

Lowe, Adam M., 'The Employment Life Cycle and Clergy in the Church of England: A Case Study of the Diocese of Durham', in K. Niemelä (ed.), Church Work and Management in Change (Finland: Church Research Institute, 2012), 132-55.

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**The Employment Life Cycle and
Clergy in the Church of England:
A Case Study of the Diocese of Durham**

In recent decades there has been growing interest in the study of clergy and their careers. Prompted by the changing nature of the priesthood, this interest has also been a response to the array of work-related effects experienced by clergy and particular between- or within-group concerns. Whilst the application of sociological and psychological research methodologies have been useful to varying extents, it has demonstrated a neglect for overall career frameworks. This paper aims to qualitatively examine the Employment Life Cycle of Anglican clergy (utilising document analysis and interviews), comparing the approaches with organisational models. Specifically, it will (a) recognise the type of Employment Life Cycle in operation within the Church of England, (b) identify key deficits, (c) reconcile findings with an Anglican understanding of ordained ministry, and (d) present a model that incorporates the findings of the study to better facilitate research and praxis, especially within a climate of change.

*Keywords: employment life cycle, careers, Anglican, Church of England clergy, attraction, selection, formation, ministry, retirement**

In recent decades there has been growing interest in the cross-disciplinary study of clergy and their careers. Prompted in part by the changing nature of the priesthood, this interest has also been a response to the array of work-related effects experienced by clergy (e.g., stress) and particular between- or within-group concerns (e.g., gender-related issues). Whilst the application of sociological and psychological research methodologies have been useful to varying extents, overall it has reflected a restricted purview of clergy career-related processes. That is, having focused on particular aspects of the job, work-related effects, or individual career processes, it has ultimately resulted in a body of research that neglects the application of broader organisational career frameworks. In effect, whilst there has been considerable research relating to various outcomes and group interests, there has been minimal research concerning the overall career frameworks that guide clergy (or ordinands, or those considering a vocation to ordination), especially in the Church of England (CofE). These frameworks may provide a useful means through which an otherwise fragmented literature might be consolidated, and the body of research positioned for more extensive empirical investigation.

This paper aims to qualitatively examine the Employment Life Cycle of Anglican clergy (utilising document analysis and interviews), comparing the approaches with organisational models. Specifically, it will (a) recognise the type of Employment Life Cycle in operation within the CofE, (b) identify key deficits, (c) reconcile findings with an Anglican understanding of ordained ministry, and (d) present a model that incorporates the findings of the study to better facilitate research and praxis, especially within a climate of change.

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE STUDY OF CLERGY

Despite the apparent need, there has long been resistance in applying organisational or managerial methods to clergy and the Church. Perhaps reflecting the prolonged debate as to whether or not there is such a cohort as ‘religious professionals’, the resistance in applying organisational frameworks has resulted in the Church being under-resourced or positioned to proactively grow, develop, and care for its ministers. Be it by Merton’s famous description of the characteristic requirements of a profession (i.e., systematic knowledge, technical skills/trained capacity, and putting to work for others),¹

¹ Robert King Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Rev. ed. (Glencoe: Free Press, 1957).

the etymology of the word (i.e., associated with the act of taking a religious vow),² or by the CofE's own assertion, it is clear "whatever it is, it is also a profession".³ To ignore this and resist the application of rigorous sociological and psychological methodologies, not only denies the wellbeing of the organisation and the individuals, but also fails to recognise that the processes already in place *are* organisational methods.

It should be noted that the application of such a framework does not necessarily deny the distinctiveness or unique elements of clergy, but instead seeks to account for these within a contemporary understanding of ministry. In fact, the very pursuit of considering the organisational processes of the Church suggests that there might be greater harmony between the theology espoused and that exercised in practice.

The Employment Life Cycle and Clergy

The Employment Life Cycle (ELC) is a framework through which organisational research conceptualises the various stages of an employee's career. Incorporating the various aspects of an individual's career, the organisational literature conceptualises the ELC (albeit not exclusively by that name) in general terms of recruitment, selection, performance/development, and retirement.⁴ Over a lifetime, they represent stages that most people will experience multiple times as they move through different jobs and other variations of their career. From an organisational perspective, the process plays an important role in the proactive management of human resources and workforce planning. In effect, by conceptualising the various stages associated with people's jobs, organisations are better enabled to contextualise the facets whilst also being aware of specific group or issue interests. As a result, the approach has been useful in understanding longer-term patterns such as the relationships with psychological health, work patterns, and careers.

Whilst considering the broad framework of the ELC it is evident that very few researchers have attempted to conceptualise it extensively with clergy; however, there are several exceptions in which comparable models have been explored. One of the earliest

² Paula D. Nesbitt, 'Keepers of the Tradition: Religious Professionals and Their Careers', in *The Sage Handbook of the Sociology of Religion, Keepers of the Tradition* (London: SAGE, 2007), 296; C. T. Onions, G. W. S. Friedrichsen, and R. W. Burchfield, "Profession," in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

³ Leslie Paul, *The Deployment and Payment of the Clergy* (London: CIO, 1964), 89.

