social as well as commercial outcomes, which “could not have been generated by a purely public or charitable project nor by a purely commercial project” (p. 211). Indeed, she argues that it was progressive local government officials, motivated by social justice concerns, and working for ‘social regeneration’ who drove this (p. 212).

20 years on partnership working is still a preferred *modus operandi* but it is a new model of collaborative enterprise that is now emerging. I could argue that this is a consequence of the postsecular turn, particularly the more positive dynamic in the relationship between the secular and the religious, and neoliberalism, which “increasingly appears as an omnipresent and often omnipotent phenomenon, a presumed ‘force’, or zeitgeist” (Eagleton-Pierce, 2016, p. xv). However, although these concepts cannot be ignored, these new organic partnerships are developing as a direct response to central government’s increasing emphasis on localism and the fewer opportunities offered to compete for funding, the result of their spending retrenchment. To evaluate this argument, I compare three factors Lowndes and Skelcher identify as significant in the partnership life cycle - formalization, bureaucratization and community participation - with my data.

Formalization, bureaucratization, and the new model of partnership

As Lowndes and Skelcher discovered, the route to accessing funding and structuring effective implementation in these earlier partnerships necessitated formalization (Phase 2). This limited opportunities for flexibility and innovation as organizations became more hierarchical and voluntary sector groups found it more difficult to compete effectively in the process (p. 325). The bidding processes increased competitiveness (Phase 3), which led to more bureaucratization and threatened the network-style relationships built on mutuality and trust (p. 326). As these partnerships were funding-

limited and frequently time-limited (Phase 4), keeping up the momentum of the partnership and finding other funding streams was often problematic.

In these earlier regeneration partnerships, funding bids from central government for a specific objective was a significant driver leading to their formation. However, such monies are now rarely available, so instead, these new partnerships, which often grow organically, seek innovative ways to address social justice and environment issues in their local communities. The Volunteer Programme set up through Manchester Cathedral illustrates this. Concerned about the effects of government spending cuts on local communities and the large numbers of unemployed in Manchester, Richard, a senior cleric, explored ways in which the cathedral and its staff could help to address this issue. When I interviewed him, he described how they worked with Job Centre Plus (JCP) to develop a ten-week programme to address problems of unemployment. They have built links with Manchester College of Arts and Technology (MANCAT) and the programme includes a day each week at the college. Richard has used his links with local businesses to draw some of them into this partnership to provide job placements, interview practice and, when vacancies come up, to offer the recruits guaranteed interviews. Cathedral staff are also part of the programme, as Richard explained:

> If you want to learn how to do a bit of administration, my PA will have a volunteer and she'll show them how to work IT programmes, how to take minutes at meetings, how to organise meetings, how to answer the telephone – stuff like that. As part of a tourism experience and learning to work with people the recruits are also tutored to act as welcomers and guides in the cathedral.

The Volunteer Programme is an example of the way in which an organization, recognizing the problem of unemployment, in this age of ongoing austerity, has sought ways to address it. Those running it have developed a creative programme through networking and dialogue with

potential stakeholders, so that by working together they have shaped a course that is meeting a real need. It is also proving successful with 60% of recruits getting into paid employment, as compared with JCP's 30% success rate. There is formality about the programme but it is not handicapped by bureaucratization, leaving room for continuing innovation and development.

The Sale West and Ashton Partnership, a neighbourhood-networking group, in a deprived part of Trafford that Doreen, vice chair of the partnership and a leader in the local community church, described during an interview, is another example of an organization not handicapped by unnecessary formalization and bureaucratization. I use examples of its achievements as illustrations later in this thesis. Trafford Council suggest this and other neighbourhood partnerships in their authority

> bring together resident groups and agencies such as the police, primary care trust, housing, youth workers, council services and other voluntary groups to make a specific area a better place to live and work by pooling knowledge and resources … [A]ll serve the function of providing local people with an opportunity to get together and discuss and address local issues. Partnerships and Communities has differing roles in each of the partnerships, sometimes leading, sometimes supporting (www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/partnerships-and/neighbourhood-partnerships).

In this network there is flexibility and opportunities for a breadth of community engagement that was absent in the earlier regeneration partnerships. This example also illustrates the way in which stakeholders from different sectors and with a range of political, ethical and moral stances are willing to work together in social action to support their community.

Lowndes and Skelcher suggest that as the partnerships they studied became more formalized, "an assertion of status and authority differentials" (p. 320) led to them also becoming more hierarchical. This included third sector

organizations often finding themselves pushed to the periphery. Elliot Stern (2004), aware of the inequality existing between partners, however, suggests that hierarchy should not be viewed negatively, as it is "a means of setting fair parameters, facilitating joint working and articulating common values" (p. 34). However, he does accept that hierarchy focuses attention on the way inequalities of power are handled and the extent of the role of the powerful to set the partnership objectives (p. 35).

In the Volunteer Programme, the Sale West and Ashton Partnership and SMEN, discussed earlier, there is an emphasis on shared ownership, which inhibits a hierarchical structure. MSWF is an exception and, as I discuss later, those who assumed leadership adopted a hierarchical approach that led to its ultimate collapse. In this new model of enterprise, as Caplan and Jones (2002) propose, "Partnership projects need champions to carry the cause and to sell the idea and process. Champions can reduce layers of management to propel projects into action. However … [o]wnership cannot be vested in any one individual" (p. 5). In setting up the Volunteer Programme, Richard championed the cause, sharing his vision for the project and encouraging others to become part of the process and ultimately, therefore, to share ownership since the success of the programme depends on everyone playing their part in it.

Doreen also described the Sale West and Ashton Partnership as a model of shared ownership, citing a number of instances where individuals have become 'champions' of specific projects that they have brought to fruition. One such champion was a woman, who, aware that their local area lacked a parent/ carer and toddler play area, bought a dilapidated Scout Hut to develop an appropriate facility. She approached the local partnership for help and, as Doreen explained

> Various community members and groups have helped her – it's been a sort of three year process for her … So they had a Housing Trust helping with renovating the building. They got volunteers from their

> staff coming in to do it. The Council has helped with some of the permissions and things they needed to do and some of the work that was needed … They got donations of toys and things like that. It's been a wonderful sort of partnership activity where various different people from different organisations have helped.

This new model of partnership, unconstrained by the need to submit bids that have to meet specific criteria, is able to develop various strands through its 'champions'. James, a priest whose responsibility includes running a community centre attached to his church in Old Trafford, highlighted this when he described the cooperative created to install solar panels on the church roof as a means of offsetting the costs of running the community centre. Initially, no one in the church or centre understood the project, so James went to organizations outside the church, including a Muslim who runs an off license, and they supported the venture:

> Now, those people have come to understand better how the centre works, and the centre also sees that it's in its long term interest. And that's brokering.

Brokerage had been a valued aspect of the pre-partnership stage of Lowndes and Skelcher's partnerships, especially as it helped dispel some of the misunderstandings and inequities in these organic groupings (p. 233). As the partnerships became more formalized and bureaucratized, this aspect was lost, while in the new model this continues as an important opportunity. James identified brokerage and building relationships as important to a partnership:

> It's to do with the nature of the community too - it's always ongoing. There's never such a thing as having cracked it because it's a very fluid community … [and] the challenge is for an organisation like ours to be aware of who's in the area that we're not seeing.

As the initiators of SMEN were employees of large businesses and multi-national companies and there was an inequity in size and potential of other member organizations, it might have been expected that a hierarchical structure would develop. Yet, like other examples of this new model, a sense of shared ownership in the way they work with one another is built into its ethos. This includes "the capacity to recognise the vital contribution of each stakeholder, the capacity to understand the constraints other partners face [and] the capacity to compromise and negotiate fairly" (Caplan & Jones, 2002, p. 5). The value of this style of operation became evident following a network meeting at which two people explained the Christmas Appeal they were running and to which everyone in SMEN was invited to contribute (4 December 2012). A local school and a Housing Association worked together to facilitate the appeal and speaking to the organizers afterwards they were appreciative of the way SMEN had responded both in contributions and in offers of help.

Unlike the other examples of this community-based model of partnership, the stakeholders who came together to support MSWF, whether consciously or unconsciously, adopted a top-down, hierarchical style of leadership. They identified their task as trying to address the problems the Somali women faced, particularly around literacy and employability. Thus, they focused on finding ways to meet those needs, failing to take into consideration the women themselves and their concerns, which revolved around the problems the drug khat caused their community, and their wish to campaign for it to be made illegal. The women spoke about this during workshops, and, as they did so, showed their abilities as mothers, wives and homemakers, and the survival skills learnt as refugees and asylum seekers. Although they brought these assets to MSWF, the organizers disregarded them, which was disempowering for the women because it deprived them of their voice. Mara, a BME worker, who had worked with the Somali women, spoke about the collapse of MSWF after the women stopped attending meetings:

> Everyone has to take responsibility for themselves, don't they? … and they at least need to be able to say we want to be able to meet … on

> this day and we'd like a room, and we thought we could put this kind of food on and do a bit of dancing or drumming or something.

The Somali women lacked funding and experience in managing an organization like MSWF. However, the failure of those who became involved to consult with them, to listen to their stories and hear what was important to them, was remiss, because it suggests an arrogance of believing they knew what was best for these women. In a journal article, Postsecular prospects: a view from ministry (*The Expository Times, 125 (1)*, p. 22-25), I propose, "joining in solidarity with the women, and supporting and encouraging them to transform their unjust situation, would be more enabling for them" (p. 24). This partnership that adopted a hierarchical structure of organization and neither engaged with those it endeavoured to support nor recognized the contribution each member can make might not have failed if there had been greater understanding of the women and they had adopted a shared ownership approach. Thus, although it evolved as an example of the new model I am proposing, it failed because it endeavoured to work *for* and not *with* those it sought to help.

Community participation

Involving the local community in regeneration initiatives had been a key feature of successive programmes during the 1970s and 80s. In addition, after the election of a Labour government in 1997, "community participation" became "a defining feature of Labour's regeneration agenda, articulated as a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSSR)" (Dargan, 2009, p. 308). To show Labour's commitment to participation, it published a detailed guidance manual: *Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration: A Guide for Practitioners* (DETR, 1997). However, the manual was written for officials running the partnerships, rather than for local people, giving them advice on how to engender local participation (Dargan, 2009, p. 309). It recommended that officers should act as "gatekeepers to participation, with the power to determine who can become involved in the regeneration and in

what capacity" (ibid.). In this model, community members were 'mediators' between the partnership and the wider community and though the rhetoric was of 'empowerment', their role was an advisory one and the views of the community were "subordinate to the interests of the partnership as a whole" (ibid.).

Labour's new approach to participative area-based regeneration, set out in the New Deal for Communities (NDC),[15] the government's flagship programme, defined communities spatially. For instance, in Manchester, this covered the Beswick and Openshaw areas. It assumed people in a community shared a sense of common purpose and that once the regeneration process started, this underlying sense of shared-ness would enable a partnership "to develop a consensus amongst community members" (ibid.). However, this was an arguably naïve assumption because communities are not homogenous but are diverse and comprise competing groups and interests (Foley & Martin, 2000, p. 486). Community is, as Dargan (2009) argues:

> far more complex than the idealistic vision underpinning many area-based regeneration programmes … [and t]he reality of working in deprived urban areas is that the sense of abandonment and exclusion felt by residents has fostered a sense of suspicion and mistrust of those outside the community … and of those in authority (p. 315).

Although governments over several decades recognized that communities should have a role in deciding how their local area develops, local needs or local priorities did not drive the programmes (Lawless, 2010, p. 26). However, now, in this time of retrenchment, there is evidence that local residents are finding their voice to propose and initiate projects that create

[15] NDC, launched in 1998, was the cornerstone of New Labour's regeneration agenda. The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) developed the initiative with the Treasury, and the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) and was designed to fund projects in 39 clearly identified urban areas.

places for addressing either social justice or environmental issues that create flourishing and sustainable communities.

Adrian, a city councillor, commenting that he is now seeing "a whole blossoming of community activity and residents' activity", confirmed this argument, giving an example of an environmental project. He explained that Dan, who is about thirty, had the idea of setting up a cider-making project in Moss Side. The Local Authority had given permission for him and other residents to use a piece of land, cleared following the demolition of a bus station and ultimately designated for housing, for growing apple trees for a cider-making project and other community garden projects. Soon after the interview with Adrian, I heard Dan speak at a SMEN meeting. His fervour for the venture and for making his dream a reality was apparent as he explained how in three years he had made a great start with the cider making. A short film of his project showed the support of local people in donating apples to his cider making, in tasting the cider and in planting apple trees in their gardens and the way in which it was promoting opportunities for economic growth and enhancing the environment in Moss Side.

Doreen, an officer in the Sale West and Ashton Partnership, described how local residents decided that a community garden would be beneficial to their environs. Through the partnership, they acquired a disused car park, which they have turned into a community garden. The partnership also arranged training for those running it. Commenting on this, Doreen said:

> They're all people who are passionate about making a difference in Sale West. And what's great about that group is that they're very happy to share resources. So if you see a need or a problem, you know, I can do this, I can do this – different people round the table all contributing to meeting that need.

These examples show that new community-based partnerships enable local people to re-connect to meaningful participation in their community, as they address, in this instance, environmental issues. An increasing desire to

confront local issues and engage actively in the creation of ad hoc networks to address them is helping to rebuild thriving and sustainable communities.

Deinstitutionalization in a post-regeneration age

In these emerging partnerships, local people are taking the initiative to improve their communities and seeking partners to work with. In evaluating the future of urban regeneration, Lawless, (2010) argues that if it is retained it is likely "that local authorities, working with local 'communities', will have a far bigger say in their implementation" (p. 27). In fact, the ideas now often come from the local communities, who will work with the local authority if they are able and/ or are prepared to support them. Previously held conceptions no longer necessarily hold true, leading me to argue that the new model of partnership operates in a deinstitutionalized mode that is helping to frame current policy.

Lawless (2010) makes the point that as far as the main political parties are concerned regeneration no longer appears in policy statements. This is probably a consequence of retrenchment in public spending but also endorses the fact that it "is not, and never has been, a major mainstream activity" (p. 27). However, current policy practices "are privileging the role of communities helping themselves over and above other forms of development, such as large area-based initiatives" (Matthews & O'Brien, 2016, p. 28), which suggests we are now in a post-regeneration era. The partnerships that are the focus of my research are examples of organic community activism, which Matthews and O'Brien argue, "is one of the important forms of contemporary urban policy that is distinct from previous regeneration policy in England" (p. 29). Recent developments also mark "a break with the past through the stripping away of resources along with the increased claims of devolution of power and localism" (p. 39). These creative, community-focused partnerships of public, private and third sector bodies are gesturing "towards a more fundamental change in the landscape of urban policy making" (p. 29). Drawing on the experience of the earlier partnerships, this new model addresses current local issues, encouraging

wider community engagement and building resilience so that personally and collectively they can address problems as they arise and adapt well to ongoing changes.

There is a developing nexus between the postsecular and ongoing austerity in these deinstitutionalized and post-regeneration partnerships. This extends Cloke's concept of rapprochement, which he identified primarily as a postsecular notion. It is my contention that this community-based model of partnership also adopts a social enterprise model, further developing Cloke's concept.

The new paradigm of rapprochement - a social enterprise model

'Social enterprise' is a term originally used by charities, voluntary groups and cooperatives, who, in order to generate extra income for social endeavours offered their resources to third parties (Ridley-Duff 2008, Eagleton-Pierce 2016). From the mid-1990s it was used more widely to describe organizations that endeavour to bring about social and environmental change using the power of business (Social Enterprise UK),[16] and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)(2006)[17] identify it as a way to bring "innovative solutions to the problem of social exclusion and unemployment." However, the neoliberal turn in which the state provides fewer services and promotes a culture that espouses self-reliance and personal responsibility, together with changes to funding arrangements for all sectors, influence the way in which social enterprises are evolving (Bull, 2008, p. 269).

[16] Social Enterprise UK is a national membership body for social enterprise and businesses with a social or environmental mission. Members include private companies, charities and public sector organizations. They run campaigns, carry out research, build networks between social enterprises and broker business for their members and other social enterprises.

[17] The OECD's mission is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people globally. It provides a forum where governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to issues that directly affect everyone's daily life.

Social Enterprise UK proposes, "[T]he primary aim of all social enterprises must be a social or environmental one" (2012, p.1), benefitting the community or a specific beneficiary group. They claim that an organization's "social mission must be explicit" and that "social enterprises should be able to explain and justify the value of social change they aim to bring about" (ibid.). However, they maintain that social enterprises are businesses, generating the majority of their income through trade and reinvesting more than 50% of any profits into its social or environmental mission (p. 2).

The term 'social enterprise' can also be used in relation to the ways businesses fulfil their corporate responsibility obligations (Westall, 2007). However, a criticism of this is that where corporations appear to be "'doing social good' in order to burnish their reputations, [this] in turn, may consolidate a 'charity-based' approach to the problems of the market economy" (Eagleton-Pierce, 2016, p. 56). Conversations about managing corporate social responsibility, which "increases cross-fertilisation of ideas" (Westall, 2007, p. 17), effectively led to the founding of SMEN, set up principally by businesses for businesses. However, my reason for proposing SMEN fits the social enterprise model, is not this, but rather, the way it affirms the values and tenets that underpin a social enterprise, adjusting it for their context. This is also the case for the Volunteer Programme at Manchester Cathedral

Although social enterprise is a complex discourse bridging boundaries between the different sectors (Ridley-Duff, 2008), its central aim is to maximise the prospects of those engaging in it. To explore this assessment, I engage in conversation with Alan Kay, Michael J Roy and Cam Donaldson (2016), who develop a proposition for a reimagined social enterprise paradigm. In this they suggest, "Social enterprise is not just a business with some social objectives, but rather a way in which people can work together in order to create well-being in terms of equality and fairness" (p. 228). I

concur with this view and therefore argue that their reimagined model is the one that these community-based partnerships exemplify.

