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How can I develop a framework for 'calling-informed' career development practice for Christian women?

by

Gillian Frigerio

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

University of Warwick, Department for Education Studies, May 2023

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of *Doctor of Education.* It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

Abbreviations

AR	Action research
BCS	Basic Calling Scale
CVC	Calling and Vocation Questionnaire
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other identities
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MCSI	My Career System Interview
SGPF	Setting God's People Free
STF	Systems theory framework
TAR	Theological Action Research
UKME/GMH	United Kingdom minority ethnic/global majority heritage
WCT	Work as calling theory

Abstract

This thesis reports on action research (AR) undertaken from the perspective of a career development practitioner and educator seeking to develop particular provision to integrate faith, work and calling for Christian women. Structured in six chapters, it reviews three selected fields of knowledge: the theory and practice of career development work; the work as calling literature; and understandings of work and calling in use in the Church of England. This denomination is justified from the point of view of researcher positionality and focus on the particular faith and career development experiences of women.

The thesis uses the meta-theoretical framework of the Systems Theory Framework (STF) of Career Development (Patton & McMahon, 2021) and provides new insights by extending the STF through integration with the other fields of knowledge. As the STF is intended as a basis for career development practice, the thesis focuses on how this might be developed. Eleven semi-structured interviews with Anglican lay women use the STF to explore their experiences of career and faith development. A reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) of the interviews identifies that the social system proximal to the individual is particularly present in the participant's self-understanding of their work, faith and calling and provides insights into the sensemaking processes of calling when understood to be coming from God. Potential for participants to benefit from career development support is identified, despite an ambivalence about accessing this. The study concludes by identifying future actions for the practitioner-researcher both in providing support direct to Christian women and working with the wider career development professional community, the Church of England and other faith communities. These are mapped against traditionally understood activities of career guidance as well as the five signposts for social justice (Hooley, Sultana, & Thomsen, 2017). A framework for practice which integrates calling into the STF based on the analysis of my interviews is the main outcome, modelled for future use in supporting women to integrate work and faith, learning to craft their way towards living their calling.

Introduction

Career development work gets to the heart of what drives people in their choices about learning and work; how they shape their working lives and respond to the contexts around them. This thesis arises from my work in career development as practitioner and educator for over 20 years. As a practitioner I offer activities and resources which help others directly to develop their own career, and as an educator I run programmes which equip others to do the same. This research also brings in themes from other parts of my life. In particular, the research presented here has enabled me to integrate my work and faith lives and explore them as linked scholarly interests. Through it, I explore the potential for me to offer a uniquely integrated form of career development support for Christian women. I am interested in this because I have long seen potential connections between career development work and faith. People of faith, myself included, bring our beliefs into our working lives and our career decision making. Calling is a term in common usage across Christian and career development contexts and so I am exploring its potential here. I am seeking to create a framework for understanding how calling can inform an integrated work and faith life, and from there will consider how I can develop resources or services based on such a framework.

The thesis is written to evidence my completion of a Doctorate of Education. The ideas within are primarily addressed to the career development scholarly community, whom I am challenging to consider the integration of faith and career development for clients with religious belief and to explore faith-based organisations as sites for and partners in delivery of career development learning activities. A secondary audience is such faith-based organisations. With my focus on the Church of England, I hope that they, other Christian denominations and indeed other faith groups could consider how their own contexts provide opportunities to align career development ideas with their own purpose and mission. The Anglican focus also enables me to draw on, and make recommendations for, my own practice as a spiritual companion who is actively engaged in church governance through synodical structures.

The connecting thread between career development practice and faith formation is emancipatory potential, by which I mean the potential to liberate individuals from unjust structures that create inequality in life chances. Career development work operates at the interface of self and society and has a role to play in enabling people to challenge and ultimately shape the social structures that can limit and restrict. It is a lively and broad transdisciplinary field of theory and practice that I have made

my professional home and has current priorities connecting it with learning (McCash, 2021; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996), social justice (Arthur, 2014; Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2017, 2019, 2021; Irving, 2011, 2021) and sustainability (Ho, Kaur & Taylor, 2023; Robertson, 2021). Religious faith can also be the basis for individuals to make sense of their social worlds and to generate liberative potential. My own experience of Christian faith and as someone involved in supporting the faith formation of others, is that it points towards hope for transformation of unjust structures. However, religious organisations can also replicate such structures and are formed in the same socio-political contexts that lead to the same inequalities as the labour market. Gender is a key axis of disadvantage and there is a continued need to explore women's particular experiences at work and within religious traditions. I hope that those with an interest in mission and ministry of the Church will find it offers insights into the particular experiences of lay Anglican women and ideas as to how faith can be further nurtured through integration with work. Moreover, I demonstrate how career development can be integrated with faith to equip and support women in their working lives.

The lens taken herein on emancipation focuses on gender and the need to pay attention to the particular experiences of women. I will address the feminist concern that the core ways in which the world is understood consolidates patriarchal structures that create particular barriers for women. The career development world acknowledges the need to theorise about career development learning in ways that redress the partiality of extant theories which arise from particularly western, privileged and male dominated scholarship. I have adopted an intersectional feminist lens here to construct a study that explores women's experiences with a view to generating wider emancipatory potential. By intersectional, I mean that, following the work of Crenshaw (1989), my approach to gender will absorb other critical perspectives and explore the further intersecting structural distinctions that need to be taken into account when exploring difference and disadvantage.

In 2018, European career development scholars laid out a research agenda for career development that advocated for an interdisciplinary proactive approach that engaged fully with global issues (Weber et al, 2018) and asks conceptual questions about the purpose and meaning of career development work in practice. In response, this work is constructed using an action research paradigm that is focused on practice and, therefore, provides a framework for contextualised knowledge creation. Action research conceptualises a cyclical process which sees research and practice develop in tandem, with empirical data gathered to inform new practice, which is in turn reviewed and refined. This cycle

is evident from a macro perspective, as my personal practice across various career and faith development contexts continues. However, this thesis only has scope to present a slice of a cycle. A detailed literature review lays the groundwork for an integrative study and a series of semi-structured qualitative interviews are analysed using a process of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021) that is consistent with the philosophy of action research. From this reflexive process I develop themes which enable me to map out and propose a subsequent cycle of innovation and evaluation which I will take forward beyond the scope of this study.

To guide the reader, the thesis is structured as follows. Following this introduction, the first three chapters take a uniform approach to different salient fields: career development work in general; calling in career development work; and calling within the Church of England. In each I offer a background overview, highlight selected relevant concepts and debates and offer an outline of what practice constitutes in each area. I go on to consider the particular issues for women relating to the field, as reviewed in literature and practice and the potential for the field to offer emancipation from restrictions. I close with an autobiographical reflection so I am reflexively written into the work throughout. These chapters seek to address questions about: the key features of any potential career development practice for women; how calling can inform such practice; and the position of the Church of England on work and calling for women.

