

# Exploring the Psychological Contract of Black British Clerical Workers in UK Local Authorities

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

By

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## **PREAMBLE**

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This thesis is a statement of the researcher positions on the three research questions together with the story of how he got there. It has been prepared in accordance with the Brunel guidance on the submission of PhD papers and is now offered for the kind consideration of the Awarding Panel.

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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This paper investigates the nature of the psychological contract (PC) of black British workers in UK local authorities. Psychological contract describes an individual employee's perception concerning the terms and conditions of an exchange agreement between the employer and the employee (Conway and Briner, 2005). The primary focus of this research is on the individual employee's perspectives and not the organization's. The research is based on the experiences of the black British clerical workers, who have been deployed at various departments across ten UK local authorities.

This research employed a qualitative method adopted from Creswell (2003). Thirty-eight interviews were conducted in ten different UK local authorities and the data was transcribed and analysed in a manner informed by the Glaser and Strauss (1990) concept of grounded theory approach.

The result of this research concludes that the black British clerical workers have endorsed five distinct reasons why they joined local authorities. In addition, this research concludes that the black British clerical workers' response to the psychological contract violations were influenced and constrained by four main societal factors, these including: (1) outside support (2) economic conditions (3) black extended family and (4) educational qualification. Overall, the findings of this research support the notion that the black British clerical worker's psychological contract is uniquely different from other staff members', for which there has been no study done in the UK, until now.

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## Glossary

ALG	Association of local government
BB	Black British
BBCW	Black British Clerical Workers
BEF	Black Extended Family
BBS	Brunel Business School
CC	County Council
DC	District Council
FWS	Flexible Working Scheme
GLA	Greater London Authority
LA	Local Authority
LGA	Local Government Association
LGMA	Local Government Modernization Agenda
MD	Metropolitan Districts
MRQ	Main Research Question
NJC	National Joint Council
PC	Psychological Contract
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RQ	Research Questions
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WLB	Work Life Balance

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## Overview of this Thesis Structure

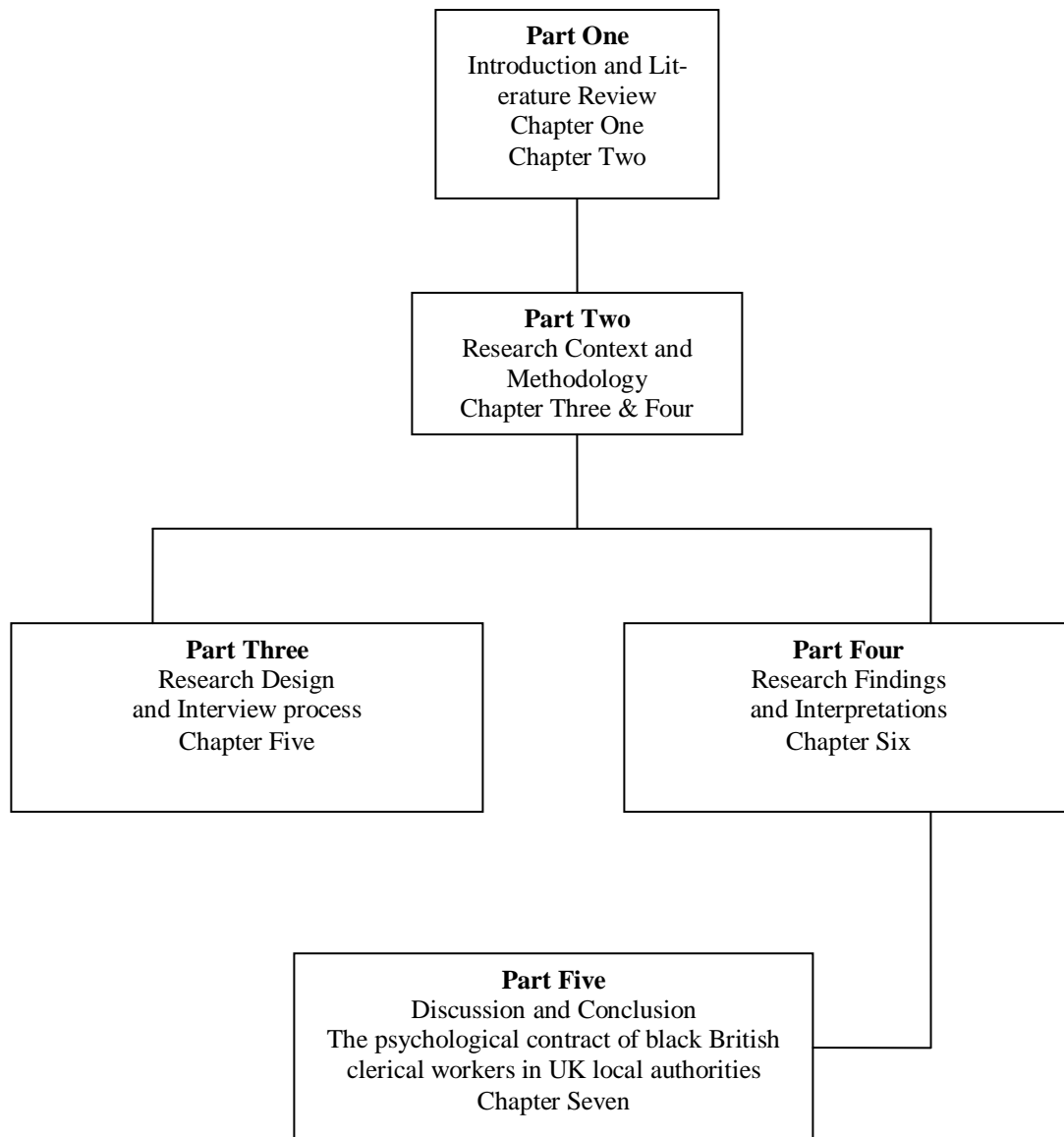


Fig.1.1 Thesis Flow Diagram

# CHAPTER 1

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## INTRODUCTION

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*So long as an employee goal remains reasonably attainable, the employee is naturally motivated to work (Meckler, Drake, Levinson, 2003).*

### **1.1 The Background to this thesis**

This research explores the nature of the psychological contract for black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. Psychological contract is a series of mutual expectations that employees bring to the organization of which the employer may not be fully aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other (Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, & Solley, 1962).

This PhD research was born of a desire to find answers to the various questions the author had concerning the nature of the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. While working as a 'deputy revenues manager' responsible for managing his own team at various local authorities in London, a range of attitudes were uncovered, also behaviours and expectations among staff members. Questions arose concerning many of the situations occurring. Upon investigating a range of literature on employment relations, it was dis-

covered that there has been no empirical study on the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. Empirical studies are imperative, because if there had been previous studies on the psychological contract for black British clerical workers, they would have revealed the degree of influence or perception leading individual employees to join local authorities.

Overseas literature on the psychological contract was investigated and it was discovered that there have been several studies concerning non-white characteristics of the psychological contract in many countries, such as Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Quebec-Canada, Malta and the United States (USA). Researchers included Kickul, Lester and Belgio (2004); Batonda and Perry (2003); Cassar and Bezzina (2005); Cox (2004); Lemire and Rouillard (2005); O'Donohue, Sheehan, Hecker and Holland (2007). For example Kickul, Lester and Belgio (2004) revealed that the Hong-Kong Chinese were more concerned about their earning power (because of their primary responsibility to provide for their families and kinship groups) than their ability to achieve career progression. In contrast, USA employees often placed greater value on work careers and job progression. These different behavioural patterns and perceptions have led the author to construct three research questions to investigate the nature of the psychological contract for black British clerical workers in the context of UK local authorities.

## 1.2 Context for this Research

The psychological contract concept was initiated over forty years ago. Although the concept was originally used by Argyris in 1960, the term 'psychological contract' was not created until after Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, and Solley conducted a research in 1962, between a foreman and his team. According to Conway and Briner (2005), it was when Rousseau (1989) reconstructed the 'psychological contract' concept that the concept emerged as a significant topic for conceptual and empirical analysis. Over the course of the last five years, there have been studies on non-white characteristics of the psychological contract in many countries, as mentioned above. But there has been no such study about black British clerical workers in the United Kingdom (UK).

Ever since the British Nationality Act (1948) gave African residents and former colonies the right to live and work in the UK, this country has moved from an all-white society to a multi-cultural society, resulting in the growth of the UK ethnic minority population from 1% in 1949 to 7.9% in 2001 (Home Office Census, 2001; please see black British). The continuous increase in the population of ethnic minorities shows that management were now faced with the challenge of managing and improving the exchange relations of minority employees, and finding new ways to attract, recruit, and retain workers from ethnic minorities. This thesis' primary focus is on the black community, which is why this is a study about black British clerical workers in local authorities. The different beliefs that employees from the black community bring to local authorities suggest they have a different

perception from that held by other colleagues, and so produce different psychological contract. Therefore, in order to bring out the gap in the psychological contract literature, this thesis will explore through critical analysis the black British workers' expectations, beliefs, values, experiences, and perceptions.

### **1.3 The main objective of this research**

The main objective of this thesis is to explore the nature of the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in the context of UK local authorities.

The sub research questions were:

- What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities?
- What are the moderating factors that help shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract?
- What are the factors that influence and constrain the black British clerical workers' response to psychological contract violation?

Once it is revealed what influences the black British clerical workers to join local authorities and the factors that help shape their psychological contract, it would

help to develop a course of action that would continue to enhance, support and strengthen the exchange relations between such workers and their employers. Emphasis will be on the employee's beliefs, how the psychological contract is formed, and how the employee responds to psychological contract breach and its violation. These revelations will aid and provide positive guidelines to policy-makers in local authorities and inform them of conditions that must be in place to enhance the exchange relations of black British clerical workers employed in UK local authorities.

#### **1.4 The justification for this research**

First, local authorities are continually examining ways on how to improve employees' commitment in the workplace through relevant training. The result of such work will provide the framework and practical guidance on how individual employees can improve their productivity, but in situations where the key decision to join the organization rests with the employees, it does not address the question of what factors influence the employees to seek employment in local authorities. Therefore, this research ought to know more about the expectations, values and beliefs the employees bring to the organization and what they wanted from it.

Second, as the black British population increased across UK local authorities, it became necessary for local authorities to find new ways of managing and to ensure they were not left disadvantaged as a result of their low educational achievement, beliefs and expectations. If a researcher can understand the mod-

erating factors that help shape the psychological contract of black British clerical workers, then he can form suitable policies for local authorities which will take into account the extent to which the black British workers would respond differently to psychological contract violation.

Third, the academic value of this research is quite wide, in that as the lived experiences, beliefs, values and expectations of the employees are investigated, a clearer view of what makes the black British clerical workers respond differently to contract breach and its violation is found.

Fourth, there are gaps in the literature. For example, there is no research of any kind on the nature of the psychological contract of black British employees working in UK local authorities. No study has been undertaken into the factors that help shape the psychological contract of black British clerical workers. No research has been done on how black British clerical workers respond to contract breach and its violation. No study has been made into linking the concept of the extended family obligations and the psychological contract. No study has been undertaken into linking the psychological contract and why the black British clerical workers behave differently from other colleagues. No research has been done to explore the factors leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities. No study has been attempted for linking the societal factors and the psychological contract. No research has been found on the factors that restrain the black British clerical worker from seeking other employment despite contract violation.

No study has been prepared linking the intergeneration issues within the black communities and the psychological contract. These gaps in the literature need to be bridged.

Fifth, there is considerable literature on non-white characteristics of the psychological contract in other countries, but this is not on the whole relevant as frames of reference for this phenomenon. The gap between what staff wanted and got from their employer varied considerably from one employee to another but this depends on the employee's background and upbringing. For example, according to Kickul, Lester and Belgio (2004) the issue of pay was considered to be much more important than career and training among Hong Kong employees working in USA. This was also found to be highly valued by the Maltese working overseas (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005) but the problem is that there has been no such study in the UK for linking it to the psychological contract, and so researchers do not know if this may also apply to the black British clerical workers in UK local authorities.

Sixth, according to Lewis, Thornhill and Saunders (2003) the future of employment relations has changed as UK local authorities become more frustrated due to the frequent use of industrial action by the trade unions, and as a result, management are under pressure from Central Government to ensure that they are in control of the employment relations. Consequently, trade unions are now being marginalized in the workplace, which has led to the rise in direct negotiation between management and individual employees (Guest, 1998). The implication is



that the trade union's bargaining powers and influence in the workplace have been reduced. Therefore, a research problem is that since a majority of the black British clerical workers are members of the trade union (Unison), any contract violation by the employer may have direct repercussions for the black British clerical workers in terms of how they would respond to contract violation. There would be concern amongst them if trade unions cannot be relied upon for support when the violation occurs.

Seventh, in the current global climate where exchange relations vary from one country to another, and as we serve in a multi-cultural society, this means that employees from a different cultural background working in UK local authorities may have a different perception from other colleagues. This might apply to black British clerical workers, producing a different psychological contract. It is therefore considered to be topical to take a look at this issue through the lens of the psychological contract.

Eighth, other points of justification for this research were that the black British people make up 3.4% of the total UK population (Home Office Census, 2001), which is higher than the black Canadians (1.97%) who have benefited from research into the area under study. The problem is that literature on the psychological contract has revealed little interest to date about black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. This gap in literature has provided the grounds for a new research in the UK, and a rationalization for this research.

Ninth, current studies on contract violations were based on the entire workforce, and so the research outcome does not reflect or take into account the actual experiences, expectations and beliefs of the black British clerical workers. Therefore it is hoped that by carrying out this research the black British clerical workers perspectives will now be represented.

Tenth, the UK social inclusive policies advocates respect for cultural and religious values, but there has been no research done into linking the concepts of personal values and the psychological contract or explaining or predicting how these values influence the formation of the psychological contract, particularly among the young and older generations of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities.

## **1.5 The Structure of this thesis**

This research is altogether composed of seven chapters and has been prearranged in accordance with the following chapters starting from Chapters One to Seven as illustrated below:

## Chapter One:

In this chapter the introduction started by discussing how the concept of the 'psychological contract' began, and how during the last five years, literature revealed that there has been research on non-white characteristics of the psychological contract in many countries, except in the UK. Later it was discussed how the PhD research was inspired out of desire to find answers to various questions arising regarding the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in local authorities, following the uncovering of a range of attitudes, behaviours and expectations from fellow staff members. Furthermore, the main objective of this thesis was explained. Afterwards, the justification of this research was illustrated by discussing the rationalization for undertaking this research.

## Chapter Two:

This chapter presents a broader literature review of the psychological contract, and discusses the contextualizing of the focus of research and brings out the gap in the psychological contract literature. The reason for choosing the psychological contract concept and not other constructs is explained. The concept of the psychological contract and its various definitions and the different forms of psychological contracts is then discussed. Later, the origins of the psychological contract are explored, and also how the concept has developed from Argyris (1960) to Rousseau (1989). The current work of the psychological contract is examined, by exploring how Rousseau (1989) led the way to the current work on the psychological contract plus the transactional/relational contracts and their relative impor-

tance. Psychological contract violation is explored, by examining what its violation and breach are, and why the subject is important. Finally, the impact of the psychological contract violation and employee response to contract breach/violation is explored.

#### Chapter Three:

This chapter presents the research context. At this point a primary concern is to discuss the place where research fieldworks will be undertaken. This chapter has been outlined as two segments. First, are the organizational perspectives, and secondly, are the employee's perspectives. Afterwards it is emphasized why interest falls upon the individual perspectives and not the organization. Later the research focus group 'black British workers' is discussed, explaining why research was focused upon it rather than 'black managers'. Finally a summary of the various issues discussed is presented.

#### Chapter Four:

This is the methodological chapter. In this chapter, strategy is explained with the extent to which the methodology adopted is able to explore the phenomenon. Afterwards, the concept of qualitative strategic thinking is discussed, in order to ensure that the methodology adopted relates to the research questions and research strategy. Later research was planned in a way that would prevent or restrict personal biases, by placing research within the qualitative tradition, using grounded theory approach. After that, research philosophy is discussed by pre-

senting a philosophical position for research, adopted in this thesis. Further, it is discussed why the qualitative research methodology adopted are more compatible to the phenomenon this thesis is investigating. The aim of the interview is shown to have the participants reflecting on their own experiences and convey the experiences to the participants in a manner that would enable the interviewee and interviewer to come to a mutual understanding of the account and meaning of their experiences. Finally, it is discussed how the research empirical materials were to be collected, using a semi-structured interview.

#### Chapter Five:

This chapter demonstrates how the research design was conducted and shows its compatibility with the research methodology. A qualitative interviewing method was adopted. The approach was aimed at considering the human behaviour from the black British clerical workers' perspectives employed in local authorities, in an attempt to address this thesis' research questions, rather than from a universal setting. This chapter set out the groundwork for the introduction of data analysis in Chapter Six, as focus is made on the findings from the qualitative phase of the study.

#### Chapter Six:

In this chapter the findings from the qualitative interviews conducted over ten weeks are presented, which saw the researcher interview 38 participants, including 4 pilot applicants and 34 core participants, using a semi-structured method. All the interviews were taped and transcribed and the data collected was analysed in

a manner as informed by Glaser and Strauss (1987), a grounded theory approach. All the interviews were approached with the view of understanding the text from the participants' perspective and then to focus on the interview discussion such as the vocabulary, the body language, grammar and descriptions. Later these two types of analysis are considered together and to look out for emergent patterns and themes.

Chapter Seven:

Having examined the 38 interviews conducted over ten weeks at ten different local authorities, the concluding chapter of this thesis is reached. The task at this stage is to discuss the research findings that were presented in Chapters Five and Six, then to summarize and evaluate the journey this research has taken and conclude how far there is still yet to go, and which future path could be taken. A summary of the substantive findings of this research is presented and then the conclusion of this research, outlining the implications of the findings for black British clerical workers. The limitations of this research are also outlined, and the contributions this research has made are assessed. Finally, recommendations of potential areas for future research are offered.

## **1.6 Summary and Conclusion**

Finally, this opening chapter introduces the rationalization for carrying out this PhD research and has laid the grounds for the research questions. It has presented the background to this thesis as well as the objective and justification for research.

Following the theoretical and empirical observations, the approach that has been adopted in the structuring of this thesis is presented. The significance of this research from the black British perspectives depends on identifying the gap or lack of knowledge in the psychological contract literature that will help improve the employment relationship with their employers.

The next chapter is a research literature review, where it is intended to have a comprehensive discussion on the relevant psychological contract concepts and to review current literature on psychological contract in an effort to investigate the research questions.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### LITERATURE REVIEW

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This chapter contextualizes the focus of research and brings out gaps in the literature on the psychological contract. The literature reviewed in this chapter will help to shape the research questions and the methodology adopted.

In this chapter, the sections are arranged as follows:

Section 2.1 draws from employees' perspectives and describes the psychological contract concept. Afterwards are highlighted the reasons for choosing the psychological contract over other constructs.

Section 2.2 explores the psychological contract concept and also examines the various definitions of the psychological contract as well as discussing the divergent views put forward by various researchers.

Section 2.3 provides an analysis of the origin of the psychological contract and how the concept developed from Argyris (1960) to Rousseau (1989). This section also focuses on the divergent views and debates about the psychological contract



put forward by various researchers and scholars. Later, a summary of the key features researchers have contributed is presented, highlighting their key differences and similarities and showing the development of the psychological contract. Subsection 2.3.1 examines the current work of the psychological contract, while Subsection 2.3.2 explores how the psychological contract has changed over time with changes in employment relations and the transactional and relational contract.

Section 2.4 explores the impact of psychological contract violation from the employee's perspective. There is an explanation of violation and its importance. In this section there is also an examination of the antecedents and a distinction between contract violation and contract breach. In addition, there is an investigation into the factors that shape the employee response to psychological contract violation. In Subsection 2.4.1 there is a discussion on employee response to psychological contract breach/violation.

Section 2.5 provides the summary and conclusion of the literature review chapter. At this point, relevant concepts and theories from the psychological contract literature are discussed in order to investigate the research questions.

## **2.1 Introduction**

The psychological contract represents a set of individual perceptions concerning the terms and conditions of an exchange agreement between oneself and another party (Argyris, 1960; Conway & Briner, 2005). But today, it is argued that the psy-

chological contract concept goes a little further for some. This revelation arises from the fact that employees bring different beliefs to the organization. These beliefs vary from person to person because of individual employee's backgrounds or cultural upbringings. Therefore for employees to fulfil their expectations, they will have to renegotiate the terms and conditions of their exchange agreement. This is particularly apparent where some employee's circumstances are different from others. For example, those employees who have young children may wish to renegotiate their working time to fit in with school term time. In the next section, the psychological contract concept is compared with other constructs and then it is considered: why choose the psychological contract and not others?

### **Why choose the psychological contract and not other constructs?**

The answer to this question is potentially multifaceted and can be dealt with in many forms (Triandis, 1989; Motowildo, Borman and Schmit, 1997). Some of the range of theories and constructs may approach this phenomenon differently. For example, the job characteristics approach (Roberts & Glick, 1981) seeks to identify how particular features of a job impact on employee behaviour. Others look at the organization's context or environment to explain behaviour. However, in all areas of organizational behaviour, there are many ways to understand human behaviour (Sorge & Warner, 2001).

According to Steers and Black (1994), other approaches to the exchange relations are outlined, for example in Bernard's Equilibrium model (1938); he de-

scribes a situation where an employer is able to get employees to continue contributing to the organization by offering them an inducement e.g. pay and allowance. Another considered was the Hedonism theory, which dates back to the time of the early Greeks. Here the theory implies that people do things that give them pleasure rather than get involved in things that do not satisfy them. This study also considered the Instinct theory by James, Friend and McDougall (1890). In contrast to hedonism theory, this one argued that human behaviour is not conscious and rational, as hedonism had suggested. According to instinct theory, human behaviours are postulated to be influenced by instincts such as curiosity, love, fear, jealousy, and sympathy. Another theory the study considered was the Reinforcement theory by Thorndike, Woodworth and Hall (1920). This theory implies that individuals make decisions about their current behaviour based on past outcome. In other words, if past decisions led to punishment, it is unlikely that the individual would repeat them. Another theory considered was the Cognitive theory introduced in the early 1940s by Jean Piaget. In contrast to the reinforcement theory, cognitive theory emphasizes more on future expectations. Here individuals behave rationally, in that they make a decision about the present situation, based on what has happened in the past. This means that if someone does extra work and does not get paid, next time the person would not waste their time doing extra work. Another theory considered was the Need Hierarchy theory by Abraham Maslow (1940). This theory implies that people are motivated by the desire to satisfy several different needs, such as security, social interaction, and self-esteem. According to Maslow these needs are arranged in hierarchical form, meaning that

people would attend to needs in a sequential manner. For example, if you want to visit the toilet , it is likely that you would want to satisfy that need first, before going to attend your second need e.g. to attend a group meeting. Maslow divided these needs into two basic ones, such as (1) deficiency needs, which he described as ones that must be satisfied if you want to be healthy and secure, and (2) Growth needs, which he described as needs that relate to the development and achievement of individual potential. Another theory this study considered was the Equity theory by Adams and Weick (1963). This is a social comparison theory that focuses on how individuals feel they are being treated in comparison to others. Another theory was the Goal Setting theory; this is very important to an individual performance based on motivational programs. Setting goals for employees helps them to focus their attention on the particular task. In other words, if we have a goal in front of us, that goal will serve as a constant reminder of where we are going and how important the goal is to us. For example, if your goal is to complete 14 letters daily and you have only finished 10, the goal setting will remind you that you need another 4 letters completed to achieve your daily target. Overall, in contrast to Bernard's equilibrium model (1938), these theories' emphasis is more on the individual, rather than a process that includes or involves the employee and organization together. On the other hand, the psychological contract concept is unique in its approach since it involves both the employee and organization, and it is used to explain employee behaviour by considering the extent to which the employee believes the organization has kept to the promises they (the employees) perceive were made to them (Rousseau, 1989; Morrison and

Robinson, 1997). The psychological contract offers the choice of being able to re-negotiate the exchange agreement between employee and employer when things are not going very well. In all human relationships, when promises are kept, there is satisfaction on both sides, but when promises are broken within the context of the psychological contract, it is regarded as psychological contract violation (Rousseau, 1989). Significantly, the choice is to renegotiate the exchange agreement between employee and employer, involving both the employee and organization, and also it is used to explain employee behaviour (Conway & Briner, 2005); this triggered the author's interest and led to considering the psychological contract to be the current platform of preference and tools for understanding and dealing with this kind of thesis phenomenon.

## **2.2 Psychological contract**

In this section, the psychological contract concept is discussed, investigating the various definitions and the conceptual boundaries of what the psychological contract is and is not.

The 'psychological contract' is not a terminology commonly used in the office or in everyday language. It is a term constructed by Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, and Solley in 1962. The word 'psychology' is not only viewed as unwritten, but as a product of mutual expectations with two characteristics such as: (1) implicit and unspoken (Kotter, 1973) and (2) generally about exchange relations between two parties (Levinson, 1962). According to literature, there is no agreed definition of

the psychological contract (Conway & Briner, 2005). This is because people have argued that perceptions or expectations differ from one person to another. As a result, many researchers both in the past and present tend to offer their own definition. It was argued that researchers sometimes adopt one of the existing definitions (Roehling, 1997). For this reason, new researchers wishing to find a definition of the psychological contract are faced with the dilemma of going through all the many definitions and then deciding which one to choose or rejecting all. However, judging from the employee perspective, this study defines the psychological contract as a set of individual expectations or obligations of which the employer is unaware in respect of the exchange agreement between both parties. This author describes the employee expectations or obligations as being unknown by the employer, on the grounds that if they are known to the employer it will not be classified as psychological, but because it is unspoken and embedded within the mind of the employee it is called 'psychological contract'.

The most pressing question people often ask is "What makes the psychological contract a 'psychological' and not a 'legal contract'?" According to Conway and Briner (2005), the difference is that the psychological contract nature of exchange is based on the perceptions each party has, rather than what is actually written down or explicitly agreed. On the other hand, a contract is a legal document that becomes enforceable in a court of law if either of the party fails to honour his/her responsibility (Guest, 1998). But the psychological contract cannot be enforced in a court of law as it is unspoken and not written down. A written contract cannot

be used to describe a psychological contract, but can be viewed on the whole as being psychological (Macneil, 1985; Rousseau, 1995). This means that the psychological contract is not written down into any formal agreement between the employer and employee but rather the agreement operates as a determinant of the employee behaviour. For example, an employment contract that is promising a pay rise to all employees but has performance increases as a precondition, usually leads to more questions and interpretations, regarding the level and timing of the pay rise and the necessary performance increase required (Conway & Briner 2005). Generally, the fact that the psychological contract concept is implicit and not written down, makes it difficult to adopt a universal definition as supported by Roehling (1997).

### **Defining the psychological contract**

According to Guest (1998), as soon as you begin to ask yourself about the definition of psychological contract, you immediately run into problem. It is not because there is no definition of the psychological contract, but rather the volume of definitions has proven to be problematic. Compared below are some of the commonly used psychological contract definitions which many researchers and organizations are using today:

- Psychological contract is the perception of an exchange agreement between oneself and another party (Argyris, 1960).

- A series of mutual expectations of which the parties to the relationship may not themselves be dimly aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other (Levinson, 1962).
  
- An individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal party person and another party. A psychological contract emerges when one party believes that a promise of future returns has been made, a contribution has been given and thus an obligation has been created to provide future benefits (Rousseau, 1989).

At a glance, the first problem that emerges as we compare the above definitions is that the psychological contract is about perceptions, promises and expectations. It is for this reason that Guest (1998) advocated that one way of resolving this problem is to insist that the concept includes perceptions, promises and expectations. But it was argued that if this is the conceptual position, then one runs the risk of being accused of oversimplification (Guest, 1998). For this reason, this study proposes that the employee's perceptions, promises and expectations are interdependent on each other. For example, perception is a mental acceptance that a promise has been made; promise is the motivating factor driving the employee and his/her line manager to work together and in return, and promises give the employee the belief of future expectations.



In defining the concept, Rousseau (1989) stated that the psychological contract is concerned with promises rather than expectations. The author's argument is that the psychological contract relies on the employee's believing in future benefits, based on the expectations that the employer adheres to the promises that have been made. It is this debate on employee expectations that lead the author to advocate that the employee's previous experiences are essential to the ongoing psychological contract. But Rousseau and Parks (1993) holds different views and considers the psychological contract to be in the mind of the employee alone, and that only the employee can hold perceptions and not the organization. In contrast to this view, this author believes that UK local authorities, managers (the organization representatives) do in fact hold perceptions and can indeed observe, feel and perceive contract violations. In support of this argument, Shore and Tetrick (1999) and Thomas, Au and Ravlin (2003) confirmed that exchange relations are between the employee and his/her line manager and not the organization as a legal entity.

Having discussed the various psychological contract definitions, this study will review further the proliferation of the use of the term 'promises and expectations' as key definitional terms used to describe the psychological contract. It is important to first examine where researchers have used these key words 'promises and expectations':

- A psychological contract emerges when one party believes that a promise of future returns has been made, a contribution has been given, and thus an obligation has been created to provide future benefits (Rousseau, 1989).
- A set of unwritten reciprocal expectations between an individual employee and the organization (Schein, 1978).

According to Conway and Briner (2005):

*The psychological contract is not all about promises. I agreed with this view, because if the psychological contract is all about promises, then the role of the employee expectations would become vague and unclear.*

As the spotlight is turned on expectations, our attention is focused on earlier events and what the employee carries with him/her to the new organization. Whether promises or expectations best constitute the psychological contract, consideration has to be given to earlier conceptualisations of the psychological contract. For example, a study carried out by Menninger (1958), observed that when the employees spoke about their work, they spoke of expectations and that the expectations seem to have certain mutual obligations. Moreover, these expectations were generally unspoken, implicit and were “largely formed before and

outside the current employment relationship". In contrast, Conway and Briner (2005) argued that employee expectations formed outside and predating the current employment could not be part of the psychological contract. In contrast, this study argues that expectation is something you carry with you and so require continuous negotiation and bargaining to keep the psychological contract alive.

Rousseau's (1989) perspective on expectation is that it is not 'expectations' that are the motivating factors driving both parties to work together, but in fact it is the 'promises' made following the interactions between the two parties. In contrast, this study would argue from a contractual perspective that promises usually lead to expectations, and not the other way around. For example, when an employer makes promises to potential applicants on a job advertisement, the applicant would believe that the promises would be adhered to. But if after appointment, the employer's promises did not materialize, it would mean that the employer had violated the psychological contract. It was this debate that has led to investigating Research Question One: What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities? (**RQ1**)

So far this debate has revealed that expectations simply refer to what the employee expects to receive from his/her employer. On the other hand, promises are much more 'psychologically engaging' than a general expectation (Guest, 1998). While all promises may involve expectations, in contrast expectations do not necessarily involve a promissory element (Rousseau & Park, 1993). An expectation is

more of a general belief about whether something will or should happen or not, whereas a promise is a much more specific belief about what will happen, when it will happen, and why it will happen (Conway & Briner, 2005).

In support of Rousseau's (1989) definition of the psychological contract, this research has identified some of the boundaries guiding the parties involved in the exchange relations. First, the psychological contract by definition is an individual perception. So the theme 'beliefs' may vary from person to person. Secondly, according to Roehling (1997) the focus of the psychological contract is on the individual reasoning, which is basically the defining factor about the concept. Therefore surely the reasoning of the black British clerical worker is different or unique from his/her colleagues because of his/her cultural upbringing. For this reason, the black British clerical worker's way of thinking or interpretation of the exchange relations is this debate's focal point.

In summing up, the psychological contract concept was constructed over forty years ago and its reputation was ignited following Rousseau's (1989) redefinition of the concept. Thereafter, the reputation of the psychological contract has grown steadily worldwide. As mentioned previously, Rousseau (1989) described the psychological contract concept as an individual's beliefs, resulting out of the interpretation of promises. While the psychological contract concept appears to be patchy because of the different definitions, it still remains a dominant influence on issues relating to exchange relations. The majority of the psychological contract

definitions refer to the concept as an expectation or promise regarding the terms and conditions of an exchange agreement. It has been mentioned that all promises may involve expectations, but expectations do not necessarily involve a promissory element (Conway & Briner, 2005). It is on these grounds that it was found fitting to define the psychological contract as a set of individual expectations or obligations unknown to the employer in respect of the exchange agreement.

In the next section, the aim is to explore the origins of the psychological contract from Argyris (1960) to Rousseau (1989) in an effort to establish a greater understanding of the concept.

### **2.3 The origins of the psychological contract**

In this section the aim is to explore the origins of the psychological contract and how the concept has developed from Argyris (1960) to Rousseau (1989). As the author undertake this review it is hoped to unearth some of the divergent views about the psychological contract.

Argyris (1960) played an important role in the development of the concept. He was reported to be the first researcher to apply psychological contract in a study involving a foreman and a group of workers. His findings revealed that the best way to get employees to behave in a desired manner was to maintain the informal employee culture, rather than being seen to behave in a way that violates the cultural norms. Argyris noted in his finding that while the employer may not even

approve of its employees' attitudes, he observed that it is not in the employer's interest to be challenging employees' behaviour patterns as this may be the excuse the employees needed to justify reducing their efforts towards achieving productivity targets. Similarly, Argyris revealed that if employers do not interfere too much in the employees' activities, respect their cultural norms, and leave them to get on with their job, employees are more likely to improve their performance. Although Argyris used the term 'psychological work contract' in his study in 1960, the term 'psychological contract' was not constructed until 1962 by Levinson, Mandl, Solley, Munden and Price (1962), when they investigated the concept rather than just saw it as a means of examining behavioural changes and exchange relationship between employer and employee. On the issue of needs, Levinson found that needs have a central role in terms of fulfilling employee obligations. His finding was that if the employer felt it had met the employee's needs, then reciprocally, the employee was obliged to fulfil the organization's needs. Schein (1965) found that the psychological contract is constantly in operation, continuously being renegotiated and mutually bargained to establish and enhance the psychological contract. In contrast, Argyris (1960) took a rather different position when he found that employees are more likely to improve their performance, if employers do not get in the way of the employees' activities.