The contribution social enterprises make to positive social change through their activities and the way they maximize 'social profit' rather than 'financial profit' makes them different from other businesses. Kay et al. therefore suggest that instead of social enterprise being seen as a "deliverer of social change", more weight should be given to "how a social enterprise operates" (p. 222). This includes focusing on the "shared values such as co-operation, collaboration, inclusiveness and democratic decision-making structures" (ibid.) that underpin organizations. Social enterprises depend on the goodwill and motivation of stakeholders and the relationship between those engaged in the enterprise is "often more 'organic', [and] based upon trust" (p. 226). These are principles crucial for the success of the organizations.

SMEN and the Sale West and Ashton Partnership correspond to Kay et al.'s re-imagined social enterprise model with the shared values they propose being the ones I identify in this new model. Adam, a member of an Eden Team, spoke about the network of Openshaw organisations, describing the way different agencies in that community have come together and the benefits of working together:

> We try to work with the different organisations in Openshaw because we're not the only answer, you know, and … there are a lot of small local charities doing a lot of good work, you know, across East Manchester.

A capitalist mode of enterprise drives the economic world meaning that social enterprise, which is still small scale, has only a marginal impact (Kay, Roy & Donaldson, 2016, p. 229). Kay et al. nonetheless recognize that what they call the more 'radical' social enterprises are finding ways to support people out of poverty. This is either by "opening up new, sometimes local, markets and jobs … [or] bringing into the labour force groups of people

rejected by mainstream enterprises (people with disabilities, women, ethnic minorities)" (ibid.). Indeed, they project this as "a model of how things could be in relation to social, environmental and societal impacts" (ibid.). I suggest that this model now exists and that there is "a new generation of social enterprises innovating beyond the confines of 'old' public, private and third sector institutions" (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2016, p. 45), organic in nature and able to "transcend the limitations of other sectors through a distinctive approach" (p. 46). Indeed, as what these initiatives are 'for' is what frames them, it seems appropriate to call them 'for-purpose' enterprises (McCulloch, 2013).

Social enterprise is a model that espouses environmental and societal ideals and I have already cited examples of programmes initiated to help the unemployed into work. Some of these partnerships operate in disadvantaged communities that are ethnically diverse and are working to upskill people from these minority groups. This model does not "assume that adding to the economy is an end in itself" (Kay, Roy & Donaldson, 2016, p. 229), but, rather, that by offering employment to the long term unemployed and enhancing their livelihoods, it helps to address the inequalities between the better off and less well off (ibid.). Although Richard did not articulate this when he spoke of the Volunteer Programme and members of SMEN were not specific when they talked of initiatives designed to get the long-term unemployed back into work, yet, it was implicit because in each situation they expressed concern for those who are workless. It suggests that the set of values these enterprises put in place defines "how they want to influence the way we live and work together as a society" (ibid.) and implicit in this is the argument that they develop in local areas (p. 231)

Interviewees cited a number of examples of the way initiatives are developing in local communities. Adrian, a city counsellor, described the Yarden project, one example of the way local people are working together to enhance their community. He explained:

> [S]ome very proficient gardeners have got together to encourage people with back yards to look at their back yards and to think of it in a more creative way. And last year there was a celebration day where there was a tour of significant yardens – some of them are actually beautiful – really very good, hidden away so you wouldn't know they're there.

As a social enterprise, this project, seemingly just a little community-based venture, appears a long way removed from the business model proposed by Social Enterprise UK. Indeed, the social enterprise movement is at a significant point in its development and Kay et al. suggest it might "split" with

> at one extreme … businesses with strong social responsibility making as much profit as possible so that a portion of it can be funnelled into philanthropic ventures (reformist); and at the other extreme community-based social enterprises with adherence to sets of values and principles that ensure all that it does and how it does it leads to social and community benefit (radical) (pp. 230-231)

Social Enterprise UK may not yet be ready to recognize this divergence in the social enterprise movement but I argue that this radical paradigm is now operating in and enhancing local communities. In the case of SMEN, as there are several multi-national businesses involved, it might be expected that they would operate on Social Enterprise UK's 'reformist model', in which, "financial figures to explain social and community benefit is dominant" (Kay et al., p. 227). However, benefitting the community is the main principle on which the network is built, thus meeting the criteria of the 'radical model'. Some of my interviewees, including Richard and James, both Anglican priests, used the term social enterprise when speaking about the partnerships in which they are involved. James describing the range of organizations that they work with at their church community centre then added that it was about finding activities and projects that "enabled people to articulate or develop the skills that give them greater opportunities."

Other interviewees did not use the term social enterprise per se but the partnerships they described, such as the Sale West and Ashton Partnership and the network of Openshaw organisations fit this radical social enterprise paradigm. In many of the partnerships, members of the Established Church are involved but perhaps because of the connotations of business and profits, church members tend not to identify with or recognize the term social enterprise. However, as Richard and James acknowledge, their partnerships are social enterprises that lead to both social and community benefit. Thus, I argue that in this present time of austerity, engaging with others and adopting a radical social enterprise paradigm offers the Established Church an opportunity to engage with the local community and assume a significant place in the public sphere.

An interesting feature of the social enterprises is the diversity of organizations involved in them and, despite sometimes very different political, moral, ethnic and faith-based stances, they are able to cooperate effectively to deliver on social justice concerns, such as unemployment, or local environment issues, such as the Yarden project. This is a feature of rapprochement, as Cloke (2011) suggests, with people "united by the ethical desire to do something practical and …forged out of the necessity to provide a response to … [need]" (p. 238). Although this argument explains why people respond to an issue that requires action, it does not explain how they come to a common mind about how to proceed. I propose that they are able to form these synergistic social enterprise partnerships by operating within the framework of 'smart pluralism'.

A framework of 'smart pluralism'

'Smart pluralism', is a framework, proposed by Brand and Gaffikin (2007), in which stakeholders recognize that their best interests are served through 'knowledge exchange', which uses "persuasive engagement rather than coercive dominance" (p. 308) and helps to achieve a synergy between

stakeholders holding significantly different views. Developing this, Vivien Lowndes and Sharon Squires (2012) suggest:

> The more diverse the partnership membership, the richer the mix, in terms of insights … [and t]here is also the potential not just to aggregate these different perspectives but to integrate them, in the context of a deliberative process in which completely new insights and approaches may be developed(p. 401).

Gathering as much information as possible about the issue concerned, which involves co-ordinating "existing resources and viewpoints, alongside the creative generation of entirely new ideas, capacities and opportunities" (ibid.) and engaging a wide range of stakeholders provides a 'buffering effect'. In this time of retrenchment, partnerships form "a vital part of the response to austerity" (p. 402), as they "combine creativity and risk-taking with a capacity to build trusting relationships" (Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013, p. 545) in their bid to address social and environmental issues in local communities.

Richard, when speaking about the Volunteer Programme at Manchester cathedral, emphasised the importance of building relationships of trust, but the complimentary assets, skills and powers that enable synergistic partnerships to develop are also important (Mackintosh, 1992, p. 214). The framework of 'smart pluralism' and 'transformative learning opportunities' afforded by "forms of civic empowerment, mediation and negotiation" lead, Brand and Gaffikin propose, not only to those involved changing their arguments but to a personal change as well (p. 308). A 'co-construction' of knowledge, created from "a collective learning process, resulting in 'negotiated knowledge' that can arbitrate among diverse claims and priorities" (p. 287) enables stakeholders to work together collaboratively rather than competitively. This collective learning process arises from what is termed 'second-order learning' (Schot & Rip, 1997), which means those involved "articulate and question their current preferences in search for a new 'fit'" (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007, p. 287). This process is possible because

preferences are malleable since “they are contingent upon circumstances, including the preferences of others” (ibid.).

The initiators of SMEN recognized that to build a better relationship with the local community, there had to be a ‘collective learning process’ at the outset. The large companies had to listen not only to each other, but to the smaller, local businesses too, because, without this, relationships and trust could not develop. At one SMEN network meeting, the CEO of a large housing association, acknowledging the way businesses in the local community were growing and were addressing issues such as unemployment, suggested that it was sharing of knowledge and the transference of skills encouraged through the network that was making this difference. In these partnerships, dialogue, such as the networking over lunch at SMEN meetings, fosters a rapport “creating a ‘sensing together’ rather than a conventional consensus” (Brand & Gaffikin, p. 293). It affords all involved the confidence and opportunity to share their own views and to discuss the views of others openly and honestly.

Smart pluralism underpins partnerships built on the social enterprise paradigm because, through dialogue, stakeholders are able to develop a ‘co-construction’ of knowledge and a ‘sensing together’. This enables them to achieve what Gadamer (2004) terms a ‘fusion of horizons’. He suggests reaching an understanding in a dialogue “is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one’s point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were” (p. 371). The common agreement achieved through dialogue and the consequent fusion of horizons enables stakeholders to work collaboratively rather than competitively in these partnerships.

Gadamer’s hermeneutical circle

The fusion of horizons identified in this new model of partnership suggests there are deeper hermeneutical principles at play. As hermeneutical activity

is by nature practical, we take it for granted in our everyday lives. It is only when as Gadamer (2004) suggests we are 'pulled up short' and realise that what we are facing "is not compatible with what we had expected" (p. 270) that we become aware of this interpretive activity.

Being 'pulled up short' and 'preunderstandings'

The collaborative praxis identified in these new organic partnerships frequently develops because individuals or a group identify a particular need or gap in provision in their local community. It often results from someone being 'pulled up short', for instance, after becoming aware that people in their community are going hungry, perhaps because their benefits are paid late or have been stopped, and they consider setting up a food bank. Jackie, who heads up a diocesan committee, recounted an incident of the way an area bishop was 'pulled up short' by a local authority CEO telling him of the discrepancy in life expectancy on the Wirral:

> The Chief Exec said to him, 'Our biggest issue is life expectancy – if you live on the west side of the Wirral you live fifteen years longer than you would do if you live seven miles away in the east side of the Wirral.

This revelation appalled the bishop who responded, "That's terrible, that is absolutely disgusting" but he subsequently shared the challenge with others and drew up a proposal for a partnership to address the issue. The partnership, including the CEO of Wirral Borough Council, the Director of Public Health, Rural Deans from the Wirral, and other interested people, largely from urban priority communities, brought churches together from the two sides of the Wirral. Through addressing the issue openly, they built a relationship of trust and then, reflecting on the concern, they decided on appropriate action. The consequence of this has led, Jackie said, "to amazing and remarkable relationships in partnership with the Local Authority and Public Health that are benefitting the local communities and helping to address the issues," particularly regarding health and social care.

In this example, an aspect of the bishop's preunderstanding was called into question when he was 'pulled up short'. Gadamer (2004) suggests that interpretation starts with preunderstandings or prejudices from a person's past, claiming that we cannot understand the meaning of a new situation if we "stick blindly to our own fore-meaning about [it] (p. 271). Rather, to understand a new situation, we need to be "prepared for it to tell [us] something" (ibid.). For Gadamer, "*[t]he hermeneutical task becomes of itself a questioning of things [sic]* and is always in part so defined" (ibid.). Thus, prejudice is a necessary condition of knowledge because from it a new understanding begins to emerge. This, as Veling (2005) infers, seeks "to invite our very selves into the interpretive process [so that] we will become more receptive and open to that which is seeking to speak to us, to show itself to us, to reveal its truth to us" (p. 15). The bishop whilst taken by surprise by what he heard was able to recognize that he needed to understand and respond to the information, contrary to expectations, given to him.

Dialogical interplay

After being 'pulled up short' and addressing our prejudices, Gadamer (2004) notes "the importance of the concept of the *question*… [because w]e cannot have experiences without asking questions" (p. 356). He argues that questions need to be open, since it is through questioning that we acquire knowledge (p. 359) and think things through (p. 360). Gadamer sees this as dialectic "because it is the art of conducting a real dialogue" (ibid) in which it is important for partners not to talk at cross purposes (ibid.) but to endeavour to really listen to and hear what the other is saying. He suggests that dialogue is not concerned with "trying to discover the weakness of what is said, but in bringing out its real strength" (p. 361). It is only in this way that we are able to undertake appropriate actions to address the issue that concerns us. In Fig. 1, I show the 'moments' of Gadamer's hermeneutical circle.

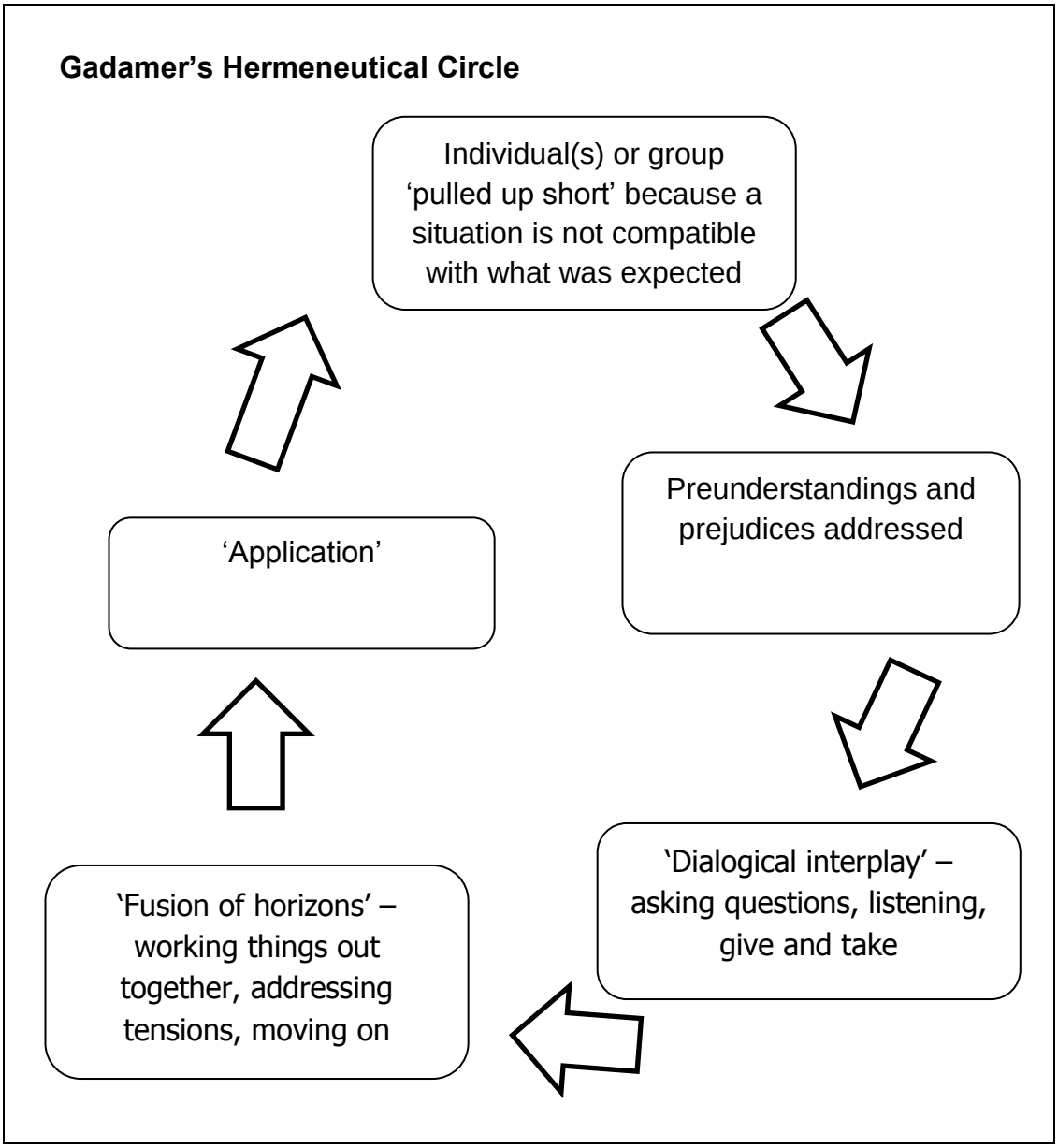

Fig. 1: Gadamer's Hermeneutical Circle

As Gadamer stresses the importance of dialogue, Brand and Gaffikin (2007) in their research into collaborative planning recognize that because "divergent propositions have to compete to be compelling … the dialogic process is itself transformative" (p. 293). For participants, this creates "a 'sensing together' rather than a conventional consensus, whereby antagonism can be domesticated into agonism (Hillier, 2002: 289)" (p. 293). From their case study that focused on the synergistic partnerships of planners in Northern Ireland, they found:

> [T]ransactional exchanges fostered rapport and, within their ambience, participants were afforded the confidence and dexterity to both ventilate their own views, and to navigate around the views of others in ways that acknowledged that query can be preferable to quiescence, and that concession does not have to be seen as surrender, or objection seen as obstructive (p. 306).