Using this structure, I consider career development theory and practice and introduce the Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (Patton & McMahon, 2021) as an integrative framework which I use throughout this work to understand career development as a learning process. This is followed by a chapter devoted to the particular use of calling as a key concept within this field. I then switch to consider how vocation and calling are understood by the Church of England, drawing on a selection of theological and ecclesiological issues to map the terrain. These three chapters set up the problem: that lay women's calling throughout their whole of life is not particularly well supported by the church in which they seek to grow their faith. Based on this, there is potential to offer some tailored support as a resource to such women.

Chapter four offers the necessary background and detail to claim that this research in particular is able to address this problem. It considers the action research paradigm as a research philosophy, methodology and method and locates the empirical work contained here within that, asking how best to frame an action research project to develop my potential practice in this area. I also weave in some

aspects of practical theology as a complementary approach to study to support the faith dimensions of the work. It details the fieldwork undertaken for this study with a sample of Anglican lay women and outlines how this data was gathered and handled. It explains the selection of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021) as an analytical process for this data, used reflexively and informed by my ongoing practice in this domain as a facilitator and spiritual companion. From here, the themes emergent from the data are presented over chapter five, focusing on: the sensemaking process of perceiving a calling; the role of the social system; and the potential for career support.

A sixth chapter pulls together lessons from this work that will feed into my continuing action research by asking what career development provision I should design, deliver and evaluate. Many recommendations are for me as scholar and practitioner. Others are for the field of career development work and for the Church of England as well as potentially wider faith communities. A short conclusion bookends the work, affirming the original contribution to knowledge of this use of the STF to integrate faith, work and calling.

To conclude this introduction, I foreground the integrative and interdisciplinary nature of this thesis: one that is innovative and distinct in that it emerges from my own autobiography and practice and connects fields which have not previously been connected in this way. The conversation partners in this thesis of career development and practical theology have in common a series of tensions which have been highlighted by Pattison and Woodward: between theory and practice, between tradition and experience, between what is and what might be (Woodward & Pattison, 2000, pp. 13-16). Practical theology, like career development, is interdisciplinary (Swinton, 2019) and can be said to "seek[s] in explicit and varied ways to enable the Christian practitioner to articulate faith – to speak of God, in practice" (Cameron et al, 2010, p. 21). This work does not seek to debate or argue for a particular understanding of the nature and existence of God. Instead, drawing on the faith of my participants and my own faith I am seeking to understand how I can bring faith and work together. Through this, I believe this work demonstrates all five signposts of socially just careers work as specified by Hooley, Sultana, and Thomsen (2021). I am *building critical consciousness* (my own and others'), *naming oppression* by exploring the gendered nature of calling at work and thereby *questioning what is normal* in a range of social contexts including the Church. By integrating career development and practical theology, I am also *encouraging people to work together* and by engaging in research I am *working at a*

range of levels. These five signposts are also used as an organising framework for the recommendations made in chapter six.

As a student of a practice-focused professional doctorate working in a space so intimately connected to my own life and work, this thesis takes a more personal tone than many traditional doctoral studies. I justify this in that my position within the field of study is made explicitly central to the research process. I am part of the social world of working lay Anglican women, and not an impartial and external observer. I am making use of my reflexivity throughout as a resource to boost the rigour, quality and value of the work. Given that my interest in this field arises from my own experience of integrating faith and work, and juggling callings to particular forms of work alongside faith-based and personal commitments, it would be disingenuous to write without my own voice audible throughout.

Writing for a wide range of audiences across both career development work and the study of Christian vocation has proved challenging in pulling together foundational concepts so that all readers can follow the line of argument. The thesis endeavours to build from fundamental ideas, such as the nature of work or faith, through to more complex concepts, such as discernment of calling and how women's working lives are shaped by complexities of interconnecting systems. Space has required a particular parsimony and focus, but I hope the study can provide a basis for future practice and enquiry.

Chapter One: Career development theory and practice

A calling informed approach to career development can only be considered once we have reviewed what is meant by 'career development work'. This chapter sets out to do that by asking what are the key features of any career development practice that might be made available for Christian women. It does this by exploring 'career' conceptually and charting how its theoretical roots have informed evolving practice.

Work and its place in our lives to create and maintain comfort, satisfaction and fulfilment has a history as long as the human experience. The term 'career', reflective of ways of thinking about how our working lives play out and can be supported, is relatively new, emerging in the last 150 years or so as a result of fundamental change to how (some) societies are organised. These shifts, from agrarian economies and highly stratified social structures to industrialised and more flexible labour markets, have given rise both to practices which support people in making work-related choices and theories on which such practices are based (Savickas & Savickas, 2019).

This chapter will establish the relevance of career development theory and practice to this study. I trace the origins of career development work as a means to support people in their working lives, beginning with its first recognisable form in the early twentieth century, and give an overview of the transdisciplinary theorising that has informed this practice (drawing primarily on vocational psychology, sociology and organisational studies). I use a selection of examples of scholarly integration of different disciplinary literatures to demonstrate the key concepts that emerge and trace the contours of the practices and organisational contexts that have emerged and evolved, mapping the current landscape. I focus in particular on the Systems Theory Framework (STF) of Patton and McMahon (2021), first developed as an integrative framework in the 1990s and now with a recently published fourth edition over twenty years later. The STF explores the interrelating influences of individual, social and societal-environmental systems, as a representation of the integration of theory and practice.

Woven throughout this chapter is an exploration of the way the term 'career' can be defined and the problems that can arise through the implied individual agency and determinism in popular understandings of the term (Collin & Watts, 1996; Blustein, 2011). Further layered onto that understanding is often a specific definition of success: one that is not the case for many living and

working in unequal societies. The potential for career development work (theory and practice) to be emancipatory, enabling people to break free of social and environmental restrictions, is also examined here. I have explored in one discrete section how these tensions emerge in women's career development, when work is the source and site of significant gender inequality.

The chapter justifies choices of language in this study as well as key concepts such as career development as an educative process of lifelong learning. In particular, the STF's representation of what Patton and McMahon (2021, p. 492) term a "therapeutic system" foregrounds the importance of the learning alliance between an individual and the person supporting them in their career development. This also loosens up traditional understandings about where and how career development support takes place, so we can see community settings (Thomsen, 2012) as potential sites of such practice and consider where Christian women might learn about their career development. Following this overview, the subsequent chapter will dive deeper into how calling is used in the career studies world.