⁴ cf. e.g., Pieter J. D. Drenth, Henk Thierry, and Charles J. de Wolff, *Handbook of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 2nd ed., vol. 3: Personnel Psychology (Hove: Psychology Press, 1998), 33-390; Stephen P. Robbins, *Organizational Behavior: Concepts, Controversies, Applications*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998), 550-77.

attempts, focusing upon the career continuum of clergy is Glasse's study *Profession: Minister*. In many ways analogous with the classically defined stages of an ELC, Glasse defined the continuum in five components, each with a secondary label. These were (a) motivation for ministry - recruitment, (b) education for ministry - seminary, (c) practice of ministry - profession, (d) continuing education - expertise, and (e) sustained motivation – morale.⁵

Another exception is the joint work of Malony and Hunt who have conceptualised the *ministerial life cycle* as analogous with that of *vocational life cycles*. Malony and Hunt describe a clergy's life cycle as consisting of five key stages of preparation, entry, advancement, maintenance, and decline.⁶ Paralleling broader organisational approaches, these stage descriptors have been used by the researchers to highlight critical times (usually transitions) within the cycle. Although Malony and Hunt largely pursued the model diachronically (relating to individual effects), it is evident that the approach also illuminates organisational dimensions. For example, questions are raised relating to how the system manages transitions between stages, or how the stages themselves are conceptually and practically related to other stages. Accordingly, Malony and Hunt's model can be conceptualised as per Figure 1.

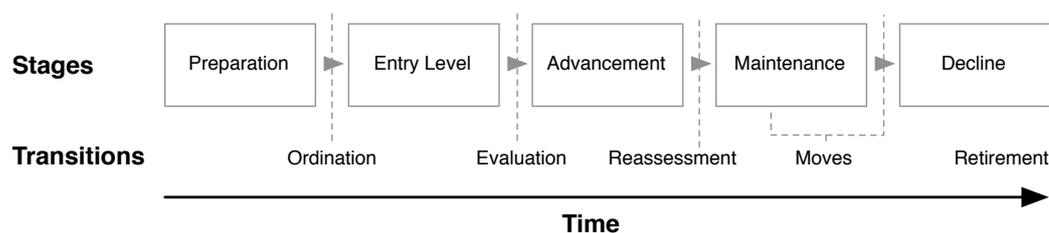


Figure 1. Malony and Hunt's ministerial life cycle (with transitions)

A more recent volume (a prelude to the Hind Report),⁷ whilst not overtly presenting an integrated approach to the life cycle, does insomuch that the actual structure of work loosely reflects the various stages. Covering a range of areas and topics, the various stages draw direct parallels with a life cycle approach. As part of a broader strategy, the report directly reflects the impetus of the CofE to more seriously

⁵ James D. Glasse, *Profession: Minister* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 19.

⁶ H. Newton Malony and Richard A. Hunt, *The Psychology of Clergy* (Harrisburg: Morehouse, 1991), 122.

⁷ Gordon W. Kuhrt, ed., *Ministry Issues for the Church of England: Mapping the Trends* (London: Church House Publishing, 2001). With reference to the Hind Report, cf. Archbishops' Council, *Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church* (London: Church House, 2003).

understand the nature of ministry, not least the systematic and integrated processes relating to clergy.⁸

Having previously identified that there was no national strategy for theological education and training,⁹ it was apparent to the CofE that a comprehensive survey would need to be conducted to identify relevant factors of interest,¹⁰ including the types of ministry in operation, as well as the shape of current and anticipated organisational processes. As a direct result of this research, language pertaining to *pathways* has been adopted and an emphasis on life-long pathways pursued.¹¹ Thus, at least in regards to the first half of the ELC, the CofE has sought to understand and adopt a strategic framework that is capable of drawing various stages and processes together.

When these various approaches are compared (see Figure 2), a common set of stages and transitions is evident. Primarily, this includes identification of the five broad stages of (a) Attraction and Recruitment, (b) Discernment and Selection, (c) Formation and Training, (d) Employed Ministry and Development, and (e) Post-Employed Ministry. The common milestones (which are indicators of transition) that intersect the stages are: the initial enquiry, selection, ordination, incumbency, and retirement. Together, these stages and milestones form the initial basis to examine the ELC of clergy.

Glasse (1968)	Motivation for Ministry (Recruitment)	Education for Ministry (Seminary)	Practice of Ministry (Profession)	Continuing Education (Expertise)		Sustained Motivation (Morale)
		Preparation	Entry Level	Advancement	Maintenance	Decline
Hunt & Malony (1991)						
Kuhrt (2001)	Selection	Theological Education	Initial Ministerial Education	Continued Ministerial Education		
	Attraction & Recruitment	Discernment & Selection	Formation & Training	Employed Ministry & Development		Post-Employed Ministry
	Initial Enquiry	Selection	Ordination	Incumbency		Retirement

Figure 2. Comparison of approaches to the ELC of clergy

⁸ Kuhrt, ed., xv, 3-5.

⁹ Advisory Board of Ministry, *Issues in Theological Education and Training* (London: ABM, 1997).

¹⁰ Kuhrt, ed., 26-27.

¹¹ Church of England Ministry Division, *Shaping the Future: New Patterns of Training for Lay and Ordained, Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2006), 84-85.