Furthermore, Schein (1965) found that the psychological contract implies that employees have certain implicit expectations from the organization, whilst the organization also requires similar expectations from the employee (vice versa).

Therefore the exchange relations are based entirely on the behaviours of the parties involved. In 1973 Kotter incorporated both the expectations of the employer and the employee. In Kotter's analysis and testing, he took a different position from Levinson when he found that the more the employee and employer's expectations match, the greater the likelihood that the employee will continue to have job satisfaction, high productivity and staff turnover is reduced. Kotter emphasized that it was the matching expectations that were more vital, and not a mismatch. Rousseau (1989) is one researcher that has had the greatest influence on the conceptualization of psychological contract. When other researchers like Levinson, Schein and Kotter were focusing on expectations, she emphasized the promissory nature of the psychological contract. In Rousseau analyses, she placed her emphasis mostly on beliefs and individual employee perceptions, rather than employee and organizational exchange relationships. This is because she believes psychological contract is "formed by the employee's perception of his/her observable behaviour, rather than being shaped by the employee's inner motives such as needs or expectations". It was this debate that leads to the investigation of Research Question Two: What are the moderating factors that help shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract? **(RQ2)** In the next segment, the overlaps between the researchers will be considered.

### **2.3.1 The overlaps between these researchers**

The overlaps between Schein, Levinson, Argyris, Kotter and Rousseau are due to the circumstances in which each of these researchers conducted their field stud-

ies as shown in table 2.1 (See below). Nevertheless, the overlaps between these researches were that Argyris was putting emphasis on the team's cultural norms, depicting team coerciveness and characterizing a distinct organizational behaviour. Levinson focused more on expectations between the employer and employee. In contrast Schein was giving more consideration to the organization's side of the psychological contract and how it could be articulated through organizational culture. On the other hand, Kotter emphasized the matching of expectations between the employer and employee. While Schein was emphasizing that employees are influenced by the expectations from their inner needs e.g. learned from their colleagues, culture, traditions and past experience, in contrast, Rousseau believes the psychological contract is "formed by the employee's perception of his/her observable behaviour, rather than being shaped by the employee's interior motives such as expectations". When other researchers were focusing on expectations, she placed emphasis mostly on employee perceptions, rather than the exchange relationships between the employee and employer. In contrast, this debate would argue that employees come into organization with different beliefs, due to their upbringings and backgrounds, influenced by past expectation which they carry within their interior motives and that makes them develop different perceptions.

To feature the contributions of these key researchers, their differences, overlaps and similarities, table 2.1 is constructed below, illustrating a summary of the development of the psychological contract.



**Table 2.1: Summary of the development of the psychological contract**

	<b>Key Differences</b>	<b>Similarities</b>	<b>Theorists' Contribution</b>
Argyris	Psychological work contract, based on an atmosphere of informal employee culture	Mutual Obligation, and exchange relationship is reciprocal	Produced optimally under passive leadership
Levinson	Lay emphasis on understanding the relationship from the employee and employer's perspectives	Mutual obligation, and psychological contract is based on a series of expectations	Identifies two expectations: implicit expectation and company's expectations
Schein	He draws from both Argyris's work and Levinson's work on the psychological contract. Also, he gave more consideration to organization side of the psychological contract	Mutual expectations	Psychological contract is continuously in operation and constantly being renegotiated.
Kotter	The more the employer and employee expectation matches, the greater the employee job satisfaction continues	Mutual expectation based on employee and employer relationship.	Matching expectations
Rousseau	Individual belief and perception, rather than the employee and organizational exchange	Reciprocal exchange agreement	Suggested violation as the mechanism that connects psychological contract to various responses in contrast to what is described as a reasonable match between the employee's contribution and the organizational inducement.

**Source:** Developed by the author

In closing, discussion has covered the origin of the psychological contract from Argyris (1960) to Rousseau (1989). The overlaps between the researchers were reviewed, and demonstrated the researchers' key differences, similarities and theoretical contributions. In the next subsection, it is intended to investigate the current work of the psychological contract.

### **2.3.2 The current work of the psychological contract**

In this section, it is intended to examine the work of contemporary researchers on the psychological contract. Afterwards it can be explored how the psychological contract has changed over time with changes in employment relations, the transactional and relational contract.

Rousseau (1989) led the way to the current work on the psychological contract. Her redefinition of the psychological contract in her article "Psychological and Implied Contract in Organization" has won over many contemporary researchers across the globe (Conway & Briner, 2005). One of the reasons why Rousseau's re-conceptualization attracted so many people was because she described the concept as a 'tool for understanding and managing changes in employment relationship'. According to literature, interest in the psychological contract was due to the breakdown of the traditional deal, such as negotiation between the employer and trade unions (Guest, 2001; Coyle-Shapiro, Shore, Taylor & Tetrick, 2004). Another underlining factor for the interest in the psychological contract is the

search for better and new ways of managing employment relations to meet the needs and interests of both parties (Guest, 1998).

Debates on how the psychological contract has changed over time revealed that the psychological contract which was originally based on expectation between the employer and employee, had changed, because it is now concerned with whether promises or obligations have been met (Rousseau, 1989; Guest, 1998). In addition, the employment relations which were based on traditional collective model between the employer and trade unions has changed; it is now an individual issue (Coyle-Shapiro, Shore, Taylor & Tetrick, 2004). The criticism levied against individualism is that without the involvement of the trade union, the outcome of any exchange agreement between employer and employees are always one-sided, meaning if management gives instruction to employee, the employee will have to adhere to it; otherwise it will be seen as not obeying management instruction. Rousseau's work has been characterized as marking a transition from earlier developments to what has been identified as contemporary research (Conway & Briner, 2005), such as the introduction of a different form of psychological contracts commonly referred to as transactional and relational contract (MacNeil, 1980; Rousseau, 1990). Below are discussions of their relative importance.

### **Transactional and relational contracts**

These two distinct sets of employee obligations, namely the transactional and relational contracts, were originated by the legal scholar MacNeil (1974, 1980) and

were subsequently distinguished by Rousseau (1990) plus other researchers such as Robinson and Rousseau (1994). Below are described the transactional and relational contracts:

**Transactional Contract:** Transactional contract is a monetary exchange between employer and employee (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). It was argued to be more of a short-term period than a long-term arrangement. This implies that employees are more likely to accept a higher wage package than rely on a long-term relationship with the organization. Agency workers and contract workers have benefited more from the transactional contract because of the short period their contract usually covers. Furthermore, it was argued that because of its monetary nature, the transactional contract is usually negotiated through an explicit process and therefore requires a formal agreement. In support of this view, Thomas, Au, and Ravlin, (2003), affirm that transactional contracts are short-term employment relationships and have been found to be useful to employees with huge monetary obligations. Others argue that transactional contract is soiled with high staff turnover. In support this thesis affirms that this is because the staff concern (e.g. agency staff) usually earn twice the amount of money a permanent staff member earns.

**The Relational Contract:** In contrast to the transactional contract, the relational contract is based on emotional investment and social exchange, such as loyalty, social-emotional and trust (Conway & Briner, 2005). It was argued that people do

not join organizations for the purpose of having an emotional investment, but rather they work so as to earn money and make a living for themselves. According to Rousseau (1995), relational contract characterized the employee's interest in long-term relationships with other employees. Negotiating the relational contract has a different dimension from that of the transactional contract. The difference is that the relational contract has a degree of implicit nature to it, which occurs through the ongoing exchange relations (Rousseau, 1995). In table 2.2 below, a comparison is made between the transactional contract and relational contract.

**Table 2.2: A comparison between transactional and relational contract**

	<b>Transactional Psychological Contract</b>	<b>Relational Psychological Contract</b>
Time frame	Short-term, Time-bounded promises	Long-term, open-ended promise
Degree of specificity	Highly specified	Loosely specified, amorphous
Resources exchange	Tangible, having a monetary value	Intangible, likely to be socio-emotional
Explicitness of promises	Explicit	Implicit
Negotiation	Likely to be explicit and require formal agreement by both parties	Implicit and unlikely to involve actual agreement by both parties
Example	Pay in exchange for number of hours worked	Job security in exchange for employee loyalty

**Source:** Conway and Briner (2005).

While these two contracts may appear opposite to each other as shown in Table 2.2, there are employees who can have both, because the different types of items in the transactional and relational contracts are interdependent, in that one type can influence the other parts of the social exchange (Conway & Briner, 2005). For example, agency workers are paid in exchange for the number of hours worked and at the same time promised job security in exchange for loyalty.

Finally, the psychological contract itself may be more of a transactional contract and not really descriptive of relational contract. This is because the primary concern of the employee is not actually to have an emotional relationship with colleagues or the organization but is in fact driven by other factors, some outside the organization itself. This thesis' criticism is that this is subjective, because there are others who would argue that the transactional contract is more of a contractual agreement and so it is written down, whereas the relational contract is an emotional exchange, implicit and not written down, and therefore is more of a psychological contract. Having discussed the psychological contract concept, examined the different type of contracts, in the next section it is intended to examine what causes psychological contract violation from the employee perspective.

## **2.4 The psychological contract violation**

In this section, we may start by investigating what is meant by the term 'psychological contract violation'. Later it must be examined what causes contract viola-

tion. Afterwards, some of the likely responses to the psychological contract violation from the black British perspectives will be discussed.

There has been no study done on the psychological contract violation concerning black British employees in UK local authorities, and as a result there is no current literature on this area of interest. The emphasis at this stage is to discuss the effect of the psychological contract violation from the black British workers' perspectives. The rationale is that most of the organization promises are directed to every employee (Chrobot-Mason, 2002). The thesis' criticism is that these promises do not represent nor meet the expectations, beliefs, and obligations of the black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. It was this debate that leads to investigating Research Question Three: What are the factors that influence and constrain the black British clerical workers' response to psychological contract violation? **(RQ3)**

### **2.4.1 What is contract violation and why is it important?**

Here the term 'violation' is examined, and afterwards the antecedents and distinction between contract violation and contract breach.

The term contract violation is not psychological contract violation. According to Morrison and Robinson (1997), the former refers to contractual failure, while the latter is psychological. The term "violation" that was originally used to describe organization failure to respond to employee's contribution, has been redefined by

Morrison and Robinson (1997) into two separate levels: (1) contract breach and (2) contract violation. In the past, most researchers used the terms 'breach and violation' interchangeably (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Outlined below are two definitions that distinguish 'breach' from 'violation'.

**Psychological contract breach:** This has been described as a situation when "one party in a relationship perceives another to have failed to fulfil promised obligations" (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). For example, if an organization supplies a diary annually to each staff member in a team but decides the following year to supply one diary for the whole team, the organization's actions may be regarded as a contract breach. Promised obligations from the employee perspectives may be used to describe obligations outside the organization of which the employer is unaware. This situation being discussed does not anyway provoke the intense negative emotional reaction necessary for contract violation. It was argued that the idea of a perceived contract breach varies from person to person because it all depends on each individual's expectations, reasoning and interpretation.

**Psychological contract violation:** In contrast to contract breach, psychological contract violation is a deeply distressing emotional experience that provokes intense negative reactions (Rousseau, 1989, 1990; Conway and Briner, 2005). According to Rousseau (1989) violation is described as "the failure of organizations or other parties to respond to an employee's contribution in ways the individual believes they are obliged to do so". For example, a situation in which a transport



company decides it is going to abolish travelling allowance at once without any consultation. This would make train drivers accuse the employer of violating the psychological contract, because the organization still has an obligation to provide them travelling allowances until another year, when it is suppose to come up for renewal.

On the issue of what causes psychological contract violation this research cited two basic causes of the psychological contract violations. According to Rousseau (1995) and Robinson (1994) the two most common causes of psychological contract violation are renegeing and incongruence. According to Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000), renegeing occurs when the organization knowingly breaks promise made to employees. This could be on purpose or due to unforeseen circumstances triggered by both national and global competitions. In contrast, the incongruence occurs when employees and their line managers have different understandings regarding what the employee has been promised. For example, the manager believes he/she has lived up to the commitments, but the employee perceives the manager has failed to keep to promises. Organ (1990) affirm that when employees felt they have overinvested in the organization and feel their contributions are not being valued, they are more likely to reduce the energy they put into performing any extra role, but in doing so they are likely to violate the psychological contract. In contrast, this view does not apply to every single employee. As discussed previously, most employees come to the organization with different beliefs, diverse expectations and dissimilar obligations and so produce different per-

ceptions, this implying therefore that other employees might prefer to seek for an alternative employment, rather than risk being dismissed for not fulfilling their contributions.

In general, this debate shows that the term 'breach' refers to a mild discrepancy, whereas the term 'violation' refers to an extreme emotional reaction. The effect of the psychological contract violation on employees has resulted in a range of negative consequences; for example, feelings of betrayal, resentment, anger, frustration, decreased employee motivation, job dissatisfaction, reduced employee commitment, high staff turnover, or increase in employee initiated litigation and unionization (Rousseau, 1989; Leat, 2001). The criticism is that while it is true that there are negative consequences due to violation, it is certain that these feelings do not apply to everyone, as people's perception varies from one person to another. In the next segment, it will be discussed how the employee responds to psychological contract violation.

## **2.4.2 Employee response to psychological contract**

### **breach/violation**

In this section, the aim is to explore the various factors that help shape employee response to psychological contract violation. Going back to an earlier question: Why is it important? It is important because knowing how employees respond to violation would enable researchers to understand what goes on inside the employee and also enable the employer to have full awareness of how the employee

perceives discrepancies. These responses are critical because it affects the employee's attitudes and behaviour (Thomas, Au & Ravlin, 1997; Tayeb, 2005). It was argued that response to violation or breach depends on individual employee interpretations; again, as mentioned previously, this differs from one person to another because of their different beliefs and expectations (Morrison & Robinson, 2000).

According to Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997) there are many ways of predicting how employees would respond to breach or violation when they are faced with discrepancy. These responses are critical as it affects the employee's behaviour in the workplace. For example, 'Control theory' provides a general platform to understanding possible employee response to psychological contract violation (Carver and Scheier, 1982). In a control theory, employees initiate an attitude or behavioural response each time they perceive a discrepancy in what the organization has promised and what they have received. From the employee's perspective, this represents imbalances in the relationships between themselves and the organization. Similarly, another theory called 'cognitive dissonance theory' introduced by Jean Piaget in 1940, mentioned previously, made the same prediction (Festinger, 1957) indicating whenever employees are confronted with inconsistency they are motivated to resolve it by changing either their attitudes or behaviours depending upon the situational constraints. On the other hand, Herriot, Manning and Kidd's (1997) study used another approach in which employees' response to violation may result in exit, voice, neglect behaviours, resistance to

change and a decrease in loyalty to the organization, but according to them this may depend on situational factors such as the availability of attractive employment alternatives, justification for the violation, and procedural justice. What these meant are discussed briefly below:

**(1) Availability of attractive employment alternatives:**

Here the employee response to psychological contract violation is likely to be influenced by the quality of other jobs available, which was supported by other researchers such as Conway and Briner (2005). 'It was argued that employees who are able to find alternative jobs may not be willing to continue working for an organization that cannot be trusted'. On the other hand, it was argued that employees who cannot find another job may have no option but to remain with the same organization (Rousseau, 1995). It must be pointed out that those employees that cannot find alternative job may engage in voice and neglect behaviours and be less likely to be loyal to the organization.

**(2) Justification for the violation:**

When deciding what response to take, most employees would first consider the justification for the violation (Herriot, Manning & Kidd, 1997). The reaction from the employee may be less severe if the employee perceives that the violation is influenced by external forces, which compel the organization to break the psychological contract. However, if there are insufficient or no external justifications for the organization's violation, then the employee's response is likely to be exit,

voice, neglect or less loyalty (Herriot, Manning & Kidd 1997). Again, as mentioned previously, this varies from one person to another.

### **(3) Procedural Justice:**

This process is available to employees wishing to seek fairness and truthfulness following their psychological contract violation. Significantly, this procedural justice refers to a process in which employees might experience positive and negative outcomes (Conway & Briner, 2005). One of the criteria for assessing procedural justice is its consistency. The employee's response to psychological contract violation depends on how he/she perceives the procedural justice to be fair and just (Conway, 2002). Generally, most employees would respond less severely when they perceive the decision-making process to be just. On the other hand, it was argued that employees would respond strongly to contract violation when they perceive injustice in the procedural process (Greenberg, 1993). According to Rousseau and Park (1993), employees who perceive the organization's decision-making process to be unfair are likely to react negatively when the organization brings in changes that actually violate the psychological contract.

In summing up, the incongruence between the employer and employee depends on each individual employee's interpretation, these varying from person to person (Morrison & Robinson, 2000). Theories reviewed were the control and cognitive dissonance theories which predict that employees initiate different attitudes and behaviour whenever they are faced with contract violation. However, the Herriot,

Manning and Kidd (1997) study provided a clearer understanding of how employees respond to violation and suggested that the situational factors help to restrain individual employee reaction to any breach or violation. It also helps to moderate the relationship between the employee's psychological contract and exit. Furthermore, Conway and Briner (2005) affirm that the situational factors are useful tools in determining what action the employee is likely to take and what employees would do in the event of violation. This is true to some extent, but not of all employees, especially when the employee is influenced by factors outside the organization, e.g. caring for an elderly relative who has no pension or savings. In this situation the employee would have no choice but to seek for another job that would provide the flexibility and remuneration needed to care for his/her relative.

## **2.5 Summary and conclusion**

In this chapter, relevant concepts and theories from the psychological contract literature were discussed in order to investigate the research questions. It was also outlined how the discussion has informed this research.

Given that this is the first study of its kind in the UK, this may be considered a research that is an exploratory work other researchers will build on. At the start of the discussion, it was mentioned how the individual employee brings different beliefs with him/her to the organization, obligations and expectations they hope to accomplish and all these are psychological because the organization is unaware of what the employee has in mind or is expecting to accomplish. For this reason

each employee would have to renegotiate their exchange agreement if they want to keep the psychological contract alive. It was the choice of being able to renegotiate the exchange agreement between employee and employer that made the author decide that the psychological contract is the appropriate platform of choice and tools for understanding and dealing with this type of phenomenon.

During the course of this literature review, what became apparent was the subjective nature of the psychological contract concept. According to Roehling (1996), the psychological contract is seen to many as “all things to all people”. It is for this reason Guest (1998), Conway and Briner (2005) advocated that many researchers have developed different views about the concept and so there is no agreed definition of the psychological contract. Consequently, this study has made its own definition, which is: that the psychological contract is a set of individual expectations or obligations unknown to the employer in respect of the exchange agreement between both parties. The employee expectations or obligations have been described as being unknown to the employer, because if they were known to the employer it would not be psychological, but because they are embedded within the mind of the employee and unspoken they are called a ‘psychological contract’.

Apparent in this discussion was an enthusiasm to explore the extent to which the employee expectations from previous experiences really influence the current exchange relations. In this debate, it was mentioned that Rousseau (1989) did not

believe the employee's expectations from previous experience constituted the psychological contract. In contrast, researcher such as Levinson (1962) believe the employee's expectations from previous experience are a moderating factor and so cannot be ignored. It was these debates that made this study affirm that the employee expectations from previous experience does have an influence on the current exchange relations. This implies that any employee who came to the organization with different beliefs, expectations and motives could have a different perception, and so produce different psychological contract.

It has been mentioned that the employment relations varied from nation to nation (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 2003; Tayeb, 2005), thus influencing the employee to interpret the exchange relations differently. It was also mentioned how culture is perceived as a mental representation, embedded within the employee throughout his lifetime and carried from one organization to another (Hofstede, 1983). Hence it is psychological, even though the employer is not aware of it, yet still governs the employee psychological contract (Levinson, 1962).

Rousseau's (1989) contribution mentioned to the psychological contract was to reconstitute the notion of exchange agreement from expectations to promissory nature. In contrast, to rely solely on promises made during the current exchange relations as being central to the psychological contract is to ignore the employee's past experience and what motivated the employee to join the organization. On the



other hand, if one accepts hypothetically that culture influences employee psychological contract, then promises alone are no longer sufficient to form the psychological contract. According to Shore and Tetrick (1994), Levinson (2003), an employee's desired expectation is referred to as 'demand' and this demand is psychologically embedded within the mind of the employee, which the employee carried with him/her from one company to another. And so long as the employee goal remains reasonably attainable, the employee is naturally motivated to work (Meckler, Drake, & Levinson, 2003).

Also mentioned was the fact that the significance of the psychological contract concept was ignited following Rousseau's redefinition in 1989. Thereafter, the reputation of the concept grew steadily worldwide, even when things were not going well with the concept because of the different definitions, yet it still remains a dominant influence on issues relating to exchange relationship. It is suggested that the variation among most of the psychological contract definitions actually reflects how the concept has grown since its original conceptualization.

This analysis of the earlier work and subsequent development of the psychological contract from Argyris (1960) to Rousseau (1989) revealed some key differences about the psychological contract. For example, Levinson (1962) placed emphasis on the understanding of the employment relations. In contrast, Rousseau (1989) placed more importance on individual beliefs based on the em-

ployer's promises, rather than the exchange agreement between the employee and the employer.

The societal factors such as culture, religion, economics conditions and the legal system are basic factors this thesis believes could help determine the importance employees place on the exchange relations. In support of this debate, Morrison and Robinson (1997) found that the severity of the employee's reaction may in part be determined by the importance the employee placed on the psychological contract violated. Again, this was supported by Kick, Lester and Belgio (2004), when their studies found that Hong Kong and US employees differ in terms of the psychological contract violation; this became apparent when they revealed that Hong Kong employees are likely to perceive a higher level of violation regarding competitive salary and job security, while USA workers are likely to perceive higher level violation regarding career advancement and promotion. This indicates that if there is violation concerning salary Hong Kong employees are likely to have greater intentions to leave the organization than their USA colleagues. This debate also found support in a study carried out by Zammit (1994), who found that Maltese employees working abroad more valued extrinsic job benefits e.g. salary than intrinsic job values (relational contract) to traditional family life.

As mentioned, the key research focus is to investigate "What are the factors that influence and constrain the black British clerical workers response to psychological contract violation?" As this phenomenon was investigated, it became obvious

that there are several factors such as black extended family, cultural obligations that could influence the employee to respond differently to psychological contract violation. This suggests that external forces can influence the black British clerical workers' psychological contract.

It was mentioned that the psychological contract violation has resulted in five different responses from employees, such as exiting, voice, neglect behaviour, resistance to change, and a decrease of loyalty to the organization. These responses according to Turnley and Feldman (1999) would depend on situational factors like the availability of alternative employment, justification for the psychological contract violation, and the procedural justice (Herriot, Manning & Kidd, 1997). It was suggested that other different responses to psychological contract violations are more likely to take place in a situation where employees have a great deal of freedom in how they behave. For example, the UK inclusive policy is a good example, a situation which demands every employee must respect individual employee culture and every member of staff has the freedom to practice his/her religion without being discriminated against. This kind of situation has caused a lot of staff to respond differently to psychological contract violation because of their beliefs. Therefore this thesis believes that the black British clerical workers would respond differently to psychological contract violation because of their beliefs.

The next chapter covers the research context, which discusses the organization where research fieldworks were to be undertaken. At this point, the chapter is outlined into two sections. First, is the organizational perspective, where an overview of the UK local authorities is presented. Secondly, the individual perspectives conversing about this thesis focus group 'black British clerical workers' is discussed.

## CHAPTER THREE

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### THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

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#### 3.1 Introduction

This is a study of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. The aim in this chapter is to discuss the context where the fieldwork will be undertaken and how the research questions are grounded in the literature.

The decision to undertake this research within the UK local authorities was taken with the intent to fill the gap in the psychological contract literature, which has seen no study done in this area. During the course of this fieldwork, it was intended to visit local authorities with the sole aim of providing an empirical response to research questions. In this thesis, the terms 'local authorities' and 'organization' have been used interchangeably to describe local government, but local people sometimes refer to it as 'Council'. The term 'local authority' has been adopted because it is felt that this represents the interest of local residents.

This chapter has been outlined into two sections. First is the organizational perspective in which the affairs of the UK local authorities are discussed. Secondly, the employee perspectives, which converse about this thesis' focus group 'black British clerical workers'.

### **The Organizational perspectives:**

Section 3.2 presents the organization perspective. Subsection 3.2.1 discusses the local authority's structure and explains the different types of local authorities in England. Subsection 3.2.2 discusses the new public management in local authorities, explaining the changes and innovation the new public management has brought to the UK local authorities. Subsection 3.2.3 discusses the effects the new public management has on employment. Subsection 3.2.4 explores the effects of privatisation and contracting-out in UK local authorities. Section 3.2.5 investigates the theoretical issue of managerial power and its impact on the psychological contract. Subsection 3.2.6 discusses the function and decline of the trade union in local authorities, and the implications for the psychological contract.

### **The Employee perspectives:**

Section 3.3 presents the employee perspective. Subsection 3.3.1 discusses the context of the black British. Subsection 3.3.2 presents a discussion about why the research focused on 'black British workers'. Subsection 3.3.3 explores the changing workforce population in UK local authorities. Subsection 3.3.4 focuses on the effect intergenerational issues have on the black communities. Section 3.4 discusses where the employee and organizational perspectives meet. Finally, the summary presents a synopsis of the various issues discussed in this chapter.

## **3.2 The Organizational perspectives**

Local authority is defined as a government of local area, meaning the government of a town, city, county, or region at a local level by locally elected politicians (*Encarta World English Dictionary, 2007*). Local authorities are the biggest employers of black British workers across England (Unison, Infocus Magazine, 2008) providing secured employment and equal opportunities for over 2.1 million workers in local authorities across England ( *Local Government Association, 2008*). Local authorities raise income in many different ways. For example, council tax collection raises 25% income and the non-domestic rate (business rates) raises 25%, while the remaining income of about 48% comes in the form of a grant from the central government (Kessler & Shapiro, 1998). Overall the central government spends over £70 billion yearly on local authorities (Benington, 2000).

### **3.2.1 Local authority structure**

Here is presented an overview of the UK local authorities in England. The local authority structure in England is organized in two contrasting ways (local government association, 2008). For example, in some parts of England there is a 'single tier' system described as all purpose unitary council (Metropolitan or London Boroughs), responsible for all local authorities, functions, and services. Other local authorities in England have a 'two-tier system' which means their responsibility for council services is divided between the district and county councils. There are 388 local authorities in England, which have been structured as follows:

**Single Tier Authorities:**

36 Metropolitan Authorities comprise of:

- West Midlands area: 7 authorities
- Merseyside area: 5 authorities
- Greater Manchester area: 10 authorities
- South Yorkshire area: 4 authorities
- West Yorkshire area: 5 authorities
- Tyne & Wear area: 5 authorities

**Two Tier Authorities comprise:**

- 34 County Councils
- 238 District Councils

There are 33 local authorities in London Boroughs (including Greater London Authority). There are also 47 Councils from the English Shire Unitary Authorities (which includes Isles of Scilly). At present there are five types of local authorities in England (Local Government Association, 2008). These are known as:

(1) County Council (CC) – These are in the rural areas and the service they provide is divided between the County Council and District Council. The service that CC provides includes education, social services and trading standards.



(2) District Council (DC) – the DC service systems are split between CC and DC. For instance, the DC services include housing and environmental health.

(3) Metropolitan Districts (M) – this is also referred to as Metropolitan borough or City Council. It provides all local authority services, which makes it all purpose authorities or single tier councils.

(4) Shire English and Welsh Unitaries (U) – They provide all local authority services to local people or single tier councils making it all purpose authorities.

(5) London Boroughs (LB) – They include the Corporation of London and also the Greater London Authority (GLA). During the 1980s there was a fundamental restructuring of the local authorities concerning the way it was managed and its services to local people. As a result, in the next section it is intended to investigate the effects of the new public management in local authorities.

### **3.2.2 The new public management in local authorities**

In this section, attention is focused on the changes and innovation the new public management has brought to UK local authorities.

During Mrs Thatcher's government in the 1980s and 1990s, reform within local authorities had focused on a new type of public management in order to increase cost efficiency. With the election of a new Labour government in May 1997 under Mr Blair's premiership, Thatcher's government privatization reform in local authorities was continued (Benington & Hartely, 2001, 2002). The Labour government's use of the slogan 'modernization and improvement', introduced a programme of

change and innovation in local authorities (Benington, 2000). The aim of the modernization project was to improve local leadership, enhance local democracy and develop the function of local authorities. According to Hartley, Butler and Benington (2002) the various issues the central government and local authorities were addressing under the local government modernization agenda (LGMA) can be illustrated in Table 3.1 below:

**Table 3.1: A framework for the local government modernization agenda**

<b>Perceived problems</b>	<b>Central government's solutions</b>	<b>Desired outcomes</b>
<b><i>Leadership and legitimacy</i></b>		
Localities lack a clear sense of direction	Cabinets and directly elected mayors Separation of executive and representative roles Community planning	A vision for the whole community Recognized leaders Clear accountability Better quality of life
Need for a new democratic Legitimacy	Make it easier to vote Consultation, engagement and participation	Increased voter turnout Revitalized local democracy More stability in council funding Improved local financial accountability
Need for a new ethical framework	New framework of standards of conduct	Respect from citizens Support from partners
<b><i>Quality and integration of services and accountability</i></b>		
Lack of coherence and of vertical and horizontal integration to deliver local services to meet the cross-cutting needs of users, citizens and communities	More 'joined-up' government Partnership working, including Local Strategic Partnerships New community leadership powers for councils	Shared vision Harnessing the energies of local people and organizations Integrated delivery through information and communication technologies (e.g. e-government) Ability to deal with cross-cutting issues
Quality of services too variable	Put the needs of service users ahead of service providers Universal inspection Beacon Councils	Quality services for all Clear service standards Spread of good practice
Some councils failing to deliver acceptable standards of service	Best Value Universal inspection New powers for central government to act on service failures Local Public Service Agreements	Continuous improvement of services More say for service users Increased flexibilities for well-performing local councils.

**Source:** Hartley and Benington (2000).

The criticism about the modernization agenda in local authorities is that it placed too much emphasis on attaining targets, monitoring performance, organizational and managerial processes (Benington, 2001), rather than on the policy making process (Hartley, Butler & Benington, 2002).

Generally, one of the desired outcomes of the modernization reform is to have a recognized leader of the council, but that means putting too much emphasis on the leadership of one person, 'the Major', rather than the Councillors that local people have voted to represent them (Hartley, Butler & Benington, 2002). This debate analysed local authority's reform in terms of its policies, programmes and practices concerning the labour government's agenda for modernizing and improving local authority's services. Some of the continuities from Mrs Thatcher's government to the Labour government under Mr Blair's premiership were described, which also continued under Mr Brown's premiership in 2007 under the slogan 'modernization and improvement', introduced to bring change and innovation in local authorities. In the next subsection, the effect this new public management has on employment is investigated.

### **3.2.3 The effect of this new public management on employment and employment relations**

In this section, attention is focused on the effect the new public management has on employment and employment relations. Many people working in local authorities had joined because they wanted a long term job security, rather than a higher

income in the private sector without job security (Benington, 2000). Today these same people are now being confronted by radical change caused by the new public management in UK local authorities. These changes according to Benington (2000) redefined the patterns of staff's lives in terms of their employment status (permanent, temporary, home-workers and agency workers) and have also changed staff's career structures. Others will argue that the more temporary or agency workers managers employed, the lesser the unions will have new members joining them.

On the rationale for using temporary contract and why there is job insecurity, it was revealed that the employee is the focal person in the provisions of local authority services (Kessler & Shapiro, 1998). This is because the labour cost accounts for 70% of the overall costs of local authority's budget (Allen & Henry, 1996), therefore for local authorities to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in response to financial restraints and competitive forces, management would have to reduce labour costs. This has led to job losses, and others have argued that employees are employed as long as they can add value to the organization (Lewis, Thornhill & Saunders, 2003) and in return it was argued that employees have the right to demand for better working conditions (Hiltrop, 1995).

On the effect of employment relations, it was argued that this is due to the increasing competitive forces, which has made management reduce labour costs, leading to job losses. This has made many local authorities categorize pay increase on the basis of affordability rather than comparability (Walsh, 1995). This

change means employers are now more likely to recruit staff on a fixed temporary contract rather than on a permanent basis. The criticism that has been levied against this change in the employment relations is that most employees from the private sectors came to work for local authorities because of the promise of job security and equal opportunities and now employees can no longer rely on their employer to keep them on the job permanently (Allen & Henry 1996). In the next section, it is intended to discuss the changes resulting from the government's privatisation and contracting-out exercise in local authorities.

### **3.2.4 Privatization and Contracting-out**

The aim in this section is to discuss the changes resulting from the privatization and contracting-out in local authorities and how it could affect the psychological contract.

Privatization is a term used to describe government initiative designed to encourage the private sector to come to local authorities and other public sectors organization. The aim of the government's privatization exercise is to introduce greater competition, improve efficiency and reduce costs to the public. In contrast not everyone sees it that way, particularly the trade unions, who labelled the whole government exercise as a way of cutting jobs (Unison, 2008). Contracting-out involves entering into contract with the private sector to provide services, for example, cleaning, catering, computer repairs, maintenance, school meals and school cleaning. On the other hand, there are others that argued that contracting-out in

local authorities is a way of remedying some of the localized service problems such as rubbish collection. It was further argued that the reasons for contracting out services vary from one organization to another, but overall the key objective is centred around cost effectiveness, lack of in-house expertise, reduction of overheads and increasing flexibility in response to changes in market conditions.