Background

It is commonplace for introductions to edited collections on career development (Gunz & Peiperl, 2007; Robertson, Hooley, & McCash, 2021) to remind us that consideration of how to make sense of choices in life has ancient roots. In turn, the introductions to these two edited collections serving as handbooks of career development reference Plato, Shakespeare, Marx, Cervantes, Freud and others as evidence of the longstanding concern for how to live and work. However, historical accounts tend to locate the emergence of formalised help and support to do that, at least in its recognisable form, in the early 20th century. Social reformers responded to social and economic change which led to challenges for individuals by providing help in choosing and securing work. The oft cited origin story casts the USA based social reformer, Frank Parsons, in the role of 'father of career development' after his work in this area led him to write *Choosing a Vocation* in 1909. In this book Parsons (1909) outlined a three staged process: understand yourself; understand work requirements; and "true reasoning" to create a match (Robertson et al, 2021: p. 2). His starting points of activism and social justice are worth remembering, even if the simplicity of this model and its inability to reflect different contextual constraints for different groups in society, as well as changing perspectives over the life course, have led to its critique. Less well known is a United Kingdom (UK) based initiative by Maria Ogilvie Gordon

whose work led to the creation of a network of labour exchanges in dialogue between education systems and employment. From this, a distinct careers service emerged in the UK and Robertson et al (2021) note similar practice developments in Norway, Japan, Germany, Austria and India. In their most recent edition, Patton and McMahon (2021, p. 6) also reference the work of philanthropic women Etta St John Wilemon in Canada and Carolyn Chisholm in Australia and note cross fertilisation of ideas and policy borrowing from the US to Japan and China.

Parsons' work reveals a strong association between emergent vocational guidance and the modern era in Western capitalist economies, assisting young men with the increased choice between options that had resulted from industrialisation. In this early work, the focus was on differentiation, defining the traits that individuals might exhibit and the links to factors present in a series of jobs or sectors. From work like this, career development work emerged as formal, state-funded provision in many economies and from this a distinct and bounded area of professional practice known as vocational guidance has emerged, informed by theoretical developments. A further example cited by Patton and McMahon (2021) is of volunteer welfare worker Edith Onians, who began teaching literacy to newspaper boys and developed provision into the Victorian Vocational Guidance Centre. In due course, professional qualifications for those working in the field developed and gained traction.

In the 1950s and 60s, interest in exploring life stage and lifespan saw developmental psychological theories emerge, which theorised how careers change through life and explored the processes of moving from one stage to another (Super, 1980). Interest from other fields of study and academic disciplines has since developed, including the learning theories of career developed by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) and theories which explored the significance of context, community and culture on career (Arulmani, 2014; Blustein, 2013; Hodkinson, 2009; Law, 2009). Organisations as employers and places of work feature significantly in work on career development, and therefore the study of organisations has also developed an interest in the study of career. These theories have influenced practice as it developed to meet the changing needs of individuals and their contexts and continue to be used by practitioners to inform their work helping individuals. Forms of practice have also diversified away from a traditional focus on a face-to-face career guidance interview between client and practitioner to include group work, online services, and provision of information resources. Indeed, scholars and commentators have redefined career guidance along these lines, with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2004) defining it as "Services intended to assist

people at any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their careers" (p. 19). A counter movement has seen the term guidance as continuing an association with a particular form of statutory provision and has instead preferred to move to the broader 'career development work'. I prefer this latter shift, as it is more inclusive of diversity and ways and means of facilitating learning beyond one-to-one work. As such, what the Standing Conference of Associations for Guidance in Educational Settings, UK, (SCAGES, 1992) defines as 'activities of guidance' can equally be labelled 'activities of career development'. These activities are listed by SCAGES as: informing, advising, assessing, teaching, enabling, advocating, networking, feeding back and managing innovation/systems change.

In tandem with the theoretical developments, we see shifts in practice that move from initial career choice to lifelong career development. We recognise that support for career development comes from a wide variety of people and is delivered in a wide variety of formats, all of which facilitate learning. Thus we have seen a 'learning turn' to career development work, including the idea that careers work enables the development of career management skills or competences which will provide the basis for lifelong change. As such, career development practice is less about diagnostics and application of expertise about the labour market to make an initial career decision and more about the facilitation of that learning for ongoing career development. As Thomsen (2012) notes, a former practitioner-dominant perspective, which places its focus on the institutional arrangements for the provision of guidance, is now making way to a participant perspective, where we consider the learner and their learning needs in their context.

These institutional arrangements for career development work have been organised in a variety of ways at points in history and different contexts. The sector has moved from a model seeing the practitioner as expert, diagnosing best actions for a client understood to be static and bound by rationality, logic and cognition, through to a model seeing the reflective practitioner facilitating the learning of a complex and embedded client who is managing their working life over time. People might access support at particular decision points, forced or not, and also in relation to job performance and perseverance. The scope of careers work might also extend to helping people consider how they do their job, not just what job to do.

A constant conundrum for the contemporary career development field is how this global practice has its theoretical roots firmly in the West, and in particular in the USA where the bulk of published work

until 2014 originated. Robertson et al (2021) note a link between modernity and the loosening of previous assumptions about life and work as leading to increased choice, thus necessitating career development support. This assumption of choice might not be true in all contexts. Gunz and Peiperl (2007) also place emphasis on the role of historical change in increased choice through industrialisation as the impetus for career development services, with an organisational emphasis on the need for sorting and sifting a mobile labour force. They even go so far as to locate this geographically by making reference to this labour force 'crossing the Atlantic'.

Key concepts and features

Exploring terminology is a useful starting point for surfacing key concepts. For example, the term 'career' can be understood in relation to both an externally observable phenomenon of the particular path pursued, as well as the internal and private perspective of the unique individual pursuing it. The etymology of 'career' reflects this dual meaning, for career can refer to both the vehicle (carrus) that travels down the road, and the journey (carraria) it takes (Gunz & Peiperl, 2007). Sometimes a motorway, and sometimes a dirt track, the carriage has an impact on the terrain and over time these routes are altered, maybe damaged and even become unpassable, or maybe made easier to traverse by previous traffic smoothing the way. This highlights for us the blend of phenomena that can be analysed as both objective (relating to happenings in the labour market for example) and subjective (pertaining to the individual's internal construction of meaning and response to such events).

The key concepts discussed in this section reflect the transdisciplinary nature of the field. Moore, Gunz, and Hall (2007) identify a series of tributaries to the study of career: the sociological, the vocational and the developmental. These range from Chicago School sociologists, whose used the word career more broadly than referring to middle-class paid jobs, differential psychologists developing testing tools to support a matching process in the practice of vocational guidance, and scholars of life course development exploring significance of life stage and ongoing adaptation across the life span and space.

Gunz and Peiperl write now within the disciplinary home of organisation studies which claims 'career studies' as a sub-category and see this as where it has "gone legitimate" (p.1) since the 1970s. However, they acknowledge "pervasiveness" of the concept of career and argue that career studies is

not so much a field as a "perspective on social enquiry" (Peiperl & Gunz, 2007). The scholarship of career development, across these dual perspectives (internal and external) and differing disciplines gives us a vast range and scope of material to consider. The transdisciplinary tributaries and trajectories reveal a body of work with shifting philosophical underpinnings. Early work, with its emphasis on matching aspects of the person and the environment, was underpinned by positivism. The shift to a developmental process still assumes generalisability of life stage and span. More latterly, constructivist and social constructionist understandings of how meaning is made through cognitive processes and interaction with the social world have developed. These foreground ongoing processes of learning and decision making with individual action in unpredictable, uncontrollable and constantly shifting contexts. The focus remains on the individual as central player, but the complexity of the game is recognised. More recently, the power dynamics within dominant neo-liberal ideologies have become a focus. The emphasis placed within organisational studies on certain types of roles and organisations is open to critique, having "put the agentic individual centre stage" (Mayrhofer, Smale, Briscoe, Dickmann, & Parry, 2020, p.329) and focused on "a limited diversity of career settings" (p. 328). A renewed focus has emerged on the meaning of work across a wider range of global populations and contexts, reflecting differences in economic, political and social contexts with widespread inequality, precarity and disadvantage (Blustein, 2019; Sultana, 2017; Ribeiro, 2021).