Asking questions, engaging in conversation, listening to what others are saying, and being open to suggestions are all aspects of the processes involved in the development of this new model of partnership. Caroline, who holds an economic development role in a private sector construction company and is one of the initiators of SMEN, explains the significance:

> We started to have a chat with people about what they were doing, what they were up to locally, and we found there was a real common ground, whether that was another third sector organisation, public sector, other private sector organisation - we're all talking corporate responsibility, social value, value added, all these different things, but what we were actually trying to get at as our core theme was the same.

Through shared conversations between representatives from businesses based in Hulme and Moss Side, they discovered the transcendent theme lying behind different types of professional and bureaucratic language and created a 'sensing together' that stimulated the possibility of working creatively together. Nathan, who works with young people on the verge of trouble with the police, also recognized the value of entering into dialogue with those who might partner with his organization. In conversation with a woman he met at a networking event, he told her that he was looking for an 'ambassador' to enhance the work of his project. She suggested that the head chef at the Hilton Hotel might be interested. He continued:

> So she gave me his e-mail address, I e-mailed him, and fifteen minutes later he phoned me up and said, I'm really interested so let's

> meet for a coffee. So next day I was sat in the Hilton having a coffee with him, told him what we do, the whole philosophy where I'm from and he's been on board ever since.

In this example, too, it was through sharing their stories, listening to and hearing one another and then discussing possible ways of developing the project that they created a 'sensing together' that led to them finding a way to work creatively together.

'Fusion of horizons' and 'application'

Gadamer (2004) maintains that engaging in dialogue about an issue leads a person to want to reach a common understanding and agreement in how to address it. This can be transformative (p. 371) since their own horizon, "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (p. 301), is decisive. However, this is "not as a personal standpoint that he *[sic]* maintains or enforces, but more as an opinion and a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one truly to make one's own what the [conversation] says" (p. 390). It is a starting point from which to view a situation, but one influenced by factors including suppositions, beliefs and values acquired from daily experiences of life. As stakeholders' converse and risk putting forward an opinion or possibility (p. 390), it becomes a 'fusion of horizons' (See Fig. 1). It is a continuous process in which "old and new are always combining into something of living value, without either being explicitly foregrounded from the other" (p. 305).

Brand and Gaffikin (2007) note that as, in the partnerships they researched, dialogue progressed, concern was not "with gauging of fixed interests but with facilitating the negotiation of emergent interests" (p. 288). This corresponds with Gadamer's proposition, and is a view acknowledged by Leonie Sandercock (2003) when she contends that transformation in the inner urban requires "dialogue and negotiation across the gulf of cultural difference, [and] its practitioners to be fluent in a range of ways of knowing

and communicating" (p. 162). When SMEN was set up, the initiators knew there were huge cultural differences between their businesses and those in the local community and it was through dialogue and negotiation, at first with a few local businesses, including, as mentioned earlier, a small window cleaning business and an independent travel agency, that they were able to develop relationships of trust.

The development of the cooperative to install solar panels on a church in Old Trafford, described earlier, also exemplifies the way open discussion and a fusion of horizons leads to social and/ or environmental action. Adrian, a city councillor, suggested that in the culturally and ethnically diverse community of Moss Side the necessity of setting up a food bank had galvanized local groups into cooperative action, drawing in organizations, including a Black Church that had never previously engaged in local activities. He commented:

> It's slightly ironic that it's food banks which have brought us together … you'd rather there were other ways rather than necessarily through the sheer mechanics of food banks, which are necessary.

Dialogue and negotiation leading to action will contribute, Sandercock claims, "to a more socially and environmentally just city, and one which is tolerant of difference, open and culturally pluralist" (p. 160). It also addresses what Baker (2016) discerns as society's desire to reconnect people with one another and "to a deeper, more sustaining and wholesome narrative of who we are as a nation" (p. 260). To address the range of concerns arising in communities today, discussion and negotiation with other interested groups and organizations is essential in order to achieve the desired objective. In Gadamer's hermeneutical circle, this is 'application', the fifth 'moment' (See Fig. 1).

For Gadamer "application is neither a subsequent nor merely an occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding, but codetermines it as a whole

from the beginning" (p. 321). It leads to "[n]ew insights giv[ing] rise to new ways of thinking and acting in the world" (Osmer, 2008, p. 23) and it is this that I suggest the new model of partnership manifests. This includes small community projects such as the one Adrian, a city councillor, described, in which a Peace garden was developed on the site of the house in Moss Side where Friedrich Engels had lived. It was initiated by a local resident, who then gained help and support from developers and builders working on another project in the community. Another example is a creative initiative undertaken in a deprived locality in Salford when some residents had the idea of entering the Britain in Bloom competition. Speaking about it, Adam, a member of the Eden team living there, said that everyone was at first sceptical and did not think it would work. He continued:

> Getting this massive team together, they gave hanging baskets to every house on every street and they put all these big massive planters all the way down the main road and along some of the other main roads and during one week they covered the estate in flowers. And I was like, that's nice, let's take some pictures today before it's all gone. Now what happened was that no one did anything to it and it lasted and we won the urban regeneration national competition.

In this instance, this community-based initiative not only enhanced this deprived and neglected community but also became a parable of what urban mission seeks to achieve. Adam described it in this way:

> It seems like it's all about to fall apart at any moment but actually it doesn't and it carries on and it's beautiful and in the midst of the kind of ugliness and the destruction there's beauty that grows. And for us, it was a partnership that we went into that became a parable about what we wanted to do and the way that God seems to work in that area.

A community-based model of partnership spiral

I have illustrated how the moments of Gadamer's hermeneutical circle are discernible in this emerging community-based model of partnership, and in Fig. 2, I show how they operate as a spiral. This provides a clearer

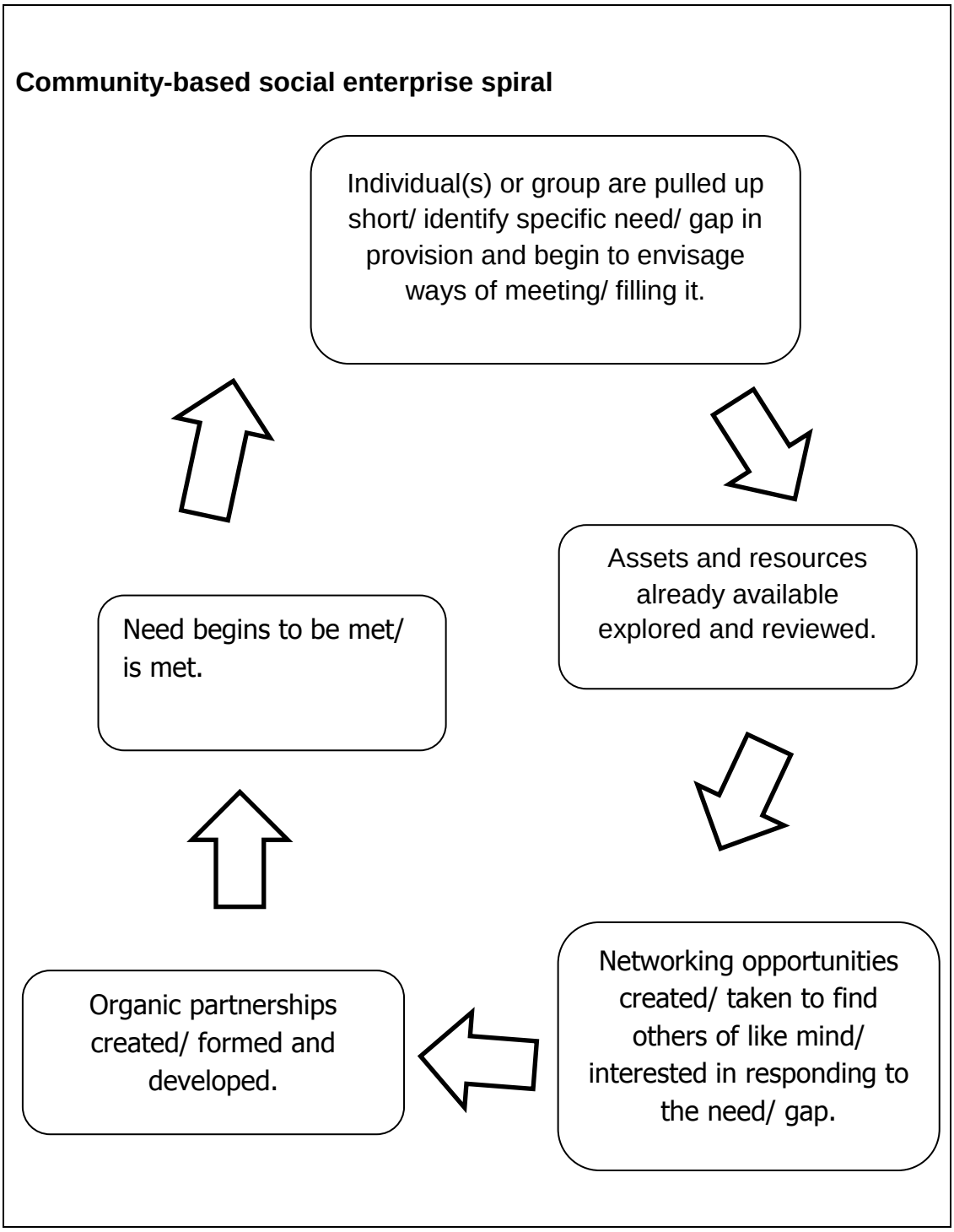

Fig. 2 Community-based social enterprise spiral

understanding of the way that dialogue, collaboration and networking are facilitating the growth of these social enterprises endeavouring to meet current issues, particularly those resulting from ongoing austerity. They are community-focused and are more successful where they are working *with* rather than working or providing *for* those who need support. In some of these community-based partnerships, the powerless, the vulnerable and the marginalised are able to be proactive in the development of projects and in others they are being upskilled, which is enabling. These partnerships are helping address local issues in the age of on-going austerity, in a post-regeneration era.

Conclusion

This chapter has critically examined the new model of partnership emerging in a postsecular, post-regeneration age. A collaborative style of working predominates, resulting in enterprises that often grow organically as they respond in a flexible and fluid way to the needs and gaps left by retreating welfare provision. These partnerships are synergistic with stakeholders showing solidarity and inclusivity with those they are endeavouring to help. Enabled by the postsecular turn, they develop in response to areas of need created by on-going austerity, a consequence of a neoliberal political economy and public policy. The continuing emphasis on localism provides opportunities for community engagement and encourages more people to respond, particularly in support of those affected by on-going austerity. As the government continues to cut back on public services, there is an increased interest in social enterprise with many “looking to it as the future for social change” (Social Enterprise UK, 2012). Engaging in this new community-focused collaboration and working with others to support the vulnerable and the disempowered opens up a route for faith groups and the Established Church again to take their place in the public square. This does not necessarily mean people of faith taking the initiative in forming a partnership, but in being willing to look outwards, to be aware of what is happening in the local area, and where appropriate to offer their resources to the enterprise.

My focus so far has been on the nature of this new model of partnership, the reasons why they start and the way in which they operate. However, my research also disclosed that the role of leadership is a significant driver in these enterprises, influencing their development and success. The interaction of the diverse array of stakeholders participating in these partnerships also affects the accomplishments of these organic organizations. In the next chapter, I will analyse these roles and the interactions of the stakeholders.

Chapter 4: The role of leaders and stakeholders in the new community-based model of partnership

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I indicated that my data uncovered leadership style as a key driver in this new model of community-based partnership. However, although the disparate voices of those I interviewed suggested these leaders were individuals with passion and vision, motivated by faith and/ or forms of belief or worldview that actively support a concern for social justice, with good communication skills and prepared to take risks, it did not explain the significance of this for these new partnerships.

In this chapter, I suggest effective partnerships are based on the open relational approach espoused in a social entrepreneurial style of leadership. As 'power' is a factor in any relationship, I consider the way leaders and stakeholders negotiate, and hold in tension the power dynamic that enables enterprises to achieve their objectives. In addition to what might be termed the official lexicon of partnership working, including terms such as passion, vision, and personal responsibility, I also detect one that is more nuanced and sophisticated that includes words such as brokering, agency, autonomy, enablement and process enablers and inhibitors.

The role of the leader

In a partnership, stakeholder collaboration is an essential ingredient for effective working. Thus, John Adar (2010) suggests an important role for strategic leaders is building and maintaining a team within their enterprise, one that also involves endeavouring to achieve the common task, and motivating and developing the individual (p. 84). He argues that organizations today need leaders with skills to cope with the scale and complexity of the issues they face, further proposing, "[T]he intellectual qualities of being imaginative and creative are desirable if not essential" (p. 101). It is their responsibility to help organizations adapt to the changing

landscape by defining “what the future should look like, align[ing] people with that vision, and inspir[ing] them to make it happen despite the obstacles” (p. 28). To fulfil this role effectively they also need an ability that shows practical wisdom in discerning the way to act and encourage others.

In setting up SMEN, the founders recognized that there was a lack of trust and the local community was suspicious of the multi-national businesses based in their locality. This was because, as Caroline, who worked for one of these large companies explained, the local people in that disadvantaged area sensed no connection with her and her colleagues working “in a massive office with nice shiny glass and loveliness and all coming in in [their] suits and [their] company Audis and BMWs”. It meant that from the launch of the network they needed to build relationships and trust. Adopting a collaborative leadership model that values the contribution each business, institution, individual or group makes, offered the potential for achieving success and as confidence in the network has developed, it has enabled the membership to grasp the vision of those who conceived the idea of this network. Thus, as “[t]he ideas, the creativity, the intelligent sparks … have come from the group itself” (Levine & Crom, 1995, p. 101), they are also helping to shape the way it develops. This is seen in the growing confidence of members to share opportunities and experiences and collectively to find ways to continue building up the local community, such as through their support of activities at Hulme Garden Centre or the Boxing Club run by the local Fire Station, both of which focus on building attendees’ skills and aspirations.

Leader-centric and follower-centric leadership

Until relatively recently, it has been usual in leadership theory to focus on the leader’s traits, qualities and style (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). However, in the private and third sectors, those studying leadership show greater “sensitiv[ity] to the distinction between leaders (as people) and leadership (as a process)” (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2016, p. 293), which has broadened the way

leadership is theorised. Traditionally, leader-centric approaches are "found in organizations that rely on authority, specific directions and strict deadlines for success", in other words, organizations based on top-down, hierarchical structures (Maslennikova, 2007). However, organic entrepreneurial partnerships do not generally choose to adopt this model. Therefore, it seems surprising that with the current growing interest in entrepreneurship there is a renewed attention to trait theories, specifically regarding competencies (London & Morfopoulos, 2010). This particularly relates to the abilities of social entrepreneurs, who Manuel London and Richard Morfopoulos (2010) claim:

> are driven by an overarching desire to improve society … They are movers and shakers … not satisfied with the status quo and … always trying to make things better. They care and they are action-oriented (p. 2).

Jim Collins (2001), sceptical of this renewed interest in leadership traits, explores the ongoing superior performance of certain American corporations, including Coca-Cola and Kellogg, discovering that personality traits in the CEOs do contribute to their continuing success. Devising a hierarchy of executive capabilities in which 'level 5' is the highest level, the research findings indicate the most successful corporations are run, not by 'level 4 leaders', who are charismatic, extrovert, and individualistic, but by 'level 5 leaders' who, although possessing 'level 4' traits, are modest but fearless and work with calm determination, encouraging participative leadership (pp. 20-25). This places "emphasis on the quality of the interactions between leaders and followers, and the behaviours that influence these interactions" (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2016, p. 297). SMEN adopts a follower-centric approach, building good relationships with all stakeholders.

Organizations adopting a follower-centric approach invest resources not only in building relationships with the stakeholders (followers), but also in helping them to develop their potential. This is because they recognize stakeholders

as the most valuable assets in the organisation (Maslennikova, 2007, p. 3). These enterprises "tend to have a flat structure, where leaders and followers are treated equally. ['Followers'] have a 'voice' and can greatly impact organizational decision-making" (ibid.). They are appreciated and used to the advantage of the 'team' (Levine & Crom, 1995, p. 102).

In any organization, the leader plays a significant role in directing it and Kotter (2012) maintains that in this rapidly changing twenty-first century, there is an urgent need for organizations to become more skilled at creating leaders. This is because he recognises that in far too many organizations there are "[n]arrowly defined jobs, risk-averse cultures, and micro-managing bosses" (p. 175), whereas what is required are "flatter and leaner structures along with less-controlling and more risk-taking cultures" (p. 174). In these emerging relational, organic partnerships, the latter is the sort of organisation evolving with the leaders adopting a follower-centric style and the traits displayed are primarily those of the social entrepreneur.

Interviewees recounted local initiatives started up by individuals able to inspire and encourage others. Jackie, who runs a diocesan committee, talking about the way an area bishop responded to the life expectancy discrepancy in different parts of the Wirral, reflected, "It's vision, it's passion, it's creativity, thinking in different ways". Richard, a senior church leader, also echoed this when talking about what motivates his social actions:

> I think what helps me enormously is my own temperament. I'm very much an ideas' person who is always looking at possibilities and I'm generally not a negative person … I'm very creative in my thinking and I can be lateral and think outside the box and alternatives and that's what helps. So given the possibilities there are always ways forward.