Towards An Integrated Approach

By combining an understanding of how the study of particular groups and foci are overlaid with the observed life cycle, an integrated methodology for studying the life and work of clergy is created (see Figure 3). This not only recognises that the career-related challenges of clergy have both organisational and individual dimensions, but also that the two are ultimately interrelated.

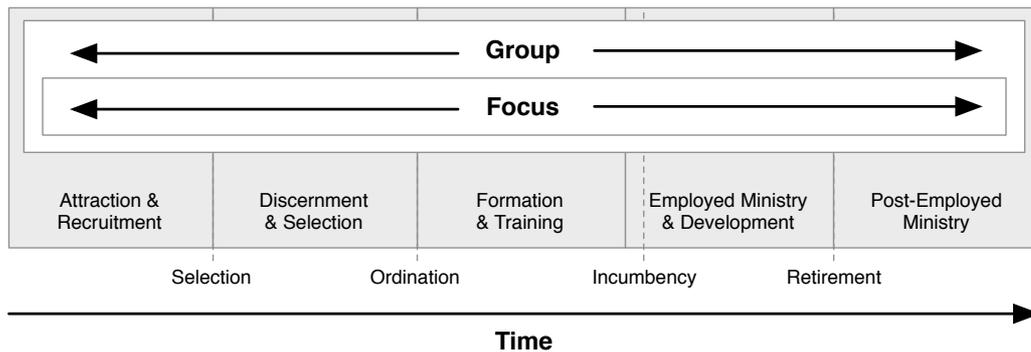


Figure 3. Towards an integrated approach

Accordingly, the key components (see Table 1) for exploration relate to sets of lateral (i.e., particular *groups* and *focus* across/at a point in time) and vertical dimensions (i.e., particular *stages* or *transitions*).

Table 1. Components of the proposed integrated approach

Component	Definition
Stages	The commonly observed phases experienced by individuals or groups over time.
Milestones	The key discrete points within or between stages.
Groups	A defined set of people for investigation or comparison.
Focus	The key pattern (e.g., working hours), outcome (e.g., job satisfaction), and/or theme (e.g., level of motivation) as experienced by a defined <i>group</i> within the life cycle (i.e., as relating to/across/between <i>stages</i> or transitions).

METHOD

Document Analysis

The document analysis consisted of three steps, being (a) the identification of documentation potentially relevant to the study, (b) evaluation and categorisation of said documents according to key criteria, and (c) analysis of the documents as relating to the processes and elements of the ELC model. Initially, a large number of institutional documents were identified as relating to ministerial practices of the CofE. In order to reduce this number to a targeted sample, only documents currently in use, publicly available, and published within the last ten years were utilised. The final documents list accessed for analysis is shown by source (i.e., national or diocesan) in Table 2.

Table 2. CofE (national and diocesan) documents accessed for analysis

Level	Author	Year	Document Title
National	Archbishops' Council	2003	<i>Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church</i>
		2004	<i>Review of Clergy Terms of Service: Report on the First Phase of the Work</i>
		2005	<i>Review of Clergy Terms of Service: Report on the Second Phase of the Work</i>
	CofE Ministry Division	2006	<i>Shaping the Future: New Patterns of Training for Lay and Ordained, Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church</i>
		2010	<i>Ministry in the Church of England</i>
Diocese of Durham	Diocese of Durham	2009	<i>IME 4-7 in the Diocese of Durham 2009-2010</i>
	Diocese of Durham Council for Ministry	2010	<i>Ministerial Flourishing: The Report and Recommendations of the CMD Review Group May 2010</i>

Semi-Structured Interviews

With the intent to examine the processes across the entire spectrum of the ELC for a particular diocese of the CofE, Durham was selected largely as a convenience sample. Having identified relevant roles across the entirety of the ELC, four were further

identified of primary concern. The characteristics of each participant's role and the length of the interview are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Interview participant role characteristics

Role (Organisation)	Time Allocation ^a	Interview Length
Diocesan Director of Ordinands (Diocese of Durham)	0.6 FTE	112 mins
Director of Ministry (Diocese of Durham)	0.75 FTE	95 mins
Director of Ministerial Practice (Cranmer Hall, Durham)	1.0 FTE	68 mins
Formational Tutor for IME4-7 (Lindisfarne Training Partnership – Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle)	0.8 FTE	53 mins

Note: ^a Indicates the percentage of a Full Time Employee (FTE) allocated to the role.

As per the typical methodology of semi-structured interviews, a series of questions were designed to provide data on the core research questions of the study. Broadly there were four sections to the interview relating to (a) subject matter expert role information, (b) the process, (c) outcomes, and (d) theological considerations.

RESULTS

In the first instance, analysis of the documents was completed to ascertain a clear concept of the processes associated with an ELC of clergy. Transcripts from the interviews were also analysed in order to validate and detail the processes previously ascertained. Accordingly, the observed ELC of clergy is shown in Figure 4, inclusive of relevant stages roles, documentation, transitions, and milestones.