According to Ascher (1987), and Kessler and Shapiro (1998), those against contracting-out argued that the private sector cannot be trusted for the following reasons: Its failure to live up to commercial promises, the continuous increase in the cost of living, reduction in pay—when pay is determined by the amount of work completed, deterioration in service standard—for example, the quality of cleaning work has dropped below the standard provided by in-house. According to the Association of Local Government (ALG), the decision of local authorities to use the private sector is economically driven rather than politically. In contrast, Ascher (1987) stated politics was the reason for contracting-out, particularly in the case of Bath City Council when management stated it embraced privatisation because staff members and trade unions refused to adapt to the new working changes. It was further argued that management was instigated to turn to contracting-out in order to break the deadlock with the unions (Ascher, 1987). However the effect on the employees' psychological contract emerged when in-house employees could not retain their jobs as a result of the privatization. For employees in local authorities, a move from in-house service to private firm usually signals the end for majority of the direct labour workforce. It was argued that this was due to the high

cost of labour which the private sector wants to reduce so as to be profitable. This is particularly severe on black and minority workers with little or no educational background and no practical experience in other fields and so unable to seek alternative work. In the next section, it will be investigated how this may have been influenced by managerial power and control.

### **3.2.5 Theoretical issue of managerial power and control**

*Contrary to popular opinion, the best managers are the ones who like power and use it*  
(McClelland & Burnham, 1976)

In this section, the aim is to discuss the issues of managerial power and control and its impact on the employee psychological contract. But first we must define 'managerial power'.

*Managerial power is defined simply as the capacity to effect organization outcomes* (Mintzberg, 1983)

Managers are representatives of local authorities, whether employed directly by local authorities or having come via the private sectors as a result of contracting-out the services. Managers require certain powers and control over its staff members to get the job done (Mintzberg, 1983). It will be argued here that such power is what separates the manager from its employees. The term control is used in many disciplines as synonymous to power (Morris, 1988). This is because to control is to direct or to have power over others. Control has the capacity to initiate,

constrain, circumscribe or to terminate employees' actions whether directly or indirectly (McGregor, 1967). Therefore for one to 'control' other people, he/she must be in a position of power to be able to affect the desired outcome. The author experiences the practice of management every day, whether on a large scale involving the management of the entire country or local authorities or on a small scale such as the management of his home or a barber shop. Therefore it is advocated that management is required in all areas of our life, but for the purpose of this thesis it is intended to focus on local authorities. In local authorities, we have the executive director who has overall responsibilities of managerial function. The director employs other managers and designates responsibilities for parts of the total function. The managers retain certain responsibilities for everything that is assigned to them and each manager's position on the organizational chart depicts their responsibilities. For the managers to discharge their responsibilities, the director will bestow on them authority from which flows whatever power they might have to get their job done (Morris, 1988). It was advocated that managers cannot perform their responsibilities without power to discharge it (McGregor, 1967) and this power enables managers to cut staff level in order to increase cost efficiency (Mintzberg, 1983). This debate supports the earlier position that managers require power to get things done.

The issue of power and control is a contentious one, because any influence in the exchange relations is always in favour of the manager and not fair to the employee (Gennard, 2002). This, according to literature, is due to the on-going in-



herent conflicts of interest, inequality and unequal power distribution between the manager and employee (McGregor, 1960). An employee knows what it means to have power and he/she can sense who has it (Mintzberg, 1983). Most managers always want their staff to do more in terms of improving their contributions, while on the other hand employees feel he/she has done enough to be valued and appreciated. These differences are the root causes of the problems between the employer and employee and if remaining unresolved can escalate to a point when the manager would be accused of violating the employee's psychological contract. But others would argue that this difference is the result of the imbalance between the two parties, activated by the different obligations both parties hold. For example, management sets the terms and conditions and can hire and fire employees, while the individual employee's duties are to carry out the task of providing the services to customers in order to earn his/her income (Kelly, 2004).

The differences between the manager and employee are in reality based on what each party is willing to contribute towards the relationship (Kelly, 2004). Others will argue that the incongruence between the managers and employees is always unavoidable. It was argued that power is about changing someone's behaviour in order to affect the outcome. On the other hand, Mintzberg's contrasting views (1983) were that "Behaviour need not always be changed to get things done, nor must behaviour necessarily be changed to have power." This thesis supports Mintzberg's view because a manager can get a staff to cover for an absent colleague without exercising his/her managerial powers; this is because staff can

cover for each other without the manager knowing about it. In any case most staff expects their manager to ask them to cover for absent colleagues, if there is nobody else to do it, and so the idea of changing someone's behaviour in order to affect the outcome does not apply, rather staffs sees it as an extra duty. It is for this reason most people argued that the relationship between the employee and manager is one-sided because the manager can hire and fire staff whenever the need arises. It was argued that power does not really belong to the manager but rather it is attached to the job the manager occupies to enable him/her to get things done (McGregor, 1967). This author supports the McGregor argument because that office can be occupied by any staff from any background, and that person will automatically assume that power to get things done.

In closing, management sees employees as productive assets to the organization and not as partners and so the employee requires certain protection and remuneration for the services they provide. Furthermore, employees are considered to be cost to the organization and since the manager has the power to hire and dismiss employees, the manager on some occasions would require staff numbers to be reduced and when that happens, the employee would view the manager's action as a violation of his/her psychological contract (Conway & Briner, 2005). Having discussed the theoretical issues of managerial power, in the next section, the role of the trade unions, and the implications for the psychological contract is discussed.

### **3.2.6 Trade union and the psychological contract**

The primary responsibility of the trade union officer is to recruit new members and protect the welfare of its members (Clegg, 1979; Lewis, Thornhill, & Saunders, 2003). The function of a trade union relate to the regulation of the 'employment relations' (Unison, 2008). According to Flanders (1975), the trade union offers a means of identifying and providing workers with voices. Trade unions represent the common interests of all members and require some level of collective discipline and actions to protect its members. In general, trade unions are there as a bargaining agent for the employees, as they negotiate the terms of the contract on behalf of staff members (Lewis, Thornhill & Saunders, 2003).

On the implications for the psychological contract, it was discovered that the involvement of the trade union in the workplace has helped facilitate the employment relations between employers and employees (Flanders, 1975). Therefore, it is important to note that local authorities across UK are working in partnership with trade unions in a bid to promote good industrial relations (Turner, 1962). Good industrial relations provide the best possible productive efficiency and fair treatment for employees (Goetschy, 1998; Regalia and Regini, 1998). For employees in local authorities this represents an effective voice in the workplace decision-making (Osterman, 2001) and a catalyst for managing the psychological contract (Levinson, 2003).

Many people cite changes in workforce composition as the reason for the decline of trade union representation e.g. employees working part-time, agency workers,

and contract workers as supported by Blanchflower and Bryson (2008). These are examples of the changes that force the decline of the trade unions in local authorities. Other reasons for the decline in trade union representation point to the fact that younger people are joining local authorities and that many of them see no point in joining trade union. Furthermore, there are others who would argue that the decline in so-called 'heavy' industries such as coalmining, shipbuilding and steel has had particularly strong impact on the trade union (Rouwenhorst, 1999). It was argued that the decline in the trade unions is due to structural changes (Blanchflower & Bryson, 2008). Others argue that the decline is not all due to structural change but also is the result of firms not recognising trade unions because of government policies. Also it was argued that the decline in the role of trade unions is largely due to employees turning their back on unions and wishing instead to remain non-union (Bryson, 2004).

### **3.3 The Employee Perspectives**

At this point the aim is to discuss the term 'black British' and provide an explanation of its usage in the past and present; to discuss the diversification of the workforce in local authorities and explain a rationale for targeting this particular group of workers.

#### **3.3.1 Black British**

This term has had different meanings in the past. In the 1950s it was used as a racial and political label (Black British, 2008). Although the term 'black' still refers

to UK ethnic minority populations, recently the term is now being used to describe in particular British residents with 'African ancestral origins'. The term black British is used by the British authorities to describe UK passport holders of African origin or whose ancestors are from Africa or African-Caribbean origin or West Indian background (Black British, 2008). African-Caribbean people are primarily descendants of West Africans and for this reason they are also of African ancestral origins. The Afro-Caribbean and black British communities exist throughout the UK but they are largely concentrated in London. According to the 2001 Home Office census, the population figure of black British in London was 10.91%. Outside of London, the black British population, for example in Birmingham, was 9.0%. Leeds had 1.44% and Chapeltown 61.6%. In comparison, Manchester had 8.5%, while Moss Side had 39.28%, Coventry 7.8%, Wolverhampton 7.3%, Leicester 5.4%, Bristol 4.38%, Huddersfield 3.4%, Sheffield 3.4%, Slough 6.19%, Luton 7.86%, Oxford 6.3%, Cambridge 5.1%, Cardiff 3.27%, and Nottingham 6.52%.

In 2005, black British people made up 3.4% of the total UK population. While this is a lower percentage compared with that of the United State (12.9%), it is however higher than the population of black Canadians (1.97%), where there have been studies carried out on non-white characteristics of the psychological contract by Lemire and Rouillard (2005). As the black population of the USA, UK and Canada vary considerably, it has been discovered that black British people have a much younger population (UK Home Office Census 2001), which means that even if there is no more immigration to the UK, the black British population will still

continue to increase. As the black British population increases, it became necessary for local authorities to find new ways of managing and improving the exchange relations. Race is a key element in interpersonal interaction, what matter is not the actual race but the meaning people attach to it (Mamman, 2002), hence the interest in the psychological contract. In the next section, it is discussed why the black British clerical worker is focused upon.

### **3.3.2 Why focus on 'Black British clerical workers'?**

The primary focus of this research is the participants' thoughts and their response to the psychological contract violation. As other departments and local authorities were worked closely with, the black British clerical workers attracted attention for a number of reasons:

Literature on the psychological contract has revealed little interest to date about black British clerical workers employed in local authorities.

In UK local authorities, there are more black British workers in clerical positions compared with those in managerial positions. Therefore, by targeting this group of employees, the 'clerical', it would enable maximizing quantitatively a wide-ranging perspective of the black British workers employed in local authorities, which the research seek to attain.

Managers are the organizational representatives and the research is particularly concerned about the employee's perspectives and not the organization's. Therefore, it was considered fitting to focus research on the employees at this stage because of the time scale involved in combining the organization and employee perspectives. It is hoped that in the future researchers will study black British managers employed in UK local authorities.

As the author is a black British manager working in local authority, it was considered whether, if he decided to interview his colleagues, it could be seen by others as investigating his own experiences. Managers are less likely to participate in any industrial action and are therefore not in a position to answer the research question concerning how employees would respond to the psychological contract violation, which they (managers) themselves had violated.

The primary research group included both men and women. According to the local government association (LGA), and the National Joint Council (NJC), these are white-collar workers or junior administrative/clerical staff members working in the office, who do not have any supervision or managerial responsibilities. Their local government position, 'under the single status agreement,' falls within the basic salary range of grade/scale two to five, on a remuneration of £14,622 to £22,692 per annum. In the next section, it is intended to discuss the challenge of a changing workforce as local authorities recruit non-traditional demographic groups.

### 3.3.3 Changing workforce in local authorities

Demographically, the workforce in local authorities continues to change as the minority population increases. As a result, managing diversity is now regarded as one of the biggest challenges to local authorities (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Howard, 1995). Therefore in order to attract, retain, and promote minority employees, literature revealed that management is now coming to realize that all employees are not the same in terms of their expectations and the beliefs they bring to the organization (Chrobot-Mason, 2002). As mentioned previously in Chapter Two, the different beliefs employees bring to the organization influences the way they interpret the exchange relations and it is this interpretation that helps shape the employee psychological contract. It was this debate that led to the investigation of Research Question One: What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities **(RQ 1)**.

Blackwell (2002), Hartley and Allison (2002), argued that local authorities are very complex organizations and that they exist in a very unstable environment. As a result change is a common theme in local authorities. In contrast, local authorities are legal entities whose aims are to provide services to local people whether the environment is stable or not. For this reason as the demographic group changes, so the way local authorities deal with local people changes as well. For example, when there are local people who do not speak a word of English living and are working in the borough, that influences local authorities to produce leaflets in other languages people would understand. You might argue that local authorities



do this as a way of including all the various groups in the borough. Others might argue it is political, but this thesis would argue that it is a bit of both and it is a way of making people feel a sense of 'belonging'. Howard (1995) and Pain (2005) supports the view that local authorities have an obligation towards their local people in terms of promoting their social, environmental, and economic well-being, providing improvement to the quality of life for local people and to deal with issues relating to the causes of social exclusion. One issue is discovered that separates the young and older people as generation issues. This is why in the next section, it is intended to discuss the intergenerational issues among the black communities.

### **3.3.4 The intergenerational issues on the black communities**

In this section the aim is to investigate the effect intergenerational issues have on the black British communities, particularly among the young and older people, and its effects on the psychological contract.

Generational groups are people who are usually of similar ages, while the term intergenerational relations refer to the interactions between various generational groups e.g. the young and older people (Pain, 2005). Older people are people over the age of 60, while young people are people under 25 years (Kerns, 2003). Intergenerational relations are part of social identity such as race, faith, gender, disability and age (Edmunds and Turner, 2002; Pain, 2005). Attention is particularly drawn on the effect the intergenerational issues has on the young and older

people perception. These issues should not be viewed as a matter that only affects the black communities, but rather it is an issue that cuts across all ethnic groups in the UK (Lowe, 2002; Lowenstein and Antonucci, 2003) which reflects the variations in cultures (Walker & Myrick, 2006; Kaplan, Henkin & Atsuko, 2002a).

Intergenerational issues are socially constituted. According to Biggs (1993), Featherstone and Wernick (1995), when there are incidents like rioting and murder in a community, government tends to dialogue and remain dependent on information from older people. In contrast, it will be argued that this is not always the case, as the government often advise everyone, including young and older people, to provide information about crime in their local areas. The author has never read or heard government say that if you are a young person, then your information is not needed. The reason government contacts and dialogues with older people is that they are often the ones with addresses and so they are easily reached, compared to younger people. However, this raises questions from young people about whom the government chooses to dialogue with, as they discuss community cohesion and representation. Young people believe older community leaders do not represent their views (Jan-Khan, 2003). To a certain extent young people believe their views are contemporary and different from older people's. While older people are concerned about murder and accident, young people on the other hand are much concerned about education and careers. These different views among the young and older people affect their perception and how they re-

act to psychological contract breach and its violation. Generally, obtaining the views of the various generation groups will help reveal the different expectations individual employees bring to the organization, and what influences them to join local authorities.

### **3.4 Where the employees and organizational perspectives meet**

At this point the author reflects on what has been discussed and establishes where the two different perspectives meet, that of employees and organization. Basically, it is to a point where the many factors combine and weigh together helping to evaluate the rationale of why this thesis is focusing on the individual employees rather than the organization. The two major areas therefore need to be covered.

In this section, the term 'organization' was used to describe local authorities. The legal contract between the employee and organization usually states who gives what and what the other person receives (Morrison & Robinson, 2004), but the success of the agreement between the two parties depends on the organization's knowledge of what influences employee perception, namely societal factors (culture, religion, economic conditions, family and the legal system). According to Rousseau (1989), the psychological contract theory is primarily concerned with the employee's willingness to rely on the employer promises and to feel obligated to reciprocate. It was argued that the organization is uniquely a living organism whose essential component is the individual, and hence this individual is the pri-

mary unit of study. It is for that reason this thesis is focusing on the employee's perspectives, rather than the organization.

Below, Fig 3.1 diagram depicts the employees and organizational perspectives, establishes the employees as the research focus group and shows the employees perspectives and the organizational perspectives separately. At the same time, it shows that the employees and organization are part of the society, overshadowed and influenced by societal factors. This thesis is focusing on the individual employee's beliefs and expectations that he/she brings to the organization, rather than the employee and organization exchange relationships. In general, the interaction between the employees, organization and the societal factors are too enormous to articulate in this research. For this reason, discussion is being limited to the influence societal factors has on the employees perception.

**Figure 3.1: The Employees and Organizational Perspectives**



**Source:** Developed by the author

### **3.5 Summary and Conclusion**

There are 388 local authorities in over 11,000 towns across England, and they operate in a very complex and sometimes unstable environment. We have mentioned that the gap between what staffs want and get varies because each employee comes to the organization with different expectations and beliefs. As a result the psychological contract is dependable on a range of issues the employee perceives to be important. For example, on the issue of pay, there are participants

who consider it more important than career and training, but in contrast, there are others who would argue that job security is more important than the issue of pay (Guest, 1998). It has been mentioned that the effect of the new public management on the employment, particularly on employees that joined local authorities from the private sectors because of job security, is that today they are being confronted by radical changes caused by the new public management or modernization agenda. Also, the traditional contracts that provide job security are now being replaced by temporary contract due to financial restraints and competitive forces, and as a result there is no more job security (Lewis, Thornhill & Saunders, 2003). Finally, it was mentioned that the individual was the primary unit of study, and not the organization, because (1) the individual is an essential component of the organization, and (2) It is due to the lack of research interest on the black British clerical workers in local authorities and so there is a gap in the psychological contract literature.

In the next segment, which is a research methodology chapter, it is intended to explain the strategy and the extent the methodology is able to address this thesis' research questions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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#### **4.1 Introduction**

This research sets out to lead the way in exploring the nature of the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in local authorities. As mentioned in Chapter One, there has been no empirical study of this nature in the UK and so the research is an exploratory on which other researchers can build. To shed light on the research methodology, the strategy and the extent to which the methodology adopted is able to address the phenomenon under investigation is explained, as is the effectiveness of the analytical method in achieving the research objectives. This chapter is arranged as follows:

Section 4.2 presents the aims of the research.

Section 4.3 examines the concepts employed to address this thesis research questions. The theoretical factors adopted to refine the three research questions are outlined. It discusses how the societal factors identified (culture, religion, economic conditions, family and legal system), plus other factors (such as flexible working and social justice) influence the employee psychological contract.

Section 4.4 discusses the development of the methodological framework, and Subsection 4.4.1 discusses the positioning of the research.

Section 4.5 discusses the qualitative method used in this research. Subsection 4.5.1 presents this thesis' study measures. Subsection 4.5.2 presents the research sample frame. Subsection 4.5.3 discusses the research interview.

Section 4.6 presents a summary of all the issues discussed in this chapter.

## **4.2 The aims of the research**

The aim of this research is to investigate the following research questions shown below:

- What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities?
- What are the moderating factors that help shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract?
- What are the factors that influence and constrain the black British clerical workers' response to psychological contract violation?



From the three research questions is formulated the main research question (MRQ) as shown below:

**“What is the nature of the psychological contract for black British clerical workers in the context of local authority?”**

In the next section, it is intended to refine these three major research questions with sub-clauses relevant to the investigation.

### **4.3 Theoretical factors adopted to refine the research questions**

The previous chapter covered the theoretical and empirical studies about the psychological contract concept mainly from Levinson (1962) to Rousseau (1989). This section now translates these findings into three research questions that will guide this research's qualitative methods and analyses. In the following segments each research question is subsequently discussed in an effort to bring out the gap in the psychological contract literature and to provide a substantial contribution to knowledge. This chapter now addresses the concepts adopted to refine the three research questions and other factors leading to the formation of the research questions.

## **Research Question One**

“What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities?” **(RQ1)**

This section draws attention to the employee’s earlier experience, where the individual employee’s past experience reflects the employee’s own characteristics, expectations and obligations that influence and lead the employee to join local authorities.

The factors that influence black British workers to join local authorities are, for example, job stability and opportunities. The black British workers, especially the older generation, are particularly concerned about long-term job security because of family commitment. Each employee’s expectation from past experience are embedded within the employee’s inner being and accumulated from previous experience (Hofstede, 1983). Therefore, going back to the employee’s past experience enables the highlighting of the inner thoughts of the employee, thus providing a clearer understanding of the reasons why employees joined local authorities. According to Rousseau (2003) the range of needs individual employees pursue varies from one society to another, between men and women, and across age groups. The employer may not be aware of the employee’s expectations, but that is because it is psychological. An expectation defines the black British workers’ cultural obligation they had acquired from past experience or inherited from being a member of an extended family, as supported by Akporherhe (2002). The

connection between the employee's past experience and family obligation has uncovered the characteristics that influence employees to join local authorities. The flexibility scheme operating in local authorities serve as a motivating factor for new staff seeking employment in local authorities (Guest, 1996). It can be argued that employees with children less than six years of age would refuse to join local authorities that do not operate a flexible working scheme, as they need the flexibility to combine their family life and work (work life balance). Therefore, this author supports the view that flexible working arrangement influences the employee to join a local authority. Another factor that this thesis believes influences the employee to join local authorities is the offer of a better remuneration, due to the high cost of living in London.

Most people decide to work for a company to fulfil their obligations e.g. mortgage, rent, career, and to enable them care for their family, and not really to fulfil their emotional obligation. Better remuneration is important to employees, although it can be negotiated to suit their needs, but nevertheless it may still influence the employee's decision as to whether he/she wants to continue working for the organization. Regardless of one's social exchange relations, it is obvious that no employee would continue to work for an organization offering remuneration that is insufficient to meet his/her expectations e.g. rent. Furthermore, it was argued that remuneration plays an important role in the employee's decision to remain with the same organization or look for another job. As mentioned in Chapter Two this is particularly apparent where certain employee circumstances are different from

others. For example, it can be argued that an employee with lots of commitment would leave the organization. In contrast, those with young children may decide to renegotiate their working time to fit in with school term time. It was argued that similar to a flexible scheme, higher remuneration also plays a motivating influence on the employee's decision to join an organization. This is supported by Simpson, Harrison & Kaler (2005), when they found that the reason unskilled hotel and catering workers joined the organization was largely "transactional in nature". It was argued that the expectations exhibited by these unskilled hotel and catering workers relates to their past experiences, which is similar to the expectations held by the black British clerical workers, and has nothing to do with the ongoing exchange relations. It was for this reason this thesis supports the view that the black British clerical workers' past experience or expectation can help form the psychological contract. This debate brought out the gap in the psychological contract literature in terms of the factors that led black British clerical workers to join local authorities.

## **Research Question Two**

"What are the moderating factors that help shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract?" **(RQ2)**

The rationale beneath Question Two is that individual beliefs which originate from the employee's cultural upbringings and family obligation are some of the em-

employee's concerns that help shape the psychological contract. How these influence the formation of the psychological contract are discussed below.

If the employee's expectations outside the organization are to be articulated onto the current exchange relations, then it would mean the employee's needs can be fulfilled. As mentioned previously, this was supported by Meckler, Drake, and Levinson (2003), when they found that "so long as an employee goal remains reasonably attainable, the employee is naturally motivated to work". In contrast, this thesis would argue that if the employee's expectations were not met as anticipated, it is likely that the employee would leave the organization. But how the employee leaves the organization is a matter that interests the old and young generations. While the young are likely to leave without securing another job, in contrast, the older participant would remain until finding another job.

When talking about individual beliefs, referral is made to the individual cultural values. Generally, culture reflects people's upbringings and distinguishes them from one group to another (Olurode, 1994; Mamman, 1996). This thesis believes this notion applies to the black British clerical workers because of their cultural upbringing. Akporherhe (2002) defines culture as the people's way of life, while Trompenaars and Turner's (1998) defined culture as "the way in which a group of people solve problems and reconcile dilemmas". While Kessapidou and Varsakelis (2002) defined culture as a major determinant of how people think and behave, Hofstede's (1980, 1983) defined culture as a mental programming from past ex-

perience. To this author culture describes one's mental programming, in the form of an obligation and expectations that society expects from you, whether in your home, communities, or country. Hence this supports the notion that expectation outside the organization can shape the employee's psychological contract. In support of Trompenaars and Turner's (1998) definition, this thesis believes culture can also be used as a tool for dealing with psychological contract violation. For example, an employee with a family obligation is expected to provide for his/her immediate family, and this influences the employee as to how he/she respond to the psychological contract violation, whether to renegotiate, resign immediately or wait until he/she secures another job before tendering his/her resignation. This debate as to whether culture and family obligations, outside the organization, influences the formation of the employee's psychological contract has brought out the gaps in the psychological contract literature in terms of determining whether the employee psychological contract can be formed only by promises made during the current exchange relations or by factors outside the organization. It is on these grounds that it was decided to construct the second research question.

### **Research Question Three**

“What are the factors that influence and constrain black British clerical workers' response to psychological contract violation?” **(RQ3)**

In this section, the relevant factors influencing and constraining the employee to respond differently to psychological contract violation are discussed. As men-

tioned previously, exchange relations between employee and employer vary from one country to another (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Therefore, response to psychological contract violation is likely to vary from one person to another because of differences in employee expectations, upbringing, and background as supported by De Greene (1973). As mentioned previously, the Need Hierarchy theory by Abraham Maslow (1940) implies that people are motivated by the desire to satisfy several different needs, such as needs for security, social interaction, self-esteem, and family obligation. It was found that these needs are arranged in hierarchical form, meaning people would attend to needs in a sequential manner. For example, if you are seriously ill, it is likely that you would want to satisfy that need first, before going to attend your second need e.g. go to work. However, Herriot, Manning and Kidd's study (1997) provided a different understanding and revealed that employee responses to psychological contract violation are influenced by situational variables. These variables include: (1) the availability of attractive employment alternative, (2) justification for the psychological contract violation, and (3) procedural justice. This thesis' criticism of the research findings of Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997) found that (1) the study does not include the black British clerical workers in local authorities. Therefore the study has opened up a gap in the psychological contract literature for black British employees in UK local authorities. (2) Each employee's response to psychological contract violation differs from one person to another because of their beliefs; for this reason there are other factors that can influence the black British clerical workers to respond differently to psychological contract violation, such as: (1) legal system (2) black ex-

tended family obligation (3) social justice. It is on these grounds that it was decided to construct the third research question. These factors are discussed below.

### **The legal system**

The legal setting in which researchers such as Rousseau (1989, 2003), did her studies in USA is completely different from that of the UK. Therefore, it can be suggested that the legal system in UK serves as a guide to employees and can influence their ability to bargain and renegotiate the psychological contract. The UK legal system helps to provide the legal framework for which employees are employed and protected (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). It also outlines the employee's legal rights and responsibilities. It equips employees with the appropriate legal rights for those seeking fairness and truthfulness, following the psychological contract violation. In many cases, the employee's response to the psychological contract violation will depend on the legal system and also how the employee perceives the legal system to be fair and just. While there may be other factors the employee might consider as he/she decides how to respond to psychological contract violation, essentially the legal system helps provide the law that requires companies to make provision for employees. The legal system influences the choice of employment for employees e.g. to work flexible hours, part-time or full time (Guest, 1998). For example, a disabled employee may not like to work for a company that does not have disabled facilities in place, even though they have access for disabled people. Also, an employee considering an appeal following contract violation would depend entirely on the legal system. For instance, if the



legal system says you can only appeal within four weeks of a decision being reached, but then you contacted the organization eight weeks after the decision has been made, in such a situation you could not possibly appeal the decision under the legal system. It was this debate that made the author consider the legal system as a factor that can influence how the employee responds to contract violation.

### **Black Extended Family**

The author interest in black extended family grew out of personal membership in extended families of this nature and observations of similar families. Martin (1980) defined the black extended family as a multigenerational, interdependent kinship system which is welded together by a sense of obligation to relatives and it extends across geographical boundaries to connect family units to an extended family network. It has a built-in mutual aid system for the welfare of its members and the maintenance of the family as a whole. According to Martin (1980) African people attach greater importance to the extended family system in which husband and wife, children, grandchildren, cousins, uncles and nieces plus other relatives form a social network of relationships that is based on communal dependence. Within this extended family structure every family member is expected to take care and share the resources, hopes and aspirations for one another for the benefit of every member of the family (Fisher, 1982).

The relationship with each member in an extended family can be very strong to the extent that one's obligation towards members of the extended family can be as close as that of the nuclear family in the Western society (Martin, 1980). Unlike the Western society, it was argued that the extended family system in Africa provides social security for every member that is in need of care and support (Berger, 2007). This support is not just during festive period, but a support that is given and shared among all members at all stages of their life until death. The concept of an extended family life is all about sharing, adherence to social obligations, having good social and personal relations with other members in the extended family structure (Martin, 1980).

Generally, Africans believe that a child belongs to the extended family and not to his/her immediate family (Shimkin, 1978). In an extended family structure, the old, retired members, sick, orphaned, or frail are all assured of long-term care, even till death. This practice may sound unfamiliar to any person that is not from Africa, especially anyone from the Western world, whose elderly parents depend solely on their nuclear family and the state for their upkeep and survival. But the notion of black extended family practice suggests that it is likely to have a direct influence on the life of the employee (Fisher, 1982). This means that when black British clerical workers want to join an organization their choice of organization is most likely to be influenced by their obligations to their extended family. Therefore, it is likely that a member of a black extended family who has benefited from such practice will be expected to take into consideration his/her obligations to

care for their extended family as they decide how to respond to psychological contract breach and its violation. Furthermore, the fact that extended family obligations are not what are conceived after joining local authorities, but instead are part of upbringing that is embedded within the person, therefore it serves as a moderating factor that can influence and constrain employee response to psychological contract violation.

### **Social Justice**

Here the author examined how the principles of social justice impact on the psychological contract, and whether it actually operates to the practical benefit of black British clerical workers, and how issues of social justice help to shape the psychological contract.

*The Commission for Social Justice (August 2009)* defined social justice as a belief that every individual and group is entitled to fair and equal rights and participation in social, educational, and economic opportunities.

This thesis advocates that no employee will respond to psychological contract violation if they think they would not get a fair hearing. According to Craig (2006), social justice is a contested concept because there are others who argue for equality of outcome and those who want equality of opportunities. Furthermore, Lister (2003) affirms that social justice incorporates the concept of needs for all citizens. For example, "We may imprison people because of their crimes but that does not

mean that we may starve them at the same time” (Craig, 2007). The term social justice means absolute fairness (Rawls, 1971; Lister, 2003). For this reason, this thesis believes that if the government focused only on poor black people and other minorities, it would not help to strengthen social justice. Rawls (1971) affirms that any policy that advocates redistribution among the poor minorities will mean it has failed in providing social justice and the promotion of fair distribution across the whole society, although one might argue that you need to help the poor more than any group if you want them to have the same opportunities. Therefore this work supports Butt and O’Neil’s views (2004) that a socially just agenda is one that is able to meet the needs of the people, provide equal rights and participation in social, educational, and economic opportunities. Butt and O’Neil (2004) indicated that many minority groups are becoming resistant to most research done on them, in which they were not involved in determining “what the questions are”, and “what they are to be asked”. For this reason, Castles (2000) advocates for cultural rights for minority people, this meaning the right to be culturally different, and in so doing they may wish for their voice to be heard and to be involved in the decision-making process. In support of Castles (2000), this research finds that black British clerical workers will respond to psychological contract violation only when they feel some sense of fairness, opportunities, and equal rights, and believe their needs will be adequately be met if they decide to stay in the organization.

Jan-Khan (2003) affirms that minority groups' resentment towards the failure of the social justice are due, for example, to: (A) Government failure to respond to their needs; (B) The failure to offer minority group the opportunity to participate in important decision-making mechanisms; and (C) The lack of adequate government funding on independent minority ethnic organizations. This study believes all these factors contributed to a great extent in why the black British clerical workers respond differently to contract violation, as many of the black British workers still feel the society, organizations, and indeed the local authorities, do not treat them equally and fairly; hence they respond differently to psychological contract violation.

In closing, the aims of this research have been discussed, outlining this thesis' three research questions to be investigated. In addition, more clarity through sub-clauses relevant to the research questions have been refined. It is now time to shed light on the research methodology, outlining the extent to which the methodology adopted is able to address this thesis phenomenon. The author begins by discussing the development of the methodological framework appropriate for the research questions.

#### **4.4 Developing the methodological framework**

Throughout preparation and reflection on the development of research methodology, the concept of qualitative strategic thinking (Mason, 2002) was used to guide my thoughts in order to be clear that the methodology adopted relates to the re-

search questions and research strategy. According to Conway and Briner (2005), the psychological contract has been researched using different research methods such as: questionnaire surveys, scenario methodologies, critical incident techniques, interviews, diary studies, and case studies. These methods have been dominated by questionnaire survey which consists of: 70% cross-sectional questionnaire survey, 20% longitudinal questionnaire survey and 10% interviews method. Reflecting on the research questions, it became apparent that it is these that determine the methods to be employed, rather than follow the methods other researchers had adopted in the past. Based on this thesis phenomenon, it was decided to investigate the research questions by accepting an interview method, which is a qualitative research methodology, adopted from Creswell (2003). This kind of methodology is supported by Crossley and Vulliamy (1997), Creswell (1994, 2004), and Silverman (2004). Below is the definition of qualitative research methodology:

*Qualitative methodology provides descriptions and accounts of the processes and social interactions in 'natural settings', usually based upon a combination of observation and interviewing of participants in order to understand their perspectives (Crossley & Vulliamy 1997, p. 6).*

The use of the qualitative methodology can be justified because it is grounded in a dialogue between the researcher and participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The qualitative methodology adopted is compatible with the research questions and

appropriate with the phenomenon under investigation. It is aimed at achieving the research objectives, an approach which has been supported by Robinson and Rousseau (1994), Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994), Rousseau (2003) and Creswell (2008).

Finally, the interview method is ideal for examining employees' immediate emotional response following the psychological contract violation (Bryman, 1984). A qualitative researcher can get close to his research participants to see the world from their own perspectives. The exciting thing about using a qualitative methodology is that the researcher is able to produce data which is 'rich', i.e., data with a great deal of depth (Bryman, 1984; Sapsford and Jupp, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In contrast, Creswell (2003) affirms that the questionnaire survey data is associated with quantitative methodology and viewed as deficient in this respect as it is seen as providing 'superficial' evidence on the social world which has little or no meaning to those participants whose social world it is supposed to represent. In the next subsection, it is intended to discuss the research position.

#### **4.4.1 The research position**

Trainee researchers are often overwhelmed by the number of research methodologies available, therefore the selection of an appropriate research design can prove to be a difficult and confusing task. The initial step taken in contemplating

how to go about the research was to consider how to position it within the existing 'research traditions' (Creswell, 2003).

A research regarding the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in local authorities was to be carried out. For this to be done, a suitable explorative research design was needed that would prevent or restrict personal biases. After some investigation, it was realised that the research would have to be placed and grounded within the qualitative tradition. This decision was taken on seeing that if the participant's experience and perception were explored, the research would seek to "build a complex, holistic picture, analyse(s) words and report(s) detailed views of the participant".