With such an array of theoretical resources to draw on, practitioners and researchers face questions about how to select, or integrate, theories for use in their work. Theoretical convergence has led to a number of integrative frameworks and approaches. I now highlight three beginning with Inkson's (2004, 2007) metaphors moving into Yates's (2021) content-based typology and finally explaining the Systems Theory Framework, bringing together content and process, which will be used in my work.

Inkson attempts comprehensiveness and integration through the use of metaphor in a format which seeks to be accessible to the end-user rather than written for a scholarly audience. In *Understanding Careers: the metaphors of working lives*, Inkson (2007) identifies a series of metaphors for career in common use, revealing multi-layered interpretations of each and linking each one to the variety of explanatory frameworks for understanding individuals' career decisions and trajectories offered by the career studies literature (career as 'fit', as 'inheritance', as 'cycle', as 'story', etc). The value here is that we can connect the metaphors that individuals use with their own sensemaking to surface ways of thinking about career, and the potential for this in practice will also be picked up later in this thesis.

A contemporary integrative model is developed by UK scholar Julia Yates (2021), who takes a pragmatic approach to integration by looking for themes rather than the traditional approach of disciplinary, chronological or epistemological difference. She identifies content themes of identity (who people are and who they can become) and environment and process themes of learning and psychological resources that equip us in career development. Yates is clear about how practitioners can apply this to their work, but without the reflexive element of the third framework which I will now consider, which opens up the practice context for theoretical critique so well.

My selection for in-depth use and critical engagement is Australian scholars Patton and McMahon's (2021) Systems Theory Framework (STF). The STF is a meta-theoretical synthesis of existing career theory using systems theory principles and ideas, developed with three main purposes:

1. to reflect a macro-picture of both extant and new/emerging theories of career development and how they interrelate;
2. to assist individuals to recognise complex and interrelated nature of their career influences;
3. to provide an analytical lens for considering career development research and practice. (2021, p. 67).

Their core text, first published in 1999 and with subsequent editions in 2006, 2014 and 2021, contains a detailed review of extant theories, taking 150 pages to summarise theories which focus on content, on process, on both content and process (such as learning theories) or those which blend developmental and contextual perspectives. They give careful consideration to constructivist and social constructionist developments and then bring us full circle from the social justice focused origins of the field to a more recent social justice turn, with contemporary concerns to be inclusive and globally relevant. As such they consider theoretical responses to the limited focus of many theories to a small subset of humanity, and consider the particular career development trajectories and needs of women, those of diverse cultures and ethnicities, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities and people from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Following this charting, they review movements of integration and convergence and build the case for the STF as the basis for collaborative multi-disciplinary scholarship.

The use of systems theory principles, which critique a traditional positivist view of linear and incremental progress, enables them to build a meta-theoretical framework mapping the complex

interplay of multiple interactions over two open systems: the individual and their context. As a systems theory, they focus on the interplay between parts of a system and the whole, working abductively between the two rather than inductively (from parts to whole) or deductively (from whole to parts). Central to the framework laid out in Fig. 1 is the individual, with the various influences (more fluid and adaptive terminology than the stasis and predictability implied by alternatives such as 'factors' or 'variables') identified from their review of content-based theories. Beyond this individual system, the contextual system distinguishes two levels of proximity to the individual. The 'social' is represented by influences which overlap with the individual: peers, family, media, workplaces, community groups and educational institutions. Moving further away and altering our focus to a more expansive view enables us to see wider societal-environmental influences such as geographical location, political decisions, historical trends, globalisation, socioeconomic status and the employment market. This representation of career as complex and dynamic systems responds to critique of career development as tied to western notions of individualism, whilst still recognising the prominence of individual sense-making in context (2021, p. 18).

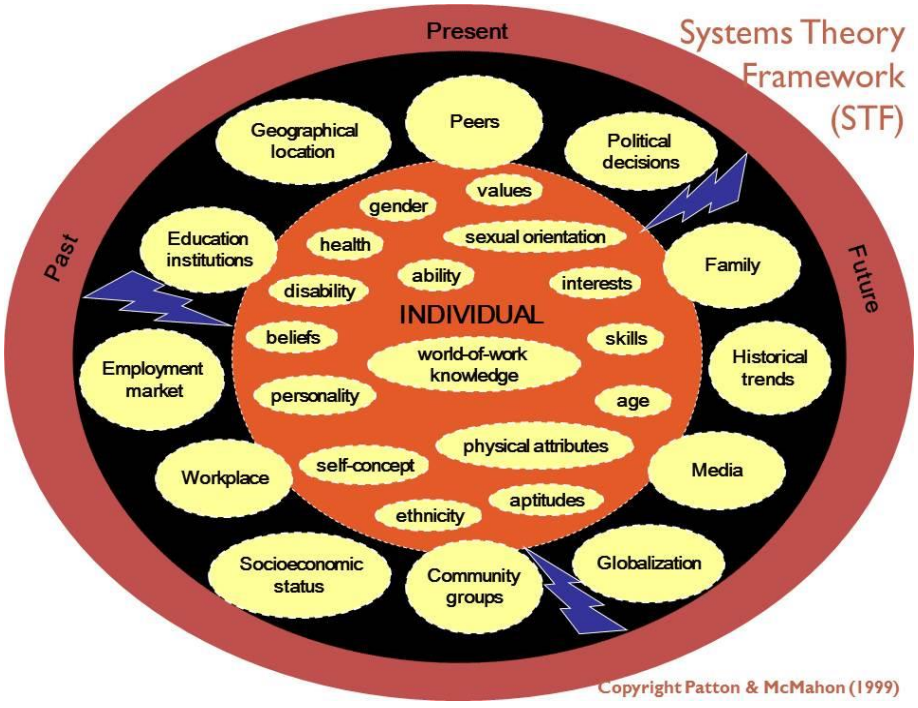

Fig 1: The Systems Theory Framework of Career Development (Patton & McMahon, 2021, p.92)

Process influences are represented as follows: recursiveness (the dotted lines around each influence, or part of the system); change over time (denoting past, present and future); and chance events (lightning flashes).