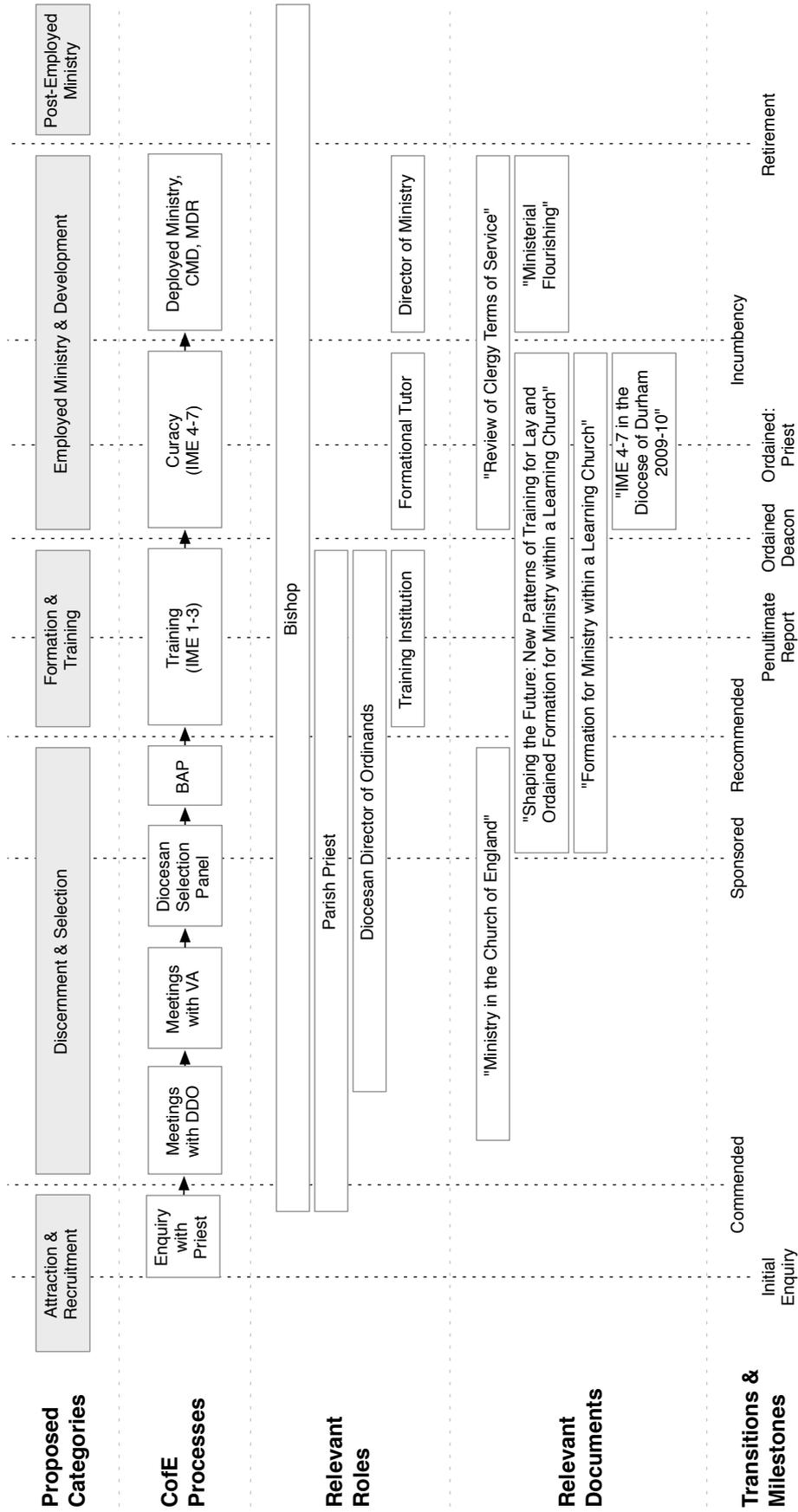


Figure 4. Observed ELC of clergy: CofE Diocese of Durham

Thematic analysis of the transcripts was also conducted to identify underlying patterns and issues. Of particular interest was information that provided a rationale for the various processes and how these relate to the process as a whole. The observations of primary importance include that:

- An individual's engagement with the organisation, and accordingly their link with the ELC of clergy, is best considered in reference to their participation with the various processes of the system. That is, the reciprocal participation between the individual and the organisation is the basis on which the 'employment' relationship is founded and interpreted.
- Throughout most stages and especially *Employed Ministry and Development*, there is a constant cycle of discernment and development occurring.
- Across the cycle, stages are characterised by milestones and a change in status of the individual (within and in relationship to the organisation).
- There is a definitive assertion that Stipendiary Priesthood (SP) (i.e., someone 'deployable') is the basis for all forms of ordained ministry.
- Initial Ministerial Education (IME) 4-7 should be recognised as part of the *Employed Ministry and Development* stage instead of *Formation and Training* due to the individual's change of activity and significant change in status.
- There is minimal focus on *Attraction and Recruitment* or *Post-Employed Ministry*.
- All interviewees indicated concern with the particular approach and future of Pioneer Ministers (PM), not least how this is reconciled with the Church's broader understanding of ordained ministry.
- The role of the lay Christian needs better consideration and understanding with reference to ordained ministry.