Social justice issues, a passion to care for and support those struggling to cope in this time of post welfare austerity, and a desire to create a more

equal society drives those engaging in these new enterprises,. At first, this suggests a 'level 4 leadership' style (Collins 2001), but the humility to recognise and value the skills and expertise others bring to these partnerships identify them as 'level 5 leaders' whose "ambition is first and foremost for the [organization], not themselves" (p. 21). These leaders, inspired to take action, often find new ways to meet specific demands, in what Andrew Mawson (2008) describes as social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship and the social entrepreneur

The Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, part of the Saïd Business School[18], defines social entrepreneurship as "the practice of combining innovation, resourcefulness and opportunity to address critical social and environmental challenges" (www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/faculty-research/skoll/what-social-entrepreneurship). Whilst the Skoll Centre gives a clear definition of social entrepreneurship, Alex Nicholls (2010), argues it is a model that has been "subject to a competing range of definitions" (p. 611). He describes social entrepreneurship as "a new model of systemic social change", while Mike Aiken (2006) defines it as the solution to state failures in welfare provision. In many instances, it is the challenge of economic hardship that motivates social entrepreneurs "to pursue opportunities to address social change" (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006, p. 9), and to mobilise ideas and resources to bring about change (Nicholls, 2010, p. 622). Increasing social need leads to the setting up of new social enterprises to serve those needs "despite an adverse funding environment" (ibid.). The Marketing Director for a small telecommunication business, speaking at a SMEN network meeting (2 October 2015), suggested that times of necessity

[18] The Skoll Centre at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, was founded with a grant from the Skoll Foundation and launched in 2003. It works for the advancement of social entrepreneurship globally, and its aims are to transform systems and practices that are unjust and inadequate through education and research.

encourage an ethos of “being in the trenches together”, which encourages creativity and a readiness to adopt fresh approaches.

In some instances, “a social issue may be compelling only to a relatively small number of constituencies and may have very low visibility, yet a social entrepreneur may seek to make an impact by raising awareness and attention to the issue” (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006, p. 9). Several examples interviewees recounted resonate with this idea, primarily because they relate to a specific locality or group within a locality. For instance, the woman in a deprived community in South Manchester who identified a lack of facilities for toddlers and carers to meet together in the area, important for the children’s development and as a way for carers to build friendships, saw an opportunity to address this when a dilapidated Scout hut became available. Her passion to bring the project to fruition encouraged her to find agencies to help her in this venture. It was not a high profile scheme but significant for those able to access the facility now.

Heather Douglas (2010) suggests that “the application of business like approaches" (p. 88) is vital for initiating social change. Social entrepreneurship “is operationalized as a continuum” with some organizations “more oriented towards the social end of the spectrum while others are positioned closer to the entrepreneurship endpoint” (ibid.). To clarify this, she offers a social entrepreneurial typology that explains the difference in orientation, consisting of two elements: first a commitment to realizing social change, second a business orientation. This results in different organizations having different orientations, organizational forms and practices of social entrepreneurship (pp. 88-89) and positioned on Douglas’ proposed continuum “according to the extent of business orientation and commitment to social change” (p. 89).

In terms of the continuum, SMEN, set up as a business enterprise, is situated at the business orientation end of the continuum, while the Volunteer

Programme and the Life Expectancy Project, are oriented to the other end and to commitment to social change. The other social enterprises sit along this continuum, though most, I argue, nearer the end committed to social change. Some of the enterprises, such as the community garden created from a disused car park, also help to bring about social change as they seek to create flourishing and sustainable communities.

Spear (2006) suggests that traditionally there has been a “"heroic" individualistic general view of entrepreneurship” (p. 406), but SMEN, for instance, shows a more collective and cooperative structure in their style of social entrepreneurship. Spear, who researched social entrepreneurship in six cooperatives, founded within the last 3-20 years in a variety of trading organizations, including computer services, food transport and leisure services, found a similar style of leadership. He notes that although “it would seem quite possible for key managers to be individualistically entrepreneurial [, i]n all six cases there was a more collective form of entrepreneurship - joint (partnership), leader/supporter, team, etc”. As many of the partnerships in my research involve more than one leader, they might be designated ‘cooperative entrepreneurships’.

The role of the social entrepreneur

While social entrepreneurship addresses social change, the characteristics and competencies of leaders is key. Social entrepreneurs are individuals whose “view of the world begins with people, passion, experience and story – not policy, statistics and theory” (Mawson, 2008, p. 2). Andrew Mawson (2008) claims that social entrepreneurs understand that “[w]hat you say and do really matters to people: seeing is believing. Integrity is the name of the game … They seek to change the ethos within which people live and work and create paradigm shifts” (p. 3). They adopt a “classic ‘inside-out’ approach … which begins with people and the building blocks of human relationships” (p. 4). Bolton and Thompson develop this idea, proposing, “[S]ocial entrepreneurs have a cause that consumes them and is their

passion" (p. 52), a cause that in the current time of austerity frequently revolves around helping the more vulnerable in society or addressing an environmental issue.

Richard is an example of a social entrepreneur, who when talking about his concern for people who are struggling, said:

> You know, many of the things I'm passionate about I talk about it and share it and people feel a similar passion and they can grasp the vision and then they run with it.

Apart from passion, Bolton and Thompson suggest that 'vision', which "underlies the perception of an opportunity, giving it strength, direction and purpose" (p. 27) is an essential quality for the entrepreneur. For some people vision is a belief in something, so strong that it becomes a reality (Roddick, 2000), but others, unable to see themselves as visionaries, describe it more modestly as dreaming or imaginative thinking (Hilton, 1957). Amongst interviewees and those they spoke about, I sensed urgency and immediacy in their desire to share their ideas for a possible response to an issue or need. Bolton and Thompson explain this resolution as a "tangible practical short-range vision … [which] is about the mountain they can see in front of them and not the one further back in the distance" (p. 28). It was, for instance, this attitude and concern for the Somali women that prompted members of the Rotary Club of Manchester Breakfast to use their contacts in the local community to seek ways to support the floundering MSWF. Likewise, growing concern for the increasing number of families suffering food poverty led three churches in Moss Side and Hulme to work together and with other agencies to set up a food bank.

Passion and vision may drive social entrepreneurial leadership, but to be able to work with others in developing successful partnerships, Bolton and Thompson suggest these entrepreneurs also need three talents. These are: 'focus' - an ability not to procrastinate, but to act with urgency to get things

done once a target is agreed (p. 20); 'advantage' - an ability "to select the right opportunity from the many" (ibid.); and 'creativity' – an ability "to come up with new ideas all the time" (ibid.), particularly ones that can be "translated into opportunities or solutions" (ibid.).

Many of the initiatives my interviewees described demonstrate forms of leadership highlighting these talents. For instance, those who started the Moss Cider and Peace Garden projects described by Adrian, a city councillor, showed 'focus' because, rather than just talking about their ideas, they shared them with others and collectively brought the vision to fruition. Richard described how he challenged those who ran a homelessness centre based at Manchester Cathedral to recognize that they needed to expand to meet the growing homelessness crisis:

> They have managed to secure funding with my support for a bigger homelessness centre … offering a very comprehensive, significant, holistic care programme for people on the street … It's meant they've had to get out of their comfort zone, those running the centre that is, and eventually they grasped the nettle, they saw the vision and they've gone for it. And it's going to make a huge difference to the quality of support and care that homeless folk will get in the city.

Richard had the 'vision' and the 'focus' for this project, so that his drive encouraged those with responsibility for the homelessness centre to recognize the need to 'act with urgency' in finding a new venue which could offer better facilities. Bolton and Thompson argue that entrepreneurs with the talent of 'advantage' "always find the resources they need" (p. 20). In the case of resources for the homelessness centre, this was £800,000 donated by a brewery trust.

James, an Anglican priest, whose church in Old Trafford includes a community centre endeavouring to meet the changing needs of that disadvantaged, multi-ethnic community, showed the entrepreneurial talent of

‘creativity’, by proposing an alternative response to problems of food poverty in that area. He explained:

> That old Christian Aid strap line that if you give somebody a fish you feed them for a day but if you teach them to fish – and I think that our ethos, our philosophy, is that we could do food bank but actually what we’d rather do is food resilience. So, we’re establishing part of our garden as a community allotment … I would rather that we responded to those kind of issues by saying, well, ok, we could give you food and we may need to give you this hand out but what else can we do?

Under James’ leadership, this church decided not simply to organize a food bank to address food poverty locally, but thinking ‘outside the box’ they identified a piece of land in their church grounds that they could turn into a community allotment. James admitted that there were members of the congregation who did donate food to help those who urgently needed it, but this new venture presented a creative alternative, and enables opportunities for active participation as people work together to develop the plot.

Doreen gave an example of how her team in a community church in another disadvantaged area in South Manchester showed the talent of ‘advantage’ in recognizing the talents of ‘creativity’ and ‘focus’ in a young man who was keen to get ‘football for kids’ off the ground. She recounted that he needed coaching training, money to buy kit and footballs and a bit of support to get it off the ground. However, once they got him started he “just took off” and runs football every Saturday for the children and football during the week linked to a local school. She continued:

> You know, he’s just doing more and more. He’s now doing something for people who are unemployed to train them up to be coaches so that they can potentially get jobs in the future. So that’s one flower that’s growing well now and we don’t need to keep that one going because it’s keeping itself going.

These examples affirm the way these new community-based partnerships help to provide those without power with opportunities, and offer the potential for creating a fairer, more inclusive and connected society.

Helping the 'flowers to grow'

The cases selected to exemplify the abilities of social entrepreneurial leadership include projects of varying sizes and involving differing numbers of stakeholders. Yet, each example shows someone serious about social innovation, with very high aspirations and "literally committed to changing the world" (Mawson, 2008, p. 8). As Mawson claims, these individuals are focused and "very serious about learning from, and applying business experience and ideas to, social questions" (p. 7). He also maintains that they are "fundamentally interested in what works in practice and how you scale up ideas to achieve effective growth" (ibid.). In deprived and vulnerable situations, where the leaders could exercise power and control, this is subsumed in their desire to help people cultivate aspirations (p. 41), which working *with* rather than *for* people enables.

A social entrepreneurial style of leadership predominates in the organic partnership projects emerging in local communities to address issues of social justice and the gaps left by the paring back of the welfare system. One reason for this approach is the frustration leaders feel about the methods traditionally used in community consultation and community governance associated with regeneration projects, which "focussed more on management than enterprise, more on formal representation than on direct practical involvement and … more on short- than long-term vision" (Mawson, 2008, p. 136). Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) also acknowledge this, and, like Mawson, suggest that pressure of time to meet the requirements of the bidding process for projects in the earlier partnerships led to formalization and bureaucratization. This also led, as discussed earlier, to competition and a hierarchical style of leadership. In this environment, voluntary sector groups struggled to find ways to participate in these partnerships and

opportunities for enterprise and often funding- and time-limitations restricted the scope of these projects. The increasing move to locally devolved power is a factor that encourages collaborative working. However, it is the plight of the most vulnerable and those who are 'just about managing' (JAMS),[19] a direct result of the deficit reduction measures, that is now prompting those with a heart for social justice to use their social entrepreneurial skills imaginatively and creatively to develop these new organic, collaborative enterprises.

The Established Church has often taken an active role in supporting the vulnerable and marginalized in society, but usually it has adopted a top down approach. Kenneth Leech (2003) notes, "Much Christian socialism … has been very patrician – aloof, genteel, polite, detached from the lives of working-class people, committed to the basic structures of society – not in fact socialist at all, certainly not revolutionary" (p. 159). However, in these radical new community-based partnerships, the emphasis is on "people from all kinds of different backgrounds [working] together to fashion their own futures" (Mawson, 2008, p. 77). It involves "staying with the aspirations, passions, hopes and fears of the people who live in 'forgotten' places, and helping them to take the raw material and talent they already have and use it in a truly creative new way, [so that together they] build a team, build a common purpose: build a strong community" (ibid. p. 78). This same hope drives those who set up the initiatives at Manchester cathedral, in community churches in different localities and by SMEN to develop community programmes on which they are now successfully delivering and thereby helping, as Doreen suggests, the metaphorical 'flowers' to grow in their locality.

[19] A political cliché coined by Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in July 2016, to describe the 'just managing' socioeconomic group feeling the brunt of austerity.

Engaging with the community

Significant for these organic partnerships is "the freedom to develop in the way that works best in their particular setting" (Mawson, 2008, p. 137) and helps to build strong community. Indeed, Mawson argues that if guidelines and principles of best practice for this approach are drawn up "then we could probably make a national programme of 'neighbourhood renewal' into a realistic ambition" (ibid.). I agree with his sentiment and is a reason why I argue that the Established Church needs to take the concept of rapprochement seriously. However, each church community has to start by engaging with the people who live in their locality because a "community [will] flourish only if the people in it beg[i]n talking to each other and taking more personal responsibility together for the area in which they [live]" (p. 69). Neil, who is Head of Regeneration for a large Housing Association that emphasises its concern for sustainable communities, described how his organization has employed their staff to contact their 4,500 customers and complete a detailed survey, including asking them about their needs and aspirations. This is because as an organization they view their customers as partners and look for partnership opportunities, particularly around employment. Neil continued:

> We weren't just interested in training people into jobs that may or may not exist, but the option of them considering starting up in business themselves and looking at linking businesses together … And there's a whole reputational benefit for the area as well as for [the Housing Association], as a business, to be seen to be part of that process. It's also bringing in our customers at some level or another that's appropriate, whether that's through a sprinkling of start-up businesses, being in the Enterprise Network … or work experience opportunities that our customers … need, but using the Enterprise Network as a vehicle to help.

Neil sees this as 'being smarter' and this includes "treating people as people" (Mawson, 2008, p. 71) rather than as statistics, which Mawson believes

government bodies frequently do. Mawson further considers that if you treat people with respect, "they will respond in kind" (ibid.). Building good relationships between the various stakeholders and particularly with those for whom such enterprises were set up to help is therefore important. Doreen, whose background is in community health and who is Vice Chair of a local community partnership, recognizes the opportunities that working with people in the community offers. The guide, *A Glass Half Full: How an Asset Approach can Improve Community Health and Well-being,* published in 2010, by the Improvement and Development Agency Healthy Community Team for the North West of England, influenced her thinking. This guide, which recommends the development of an assets approach as an important strand of tackling health inequalities, suggests that it leads to a better understanding of local communities and helps to develop a better way of providing services. Doreen commented:

> The traditional way of doing things with and to a community was to go to them, say what your needs are, look at what the gaps are and then services would try and fill the gaps. And it really wasn't a very sustainable model – as soon as money went, everything fell apart again and communities were used to having short term initiatives which would come flying in, then the money would run out and everything would fall apart again. But this approach is to look at – don't look for all the needs and the holes, look for what the assets are and build on them. It made so much sense to me that I felt this is an approach we ought to try to use in Sale West. And we started doing that with a number of different people who we could see as 'community diamonds', you know, those kind of people who you felt had some potential.

During my research, I heard accounts of many individuals, who Doreen might identify as 'community diamonds' and who are making a significant contribution in their community. Indeed, I propose that the ability of social entrepreneurial leaders to identify 'community diamonds' and to help them to 'flower' is a defining feature of these new organic partnerships. Examples

that illustrate this, and already cited, include the young man who wanted to start 'football for kids' and the woman who bought a disused Scout Hut to convert into a centre for carers and toddlers. They were helped to bring their 'vision' to fruition, as was a young man, mentioned by Adrian, a City Councillor, who, with support, has taken a lead in developing a large community allotment in Moss Side. He explained:

> It's now all run by the community – chickens and eggs and it's a hive of activity and a meeting place … in an area that's very deprived.

Leaders in these creative organic partnerships recognize that everyone brings assets to an enterprise and there is a move towards encouraging all participants to be fully engaged in running the projects. The idea of adopting an asset-based approach is not new, but is based on the work of John Kretzmann and John McKnight, two international development professionals, who first introduced the concept of asset-based community development (ABCD) more than 20 years ago (1993). Their concept, which evolved from more than 30 years of community organizing and community development, recognizes that everybody has something to give; it cannot be built top down but has to be internally focused and grown 'inside out' and be relationship-driven (p. 9).

Jackie, heading up a diocesan committee, first encountered the notion of an asset-based approach in community development during the 1970s and 1980s. However, she considers that its real potential for "building up the capacity for the good of the whole community" is only now being realised. I agree that recognizing the potential of individuals, who in other circumstances might have been the target for help, and enabling them to identify their assets and utilize them as they develop their ambitions is crucial and helps them become more resilient in these challenging economic times.

Unlike many traditional organizations, these new community-based partnerships assume an asset-based approach in which everyone's

contribution is valued and utilized. They adopt a non-hierarchical attitude, understanding that "[t]he hearts and minds of all members of the workforce are needed … [because w]ithout sufficient empowerment, critical information about quality sits unused in workers' minds and energy to implement changes lies dormant" (Kotter, 2012, p. 175). The framework of smart pluralism allows stakeholders to co-produce knowledge, and helps to build relationships of trust and understanding. It also "involves recogni[z]ing and reacting to relationships of power" (Pool & Pahl, 2016, p. 79), which means that if enterprises are to flourish, leaders must hold in tension the power dynamic for the mutual benefit of all.

Addressing the issues of power differential

Although it is easy to suggest that leaders need to hold in tension the power dynamics that exist within these organic enterprises, in practice this is not always straightforward, especially as Jim Wallis (2006) notes, "Human beings seem not to handle power very well" (p. 61). In MSWF, the leaders had autonomy, authority and a body of professional knowledge that they did not share with the women, and so it became "an instrument of social control of the have-nots – the poor, the dispossessed, ethnic and racial minorities, women – by a social elite" (Schön, 2003, p. 288). This way of exercising power over the vulnerable and the marginalised, can lead to compassion and charity becoming a substitute for justice (Morisy, 2009, p. 215), and, as such, both offensive and oppressive. Nick, director of a Christian charity, admitted that in this context he often found the attitude of Christians frustrating because:

> Churches want to help people and the power relationships are we're helping these helpless, needy people and for the more evangelical churches it's not only we're helping them but … we're bringing … Christ to them and, you know, we're the shining beacon of light and truth to these kind of sad, enfeebled people and we can rescue them.