The knowledge identified as central to this research, could be gathered by talking to black British clerical workers (interviewing) and listening to the description of their relationship and experience of the psychological contract. These descriptions are interpreted through different circles of analysis. The interview process is therefore a joint experience between the researcher and the participant (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Therefore the participants' expression of their experiences, perception and emotions constitute valid knowledge and data that the author could interpret and understand.

In the preceding section, the difficulties that a novice researcher are faced with when choosing an appropriate methodological approach were discussed. It was



highlighted how the preparation for the development of an appropriate methodology was guided by the concept of a qualitative strategic thinking (Mason, 2002). Despite the dominant use of the questionnaire survey it was decided to adopt a qualitative methodology, which consists of interview methods. The interviewing method encapsulates the skills of one-to-one dialogue, and it gives the opportunity to examine in person, the participant's body language and emotions in terms of how he/she feels and responds to contract violation. In the next section, the qualitative research methodology will be discussed.

#### **4.5 This qualitative research methodology**

Methodology is the theory of how enquiry should proceed (Burns, 2000; Henning, 2007; Creswell, 2003). The qualitative methodology this research has adopted is inherently exploratory. As a result, the qualitative research is a journey of discovery rather than one of verification. These research findings are therefore likely to stimulate fresh leads and new avenues of research for other research to build on. The qualitative methodology employed in this research involves a semi-structured interview adopted to address research questions.

According to Fryer (1991) and Silverman (2004):

*Qualitative methodology is all about the ability to accurately describe, deduce and interpret the meanings of events occurring in their normal social contexts.*

Therefore the qualitative research methodology adopted was the most appropriate for this research, rather than a quantitative research methodology. The reasons are explained below:

- This is the first time this type of research is being carried out in the UK and so this is an exploratory work. The researcher was able to observe directly any emotional outcome the participant may have had because of psychological contract violation, which a quantitative methodology would not be able to attain.
- It was mentioned that individual employees come to the organization with different perceptions because of their cultural upbringing and backgrounds and so produce different psychological contracts from that held by other colleagues. With this in mind, using a qualitative methodology based on a semi-structured interview would enable the participant to speak his/her mind and provide explanations as to why he/she produces a different psychological contract from other colleagues.

Finally, this section highlights the reasons for adopting the qualitative research methodology and the reasons why the qualitative methodology is the appropriate approach for this research. In the next section, the aim is to discuss the study measures.

#### **4.5.1 The research measures**

The research measures are to be framed in terms of the format of the interview which may include, for example: (1) What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities? (a) As perceived by black British clerical workers. (b) Employment history e.g. employment positions, nature of duties (2) What factors help shape their psychological contract? (a) motivation/expectations e.g. what motivates them to choose their present employer? (3) What are the expectations that are likely to constrain or lead them to exit the organization? (a) What are the factors that are likely to increase or lower their effort/contribution to the organization? (b) Psychological Contract violation e.g. what influences their response to the violations?

#### **4.5.2 The research sample frame**

The number of local authorities across England means that hundreds of black British clerical workers may be needed if a fully representative sample is to be achieved. However, the timeframe allowed for this research means that this is not realistic. Therefore to have a representative sample of the black British clerical workers population in local authorities, participants would have to be randomly selected from across local authorities, so as to avoid any systematic bias inherent in a single organization.

In contrast to a questionnaire survey method which would have given the opportunity to contact over one thousand participants and would be less expensive, the

interview method adopted is going to be costly and time-consuming when collecting data and analyzing empirical materials.

The black British population is widely dispersed throughout England. Therefore it would be extremely costly to reach them if attempting to use public transport. London being the capital city of the UK has the largest number of local authorities in the country (32 local authorities, plus the Greater London authority). It has a population of ten million and has the largest amount of inhabitants of black British population in the UK. London is therefore representative of the entire country in every aspect, and using public transport around London is comparatively cheaper for the researcher than to travel all over England. For this reason, London was to be the geographical base from which to conduct this research.

### **The research core participants**

The core participants are individuals whom the research will actively investigate and consider as a fully representative sample. These individuals are the black British clerical workers and they are closest to the phenomenon or issues being investigated. These individuals were expected to have had a direct and central role regarding the matters this research is investigating and also must have an interest in these research questions and may be subject to explicit criticism or commendation in research discussion/conclusion. In the next segment, how the size of the sample was selected is discussed.

### **How was the sample selected?**

It was not possible to anticipate the number of research participants, until saturation was reached, i.e., after having started collecting and analyzing the data. The participants were to be selected randomly from a list of names collected from ten local authorities in London. Access to this group 'black British clerical workers', was easy for the author, being a local authority employee and also a member of Unison Black Members group. It was possible to obtain and use data held in local authorities and access the black staff forums record across local authorities in London. The aim in the next section is to discuss how the core participants would be selected randomly.

### **Random sampling**

Having decided that the research sample would be selected randomly across ten local authorities in London, it was important that every member of the black British clerical workers had an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample.

To pick the random sample, it was essential to obtain all the names of black British clerical workers employed in ten local authorities in London. Once obtained, names of the participants would be placed in one column of a spreadsheet and a second column created which would consist of random numbers from the spreadsheet's random number generator. As sorted, using the second column as a sort key, the participants' names are put in random order, for instance, every third name on the list, and then the first 50 names selected. These particular persons would have to be interviewed in order to make the sample truthfully random. While the random sampling may be considered very expensive and time consum-

ing, the most important reason for a random sample is that it gives a true representative sample of the black British clerical workers population in England.

Having discussed how the size of the participants are to be selected randomly, in the next subsection, the author will discuss the location where the highest population of black British clerical workers live and work, compared to any other locations in the UK.

### **Institutional locations**

As discussed previously, London was the geographical base where research could be conducted. In this sub-section, local authorities are referred to as institution. This was where research could be carried out. There are 32 local authorities in London. The selection of institutions is based entirely on the demographic population of the areas where black British community resides in London. However, the black British population is widely dispersed throughout London, and to maximize the number of participants to be interviewed, it was decided for the research to be conducted in ten local authorities in London where the black population is larger. These ten institutions have the highest percentage of black residents and the largest population of black British workers, compared to any other institutions in the UK. Table 4.1 below depicts the demographic population of the areas where we have the largest black British community residents in London.

**Table 4.1: Demographic statistics of London Black British population**

According to the 2001 UK Home Office census released in 2003, below were areas where large black British communities live and work:

- London 10.91% Black
  - London Borough of Southwark 30.9% Black
  - London Borough of Lambeth 28.95% Black
  - London Borough of Hackney 28.9% Black
  - London Borough of Brent 25.8% Black
  - London Borough of Newham 25.3% Black
  - London Borough of Lewisham 25.95% Black
  - London Borough of Waltham Forest 20.7% Black
  - London Borough of Haringey 22.23% Black
  - London Borough of Hillingdon 13.3% Black
  - London Borough of Croydon 13.3% Black

**Source:** 2001 UK Home Office Census released in 2003 (*on-line*)

As of 2001, the Greater London Urban area had a population of 8,278,251 and the metropolitan area is estimated to have a total population of between 12 and 14 million residents. This accounts for over 23 per cent of the total UK population of 60 million (*Home office census, 2001*). Another benefit for selecting these ten institutions in London is that they provide a realistic representative sample of the entire UK black British population, thus saving the expense and time of travelling across England in search of participants to interview.

#### **4.5.3 The research interview**

At the interview, the aim was to have the participant reflect on his/her experiences and then convey the experience to the participant in a manner that would enable

the interviewer and interviewee to come to a mutual understanding of the account and meaning of the participant's experiences.

“The interviews are aspects of the subject awareness that changes from being unreflected to being reflected” (Marton, 1994). Therefore, since having adopted a qualitative methodology, the method this research was going to employ in investigating the participants experiences and perceptions was through a semi-structured interview (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Gubrium and Holstein, 2002; Silverman, 2004). The semi-structured interview might last not more than two hours, but this could vary from one participant to another, which was consistent with previous research conducted by Rousseau (1994, 1995), Conway and Briner (2005), Harrison, Simpson and Kaler (2005). In the next subsection, the semi-structured interview accepted is discussed.

### **Semi-Structured Interview**

In a qualitative research, interview is considered to be the most favoured tool of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000). An in-depth interview would be undertaken in this research in order to add detail and richness to the understanding of the empirical material. An in-depth interview literally entails asking participants questions, listening to them, and recording the answers they give. Furthermore, posing more questions in order to clarify or expand on a particular issue (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). There are three basic approaches to in-depth ap-



proaches. These are: (1) the semi-structured interview (2) the open-ended interview, and (3) the informal conversational interview.

**Table 4.2: The difference between semi-structured interviews, the informal conversational interviews, and open-ended interviews**

Semi-Structured Interview	Open-Ended Interview	The Informal Conversational Interview
Involve pre-determined set of questions Free to pursue certain questions in depth	Involve pre-determined set of questions Free to react to any answer provided by the respondents	No pre-determined set of questions  Pursue a line of questioning in a direction that appears to be appropriate and dependent upon the information that emerge from speaking to the respondents
Slightly flexible	Flexible	Highly flexible

**Source:** Gubrium and Holstein (2002)

This research adopted the semi-structured interviewing. The advantage of a semi-structured interview is that it enables the researcher to interview a number of different persons more systematically and comprehensively by setting a limit on the issues to be taken up in the interview (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). However, the disadvantage of this approach is that it does not allow the researcher to pursue topics or other issues of interest that were not anticipated before the interview (Creswell, 2003).

In closing, the best method of detecting levels of participant understanding and conception is usually through a semi-structured interview. These interviews were to be taped and written out in full, and data analysed in a manner consistent with

Glaser and Strauss's concept of grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Walker and Myrick, 2006). The framework for this analysis is a grounded theory model to identify themes and issues that emerge from the data. As outlined by Ritchie and Spence (1996), this involves, for example, "a process of sifting, sorting and illustrating material relevant to key issues and themes that emerged from the data" (Harrison, Simpson & Kaler, 2005). In the next subsection, the ethical considerations about this thesis are discussed.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As the interviews are with human beings, the research must abide by all the ethical protocols and obligations of Brunel University. Regardless of the approach adopted it was realized there were many ethical challenges that might have to be faced and the impact of bringing to the surface what might be very personal feelings and experiences for black British clerical workers during data collection and in analyzing the qualitative reports. Since the interviews would involve talking to black people on a one-to-one basis, questions asked during research might raise feelings and emotions. It was endeavoured to protect the anonymity of the core participants, which was done by assigning only four letters of their names, rather than writing down their full names, and reference to organizations where participants are working were removed from the data. While conducting research for this thesis, to minimize any negative impact on participants the British psychological ethnical guidelines were followed. As a qualitative researcher, for the author to gain support from the interviewees, it was conveyed to participants that they

would be taking part in research, explaining to them the purpose of the research, rather than engage them in deceptions, concerning the nature of the research topic. All participants were advised that at any time during the discussion they could stop the process or choose not to respond to any particular question, and also that they could contact at any time to add or change information they had provided. Fundamentally, it was confirmed that all participants gave their consent and were guaranteed confidentiality in return of individual responses. In the next section, a summary of all the issues discussed in this chapter is to be presented.

#### **4.6 Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter was started by outlining the research focus, followed by a discussion on what made the author embark on the research. Other countries were highlighted where similar research has taken place and then the research questions and main research question to be addressed were developed, in order to bridge the knowledge gap that exists in the psychological contract literature.

Following the development of the research questions, a methodological framework was developed. Afterwards the research position within the qualitative tradition was discussed. Once an appropriate research methodology had been adopted, the research method (“The Interview Method”) was then presented. The reasons why the qualitative research methodology was adopted were highlighted and why it was compatible to the research questions. Afterwards, the justification for adopting qualitative research methodology was given and not the quantitative

research methodology. It was important to discuss the measures of the research study including the use of a semi-structured interview technique as a data gathering method and the selection of participants. Most importantly, the ethical considerations in conducting the research for this thesis were discussed. In the next chapter, the qualitative research design and interview process will proceed.

## CHAPTER FIVE

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### RESEARCH DESIGN AND INTERVIEW PROCESS

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#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous research methodology chapter described how the research perspectives and research strategy were developed largely from the conception of the research focus and on to the construction of the analytical method.

This chapter however, explains a different process, that is to say the process of constructing research design and then putting it into practice in a way that is consistent with the methodological approach adopted in Chapter Four. In other words, Chapter Four is like the conceptualization of a house and explaining a strategy on how to build it, while this chapter is the process of constructing the house design and putting the plan into practice by actually building the house. Therefore the aim of this chapter is to embark on the research design and the interview process, as well as to explain how to arrive at it.

This research set out to explore the nature of the psychological contract for black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. In view of that, it seeks to address the following three research questions:

- What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities?
- What are the moderating factors that help shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract?
- What are the factors that influence and constrain the black British clerical workers' response to psychological contract violation?

This chapter is separated into three parts. The first part discusses the research design, the second part discusses the interviewing process, and the third part discusses the issues of analysis. The early phase of the research involves undertaking a pilot study through a semi-structured interview with volunteered black British clerical workers in local authorities regarding first their expectation e.g. why they joined local authorities, and secondly their perceptions e.g. the factors that helped shape their psychological contract, and thirdly, what influences them to respond differently to psychological contract violation, e.g. beliefs or family obligations. This is organised below as follows:

### **Part One: Research Design**

#### 5.2. Constructing the qualitative research design

##### 5.2.1. Pilot interviewing

##### 5.2.2. Type of design

##### 5.2.3. Selection of institutions and gaining access

##### 5.2.4. Selection of research participants

5.2.5. Data collection procedures

5.2.6. Data report writing procedures

5.2.7. Qualitative data analysis procedures

5.2.8. Validity and reliability

5.2.9. Critique of this research and the summary of this section

### **Part Two: The Interviewing process**

5.3.1 Interviews

5.3.2 The process of interviewing participants

### **Part Three: Discuss the issue of analysis**

5.4.1 Introduction

5.4.2 The issues of text

5.4.3 Issues of stories

5.4.4 Selection of stories

5.5 Conclusion to Chapter Five

## **5.2 Part One: Constructing the qualitative research design**

In this section the process considered the most outstanding way to construct the research design is outlined. Qualitative research involves fieldwork activities; this means a researcher will physically go out to the field or local authorities to interview people, talk to people, and record their behaviours in its natural setting, as supported by Creswell (1994, 2003) and Silverman (2006). As a qualitative re-

searcher, the researcher was the primary instrument for the data collection and analysis. This meant that the data was mediated through the researcher, rather than by a quantitative method which would involve going through questionnaires or inventory machines. As explained in Chapter Four, a qualitative approach was chosen because this thesis is more interested in what goes on inside the black British clerical worker, how people make sense of their lives, their feelings, experiences, the way they view the world around them and their emotional reaction to psychological contract violation or breach. It is therefore for this reason the research phenomenon is not suitable for quantitative measures. The spirit of grounded theory was followed in the research design and analysis, for example by collecting data from a wide range of age group, generating categories by coding and then engaging in ongoing comparisons between the data and the literature and later concluding the collection and coding only when no new codes appeared, which is described as theoretical saturation. Because this analytical design is based on a grounded theory approach, this allows combining data collection and analysis, rather than commencing analysis only having completed data collection.

The list of sample 'black British clerical workers' was to be gathered by visiting ten local authority offices across London. The black British clerical workers would be told that the interview involved investigating a list of research questions. All the volunteers would be given assurance of confidentiality during interviews.



### **5.2.1 Pilot Interviewing**

A decision was made as to how to collect data by first embarking on a pilot interviewing. This approach fitted in well with the grounded theory method adopted, because the analysis of pilot interview data could be used to help shape the main research questions. Similarly under grounded theory method, “The data I collected and analysed are purposefully combined. The initial data analysis is then used to continuing shape data collection” in accordance with Strauss and Corbin (1990). This approach would help reconstruct, enhance and validate the main list of interview questions. Being a pilot interview stage, it involved carrying a small scale investigation e.g. interviewing ‘four participants’ before the main research investigation; this of course is intended to assess the competence of the research design and the instruments intended for use for data collection. Piloting the data collection is important, because it enables reinforcing or scaling down the decision as to whether the interview schedules or questions were appropriate to the research phenomenon. For the author, the purpose of the pilot interview was to enable devising a set of response categories for each of the research questions, to cover as much as possible the full range of response which may also be given in reply to the main research investigation. For this initial approach to work, the pilot sample was to be representative of all the diversity of individual participants which the main research interview covered. One might argue that a full representative may be difficult using a small scale sample (four participants), but in contrast the author’s response is that it is essential for to construct a superior sample for a pilot study so that a diverse range of individual participants and their likely response

is fully covered, provided the diverse range is made known in advance of this study. It is important to note that this pilot study was not intended to represent all the different types of individuals within the black British population, but rather the aims at this stage were to cover the whole range of the possible replies to the interview questions, which might be given to any of the potential questions in the first draft of the interview schedule. The four pilot interviewees were two men and two women. They had all volunteered for the research study. All volunteers had an average of 5 to 20 years work experience in local authorities and their jobs were diverse, coming from various departments within the Council, thus contributing to 'ecological validity' in the study's design (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) .

### **The aims of the pilot interview**

The pilot study was a guidance of perfection. However, one common argument about the pilot interview is that no matter how good a pilot sample is, answers to the questions in the main interview might turn out to be something which was not anticipated in the pilot results. Sapsford and Jupp (1996) outlined below the aims of exploring a pilot scheme, which include for example:

- Whether respondents or participants understand the questions that were initially phrased
- Are potential respondents able to reflect on a whole range of various responses as they come across the interview questions or do they need a particular type of understanding?

- Does the interview question take too much time to complete, thus making pilot respondents to show signs of impatience?
- Do the pilot questions show the best order of questioning, e.g. should you start with sensitive questions that could jeopardize any effort of getting hold of the information you required?
- Do the questions discriminate between different respondents, i.e., investigations that are explanatory should be able to discriminate effectively between different respondents so that the questions put forward may be able to 'spread' respondents across different response categories (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996).

During the pilot interview, participants would be able to add to, divulge more idea or make suggestions as to what they hold very important. The pilot interviews were conducted at two different local authorities: one in South London and the other in North London. In South London a man and a woman were interviewed, while in North London also a man and woman. Undertaking a pilot interviewing at two different places would help to find out whether the psychological contract breach or its violation is a common phenomenon among the black British clerical workers in local authorities. Also, it has enabled the comparison of other employee expectations, feelings and experiences. At this point, it is important not to forget that the focus of the research was primarily on the lived experiences of the black British clerical workers and as mentioned in Chapter Three, this is because the main 'unit of analysis' was the experience of the employees and not the or-

ganization. More specifically, the interest was in exploring the nature of the psychological contract for black British clerical workers in UK local authorities, which could be gathered through an interview method as discussed in Chapter Four. This was the primary source of informing this research and answering the research questions.

Having discussed the first step of conducting the data collection, the next stage is the choosing of an appropriate research design to analyse the data collected.

### **5.2.2 Type of design**

As discussed in Chapter Four, an interviewing method based on this thesis' research questions was adopted. However, as it was contemplated how to analyze data, it was discovered as a novice researcher conducting qualitative research design, that one was faced with the difficult challenge of choosing an appropriate research design that is drawn from the five disciplinary fields such as biography, phenomenology, ethnography, case study and grounded theory (Creswell, 1998; McCaslin and Scott, 2003). Following assessment of all the five qualitative traditions, it was decided to adopt the grounded theory approach to use analyze the data collected. Literature indicates that grounded theory has its origin from sociology and it is a research method for behavioural science developed by the sociologists Barney Glaser (1930) and Anselm Strauss (1916-1996). It is a method found to be compatible with the research phenomenon. Depicted below are five questions in table 5.1, these are to help guide in selecting a suitable qualitative

research design from one of the following five major qualitative traditions appropriate to the phenomenon under investigation.

**Table 5.1: Five Questions to select the ‘colour’ to paint a qualitative design**

Question to Act to Discover Preferred Approach	Associated Tradition
1. If I could discover the meaning of one person’s lived experience, I would ask _____ (individual) about _____.	Biography
2. If I could discover the shared lived experiences of one quality or phenomenon in others, I would want to know about _____.	Phenomenology
3. If I could experience a different culture by living/ observing it, I would choose to experience _____.	Ethnography
4. If I could discover what actually occurred and was experienced in a single lived event, that event would be _____.	Case Study
5. If I could discover a theory for a single phenomenon of living as shared by others, I would choose to discover the theory of _____.	Grounded Theory

**Sources:** McCaslin and Scott (2003)

Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology, described as a research method in which the theory is developed from the data, rather than the other way around (Davidson, 2002). Grounded theory is an inductive approach, meaning the process of inducing a feeling, idea, perception, or state from the participant explanation, which fits in well with the research phenomenon. Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined grounded theory as “one that is inductively derived from the study

of the phenomenon it represents". Glaser and Strauss (1967) affirm that it uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory concerning the phenomenon. The primary aim of the grounded theory approach is to expand on the participant explanation by first identifying the key elements of the phenomenon. According to Strauss and Corbin (1996), grounded theory approach provides a systematic procedure for data collection, analysis, and theorizing. At the same time it is concerned with the quality of its developing theory. Furthermore, Strauss and Corbin (1996) indicate that there are four primary requirements for judging if a grounded theory approach is good or not, as revealed below:

- 1) It should fit the phenomenon, provided it has been carefully derived from diverse data and is adherent to the common reality of the area*
- 2) It should provide understanding and be understandable*
- 3) Because the data is comprehensive, it should provide generality, in that the theory includes extensive variation and is abstract enough to be applicable to a wide variety of contexts*
- 4) It should provide control, in the sense of stating the conditions under which the theory applies and describing a reasonable basis for action (Strauss & Corbin, 1996)*

In designing the analytical process, it was ensured that the four main central criteria for judging the applicability of the grounded theory approaching to the phe-

nomenon were met and this was done by making sure the grounded theory for instance: 'fit, understanding, generality, and control' (Strauss and Corbin, 1996). Finally, the conditions of the grounded theory method should apply specifically to a particular situation e.g. black British clerical workers in local authorities and the condition to which it applies should be explicitly spelled out and the theory should provide control over the action taken regarding the phenomenon. The next subsection discusses the selection of institutions and how it was managed to gain access to them.

### **5.2.3 Selection of institutions and gaining access**

In this section is discussed the selection of institutions and how to gain access to the institutions.

**Selection of institutions:** The term 'institution' refers to local authority. In some cases both terms have been used interchangeably. In Chapter Four, it was discussed how the institutions were located, not selected. Also mentioned was the underlying principle that guided in deciding where each institution was located. The institution that was selected has the highest percentage of black residents and also has the largest population of black British clerical workers compared to any other institution in the UK. One of these institutions selected happens to be where the author is working but no staff member in the same department was interviewed. The reason staff members from the same department did not want to take part in this interview was because they did not feel free to voice their opin-

ions against management as they should have liked, were the author not their manager. Initially one staff member approached narrated her fears below, when asked if she could participate in the research interview:

*I have a lot to say, but because you are my manager, I'm afraid I would not be able to divulge anything that could be use against me in the future as I dread you might pass it on to senior management (Olag)*

Olag's comment indicates she was afraid to take part in the interview because she feared information might be passed on to senior managers and had that happened that she might run the risk of losing her job or putting her job in jeopardy. One of the criteria adopted when selecting institutions was that the institution must provide a representative sample of the black British population. Therefore in order to choose or select the right institutions, it was decided to draw up a list of local authorities in London and with the appropriate support from my gatekeepers, local government association, Unison Black Members group and with assistance from personnel department across local authorities, it was possible to obtain the names of the institutions employing black British clerical workers. The institutions with the highest numbers of black British clerical workers were the ones selected. The numbers of permanent staff members working full time, temporary staff members, agency workers and self-employed contract workers were considered. With this sample in hand, it was easy to have equal amount of staff from each institution, by choosing at random volunteers whose name appeared second posi-



tion on the list. The process was considered until obtaining the appropriate number of volunteers required. This followed the principles of 'purposeful' sampling as adopted by Creswell (1994) or 'purposive' sampling as adopted by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). In so doing it was possible to show initially certain ideas about the types of institutions wanted for selection, but it was also intended to allow the sampling to 'evolve' so as to be responsive to the development of the research, and at the same time maintaining certain flexibility.

**Gaining Access:** It might be argued that gaining access to local authorities would be quite easy for a person working in local authority. To some extent it might be right to think that way, but from the author's perspectives it made no difference. It was found that managers in particular are often treated with scepticism by staff members, concerning what they are going to do with the information collected. This has led some volunteers to lose interest in the interviewing process. In contrast some of the volunteers spoken had informed that they preferred to talk to someone they did not know because of fear that the information they provided might come back to haunt them.

The experience of gaining access to participants was not exactly what was thought. For example, at each local authority a gatekeeper was acquired as a personal contact whenever wishing access to participants. Once having contacted respondents through the gatekeeper, the initial concern was to get them to agree to take part in the interview. After respondents had read the research outline and the invitation letter asking for volunteers, interestingly all of them were very ex-

cited to be included in the pilot study but the issues they all had in common were 'timing and duration of the interview'. One out of five respondents was concerned about the length of the interview. For example, one of the participants asked how long the interview was going to last. When told 'one hour', she replied: "Isn't that too long? I have to go to lunch at 1 p.m. and carry out a bit of shopping afterwards and won't be back from lunch until 2 p.m. and at 3.15 p.m. I have to go and pick up my child from school." It was this discussion that led to suggesting having the interview in the morning before lunch or in the evening after close from work. In another situation, a departmental manager was contacted about interviewing her staff members. She emailed back saying that she feared the outcome of the interview would be published in a local press or national newspaper; as a result she declined the request and suggested the outcome of the interview might not be good for the organization image. For reasons of confidentiality and in accordance with the access agreements with participants, it is not correct to name any of the individuals or institutions in this research. In the end, two of the pilot participants decided they would have their interviews in the morning before lunch, while the other two participants decided they wanted the interview after they had closed from work. One of the respondents that could not be interviewed had suggested she preferred to have the interview on Saturday at her home because of childcare cost or arrangement. At long last, it was pleasing to have secured the arrangement to interview all the four pilot respondents this thesis really needed.

It was found that obtaining access was an emotionally exhausting experience and time-consuming, especially as having to rely on other people to have a meeting room booked for every interview to convene in the workplace. At the same time one can be very conscious of the academic year ticking away like a grandfather clock. However, it was realized that the process of arranging and obtaining access does cause delay but in fact the delays actually worked to advantage, giving the opportunities to double check with the next respondents required for interviewing and to transcribe the data collected in accordance with the emerging themes coming from previous interview data. This process was in line with the principle that is consistent with grounded theory approaches (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Locke, 2001). Also, the issues of flexibility caused problems to the first two participants which led to suggestion of doing the interview in the evenings after they had closed from work. Due to problem with child-care arrangement for any respondents whose interviews fall in the evenings, they were encouraged to bring their children or dependents if that would not cause any problem, but that meant booking a bigger room that would fit everyone. In closing, for ease of reference listed below is the profile of the four pilot participants interviewed, as described in table 5.2 below:

**Table 5.2: Profiles of the four pilot participants from two local authorities**

Eliz	Female	25-30	LA01	Finance	Seven years	Contract
Jona	Male	35-40	LA01	Social Dept	Fifteen years	Permanent
Merc	Female	25-30	LA02	Resources	Ten years	Permanent

Olur	Male	21-25	LA02	Regeneration	Five years	Permanent
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Having gained access to these institutions, in the next subsection, it is described how the research participants were selected.

#### **5.2.4 Selection of research participants**

In this section, the strategies the research had employed in selecting the research participants are described.

Once having gained access to the local authorities wanted, the research strategy was to send out emails to black British clerical workers, who are briefly described in the research outline, and then to solicit for volunteers (see Appendix 2 & 3). The selection of participants is primarily to yearn for volunteers from the names of the participants selected through random order. As described in Chapter Four, these participants would have to be interviewed in order to make the sample truthfully random. While random sampling may be time consuming as described previously, the key factor is that the random process depicts a true representative sample of the black British clerical workers population in England. The email strategy employed worked very well as 95% response was obtained from the list of those chosen from the random order. An additional forty persons were recommended by those to whom an invitation letter was sent. Those people that were recommended were kept in reserve in case any respondent suddenly decide to withdraw at the last minute. It was found that the list of names chosen from the

random order was unbalanced at first. For example, Local Authority One shows a predominately female respondent, while Local Authorities Two and Three show a less large number of women. As a result, it was decided that to correct the imbalance, some names were to be extracted from the list of respondents kept in reserve previously. Respondents were asked to recommend other people with opposite views to them, so that one could get a cross section view of the research phenomenon, an approach which was referred to as 'negative' or 'discrepant' case analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Silverman, 1993).

The aim was to conduct a semi-structured interview, but it was premature at that stage to put a ceiling on the number of participants to be interviewed as this figure could increase or decrease depending on the nature of response. For example, if there was recurrence of similar themes continuously, this could be described as 'theoretical saturation' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). At this point a halt would be called to further interviewing.

As mentioned previously, once emails were sent to potential participants or in some cases phone calls made, daily at least two to three emails and exchanges were received with respondents before actually meeting them or the interview taking place. The process of sending out emails, phoning respondents, and waiting for their replies was absolutely exciting.

Having described how the participants were selected, an equally important question to ask was why the respondent decided to show interest in the study? Be-

cause, it was thought, the author was not the only person to have approached them to take part in a research project this year. One of the (female) respondents asked why she was interested in the research project replied:

*I just wanted to find out what your study is about and secondly to provide my own opinion. As you know, not very often you get someone asking you about your opinion in this local authority (Merc)*

Another respondent (male) replied:

*I wanted to share my knowledge as I thought my opinion might be helpful to others or perhaps being part of your research project could help improve the way we do things over here (Olur)*

Another respondent (female) replied:

*Not often I get to see my opinion printed on paper, because management just listen to you talk and they don't do anything about it. At least this is different since I can see you recording the conversation and you promise to send me the outcome of your study later (Eliz)*

Another respondent (male) replied:

*At last someone is interested about black people's opinion and how we black people feel in this local authority; it's time someone bring some changes to this place (Jona)*

Although respondents were told this study was undertaken as an independent research, judging from their various replies, some of them were treating the author as an earpiece or someone sent to bring changes to local authority. The reasons why they (pilot respondents) volunteered to be interviewed appear from the above to be different from one person to another. As a result of confidentiality and the access agreement with core participants, all the local authorities where participants are working will be referred to by numbers in the order in which they were contacted, such as Local Authority One, Two and up to Ten (LA01) as shown on the profile of 4 pilot interviews in table 5.2 and the profiles of the 34 core participants shown in table 5.3.

Having selected, met, and interviewed the core participants, in the next subsection 5.2.5 below, it will be described how the research material was approached or the data collection procedure from which research was drawn.

### **5.2.5 Data collection procedures**

The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data mediates through him, rather than through inventories, questionnaires or some kind of machine. Undertaking a qualitative method involves fieldwork, as he

physically goes out to interview people, observe behaviour, and record the interview in its natural setting (Creswell, 2003). This approach fits in well with this research phenomenon being interested in investigating the lived experience of black British clerical workers in local authorities, about how they feel, emotions, thoughts and reaction to psychological contract breach and its violations. This was data or material a researcher could not acquire through questionnaire survey as supported by Bryman (2002) and Silverman (2004).

The step taken before starting data collection was to first list the following data collection procedures in qualitative research, adopted from Creswell (1994), for example:

- (1) Setting the boundaries for the study
- (2) Collecting information through interview and visual materials
- (3) Establishing the protocol for recording information.

The idea of a qualitative research is to select participants that can be considered best to answer my research questions. At the same time one is cautious that the participants selected represent fully the entire population of black British clerical workers, hence the reason for randomly selecting the core participants. As discussed previously, the parameters suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984) on how to engage in qualitative data collection are as follows: (A) The setting – that is, where the research will take place, which in this case is the UK local authorities. (B) Actors – These are the participants to be interviewed; in this case these are the black British clerical workers in local authorities. (C) The events – meaning



what the participants will be interviewed about; in this case, to investigate the nature of the psychological contract for black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. The data collection procedures adopted from Creswell (1994, 2004) involve three basic types such as:

**Interviewing:** Data would be collected by engaging in a face to face or one-on-one interview with black British clerical workers, talking to them in-person. The limitations are that the information may be provided in a designated place e.g., 'meeting room'. This may be necessitated because some participants may like the interview to be set in private as they may be uncomfortable if others are listening to what they are saying. At the interview the role of the researcher is basically to note down what is observed about the events without participating. This is supposed to be an opportunity to allow the participant to answer the questions as best as he/she can. However, the limitations are that the participant may think this intrusive, as private information may be observed during the interview which cannot be reported e.g., health issues, family problems.

**Documents:** Some of the useful documents are the demographics list of black British population, positions, historical information about black British people. The limitations may be that some of this information may be unavailable to the public and so special access may have to be applied for.

**Audiotape material:** Here we refer to the use of tape recorder or cassette recorder during interviewing or one-on-one interview. As a qualitative researcher the recorder is very useful as it allows gathering all the information the participant has

provided and also allows the participant to speak freely without asking him/her to pulse or stop. This seems the unobtrusive method of collecting data. The limitations are that it is time consuming and may be difficult to interpret and not assessable to the public.

These three basic data collection procedures have been supported by Merriam (1988); Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Creswell (2004, 2008). Having discussed the data collection procedures, the next subsection is to discuss the data report writing process.

### **5.2.6 Data report writing procedures**

As a qualitative researcher, in interviewing lots of participants it was decided to purchase two cassette recorders. One recorder was kept in reserve in case the other broke down, while using one recorder to record the one-on-one interview scheduled with the core participants. These would enable collecting entirely all the information the participants provided. The advantage is that even though all the details could not be noted during the interview, at least there was the tape recorder to fall back on and which could be transcribed later while analysing the data.