The Identified Type of ELC

As confirmed by the document analysis and semi-structured interviews, it is apparent that a five-stage model of the ELC (i.e., in its revised form: Attraction, Selection, Formation, Licensed Ministry, and Retirement) is applicable to clergy. As detailed in Table 4, the model is largely characterised by its respective *stages* (i.e., the commonly observed phases experienced by individuals or groups over time) which are

defined according to the observed a) *milestones*,¹² b) *status* of the individual,¹³ and c) typical focus of *activity*.¹⁴ Considered together, these three elements form the basis to empirically identify the relevant stages during which an individual engages with the organisation, across numerous levels (i.e., local, diocesan, regional, national). Thus, the ELC of clergy is set within the parameters of a reciprocal relationship in which both parties choose to engage with the other (regarding ordained ministry), but only one has the power to exclude (i.e., the Church may exclude an individual, but the individual may only exclude themselves). The relationship (through these stages) focuses on the ongoing exploration of an individual's potential vocation to ordained ministry, within a particular context, and (as will be discussed) according to particular expressions. Accordingly, this participation between the individual and the organisation is the basis on which the 'employment' relationship is founded and interpreted.

¹² The key discrete points within or between stages. Transitions describe the period surrounding the milestone during which a change in ascribed status and activity normally occurs.

¹³ The label assigned and recognised by the organisation to the individual which indicates both (a) their relationship with the organisation, and (b) their progress within the ELC.

¹⁴ The activity describes the general focus of the individual within this stage.

Table 4. *Observed* ELC of clergy

Stage ^a	Description of Activity (Milestone) ^a	Status ^a
1. Attraction	Individual approaches clergy at a local level who have been empowered to handle it appropriately. This <u>enquiry</u> is considered informal, and the status is descriptive only.	Laity: Enquirer
2. Selection	<p><i>a) Diocesan Selection:</i> Individual formally engaging at a Diocesan Level. Involves <u>meeting with DDO, VA, Diocesan Panel, and bishop.</u></p> <p><i>b) National Selection:</i> <u>Sponsored by the diocese</u> individual participates in Bishops' Advisory Panel with advice returning to bishop. The focus of selection is whether the individual is called, and if so, whether they should be selected for training.</p>	<p>Laity: Commended</p> <p>Laity: Sponsored</p>
3. Formation	Occurring through an accredited institution the individual, <u>once accepted for training by the course/college and the bishop</u> , participates in training (i.e., IME 1-3) for two or three years.	Laity: Recommended for Training
4. Licensed Ministry	<p><i>a) Initial Licensed Ministry:</i> Typically a curacy, this is the period which begins with <u>ordination</u> and continues with the individual being active in ministry (empowered to do so by a <u>diocesan license</u>). The individual also participates in ongoing development in the form of IME 4-7.</p> <p><i>b) Continuing Licensed Ministry:</i> Based upon the recommendation from curacy (and bishop's decision), the person engages in ministry as empowered by the diocese. It begins at the <u>completion of curacy and commencement of the next position.</u></p> <p><i>c) Late Licensed Ministry:</i> In the <u>ten years approaching retirement</u>, the period in which the individual participates in active ministry as empowered by a diocesan license.</p>	<p>Clergy: Deacon (Priest)^c</p> <p>Clergy: Various potential roles (including bishop)</p> <p>Clergy: Various potential roles (including bishop)</p>
5. Retirement	Having officially <u>retired</u> , the individual may participate in ministry as empowered by a different type of license.	Clergy: Retired (possibly with some license)

Note: ^a At beginning of stage.

Whilst the phases are similar to that originally asserted, they have been relabelled to promote simplicity and emphasise their distinct characteristics. Terms that are overly generic and may be confused with other stages (i.e., discernment, training, and development) have been omitted in preference for a less ambiguous approach. This relabelling also reflects the desire to differentiate between *stages* of the life cycle of clergy (according to *milestones, status, and activity*) and the *recurring cycles* across the entire process (see Figure 5). These recurring elements of vocation – discernment, development, and practice – are inherent to every phase, although typically, attract varying levels of emphasis by the Church (see Table 5). For example, in regards to *discernment*, it is evident that the organisation emphasises these processes at the beginning of the ELC (e.g., regarding if an individual should be trained) but less as the process continues. Yet, it seems reasonable to assert – if seeking God’s will throughout the entire life cycle of ministry is deemed important – that discernment is just as critical in other stages, even though it may be operationalised in different ways (e.g., what type of new role might an individual be called to during *Licensed Ministry*). A similar situation is apparent when considering the nature of development and practice as non-exclusive to the *Licensed Ministry* stage, but also applicable to early and late stages. Therefore, it is most appropriate that the ELC be understood in regards to both *stages* and pervasive *cycles of vocational focus areas* (i.e., discernment, development, and practice).