Nick also recounted how a group, who had been enthused after taking part in a lobby of Parliament around housing and homelessness that he had organized, decided that they wanted to do something practical. Six months later, they wrote to him saying, “We’ve found a building that we can set up as a night shelter, can you help us find some homeless people.” He continued:

> I think there is that kind of phenomena in churches – we want to do something, and, you know, what’s the idea – well, food banks is what everybody does, so we’ll do a food bank.

Nick’s comments suggest that the way people perceive the needs of those who are struggling, particularly those currently affected by the austerity measures, influences the way they respond to them. They want to help but they do not necessarily take into consideration how their help will be received and as Ann Morisy (2009) suggests, “Failure to allow autonomy into the relationship rapidly permeates our orientation and our language, and … we begin to treat the poor like faulty goods or seconds” (p. 215).

In the case of MSWF, it was the assumption of the leadership that they knew what help the women needed and a failure to realise that they had their own ideas, that led to the Somalians stopping attending forum meetings. Rather than exercising power in this way, it should have been their role to work with the women, thus enabling them to take responsibility for their organization, helping them to become more confident and together exploring the issues that matter, and in mutual trust finding ways to solve problems. It was a challenge to everyone involved with MSWF because working effectively and hearing the women into voice meant having to rethink their role and responsibility, which they did not do (TH8004 portfolio).

Ellen Clark-King (2004), who, from her research among working class women of faith in Newcastle, argues that their voices need to be heard, might propose that the initiators of MSWF saw no need to hear the women’s voice. This was because, in that context, those who had assumed

responsibility thought they could speak about them better than they could talk about themselves (p. 11). However, she insists that this is not an option and that "[i]f we want to hear the voices of those who cannot yet gain a hearing in their own right, it is still necessary to make the attempt" (p. 12). bell hooks (1984) similarly suggests that women and other vulnerable people "need to know that they can reject the powerful's definition of their reality … [and] know that the exercise of this basic personal power is an act of resistance and strength" (p. 90). Through dialogue with those in leadership roles, those without power need encouragement to see that they are the only ones who can liberate themselves and engage in a search for something better.

The leaders of this new model of organic community-based enterprise espouse a relational praxis, working with all partners and affirming the assets they bring to them, rather than exercising power and control over those they seek to support. In some instances, this necessitates building the confidence of those with whom an organization is working as Claire, who organizes many of the educational opportunities offered in a church community centre, explains:

> Some people, they're not ready yet to take that step on to a course that we're offering. They actually need confidence building or just to be with other people and share where they're at before they actually get on that next rung of the ladder.

The way that leaders of this community centre help members to become more self-assured is enabling because it gives them encouragement to participate more fully in the activities of the organization. For those seemingly without power, "conscientization" or "consciousness-raising", Freire (1996) argues, is crucial to enable an in-depth understanding of the world (p. 55). This allows an individual to recognize who holds the power and encourages him or her to "take themselves in hand and become agents of curiosity, become investigators, become subjects in an ongoing quest for

revelation of the 'why' of things and facts" (Freire, 2004, p. 90). It helps the more vulnerable to achieve autonomy, an essential element of these relational social enterprise partnerships. Mark Purcell (2013) defines autonomy as "a condition in which … power is not alienated, in which people retain their own power for themselves … [and] requir[ing] only that people discover and reassert the ruling and law-giving power that is already theirs" (p. 74). Autonomy for him constitutes democracy and he argues, "Democracy insists that people never agreed to surrender their power in the first place, and so achieving autonomy requires only that people discover and reassert the ruling and law-giving power that is already theirs" (ibid.).

Many of the partnerships I have cited, and particularly, the smaller ones such as the group who worked together to create a community allotment or the Moss Cider project, are creating spaces in which autonomy and opportunities to 'become-democratic' can grow (Purcell, 2013, p. 151). Purcell acknowledges, "[T]he desire or will to become democratic, autonomous, and active already exists in us, and it is struggling to endure" (ibid.). Thus, in terms of power, the forces that endeavour relentlessly to inhibit or control people's aspirations to manage their affairs need to be warded off so that a space where becoming-democratic can grow is carved out and defended (ibid.). It is a space, which is:

> about talking to each other. It is about drawing ourselves together into an encounter, to listen to and learn about each other, to understand our commonalities and differences, and to work out together what our desires are (Purcell, 2013, p. 153).

Becoming democratic is about engaging in a dialogue in which each participant endeavours to hear what the other is saying, thus leading to a common understanding and a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 2004, p. 361). It leads to those involved:

> [R]enew[ing] their commitment to become active by continually remaking the structures they create, always disassembling

> institutions, recalling leaders, and reaffirming that it is the active participation of people themselves that constitutes the community and the movement (Purcell, 2013, p. 156).

Autonomy, and the growing of autonomous spaces that this new model of partnership encourages, is a defining feature of them and one of the terms that the more nuanced and sophisticated lexicon associated with rapprochement includes. In organizations that develop collaboratively with a focus on building relationships there is more of a blurring of the lines between those leading and those being led. Leaders adopt a more open approach and team building and power sharing deinstitutionalize the traditional hierarchical structure. Such leaders are self-aware and as Brian, a minister in a community church, commented:

> If you've got a person centred viewpoint, I guess that if you're approaching people with respect and compassion most of the time it rubs off and you're asking other people to do the same. So it is a mentoring sort of thing.

James, however, sees his role as a priest working with and developing relational contacts with groups and organizations in his church community centre not so much about 'mentoring' as 'brokering'. Brokering is a process of negotiation whether with an individual or an organization, with the broker acting as 'go-between' in the development of partnerships, whether, in James' case, that is finding people to join a cooperative to install solar panels on his church or bringing together a training agency and a theatre group to develop a community project. In the context of this new model of partnership, 'brokering' is another defining feature that forms part of the distinctive lexicon, with those leading them seeking out, building relationships and negotiating with other potential partners. Thus, power is not only held in tension but is redistributed, enabling agency and granting autonomy to the vulnerable. This then allows them to find and fulfil a more active role in society.

Enablement offering hope

In the neoliberal era, the term empowerment has become popular, particularly in organizations concerned with social action. This is because it "represents a desire to reveal the contours and content of unequal socio-political relations but, importantly, still give a sense of hope to the marginalised that inequalities can be narrowed or even erased" (Eagleton-Pierce, 2016, p. 142). During the 1980s and 1990s, it became a popular term in business management as a way of "giving less privileged employees (women, minorities) more authority in decision-making" (p. 143). Its popularity as a term has led to its overuse and this has resulted in it becoming a 'washed-out' word (p. 144), with negative connotations, linking it more closely to the concept of power. Indeed, Angela McRobbie (2009), speaking from a feminist perspective, contends: "[W]omen are currently being disempowered through the very discourses of empowerment they are being offered as substitutes for feminism" (p. 49). In light of this argument, I deliberately choose not 'empowerment' but 'enablement' as the term that, in these new partnerships, describes what those engaging in social action aim to achieve with those they seek to help. Enablement addresses ways of "helping people develop the necessary competencies to manage their own empowerment effectively"(Barner, 1994, p. 33). It is not simply about leaders handing over their authority and control to other stakeholders, but, about working with those who might otherwise be voiceless, to develop strategies for managing their new autonomy.

Enablement also supports deinstitutionalization, since within the new enterprises the contribution of every individual is recognized and valued. The traditional approach of organizations involved in social action has been to provide assistance for those needing it, but now, those who might have been overlooked or ignored, are enabled to develop their skills and make a valued contribution to their community. Those organizing the Yarden project and those developing a community allotment exemplify this as in former times it is unlikely that they would have had a 'voice' that was listened to or heard. The way in which the contribution of all is valued indicates the

importance of the relationships that now exist between the various stakeholders involved in them.

Stakeholder interaction in the social enterprise model of partnership

An identifying feature of this new model of partnership is the broad spread of individuals, groups, organizations and institutions brought together in response to a particular social or environmental issue or need. It includes public, private and third sector organizations, with, in some instances, the Established Church and other faith groups becoming stakeholders in these partnerships. Le Feuvre et al. (2015) describe these stakeholders as "a very diffuse and amorphous agglomeration … with different ethea, mindsets, perspectives, modus operandi etc" (p. 56). Coming from a spread of backgrounds means that there are almost inevitably political, social, ethical or moral differences in their attitudes and yet, in the current context, this is not inhibiting the success of these partnerships.

For Cloke (2011), the postsecular turn enables the establishment of these synergistic partnerships, whilst Brand and Gaffikin (2007), suggest that a framework of 'smart pluralism' helps to achieve this synergy between stakeholders holding significantly different views. Both these concepts help to explain how current partnerships develop, although it is knowledge exchange and a co-construction of knowledge, key to smart pluralism, which is particularly significant in these enterprises. This is because, as Le Feuvre et al. suggest, it requires stakeholders "to compromise their individual beliefs and values for the greater good" (p. 64). It points to kenosis, an emptying of oneself, which is "the gateway to mutual understanding and … [through which, b]y dispossession of self we are able to absorb the amazing riches of others" (Raguin, 1973, p. 112). Espousing kenotic values, including voluntary self-limitation, vulnerability, humility and openness to the 'other', leads to personal transformation of both the leader and follower and a "radical divesting of power" so that all stakeholders are enabled to enter into a new relationship "that is marked by equality and service" (Bekker, 2006).

Stakeholder process enablers and inhibitors

Although stakeholders work in a collaborative and open way, partnership arrangements are often complex and the interaction of stakeholders and the way leaders manage them influences the success of an enterprise, as Le Feuvre et al., who researched an urban partnership situated in the Reddish district between the City of Manchester and Stockport Metropolitan Borough, discovered. Their research reveals four process enablers: access to opportunity, cooperative competition, process efficiencies and process replication; and five process inhibitors: insularity, goal misalignment, apathy, role ambiguity and bureaucracy, which can influence a partnership positively or negatively.

Le Feuvre et al. suggest that 'access to opportunity', the first enabler, "bring[s] together stakeholders' distinctive yet complimentary resources … to create - and respond to – possible opportunity" (p. 59). Their complementary assets, skills and powers also produce synergy (Mackintosh, 1992, p. 214). 'Cooperative competition', the second enabler, which permits the establishment of cooperative working arrangements, offers the potential of securing additional benefits for their own organizations, even though this could mean interacting with existing/ potential competitors (ibid.). Having a common objective is beneficial in this instance. Identifying "the efficiencies gained by combining the respective strengths of stakeholders' different sectoral affiliations (e.g. public, private, voluntary)" (p. 61) is a third process enabling influence on stakeholder interaction. Le Feuvre et al.'s research indicated that the process efficiencies of partnership working "reduced perceptions of risk, increased the potential of revenue streams, and facilitated greater stakeholder commitment, both towards [the project] and between its stakeholders" (ibid.). The final process enabler is 'process replication', which recognizes that over time process efficiencies can be replicated, "thereby facilitating the development of more extensive and complex partnership interactions and collaborations and palimpsestic nesting of intra-partnership structures" (ibid.). As opportunities to work together on a social justice or environmental issue bring stakeholders sharing a common

objective together, there is a fusion of horizons created through knowledge exchange and the co-production of knowledge that leads to the successful delivery of the enterprise and offers a possibility of the creation of sub-partnerships that replicate the process.

In the partnerships my research uncovered, these process enablers are evident. For instance, Richard saw a 'possible opportunity' for staff at Manchester Cathedral to assist in addressing concerns about growing levels of unemployment, which led to the setting up of the Volunteer Programme. In a similar way, a sole trader fashion designer's business potential increased, when, through membership of SMEN, she successfully approached the management of a big Manchester hotel about incorporating some of her mannequins into the hotel design.

As this last example suggests, stakeholders' entrepreneurial spirit means they look for and seize possible opportunities. They also strive to create an environment that espouses cooperative working arrangements for the mutual benefit of all. On occasions, this might mean interacting with existing/ potential competitors. Although this last point could be an issue in SMEN, building cooperative relationships enables all organizations to benefit from membership, and not least the small businesses. For instance, Hulme Window Cleaners is a small business benefitting from membership of SMEN, as Andy, who set up the business, explained when he showcased it at a network meeting. Undaunted by the audience, he spoke enthusiastically about the window cleaning service that he and three colleagues run and their hopes for future growth. As they then networked over lunch, there was a steady flow of people talking to Andy and his colleagues, and when I spoke to him later, he affirmed that membership of the network offers them support and encouragement. Following the conversations at that meeting and potentially securing additional contracts, it also offered them opportunities to expand their business.

Establishing cooperative working arrangements can only happen if stakeholders are prepared to engage in dialogue with one another, which is a significant aspect of this new social enterprise model. In these partnerships, stakeholders from various sectors, combine their respective strengths to bring a project to fruition, which for Le Feuvre et al. is their third process enabler. Transforming Lives Together, set up by the Diocese of Chester and Church Urban Fund, and part of the Together Network,[20] that Jackie, director of a diocesan committee, described, is an example of the way that dialogue leads to partnerships developing. The aim of this project is to provide a framework that enables Christians in local communities to engage with issues of poverty and by working relationally with individuals and groups to develop people driven initiatives to address their concerns.

Interviewees are aware of the benefits of maximising stakeholders' skills and of what this means for partnerships and for the local community. Instances, such as converting a disused car park into a community garden, or setting up and running a successful food bank, illustrate the importance of this process enabler for these partnerships. Doreen's description of the 'blossoming' of activity both in the Sale West and Ashton Network and in her community church further demonstrate Le Feuvre et al.'s fourth process enabler of 'process replication'. Building a collaborative partnership that is able to deliver effective solutions offers the potential for 'replication of process efficiencies' and the development of more extensive and complex partnership interactions. For Doreen this included the launch of the SWAN newsletter, produced by and for that local community and delivered to each household every few months and which provides information about events, activities and ways in which local people can get involved. James also explained how in the church community centre in Old Trafford the success of one project is leading to another. Following the installation of solar panels and the creation of an allotment in the church grounds, another project in

[20] The Together Network, which is central to the Church Urban Fund (CUF), consists of 19 partnerships between CUF and Church of England Dioceses. Employing a development worker to bring expertise and support to churches and others, the aim is to effect positive change in those communities

process is the installation of a tandoori oven, designed to improve the kitchen facilities but also to enable the centre to offer cookery lessons to local people many of whom lack basic food preparation and cookery skills.

Community-based partnerships in which leaders are conscious of the process enablers that positively maximise stakeholder interactions flourish. However, Le Feuvre et al. also suggest there are factors that inhibit the establishment of effective partnership relationships (p. 61) and these contributed to the collapse of MSWF. First, if stakeholders within a partnership have different goals, this leads to 'goal misalignment' (ibid.). In the case of MSWF, the focus for some of those who wanted to support the failing forum was to help the Somali women improve their spoken English, develop their literacy skills and thus increase their employability opportunities. The police, on the other hand, felt that understanding the law, particularly as it related to their children, was important, and, as mentioned earlier, the women's priority was to campaign to have the drug, khat, made illegal. Without reference to the women, the committee organized activities and events to meet their perceived goals, which were not in line with the women's own objectives.

'Goal misalignment' leads to apathy, Le Feuvre et al. suggest, which, their research showed "was typically manifest in poor attendance at … partnership meetings and/ or a failure to deliver on, or contribute to, agreed goals/ actions" (ibid.). They also warn, "In such situations, the notion of stakeholder interaction and partnership working rapidly deteriorates" (ibid.). Consistently arranging forum activities that did not appeal to the women's interests led to the latter first arriving late for meetings and finally failing to arrive at all.

'Role ambiguity' is a third process inhibitor, caused when roles and responsibilities within the partnership are unclear. The network that developed to support MSWF drew together stakeholders from a variety of organizations and institutions. However, as no one person assumed

responsibility for coordinating what happened, despite everyone's enthusiasm for the project, there was a lack of clarity about what was to be done when and by whom, and certainly, insufficient consideration given to the role the women themselves played in it.

Le Feuvre et al. suggest "differences in processes, and perceived views about the best way(s) to manage inter- and intra-stakeholder operations and communications, create[s] strategic tensions in partnership working" (p. 62), leading to 'bureaucracy', the last process inhibitor. This can lead to frustration, which was my personal experience while attending forum meetings. For instance, those concerned with helping upskill the women for employment had secured funding to employ an ESOL teacher to help with a planned Job Club, but, on one occasion, plans for a morning's activities changed, seemingly without reference to or consultation with those expecting to run the event. Others who perhaps understood the women better had decided to discuss family issues instead. As there was no clear 'lead' and each person had their own view of what would help the women best, it resulted in confusion and frustration. The negative effect of process inhibitors illustrates the importance of creating a partnership in which objectives are openly shared and discussed and there is a fusion of horizons that enables all to work together in bringing the project to fruition

If partnerships are to achieve their objectives, they need skilful, self-aware leaders who will encourage all stakeholders to interact positively and to share information and experience effectively. This will influence the attitudinal and behavioural positions of stakeholders (Le Feuvre, Medway, Warnaby, Ward, & Goatman, 2016, p. 62). Effective collaborative working also requires an understanding of "the shifting, fluid – and sometimes nuanced and paradoxical – interplay of stakeholder interactions which is as important as understanding the individual/ organizational characteristics of the stakeholders themselves" (p. 63).