Recursiveness is key to understanding how the individual-in-context can be supported in their career development, and recognises the mutuality and relatedness of key influences. This is best demonstrated by an in-class activity that I typically lead my students through where individual class members represent each influence and then move around demonstrating how each part has potential to influence the other. In working with the STF, Patton and McMahon place an emphasis on learning, seeing career development work as the facilitation of learning by the practitioner, as depicted in what they call 'the therapeutic system' (Figure 2). This system enables the practitioner to consider their own individual and contextual systems and how those might interact with clients' systems. It demonstrates how connectedness of the entire system, including the organisational context in which the career development interaction takes place, facilitates reflection, meaning-making and learning for the client. This powerful representation of how individuals influence one another will be used throughout this study as an analytical tool, as well as the basis for reflexive consideration of my own role as researcher.

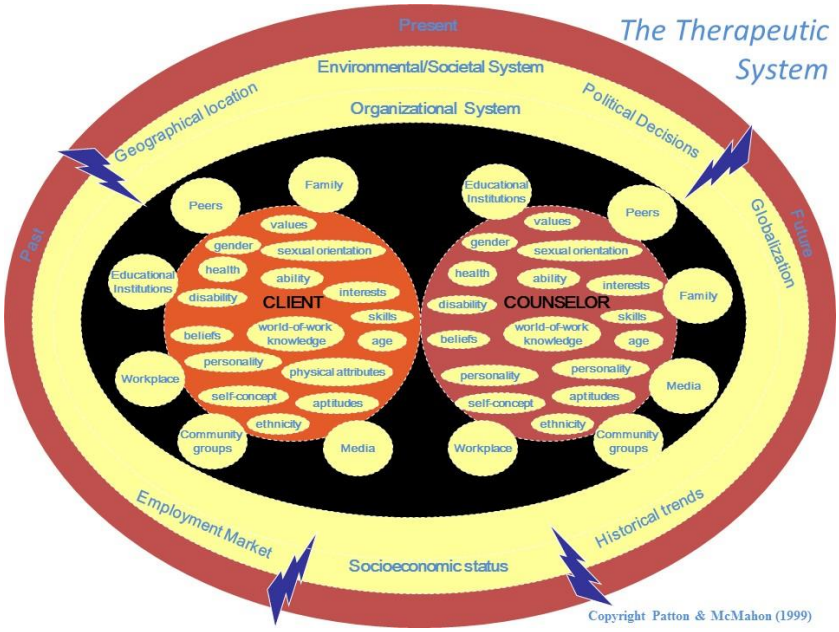

Fig 2: The Therapeutic System (Patton & McMahon, 2021, p. 492)

My selection of STF is based on its comprehensiveness, its wide parameters for inclusion, its underpinning constructivist/social constructionist epistemology and its integrative intent.

In a detailed analysis of multidimensional understandings of agency using relational sociology, Bilon-Piórko and Thomsen (2022) find the STF to be more comprehensive than other constructivist theories, specifically Savickas and Savickas's (2019) life design, in recognising external constraints and contingencies, suggesting its value to the career development practitioner with a focus on social justice. However, that is not to take its claims and priorities at face value. For example, the literature on calling covered in chapter two is not referenced in the theoretical overview preceding the STF.

Is it for everyone?

Despite its roots as vocational guidance, the area of practice has become more commonly known as career development, and thus carries with it some of the exclusive implications associated with the term 'career'. Robertson et al (2021) note that theorising about career development that emerged alongside vocational guidance practice began with a focus on working-class and migrant populations but over time the emerging developmental focus privileged the middle classes. This can carry forward into the theoretical discussions. Perhaps understandably, given their organisational studies base, Gunz and Peiperl's text includes explicit assumptions that people with careers are pursuing them in organisations and that enough can be said about careers by looking at people's progression in and through organisations:

> It is as if in everyday life, career means something one is serious about, as opposed to those things that one does for the love of doing them but without getting paid for doing so (Gunz & Peiperl, 2007, p. 3).

Assumptions are revealed in this sentence about normative economic models of selling labour through participation in the job market. The obvious drawback is that any person who is a long way from organisational employment will find that their path through life is outside the scope of study. The claim is made that career relates only to paid work, and perhaps also to quite narrow forms of work, undertaken by those with high degrees of volition in their working life.

Alternatively, we find more expansive definitions which look at the place of multiple forms of work as part of life. The editors of the *Oxford Handbook of Career Development* include within the realms of career the whole of life, in all its forms:

> It is a concept not limited to hierarchical progression within an organisation or occupation. It encompasses a very wide range of activities, including formal or informal paid work, study, housework, caring work, voluntary or community work, political activism, and so on. It also includes religious practices, leisure interests, health maintenance, family time, and relaxing. Career development is a key concept because it draws together and integrates all these important activities. In our sense, individuals have only one career, within which they engage in a wide range of activities, situations, and roles throughout their lives. (Robertson, Hooley & McCash, 2021, p. 11).

This problem of terminology has led others to suggest further alternatives: Blustein (2006) proposes a 'psychology of working' and suggests we speak of 'working lives' in order to ensure that assumptions of volition and choice are challenged. The theory reminds us that working optimally fulfils human needs for: power and survival (food, shelter, safety etc.); social relationships (connection, belonging, making a social contribution); and self-determination (autonomy, competence, relatedness).

Richardson and Schaeffer (2013) use the terms 'market work' and 'care work' to suggest a dual model encompassing both paid and unpaid work, conceptualising a "mutually interdependent relationship between economic production and social reproduction" (p. 35) and arguing that the "invisible hand of the market cannot function without the invisible heart of care work" (p.35). These more comprehensive perspectives enable us to consider what career development work can offer to wider populations and not just to people who might consider themselves to have a career in a particular field, with its associations of vertical progression, status and self-actualisation.

Arulmani (2014) and Sultana (2017), writing about Indian and the Southern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) regions respectively, prefer the term 'livelihood planning' to emphasise the economic survival priorities of many who are supported there by career development practitioners.

From this review I conclude that career can be for everyone, but care must be taken to ensure the approaches chosen do not implicitly exclude anyone and are relevant to a wide range of individuals with different identities and circumstances.

What about women?

These fault lines of exclusion and inclusion are particularly evident when we look at the salience of the terms 'career' and 'career development' to women. As part of a wider social justice turn in career development work discussed in my introduction, a critique has developed of the relevance of extant theories to women, as well as those of different ethnicities, cultures and socio-economic contexts, to the normative white western middle-class male.

As a starting point it makes sense to examine the need for particular consideration of women's career development. As might be expected in a field where internal influences are considered alongside external realities, we can see that there are both observable distinctions between work for men and women and different reported internal motivations, perceptions and behaviours of women themselves. Coogan and Chen (2007) categorise the main reasons for the complexity of women's careers as being early socialisation into gendered roles, economic inequality and family care commitments. Whilst all three are evident from reviewing women's labour market participation, a consideration of women's career development needs to keep in balance the tendency to problematise women, assume difference and uniformity and even confirm gendered social expectations.