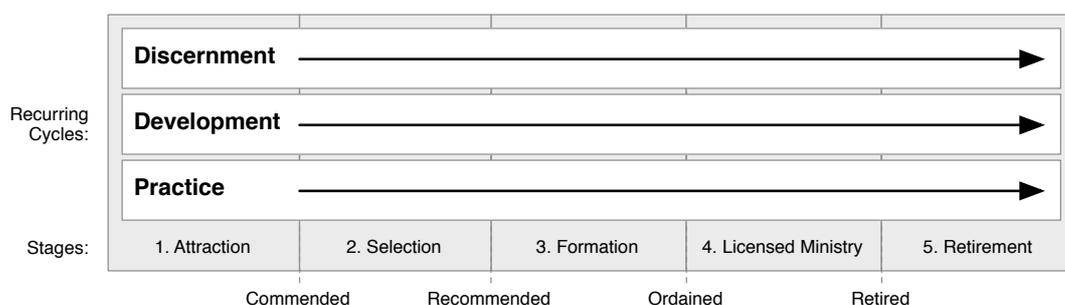


Figure 5. Vocational focus and the ELC of clergy

Table 5. Observed level of vocational focus across the ELC

Stage ^a	Discernment	Development	Practice
1. Attraction	High	Low	Low-Medium
2. Selection			
a) Diocesan	High	Low-Medium	Low-Medium
b) National	High	Low-Medium	Low-Medium
3. Formation	Medium	High	Medium
4. Licensed Ministry			
a) Initial	Medium	High	High
b) Continuing	Low	Medium	High
c) Late	Low	Low	Medium-High
5. Retirement	Low	Low	Low-Medium

Note: The above examples are indicative only.

DISCUSSION

As evidenced, it is essential that the ELC be understood with a dual perspective incorporating *stages* (i.e., Attraction, Selection, Formation, Licensed Ministry, and Retirement) and pervasive *cycles of vocational focus areas* (i.e., discernment, development, and practice). Whilst there are key theological considerations linked with this assertion, methodologically it provides a key perspective through which some of the problems experienced by others may be overcome. For example, whilst Glasse asserted that the various components of a career continuum should not necessarily be considered linearly,¹⁵ it is equally apparent that there are distinguishable stages that occur in a predictable pattern. Conversely, whilst those such as Malony and Hunt proposed a linear based progression,¹⁶ the respective stages are endangered of being indistinguishable from each other without an adequate means to differentiate pervasive and continuous cycles of vocation that exist. For example, whilst the preparation stage was strongly characterised by training, it is evident that training must occur throughout the entire process. Or, if one is reliant to define formation as a period or preparation or training, it could be argued that formation actually extends into curacy (or even further). Thus, without first identifying

¹⁵ Glasse, 19.

¹⁶ Malony and Hunt, 122.

continuous threads of vocational focus evident throughout the entire cycle, the stages are endangered of becoming indistinguishable.

In an applied context, just as the CofE has worked to recently assert and implement approaches to continual learning (or development),¹⁷ these processes *across the life cycle* cannot be completed without also an element of discernment and practice. The new approach to Ministerial Development Review and Continuing Ministerial Development – that requires evaluation, the setting of objectives, and learning to match those objectives – illustrates the appropriateness and utility of such an approach. When considered laterally, it might also assist the organisation and individuals to be more proactive in how the vocation of those in ordained ministry is operationalised. Further, it disarms any argument that ‘managerial systems’ ignore the uniqueness of ordained ministry (and the unique vocational shape of every ordained person’s ministry), working to constantly emphasise the need to respond to God. It also provides an ideal opportunity to understand career changes not as hierarchical steps, but as practical responses to active discernment within an overall life cycle context. Thus, it is essential to consider the overall ELC whilst maintaining a constant vocational focus on discernment, development, and practice. As will be argued, these areas may also provide a useful basis to better articulate the theological commonalities of lay and ordained vocation, with the ELC of clergy providing a differentiating framework.

An Impetus for a Systems Approach

While some people have resisted the application or consideration of organisational perspectives to clergy, it is clear that there is a strong impetus to do so. This perspective, as highlighted by the ELC of clergy proposed, not only brings to light the various stages observed, but also how it is inherent for ordained ministry to be defined within an organisational paradigm. Therefore, it is not only that there are organisational processes, but that these processes work to define and operationalise ordained ministry itself. Thus, it is only within these multiple levels of organisation, that the nature and function of ordained clergy can even begin to be understood. This type of integration is even more pronounced than for other professions because the organisation is integral at every single stage (i.e., from *Recruitment* through to *Retirement*); in effect, it is a closed system. For example, whilst in other professions the training institution and professional association remain separate from the employing organisation, in the Church these elements maintain

¹⁷ Church of England Ministry Division.

a much tighter integration. Consequently, to suggest organisational perspectives – such as the ELC – are irrelevant or inappropriate, is to actually deny an aspect of ordained ministry that is not only inherent to its nature in practice, but also fundamental to its very existence. Utilising the ELC not only illuminates the organisational reality of clergy, but also the essence of the role and how it is centred within a concept of community.

A second impetus for a systems approach to clergy is the need to better understand issues of relevance (e.g., ministerial effectiveness) within a predictive framework. The ELC provides a key opportunity to more strategically seek understanding regarding these various issues by locating them within relevant stages. To treat all clergy, at all stages, in the same way would not only be ineffective, but also be pastorally irresponsible to the individuals and the organisation as a whole. Conversely, to treat all individuals without a construct of organisation would be grossly inefficient and impossible to facilitate. Thus, the ELC strikes a balance by catering to individual need through commonality and systematic processes that contribute towards the individual and collective fulfilment of vocation.