Data recording requires some strategic format. This means that before going to interview a participant, it had to be ensured an approach was prepared on how the data was to be recorded. This involved sorting out 'what is to be recorded' and

'how will it be recorded' as supported by Creswell (1994). To address these two concerns, the first step, as the participant came into the interview room and sat down, was not to record greetings as welcoming the participant. This approach was taken to make sure relations were okay with the interviewee before starting to record. At the same time the interviewee was reassured that any data obtained would solely be used as part fulfilment for a PhD degree, and not for any other reason. Also the outcome of the research would be made available to them.

How would it be recorded? As a qualitative researcher one would believe the interview process is a dialogue between the interviewee and interviewer, and both are together in partnership, therefore the interviewer feels obligated to let the interviewee know when recording will start and when it will stop, in so doing hoping to gain the interviewee's confidence and reassurance as supported by Silverman (2004). Once the recording does commence, this approach helps both to focus on the issues or events to be discussed. At the interview, it was important to make note while recording, to save from embarrassment in the event that the tape failed to record. Equally important is the need to plan in advance for the transcriptionist as this may take time to complete. Notes were taken during the interview process in order to complement the audiotape interviews. The rationale for taking notes is that it helps to note of any body language or actions that audiotape would not be able to represent. Notes were also taken during pre- and post-interview discussions that took place when the audiotape was off. At the end of each interview thoughts were noted about how the interview was conducted and later reflection

on personal practice and performance as an interviewer were possible—how was it done?—and then the effect it had on the direction and shape of the next interview—what was done—was noted. After the interview it was also reflected upon what perhaps was missing from the interview, and what had failed or been forgotten, what questions were difficult for the participant to understand, and questions that appeared too long or perhaps confusing for the participants, which was in keeping with the qualitative approach. At the end comments were made upon which pieces of the interview questions were found interesting and whether the themes were similar or different to those already voiced by other participants. Having discussed the data reporting approach and what sources of information informed this study, the author can now consider the data analysis approach.

### **5.2.7 Qualitative data analysis procedures**

In this section is described the process of transforming 'raw data' into variables, and analyzing to produce the information found in the results sections of the thesis report as supported by Sapsford and Jupp (1996). Here is explained the extent to which the data on which the research arguments are based is authentically original, meaning 'not found anywhere in the world', which are in fact constructed by the author.

As a new researcher, to obtain a holistic sense of the data and strength of each participant's expectations and experiences of working in local authorities, it was necessary to make sure that each transcript was read thoroughly, while simulta-

neously listening to the audiotape. At the end of each interview, listening to the audiotapes would provide an inclusive awareness of the effect of each semi-structured conversation. Consequently, this led to wanting to understand thoroughly each audiotape interview before starting to reduce it to discrete segments for analysis. As listening to each audiotape and reading field notes, notes could be made again about individual characteristics of why persons join local authorities; the factors that help form their psychological contract, and how they respond to psychological contract violation. It must be said that the notes taken during the initial listening to the audiotape and reading the transcripts were indeed helpful in providing future directions as to how to organize the structure of the next data reduction and analysis. Data from the interviews were later transcribed throughout the interview period and for another one month afterwards.

As a qualitative researcher who has adopted the grounded theory approach, the analysis represents coding. Therefore, coding is the process of analyzing data. What this signifies is that the knowledge from the analyses is constructed because it is based essentially not on the researcher's perception but on the interpretation of what was experienced from talking to core participants. The extent of interpretation conformed with the qualitative research methodology this thesis adopted, which is in contrast to quantitative research method that deals with data expressed in numbers and counts. According to Creswell (2004):

*Data analysis requires that the researcher be comfortable with developing categories and making comparisons and contrasts. It also requires that the*

*researcher be open to possibilities and see contrary or alternative explanations for the findings.*

Supported by Creswell (1994, 2004), it was found that data analysis is varied and so there is no 'right way' (Tesch, 1990). This makes novice researchers to go into the field feeling excited, and then collecting so much data they cannot manage or reduce it to a meaningful analysis. A qualitative researcher knows there is this tendency to collect and collect data, and when you have finished collecting your data, you may find yourself confronted with volumes of information you are not able or have difficulties to analyse as supported by Sapsford and Jupp (1996) and Patton (1990). For a new researcher, sitting down after each interview, it can be breath-taking; sorting and sniffing through audiotapes, pages of interview notes and files of field notes. Therefore in this respect it can be advocated that qualitative analysis differs completely from the quantitative research approach of dividing, while also engaging in separate activities of data collection, analysis, and writing the results. As a qualitative researcher, one important point to note is that data collection and analysis are tightly interwoven processes, i.e., the initial analysis helps guide and direct the sampling for the next interview, as supported by Strauss and Corbin (1990). It was found that to go into the field, there were simultaneous activities that engaged attention such as collecting information from the field, sorting the information collected into categories, formatting the information into a story manner and then actually writing the qualitative text as outlined under the grounded theory approach. In contrast, quantitative researchers may

want to treat these activities differently, as supported by Bogdan and Biklen (1992).

Doing analysis is in fact making conceptual interpretations. What is the analysis process based on? It is based on 'reduction and interpretation' of the data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). For example, a voluminous amount of information would be taken and reduced to certain patterns, categories or themes and then later interpreted by using some schema. This process is called 'de-contextualization' and 'recontextualization' (Tesch, 1990). "While the initial work of the analysis process consists of 'taking apart', but the outcome is the appearance of a larger and combined picture" (Tesch, 1990). For example, the units of coding are the individual statements given by the participants concerning their psychological contract. The research interview started with the initial themes 'background' as the interviewer sought to find out about the participant's circumstances and asked: "What made you to come and work for this local authority?" In response the participant gave the following statement or information: "It was closer to my home and I can now drop/pick up my child from school, and it's a better prospect in terms of the sort of job I will be doing." This individual information was coded and built into common themes, for example starting with the initial theme or category 'background', while the attached codes were flexibility and opportunity. At this early stage of data analysis, the aim was to identify the coding procedure to use to reduce the information to themes or categories.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the analysis procedure stipulates that there are flexible rules governing how one should go about sorting through interview transcriptions, notes, documents and audiotapes. As a qualitative researcher, as shown above, this involves forming categories of information and then later attaching codes to the categories (Creswell, 1998). It is these categories and codes that help to form the bases for the emerging story one seeks to achieve and wishes to be told. The purpose of the grounded theory approach is to 'discover', which fits in well with the research objective, in this case that which seeks to explore the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. Under the grounded theory approach it was intended to analyze the data by adopting a series of data analysis steps as provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990), that consists of three major types of coding: 'open coding, axial coding, and selective coding'. These codes are discussed below:

**Open Coding:** This stage of the analysis relates specifically to the naming and categorizing of this thesis phenomenon through close examination of the data. This initial stage is important to the rest of the coding, because without taking this first analytical step, it was discovered that other analytical coding and communication that follows could not possibly take place (Creswell, 2003). In the course of sampling the participants, referred to as theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), this led to developing key themes/categories such as 'background'. At this opening stage it would be attempted to summarise the data according to the key themes raised by the research questions. These themes are information the par-



ticipants has provided (Creswell, 2003). Each of the participant's statements in the interview data was coded individually and built into various themes. If two cases were found to resemble each other and could not be fitted into the existing categories, that meant new categories would have to be created. There are many ways of approaching this open coding. For example, one might begin by analyzing the first interview data and a line-by-line analysis, involving close examination, phrase by phrase, and sometimes of single words (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). At this open coding stage, patterns were discovered involving both commonalities and differences concerning, for example, why the participants join local authorities and their expectations. The data was broken into separate parts, closely examined, compared for any similarities and differences, discussing individual interpretations and later questions were asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data collected (Creswell, 1998). This was done in order to increase the reliability of the qualitative data analysis.

**Axial Coding:** After open coding, at this stage each descriptive code is revisited by making connections between categories to develop analytical categories. This involves refining the initial list of categories in the open coding, deleting and merging some of them. In this case, the initial category 'background' and the attached coding 'flexibility and opportunity' has been merged to create a new category 'work-life balance'. The categories are inundated through 'constantly comparing' an incident with incidents until the categories emerges. It was important to make connections between the categories and define their properties, because in so

doing some of the categories emerged with high frequency and were sequentially connected to other emerging categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

**Selective Coding:** At this stage is the process of selecting the core category and then relating it to other categories. Here a few numbers of different categories were actually chosen as the core category, such as career history, experience, expectation, and perception which means all other smaller categories were related to the core ones' 'background'. The relationships of these core categories selected was validated and then those categories that need further modification and development were filled in (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In general, one important point to remember is that the three codes mentioned above do not necessarily have to take place in sequence order or stages; you can move between one form of coding and another coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). After post-interview transcripts, it was decided that individual interview documents were to be hand-delivered or emailed to participants to ensure confidentiality. Each of the participants was given the opportunity to review the accounts of their statement or information, and was advised to return any of the comments he/she believed had misrepresented their views. A month after the interview phase and coding, it could be confirmed that no comments were received requesting the raw data to be changed. In the next segment, the NVivo research software program, was examined discussing its usage and benefit in qualitative research, but crucially the reasons why not used to analyze the data.

### **NVivo Research Software**

The NVivo software program is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software package, which was developed for analyzing qualitative data, capable of handling rich text records, freely edited and coded (Bryman, 2002). But the argument against NVivo usage is that it is a tool, therefore you only get what you put in. In contrast, narrative analysis is able to describe feeling, body language, and the live experience of the participants both in the past and present, something computer software could not do. The NVivo was strongly influenced by grounded theory and so the NVivo program also provides support for the grounded theory approach (Bryman, 2002), but if this research was to choose a computer software like NVivo, the researcher would feel detached from the participant. NVivo allows for qualitative inquiry that goes beyond coding and retrieval. It is designed to integrate coding with qualitative linking, shaping and modelling, but its diverse usage has seen it also applicable in various fields of qualitative research (Singh & Jones, 2007). NVivo 8 is the latest 2009 software package designed for analyzing audio-tapes, video, pictures, or documents. However, so long as the theory arises from the data and it is supported by the data then they are understood to be grounded (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was reflected in the examples given earlier as discussing the three major types of data analysis steps (open coding, axial coding, and selective coding) as provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990). For that reason, it was intended to analyze the data using the grounded theory approach.

### **Why Nvivo research software was not chosen**

NVivo is merely a tool and the quality of research that emerges is dependent on the researcher's own imagination and reflections into the data (Singh & Jones, 2007). The centre piece of qualitative analysis requires a clear understanding of the meaning of the texts, and this is something computer assistant software like NVivo is not able to do (Bryman, 2002). This author supports the view that the function of qualitative analysis software like NVivo is more similar to that of a database, "because it enables the researcher to keep record of their hunches, ideas, searches and analyze and then gives access to the data so they can be examined and analyzed" (Bryman, 2002). Furthermore, it can be argued that NVivo is much the same as a 'word processor', simply because a word processor cannot write meaningful text, but makes that process of writing and editing a lot easier. Moreover, NVivo makes analysis easier, more accurate, more reliable and transparent, but in contrast, NVivo program will never do the reading and thinking for the researcher. NVivo has a lot of tools for producing reports and summaries but the interpretation of these is down to the researcher (Bryman, 2002). Moreover, coding is a key activity in qualitative analysis and the use of computer assistant software makes it easier not only to select the text and apply codes, but also help to retrieve all similar coded texts without losing information from where it was created, but in the end, as mentioned previously, the interpretation is down to the researcher and not the computer, because the computer itself cannot describe participants' feeling, thinking and behaviour. While there may be lots of benefits for

using software like NVivo, it is also important to note that there are lots of dangers too for using the software.

In summing up, computer software is a tool for analysis and it cannot do the job without human interpretation. Therefore, to achieve an excellent qualitative analysis, one still has to rely on the analytical work of human researcher. Similarly, a “good writing is not guaranteed by the use of a word processor” (Bryman, 2002). The use of a computer software can make a positive contribution, because what you put in is what you get out, and that is because it takes away much of the work of ‘human’ qualitative analysis. For a qualitative researcher, concerns have been on the possible threat to quality that may arise in the process of the analysis, and as discovered, there are varieties of threats such as biased interpretation, ignoring of negative cases and vague codes.

No software can read and understand text, and so the use of NVivo would still require the work of the human researcher to constantly read and reread the text to check the interpretation. As discovered, qualitative data is distinguished by its meaningfulness, which is why interpretation is the centre piece of qualitative data analysis. While computer software may seem an easier way to analyze texts, it cannot do the job of interpretation without the human researcher. As mentioned previously, NVivo is a tool and the quality of research that emerges is dependent on the researcher’s own imagination and reflections into the data (Singh & Jones, 2007). Therefore interpretation is down to the researcher and not the software,

since the software cannot interpret the participants' feeling, thinking and behaviour. It is these reasons that cause the accepting of the grounded theory approach. Having discussed the data analysis process, in the next subsection, the concepts of validity and reliability are addressed to frame the concepts within the procedures as emerged from my qualitative writings (Creswell, 1994; Silverman, 2006).

### **5.2.8 Validity and Reliability**

In this section the issues concerning validity and reliability are discussed. The term 'validity' means the ability of the research to completely reflect the concept of this thesis (Creswell, 2003). While 'reliability' refers to the extent to which the study yields the same or produces a similar result, even if repeating the study in similar circumstances. For example, if a train travelling at the same speed from London Bridge station arrived at Uxbridge station on the scheduled time, it would be seen as reliable. If it did not arrive on time and came late it would be unreliable. It is important to bear in mind that reliability is not measured, it is in fact estimated. According to literature there is no agreed consensus among qualitative researchers on how best to address the topic of validity and reliability in a qualitative study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). With this in mind, qualitative writers have established quality criteria such as 'trustworthiness and authenticity' as a way of distancing themselves from the positivist paradigms (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). However, in determining the accuracy of the participants' account, discussing the generalization of it, and then looking at the possibilities of it being

replicated, has long been seen by other researchers as the scientific evidence of a scholarly study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Internal validity in qualitative research is very much concerned with the accuracy of the information collected from the core participants and whether it matches reality (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, relying purely on a single interviewer's coding may create problems when assessing the validity and reliability of the data. On the other hand, external validity (generalisation) is the judgement that the outcome of the research results can be generalised to a larger population (Merriam, 1998) such as the black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. As viable evidence to validity and reliability, the idea of a 'member checks' at the one-to-one interviewing was introduced, accomplished by promising to hand-deliver or email participants a copy of their interview transcripts for verification. In so doing it was possible to feedback to the core participants the outcome of the research and to ask them whether the conclusions were accurate or an opportunity for them to judge for themselves if the conclusion was accurate. It was found that the role as a researcher and that of the participants during the one-to-one interviewing was an issue that could affect the validity and reliability of the report. For this reason, it was considered that the researcher's first role was to listen, gather the data as the participant had explained it, and not to generalize the findings but to form a unique interpretation of the event as observed with the participant. On the issue of replicating the data, it was found that there were limitation to this, because, as interviewing men and women, participants of varies age groups, and of different

upbringings and cultural backgrounds, working in different local authorities, it became obvious that the information they provided at the interviews were unique to their individual circumstances, expectations and experiences, and therefore could not be replicated in anyway. One way discovered in enhancing the internal validity of the qualitative study was to invite another PhD researcher, a senior lecturer, together with my supervisor to examine this audit trail, pertaining the key decisions made during the research process and to validate the accuracy and usefulness. The decision about the data collection and data analysis were reviewed with the supervisor and also with three PhD colleagues during the course of this research. With suggestions put forward by supervisors and colleagues, all identified points of differences were discussed, confirmed, and resolved. Furthermore, the reliability of the categories developed in data analysis was reviewed with supervisors and also with two other PhD colleagues who read the interview transcripts to see if they would classify them in a similar way. By this decisive factor, the results were considered to be reliable by two independent readers, together with the two supervisors who have had significant experiences with this type of research and are familiar with applying qualitative coding procedures, and both have agreed with most of the coding and themes in the data analysis. Finally, the validity of the research findings was further enhanced by emailing the results of the research to the interviewees or core participants, allowing them to return their feedback on the transcripts.



### **5.2.9 Critique of this research**

What was seen from the perspective of the volunteers contacted as being the main criticism in conducting this research has been outlined. These are, for example, two key areas and they are methodological as shown below:

(A) The sample – black British clerical workers

The main criticism gathered from volunteers was 'Why black clerical workers and not black managers'. As a black manager (the researcher) working in UK local authority, if it was decided to interview black managers in local authorities, it would be seen by other researchers to mean investigating oneself.

The primary focus of the research is the participant's thoughts and their response to the psychological contract breach and its violation. Consequently, the criticism volunteers put forward against managers is that managers are less likely to participate in an industrial action and are therefore not in a position to answer questions regarding how participants would respond to psychological contract breach or violation, which they (managers) themselves had violated. On the other hand, there were volunteers who argued that managers were once clerical workers before they eventually went up the ladder to become managers, and as a result they should be included in the research sample and also be interviewed.

## (B) Data Collection

The criticism the research faced about data collection through this thesis interview method was the concern over the availability of volunteers. Some volunteers want to be paid for their time, a suggestion the author strongly rejected because the idea of compensation, if adopted, might make volunteers show more interest in the money they would get, rather than the contribution that was expected from them.

Other criticism was the willingness of volunteers to come up with information that might raise their personal feelings and emotions. During interviewing, it was noticed that the presence of the audiotape made some participants to be nervous and less reluctant to express themselves freely. When asked why he was reluctant to talk, one of the participants replied:

*Don't you know this people (management), the moment they find out you don't like them, that is it for you? I bet you will never be a manager in this place. If they want to carry out restructuring next year, they may even sack you. So I don't want to take any chances with my future, you know I have a young family to look after (Kaza).*

One of the criticisms about the qualitative approach was that participants did not have enough time to sit down for a one-to-one interview that might last for an hour

during office hours, as they seemed worried to not be able to complete their daily target. One volunteer put it this way:

*The work we have outstanding is very high and if my manager finds out I did not meet the departmental target I may face disciplinary action. I really don't want that right now (Nana)*

Another participant argued that things were getting very stressful over there and in her own words said:

*We are very stressful in this place due to the high volume of work we are told to complete daily. For me to take time-off from work I need to build up some flexi hours, so if I sit down with you for an hour, when do you think I will finish my work today? Don't you know I have to pick up my child from the nursery school? (Tutu)*

As mentioned previously, this made some rearrangement of some interviews outside work hours in order to accommodate everyone. On the other hand, this enabled maintaining some degree of flexibility surrounding this thesis qualitative methodology adopted.

Overall, in section 5.2, Part One, a detailed outline of the research design has been presented. Generally, the construction of the qualitative research design and

pilot interviewing has been discussed, outlining the different types of qualitative research design and later presenting the justification for choosing the type of design adopted. Afterwards it was discussed how the local authorities or institutions from which to undertake the research interview were selected and how access was gained to the various institutions. It was further discussed how research participants were selected, how data collection was carried out, the data report writing procedure, the data analysis procedure, the validity and reliability of this thesis, and in conclusion the critique of this research. In the next section, the focus is the interviewing process.

### **5.3 Part 2: The Interviewing process**

At this stage, it should be said that interview began again, this time moving on from pilot stage onto the main interviewing platform employing a semi-structured interview with the core participants.

#### **5.3.1 The Interviews**

The author's perspective of the interview is that it involves negotiating with core participants for information and live stories about their expectations and experiences in a semi-structured way, engaged in recording and analyzing their answers appropriately using the coding procedures and techniques outlined under the grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Dunne, 1995; Hardy and Bryman, 2004). Using a grounded theory approach, it allows the focusing of

the questions that lead to discovering, rather than an ethnography design that seeks to understand or explain, or a phenomenology design that seeks to describe the participant experience. As a qualitative researcher the research question is begun with the words 'what' or 'how' to start the grand tour question, and then followed by several sub-questions, an approach consistent with the emerging qualitative design, but in contrast to quantitative paradigm which is accustomed to hypotheses or to identify specific questions (Creswell, 1994).

In total 38 black British clerical workers (4 pilots and 34 core participants) were interviewed, made up of 22 females and 16 males, with an age range of 19 years to 56 years. A majority of these people originated from Nigeria, Jamaica, Ghana, Cameroon, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Zambia, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Benin, Somalia, Senegal, Namibia, Sudan, Togo, Eritrea, Gabon, Democratic. Rep. Congo (Zaire), Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, Barbados, Lesotho, Rwanda and Botswana. Participants from these nations took up British citizenship before they started working in UK local authorities. It is against immigration rules to initiate employment to any local authorities if you do not have the right to live and work in the UK or are what the native describes as foreigner. Among the 34 people interviewed, ten were born here in UK, although they later said that their parents originated from Africa and the Caribbean. A profile of the 34 black British clerical workers interviewed are shown below in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Profiles of the 34 core participants in ten UK local authorities**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
Abdu	Male	36-40	LA06	Resources	9 years	Permanent
Adet	Male	45-60	LA07	Social Serv	26 years	Permanent
Ahme	Male	30-40	LA04	Legal Dept	8 years	Permanent
Akin	Female	45-50	LA08	Personnel	15 years	Permanent
Ayot	Female	18-20	LA01	Council Tax	2 years	Contract
Azee	Female	45-50	LA03	Admin Dept	19 years	Permanent
Eser	Male	24-30	LA03	Social Serv	5 years	Permanent
Ewah	Female	45-50	LA02	Resources	17 years	Permanent
Fola	Female	30-35	LA04	Regeneration	10 years	Permanent
Hele	Female	40-45	LA07	Social Serv	28 years	Permanent
Igbi	Female	38-45	LA04	Housing Dept	18 years	Permanent
Iren	Female	35-40	LA03	Regeneration	8 years	Permanent
Jade	Female	27-30	LA05	Finance Dept	7 years	Permanent
Julu	Female	50-62	LA05	Social Serv	31 years	Permanent
Kaza	Male	38-45	LA07	Housing Dept	15 years	Permanent
Kobo	Male	20-30	LA08	Personnel	5 years	Permanent
Koro	Male	18-23	LA05	Resources	4 years	Permanent
Mele	Female	28-30	LA09	Housing Dept	8 years	Permanent
Nana	Female	50-56	LA08	Finance Dept	21 years	Permanent
Oghe	Female	36-40	LA10	Housing Dept	15 years	Permanent
Ogun	Male	30-35	LA01	Legal dept	8 years	Permanent

Olab	Female	50-60	LA03	Regeneration	28 years	Permanent
Owus	Male	36-40	LA02	Social Serv	10 years	Permanent
Qasi	Male	30-35	LA10	Legal Dept	9 years	Permanent
Rama	Female	45-50	LA01	Regeneration	20 years	Permanent
Rees	Male	40-56	LA04	Legal Dept	9 years	Permanent
Shit	Male	18-20	LA01	Resources	2 years	Permanent
Simb	Female	18-20	LA09	Finance Dept	2 years	Permanent
Solt	Female	45-50	LA05	Housing Dept	20 years	Permanent
Soul	Female	18-20	LA09	Social Serv	2 years	Permanent
Tayo	Male	45-60	LA01	Legal Dept	10 years	Permanent
Telu	Female	45-50	LA06	Housing Dept	16 years	Permanent
Tutu	Female	30-35	LA06	Social Serv	10 years	Permanent
Ussh	Male	43-50	LA10	Legal Dept	20 years	Permanent

Having focused on the interviewing, we now turn to the ‘collection’ of information from the participants. At first the first three interviews were treated as pilot interviews, and as such they had helped, for example (A) to refine the research focus (B) to identify areas of misunderstanding or the need for clarification (C) to help to reflect on and to refine the interview practice. At this stage it was realized that the semi-structured interview adopted was the method that would yield the information required in order to answer the research questions. 54 questions that would elicit the information sought for were drawn up (see Appendix five). This included the researcher asking the participants about their expectations and experiences of

working in UK local authorities, and how they responded to psychological contract violation. The answers gathered gave an insight into why the black British clerical workers joined local authorities. The first three interviews were short and lasted about 50 minutes, although the interviewees were asked some follow-up questions, but in the end concerns at that initial stage were of 'getting through' the interview schedule. This experience allowed for adjustment and making changes to the way the research interviews were conducted. Consequently, in the fourth interviews, more concentration was made on listening and picking up on leads which had been supplied by the interviewees and at the same time allowing the interviewees to speak from their personal experiences and to share stories about how they responded to psychological contract breaches or violations. After that, in the fifth, sixth interviews and so on, experiment was made with a less religiously used interview schedule; instead it was used only for guidance. In the end a marked difference was noticed between the first three interviews and the fourth, fifth and sixth, in terms of the length they took to complete. The fourth, fifth and sixth interviews lasted for over an hour. Another difference noticed was on the issue of formality, given that the interviewees and the interviewer were more relaxed compared to the first three interviews undertaken. This improvement was due to the fact that the interviewees were allowed to speak without restraint about their expectations and experiences, while the interviewer was listening more and picking up on leads that were relevant to the research objectives. As a result, the interviews became less formal, as participants took their time to describe their



lived experiences. It was this that arose second thoughts about how to perceive the interview process and the way to approach and conduct the interview.

While collecting data from the participants, the research revealed some interesting themes. For example, participants pointed out that they came to the organization with different individual goals and motivation; different upbringing and diverse cultural background; varied expectations; and different perceptions from other colleagues. Almost 90% of participants pointed out that their different expectations were due, for example, to previous promises before they joined the organization, their varied upbringings, cultural backgrounds, and individual beliefs. It was also noted that there were some discrepancies in terms of what 'psychological contract' actually meant to the participants. In fact, before the interview, 60% of the participants indicated they had not heard of the term 'psychological contract', but after the interview they pointed out that they now understood it to be unwritten contract. It was also noted that there was certain confusion surrounding the use of the term 'violation' within the framework of the psychological contract. Again almost 75% participants did not understand the term 'contract violation'; a majority of them thought it was abusive terms or maltreatment. Only 25% of them thought violation was disappointment or unfulfilled promises, which they equated with the concept of being dismissed or redundant. A participant's description concerning contract violation is reflected below:

*Oh yeah, I know a young man working in Customer Services that was beaten up badly by his manager. In the end management just sack both of them, they didn't even investigate the matter thoroughly or call the police, which many employers would have done. If you ask me of my opinion, I think that was violation (Soul)*

The research focus revealed other interesting themes, as one participant put it:

*This research is very interesting! No one has ever asked me or cared enough to find out if I have any expectation in this place, they just treat everyone like a 'photocopy machine'. Therefore, this is an opportunity for me to tell people that local authority is not like you see it from the outside (Oghe)*

Overall, this research alerts to some of the issues involved in conducting qualitative interviews in terms of the timing for interviews and the relationship between the interviewee and the researcher. For example, it was once considered interviewing volunteers during lunch hours, but this was not to be the case as a majority of them showed their preference for being interviewed after work, in the evening and Saturday, because of childcare arrangement during weekdays and family obligations. As mentioned previously, after the third interviews, there have been changes partly due to experiences with the participants, which cause rethinking of how to approach and structure the remaining interviewing process, which is discussed in the next segment.

### **5.3.2 The process of interviewing participants**

Following the pilot study, it was realized necessary to change the interview approach into a semi-structured interviewing approach. The interviews lasted approximately two hours. All interviews followed a set of guidelines or themes that were identified and grounded on the literature review and research context (see appendix five). This led to designing the interview framework into fifteen substantive topics. These included:

(1) Background (e.g. previous positions, nature of duties, how long have you been working in this local authority, and what made you to come and work for them?)

(2) Perception (e.g. how did you perceive the organization before you arrived, have you changed your perception now you are here, did outside factors such as family/friendship influence your perceptions?)

(3) Expectation (e.g. what were your expectations before joining this local authority, where did you form these expectations, are these expectations influenced by being black, have these expectations been met, do you think this would have been difficult if you had been white?)

(4) Promises (e.g. were any promises made when you joined the organization, did your employer keep to these promises?)

(5) Individual upbringing and cultural background (e.g. how does your upbringing influence your experience, did it influence the kind of people you make friends

with at work, do you see them outside work, if you left who would you keep in contact with?)

(6) Religious factors (e.g. is religion an issue in your workplace, are you a religious person, does this affect your work experience/expectations/relationships?),

(7) Social Justice (e.g. are you treated fairly, are you treated differently because you are black, do you feel there is fairness and equality in your department, have you been unfairly treated, as a black worker do you feel your voice is being heard, does being black influence your friendship at work/loyalty/status and relations with managers/colleagues?)

(8) Individual goals and motivation (e.g. what did you feel you could achieve before you joined this local authority, how did your job turn out in terms of your goals, what do you hope to get out of the job, do you think you might leave?)

(9) Transactional contract (e.g. are you content with your salary, what if promise of pay rise was cancelled, would you prefer to work elsewhere were there are more increment, do you work flexible hours, if you lost this flexibility would you leave?)

(10) Relational contract (e.g. do you feel a sense of pride working here, do you have black and white friends, if your boss asked you to work late to cover for a colleague would you do it?)

(11) Exchange relations (e.g. do you have a good relationship with your manager, have you ever fallen out, can you turn to him/her in a crisis and if you have a problem?)

(12) Trade union (e.g. have you ever felt let down by the organization, how did you respond, have you ever contacted your trade union, do you discuss problem with work colleagues, did it help?)

(13) Response to psychological contract violation (e.g. do you discuss problem with your family/church, does being black affect how you respond to problem and disappointments?)

(14) Intergenerational gap issues (e.g. how is your experience at work, would you respond differently if you are: (a) parents (b) children, do you have issue concerning the way the young generation responds to problems when things go wrong at work?)

(15) In closing participants asked to talk through their stories of (a) why they decided to stay with the same local authority despite suffering contract violations, (b) give examples of why they must go or leave the organization, (c) give three reasons in which being black has affected their experience at work

In all interviews participants were asked to describe incidents and give personal accounts/stories of their experience that had affected them indirectly. Where appropriate, participants were encouraged to elaborate on these examples by telling story of their experiences at work, this according to literature; story-telling is an addition to data gathering and has gained credibility as a means of communicating unwritten past experiences as supported by Gabriel (2000); Harrison, Simpson, and Kaler (2005).

Initially it took time to convince participants that any information they provided would not be handed over to their employer (local authorities). Furthermore, there were problems trying to persuade participants to attend interviews due to time pressures. As mentioned previously, it was decided to arrange some of the interviews outside work hour in order to accommodate everyone. On the other hand, this enabled maintaining some design flexibility due to uncertainties surrounding qualitative research interview. It was this situation that caused the advocating that qualitative research design is an on-going process because of the importance of accommodating all the participants and the issues that emerged from the interviews. At the earlier part of the interviews there were some concerns as to the availability and willingness of the volunteers to become involved. As a result it was tempting to offer compensation to volunteers for the time spent during the interview, but this was rejected, not wishing to pressurize anyone to give information they did not really want to give. Below is a comment from Mele a volunteer:

*I don't know if I can attend this interview, I only have half hour lunch every-day and after that I will be rushing to pickup my child from the childminder. I cannot afford to take more than half hour lunch, as I really need the money to pay my childminder (Mele)*

Having rejected the idea of compensation, the decision was supported by colleagues and other researchers, who also discouraged the idea as they advised that the compensation, if adopted, may make volunteers show more interest in the

money they will get, rather than being part of the interview and making valuable contributions to that which has been designated to be an important discussion about their psychological contract.

It was also found that relying on departmental managers to ask their staff members to take part in the interview was difficult, as some of the managers would not allow their staff to attend the interview unless staffs were prepared to take unpaid time off. One of the managers approached made the following comments to her staff members:

*If any of you is interested in taking part in this interview, it must be on your time, not the local authority. Please don't forget to log-out on the system as you leave the office (Tobi- Manager)*

In the end, those staff members who wanted to volunteer still managed to find the time to speak, either via email or telephone, to register their interest in the research. On receiving their responses, a date was arranged and time for the interviews, after a room was booked for the meeting. Eventually every potential interviewee was interviewed once. This fits in with the qualitative interview method chosen, rather than a longitudinal design or a self-report questionnaire cross-sectional design. The interviews conducted outside work hours were considerably longer than those ones conducted during office hours or weekdays. This was at-

tributed to the fact that the participants had closed from work and so were less stressful, hence remained more focused in the interview.

All the interviews conducted were tape-recorded, but before then the consent forms were all signed. A majority of the participants asked if they could have a copy of the audiotape once the analysis was finished. Curiously, when asked why they wanted a copy of the audiotape, a majority of them said that this was their first interview and so would like to hear the sound of their voice and to see how they could improve on their tone of voice. Below is an account from one of the participants:

*The last time I was tape-recorded was five years ago, when I was in college.*

*I'm sure I must have performed terribly, I would like to hear the sound of my voice again, and may be after that I could improve on my voice (Mele)*

No participant refused to be tape-recorded. This may be due to the fact that they were already told in the consent letter that the interview would be tape-recorded. But it was noticed at first that the presence of the audiotape made some participants to be nervous and less reluctant to express themselves freely. When this happened they were always reassured of the importance of the tape recorder and were often offered to receive a copy of the tape once finished, should they need it. On one occasion a participant was nervous, it was offered to turn the tape off, but the participant simply said, "I'm alright!" and the offer was never taken up. But it



was realized that he *wasn't* alright. Such experience led to taking a more relaxed approach when approaching interviews with staff members and to conduct the interviews in a more informal chat style, thus making it easier for staff members to express their views, and it gave the chance to raise and discuss some of the issues in a more relaxed or casual way. Having discussed this thesis research design and the interviewing process, it is time to move on from the creation of the interview text to its analysis. In the next section, it will discuss the ways the text was analyzed.

## **5.4 Part Three: the issue of analysis**

In this section, discussion initially concerns the 'texts' that used as primary data sources. Consecutively are discussed the importance and relevance it has on the qualitative analysis.

### **5.4.1 The issue of text**

To a qualitative researcher, a 'text' is the spoken words or the accounts of the participants in an interview, which may come in a written format, audiotape and video, with respect to its content rather than its physical form (Bryman, 2004).