Reviewing external data, labour market participation statistics are complicated by the preponderance of women in part-time work, which tends in turn to be available in traditionally female roles and have relatively worse pay and conditions than full-time work. A further suitable indicator for difference is gender pay gaps. This does not imply that financial reward is the most significant surrogate for career success, but it is important because it is known that pay gaps emerge when women choose lower-paid work through socialisation and limits of discrimination. In 1980, when Fitzgerald and Crites published their landmark article calling for a career psychology for women, the gender pay gap in the USA was 48% and in the UK (coming five years after the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Act) was 73% for full-time workers. It now stands at 92% in the UK in 2021 (Office for National Statistics , 2022a) and 81%

in the USA although wage data and its collection has been significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alternative indicators include the significant persistent vertical and horizontal segregations of labour markets (Crompton & Sanderson, 1990), with women dominating numerically in roles viewed as traditionally female and making up a smaller proportion of many traditionally male roles. Structural disadvantage also leads to vertical segregation even in those traditionally female dominated roles. Whilst western industrialised nationals have seen significant change in recent years, globally labour markets demonstrate an entrenched "depth and persistency" of gender inequality (Bimrose, 2008, p. 375).

This rapid pace of social change in western contexts and the evolution of theoretical perspectives make it hard to get purchase on how career development theory and practice for women has developed. Indeed, in distinguishing between gender as a social construct and the binary sex distinction of male and female, Bimrose (2008) notes that the increased acceptability of traditionally very gender specific job roles now being held by those of other genders as an example of the fluidity of gender boundaries and change over time. In the STF text, Patton and McMahon (2021) chart the journey from early acknowledgement that career development theories needed to be modified in order to be relevant to women's more complex careers (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980) through to the development of specific theories for women (e.g. Astin, 1984; Gottfredson, 1981). This maps onto wider psychological theorising, with Gilligan's (1982) ground-breaking work arguing that moral reasoning develops differently in women. However, this literature has been accused of essentialising along gender lines by revealing implicit assumptions about all women in contrast to all men. Most tellingly, career development differences are explained in relation to normal middle-class practices of married women with children remaining outside the labour market (Goldin, 2021). In fact, even when middle class women were staying at home with their children, the majority of minority ethnic women and working class women were working, albeit more commonly in lower paid and flexible work that aligned with caring commitments. More latterly, theories have called for critique of a traditional emphasis on paid work with the gendered interplay of paid and unpaid work (Richardson, 1993).

Early work assumed that a focus on marriage and family would dominate women's thinking and career choice would be a secondary concern. This has now given way to the premise that meaningful work is equally salient for women. Women's careers have been understood to be less linear and hierarchical,

perhaps due to the complexity of juggling caring commitments and propensity for interrupted trajectories, in turn leading women to reject traditional hierarchical progression. A strong focus has been on the interplay of different trajectories on the interests, behaviours, aspirations and choices of girls and women, with Gottfredson's (1981) theory of circumscription and compromise demonstrating the process of early narrowing of the range of considered options through sex-role socialisation. Further work has focused on socio-cognitive perspectives on how gender socialisation affects self-efficacy for girls and women (Betz & Hackett, 1997). Others argue that such work overplays individual volition in many contexts.

A contemporary review of theories of women's career development pays attention: to the interplay of different motivations, perspectives and behaviours from women and different outcomes achieved by women: the internal and external barriers in place; the developmental stages across the life course for women (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005); and the role of childcare and social reproduction in the home and the potential for work/family conflict. Moreover, it surfaces distinctions and difference as well as common issues, thus an intersectional lens is needed to see how (Crenshaw, 1989) different structural barriers exist for women according to ethnicity, age, social class and disability.

Mary Sue Richardson (1993, 2009), frames career expansively, along the same lines of Robertson et al's (2021) definition. She uses the market/care work framing to 'degender' career and argue from a feminist perspective that the categorisation of care work as domestic, private and feminised is regressive for both men and women. Schultheiss (2013) and Blustein (2011) both point to the importance of a relational understanding of career for women and Bimrose (2008) emphasises the dual demands and stresses of paid employment and domestic duties (p. 379) as evidence of complexity for women. However, to counter the claim that we need different theories for women, I prefer integrative frameworks which enable us to ensure theories are used in widely applicable ways relevant to different populations. For example, the STF helps us understand women's career development as both socially constructed and intersectional, albeit implicitly and requiring a reflexive consideration by the practitioner.

It is also worth noting that the STF reminds us that gender is not only a factor in career development for women. In particular, men experience forms of labour market change to traditional masculine job roles as well as a changing relationship to the market work/care work balance, but that is outside the scope of this thesis.

To close this section, we must remember that both market work and care work for women in both public and private spheres change rapidly, and theories need to keep up. Patton (2013) cited the aging population as having an impact on women's care work for example, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's careers given their propensity for precarity, key worker roles and caring commitments is much discussed.

What does practice look like?

The theoretical perspectives outlined here all influence the work of career development practitioners so in this section I address the ways and means of integrating these theories with practice. For much of this chapter we have looked at theoretical work, but the discussion of women's career development shows that it cannot be isolated from the practice of supporting people's career development or the policies that shape how this practice is offered. The field of practice is broad and includes: helping individuals choose areas of work to pursue; identifying specific opportunities; and finding ways to move into those spaces by influencing gatekeepers (e.g., by making an application and attending an interview with a recruiter, by making a convincing case for promotion or pitching successfully for a business contract). As implied by the therapeutic alliance in Figure 2, the stereotypical context for such practice is a one-to-one in-depth dialogue between practitioner and client, referred to variously as career counselling, career coaching and career guidance. This has broadened out to include group delivery, online services such as vacancy databases and asynchronously delivered content and learning resources, digital services and the organisation of learning experiences such as mentoring programmes and work placements. These were defined earlier as 'activities of career development'.

The introductory section referenced the development of statutory services, publicly funded and managed at national or local level in economies where labour market needs and other social factors such as rising unemployment support such investment. In England, which is the focus of my thesis and the shared context for the Church of England, this statutory provision constitutes the bulk of what is available, although delivery mechanisms have shifted away from local government towards educational institutions and public employment services in recent years. Career services are well developed in higher education settings, and support is seen as a private as well as a public good, so is offered in a wider variety of settings: workplaces, private practitioners and consultants who might work with

individual or organisational clients, charities who specialise in supporting people with particular needs, such as migrants or people with disabilities, and other community or voluntary organisations.

In tandem with the theoretical developments, we have seen shifts in practice moving from solely supporting initial career choice, typically of young people exiting education to enter the labour market, to practices that support lifelong career development. We also have a wider understanding of the professional roles involved, recognising the overlap with other forms of helping such as coaching and mentoring and also the significance of others with whom we discuss our career ideas at home and work (bosses and colleagues, friends and family) on our career development. In section three of their volume, Patton and McMahon (2021) frame learning as a key focus of career development work. We are all constantly learning about career, and, as such, career development practice is less about diagnostics and application of practitioner expertise about the labour market and more about the facilitation of that learning. Practice has evolved from a directive and diagnostic encounter where an expert practitioner assesses an individual and assigns them a match, to a more supportive and humanistic encounter which supports the actor to make independent decisions and to take the actions needed for them to flourish. Just as learning in general takes place in formal, informal and non-formal settings, so does career development learning in particular. The women I am focusing on in this study, then, may be entitled to access statutory services within their local area, services offered by a current or former educational institution or employer or private provision at a cost. Most significantly for this study, whether they access formal career services or not, their career development learning may take place in a diffuse set of contexts including some that are accessed as Christian women, namely their church communities.