The way stakeholders interact at SMEN network meetings, and offer and engage with opportunities to support one another, suggest that they understand and are working on increasing what Le Feuvre et al. identify as process enablers. In this model of social enterprise, the social entrepreneurial leaders recognize the importance of creating a positive environment in which all stakeholders can flourish and be enabled. It is also helping to reconnect the people with one another and, if replicated, will help build more cohesive and sustainable communities.

Conclusion – a new lexicon for rapprochement

In this chapter, I have explored the significance of the role of leader in this new, organic and radical social enterprise model of partnership. I have identified these leaders as social entrepreneurs, individuals able to adapt strategically to the demands of the world's rapidly changing circumstances. They "care a lot about people and are talented at forming relationships and creating committed teams and communities around them" (Mawson, 2008, p. 7) and by applying business experience and business logic, they address social issues. These leaders exhibit the attributes of Collins' (2001) 'level 5 leaders', "a compelling modesty, are self-effacing and understated" (p. 39). Yet, they are also ambitious, have vision and passion, though not for themselves but for the success of the enterprise. They are aware of power dynamics at play in all relationships and work to hold these in tension and enable agency.

Apart from the terms that might usually be associated with partnerships, I discern a more nuanced and sophisticated lexicon in these community-based partnerships of rapprochement. Leaders identify and promote 'community diamonds', individuals who they recognize as having potential to develop an initiative or activity that they have a passion for and that will enhance the local community. They adopt an asset-based approach that metaphorically 'helps these flowers to grow'. 'Brokering' helps to create autonomous spaces in which the voiceless are heard. These partnerships help to

overturn a dependency culture, as working with those they seek to help rather than for them, provides opportunities for all to take an active role in their community. This leads to a blurring of lines between leader and followers, and adopting a more open approach to team building and power sharing, enables deinstitutionalization. These enterprises draw stakeholders from organizations and institutions from all sectors, including the faith sector, leading me to suggest that 'process enablers' influence their success, whilst process inhibitors can cause them to fail.

Having analysed both the radical new model of organic partnership that is the basis of my research and the style of strategic leadership operating in them, in the next chapter, I will explore my reasons for arguing that the Established Church needs to embrace this model in this age of ongoing austerity.

Chapter 5: Church engagement with postsecular rapprochement

Introduction

Key to the findings from my research, which focused on Cloke's (2011) concept of rapprochement, is the discovery that in this emerging social enterprise model of community-based engagement there is a subtle and nuanced redistribution of power that in innovative ways enables agency. This influences alternative attitudes to hierarchy and bureaucracy and enables fresh expressions of place and space to develop. This has significant implications for the Established Church, as I discuss in this chapter, offering it an opportunity for strategic deinstitutionalisation and a fresh chance to show, through praxis, God's unconditional love of all and the inclusivity of the gospel.

Ongoing austerity and the blurring of boundaries characterized by elements of postsecular pragmatism is creating, in individuals and groups, a desire to see people and communities re-connected. This mission calls for action to build a fairer society by addressing social justice issues and creating places that enable the disempowered to participate meaningfully in their communities. It resonates with the Christian gospel that commands us to love our neighbour and engaging with this community-based model of partnership enables the church once again to assume a meaningful role in the public sphere. Finding ways to re-engage with the local community is also timely for the Established Church, which faces its own difficulties of dwindling, aging congregations and diminishing financial resources (Statistics for Mission 2015), as it offers the opportunity to show the relevance of the gospel in a predominantly secular society.

Engaging in dialogue with other organizations and institutions where the knowledge exchange of smart pluralism (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007) facilitates a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 2004), offers the church an opportunity to

participate in synergistic partnerships to address social justice issues. Apart from being a means of helping people in communities re-connect, it offers encouragement and hope to those struggling in this postwelfare age of austerity. Relationships in this emerging model of partnership are inclusive and welcoming, and stakeholders work *with* rather than *for* those they seek to help. For Christians, hospitality is a means of showing God's unconditional welcome to everyone and, as it is a practice already present in rapprochement, it offers a fresh theological understanding of this notion. Rapprochement also offers a distinct theological understanding of leadership, espousing a model that is always drawing more people in, helping them discover their gifts and constantly expanding and sharing leadership.

Understanding the changing nature of religious belief and praxis

During the 1990s, faith-based groups responded to the government's social and economic policies for urban regeneration and the opportunity to collaborate with others this afforded them. At this stage, they hoped, as Baker (2009) notes that "they would be allowed to interpret regeneration in a dynamically religious, as well as utilitarian, way" (p. 107). However, the way these programmes were set up "did not allow them to express these spiritual and religious aspirations" (ibid.), and so instead they "reframe[d] how they describe[d] their community work to fit into the technocratic, targets-based language that the regeneration industry require[d] (ibid.).

More recently, we have moved into what I have identified as a post-regeneration era. This is distinguished from the earlier regeneration era by the paring back of resources and a dominant policy model for community engagement, which "aims at getting citizens to be involved in the existing practices of the local and national state" (Matthews & O'Brien, 2016, p. 38). In this context, there is a new visibility of faith-based groups, including the Established Church, working in partnership with other organizations to support those struggling in an age of on-going austerity. They work

collectively and collaboratively to fill the gaps in the current landscape of neoliberal government, the consequence of "shrinking public service provision and the contracting out of service delivery" (Williams, 2015, p. 194).

The welfare and caring activities that faith-based groups undertake, however, do not simply mirror the neoliberal environment, but rather they "can be seen to embody pathways of resistance to neoliberalism" (ibid.). These alliances frequently form to assist those no longer supported by the state and "[t]he very existence of these welfare services represents a critique of the injustice of socio-economic and political policies of neo-liberalism, and are motivated by and performed in the light of that critique" (ibid.). The increasing proliferation of collaborative partnerships, including those involved in political campaigning (such as Church Action on Poverty and Barnardo's), "have been active in mobilising public concern around counter-hegemonic rationalities of poverty" (ibid.). Consequently, the religious/ secular divide appears to be breaking down as people of faith and no faith "adopt collaborative pragmatism to work towards common ethical and political commitments" (ibid.).

Christian charity can be misconstrued as "a group of God-fearing do-gooders whose response to marginalized people is wrapped up in a self-identity of faith-virtue, and an other-identity that positions service users as little more than fodder for evangelism" (Cloke, May, & Johnsen, 2010, p. 99). In fact, what Christians engaging in these new partnerships are endeavouring to do is "to articulate a theo-ethical sense of *agape* and *caritas*, a genuine openness to and an outpouring of unconditional love towards the other" (ibid.). Doreen, a community church leader and a former director of Public Health for a metropolitan borough, appreciating that although during her time in office there had been reductions in health inequalities across the borough, yet considered that more could have been done to link the churches into that work. On retirement, she saw her mission as finding ways to connect her local church into projects to improve health and well-being. It led her to

accept the role of Vice Chair of the Sale West and Ashton Partnership and, through her connections and "knowing how to manage the system", to access £30,000 for Sale West. Significantly, this partnership, in which the church plays a full part, does not focus simply on initiating projects that they deem appropriate to the needs of the community, but also responds positively and supportively to suggestions that individuals and groups in the area put forward. This has included enabling a person to start 'Football for Kids' and helping a group of residents obtain a suitable site for a community garden, also providing them with training to be able to manage it. Together they are engaging in social action, including environmental issues, as they endeavour to create a flourishing and sustainable community.

Diane's recognition of the role the church can and should play in supporting these initiatives in her community is a response to the commandment to love our neighbour, who "personif[ies] the image of God" (Cloke, 2010, p. 6). This is theo-ethics, which "offers an analytical framework through which to analyse the complex ways ethical action is informed and energised by narratives, rituals and precepts drawn from religious experience and tradition" (Williams, 2015, p. 195). It recognizes the way Christians' religious belief and practice is now changing, with increasing emphasis placed on faith-by-praxis. However, theo-ethics also "denotes a new and positive relation to difference by acknowledging the failure of traditional forms of Christian caritas and secular charity (Coles 1997) to recognise alterity" (ibid.). It means that 'otherness' becomes "an expression of something that can be shared and acclaimed universally … [and] offer[ing] prospects for envisaging equality with difference through an ontological lens of faith, hope and charity" (Cloke, 2010, p. 6-7). An embodiment of genuine care for and acceptance of the 'other' emerges in these community-based partnerships as the response of both people of faith and of no faith. Sadie, a trustee of a church organized food bank, who professes not to be overtly religious, epitomizes this viewpoint when she commented:

> I've got my house, I've got my kids, I've got a job – I can do whatever I want, but actually I think it comes to a point where you think, for

> what? … I'd rather kind of – like the Christmas dinner, I've spent the last two Christmas days in the Zion Centre serving dinner … And you get people saying thank you and you just think, well, you don't have to thank me, I wanted to do something and just to hear someone say that actually this is the best Christmas I've had in ten years, you just think, well, I've only done something really really tiny … So I'm missing out on three hours of Christmas Day which is kind of neither here nor there really.

Although Sadie's response could be simply an ethical response to a situation of need, I identify her unconditional care for the other as theo-ethical. An aspect of rapprochement is "the construction of crossover narratives and devices, capable of holding together the combined discourses and praxis of secular and religious workers" (Williams, 2015, p. 200) and in this instance, this, and growing up in a Christian home as Sadie did, affect her actions. Williams (2015), develops the idea of theo-ethics from a case study that examined the practical dynamics of stakeholders from a variety of religious and non-religious standpoints working together in a Salvation Army homeless centre and drug treatment service (p. 192). He notes, "Theo-ethical notions of grace, understood as God's love for all people, opened up a discursive space … where non-religious staff and volunteers could share their own ethical commitment to universality and humanitarianism" (p. 203). Further, he argues that this suggests, "[P]ostsecular rapprochement is performatively brought into being through the ethical frames, attitudes and performances of staff and residents – whose reflexive, routinized and improvised practices solicit affective encounters between religious and non-religious bodies, materials and relations" (p. 204). Through dialogue, the co-production of knowledge and the resulting fusion of horizons, those involved share hopeful sensibilities, which lead to an "opening out of liminal spaces" (ibid.).

Nick, coordinator of a major Christian charity based in Manchester, gave an example of the liminal space that opened up in a programme organized for a group of ex-offenders:

> The basic idea is you get eight or ten or twelve people who've got some common experience – they don't necessarily know each other – but they're from an excluded community – together and over three months you work with them weekly doing classic Freirian things where you help them build their confidence, their self-esteem, their sense as a group and then their social analysis and then they define an action that they want to take … So for them what they came up with is, we want to individually and as a group make positive choices for ourselves but also then to share that experience with other people that are coming along the same route, that it's incredibly hard when, for instance you come out of prison to make a go of it because, you know, there isn't support there, there's not peer support.

This example, and the way in which Doreen's community church engages with its local community to work collaboratively to improve people's health and well-being, show how the relational and dialogical partnerships of rapprochement are developing, and providing opportunities for the construction of crossover narratives and the co-production of religious, non-religious, secular and humanist discourse. It offers the Established Church a significant opportunity to engage with society and to embody the gospel message of unconditional love and concern for the disadvantaged and the vulnerable. However, with its own significant challenge of an aging and declining membership, the Established Church needs to consider the sort of ecclesiology and missiology required if it is to take its place again in the public sphere.

Reimagining church

At my licensing to my current appointment (1 December 2012) as Priest-in-Charge of a rural parish, the Bishop of Stockport, in his sermon, asked the

congregation to consider whether they want to be caretakers, undertakers or risk-takers for the Kingdom of God. It challenged them to think about their relevance and role in today's postsecular society, a question that many congregations in this country need to address. If the church is to make a difference in today's increasingly flexible and constantly changing society, it must be able to connect with it. To achieve this, Pete Ward (2013) proposes that it requires a new ecclesiology and a new way of being church.

During the early phase of modernity, the church assumed certain core values that developed into a discernible pattern of tendencies. In many instances, the church developed into little more than an exclusive club where, "[f]or many key club members, organizing the club [became] an end in itself" (Ward, 2013, p. 20). However, the more recent social, economic and cultural changes have led, Ward argues, to the church experiencing a "subtle mutation" (p. 25). This includes, in some cases, the church building becoming a heritage site, and, for the congregation, "a passion and a place of investment financially and in terms of identity" (p. 27). In other instances, the church becomes a place of refuge in which a sense of 'belonging' is emphasized and members "are encouraged to feel that to be a Christian is to be part of a wider family" (p. 27). A third mutation presents church as nostalgic community "appeal[ing] to an imagined past" (p. 28), one in which "young and old gather together in ways they never do outside the church" (ibid).

These mutations hinder the church in its endeavour to engage in genuine mission in today's fluid society, leading Ward to suggest that because what he calls 'solid church' has ignored "the fluid nature of culture, [it] has found itself stranded on a desert island" (p. 30). In fact, many church communities are aware of the way things are changing. They want to reach out to what they recognize is a disconnected society but their struggle is often in how "to find ways to be the kingdom of God in the wider society" (ibid.). For Ward the answer is 'liquid church', which, he proposes, takes the present culture

seriously and seeks to express the fullness of the Christian gospel within that culture" (ibid.). However, he does not believe 'liquid' church yet exists (p. 2), and so he imagines what this new way of being church might be like:

> [W]e need to shift from seeing church as a gathering of people meeting in one place at one time … to a notion of church as a series of relationships and communications … a network or a web rather than an assembly of people … made up of informal relationships instead of formal meetings (ibid.).

Although Ward suggests this new model of church will be more flexible in its approach to community, worship, mission, and organization and be responsive to change (p. 41), not everyone shares his view. As it still requires people to make a commitment to Christ and to a core theology based on an evangelical interpretation of the Gospel, this "raises important challenges for those engaged in forging a liberative cross-cultural urban theology" (Shannahan, 2010, p. 206). Chris Shannahan also suggests that such a church will find it difficult to "authentically express the inherent multi-faith character of postmodern urbanism" (ibid.). There is also criticism of Ward's ideas of making use of modern technologies and organizing interesting events appropriate for the mobility of contemporary lifestyles, because "[it] sounds like a plea for that 'old time religion', though organized in a highly modern way" (de Groot, 2006, p. 100). Kees de Groot thus argues that "[t]he hermeneutic task of reconstructing the mission of the [c]hurch in liquid modernity remains" (ibid.). For me, Ward's notion of 'liquid church', "a series of communications and relationships within an ever changing network" (p. 71), offers Christians in today's fluid society opportunities to engage with agencies within the community in a realistic and practical way and to work with them in showing God's concern and support for the poor and the disadvantaged.

A liquid church ecclesiology resonates with the underpinning philosophy of postsecular rapprochement. These organic, collaborative partnerships

adopt, as the liquid church might, a relational and dialogical approach that builds trust and respect among members. Communication and flexibility are also essential ingredients in enabling stakeholders to work together collaboratively on local issues of social justice that help to create a fairer society. While Ward may only be imagining liquid church, this research highlights that in some places this is already becoming a reality as Christians respond to their cultural context, remembering God's call to welcome all, to have a particular concern for the poor and the weak and to reach out and support them. Hospitality is a way in which Christians can show God's welcome.

Sharing hospitality

For Letty Russell (2009), hospitality "is the practice of God's welcome" (p. 19), by which she means "reaching across difference to participate in God's actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis" (ibid.). It is the ministry of every church member and through "solidarity with strangers [and] a mutual relationship of care and trust … we share in the struggle for empowerment, dignity and fullness of life" (p. 20). Yet, as Russell notes, in many churches, the practice of hospitality has fallen into disuse beyond a cup of tea after Sunday morning worship and she argues that it needs to reappropriate it. This is because "God's hospitality as a partner with humankind in the 'repair of the world' becomes the mandate as we look for ways to work with one another to transform the world" (p. 50). However, in examples of rapprochement, hospitality is a significant feature and, regardless of whether stakeholders come from religious or secular settings, they offer hospitality that is open, inclusive, showing solidarity with the 'stranger' and valuing those who might be identified as 'guests'.

Russell reasons that inclusion is "a linchpin of any definition of hospitality" (p. 102) and that for those offering it, it is important "to look beneath the surface of what they say and do, to understand 'where they are coming from,' and to address the social context out of which the conversation comes" (p. 105).

This inclusivity, Russell argues, can be achieved only by putting an end to "the 'lady bountiful' frame and striv[ing] to meet others as they are, not as objects of our charity, but persons in their own right, capable of making choices about their destiny" (Russell, 2009, p.81). For me, SMEN shows this inclusivity because stakeholders from any business or third sector group, regardless of size and numbers involved, have equal opportunity to promote themselves and network at the bi-monthly meetings or through use of social media. At one network meeting (24 September 2014), the manager of Hulme Garden Centre spoke and her comments showed the hospitality that SMEN offers in its broader setting. She explained that the centre is open to the public every day, running sessions for a variety of people, from service users (who pay a small fee to come and be involved in a range of activities to learn life skills), to mothers and toddlers, and to probationers. Sometimes all three groups are on site at the same time working on different projects and that works. She continued:

> It's not just a garden with a garden centre. It's hard to explain without seeing it, and I know it sounds a bit naff, but we really do get people coming here saying: 'Wow! This has changed my life'.