The above definition is in keeping with the qualitative traditions that were adopted, in which the primary interest was on the black British clerical workers' accounts of their expectations, perception and experiences at work. Therefore, it is difficult to

follow this thesis' analytical approach without any material record of what the participants said at the interviews. Significantly, the term 'text' can also be figurative, thus meaning that individual social acts can be regarded as some kind of symbols, thus taking the text as model (Prasad, 2002). From the definition mentioned above, the interviewer takes the text to mean a written statement or spoken words (audiotape), in which he was personally involved in producing and one that is drawn from the dialogues had with the participants. Therefore the text being used in this thesis is the participants' accounts drawn from oral debates or dialogues of what took place between the participants and the interviewer. The part of the transcripts selected as text to be used in this thesis is mainly from an oral interaction, which is in line with the interviewing method adopted. This happened at a point during the interviewing, when the participants were encouraged to tell a story about their experiences at work. For example, by focusing on three broad types of stories such as: (1) What does it mean to work as a black British person in UK local authorities? (2) Have you had instances when you felt you have been unfairly treated by your employer? (3) How did you respond to psychological contract violation? These are the types of themes that have drawn a lot of text from participants through telling stories. In the next section, it will be explained why focus was made on the participants' 'stories'.

#### **5.4.2 Issues of Stories**

Stories help you to reflect on your experiences both in the past and present. It is one way of communicating experiences to others, and also another way to describe your life and other people lives without mentioning names. As Finnegan

(1997) puts it, we all live 'storied lives'. This shows that the author did not set out to collect stories or intentionally asked participants to tell them, instead it was noticed when participants were responding to questions, their replies always being in stories form. It was this that prompted, at the initial stage of the interview (pilot), the asking of participants why they used so much story and the answer was obvious from the discussion so far. Furthermore, a view held by another researcher argues that:

*We understand our own lives – our own selves, our own places in the world – by interpreting our lives as if they were stories, or more precisely, through the work of interpreting our lives, we turn them into stories, and life understood as stories constitutes self-understanding (Ricoeur, 2003)*

This process described above is in keeping with the interview context this thesis has adopted, where as a researcher work was done with participants to make sense of their world through continuous interaction that included stories. Answering to the call of stories in interviews, it was decided to use the language of stories during the interview process to encourage participants to tell the stories by asking questions such as: "Can you tell me the story of how you came to be working for this local authority?" Or perhaps, "Could you talk me through your story of how you responded to psychological contract violations or disappointments?"

Other researchers might have argued that a story approach to the conduct of the interviews was purposely employed, but in contrast, it should be argued that an approach using stories had evolved from the way the participants responded to the research questions, and in turn the author has responded to the fact that stories are an integral part of the research experience that has developed through the use of qualitative interview process.

Most researchers would notice that most of the extract from interview data has been presented in a story format. The rationale to this approach has been unmasked as explained from this researcher's perspective towards what the term 'story' meant, and how it was decided to choose the stories used in these debates. Literature has shown that a story is often used interchangeably in debates or interviews (Gallie, 1968). But according to Boje (2001) "Story is an open account of incidents or events." Adopted from Gallie's approach (1968), below is a definition of 'story' by Ricoeur (2003):

*A story describes a sequence of actions and experiences done or undergone by a certain number of people, whether real or imaginary. These people are presented either in situations that change or as reacting to such change. In turn these changes reveal hidden aspects of the situation and the people involved, and engender a new predicament which calls for thought, action or both. This response to the new situation leads the story to its conclusion'*

There are times in our lives when changes or events occur in our lives, and while we may not be able to remember in detail exactly what transpired, storytelling would acknowledge and then perhaps help us to give the change or event a special place in our life histories, thus helping us to make sense of the change or event in our lives (Ricoeur, 2003). You may argue that most people or indeed government keeps diary of event or changes, thus removing the need for story, but in contrast, it could equally be argued that event or changes such as the birth of a new-born baby can be a very traumatic experience and a major change for the new mother. While there may be documentary evidence about the birth of the child in hospital, on the other hand you might ask yourself, “Who carries with them everywhere documentary evidence of the birth of their new born baby?”—thus giving rise to the use of stories to reflect experiences at work, home, or time in the hospital (Boje, 2001). It was this debate that led to the support of the view that people are a product of their own experience.

Generally, in reflection on the use of stories (Ricoeur, 1984, 2003) it was found that the terminology is used commonly to reproduce lived experiences. While this thesis uses mostly the term ‘story’ when interviewing participants, it is believed that the terminology can be used to provide accounts of individual black British clerical workers’ own experiences. The term ‘story’ is a household resource that most people use to describe event and change to their lives, which means relating more to the world and lives of those participants researched, ‘the black British clerical workers in UK local authorities’, because of their link with local people,

rather than people in the academic world. Having discussed the importance of stories in this research process and mentioning that the majority of the texts used in this thesis are stories, we can now turn to how these stories were selected.

### **5.4.3 Selection of stories**

During interviewing it was noticed that participants' 'stories' related more to event or change in their lives, and sometimes it brought to light the event and change that has happened in their past or present lives. How these stories to be used in the thesis were selected depended entirely on its quality and relevant to the themes under discussion. It must be said that although most of the participants chose to tell stories about their experiences, others endeavoured to give example and explanation when asked to respond to issues concerning psychological contract violation.

Boje (2001) support the notion of following a sequence, claiming it is the most positive way of making a good story. In contrast, this research found a difference of opinion among the participants during the interviewing process. Some of the participants during interviews suggested that the sequence approach advocated by Boje (2001) was hard to follow, especially where the participant's language was different from the research language, e.g. participants whose first language was not English. Therefore, the idea of having a sequence may be obscured by non-fluent speech, caused by shyness, or lack of confidence in the language in which the story (event) is being described. This might be due to the fact that half

of the participants' first language was not English. This meant spending lots of hours or days interpreting and analyzing the texts. However, for the purpose of reaching out to the wider black population, it was decided to make a conscious effort to look for different forms of storytelling, meaning interviewing both non-fluent and fluent speakers of the English language as supported by Boje (2001).

Literature revealed that there is a difference of opinions among researchers on how to analyze participants' stories (Boje, 2001). Having decided what constituted a story in the transcripts, it was needed to select more stories/texts to analyze and to do this a form of theme analysis was employed, which relied not only on stories but also exploring more on the themes that are grounded in the literature review or emerged from the last three chapters as supported by Neumaan (1997) and Boje (2001). This was done by returning to all the transcripts and spotting areas in the transcripts where these themes had been discussed. In addition, the themes were explored by moving away from the storied approach to use instead the themes analysis approach to identify examples in the text where participants were explicitly describing their expectations and experiences at work, and the analysis of these stories plus other less stories process has helped to form the basis for the content of Chapter 6.

## **5.5 Conclusion to Chapter Five**

On the whole, this chapter presented a detailed outline of the process undergone from formalizing the research design, selecting local authorities where the re-

search was undertaken and the research participants. It was described how the data was collected through an initial pilot study, then proceeding to the main qualitative interviewing, further continuing through to analyzing and presenting the data. It was also described what steps were taken to demonstrate to readers that the findings were 'credible'. Research credibility was shown by going through a process of revealing the validity and reliability of the data and at the same time making sure that the research was ethically conducted.

Argument was made against the use of a quantitative research method as an alternative methodology for this thesis phenomenon. Later the use of qualitative interviewing was evaluated. Afterwards the difficulties and drawbacks that the research method had suffered were expressed in the methodological chapter. These issues were considered with reference to personal experience as a researcher during the interviews with participants. Recommendation was then made of ways of addressing these difficulties and drawbacks. Also discussed was the interviewing method using a semi-structured approach and the use of storytelling to describe individual experiences at work. The choice of the research locations was justified, the ten UK local authorities where research was undertaken and selection of the research participants, in so doing making sure to demonstrate a fully representative majority of the black communities in the UK. It was discussed how participants were selected and how the approach participants revealed that their voices or opinions had not been taken on board by management, and that for this



reason some participants had decided to take part in the interview. Below, one participant explains why he took part in the research:

*I wanted to use your research as a channel to recount my experiences at work, because in this local authority no one listens to you or takes on board your opinion and suggestion (Qasi)*

As demonstrated above, the participants tell stories about events that had happened to them whilst working in local authorities; in so doing it shows the incorporation of the concept of storytelling to the methodological strategy.

This chapter served to demonstrate how the research design was conducted and arrived at and showed how compatible it was with the research methodology as previously described in Chapter Four. It was also revealed how features of the research design, e.g., the adoption of an interviewing, and storytelling, were important as a qualitative researcher, whose approach is the aim to consider the human behaviour from a participant's perspective in a local setting (local authorities), rather than from a universal setting based on a quantitative method connected to positivist approach. This chapter has set the groundwork for the introduction of the data analysis in Chapter Six, focusing on the findings from the qualitative phase of the thesis.

## CHAPTER SIX

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### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

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#### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter findings are presented from the qualitative interviews conducted over ten weeks, which saw the interview of 4 pilot participants and 34 core participants, using a semi-structured interviewing method.

As mentioned previously, all the interviews conducted were taped and transcribed. The data collected was analyzed with the sole aim of building a theory inductively in the same manner as informed by the concept of grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1987). Therefore, the framework analysis is based on grounded theory approach. All the interviewees' stories are approached firstly by attempting to understand the overall meaning of the text, and secondly to focus on the discursive elements of the text; for example, the vocabulary, grammar and imagery, and thirdly to bring together these two types of analysis simultaneously in looking for the emergent patterns and themes. This is with reference to Chapters Four and Five, where the influence of the societal factors were drawn upon, namely: culture, religion, black extended family, social and legal system as a framework with which to organize information and further develop themes. This

concept was used as a way of exploring what factors influence the black British clerical workers to join local authorities; understanding the moderating factors that help shape their psychological contract, and how they respond to psychological contract violation. These analytical approaches have been used to identify themes and the various issues that have emerged from the interview data.

## **6.2 The Findings**

This section serves the important role of introducing the participants' voices through the various texts and stories collected. To bring this research to life on paper, extracts have been lifted from the word to word comments had with all the interviewees, assembled under common themes. As promised to the interviewees, their anonymity is retained by using only the first four letters of their forename. False names might have been used to describe the participants, just as other researchers have done in the past, as supported by Hardy and Bryman (2004), but that might mean the loss of the sense of individual connections had for each participant, and even after concluding all interviews, going through the comments and stories again brings a reminder of their faces. The 38 semi-structured interviews were empirically carried out, and with the result of all the interviews in hand, it was possible to focus on each individual's perspective and then narrow these down to the elements considered to be of key relevance to this research. The main themes had emerged as informed by what had been researched in the psychological contract literature and subsequently found to be important after analyzing the interviews. The main themes are: individual back-

grounds, perception, expectations, promises, motivation, transactional contract, exchange relations, intergenerational issues, and contract violation.

In classifying individual responses on these themes into codes, it was necessary to give proper consideration to the stories or text provided by the participants. Basically, it is only those interviewees' comments or stories that were particularly pertinent to the research questions that are shown and not all comments from all the interviewees. The codes below had emerged from the interview themes and they are of key relevance to this research phenomenon:

### **Section 6.2.1**

Here, the findings on the five key elements that led participants to join UK local authorities are presented **(RQ 1)**.

#### **Opportunities and Security**

For most black British clerical workers interviewed, the awareness of a better opportunity and security in the workplace was the key influence for job change, and most participants agreed that was what they were looking for before joining any organization. Participants were asked "What did you feel you could achieve before you joined this local authority?" About 90% of the participants interviewed indicated that they joined UK local authorities because it operated an equal opportunities policy, which to them was a kind of security, and they are motivated by the fact that local authorities operate an annual salary increment scheme, meaning

the longer they stay, the higher their salary. Below, Hele made the following comment about opportunities when she was asked what led her to join local authority:

*In the bank there wasn't much prospect as such, so going to work for local authority I thought I would have a better opportunity in terms of progression, which I did because within six months of me being there I moved from my receptionist job scale 2 onto a clerical officer post scale 4 with good salary*  
*(Hele)*

Participants were asked how their job turns out in terms of their goals. 80% indicated it turns out well and at least better than their previous job, while the remaining 20% thought not much different.

### **Stability**

While pay seemed to be a motivating factor for some to enter an organization, for about 90% of black British clerical workers in local authorities, the single most important reason for joining local authority is primarily to secure a long-term job stability, rather than higher income in the private sector or working as an agency worker without job security. Tutu made the following comment about job stability:

*For the last five years, I have worked in more than six local authorities as agency worker. The maximum I have been given in one organization is a year*

*contract. I am not getting younger, and travelling around London is becoming increasingly difficult, hence I decided to look for a permanent contract, which would guarantee long term job stability (Tutu)*

Tutu's comment shows the need to secure a stable job due to uncertainty in the job market. In support, Rama made the following comment when asked what motivated her to join local authority:

*My father worked for Barclays Bank for over twenty-five years. He has already planned for his retirement, but today he has lost his job because of the global economic recession. My father is 54 years and it's going to be difficult for him to get another job. So money is not everything that makes someone happy. For me what is most important is a long-term job security that will keep the roof over my head until I retire and that is why I came to work in this local authority (Rama)*

Rama's comment shows she does not want to fall into the same situation as what had happened to her father, hence her desire to secure a stable job. Later participants were asked what they hope to get out of the job. 90% indicated they wanted satisfaction, better remuneration, experience and the opportunity to input changes and to influence others. This led me to ask, "Do you think you might leave if things do not turn out as you wanted?" Below Abdu made the following comments when asked:

*If I'm offered a better salary than what I am earning now, of course I will go, but it must be on a permanent basis (Abdu)*

Again, Abdu pointed out the fact that transactional contract is important but emphasized his requirement for job stability. Another participant name 'Shit' was asked the same question and below is his comments:

*Maybe yes, but the fact that I work few days at home has helped soften the impact and released the tension of me thinking of leaving the organization (Shit)*

Above Shit's comment emphasized the importance black British clerical workers placed on work life balance. His comments raised the issue of work life balance, which will be discussed below.

### **Work/life balance**

Black British clerical workers with children indicated during interviews that a better family life, good hourly pay or salary, and a short distance to work were very important to their joining the organization. There was a general consensus in the interviews among the black British clerical workers with young children, that any work pattern that suited childcare arrangement, like flexible working scheme, was particularly interesting to them.

Participants were asked whether they were content with their current salary. Those on top of their salary scale indicated they were content with their current salary, but those not yet on top of their salary scale indicated they were not content. Fola made the following narrative when asked about her experience:

*I know a man who worked here for five years. As soon as management decided to cut down on the number of overtime individual can do the man couldn't cope with his basic salary so he left for another employment. According to him he has too many obligations and so not prepared to take a lower salary (Fola)*

Fola's story shows the employee was not prepared to accept pay cut because of personal obligations; instead he would rather leave the organization. Later participants were asked if they would prefer to work elsewhere where there is more salary increment. A majority indicated that money is important but it is not the single most important issue when they (participants) want to leave the organization.

Kaza made the following comment when asked whether he would leave:

*My house is twenty miles away from here, so if I can get another job on the same salary, but closer to my home, where I'm able to visit my elderly parents regularly, I will definitely resign (Kaza)*



Here Kaza was emphasizing the need to be flexible and therefore would only move if he get a job closer to his house. In support, Akin made the following comment regarding what constrains her from leaving the organization:

*I thought of looking for another job with a better salary package, but I couldn't because of my children, they are still in primary school and the school they are attending is the best in South East England. Therefore, I'm prepared to wait for another five years when both of my children finally leave primary school (Akin)*

Here Akin's comment shows that work/life balance not only made her join the organization, but it is what is constraining her from leaving, thus allowing her to care for her children, while working at the same time. Participants were asked if they think good exchange relations with their colleagues and managers would constrain them from leaving the organization. About 20% of the participants indicated a good relation would hold them back from leaving the organization. Below Olab made the following comment when she was asked the same question:

*My work is where I spend most of my time and so if I cannot get along with my colleagues and manager, it would make life difficult for me and at the end I will have to leave the organization (Olab)*

Olab's comment suggests that in general closer exchange relations do in fact make her job interesting, but a better exchange relation with other ethnic groups is not common among the black British clerical workers. Although she later confirmed to me that there are differences between personal relations (someone you have a close relation with, maybe visit each other at home after work) and co-workers (these are people not in your team, people you only say 'hello' to at work, some of them don't even stop when they see you outside work; occasionally you might wave to say hello).

In contrast to Olab's comment, Tayo suggested below that he prefers work/life balance, to having an exchange relation with colleagues:

*The team I'm working with at present are very supportive. However, if the job cannot fit in well with my family life and my personal life (work-life balance) then I will have no choice but to seek for another employment (Tayo)*

Earlier during the interviews, participants were asked about flexible working and how important it is to them. About 80% of participants indicated that flexible working is important to them, and some confirmed they have children below six years, who they regularly drop at school every morning. Oghe made the following narrative after being asked about flexible working:

*Flexible working is important to me, since it gives me the opportunity to work round my time; for instance there are days I feel like working and there are days I do not want to work and so I just don't do it. Flexible workings enable me to drop off and pick up my children from school, and also help me to do other things like attend evening school. I wouldn't be able to continue in my job, without this flexible working (Oghe)*

Oghe's story indicated the importance she attached to flexible working and suggests she would not be able to continue working without it.

Adet was asked the same question, and he gave the following comment:

*Having the choice to work flexible hours while in the office has enabled me to drop and pick up my kids from school. I really enjoy being on a flexible scheme because it allows me to focus fully on my job without the constant fear of coming to work late (Adet)*

Again, Adet's comment highlights the importance of a flexible scheme. Below are Koro's comments in support of flexible hours:

*I would not have joined this local authority, if they are not operating a flexible working scheme. Working flexible hours allows me to drop and pick up my kid at school (Koro)*

Here Koro and Adet share the same opinion, as they support the availability of the flexible working scheme. Solt was asked the same question about the importance placed on flexible working and she gave the following narrative:

*The fact that I live very close to the office has saved me lots of money I would have spent on petrol, transportation, and so if things don't turn out the way I wanted, any decision I take will be constrained by the fact that I have lot of flexibility, that means I can start and close from work whenever I choose and that is a great help to me. As you know money is not everything you need to keep you happy (Solt)*

Here Solt is very much concerned about losing her flexibility and considered her flexibility as constraint to any decision to leave or stay. Solt's story highlights how important flexible working scheme is to employees. Solt's talk about money is not everything; her story raises the issue of remuneration which is discussed next.

### **Remuneration**

On the issue of what role remuneration plays on the employee's decision to join the organization, it was gathered during the interviews that the high cost of living in London and family obligations are the underlying principle why black British workers are attracted to better remuneration. In fact 80% of black British workers indicated a good remuneration will continue to be a motivating factor attracting

them to apply for a particular job. Below Ogun made the following comment when asked why he joined local authority:

*Local authorities across London pay different scales for the same kind of work I do, and so I am always attracted to a job advert offering more pay than what I am getting now (Ogun)*

About 90% of the black British clerical workers I interviewed had expressed the desire to go for a good remuneration because of individual obligations. Similarly, Rees made the following comment about pay when he was asked why he decided to join local authority:

*If it wasn't for the good remuneration I am getting, I would not be able to take care of my family. It is important I work for local authority that pays better salary (Rees)*

Overall, there is a general consensus among the black British clerical workers interviewed of the desire to earn a good remuneration due to increasing high cost of living, growing family needs, and cultural obligations. This raises the issue of individual expectations, which will be discussed next.

### **Individual expectations**

Participants were asked whether they see colleagues outside of work. And, if they had left the organization, with whom would they keep in contact? Below are some of the comments at the interviews:

*I tried to be pleasant with everyone at work but there are some odd ones you keep in contact with and later become your friends. Sometimes the environment makes that happen for most people. We (black people) don't normally go to bar to have a drink after work as most of our colleagues do, especially white people. I sometimes feel we black people, our brains, have been programmed in that way (Adet)*

Another participant who was asked if she sees her work colleagues outside of work, agrees with Adet, as she made the following statement:

*Not really, maybe one or two of my close friends, but generally most black people just go home after work (Iren)*

Iren and Adet's comments indicate that when black people join an organization their aim is not to seek for better exchange relations, but rather to see how they could make life better for themselves and their families, and as mentioned previously, this raises the issue of individual expectations. For the black British clerical

workers interviewed, the term 'expectations', refers to what they are hoping to accomplish. It was gathered during these interviews that employees' desires differ from one person to another, age to age, from one society to another. But for the older generation 'expectations' means to provide both cultural and financial supports to their extended family in the UK and Africa, providing shelter for their immediate family and keeping them safe. In contrast, the younger generation are more concerned about who they want to become, interested in career progression, pursuing higher education, going on holidays and trying to keep away from crime or trouble. It was gathered that these expectations are the key factors influencing participants' perceptions. That is why in Chapter Two participants indicated that as long as their expectations are fulfilled, reciprocally they are obliged to fulfil their contractual targets. Participants were asked if their perception was formed before or during the current exchange relations. Older participants between the age group 30 to 60 indicated they had formed their expectations before joining the organization. In contrast, younger people between the age group 19 to 29 pointed out that their expectations had been formed from things they had read about the organization, and from friends doing similar work. The consensus gathered among the older generation was that they view their expectations as a demand in terms of their cultural obligations, their families and the black communities. Below Tayo narrates about his expectations:

*I am 57 years old. Presently I'm on top of my salary scale. If my continuous stay in this local authority is simply based on money then I would say it is*

*time for me to go. But it isn't, rather my expectation is to retire gracefully and go back to Africa, hence my desire for a long-term job security. At my age I do not want to go and work elsewhere and then lost my job (Tayo)*

Tayo's story shows his desire for job stability and security, especially for people who are getting to their retirement age. In contrast, Soul had a different view as shown in her comment below:

*I am only 20 years old and my expectation is to be a manager by the time I turned 30 and so if I wait for the next two years and nothing comes up, I would consider leaving elsewhere to pursue my career (Soul)*

Soul's comment demonstrates how people come to local authorities with different beliefs, thus influencing their perceptions. Participants were asked if they had discussed their expectations with their line manager. They responded as follows:

*Not really, because I think if my present line manager knows about my expectations she might think I wouldn't stay here for long and assume I am unreliable, and that is what I don't want (Jade)*

Jade's comment shows her expectations are embedded within her, hence are psychological. In supports, below Akin's narrative shares a similar line of thought:



*My expectations are concealed within me. I rather discuss it with my close friends and not with my line manager. Do you know management changes staff in this place frequently? Let's assume my manager doesn't like my expectations, what do you think will become of my job? (Akin)*

Akin's story demonstrates the uncertainty of the job market and at the same time shows her readiness to keep her expectation embedded within her inner motive. Participants were asked if their expectations have been met and whether they were influenced by being black. Below Koro made the following comments:

*I haven't achieved all my expectations, however being black did not influence me but it has made me to work harder so as to demonstrate I can perform the job even better (Koro)*

Koro's comments shows that being black did not influence him, but later during the interview he admitted it could be because he is a young person and that racism or discrimination is no longer prevalent in the workplace as it used to be thirty years ago, but agrees that being black made him to work harder so as to show he can do the job better than those older than him. In contrast, Julu, an older person, had a different view as shown below:

*At the age of 60, I would say I have achieved my goals. But this is a white country, let's not forget that, and so there are people out there who would like*

*to see more of their own in certain positions. Therefore, from my perspectives as an older person my aim is to work harder so as to provide the best I can for my family, for this reason I would say I am influenced by my own experience as a black woman (Julu)*

Julu's comment is coming from a woman of a different generation, and as an older black woman she sees herself culturally different from others and so she has to work harder to show she can do the work. In contrast, Kobo (20 years old) had a different view as shown below:

*I have not met all my expectations yet, but being black has nothing to do with it, may-be thirty years ago it could be different (Kobo)*

Kobo's comment shows a young man who lives in an era when racism is legally controlled and so does not feel being black is unhelpful. Participants were asked if they think their expectations would have been different if they had been white. Below Solt narrates her experience:

*Of course, if I am white definitely my expectations would have been different, because I would not have to take care of my extended family in Africa, which is costing me a fortune at the moment and my money could have been spent on other things like houses and holiday (Solt)*

Solt is 49 years old, a black woman who has an extended family in Africa, actually believing her expectations could have been different if she was a white woman. In contrast, Julu, a 60-year-old black woman, has a completely different view as shown below:

*My expectation is partly due to the fact that I am black, because think about it, if not for the racist society, black people would not be fighting for equal opportunity and I will not be working as a diversity Admin assistant (Julu)*

Solt and Julu agree that their black cultural heritage had an impact on them as black women and so believe their expectations could have been different if they had been white women.

## **Section 6.2.2**

In this segment are described the five most recurring codes that have helped shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract (**RQ 2**). These have been discussed below.

### **Change of perceptions**

80% of the participants indicated their perceptions concerning the organization have changed since they started working.

Ewah, a former bank employee, did not know what to expect when she joined her new organization, as she recounts her experience:

*Previously I was dealing with technical job in the bank, but my new job in this local authority wasn't demanding, everything you do here has to be allocated to you (Ewah)*

Ewah, although pleased with her new task, wasn't expecting how relaxed the staff were in local authorities. Fola, formerly from the private sector, agrees with Ewah, as both ladies didn't know what to expect when they joined local authorities:

*In my previous job, I go home when my company closes at 5.00pm, but in this place I was surprised at the amount of flexibility available compared to my previous job. Over here, I am allowed to go home once I have done my 7 hours. I think it is great; I love it (Fola)*

Fola's comment shows a positive outcome due to the flexible working scheme. However, Solt who previously worked as a supervisor in a Plywood company in Liverpool had a different view. In contrast to Ewah's and Fola's accounts, Solt wasn't so content to find out that she has to reapply for every job if she wants to move up the ladder. This is particularly difficult for Solt, because in her previous company, progression came automatically once an employee obtained a diploma. Below Solt narrates her experience:

*I was very pleased to get this job after being made redundant. When I joined this local authority, initially I thought promotion must be easy here, but I was mistaken as I discovered after I started work here, that you do not need any qualification to do the kind of work I am doing now, therefore I have to re-apply for every new vacancy even though I am over-qualified for the job (Solt)*

Solt is not a happy lady from the look of things, but her decision to continue working for this local authority was due to the fact that there are better opportunities, flexibility, and her office is closer to home compared to her previous company. In contrast to Ewah's and Fola's stories, both Solt and Igbi had different viewpoints. Below Igbi, a former air hostess, recounts her experience:

*I never knew things were like this when I apply to work here. In my previous job we work as a team. On my arrival here I noticed everyone minds their own business in this place, and very much concern about achieving their daily work targets than entering into a relationship with other colleagues (Igbi)*

Other participants expressed the view that their perception was influenced by outside factors. Below are narratives showing how outside factors have helped them shape their psychological contract:

*Ussh a senior clerical officer working in local authority. To him the idea of working in a local authority is a status symbol back in his native country in Africa. This job offers me respect within my community, as most people look at me as a breadwinner in my family (Ussh)*

Ussh, a former coco farmer, feels very proud working for local authority. In support, Eser narrates below how his continued stay with this local authority has been influenced by his extended family background:

*My parents are very poor in Africa and don't get any social security benefits from the government, in fact they depend on me financially to buy food, pay rent etc. And since joining this organization I was surprised to discover that my salary keeps on increasing annually compared to my previous employer where you have to negotiate for any pay-rise that comes your way. For this reason I am pleased to be working here. In fact I needed this type of work that can help me meet my family obligations (Eser)*

### **Individual Beliefs**

Participants indicated that their upbringing and cultural background helped shape their beliefs. As discussed in Chapter Two, employees come to local authorities with different beliefs and this belief has helped shape their perceptions. When participants talk about beliefs they are referring to their upbringing and cultural background as supported by Jan-Khan (2003). It is for these reasons that individ-

ual beliefs vary from one person to another and as a result produce different psychological contracts.

At the interview, Tutu made the following comment:

*If people are not different, Britain will not be described as a multicultural society (Tutu)*

Tutu's comment describes Britain's multicultural society as a country with people of different beliefs, culture and backgrounds. In support, during the interviews about 80% of the participants confirmed that the key influence on individual behaviour originated from their upbringing and background, which in turn helped shape their perceptions of any exchange agreement. It was also gathered at the interviews that their beliefs had a lot to do with their way of life, and also on the people they interact with. Participants were asked if their cultural upbringings and background influence the kind of people they make friends with at work. During the interviews Rama narrated her experience below:

*A young man named Boji, was working here two years ago. Boji always refuses to go out to the local pub with colleagues. Lots of colleagues including me called him a wimp without knowing his background. Six months later Boji invited everyone to his house for a drink ...*

*'What are you celebrating?' Kofi asked.*

*'I was consecrated as a pastor yesterday,' Boji replied.*

*I couldn't believe Boji kept this from everyone, I thought.*

*Later we discovered his parents are both senior pastors (Rama)*

Rama's story demonstrates how an individual upbringing and background can influence behaviour at work and the kind of people he/she makes friend with. Among the participants interviewed, there was a general consensus which stands to confirm that individual upbringing and background is a moderating factor that helps form their psychological contract.

### **Feeling Valued**

Participants were asked if they felt a sense of pride working there. Do they have black and white friends? If yes, do they drink after work and socialize with their boss? In response participants indicated they feel a sense of pride working in their respective local authorities. 50% indicated they have few white friends, but have a lot of black friends, while about 70% indicated they do not drink after work and rarely socialize with their boss. Below Koro made the following comments:

*I wish I have the time to socialize with my boss, but I don't. If I want to develop a good relation with my manager, I have to ensure I meet my daily stats, because if I'm behind in my stats, my manager will definitely tell me off. For me the most important thing is being happy in my job and to feel valued in the team (Koro)*



(‘Stats’ are statements of works completed i.e., daily, weekly or monthly).

Koro’s comment shows the significance of being happy in his job, as well as showing little concern about relational contract. For him, he did not join local authority to make friends. It is quite obvious that the most important thing for him is to feel valued by other members of the team through hard work and meeting his daily stats, otherwise he feared he ran the risk of being told off or losing his job. In so doing he is able to form a better psychological contract with his manager. In support, Abdu made similar comment when ask the same question:

*I am appreciated and I have only been here for few years. I am highly valued and highly depended upon. They don’t even want me to go. There are some occasions, say once every three month when I do in fact drink after work and socialize with my boss. I see the reward of what I am doing in the team and I make things happen by achieving above our projected team target (Abdu)*

Abdu’s comments indicate that participants feel valued through hard working. It is obvious that you will not have good exchange relations with your manager if you have problem meeting your daily targets. Although he does not have drinks with his manager regularly, the most important thing is fulfilling the target the manager has set for him. There was a general consensus among the participants interviewed that one can only form a psychological contract by continuing to meet the

departmental target, because the continue stay with the organization depends on it. This raises the issue of team support.

### **Team Support**

Participants were asked what they would do if their boss asked them to work late to cover for a colleague. Would you do it? About 95% of participants indicated that they regularly use their initiatives to cover for absent colleagues without their manager knowing about it. Below Eser made the following comment when asked the same question:

*We are only four in the team and we support each other. Whenever any member of the team calls to say he/she is coming late or going to be absent, we usually pull every resource together as a team to cover for the absent colleague without the manager knowing about it (Eser)*

Eser's comments acknowledge the importance of team spirit and bonding. This is very important to black British workers as they feel less stressful believing when they do return to work, they would not have to work extra hours so as to meet their targets, therefore team support not only helps to build a better exchange relationship, but helps participants to form their psychological contract. In support Adet made the following comment about team support:

*We support each others in the team. I have done it before. I think I would do it again if it would help achieve the objective of the team (Adet)*

Adet's comment shows departmental objectives can be accomplished through team effort and if everyone supports each others. This helps everyone in the team to enhance their exchange relations with their managers if they all meet their targets.

In this discussion, black British clerical workers indicate that team bonding is particularly important in helping to pull resources together in the event of a team member being absent. However, despite having a strong bonding within the team, participants indicated there are occasions when individuals are let down by managers reneging on their promises, that is, when managers knowingly break a promise made to employees. During the interviews it was found that participants' response to disappointment varies among the young and the older generation. This led to investigating the issue of intergenerational gap between the young and older generation.

### **Age Gap**

For most participants the gap between the older generation and the younger generation is an intergenerational issue. Older participants indicated that the influence of a strong cultural background and good upbringing on an individual has a lot to do with the gap among the generational groups. During the interviews 90%

of the participants indicated that the older generation that immigrated to the UK more than forty years ago came here for economic reason and so have the propensity to care for their black extended family left behind in Africa or in the Caribbean, therefore as long as their goal remains reasonably attainable, they are naturally motivated to work (Lewis, Thornhill & Saunders, 2003) which helps them to form their psychological contract. The second generations that arrived in the UK twenty-five years ago or those that were born in the UK are generally influenced by the circular system they themselves have been brought up in, and therefore have more concern about seeking to build and develop their employment careers and education, rather than care for relatives or extended families in Africa or the Caribbean that they do not even know.

Furthermore, older participants were asked "How is your experience at work, would you say your response to problem will be different from your children's?" 90% of older participants indicated that young people born here in the UK would respond differently to problem in the workplace because of their Western upbringings, whereas about 70% of the young generation indicated that they are likely to resign and then move on, when faced with problems of unfulfilled promises or disappointment. Below are some of the narratives from both the young and older generational groups as they were asked whether the young generation would respond differently to unfulfilled promises:

*We have a young person in my team that management wanted to move to another district and he fought it. If it were to be me, I would not fight it. My son who is 20 years old would handle the situation differently from me, in that he would fight it and if management try to force him to stay, he will just resign (Adet, an older person)*

Adet's story shows how the young and older people respond differently to problems at work. In support, Simb, a young person, made the following comment below:

*Many young people would respond differently to problem in the workplace, because things have changed, lots of people have learnt to accept you as a black person and so there are lot of choices for young black people. Whereas previously it wasn't the case, as most white people didn't have the opportunity to work with so many black people in the office and so job evaluation was based on what they felt about you individually, rather than your ability to do the job (Simb, a young person)*

Simb's comments emphasize the improvement that has happened in the past on race relations and that these have made life relatively easier for young people because job evaluation is no longer based on who you are, but on what you can do. In support, Rama, an older person, made the following comment:

*For young people things have changed for them. We the older generation have successfully bridged the gap between white and black people, whereas for the young generation they didn't have to face racism in the workplace, because the changes are already there, and now everything is based on your ability to do the job rather than the colour of your skin. These have given the younger generation plenty of choices, e.g. where to work or which career to pursue (Rama, an older person)*

Rama's comment not only supports Simb's narratives but indicates the problem of race issues are no longer visible; as a result both young and older people are able to form their psychological contract by performing to the best of their abilities.