Finally, having established the rationale and validity of applying an organisational framework, it also highlights the continuous cycles of vocational focus. This approach works to recognise the harmony of the entire life cycle and reflects the various endeavours of the Church to promote initiatives such as life-long learning within ministry. Furthermore, by understanding facets such as discernment as continuous, it provides a systematic opportunity through which clergy may continue to seek God's will in the *shape of their vocation* beyond just an assumption of continuous parochial ministry. As the Church seeks to explore fresh expressions, and the varying licenses of ordained priests, this need will become increasingly critical. Similarly, it recognises the changing shape of ministerial practice over a lifetime. Whilst the practice of clergy at the beginning of their career may or may not be the same at the end of it, the exercising of that vocation (along with discernment and development) remains.

Towards a Theology of Vocation: Orders and Expressions

Whilst within Anglicanism there is a strong identity associated with the threefold order of ministry (i.e., bishops, priests, and deacons),¹⁸ there is a need for a more

¹⁸ Paul D. L. Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 165; Paul F. Bradshaw, 'History of the Ordinal', in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 159-62.

thoroughgoing exploration of “the theological principles that underlie the Church of England’s ministry”.¹⁹ Whilst this is of course beyond the scope of this paper, there are several important insights that may contribute to a fuller discussion regarding the nature of ministry (and vocation) within the CofE. Primarily, these insights do not concern the specific theologies associated with each respective order, or even ministry itself, but more broadly – *the necessity to understand the theology of vocation* (and the difficulties that arise from the patterns observed). It is apparent that the desperate need for the Church is primarily a question of vocation (equally shared by both lay and ordained). This assertion concerning vocation (framed as a response to discipleship), reflects the impetus of the *Ministry in the Church of England* that primarily contextualises ordained and accredited lay ministry within the sphere of vocation.²⁰

In view of this, perhaps the largest challenge being faced by the current approach to ordained ministry in the CofE pertains to the various ‘pathways’ of priesthood and lay accredited ministry. As indicated in the current study, this has resulted in considerable concern regarding how these various subtypes of ordained ministries are to be interpreted theologically. That is, the situation arises in which the expected type of licensing for a priest (e.g., SP, Non-SP, Ordained Local Minister [OLM], or PM) will have some shaping of their training, particularly in some circumstances. Yet, whilst individuals may be trained (and even selected) for anticipated roles, they are ultimately ordained within one order and in theory, could be deployed to other roles than that they were specifically selected and trained for. Interviewees suggested that this becomes highly problematic when selecting specific roles with specific contexts, when in reality there may not be the opportunity to exercise that call. Furthermore, as commonly remarked by interviewees, a “priest is a priest” – there is no differentiation in the ordinal – thus should be equally deployable to a range of roles. In the case of priesthood, one approach to resolving this has been to assume that (in a generalist way) parochial ministry is the basis for all other types. Yet, because of the emphasis upon the parish, this oft-results in a reluctance to recognise different forms of priesthood, because it implies (to some) that there are different orders of priesthood. The result is a somewhat awkward proposition that fails to fully acknowledge the richness of the order and the diversity of roles required.

¹⁹ Archbishops' Council (2003a), 25.

²⁰ Church of England Ministry Division, *Ministry in the Church of England* (2010 [cited 1st March 2010]); available from <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/ministry/ministryinthecofe/ministryinthecofepdf.pdf>.

The alternative proposition to train priests as ‘specialists’ from the outset is equally problematic as it assumes that there are (a) distinct sub-orders, and that (b) the *particular* discerned calling of that individual is a permanent one. There is therefore a deficit of synthesis between the theology of order and a theology of expressed ministry. To be overly broad seems to reduce the potential for discerning and training for specific contexts; to be overly specific seems to fragment any theology relating to orders; and to assume one type of ministry as the basis for all others avoids grappling with the reality of preparing and placing people within specific contexts to which they are needed and may be called. Therefore, a way forward might be to emphasise the identity of all Christians as the “whole people of God”,²¹ and in doing so, all with a vocation (that needs to be continually discerned, developed, and put into practice). In effect, the people of God are ordered through the function and identity of the Church, and within those orders there are expressions of ministry. Thus, there may be a differentiation between orders and how these are *expressed* (i.e., the particular role that the individual is licensed to participate in).

Accordingly, all priests are priests, but licensed for particular roles (at particular times) as an *expression* of their order (and similarly for other orders). Thus, one might not be called to be a PM or OLM indefinitely – but, at different times across the lifetime of their vocation, they will discern what expression they are called to, engage in development to fulfil that call, and exercise that ministry in practice. Continuing this logic, a parish priest is just as much a particular expression of priesthood as is OLM or PM. In effect, one must discern their vocation as a member of the whole people of God, but then they must continue to grow that vocation through a continual cycle of discernment, development, and practice over time.