This Garden Centre provides a place where people are able to reconnect "to one another and … to a deeper, more sustaining and wholesome narrative of who we are [in community]" (Baker, 2016, p. 260). Hospitality is a relationship "rooted in our God-given human nature" (Russell, 2009, p.117) and one to be shared, "build[ing] relationships across difference and in this way [being] a catalyst for community that is built out of difference" (ibid.). It involves 'dialogical interplay' (Gadamer 2004), and "not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it" (p. 301). As these emerging partnerships embrace the notion of hospitality, they consciously avoid "the possibility/ potential of misusing [it] to demean those with less power … and to make [them]selves superior" (Russell, 2009, p.123). They acknowledge the assets that everyone brings to the partnership and by working with those they seek to help, they enable them to find their voice. It is this notion of hospitality that the Established Church needs to reappropriate because, as

Bretherton (2010a), observes, “The motif of hospitality is a root metaphor and practice embedded in the Christian tradition that encapsulates its crucial elements with regard to how the church relates to its neighbours” (p. 128). It highlights God’s concern for the weak and vulnerable found in scripture and in Christian doctrines.

Community organizing is a way the church can show hospitality as it respects its neighbours’ beliefs and practices, whilst honouring its own tradition (Bretherton, 2010b, p. 87). By “paying attention to others – through one-to-ones and testimony where vulnerability, anger, passions, and hopes are shared … [one] step[s] out of one’s own limited perspective and enable[s] new understanding to emerge” (ibid.). Developing this notion, Bretherton uses the metaphor of the tent, which, from a scriptural perspective, he sees as “a mobile, provisional place … [in which] the encounter with others and their stories informs the sense of what it is like to live on this mutual ground, to dwell together in a given and shared urban space (pp. 87-88). Tent making provides an opportunity for mutual learning and a means of helping people re-connect with each other.

Tent making also describes the interactions of those involved with the local food bank at Doreen’s community church. It further suggests that offering hospitality through community organizing can be a transformative experience as she explained:

> We have a lovely mix of church and community and I try and mix the two together when I do the rotas. And the conversations that are going on amongst the volunteers are so rich both ways round, church people naturally talking about how great church is and why don’t you come along kind of conversation, but also members of the community, many of whom themselves are struggling, explaining what it’s like living, you know, on benefits or whatever and how difficult it is and how they have to manage things. It’s helping some of the more middle class church people get real insight as you’re sitting

> there just chatting with one another. It's really enabling people to get better insight into what it's really like.

Bretherton (2010a) suggests making room for the 'other' can be "an inherently patronizing way of organizing relations between strangers" (p. 88), but I argue that rapprochement is relational and the contribution of all stakeholders valued. Thus, the hospitality offered in these partnerships counters "patronizing or excluding relations between strangers because it demands that the hosts become decentred and transform their understanding of themselves in order to make room for and to encounter the other" (ibid.). As Doreen's example above suggests, learning from those who receive hospitality is as important as offering it and the host needs to be "open to learning from the guest" (Morisy, 2009, p. 172). Indeed, Bretherton (2010b) goes further, arguing that "to accommodate (in the sense of adapt to and make space and time for) or host ... the stranger carries the implication that making room for the stranger requires the host to change their pattern of life" (p. 140). He bases this idea on the teaching of St Benedict for whom "hospitality of vulnerable strangers was directly linked to a readiness to change one's self-willed and pride-filled pattern of life in order that worship of God, and love of one's neighbour, might come first (ibid.).

A *Grub and Gossip* event hosted by the Rotary Club of which I am a member first led me to reflect on the impact guests can have on their hosts. People from the local community, including a group of Chinese elders attended this event, held in a community church centre in Moss Side. After sharing a meal, the Chinese elders performed a Tai Chi routine and then invited everyone else to participate. Including this as a case study in my publishable article (TH8003 portfolio), I commented:

> The guests had become the hosts, which also had the effect of creating a greater atmosphere of community and a 'fusion of horizons', a realisation that sharing things in common, sharing

hospitality, can help to overcome some of the barriers we face in our societies today.

Hospitality is a paradigm that this emerging community-based model of partnership adopts and where stakeholders are working with rather than for those they seek to help, the hospitality they offer is open and inclusive. It values and gives agency to those who might be identified as 'guests'. Choices about the use of power also bring "the power quotient into balance through the sharing of power" (Russell, 2009, p.44). "Hospitality creates a safe and welcoming space for persons to find their own sense of humanity and worth" (Russell, 1993, p. 173), which sums up the significant role it plays in rapprochement. If the church is to embrace the notion of rapprochement, hospitality is an ethic it needs to reappropriate, and a topic leaders need to focus on as they engage with others in their community.

The entrepreneurial minister

For many church communities the church building is now a heritage site or a place of refuge, while in other instances, the congregation has become a 'nostalgic community'. Each of these modes leads church members to be inward looking (Ward, 2013, pp. 25-28). It makes it difficult for them to connect with their wider community, and with an aging and declining membership, the future of the church becomes more uncertain. The Established Church in the inner urban faces the additional problems of dwindling resources and a growing inability to pay for its clergy, together with a smaller cohort of clergy prepared to live and minister there. Community-based partnership presents the church with a viable option, since engaging with the wider community is a practical way of showing love and concern for their neighbour. It also offers the potential of being able to make a difference for those struggling in this age of ongoing austerity. Assuming a role in the public sphere will show that the church is not an irrelevance in today's society but a faith group that is open to all, concerned for all and offering itself in service to its local community. My research indicates that a

significant factor in the success of these enterprises is the adoption of a social entrepreneurial style of leadership, and I will now consider the significance of this for the church.

It has been traditional in the church context for the parish priest or minister to hold the key leadership role and to be instrumental in encouraging the congregation to wider participation. Richard, a priest, feels strongly about this:

> I think a lot of it is dependent on the vicar. If you've got a vicar who's willing to get out of the parish office and the parish church into the community and firstly I think build friendships in the community – genuine sincere friendships … getting involved in community associations, and sort of local groups … when people know that the local vicar is genuinely interested in them as people and genuinely concerned for their welfare … you can make a significant difference in your community and through you your local church can make a difference.

As a parish priest, I can identify with Richard's comments and the importance of the vicar or minister's role, but suggest that identifying entrepreneurial skills enhances his or her ministry and the missional effectiveness of that church community. Michael Volland (2015), a minister in the North East of England,[21] who identifies himself as an entrepreneur, suggests that if Christians reflect on Jesus' entrepreneurial approach to ministry they may begin to "recognize and celebrate the gift of entrepreneurship in our Christian communities" (p. 3). He defines the entrepreneur as "[a] visionary, who in partnership with God and others, challenges the status quo by energetically creating and innovating in order to shape something of kingdom value" (ibid.). Although Volland's focus is the entrepreneurial role of the minister, this definition also applies to the laity, whose role is similarly important.

[21] Michael Volland combines a role as Director of Mission at Cranmer Hall with serving as Missioner to nine parishes in the East Durham Mission Project.

For Volland, those who catch God's entrepreneurial vision "can become agents for change … as [they] help people of faith to their divine mission in meeting the needs of people within our society" (Simms, 2006, p. 21). The entrepreneur seizes opportunities "acting boldly and taking risks – while expecting results that improve people's lives" (p. 22). "Change stands at the heart of entrepreneurship" (ibid.), but it is often difficult to implement and many ministers know the challenge of having to endure church members complaining that "We tried that once and it didn't work!" (Volland, 2015, p. 43) or "We don't do that sort of thing here!" (ibid.). Doreen acknowledged the challenge of trying to help a congregation to understand the issues faced by those struggling in today's postwelfare society when she talked about the support the community church receives from their parish church, whose worshipping congregations are predominantly middle class:

> St Mary's is very different …The majority of the congregation at St Mary's doesn't know anything about [our community], wouldn't know where it was, but they do collect food for the food bank. The Mothers Union is very keen on the food bank and that's something practical which people can understand … Just giving food to the poor isn't where, you know, it should be at in my view. But, at least it's a start.

My research indicates that there are increasing opportunities for groups and organizations to work with others on social justice and environmental issues, to offer support to those who are struggling and to help to reconnect communities. However, congregations, embedded in 'solid church', can be blind to these possibilities or reluctant to participate. Thus, Bolton (2006) argues, releasing "entrepreneurial talent among God's people is the greatest task facing the church today" (p. 4). This is important for the minister and for any church member with entrepreneurial skills because God calls everyone to share his entrepreneurial vision for a fairer world.

In releasing this entrepreneurial talent, leaders need to be aware of and utilise the varied skills and experience that members of a congregation

possess and bring to their community. It includes recognizing that they also belong to networks outside the church, which both facilitate cooperation for mutual advantage and "provide a basis for social cohesion" (Field, 2008, p. 14). Relationships that develop around shared common beliefs provide social capital, a valuable resource that enables people to achieve more by working together than they could on their own. However, faith groups also provide religious capital – their "practical contribution to local and national life" (Baker & Skinner, 2014, p. 4) and spiritual capital, which "energises religious capital by providing a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and a basis of faith" (ibid.). Whilst "spiritual capital is often embedded locally within faith groups [it is] also expressed in the lives of individuals" (ibid.) and is "the motivating basis of faith, belief and values that shapes [their] concrete actions" (Baker, 2016, p. 268) and resources religious capital. Identifying and working with these capitals will enhance any project undertaken.

Utilizing religious and spiritual capital enables the church to "provide and curate new spaces of reconnection for other citizens looking not only for a reconnection to each other, but also re-connecting to a more deep and satisfying type of political and civil engagement based on core principles and values" (Baker, 2016, p. 269). However, working with others, rather than always being the initiator, is key, as Adam, an Eden Team leader, explained:

> We had quite a big like theological change, which was that we began to realise that God had already been at work in [this community] before we came there and that we weren't taking Jesus in there but that he was taking us in there, and inviting us in there. We began to see all over as we opened our eyes that justice and peace and joy were at work in that estate in a really tough area, in a really difficult situation … And we joined in with the mission of God rather than us doing our thing and hoping God joins in with it. It was a huge change for us …and instead of kind of blustering ahead and doing every project we could possibly think of … we started to stop doing that and appreciate how all the other groups in the community were also

> bringing justice and peace and joy and often they were doing it a lot better than we could. And so we started to join in and see how we could genuinely serve the other projects and the other groups.

Joining in partnership with other organizations may entail risk, but entrepreneurs are risk-takers and organizations need risk-takers because "[t]hey are the pioneers who are exercising a form of leadership that is vital for the future health of the organization" (Cottrell, 2008, p. 45). This applies as much to the Established Church, who like other organizations and communities "lose their way because they have lost their way-finders … pioneers who were often most at home on the edge or on the frontier" (ibid.). Richard acknowledged that although there are risks attached to undertaking the wider organic initiatives that the cathedral engages in, it is important to take them:

> Not everything's a success, obviously. Some things don't work and I'm very happy to put my hands up and say that's not worked, let's ditch it. That's fine … so I say to people here … don't say no to me, say to me, yes, we're open to exploring it with you. And if we explore an idea and it works out, great, we all celebrate. If it doesn't work out we ditch it. But let's not be afraid to be risky and to try things out.

Taking this sort of risk, Stephen Cottrell (2008) suggests, is a sign of real leadership, and leaders must "take the risk of allowing others to make mistakes as they learn their place within the whole … building a framework within which others will thrive and the enterprise of the company or association prosper" (pp. 15-16). I agree with this and further argue that the church today needs 'level 5' leaders, individuals who possess a "paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will" (Collins, 2001, p. 20). Such leaders have a compelling modesty, a quiet, calm determination to inspire others, and they channel their ambition into the organization (p. 36). It is what I define as a servant leadership model. It combines a "motivation to lead with a need to serve" (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1254) and these

leaders “know their gifts, and use them wisely, sparingly and strategically, always wanting to build up the gifts of others” (Cottrell, 2008, p. 73). They show authenticity and integrity, and the way they lead means that those they work with “genuinely feel that the work was theirs” (ibid. p. 74). It is a style of leadership enabling for all.

Adopting a ‘table principle’ ecclesiology and missiology

The style of leadership ministers and others adopt influences and shapes the Established Church’s ecclesiology. It determines whether the focus is simply on those who are already part of the church community, or whether there is a serious concern for those who are outside, particularly those who are struggling. It leads Russell (1993) to suggest:

> The measure of the adequacy of the life of the church is how it is connected to those on the margin, whether those the NRSV calls ‘the least of those who are members of my family’ are receiving the attention to their needs for justice and hope (Matt. 25.40) (p. 25).

If the church is to reach out to those ignored or shunned by society, it needs to adopt what Russell calls a ‘table principle’ ecclesiology, one that invites those outside “to gather round God’s table of hospitality” (ibid.), and thus to make a “commitment to inclusion of the marginalized as a sign of God’s intention for humanity” (ibid. p. 26). Adam, an Eden team leader, describing how they help asylum seekers, also explained why partnership working was important:

> Another partnership we have is with the Red Cross, so we do a Food Parcels Project for destitute asylum seekers and the Red Cross send people to us each week and they will give the advice to the asylum seekers about who to go to. And that’s been a really good partnership for us. And I guess, all the partnerships we go into – and I’m from quite a conservative evangelical background and it used to be, oh we’ll partner with anyone who really loves God or who is really into the gospel. But now, we’ll partner with anyone who’s into justice and

> peace and joy and seeing what we'd call the Kingdom of God, but others would use different language for it.

Adam recognizes the importance of joining in solidarity with those who seek to support the disempowered, as this leads to a redistribution of power and enables agency. In these emerging community-based models of partnerships, there are opportunities for all to join in and thus to build webs of connectivity. The inclusivity found in these enterprises suggests they adopt a 'table principle' approach.

Adopting a 'table principle' ecclesiology also influences the church's missiology. In 2004, the Anglican Consultative Council's *Mission-shaped church: church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context* identified what it termed *Five Marks for Mission*, offered as a framework that could be applied where a church was wanting to develop or grow as a missionary church. Three of these 'Marks' are relevant to this thesis. First, a missionary church is incarnational, which means a church "seeks to shape itself in relation to the culture in which it is located" (p. 81) and "seeks to be responsive to the activity of the Spirit in its community" (ibid.). Second, a missionary church is transformational and "exists for the transformation of the community it serves" (ibid), with the church being "understood as a servant and sign of God's kingdom in its community" (p. 82). Third, the missionary church is relational and in it "a community of faith is being formed … characterized by welcome and hospitality" (ibid.).

In earlier chapters as I analysed this organic model of social enterprise partnership, and the role leaders and stakeholders play, I gave examples of the ways some church communities already endeavour to fulfil a 'table principle' ecclesiology and to show the 'marks of mission'. They work with and not for those they seek to help. They fulfil a vocational role, responding to the call of God and recognizing that their "purpose for being in the world is

related to the purposes of God" (Veling, 2005, p. 12). There has often been a reticence about linking notions of church and social enterprise, which is viewed as a business, but they now find that incorporating good practices from social enterprise enables them to provide a long-term vision for their mission in that community. James, who is responsible for a church-based community centre acknowledged this when he commented:

> There's that danger when you start using the language of social enterprise, you start saying, well, that'll be £25 for the hour please, rather than remembering the reason why this place was set up as it is by the church to, in a modest way, address issues of inequality and injustice.

Church communities embracing this community-based model of partnership recognize in their communities those who Doreen calls 'community diamonds', people who have an idea and with help and support from others take responsibility in seeing it come to fruition. Through kenotic strategies, they broker opportunities that enable those who need help to achieve autonomy. It is a model the church needs to embrace.

Conclusion: Rapprochement – a model for church engagement

The Established Church in the twenty first century faces many challenges with aging congregations, dwindling resources and church buildings that often hang like millstones round their necks. This is particularly acute in inner urban and rural communities, although suburban communities are not immune from these problems. Church congregations have been encouraged to consider *Fresh Expressions*, *Pioneer Church Planting*, and *Growth Action Planning*, as ways of addressing the disconnect that exists between what happens in church and the rest of society in this rapidly changing world. When the Church of England's General Synod approved and commended *Mission-Shaped Church* in 2004, amongst its recommendations it proposed "The Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council should actively seek to encourage the identification, selection and training of pioneer church

planters, for both lay and ordained ministries" (p. 147). It also recommended that "[t]hose involved in selection need to be adequately equipped to identify and affirm pioneers and mission entrepreneurs" (ibid.).

Sadly, in many parts of the church these ideas for addressing the problems they face are going unheeded and Brian, a church leader, suggests this is because "the church, by and large, is so worried about its own survival that, you know, it's got to do stuff for itself." What Ward (2013) describes as 'solid church', leads many church communities to make choices about themselves that, in fact, only perpetuate or aggravate their problems and could ultimately lead to their demise. When asked further about the church being in survival mode, Brian commented, "Well, the community saves the church, doesn't it, in the end?"

Engagement in the community, participating in partnerships of rapprochement, offering with others a welcoming, inclusive, unconditional hospitality presents the Established Church with a fresh opportunity to deinstitutionalize as it seeks to further God's Kingdom. It enables it to find ways to build bridges between itself and the local community, in the same way that those who first envisaged SMEN did. It does not mean the church has to initiate everything. As Adam found, rather than initiating something and hoping God joins in with it, it may be better to join in with the mission of God already happening in that locality. However, unless there are entrepreneurs with vision, passion and creativity who are able to inspire and enthuse others to join their team and work with them, none of this will happen.