The findings revealed that the older generation blame the gap on the European circulatory system which they argue put more emphasis on the pursuit of materialism rather than caring for their extended families, and as discussed in Chapter Two, this has put the duties of care on the government, instead of individual family members. This discussion led to investigating what influences and restrains the old and young generation to respond differently to psychological contract violation.

### **Section 6.2.3**

In this section are presented the four codes exhibited by the black British clerical workers interviewed, factors that have influenced and constrained their response to psychological contract violation **(RQ 3)**.

During the pilot interviews it was noticed that when the term 'violation' was mentioned most participants assumed this was referring to 'mistreatment, aggression, hostility' and 'violence'. Initially, participants were asked, "How would you deal with psychological contract violation?" The response received was, "What is contract violation?" It took a while, but in the end it was possible to establish a better understanding, and thus emerged the use of the term 'unfulfilled promise or disappointment' to describe the term 'violation'. The rationale behind the participants' decision—why they might leave—led to investigation of the issues relating to outside support, which shows the finding below:

#### **Outside Support**

Participants had pointed out that the decision to leave or stay with the same organization depends on the advice/support they received from other groups outside the organization. Participants were asked if they have ever felt let down by their organization, and how that makes them feel. 80% indicated they have been let down in the past by their employers (local authorities). Participants pointed out that unfulfilled promises or disappointment is usually a common practice across

UK local authorities particularly during management selections, and reorganization.

Participants were asked how they responded to disappointment when let down by their employer; they were further asked if they contacted their trade union or seek advice/support from groups outside the organization. Participants were asked to tell a story about their experiences. Below is Ahme's narrative:

*I joined this organization over five years ago. My last employer was also a local authority but unfortunately they made me redundant when our call centre service was contracted out to private firm in India. I had a lot of witnesses ready to stand by me because they argued my previous employer should have allocated me to other department (Ahme).*

Ahme's experience suggests he felt let down and also felt his psychological contract has been violated because he believed there are other posts in other departments that management could have given to him; instead the post was given to someone else that has less experience. He was asked, "Did the union come to your support?" encouraging him to continue with his story:

*The trade union were not prepared to help pursue the case, according to them the situation was forced on the Council due to lack of financial support from the Centre Government. Some of my team members were telling me to take the*



*Council to industrial tribunal, but in the end I decided I want to move on.*

*That is why I am here today (Ahme)*

Owus was asked the same question and responded as follows:

*Yes, I have been let down by my employer and that makes me feel I am not being recognised as a valuable worker. Some managers take advantage of you if they find out you are not in the trade union. That means they can call for a 1-2-1 meeting and tell you what senior management want to do and they know you will not take the matter further. This is not a matter of what I can contribute or what I can gain, instead it is a matter of what my employer can get from me (Owus)*

Owus's story points to the fact that he felt let down because management had not recognized him as a valuable staff, and couldn't take the matter further because of his non-union membership, but in the end due to his family obligations, he decided to stay until he found another job.

20% of the participants interviewed indicated that they do not regularly contact their trade union representatives, because they felt trade union are part of the negotiation team that has brought the changes. However, 60% of the participants indicated that they still maintain regular contact with their union representative on

matters that they (the participant) had raised. About 20% indicated they were not union members.

On the other hand, 80% of the participants indicated that they often discuss issues concerning unfulfilled promises with their close friends, while other participants pointed out that it is only when you talk to people about issues concerning unfulfilled promises that you discover a lot of them are in the same situation like you. About 70% indicated that it also helps to discuss problems with family members and a church group, because when you found someone to talk to, who is not in your organization, he/she might be able to see things in a different way. Another participant, 'Koro', made the following narrative concerning the response he got when he went to seek advice from his close friend regarding the unfulfilled promises he suffered at his previous job:

*I went over to my close friend to seek advice about whether to make a complaint concerning an unfulfilled promise in my last job. After listening to my story, my friend advised me that if I make a complaint now, that will bring up all the issues again and most people may think I'm a troublemaker and senior managers may not be happy with me. At the end I did not bother to proceed with the complaint anymore (Koro)*

Koro's narrative suggests how unhappy he was towards his psychological contract violation. Even though he still wanted to appeal against the decision, the ad-

vice he got from his friend made him not to proceed with it. Another participant, 'Igbi', made the following narrative as to the reason why she decided to share her problems with other groups i.e., a Church group:

*Yes, I discussed my problems with my church group. It's good you can let the steam out, since they are talking from a religious position and not from the organizational perspective, and can give advice from a neutral position, and they may not be biased (Igbi)*

Igbi story shows the benefits of contacting other groups outside the organization, because these groups are able to offer an unbiased advice. Afterwards, Igbi confirmed that if any employee contacts the union they also stand a better chance of knowing what to do, as the trade union has more knowledge about an employee's rights at work.

5% of the participants interviewed indicated that they did not want to get their trade union representative involved, because they did not want to be branded as troublemaker, and as a result they prefer to leave the organization quietly. Participants were asked if other factors such as family or cultural background influence the way they would respond to unfulfilled promises. Kaza made the following comment about his experience:

*I have a young family and a big mortgage; I don't want to take the risk of losing my job. Therefore I am prepared to take a lower salary. For this reason, I will not take the complaint route if my manager didn't fulfil his promise of pay increase, but wait until I get another job (Kaza)*

Kaza's comment suggests his family obligation is very important and so does not want to lose his job. In supports, Shit's narrative below expresses some fear over his family well-being:

*I have been working here for over twenty years. If you feel you cannot handle it yourself, then seek for another employment elsewhere, it better to be happy in your job than being miserable. The health and well-being of my immediate family and my extended family depends on this job, for this reason I will not challenge my manager if she didn't keep to her promise. (Shit)*

Shit's story shows he is influenced by her family circumstances. As a carer he particularly expressed concerns about his family well-being since they depend on him for their daily living. Both Kaza's and Shit's narratives show some degree of loyalties and pride for working in their respective organizations, but they do not want to jeopardize their dependence and so they intend to hold on until when they retire or find another job. However, Akin, an older person, narrates below why she feels it is not culturally right to appeal against the psychological contract valuation:

*Culturally, my upbringing tells me to respect my boss, and also says 'do not bite off the hand that feed you'. To me this means I must do what I am told and in no circumstances must I go fighting with my boss. If I cannot continue with my current work, then I must look for another employer and leave quietly (Akin)*

In contrast, Kobo, a younger person, took a different position, a rather aggressive one, as he narrates his experience below:

*There is life outside this job, I really do not care, I am better off on the dole. Do you imagine being told I need to undergo further training on a job I can do properly than others. I think I can do better than this. It shouldn't take long I will definitely find another job. I must hand in my resignation immediately (Kobo)*

Akin and Kobo demonstrate how an older person (Akin) and a younger person (Kobo) respond differently to psychological contract violation.

### **Economic Conditions**

Economic conditions are more of a transactional contract than a relational contract; they are negotiated but nevertheless still able to influence the employee's decision as to whether to stay or leave the local authority. 90% of the black British clerical workers viewed the current economic recession in the UK as a significant

societal factor that can influence and constrain their decision to stay or to leave the organization. This notion reinforces previous discussions in Chapters Two and Three that the current state of the UK economy is likely to bring to bear strong influence on families with higher childcare cost, big mortgage, and other family obligations. About 70% of the participants interviewed pointed out that the present economic recession makes the job market insecure and so makes it hard for them to change job in case they lose their job. Below Nana put it this way:

*I have been working here for over twenty years and my job is secure for now, but with many restructuring taking place across UK local authorities, I just cannot risk changing my job. What if I change my job, a year later I was told there is no more work for me. At the age of 54 I would not be able to cope*  
*(Nana)*

Nana's story confirms the trepidation that is common among the black British clerical workers interviewed. About 70% do not think this is the right time to consider leaving the organization until the UK economy improves.

About 90% of the participants indicated that because of the high cost of living in London, the implication is that they have to seek for the best employers in terms of remuneration to enable them to meet personal and family obligations. Below Ewah made the following narratives:

*This economic recession has made me to be very selective in terms of where I seek employment. This is because I have to support my family members financially, this includes my husband and children, my retired parents, and my extended family like my cousins, nephews, brothers, sisters and uncles. I have to send money to them on a regular basis to assist in their education and well-being. I cannot afford to stay where I do not have the opportunity to earn good salary (Ewah)*

Ewah's story is typical of a characteristic (older person), as 90% of the participants believed they are responsible for the upbringing of their extended families and so feared the worse if things should go wrong. In support, Fola also made the following comment:

*My problem is that the UK economy is bad and I do not know if I am going to have a job for the next 12 months. With restructuring coming up soon, nobody can tell what would happen. So for me the UK economic condition comes first as I decide whether to stay or leave the organization (Fola)*

The uncertainty of the job market caused by the current economic recession is the single biggest reason why most participants resist leaving their present organization. Therefore 70% of the participants interviewed pointed out that the current economic recession is likely to have greater influence on families with higher childcare cost, higher mortgage, and the obligation to care for their family members (wife, children, and retired parents).

### **Black extended family**

Black extended family member includes cousins, nephews, brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles. When participants talk about influence from extended family, they are referring to their cultural obligation. Participants indicated that as a people, culture is their way of life. 90% of the participants interviewed pointed out that culture is a mental programming from their past experiences and reflects their upbringings and backgrounds as supported by Hofstede (1983) and Akporherhe (2002). It was for this reason the notion of past expectations on the psychological contract was supported in Chapter Two, because expectations are not conceived from the moment one starts work, rather it is already embedded within before one joined local authority. For instance, the obligations to take care of immediate and extended families, mortgage payment, and nursery cost are already embedded within before joining local authority.

Olab pointed out how he benefited from his extended family, thus embedding within him the obligation to reciprocate as it is expected of him, due to the help he got from his cousin before he came to the UK:

*I would not be in the UK if it wasn't for my cousin. He paid for the flight ticket for me to come to this country. Similarly, I owe the same obligation to my relatives, cousin, uncle and my aunts. In Africa it is a common notion that a child belongs to his extended family and not just to his immediate family. As*



*a close knit of relatives we commonly share the cost of rearing children in terms of finance and material support. In essence the responsibility for the upbringing of a child is shared among every member of the extended family and not limited to the parents. This is my cultural obligation (Olab)*

Olab's story suggests he is guided by his extended family's obligation and so his decision to remain or leave the organization depends entirely on his being able to assist his extended family.

### **Educational Qualification**

Participants indicated that the single most important grounds that limit them from looking for another job are educational qualification. Telu narrates below how she lost a well paid job because she did not have the relevant educational qualification:

*I saw this advertisement in the Daily Telegraph newspaper three months ago for a senior clerical officer post. The person's specification was for someone with five years experience and I got more experience. I applied for the job and was invited for interview, but unfortunately I wasn't given the job because I didn't have the relevant educational qualification. After this experience, I promised myself I will undertake a certificate course in customer services and combined with my practical experience, getting a well paid job will be easy for me (Telu)*

Telu's comment shows how competitive the job market is for older people to get a job. Despite her experience, she was not offered a job. Later Telu confirmed she went for a feedback after the interview and was told the employer had decided at the last minute to employ someone younger with four O-levels (Mathematics, English, Science and Computer studies) because of the task involved and that she did not fit that characteristic.

Participants who had been working for more than fifteen years with the same local authority indicated that when they first joined local authority there was no emphasis as such on educational qualification. Instead the job requirement or personal specification was based on practical work experience, skill, and knowledge. However, due to increasing competitions among UK local authorities, standard has since been raised to accommodate customer demands. Hence the recruitment of clerical officer position now requires the ownership of a relevant educational qualification. However, the implications for older black British clerical workers who have been employed on the basis of their practical experience without any professional or educational qualification is that they are unable to further their employment careers or to change job without undertaking further training courses to make them employable. Below Olab narrates from a participant's perspective about her experiences at work:

*When I join this council twenty years ago, not enough people were coming here to work, so I was lucky to get this job without obtaining the relevant educational qualification. I saw a job advert last week for a senior clerical officer post in another local authority, even though I have the required experience, I couldn't apply for the job because the employer wanted a candidate with GCE qualification in English and Mathematic, and I didn't have any of them (Olab)*

Here Olab demonstrates how she has been disappointed in the past for not having the appropriate educational qualification. As a result, she is now attending a computer training course so as to get back on the job market. In support of Olab, below Azee narrates her experience:

*Few weeks ago I started an evening course in business studies to make myself employable in other fields in case I was made redundant. I believe I could use the qualification to get another job elsewhere; otherwise it's going to be difficult for me to change job or further my employment career (Azee)*

Olab's and Azee's narratives indicate that educational qualification is a major characteristic for older black British workers wishing to change job or who had attained the required practical experience but lack the educational qualification. Therefore, it is vital for older black British clerical workers who had the practical experience but no educational qualification to think of obtaining an educational

qualification if they wish to change job or further their employment careers. In so doing they are able to compete equally with other candidates in the job market.

In conclusion, participants were asked at the end of each interview to narrate their work experiences, for example:

(A) Give three reasons why they stay with the same organization?

At this juncture participants indicated they were concerned about their future, family, and especially their pension; for that reason they were prepared to take a lower paid job with the same organization. Another reason for staying was because of the flexible working scheme available and also being loyal to the organization. For those participants working from home, they indicated the decision to stay with the same organization was based on the work/life balance scheme available, that allows them to combine their work, family, and personal life. Qasi, a home worker, made the following comment below:

*I have worked in other local authorities, and I must confess working two days from home is a flexibility other local authorities would not allow me to have and that is the reason I have decided to stay with this local authority (Qasi)*

(B) Give me three reasons why you must go?

At this point participants indicated that one of the reasons they would like to leave the organization is because they needed to move higher so that they could improve their family well-being. Participants also indicated that they have decided to

go for their own contentment, happiness, and the desire to fulfil their expectations. Furthermore, participants indicated that they must leave because they needed to achieve the goals of their life e.g. managerial position. Soul put it this way:

*I am only 20 years, and I plan to buy my own house, get married, and have children. There is no way I am going to survive on my current salary and on the type of life style I want to live (Soul)*

(C) Give me three ways in which being black has affected your experience at work?

Here participants indicated that being a black British worker has made them to stay focused in all challenging situations. It was pointed out during interviews that being a black British worker with strong African accent has its drawbacks and so it was difficult for them to secure the job they really wanted. Adet narrates his experience below:

*Two days ago I saw a man named David Smith at our Access-point. After spending more than ten minutes talking to him and explaining our company policy, this man stood up and said he didn't understand a word I have been saying to him.*

*"Why didn't you say you don't understand me, instead of waiting for me to finish," I asked?*

*"I'm sorry, can I speak to your manager please?" he replied.*

*“My manager is at lunch at the moment,” I commented.*

*He yelled at me saying, “But I don’t understand your accent, it’s too strong for me. Can’t you get someone else that speaks good English?” he added.*

*I was furious inside me but couldn’t show it. I was assertive and told him everyone is busy and not available. At the end, the man slam the door so hard I thought the ceiling would come down on me (Adet)*

Adet’s story is typical of a person not born in the UK, with strong African accent. About 80% of the participants indicated that being a black worker has affected them personally because of their cultural upbringing and background, thus being expected to behave in a manner that is different from other staff members. Finally, 60% participants pointed out that to be a black British worker it means you have to work extra hard to prove that you are better than the rest of the employees. In contrast, about 30% believe things have changed and so there are chances of one being assessed based on ability to do the job, rather than by skin colour.

### **6.3 In summary**

Thirty-eight semi-structured interviews were concluded involving the pilot and core participants. The interviews have proved to be a very useful dialogue. It was not practical or necessary to repeat in this section all the stories or comments participants have made during the interviews. It was believed the stories, comments, and the literature would allow some clear conclusions and recommendations to be made in the next Chapter Seven, where it is intended to present this thesis discussion and conclusion, and summary of substantive findings. The limitations of

the research will also be discussed and suggestions made of recommendations for future studies.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

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### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

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#### **7.1 Introduction**

We have now come to the concluding chapter of this thesis. The task now is to discuss the research findings presented in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis, to summarize and evaluate the journey this research has taken and how far there is still to go, and then discuss which future path could be taken.

In previous Chapters Five and Six, the interviews conducted with 38 participants at ten different local authorities were examined, exploring the nature of the psychological contract of black British clerical workers from the employees' perspectives. In so doing three key issues have been addressed, namely: (1) What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities? (2) What are the moderating factors that help shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract? (3) What are the factors that influence and constrain the black British clerical workers' response to psychological contract violation?

The rationale leading these research questions was the author's claiming, based on observation and personal experience as a manager in a local authority, that



the black British clerical workers' psychological contracts are different from other staff members employed in UK local authorities. According to Mamman (1996, 2002) a diverse employee's interaction adjustment in a heterogeneous workforce are influenced by variables such as: culture, race and gender; these characteristics distinguish the employee from other members of the organization, which cannot be easily changed or manipulated. The theoretical framework guiding this research is that the black British clerical workers' psychological contract is partly due to their upbringing and background, and partly influenced by the societal factors such as economic conditions, outside support, black extended family, and educational qualification. These factors from the employees' perspectives are the reasons why black British clerical workers have different psychological contracts. However, to address these research questions, a qualitative methodology based on an interview method, using semi-structure techniques was adopted. Data collected was analysed in a manner consistent and informed under a grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1987). The findings that emerged from these analyses are fully discussed in this chapter. This chapter is organized as follows:

In section 7.2, the findings for each research question are discussed and explained within the context of the research. As a point of comparison and contrast to the findings, relevant literature was introduced where appropriate. Section 7.3 presents a summary of the substantive findings of this research. Section 7.4 presents the conclusion of this research and outlines the implications of the findings

for the black British clerical workers. Section 7.5 presents the contributions this research has made. Section 7.6 outlines the limitations of this research. In the end, Section 7.7 makes recommendations on potential areas for future research.

## **7.2 Discussion of research questions**

At this stage the findings are now brought together from answering the three research questions individually as follows:

### **Research Question One**

What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities?

Here were discussed the findings relating to Research Question One. As explained in Chapters Two and Three, employees come to the organization with different expectations (Levinson, 1962) and beliefs (Rousseau, 1989), thus producing varied perceptions, which then leads to different psychological contracts. As presented in Chapter Six, the research findings indicate the existence of five distinct codes which the black British clerical workers had exhibited. These codes are categorised as follows: (A) Opportunities and Security (B) Stability (C) Work-life balance (D) Remuneration (E) Individual Expectations. The characteristics and similarities between these codes are discussed below:

## **Opportunities and Security**

Apparently from the research findings it was revealed that over 90% of the black British clerical workers decided to join local authorities because of the awareness of better opportunities, job security, and the reputation that comes with working for local authority that can guarantee a predictable future. Job security is about holding onto a job, rather than joining an organization without a guarantee of a job. Job stability (to be discussed later) is about being on a permanent post or having a job for the next five years or more. The issue of equal opportunities is particularly important among the black British clerical workers, because it shows that everyone is treated equally regardless of their race and gender; it guarantees individuals will be treated fairly and respectfully if they work hard enough to satisfy the departmental objectives or targets. In comparison to the private sectors, local authorities' guarantees steady annual salary increment (Guest, 2002). This is important as 80% of the participants interviewed indicated that this was a motivating factor for them because it showed that the longer they stayed, the higher their salary would rise. On joining local authorities, about 80% of the participants revealed things had turned out well for varied reasons, such as, the organization was closer home, their transport costs had reduced, and for others, they had progressed from receptionist scale 2 job to a clerical officer scale 4 job. The research findings revealed that because of uncertainty and insecurity in the job market, it became obvious that job progression was the type of opportunity participants are seeking and the primary reason for joining local authorities. Therefore, it can be

concluded that opportunities and securities are what lead black British clerical workers to join local authorities.

### **Stability**

Another code that was identified from the qualitative interview data is stability. Among the black British workers interviewed the single most influencing factor was the awareness that the job provided some degree of stability. Over 90% of the black British clerical workers indicated they would not consider working for any organization if they were not sure whether the job would be there within the next one to two years. The most common reason participants gave for seeking stability in jobs was that presently it is difficult to find another job because of the uncertainty in the job market. There was a general consensus among the participants that stability is a motivating factor when seeking a job, hence the desire to work for local authorities, since they are the only employers across the UK that can guarantee job stability. The uncertainty in the job market, combined with high staff turnover is a constant worrying for employees, especially home owners, hence the motivation for job stability. This does not mean everyone fits this characteristic. About 15% of the black British workers interviewed, especially the younger generation, indicated their first priority is saving to buy their own house, hence they do not mind going on contract or working as agency workers because of temptation to earn big salary. Job stability may be important—it does not make someone happy while on the job, instead individual satisfaction comes from the fact that their aims or expectations are continuously being met, as supported by

Lewis, Thorntill, and Saunders (2003). If one is unable to meet expectations, such as paying mortgage or rent, sending feeding money for loved ones in Africa (extended family), then one might consider looking for another job. Overall, employees' determination to have a secured financial future makes them seek job stability, but if it turns out that the job no longer provides the right salary because of the employee's change of circumstance, then employees, especially the younger generation, are more likely to look for another job. However, this research finding revealed among the black British clerical workers that there is disparity between the attitudes of those born in the UK and those that came to the UK for economic reason. This research findings show that those born in developed or western countries feel the social welfare system in the West makes them not to be awfully distressed about losing their jobs, because they believe government will take care of them and their family. In contrast, individuals born in developing countries who came to the UK for economic reason are more likely to look for a job that is stable, given the economic instability that is widespread in developing countries and the lack of a solid welfare system, which would have softened the effect of job loss. Therefore, it can be concluded that job stability is an important factor that would lead employees to join local authorities.

### **Work/life balance**

The work/life balance (WLB) is a term used to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. It was not uncommon for a woman or a man to take time off to care for his/her older parents and children, but prior to the intro-

duction of the WLB in 1999, employers viewed such requests as less than full commitment. As a result both men and women suffered discriminations in the workplace as they took time off or reduced working hours for taking care of their family (Bennington, 2000). There is a wide range of work/life balance options, covering flexible working arrangements and flexible benefit packages. Flexible working is a catch-all term that has been used to describe any working pattern adapted to suit the needs of the employees. Here the employer recognizes that employees do have needs and that these needs have to be fulfilled, hence the flexible working arrangement. Consistent with Levinson (2003) employers may not be aware of the employee's needs but nevertheless still govern their relationship. If the employee's needs are not fulfilled, the employee may not only feel disillusioned but would consider the psychological contract violated. The flexible arrangement includes flexi-time, working from home, time off in-lieu, compressed hours, 'hot-desking', part-time working, job sharing and staggered hours etc. The benefits to employers are that staff members are more motivated, productive, and less stressed at work, while to employees the benefits are that they are happier at home and at work.

About 80% felt it helps them balance their work and private life. Amongst these findings 'Akin' responded in ways that indicated she could not cope without flexible working scheme, meaning she could not take care of her children and family while working at the same time. Her comment indicated that the work/life balance was what made her join the organization. 90% of the black British clerical workers

with families pointed out that a pattern that suited child care arrangement, like a flexible working scheme, is interesting to them. If participants are faced with the choice of work/life balance or higher pay, 80% opted for work/life balance, while only 20% opted for higher pay and so participants preferred greater flexibility over short-term higher salary. This argument supports the notion that money is valuable but is not the single most important feature employees look for when seeking employment. In contrast, 50% of the young generations, especially those still living with their parents, prefer higher salary over flexible working arrangement. The rationale gathered from these young people was that they do not have any family obligations and so they do not have to take care of anyone except to look after their own well-being. In these findings 'Tayo' suggested that if a job could not fit in well with his family life and his personal life (work-life balance) he would have no choice but to seek for other employment. Over 70% of the participants interviewed agreed with Tayo. This is because flexible working has become popular, particularly in local authorities, as every employee is now entitled to join the scheme, rather than only employees with children—which is what it was originally meant to support.

The findings revealed that about 60% of the participants take train, underground or tube, and buses to work every morning. Therefore a flexible working scheme is particularly ideal for employees living far away from the office. Alternatively it helps relieve the stress and anxiety of having to get to work early, meaning that they can arrive for work by 10.00 a.m. instead of the usual 9.00 a.m. The findings

indicate that local authorities across the UK operate a flexible working scheme and that attracts people from the private sectors where there is little or no flexible working arrangement. Again, it was noted that about 70% of the participants that came from other local authorities indicated that they were already used to the flexible working scheme and so would find it difficult to work in other organization where there is no flexible working scheme, as it is already part of their way of life. Flexible working is a volunteer scheme, meaning that if any employee wishes to stick to the traditional working pattern of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., they are free to do so. While the scheme may be an employee's legal right, management do have the right to withdraw it if the employee abuses the scheme. The findings revealed that not only do black British clerical workers join local authorities because of the flexible working scheme, but it is what keeps them in the organization. Provided with this evidence it can be concluded that work/life balance is important to black British clerical workers and it is what motivated them to join local authorities.

### **Remuneration**

The research findings suggest that for working parents a better remuneration is desirable when faced with the high cost of raising families. It was gathered during the interviews that the cost of childcare has rocketed over 100% in the last ten years, hence the desire for jobs that provide higher remuneration and meet individual expectations. Surely no person would leave home every day to work and not able to pay for keeping the roof over their head. The high cost of living in London may be a justifiable reason to seek for a better remuneration, but 60% of the



participants (with children) interviewed indicated that although higher remuneration is important they prefer a permanent position rather than a temporary contract because of the benefits that come with it, such as holiday. With so many families losing their homes, owing to the economic recession, it is obvious that the desire for long-term employment is a matter of importance. This research finding revealed that local authorities across the UK offer the highest salary compared to the private sector. About 80% indicated that if it were not for the high salary they are receiving, they would not be able to care for their loved ones or even their extended family. Overall individual obligations outside the organization have a key influence on the participants' decision to accept the remuneration being offered or to continue looking for another job. Although as noted above there are other factors equally important which help the participant to decide whether to join the organization or not, the offer of a good salary is not sufficient for participants to decide whether to join the organization or not. Therefore, it must be concluded that if the salary or earning is enough to meet the employee's financial obligations that will lead him/her to join the organization.

### **Individual expectations**

Expectations vary from person to person because of backgrounds and upbringings (Levinson, 2003; Hofstede, 2001). Expectations are embedded within the individual employees and as such it is psychological. The findings suggest that most employees do not discuss their expectations with their manager; if they did it surely would not be psychological. Findings suggest that expectations are what

participants wish to accomplish but these differ between the older generation and young generation. 80% of the older generation indicated that their expectations were formed before they joined the organization. But in contrast (Chapter Two), Conway and Briner (2005), and Rousseau (1989) argued that expectations formed outside the organization cannot constitute the psychological contract. This author believed that each individual expectation originated from the past before they joined the organization. Levinson (2003) supports the notion that expectation outside the organization can indeed constitute the psychological contract. It was gathered during the findings that the term 'expectation' has a different meaning to the older generation than it has to the younger generation. In fact the consensus among the older generation was that the term 'expectation' means to provide both cultural and financial supports to their extended families in Africa or the Caribbean, and providing shelter and well-being to their nuclear family in the UK. In contrast, the younger generation indicated that 'expectation' to them has a different connotation. For example, it included career progression, higher education, holidays, buying a home, and who they want to become e.g., lawyer, teacher or doctor. This shows that the two generation groups hold opposite views when it comes to expectations. The older generation's expectations were mostly formed outside the organization, while the younger generation formed their expectations from what they gathered from friends doing a similar job, and the information they have read about the organization.

Overall, the findings revealed that expectations differ from person to person and from society to society which in turn influences individual perception, and leads to different psychological contracts. The findings suggest that 70% of the participants believed their expectations have been affected because they are black. The rationale is that the participants believe if they were white they would not be caring for their extended families in Africa or the Caribbean, therefore they consciously believed that being black is culturally a way of life that is consistent with the views expressed by Akporherhe (2002) when he confirmed that culture determines how employees behave and respond to problems, and so the notion that black British expectations would have been different if they were whites has been established. For that reason, it is concluded that when the black British workers believe their expectations can be accomplished, then they will join the organization.

### **Summary and Conclusion of research question one**

This initial stage of the research provides an insight into what motivates participants to join local authorities. The findings indicate that job opportunities in terms of career progression are factors for which participants seek when deciding which local authority to join. Also, having job security in the form of a long-term employment is what participants seek before joining any organization. The discussion revealed that work/life balance separates the private sector from local authorities. It was found that about 70% of the participants prefer to work for an organization where they operate work/life balance or a work pattern that suited a childcare ar-

rangement. It was found that 60% of the younger generation prefer higher salary over flexible work scheme. In contrast 80% of the older generation indicated that they cannot cope without the flexible working scheme. Findings also revealed that flexible working is vitally important to black British clerical workers, especially those with young family. For this reason, offering a good salary is not good enough to make participants decide whether to join the organization. Therefore, it can be concluded that work/life balance is a moderating factor leading participants to join local authorities. In another circumstance, the findings suggest 80% of the participants believed their expectations had been affected because they are black, and went on to affirm that if they were white they would not be caring financially for their extended families in Africa or the Caribbean. The rationale is that being a black British person, it is culturally a way of life (Akporherhe, 2002). Therefore, the findings indicate that if participants had been whites their expectations would have been completely different. Overall, based on the evidence presented in this research, one can conclude that the black British clerical workers join local authorities because of the awareness of opportunities and security.

## **Research Question Two**

What are the moderating factors that help shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract?

At this stage the findings are discussed relating to Research Question Two. Here there are five features exhibited to have shaped the black British clerical workers' psychological contract as shown below.

### **Change of perceptions**

To have a change of perception is for things to turn out the way you did not expect or what you thought might be ... but did not materialize as you expected it, and as a result your perception about the organization has changed. It was not a surprise to discover that most participants had changed their perception once they started working. Local authorities are the only employer where people of various ethnic backgrounds are seen, and they all come with different expectations. For most employees the surprise they meet on their first day to discover that the workforce is culturally diverse. In contrast, others might find it interesting and a good experience, being that the UK is a multi-cultural society. Therefore to fulfil their expectations, each employee would have to renegotiate the terms and conditions of their exchange agreement. This also supports the views of Schein (1965) who advocated that the psychological contract is continuously in operation and constantly being renegotiated. For instance, Fola, a former bank worker indicated that when she used to work for the bank no one was allowed to go home until when

the bank closes, but in local authorities staff is allowed to go home once they have completed their seven hours. In the case of Fola, her change of perception turned out to be good news. However, not everyone has a happy ending as the findings indicate that 25% of the participants were disappointed to discover that they have to reapply for every vacancy even though they are over-qualified for the job. Other participants suggested that their change of perception was influenced by outside factors such as the way friends think highly of them, in fact some of them felt friends now show more respect to them since they have started working in local authority. Other participants felt disappointed as they did not imagine employees would be more concerned about meeting their daily work targets than building better exchange relations with other colleagues. Overall, it is concluded that participants may have had a change of perceptions, but 70% agreed that the changes were for the better as they helped moderate and enhance their psychological contract.

### **Individual Belief**

When participants talked about beliefs they were referring to their upbringing and cultural background. This notion is supported by Akporherhe (2002). The view that each employee comes to the organization with their own beliefs is also supported by Olurode (1994) when he indicated that beliefs vary from one person to another. It is this dissimilarity in beliefs that lead employees to produce different psychological contracts. In support of this difference, Tutu commented in the findings that people are different; if not, Britain will not be described as a multicultural

society. What Tutu meant was that Britain is a country with people of different cultural beliefs. This author supports Jan-Khan's (2003) view that individual behaviour originates from upbringings and background. This was highlighted in the findings when Rama narrated her experience concerning a young man named Boji, who had a Christian upbringing, Boji refused to go to lunch with his work colleagues, despite being pressurized by his colleagues. It was not until Boji invited his work colleagues to his house that they discovered he had been ordained as a pastor, which he inherited from both his parents who are pastors. Boji's upbringing demonstrates how one's beliefs can affect how a person behaves and responds to issues at work. Based on this evidence it is concluded that employee's beliefs not only affect how he/she relates to his/her work colleagues but can shape and enhance the psychological contract.

### **Feeling Valued**

To feel valued means your contribution and hard work have been recognized. In some cases participants would receive gratification for a job well done. About 80% of the participants indicated they are very proud to work in local authorities. When asked why, they indicated that their hard work is continuously acknowledged. It was not a surprise to note at the interviews that there is less social interaction between employees and managers. About 40% of the black British workers interviewed pointed out that they did not join local authorities for the purpose of making friends, but rather to fulfil their own personal obligations. In contrast, 60% of the black British workers indicated that they spent more time at work than they

do at home, hence they would find it difficult to work in an office where they could not get on with other staff members. It was found that the exchange relations between black British workers and their managers are more target-driven, hence they rarely go out to eat or drink together after work. Participants felt more valued when they achieved their work targets and improved on their performances, than in having good exchange relations. There seems to be a link between achieving work target and feeling valued. This brings constant worries upon employees to do better, if they want to feel valued. This was highlighted in the findings when Koro indicated that he wanted to build a good relational contract with his manager, but felt it depended on achieving his work target. The rationale is that if he fails to achieve his work targets, it could have an adverse effect on the relations between himself and his manager. This author supports the view that achieving a work target is linked to feeling valued; therefore participants are happy when they achieved their work targets, because that would make others value and respect them. Based on this discussion, it is concluded that to feel valued does in fact help shape the black British workers' psychological contract, which is consistent with the views of Lewis, Thornhill and Sounders (2003) when they suggested that employees are happy as long as they are valued.