This model, whilst highly reflective of an Anglican understanding of ordained ministry, presents a somewhat distinct form from the current reality. This is because it overcomes (a) the reluctance of the Church to specialise ministers from the outset (in fear of fragmentation), or (b) assume such ‘specialisations’ are permanent. From an individual basis, this works to honour the disciple-shaped nature of all orders, but organisationally enables a continuous discerning of vocation that is responsible and flexible. It also counters the proposition that career development is analogous with vertical progression, because the focus is on how God (in the context of the Church) is

²¹ Faith Order Advisory Group of The Church of England, *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Archbishops' Council, 2007), 17.

calling the person continuously. Thus, there are orders and expressions of those orders – but all work to fulfil one’s vocation. These expressions – which involve an interaction between call and gifting – are a means through which the task of realising an enablement of the whole people of God might be strived towards.

The implication for lay is similar in that they too are called (and ordered, by baptism – *not* by ‘default’). Similarly for lay, one ought not to assume that their vocations and expressions are any less equal to that of clergy. It is a vocational empowerment of the Church that recognises that all are the people of God and all have a continuous responsibility to flourish in their vocation (in development, discernment and practice) through diverse expressions. Thus, be it through a particular accredited lay ministry, and/or a particular ‘secular’ career, all aspects of their lives become expressions for their vocational call as laity. Just as the clerical role declares the nature of the vocation, so too do the roles and careers of laity.

A key point of vocational differentiation for clergy, is that they are called to fulfil this within the formal context of the Church as ordained ministers licensed for specific roles. It also recognises the key role of clergy, within the organisation of the Church, is to be leaders of the Body of Christ in their shared ministry and mission in the world.²² Thus, an understanding of ordained ministry is not only set within an organisational context, but its very existence demands an interaction with a body. Whilst true for lay also (i.e., they exist within the church), it is operationalised according to a different type of relationship with the organisation. Thus, in order to grapple with the realities of vocation, the Church as a unit might not be satisfied with only an historic conceptualisation of a threefold order, but may in fact need to (more seriously) consider a contemporary theology that includes laity, bishops, priests and deacons as ministers.²³

Conclusion

Whilst there has been growing interest in the relationships between spirituality, religion, and career in regards to lay people, it is perplexing to consider why models such as the ELC have not been more readily applied to clergy. When one takes into account the embedded nature of ordained ministry within the organisation of the Church, and even more broadly the Body of Christ, it seems that ignoring organisational frameworks

²² G. Jones, 'On the Priesthood', *Anglican Theological Review* 91, no. 1 (2009), 60.

²³ Fredrica Thompsett, 'The Laity', in *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 288.

is even more confounding. It seems for some, the application of these organisational methods denies the relative uniqueness of clergy, when in fact the very nature and operationalisation of the ordained ministry is entirely embedded within an organisational context. Thus, an application of these frameworks is not only appropriate in light of the organisational processes and structures utilised, but also because they seek to understand the role within the very context that defines its existence.

In this view, I have sought to identify the type of ELC of clergy prevalent in the CofE (with particularly reference to Durham). As per the document analysis and interviews, it was apparent that a five-stage model (i.e., Attraction, Selection, Formation, Licensed Ministry, and Retirement) was applicable. These stages could be empirically identified according to *milestones*, the ascribed *status* of the individual, and the typical *activity* entailed. In addition to the stages, a set of vocational focus areas (i.e., *discernment*, *development*, and *practice*) was identified as pervasive across the entire cycle. By combining these two perspectives, the model presented overcomes some of the limitations identified in the literature, emphasising the uniqueness of clergy, situating them firmly within an organisational context, and working to connect the common elements of vocation with the whole people of God.

Whilst it was beyond the scope of this paper to comprehensively explore the theological consequences of such an approach, there were some further implications relating to the identified strands of vocation. That is, as was identified, it was apparent that there exist significant concerns and complexities associated with the increasing types of ordained ministry within the CofE. Whilst there is resistance to understand these as particular ‘sub-orders’ of ordination, the ELC appears to identify that in practice they do appear to be operationalised as ‘specialist’ forms of ordination. The alternative – which is equally problematic – is to emphasise parochial ministry as the basis for all ‘types’, when in fact, it too could be considered a specialisation itself. As implied from the frameworks, this research suggests that the various ‘forms’ of ministry should not be positioned as specialist orders within an order, but instead an expression of that ministry, associated with a particular role, for which the individual is licensed. Therefore, the vocation is to ordained ministry, and the *expression* of that order may (or may not) take various forms through active vocational growth through a focus on discernment, development, and practice. Thus, as the Church seeks to fulfil the potential vocation of individuals (in this case that pertaining to ordination), the ELC is used as a means to facilitate vocational growth and in doing so, the ministry and mission of the Church.

Finally, in order to facilitate an integration of future research relating to clergy, a methodological framework was proposed with associated research priorities. Whilst this framework may provide a useful means to facilitate future studies of clergy and integrate a relatively fragmented body of research, the size of the study and analysis of only one diocese are acknowledged as limitations of the current project. Further theological discussion regarding the implications, is also required in relation to the sacramental nature of ordained ministry. Accordingly, future projects might seek to expand upon this study and validate the frameworks proposed, with possible extension to ecumenical and multi-faith settings.

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