This diversification also means that the professional skills of the practitioner have also moved and the boundaries of professional practice are hard to define. The various job titles associated with career development work are not protected and moreover the more expansive definitions recognising the informal contexts in which career development learning takes place mean it is hard to place a definitive boundary around the sector. A recent example of fuzzy edges in England is the development of the Careers Leader role in schools and colleges: senior or middle school leaders who have strategic responsibilities for careers programmes but may well not offer individual guidance themselves. Many of these will primarily identify as teachers. There is typically even less regulation or available professional training in global contexts beyond North America, the UK and Australasia.

Returning to the critique advanced by Thomsen (2012) of the institutional arrangement and practitioner focus, she goes on to advocate for breaking out of this restrictive mode and using communities as a vehicle for organising career development. Having studied ethnographically the potential for locating practitioners in residential learning communities and workplaces, she argues that this decentred analysis enables us to look at what happens from a participant perspective rather than focusing on the institutional arrangement and the actions of the practitioner. This in turn allows for inspection of how career development work is taking place in the context of people's lives and makes sense in that context. The definitions of community that Thomsen explores potentially map onto faith-based communities. The potential of this idea for my study will be picked up in chapter three.

Emancipatory potential

In keeping with the emancipatory thrust of this thesis, it is now fitting to consider what potential career development work, both theorised and in practice, has for challenging inequality and oppression in relation to work. If theories are biased and partial in favour of those who have the greatest individual autonomy, experience fewer disadvantages and live in individualistic cultures (Arthur, 2014), then it stands to reason that practices derived from such theories risk perpetuating bias. Indeed, career theory has been critiqued for "tacit support of neo-liberal agenda, emphasising individual agency at the expense of structural change" (McMahon & Arthur, 2019, p. 14). That said, emancipatory movements do impact the development of new theories and theoretically informed practice. Bimrose (2008) considers the potential for feminist counselling to be used in career guidance for girls and women, and Schultheiss (2013) has developed a 'relationships and career interview' (p 58). The turn to social justice in the field (Hooley, Sultana, & Thomsen, 2017, 2019; Arthur, 2014; Irving 2021) has focused attention on the contextual influence on an individual's career that result in a fundamentally unequal world. This in turn highlights the need for theorising from the starting point of this inequality and the potential for career development work to intervene, dependent on the way it is managed and offered and the capacities and outlooks of practitioners. This has been developed into the five signposts for socially just practice highlighted in the introduction, which urge practitioners to build critical consciousness, to name oppression, to question what is normal, to encourage people to work together, and to work at a range of levels.

The delicate interplay in the theories reviewed here between self and society leads to a central dilemma for practitioners: whose interests are served by career development work? As outlined earlier, the focus of practice on the individual can be traced right back to the social reforming intent of early practitioners, seeking to help those struggling with their livelihoods. However, this individual focus can lead the practitioner to ignore, or avoid, contextual challenges. This balance has been classically depicted in a 1996 socio-political analysis by Watts as follows in Figure 3.

	Societal focus	Individual focus
Change	Radical (social change)	Progressive (individual development)
Status Quo	Conservative (social control)	Liberal (individual adaptation)

Fig 3: Socio-political Ideologies of Guidance (Watts, 1996)

Here we can see how a social control (conservative) approach drives practice towards helping individuals adapt to existing opportunities, as opposed to a social change (radical) approach which emphasises enabling individuals and groups to challenge the unequal and exploitative nature of employment. In turn, a progressive approach focuses on supporting individuals to overcome social barriers which they face. Finally, a liberal approach values non-directive approaches to careers practice wherein individuals develop careers according to their existing self-concept. This alerts practitioners to the danger of focusing only on the individual (whether liberally or progressively) and therefore missing how context means we can be acting conservatively, as agents of social control or radically, as agents of social change.

A more contemporary mapping is conducted by Blustein, McWhirter and Perry (2005) who use Prilleltensky's (1997) emancipatory communitarian approach to psychology to consider vocational development theory, research, and practice. Here, traditional practice is accused of buying into the doctrine of individualism and meritocracy, with people given the tools to succeed in a race where everyone starts in the same place (a liberal focus in the Watts model). An empowering approach would promote the self determination of marginalised groups, raising aspirations through activities like role modelling and mentoring, without changing the system (progressive, for Watts). Socially-just

career development work must recognise inequalities and lead to actions designed to increase equal access or it can become another site of oppression (Irving, 2011).

Exemplars of how these orientations can work in practice include a conservatising effect is observed when practitioners point clients towards routes where they are less likely to experience discrimination and disadvantage, a phenomenon referred to by Mignot (2001) as 'protective channelling'. This can mean that yesterday's social inequalities can be conservatising, affecting practitioners' views of the options and expectations of their clients. A progressive focus might see a practitioner supporting a woman to reframe their ambitions. The five signposts present a more radical move beyond the individual/context binary showing that Blustein et al's (2005) emancipatory vision can be enacted at individual level too:

> to work at the micro (individual and group), meso (institutional and organisational) or macro (social and political system) level…it is about keeping *all three levels in mind* even if one might feel more ready or more able to work at one level rather than another at a particular point in time." (Hooley et al, 2021, p. 63).

This confirms that the socially just practitioner works not only with an individual *or* social focus, as per Watts (1996) shown above, but works across all levels, from one-to-one individual guidance to advocacy and systemic change within institutions. This aligns with the STF in awareness of wider systemic influences and recursivity gives us a way of understanding the processes of influencing at a range of levels. It also foregrounds learning, in the tradition of Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy through its emphasis on conscientisation. From here, forms of emancipatory practice begin to emerge, such as Meldrum's (2021) pioneering of group career coaching and Delauzun's (2020) action research working with student groups on the gig economy and gender pay gaps.

Returning to Blustein et al (2005) we are urged to:

- strive to incorporate democratic participation among stakeholder and participant throughout research and delivery interventions;
- strive to engage in the process of research and practice that starts from the bottom and is simultaneously worked down from the top;
- strive to instil a critical consciousness – not just among the powerless but the powerful and privileged;

- incorporate social advocacy and activism into our notions of research and practice.

These principles are woven into the design of this project and will be incorporated into the planned activities recommended by my fieldwork.

How does this relate to me?