My research has focused on inner urban communities, primarily in Manchester and the North West of England. However, my analysis of the nature of these organic community-based partnerships and recognition that austerity does not affect only people in these communities, leads me to suggest that postsecular rapprochement has a wider remit. This means that

if the Established Church embraces this welcoming and inclusive model of community engagement, it becomes a possibility, not only for inner urban churches, but also for suburban and rural church communities to work with others in God's mission for his world. It is a mission that enables people of faith to work with those who do not necessarily share their beliefs in offering 'caritas without strings'. It redistributes power that enables agency and releases enterprise, innovation and hope.

A significant challenge is finding the means to encourage the Established Church to move beyond survival mode and the mutated 'solid church' that Ward describes into a place where it can engage more effectively with the postsecular communities in which it is situated. Senior church leaders need to address this issue urgently, looking again at the recommendations of *Mission-Shaped Church* (2004), and, acknowledging the priesthood of all believers, seek out lay and ordained men and women with entrepreneurial qualities and skills, and equip them with adequate training for the task. These leaders will then be able to envision what role the church can and should be fulfilling in their local community as in seeking to build the Kingdom of God they help to create places in which people can reconnect. However, it will not be in isolation, but alongside others also wanting to build a stronger reconnected community, one that in this ongoing age of austerity enables the weak to grow stronger. The need is particularly urgent in the poorest inner urban communities where evidence suggests the church is in retreat.

My research uncovered the fact that key to this radical, innovative, social enterprise model of partnership is a deep respect for hermeneutical integrity. The experience and wisdom that each stakeholder brings to the enterprise is valued and through knowledge exchange integral to smart pluralism (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007), they are able to achieve a synergy that enables them to work together collaboratively despite different ideological positions. A co-construction of knowledge through dialogue leads to a fusion of horizons

(Gadamer, 2004), which is transformative for those involved. These partnerships, unfettered by needless bureaucracy and hierarchical structures, are a response to the call for social justice for those who are disempowered, excluded or struggling to cope in this age of austerity. They help to transfigure injustice by shining a light on the issues and effecting change through a redistribution of power that enables autonomy and agency. Already, as my research has revealed, some churches are responding to this call to a mission that, using an asset-based approach, helps the vulnerable and marginalized to participate in meaningful ways with their community, and thus create a more inclusive and connected society. For Christians it is a way of showing God's unconditional love for all and his particular concern for those who have least. It is also a way of furthering the Kingdom of God, and although, as Adam suggested, others may use a different language for what they are doing, together they are endeavouring to create a fairer society.

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I am aware that the way I shaped my research following the collapse of MSWF and my decision to interview people, who are 'leaders' in their context, means that I have reviewed rapprochement from a leadership rather than stakeholder perspective. Originally, when I was focusing on one example of rapprochement, I had planned to undertake focus groups with the Somali women and with those who were supporting them, which would have given me a different perspective from the one I have presented. Investigating stakeholders' roles and perspectives would be a valuable avenue of study, particularly, as Le Feuvre et al. (2015) indicate there has been little research undertaken in this area. Broadening my research to encompass a range of examples of rapprochement, however, has enabled me to present a more significant body of material.

I identify postsecular rapprochement as an emerging strategic deinstitutionalized social enterprise model of community engagement. These partnerships evolve organically and adopt a flat structure to work collaboratively with others to create a society that is fairer and more equal. It

is a model that the Established Church should seriously review and, recognizing the breadth of its potential, embrace as a valuable model for deinstitutionalized community engagement in this postwelfare, post-regeneration age.

Final reflections

The findings from the research I have undertaken for this degree of Doctor of Professional Studies in Practical Theology lead me to propose that postsecular rapprochement is a model of community engagement with which the Established Church should engage. Despite many Anglican churches and churches of other mainstream denominations in this country being in decline, with aging congregations and dwindling resources, I would contend that the current political and social situation offers a significant opportunity for engagement with local communities in social action. Evidence from my research indicates that particularly joining in partnerships that support the weak and vulnerable is a viable option that can engender growth in church communities, helping to offset numerical decline and supporting people in local areas to reconnect with one another.

Despite the concern many churches have about their survival, evidence suggests that many congregations are genuinely concerned for those who are struggling in this age of ongoing austerity, particularly those afflicted by food poverty. Surveys undertaken by the Church Urban Fund found that in 2014 two-thirds of Anglican churches were supporting food banks, twice as many as offered support in 2011.[22] Numbers of volunteers involved in church social action is also increasing and a survey conducted by Jubilee Plus in 2014 found churches providing 114.8 million volunteer hours on social action per annum, “an increase of 16.8% compared with two years earlier and 59.4% compared with four years ago” (p. 3).

[22] www.cuf.org.uk/church-in-action-2015

Despite society becoming increasingly secular, faith gives church and faith-based organizations distinctive attributes. Research by New Philanthropy Capital, a think-tank supporting charities endeavouring to make a difference in communities, undertook, concludes:

> We believe that faith-based charities are an important part of the voluntary sector and wider society. They can reach groups other charities cannot; they are resilient to changes in funding and policy; and their values motivate them to help those who are most in need. Ultimately though … what matters is the impact they are having on the lives of those they seek to help (p. 31).

A "desire to 'live their faith' and 'love thy neighbour'" (Birdwell, 2013, p. 140) encourages people of faith to become involved in social action and to play significant roles in this organic model of partnership. However, as Samuel Wells, Russell Rook and David Barclay (2017) suggest, most Christians are "confused and conflicted rather than confident and clear" (p. 32) about how and why their church should engage with the most vulnerable and marginalized in society. These attitudes are based on concern that their action "could mask, or even incentivize, the retreat of the state from its proper moral duties" (ibid.) and "a fear that an increased focus on social action could dilute the core identity and fundamental purpose of the church" (ibid.). Further, although more people are engaging in social action, many congregations and church leaders see this simply "as an 'optional extra', or something just for those with a particular calling and passion for social justice, or even worse as a distraction from the fundamental calling of churches to worship God and make disciples" (pp. 34-35). The gospel, however, clearly indicates that unease for those struggling in our communities should be the concern of each member of a church community and a focused part of their mission today.

The model of engagement that this thesis proposes the Established Church needs to embrace recognizes that it is not simply about meeting needs, but

about being creative, working with others, and building relationships and a society in which all can flourish. It requires congregations, even small ones, and their leaders prayerfully to re-envision their mission in today's fragmented world, reflecting on the theology that underpins all that they undertake – the call to be incarnational, to look outwards and show loving concern for all. It also requires them to reflect on the resources they have available – particularly, people, buildings, time and money – and how they can use them to undertake social action, an essential element of discipleship and mission. Angus Ritchie, Director of the Centre for Theology and Community, suggests, "The challenge is to move social action from 'foreign affairs' – the preserve of a few enthusiasts in the church … to 'home affairs' – understood as something that flows from the very heart of the Church's worship and mission."[23] As congregations are often conservative in their outlook, it needs church leaders who are able to re-envision mission in their parish, promoting missional pastoral care and an environment in which all in that community can thrive. They also need the skill to share their vision in such a way that their congregation is able to engage with and own the ideas.

The vital role leadership plays in this new social enterprise paradigm is a significant finding of my research. It points to leaders who are social entrepreneurs, 'learning by doing', applying business experience to issues of social justice, and "scal[ing] up ideas to achieve effective growth" (Mawson, 2008, p. 7). They are also individuals who help cultivate aspirations in those with whom they work (p. 41). My research identifies examples of church members, both ordained and lay, now fulfilling this style of leadership role and who, by their encouragement, are drawing others into the work and enabling growth and flourishing in their church and local community.[24]

In *Senior Church Leaders: a Resource for Reflection*, the authors report that amongst church members there is "a widespread desire for leaders who can inspire, encourage and sustain the people of God in their collective ministry

[23] 'Community Organising and Church Growth' seminar at CUK, 15 May 2017
[24] See Chapter 4, particularly p.107ff

and mission: leaders with a compelling vision for the growth and flourishing of the church" (p. 12). They suggest that the church needs leaders who are able to "engage confidently and persuasively with the wider world", work "transformatively with others in the world" and "respond creatively to change … [and] the need and opportunity for mission that those changes create" (pp. 12-13). Achieving this needs a renewed church leadership that can respond creatively to these challenges, enable the church to succeed in the new contexts and move deeper into mission (p. 13). This includes recognizing that social action and finding ways to work with and support those struggling in this age of austerity is an essential component of both mission and discipleship. It inevitably places fresh demands on both clergy and laity and, if they are to be able to "assist, enable and inspire the people of God in their pursuit of this calling" (p. 16), it is essential that senior church leaders provide appropriate training for ordinands, and relevant ongoing support and resources for continual ministerial development.

For any church community, spiritual and religious capital are significant resources. Baker and Skinner propose that, despite continued institutional decline, religious capital, energized by spiritual capital, is now able to influence economic and political policy debates and is "being given the space to contribute practically to these agendas, … even in some cases to be held up as a model of good or exemplary practice" (2014, p. 27). The way "faith groups negotiate their religious capital, their skills, gifts and competencies and innovations" (Baker, 2007, p. 204) creates a real impact at local level, particularly in terms of the social change that entrepreneurial activity effects. As church communities seem often to be unaware of or not to understand the potential of these capitals, helping them to realise this and the way it assists effective engagement in social action makes it an area requiring significant teaching and development.

My research identified church communities that are combining the innovation, resourcefulness and opportunity of social entrepreneurship to

address the current economic challenges. Working with a variety of partners, they develop social enterprises, based on a business model of postsecular rapprochement.[25] However, many Christians and non-Christians have an antipathy towards the notion of business, which they associate with wealth creation, materialism and greed. Consequently, they often fail "to give adequate recognition to the fact that, as business is the means of wealth creation, the market has a key role in the alleviation of poverty" (Heslem, 2007, p. 124). Churches engaging in these enterprises are taking forward secular-based praxis and are affirming business "as an arena of Christ's transformative work" (ibid. p. 123). They are developing a transformative theology of business, a paradigm that recognizes that "[b]usiness is a social institution to which the world is becoming increasing committed" (ibid. p. 130) and that "allows business to be seen … as one of the foundational spheres of human life that provide a moral and practical framework for human flourishing" (ibid. p. 131).

As discussed in this thesis, the postsecular opens up new forms of collaborative ethical praxis and encourages a "'crossing-over' in the public arena between the religious and the secular" (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012, p. 28).[26] In the context of rapprochement, social entrepreneurship presents a means of "unlock[ing] societies to the freedom and joy of the Kingdom of God" (Heslem, 2007, p. 132). Missionally this means that taking the opportunities offered by social entrepreneurship "is a vital and strategic means of co-operating in God's mission to the world" (ibid.).

Today, many Christians work in the business sector and church communities need to appreciate and value the skills that every member brings to the missional activity of their church. However, too often there is an over-dependence on a small number of individuals undertaking everything the church does, which means that the skills and experience that others bring is neither recognized nor harnessed. It is easy to excuse those whose

[25] See Chapter 3, pp. 83-88
[26] See Chapter 2, pp.39-50

employment means they work long hours, leaving them with little opportunity to engage in church activities. Yet, as churches re-envision their missional role in their community and seek partners with whom they can work, they need to re-evaluate the assets every member brings. They may want to develop ambitious goals to support the vulnerable and create a flourishing community, but "the importance of small steps and incremental processes" (Baker, 2007) is also worth remembering. Church leaders and congregations should also consider how they could better support church members in their employment.

My research project has explored in detail Cloke's (2011) concept of rapprochement, which emerges within the postsecular context. It takes scholarship about this concept further by identifying it as a fresh model of radical partnership evolving, particularly in inner urban areas, in response to a developing nexus between rapprochement and austerity. It further extends knowledge of rapprochement by identifying these community-based partnerships as social enterprises. Working to initiate social change, these organic partnerships apply the business principles of social entrepreneurship to projects undertaken. I also identify that a dialogical approach based on the knowledge exchange of 'smart pluralism' (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007) leads to a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 2004) and enables stakeholders holding different ideologies to collaborate successfully. [27]

My thesis also adds to scholarship relating to rapprochement by highlighting the significant role leaders play in these successful enterprises. It identifies these leaders as social entrepreneurs, able to apply business principles to social issues and to hold in tension the power dynamics at play in any relationship. It further shows how, by adopting an asset-based approach, they endeavour to create autonomous spaces in which all can flourish.

[27] See Chapter 3, pp. 88-97

My research also sought to establish the suitability of rapprochement as a model for church engagement and I found that churches already engaging in this new model of partnerships are becoming deinstitutionalized and are making a valuable contribution in supporting those who struggling because of the government's ongoing austerity measures. They work *with* and not *for* those they seek to help and encourage a dialogical approach that enables a co-construction of knowledge and leads to a 'fusion of horizons'. This results in social change and helps to create flourishing and sustainable communities.

In terms of my professional development, it encourages me, as an Anglican priest, to work with my congregation and other local churches to re-envision mission and ministry in our community, maximising the use of our resources, including our personnel, buildings, time and money, for the benefit of all and particularly the most vulnerable. This new model of partnership offers the church opportunities for renewal of church life, whilst also enabling it once again to take its place in the public sphere. I, therefore, see it as a paradigm that senior church leaders need to endorse and promote, ensuring that clergy and laity receive the training and support they need to be able to achieve this.

Appendix 1

University of Chester

Participant Information Sheet

An evaluation of the partnerships/ networks developing between faith-based organisations, including churches, and other, often secular, organisations to support specific groups of vulnerable/ marginalised people in inner-urban communities in this age of austerity economy.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

It is being recognised that within inner-urban communities innovative networks, which can include the institutional church, are developing to try to support marginalised and vulnerable groups and in such networks an ethic of care seems to override political or moral stances that might otherwise prove problematic

The aim of this study is to explore what the role of the church is in a postsecular inner urban context and whether being involved in the sort of network described above is a viable model for church engagement in a postsecular city?

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part because you are a member of an inner urban church or faith-based organisation, or have a role within a public institution or the Local Authority, or are involved with a Third sector group or charity that is working in an inner urban context.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will be accepted without question.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. This will give your consent for Margaret Jones, the researcher from Chester University, to contact you to invite you to take part in a semi structured interview in which you will be able to talk about your experiences of working in the inner urban area, the changes you have seen in this community over the last ten to fifteen years and, particularly recently, as the welfare reforms have taken effect. You will also be asked for your views on the fact that faith-based and other organisations and agencies are now working together on specific projects, such as with the homeless or with young people, despite not necessarily sharing common values .

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages or risks foreseen in taking part in the study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

As someone with a concern for inner urban communities and their development, and with a concern for the disadvantaged and vulnerable, you may welcome the opportunity to share and discuss your views. By taking part, you will be helping in the exploration of the opportunities and challenges that this new way of working offers, and which will hopefully lead to further future developments.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of the study, please contact:

Prof. Robert Warner
Dean of Humanities
University of Chester
Chester CH1 4BJ
Tel. 01244 511030

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected during an interview and/ or focus group will be kept strictly confidential and this, both in paper and electronic format, will be kept securely in the researcher's study, so that only the researcher will have access to such information.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be written up into an extended essay as part of the researcher's Professional Doctorate. It is hoped that the findings may offer ideas and encouragement to others considering working with marginalised

communities, and particularly encourage church communities to engage in these organic partnerships.

Who is organising the research?

The researcher is a student at Chester University and she will be organising and carrying out the study.

Who may I contact for further information?

Revd Margaret Jones. Dept of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Chester, Chester CH1 4BJ

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Appendix 2

Participant Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Partnerships/ networks developing to support groups of vulnerable/ marginalised people in inner-urban communities in this age of austerity economy

Name of Researcher: Margaret Jones

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant information sheet, dated ……., for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without my care or legal rights being affected. ☐

3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 3

Profile of Interviewees

Caroline – Works for a private sector construction company in an economic development role in the north of England. Based in Hulme and one of the initiators of SMEN.

Presented a case study at *The Urban Shifts 2 Conference – Desire-Lines? Joining dots in local communities* at Chester University

Neil – Head of regeneration in a large Housing Association based in Hulme. One of the initiators of SMEN.

Richard – Senior priest at Manchester Cathedral, initiating a variety of enterprises that address current political, social and cultural issues in Manchester.

Brian – Minister of a Community Church in Moss Side, that is also home to a youth project that has been providing innovative youth work in that community for fifty years.

James – Priest-in-Charge of a church in Old Trafford that has an adjacent Centre running a wide range of activities and events for and with the local community. (Claire is the Centre Manager and participated in the interview with James.)

Simon – a Baptist minister and joint Chair of the Layered Service Provider of a local authority.

Jackie – Director of a Diocesan Committee for Social Responsibility.

Doreen – A lay leader in a Community Church in Sale West and Vice Chair of the Sale and Ashton Partnership. A former director of Public Health in a metropolitan borough of Merseyside.

Nick – Director of a national Church charity based in Manchester that campaigns to alleviate poverty.`

Alice – Development coordinator for the Eden Network

Adrian – a Manchester City Councillor and a member of a Community Church in Moss Side.

Hussain – Chief Executive of an organization working for Community Relations, based in Moss Side. A former Manchester City Councillor and a Muslim, active in that community.

Nathan – Chief Executive of a charity working with young people on the verge of trouble with the police.

Sadie – Trustee of a Food Bank set up by three churches in Moss Side and Whalley range, but not a regular churchgoer.

Mara – Project Officer with Oxfam for a project that aims to improve the influencing power of black and minority ethnic women's groups, particularly in the north of England. Helped in the original setting up of MSWF.

Adam – Eden team leader living and working in a disadvantaged estate in Salford.

Presented a case study at *The Urban Shifts 2 Conference – Desire-Lines? Joining dots in local communities* at Chester University

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