### **Team Support**

To have team support means to work collectively together as a group in achieving a common goal and objectives. This means covering for absent colleagues even though they did not arrange for someone to cover for them. Employees working in



a team regularly get support from other colleagues, may be to answer phones when they are tied up on other duties due to deadline. This was highlighted in the findings when Eser commented that his team members regularly get support from other members when they are coming in late, going home early or absent. They do this by pulling every resource available as a team without the manager knowing about it. Having a good team spirit helps foster better exchange relations with other members of the team. Departmental objectives can be accomplished through team effort if members work together as one team. For many employees team bonding is very important as it helps to maintain a good relational contract with colleagues. However, team spirit can be in jeopardy when manager reneges on promises. When that happens, staff members feel let down and disillusioned, and that makes them reduce their contributions. It is concluded that a good team bonding brings satisfaction and makes employees proud of being a member of the team. This helps foster a good relational contract and helps to shape employees' psychological contract.

### **Age Gap**

The intergenerational gap issue draws attention to the differences between the older generation and the younger generation. This research finding indicates there are gaps between the younger and older generations. For example, from the older participants' perspective, they are more family oriented and have the propensity to take care of their extended families in Africa or the Caribbean, compared to the younger generation group. In contrast, younger participants indicated

that they are more concerned about seeking to develop their work careers, further education, and planning to have a family; therefore they have different expectations compared to the older generations and so do not feel their opinions are being represented in society. It is this gap between these two generations that makes them have different psychological contract. Nevertheless, as long as their goals (old and young) are achievable, participants are willing to renegotiate the exchange agreement to help form a stronger psychological contract.

It was not surprising to find that older generations respond differently to problems at work compared to the younger generation. According to Mamman (1996) the older one becomes the more difficult it is to adapt to a new setting (Gudykunst and Kim 1984). The rationale is that younger people believe they have many years ahead of them and so they cannot be bothered to continue feeling unhappy and prefer to seek another job. On the other hand, the older generation blame this type of attitude on the European circulatory system, which they argue is a materialistic generation rather than the one that takes care of their loved ones. The thought of looking for another job when they should be preparing for retirement is a daunting task for the older generation. At an old age, one factor that older people dread is the fear of losing their job. To be told you are too old when applying for a new job is awful, and as a result older people are more likely to renegotiate their exchange agreement so as to revitalize the psychological contract. Based on this evidence, it must be concluded that the uncertainty of the job market, plus age discrimination, restrain older people from leaving their organization and there-

fore serves as a moderating factor that helps shape their psychological contract, whereas the younger generation will continue to respond differently to disappointment, but as long as they feel their expectations are being met, that would serve as a moderating factor that helps shape their psychological contract.

### **Summary and Conclusion of research question two**

This research finding revealed five distinct characteristics exhibited as being a moderating factor that helps form the psychological contract. These features include, for example: change of perceptions, individual beliefs, feeling valued, team support, and age gap. On the subject of change of perception, for example, 20% of the participants from the private sectors felt disappointed when they discovered staff members were more concerned about achieving their work targets, rather than entering into a relational contract. In contrast, the findings also revealed that 60% of the participants from the private sectors were very pleased as they no longer felt pressurised to work on Saturdays. Overall, the initial conclusion is that participants might have had a change of perceptions after they started working in local authorities, but a majority agreed that the changes were for the better, as they helped enhance and shape their psychological contract. On the topic of individual beliefs it was found that when participants talked about beliefs they were referring to their cultural background and upbringing. The findings revealed that these beliefs vary from one person to another; hence they have different psychological contracts. Furthermore, the finding revealed that individual behaviours originate from their upbringing and background, and as a result they have to re-

negotiate the terms of their exchange agreement in order to enhance the psychological contract, this being consistent with the views of Schein (1965) when he advocated that the psychological contract is continuously being renegotiated for it to be workable. Therefore, it is concluded that beliefs affect how employees relate to other work colleagues, and in turn, help shape the psychological contract. On the topic of feeling valued it was found that participants felt valued if their contribution and hard work was appreciated. On the subject of team support, participants had demonstrated that having the team behind you is a valuable help, as most of them are either absent or do not come to work on time. Based on this evidence it is concluded that team support enhances the exchange relations among team members. Furthermore, the uncertainty of the job market helps to restrain the older generation group from leaving the organization and in turn serves as a moderating factor that helps shape their psychological contract.

### **Research Question Three**

What are the factors that influence and constrain the black British clerical workers' response to psychological contract violation?

At this stage the findings relating to Research Question Three are discussed. At first the finding shows that the black British clerical workers did not understand the term 'psychological contract violation'; in the end the use of the term 'unfulfilled promise or disappointment' emerged as the most appropriate term to describe the term 'violation'. Here four factors were exhibited by the black British clerical work-

ers to have influenced and restrained their response to the psychological contract violation, as discussed below:

### **Outside Support**

How participants would go and seek advice from groups outside the organization is now discussed. The rationale is that participants feel groups outside the organization are less likely to be biased towards them and so they are more comfortable discussing their problems as they hope to get honest advice. Participants pointed out that they felt let down when management did not adhere to promises made to them. When asked to describe how they would respond to unfulfilled promise, they responded in a way that indicates that the psychological contract violation varies from one person to another. The finding revealed that the participants' background and upbringing determines how they would respond to violation or problems, as supported by Olurode (1994). When there is problem at work the usual first port of call is the trade union. The finding revealed that 20% of the participants indicated that they hardly contact their union representatives, because they felt the trade union is also part of the negotiation team that brought in the changes and so there are limits as to how far they can take the matter. In contrast, about 60% of the participants still believe in maintaining strong relations with the trade union because they felt the union stands even a better chance of knowing exactly what to do, since they have more knowledge about employees' rights at work. However 70% of the participants indicated that when there is problem at work they prefer to seek for help from groups outside the organization e.g.,

Church groups, Muslim groups, families, and close friends. According to Igbi, it is good to 'let the steam out', since supports from an outside group (e.g., church) which converses from a religious position and not from the organizational perspective, can give advice from a neutral viewpoint, which may be considered unbiased. Other participants argued they would not like to discuss their problems with their line manager or work colleagues because if they did, it would not be considered a psychological contract, as supported by Conway and Briner (2005). It was found that older groups tend to speak to their families, church groups and close friends, while the younger generation prefer to talk to friends and close family members. Therefore, it is concluded that outside supports are important to black British clerical workers, as they help determine how each participant responds to psychological contract violation.

### **Economic Conditions**

Here the participants are concerned about their financial well-being and whether the job is able to sustain their financial obligations. Economic conditions are more of a transactional contract and they are negotiated between the employer and employee. About 70% of the participants interviewed had believed the present UK economic recession to be a significant societal factor that has influenced their decision to stay or leave the organization. It was found that while the flexible working scheme is a major influencing factor, also an individual's economic condition is critical as it determines a participant's life style, the type of house in which they live, and family well-being. The finding revealed that the present economic reces-

sion has made participants think twice before leaving their employer as they do not want to end up losing their job. This was highlighted when Nana commented:

*I have been working here for over twenty years and my job is secure for now, but with much restructuring taking place across local authorities, I just cannot risk changing my job. What if I change my job, a year later I was told there is no more work for me. At the age of 54 I would not be able to cope.*

Therefore, it can be concluded that the present economic condition is a major factor that influences and restrains participants' response to the psychological contract violation.

### Black Extended family

Here were discussed the influence that extended family (cousins, nephews, brothers, sisters and uncles, grandparents, relatives, and aunts) has on the employee's psychological contract. In the findings it was mentioned that when participants talk about extended family they are referring to their cultural obligations and that the obligations are mental programs from their past experience, as supported by Hofstede (1983). These obligations are embedded within the participant and so they are psychological. About 70% of the participants indicated that they benefited from the extended family association and as such had a duty to reciprocate that care to other members of the extended family. This was highlighted by Olab in my findings when she commented:

*I would not be in the UK if it wasn't for my cousin. He paid for my flight ticket. Similarly, I owe the same obligation to my relatives, cousin, uncle and my aunts.*

In contrast, if you do not feel obliged to care for your extended family, you might argue this is someone offering a favour? A Westerner would be right to think in that mindset, since individuals in Europe get paid unemployment benefits when they become unemployed, but not in Africa, where an individual's well-being depends on his/her extended family handouts. Therefore from the black British clerical workers' perspectives this is a cultural obligation. Essentially what this means is that the duty to bring up a child or care for the elderly is shared among every member of the extended family and not restricted to one parent. Therefore, it can be concluded that the black extended family is a major factor that influences and constrains the black British clerical workers' response to the psychological contract violation.

### **Educational Qualification**

From the participants' perspectives, the value of educational qualification cannot be measured. According to Mamman (1996), high educational attainment can improve a diverse employee's ability to interact with the dominant group. There is a general consensus among older participants of the need to have a transferable skill or to undertake further training in other fields such as computer and customer



services, so as to remain employable in the future in the event of losing their job. Today the job market is very competitive and while experience might be important, it is no longer a sufficient requirement to obtain the job, therefore educational qualification is needed. However, it is important the right educational qualification is obtained, to be able to compete equally with other participants. The significance of an educational qualification was highlighted by Telu in the findings when she commented on seeing an advert for a senior clerical officer post requiring five years experience when she had fifteen. She said that she was not given the job for lack of educational qualification.

Older people are more vulnerable to this type of disappointment, especially those that have spent their entire life working for one organization without any educational qualification. For older people the disadvantage is greater if their skill is not transferable or it is unrelated to the job they want to apply for. For example, one would not expect a cleaner working in a 'Tesco' supermarket with fifteen years experience on the job, without any experience or knowledge whatsoever in other fields, to apply for a Benefits Officer job. In contrast, for the young person there are age advantages, because he/she can undergo further training to supplement present skills. Therefore, it is concluded that educational qualification is a moderating factor that can limit and constrain participant's response to the psychological contract violation.

### **Summary and Conclusion of Research Question Three**

On the issue of seeking for advice from groups outside the organization, it was found that participants usually contact groups such as Churches, Muslim groups, close friends, and family members. Participants felt that groups outside the organization produce unbiased and honest advice because they take a neutral position. However, participants agreed that response to psychological contract violation varies from person to person, age to age, and society to society. The older generation argued that response to contract violation depends on individual upbringing and cultural backgrounds, which they believe help constrain participants' response to psychological contract violation. As a result, it can be concluded that outside support provides the venue where participants can get advice on how to respond effectively to the psychological contract violation. On the subject of economic conditions, the finding indicates that the participants' economic conditions determine their life style, family well-being, and the car they drive, or where they live or stay. An organization facing financial difficulties may not be able to retain its staff members, if things do not improve economically. Therefore, it should be concluded that the individual economic condition is a major factor constraining participants' response to the psychological contract violation. On the issue of black extended families, findings revealed that when participants talked about extended family they are referring to their cultural obligations. Again this varies from one person to another depending on individual upbringing. It was revealed that 70% of the participants were found to have benefited from an extended family association, and as a result they feel obliged to give in return. Therefore, it is con-

cluded that the extended family is an influencing factor that constrains participants' response to the psychological contract violation. On the subject of educational qualification, the findings indicate that the older generation is vulnerable to unemployment if they do not have the relevant educational qualification. Hence the need for them to acquire more knowledge to make them employable in the event of losing their job. In contrast the younger generation do not have this problem as they can always apply for a training job. Therefore, this thesis advocates that educational qualification will enable the older generation to compete equally with other candidates in the job market. The finding also indicates that the older generation face being discriminated against without educational qualification. Therefore, it must be concluded that educational qualification is a key factor that influences and constrains the participants' response to the psychological contract violation.

### **7.3 Summary of Substantive Findings**

A summary of the substantive research findings is now presented by highlighting the key findings of this research. The substantive findings of this research are summarized below, which demonstrate how the empirical evidence collected and analysed for this research have addressed this thesis' research questions:

First, the findings of this study revealed that black British clerical workers hold five distinct and independent characteristics, which indicate why they joined local authorities, these including: (1) Opportunities and Security; (2) Stability; (3) Work life

balance; (4) Remuneration; (5) Individual Expectations. Among these characteristics the most dominant of them were opportunities, security and flexibility.

Second, the findings of this research indicate the existence of five distinct quality patterns that help moderate and shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract; these are categorized as: (1) Change of Perception; (2) Individual Beliefs; (3) Feeling Valued; (4) Team Support; (5) Age Gap. These qualities conform to the traditional views among other researchers such as Pain (2005), Jan-Khan (2003), Akporherhe (2002), Olurode (1994), and Hofstede (1983) that the behaviour of the black British clerical workers originates from their upbringings and cultural backgrounds, which makes them respond differently to problems at work and thus produces different psychological contract.

Third, the key findings of this research revealed four societal factors that have influenced and restrained the black British clerical workers' response to psychological contract breach and its violation. These factors include: (1) Outside Support; (2) Economic Conditions; (3) Black Extended family; (4) Educational Qualification. Findings revealed that 70% of the black British clerical workers did not understand the term 'contract violation'; there was confusion initially as to what it means, and in the end the use of the term 'unfulfilled promise or disappointment' emerged as the most appropriate term to describe it.

Fourth, the findings to this thesis main research question revealed that the nature of the psychological contract for black British clerical workers is not mainly in-

spired by individual interest such as opportunities and security and the desire for a higher salary, but rather is largely shaped and formed by broader social structures e.g. economic conditions, uncertainty of the job market and partly determined by the employee's personal circumstances e.g. extended family obligation, and the participant's desire to further his/her education.

Fifth, the findings of this research show that the intergenerational gap issues between the younger and older generations were as a result of their different expectations, experiences and upbringing, thus influencing their perceptions about the exchange agreement.

Sixth, the research findings revealed that the older generations are more connected to the extended family network than the younger generations, and as a result, the older generation are more likely to seek for job stability and long-term job security than a short-term higher salary.

Seventh, the research findings revealed that the older black generation believe they would eventually go back to their country of birth once they retired. In contrast, the younger black generation have different perspectives, as they believe that the UK is their homeland and so do not feel any connection to their parents' country of birth.

Finally, the eighth finding revealed that response to psychological contract violation depends on the participant's generation group. For example, the older gen-

eration respond calmly to psychological contract violation, and are more likely to remain in the organization until they find another job, whereas the younger generation react strongly to psychological contract violation and are more likely to resign at once without bothering to secure another job.

## **7.4 The Conclusion**

The journey to this point has been slow and long. As a new researcher, the difficulties encountered in conducting this research have ranged from the usual time constraint and seeing enthusiasm evaporate from the frustration of exploring a phenomenon that has never been researched in the UK, meaning the nature of the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities.

First, the quantity of books, journals and other materials to be read and re-read was underestimated, also the writing and re-writing. Overall, this research process has been exhausting and at the same time very fulfilling. The research findings are unique to the geographical area of London, the capital city of the UK, where the research was conducted. As the capital city, London is the largest city in the UK with a population of over ten million residents and has 32 local authorities compared to other cities where there is only one local authority, and so this research can argue that London is a fully representative area of the entire UK, with a population greater than most countries in the Middle East, such as Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Palestine, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Israel, also including some African and North and South American countries.

Second, the use of the qualitative interview was the best option and has provided a very useful insight into the lived experience of the black British clerical workers, and in so doing, this research has improved the author's knowledge and understanding of the psychological contract concept from the black British clerical workers' perspectives.

Third, this research has provided a clear understanding into what inspires the black British clerical workers to join local authorities. It indicates that the older generation are more interested in long-term job opportunities, as these are the type of security they are seeking for when deciding which organization to join. The younger generation were indicated by this research to be very much concerned about their job career, education, making lots of money, and buying their own house.

Fourth, the research findings revealed that the black British clerical workers born in the UK and those that came to the UK for economic reason were found to have a dissimilar psychological contract, because of their different expectations.

Fifth, this research finding indicates that participants come to the organization with different beliefs and behaviour, and as a result they have to renegotiate the terms of their exchange agreement to have a workable psychological contract. Overall, the conclusion was that 60% were pleased they had joined, while the 30% that

had a change of perception agreed that the changes had enhanced and shaped the psychological contract, but the remaining 10% had expressed some disappointment as things had not turned out well for them, one participant saying, “I never thought you have to reapply for every vacancy, when management knew you are overqualified for the job.” In contrast, what local authorities are trying to do is to create an opportunity for everyone to apply for any vacant position, and this is the main reason most participants joined local authorities.

Sixth, the findings show that behavioural response to contract violation varies from one person to another, age to age, society to society. For that reason, this thesis assumes that individual behaviour originates from their individual upbringing and background, which in turn determines how they resolve problems and respond to psychological contract violation.

Seventh, the implications of these research findings for the black British clerical workers were that the findings would:

- (1) Interest all local authorities
- (2) Interest the public sector organizations and central government
- (3) Enhance the exchange relations between black British clerical workers and their employers
- (4) Aid and provide positive guidelines to policy makers in local authorities and inform them of conditions that must be in place in order to enhance the exchange relations of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities



(5) Assist organizations' policy makers to develop policies that will help strengthen and create a better awareness of the issues affecting black British clerical workers employed in UK local authorities

(6) Clarify that the psychological contract is about behaviour and so legislating will not change employees' behaviours. Therefore this thesis suggests that organizations listen to their employees' voices and invite them as partners in developing a lasting policy that would benefit all the parties involved.

Finally, on the issue of generalisation, the author recognizes the importance of having report or findings that are generalisable. According to Polit and Hungler (1991), generalisation is defined as the degree to which the findings can be generalized from the study sample to the entire population. The author is not claiming the research findings are generalisable to this extent or that generalisation is the author's primary concern as a qualitative researcher. Rather the author believes the empirical knowledge obtained is significant in its own right.

The goal of this research is to focus on a particular phenomenon of the nature of the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities. Therefore, the 38 participants the author randomly selected and interviewed from a relatively large population give some insight, as exploratory research, of the issues facing this particular group. This may find commonalities with other black British workers and with similarly placed groups leading to the possibility of partial

generalisability. Overall, however, claims of generalisability, given the nature of the sample, need to be treated with caution.

However, we have gained an understanding of this thesis phenomenon, and the findings have contributed to our knowledge of black clerical workers in English local authorities as a new empirical site.

While there may be a boundary on how generalisable this research finding will be, with some aspect generalisable, while others might be more specific, there may be potential for transferability. From Polit and Beck (2006), transferability (the applicability to research to other contexts) can apply to most types of research, whether qualitative or quantitative. Thus the findings may be transferable to other groups, such as black British clerical workers employed in others part of UK or those employed in the private sector. Generalisability and transferability are not methodologically mutual, because transferability does not always claim generalisation (Polit & Beck, 2006). For example, the 38 black British clerical workers who had been chosen randomly from a large population of clerical workers cannot claim to be representative of black British Managers in UK local authorities.

In the next segment, the main contributions of this thesis can be summarized.

## **7.5 Contributions this Research has made**

To begin, this type of research has never been carried out in the UK, so this is the first of its kind. For that reason the contributions that have emerged from this research have added to the understanding and knowledge concerning the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in the contexts of UK local authorities.

The first contribution is that this research has added to the understanding of the concept of the psychological contract by suggesting that the formation of the psychological contract in the contexts of local authorities needs to be viewed differently, that is, not as a consequence of the exchange agreement between the employer and employee, but rather suggesting that the psychological contract of the black British clerical worker was a result of the individual expectations formed outside the organization, as opposed to the Rousseau (1989) and Conway and Briner (2005) suggestions that expectations formed outside organization do not constitute the psychological contract.

The second contribution is that this research findings confirm what has already been found in the literature, that the psychological contract of the black British clerical workers had already been formed before they joined local authorities, through for instance (1) the information they had read about the organization, and (2) the information they had gathered from talking to friends and people doing a similar job, rather than the Argyris (1960), Schein (1965) and Kotter (1973) sug-

gestions that the psychological contract is the perception of an exchange agreement between the employer and employee or between oneself and another party.

The third contribution is that Rousseau (1989) did not believe the psychological contract is formed by the employee's inner motives i.e., expectations from past experience. Rather she believes the psychological contract is formed by the employee's observable behaviour. In contrast, this research suggests empirically that the psychological contract can be formed by past experience e.g., expectations and extended family obligation, which the black British clerical workers indicated during the interviews that they carry within them from one organization to another, and is embedded within them mentally.

Finally, the fourth contribution is that this research finding has added to the knowledge by suggesting the re-conceptualization of the term violation. It emerged during the interviews that 70% of the black British clerical workers did not understand the term 'psychological contract violation'. In fact, the findings revealed that participants thought it related to abuse, defiance, disobedience, destruction, mistreatment, harassment, intimidating behaviour, and bullying. Therefore, this research suggests the use of the term '*Disintegrated Contract*' as being the most appropriate terminology from the black British perspectives, rather than Rousseau (1989), Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997), and Turnley and Feldman (1999) in suggestion of the term 'violation', which many participants indicated is

too extreme to describe management failure to fulfil promises made to employees, which in many cases can still be renegotiated.

It is now time to summarize the limitations of this thesis.

## **7.6 Limitations of this research**

Here are outlined the limitations of this research. At the outset, adopting qualitative methodology in this research has brought the researcher closer to the core participants, 'the black British clerical workers' employed in the UK local authorities. At the same time, adopting a qualitative interview process has made it possible to see things from the employees' perspectives, rather than the researcher's own experience. In travelling around London interviewing participants, it became apparent that there were some limitations that needed to be taken into consideration while making generalizations from this research finding as highlighted below:

The first limitation is that this research is limited by scope and time. There is a word-limit on the thesis and the time spent on this research is constrained by Brunel's academic calendar. In addition, a conscious decision had to be made to (1) stop the literature review when enough had been done (2) stop analyzing the data when the research questions were answered (3) be conscious of the word count because someone else will have to give up his/her time to read the entire thesis; and so one must be concise and to the point in writing up.

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The second major limitation was insufficient funds. This author would have loved to interview black British clerical workers employed in other parts of the country such as Scotland and Wales, but the qualitative methodology adopted made it economically impossible to travel across the UK, meaning an extra loan from the bank, which could not be paid back.

The third limitation of this research was that participants were asked to recount story and give accounts of their lived experiences, but some did not remember everything. While some of the participants had never discussed their experiences with other people except their wife, husband, relatives, or close friends. As the interview progressed it was found that some participants are very reluctant to provide substantive information and their comments were very short. When that happened they were reassured that their names would not be mentioned in the research findings and any information provided would remain confidential.

Finally, the fourth limitation is the fact that there is lack of research interest on the black British clerical workers in UK local authorities and this meant there was little or no literature about the psychological contract of black British clerical workers. Therefore, it was necessary to rely more on what participants had narrated or commented. Also this meant depending on literature from the USA, Canada, Australia, Africa and Europe where there has been research done on non-white psychological contract.

It is now time to briefly summarize potential areas for future research.

## **7.7 Future researches**

Having investigated the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities, below recommendations are made on potential areas for future researches:

First, the findings of this research are unique for England as the study was conducted in London, the capital city of the UK, and so it would be interesting to establish whether the outcome of the research was relevant to other parts of the UK, e.g., Wales and Scotland. Therefore, in the future similar research should be carried out in this part of the country.

Second, Britain is a multi-cultural nation (Gundara, 2000), and historically it has been able to capitalize on the creativity of diversified societies. It is therefore in the interest of UK local authorities that this type of research is extended to other ethnic groups.

Third, to include in this research the organizational and managerial perspectives at this stage would be too much work to handle alone, therefore in future it would be good to see research carried out with the view of exploring the psychological contract of black British managers in UK local authorities.

Fourth, this research is about the psychological contract of black British clerical workers employed in UK local authorities. In future it will be interesting to have a similar research carried out on other black British workers employed in the UK public sectors, such as the civil service, the health services, education, defence, non-commercial and commercial state bodies.

Overall, I feel I have reached the end of a stage in my research journey in which I have been engaged in considerable learning. Many thanks to my main supervisor, Prof. Simpson, who wants me to know everything! This is a relatively new area of research in the UK, and I believe that this thesis illustrates how research such as this, aiming to listen to participants' voices and endeavour to gain a better understanding of their psychological contract, can have practical outcomes on future exchange relations between black British clerical workers and their managers in UK local authorities. A disappointment in not being able to find any research work on black British workers in local authorities has been overtaken by the belief that there is much work to be done which this thesis has only begun, and so personally many things have been learnt for doing this research, broadening personal knowledge and understanding of the psychological contract, to be aware of the gaps, and the need for further research to be undertaken on the black British workers.



## APPENDIX 1

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## APPENDIX 2

February 2009

### INVITATION LETTER ASKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Dear Sir/Madam,

PhD Research Project on black British clerical workers in UK local authorities

I am a doctoral researcher at Brunel University, Brunel Business School, Uxbridge, Middlesex, London UB8 3PH. My PhD research focuses on investigating the “psychological contract” of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities.

I would like to talk to black British clerical workers concerning their expectations and experiences of working in a local authority. I am looking to interview as many people as I possibly can. The interview will be a one-to-one interview, and will last for approximately one hour with your permission. The interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed. All interviews and transcripts will be kept strictly confidential and no participant will be identified. Any data you give will be treated confidentially and securely stored and destroyed at the end of the project.

There has been no previous work done in this particular area therefore this is a perfect opportunity for you to participate in this important topic. I am scheduled to be in several times in the next few weeks, so if you want to participate in this research project, please contact me directly to arrange a particular date and time. If you need further information about this interview, please feel free to reach me via

my email at [vincent.dadi@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:vincent.dadi@brunel.ac.uk) or 0798 523 2185. In return for the participation, I will provide copy of the significant findings of this research.

Thank you for taking the time to read this invitation letter. I am looking forward to meeting you soon.

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent Dadi'.

Vincent Dadi

Doctoral Researcher

Brunel Business School

Brunel University

Uxbridge UB8 3PH

[Vincent.dadi@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:Vincent.dadi@brunel.ac.uk)

## **APPENDIX 3**

February 2009

### **INVITATION LETTER TO UNISON BLACK STAFF FORUM**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a doctoral researcher at Brunel University, Brunel Business School, Uxbridge, Middlesex, London UB8 3PH, United Kingdom. My PhD research focuses on exploring the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in UK local authorities.

I would like to invite members of your black staff forum to participate in my research project. At the interview they will be required to talk about their live experiences, expectations and their exchange relations. The interview will last for approximately one hour with permission. The interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed. All interviews and transcripts will be kept strictly confidential and no participant will be identified.

In return for their participation, I will provide copy of the significant findings of this research.

I would be grateful if you could email me the names of your members in clerical positions, together with their departmental address so that I can write to them directly. Once I hear from you, I will send a letter of consent to your members, which will give me the authorisation to proceed with the interview. Also, I will send a schedule advising members they could have the interview with me at their own convenient date, time and place. If you would like to discuss this research with me

prior to making a decision, please feel free to write me, via my email at Vincent.dadi@brunel.ac.uk.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V Dadi'.

Vincent Dadi

Doctoral Researcher

Brunel Business School

Brunel University

Uxbridge UB8 3PH

Vincent.dadi@brunel.ac.uk

## APPENDIX 4

February 2009

### CONSENT FORM

You were selected as a possible participant because you are a black British employee, working in a local authority. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in this research.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** This involves looking at the expectations you had when you joined this local authority, the extent to which these expectations have been met and your experience at work.

**PROCEDURES:** If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to spend approximately one hour for an audiotape face-to-face interview.

**RISKS AND BENEFIT:**

Risks: There is no physical or psychological risk to participate in this research. You will have the opportunity to add to the existing body of knowledge regarding the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in local authorities.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** The records of this research will be kept private. In any report based on the findings of this research, you will not be identified in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as a participant. Research records and audio tapes will be kept in a locked file, and will be used only for research purposes.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:** Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

**CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS:** Feel free to contact me for any questions or clarifications with this email address: [vincent.dadi@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:vincent.dadi@brunel.ac.uk) or 0798 523 2185. If you want to talk to someone else regarding this research, please contact my supervisor Prof. Ruth Simpson [r.simpson@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:r.simpson@brunel.ac.uk).

**You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.**

Statement of consent: I have read the above information. I have received answers to the questions I have asked, I consent to participate in this research.

Name of participant.....

Signature.....Date.....

## APPENDIX 5

March 2009

### QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### INTRODUCTION:

This interview is part of my fulfilment for a PhD degree. Data obtained will be solely used for this purpose only and not for any other reason.

I would like to begin by thanking you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Your contribution is very important to me and I am very keen to talk to you today.

May I give you Part One of my interview, which deals with questions about your expectations and experiences of work? Part Two of this interview is the demographic information form I gave you to complete. Thank you for completing both forms.

#### PART ONE - EMPLOYEES' ACCOUNTS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES AT WORK

First, let me briefly ask you a few questions about your background before we start on the main interview questions.

#### **Background**

1. How long have you been working in this local authority?

2. Did you work in another organization before joining this local authority?  
How long were you there for? Why did you leave?
3. What made you to come and work for this local authority?

### QUESTION ONE:

The questions below are designed to address my Research Question One: What were the degrees of influence leading the black British clerical workers to join local authorities?

#### **Perception**

4. How did you perceive the organization before you arrived?
5. Have you changed your perception now you are here?
6. Did outside factors (family/friends/church) influence your perceptions?

#### **Expectation**

7. What were your expectations before joining this local authority?
8. Where did you form these expectations (e.g. before you joined the organization, at the interview, from other people, from material you read)?
9. Did you discuss these expectations with your manager or vice versa?



10. Are these expectations influenced by outside factors (e.g. family, friends, and previous employment)?
11. Are these expectations influenced by being black?
12. Have these expectations been met?
13. Do you think this would be different if you had been white?

### **Promises**

14. Were any promises made when you joined the organization?
15. Did your employer keep to these promises? If no, what action have you taken for those promises your employer did not keep?
16. Was the action you took influenced by outside factors (e.g. family, friend, previous employment, economic factors)?

### **QUESTION TWO:**

The questions below are intended to address my Research Question Two: What are the moderating factors that help shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract?

### **Individual Upbringing and Cultural background**

17. How does your upbringing influence your experience (e.g. your expectation, your relationships at work e.g. friendship 'black', 'white')?
18. Did it influence the kind of people you make friends with at work (e.g. men and women)?

19. Do you see them outside work? If you had left who would you keep in contact with?

### **Religious factors**

20. Is religion an issue in your workplace?

21. Does this affect your work experiences, your expectations, your relationships, how you are treated?

### **Social Justice**

22. Are you treated fairly at work?

23. Are you treated differently because you are black?

24. Do you feel there is fairness and equality in your department?

25. Have you had instances when you feel you have been unfairly treated?

26. As a black worker do you feel your voice is being heard (e.g. Do management listen to you; do they seek your opinion before bringing in changes)?

27. Does being black influence your friendship at work, loyalty, status and relations with managers and colleagues?

### **Individual goals and Motivation**

28. What did you feel you could achieve, before you joined this local authority?

29. How did your job turn out in terms of your goals?

30. What do you hope to get out of the job?

31. Do you think you might even leave?

32. If something went difficult and you were asked to step in would you do it?

### **Transactional Contract**

33. Are you content with your current increment or salary?

34. What if promised pay rise was cancelled?

35. Would you prefer to work elsewhere where there are more increments?

36. How many more increments would you need before you move to the top of your salary scale?

37. Are you allowed to work flexible hours here? If yes, how important is this to you?

38. If you lost this flexibility would you leave?

39. Do you think a good relationship with colleagues and managers is better than having a short-term higher salary?

### **Relational Contract**

40. Do you feel a sense of pride working here? Do you have black and white friends? If yes, do you drink after work? Do you socialise with the boss?

41. If your boss asked you to work late to cover for a colleague would you do it?

### QUESTION THREE:

The questions below are intended to address my Research Question Three: What are the factors that influence and constrain the black British clerical workers response to psychological contract violation?

#### **Exchange Relations**

42. Do you have a good relationship with your manager? How would you describe it?
43. Have you ever fallen out? Can you expatiate further?
44. Can you turn to him/her in a crisis and if you have a problem?

#### **Trade Union or Individualism**

45. Have you ever felt let down by the organization? How does that make you feel?
46. How do you respond? Have you ever contacted your trade union?
47. Do you discuss problems with work colleagues? Does this help?

#### **Response to unfulfilled managerial promises**

Previous researches have shown that employees reactions to unfulfilled promises depend on situational factors, such as, the availability of attractive employment,

justification for the unfulfilled promises and whether you think the organization complain procedure can produce positive results. With this in mind, as a black British clerical worker:

48. Do you discuss problem with your family? Does this help?

49. Do you discuss problem in your church/Muslim group?

50. Does being black affect how you respond to problems and disappointments? Is it an issue?

51. Do outside factors such as family, friends, cultural background and finance, influence the way you respond to unfulfilled promises?

### **Intergenerational gap Issues**

52. How is your experience at work? Do you respond differently to (a) your parents (b) your children?

53. Do you have issue concerning the way the young generation of black British workers respond to problems when things go wrong at work, which you feel does not apply to older black British generation?

54. Finally: (A) Give me three reasons why you stay? (B) Give me three reasons why you must go? (C) Give me three ways in which being black has affected your experience at work?

PART TWO - DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

May I ask you to answer the following questions as they relate to you? All your responses will be kept classified.

- Name:.....
- Date of birth:.....
- Email: .....
- Gender.....
- Marital status e.g. with children.....
- Educational qualification.....
- Occupation.....
- Current position.....
- Name of current organization.....
- Tenure in the organization.....

I am grateful for telling me your story; I look forward to sharing my results with you. Please contact me if you think of anything else you would like to add or if you have any question for me.

Thank you for your participation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent Dadi'.

Vincent Dadi

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## APPENDIX 6

March 2009

### CONTACT SUMMARY FORM

Contact Summary Form	
Contact type Visit: Phone:	Site: Contact Date Today's Date
<p>1. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?</p> <p>2. Summarise the information you got from the interview</p> <p>3. Anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating or important in this contact?</p>	