This chapter ends, then, with a reflexive response to the threads that have been woven together as a career development practitioner, educator, researcher, and person with a career. I find it helpful to consider how my professional practice has roots in progressive-justice movements seeking to support individuals. However, I can also see how a narrowing of focus, as well as my own privileges of class, ethnicity and education can obscure a wider frame. Faith also feeds into my identity, informs my values and places me in particular communities. An STF based approach where I bring my whole self, and the social contexts that have formed me, into an alliance with others that supports their learning, appeals greatly. And as an educator and practitioner researcher, I am poised to carry out a study that involves participants, has both top down and bottom up dimensions, and shines light on new areas to develop critical awareness. As such, I serve as an advocate and activist through action research.

To conclude this chapter, the key features of any potential career development practice for Christian women have been presented as broad enough to bring all the tributaries of career development together, based on an integrative theoretical framework that allows for consideration of how the individual in context socially constructs their career. It might have multiple features, from the facilitation of learning through to more systemic interventions such as advocacy and policy development. It will also have an emancipatory focus and seek to create social change, being broad enough to consider all aspects of women's working lives.

Chapter Two: Calling and Career Studies

The previous chapter outlined career development as having fuzzy boundaries and multiple points of mutually influencing connection with practice. We now proceed to consider how the concept of work as a calling has come to figure in this through a developing literature within organisational studies and vocational psychology. The chapter will consider how calling can thus inform the career development practice I am seeking to develop through this project. Although in chapter one, the meta-theoretical STF considers the individual in context, here we see how vocational psychology tends to focus on individual perspectives, whereas organisational literature considers the individual working in and through organisations. We will return to this distinction when looking at practice in the 'what does practice look like' section below. We also find a seam of literature that even the most updated edition of the STF (Patton & McMahon, 2021) has not fully considered.

Background

Whilst career calling has a relatively short scholarly history, with a dramatic upturn in related work over the last 30 years, there is a correspondingly long cultural legacy commonly referenced in the work reviewed here. Links are commonly drawn with the role of the Protestant Reformation, and in particular the ideas of Luther and Weber concerning religion and work. For now, an acknowledgement of this example of career development theory's links to western thought, these links will be explored more deeply in the next chapter.

Instead, the more contemporary focus on 'career calling' is an extension of the 'vocational' strand of career studies as identified by Gunz and Peiperl (2007). A key foundational narrative evident in the literature begins with *Habits of the Heart* (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1986), a sociological study undertaken in the USA. This broad ranging review of individualism and commitment in American life in the 1980s identified work, career and calling as three contrasting orientations to paid employment. Here, 'work' is a means to material benefits, 'career' indicates work framed as path to achievement, advancement, power and prestige and 'calling' refers to work that is fulfilling and socially valuable. This tripartite schema was then taken into fieldwork by scholars led by Wrzesniewski

from Yale School of Management, categorising workforces in the USA accordingly and finding typically equal distribution across a range of occupations (Wrzesniewski et al, 1997). However, it is not so simple as to state that certain roles can be categorised in this way: researchers found all three orientations could exist within a single occupation. This focuses attention on how the distinction is constructed by individuals rather than an objective difference in roles.

Since the late 1990s, there has been a gradual increase in research articles featuring calling, with a number of significant waymarks. Dobrow's 2004 Academy of Management paper captured attention and plaudits and by 2018 a theoretical model of 'Work as Calling' (WCT) was being proposed by Duffy, Dik, Douglass, England, and Velez (2018). Here they assert that over 200 articles on the topic have been published in the last ten years, and the number of articles continued to increase with a Special Issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* following in 2019. Also in that year, a literature review paper by Thompson and Bunderson (2019) reviewed research on work as a calling within the field that they demarcate as 'organisational psychology and organisational behaviour', identifying 203 articles published between 1997 and 2018. Popular interest in calling has also grown with self-help resources around career choice exploiting the concept (Dik & Duffy, 2012; Isay, 2017; Robinson & Aronica, 2014).

In keeping with the multi-disciplinarity of the field discussed in the previous chapter, both Dobrow (2004) and Hall and Chandler (2005) refer back to the Chicago School of Sociology and its contribution in distinguishing between the objective and subjective elements of career. Calling is associated with the subjective and how the individual is constructing meaning from their working life. As the field has evolved, we have seen the development of psychometric instruments to measure calling in particular research populations, quantitative studies linking calling to other salient concepts, and qualitative studies exploring these processes of construction as sense-making, in a range of differing contexts. This chapter will synthesise this vibrant body of work and discuss a series of key concepts and debates sketched out in the literature. In common with the structure used in the previous and following chapters, it then considers widespread relevance and its particular bearing on women's career development, practice, emancipatory careers work, my own career and practice and this project in particular.

Key concepts and features

This section will consider contrasting definitions of calling, how these reflect differing approaches to calling source, the development of a continuum of approaches and the 'work as calling' theory (WCT, Duffy et al, 2018) which maps out distinctions between perceiving a calling and its antecedents as well as living a calling, and its (often idealised) consequences. I go on to explore contextual differences and some of the variance and problems with calling that emerge from research, often referred to as the 'dark side'.

Definitions

Three contrasting definitions of work as calling emerged early in the period reviewed here, and are laid out neatly by Connell and Yates (2021). Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) define a calling simply as 'a consuming, meaningful passion people experience toward a domain', whereas Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) were the first to link meaning to calling. They too defined calling internally, seeing meaningful work as merely personally meaningful (the opposite of pointless tasks). Their definition specifies the feeling of being drawn and the centrality to identity, so that "their work is inseparable from their life" (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997, p. 22).

So far, so subjective. A third definition by Duffy and Dik (2013) adds to this mix the idea of an 'external summons' which points us to consider the source of the calling and the nature of the calling as being for the 'greater good', highlighting a moral or ethical dimension to meaning beyond the self. They identify three key features of calling as an external summons, a sense of purpose and a pro-social orientation. This leaves open the possibility of a religious understanding of call, but could equally well come from other external sources. A more in-depth review of definitions in the Thompson and Bunderson (2019) review surfaces no less than 14 distinct definitions, although they also note the more expansive Duffy and Dik (2013) definition as by far the most commonly used.

Understandings of calling often begin by contrasting it with other things. The tripartite definition from Bellah et al. (1986) differentiates it from work and career, which implies a view of career that might be in line with a folk theory that defines 'career' as certain types of work, but inconsistent with the broader one mapped out in chapter one. In contrast to the finding of Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) that the three are roughly equal across the USA working population, Duffy and Dik (2013) find their

definition in roughly half the same population. This increase perhaps reflects a more inclusive understanding, and indeed Duffy and Dik advocate that calling can be salient for everyone, as discussed in the next section.

Calling source

The debates about definition led both Hall and Chandler (2005) and Bunderson and Thompson (2009) to propose two distinct types of calling. For Hall and Chandler this is a religious or a secular call, as depicted in Table 1. For Bunderson and Thompson it is instead a neo-classical call (aligned with the Duffy and Dik definition) or a modern call (aligned with the more subjective approaches of Wrzesniewski et al). A neo-classical call is associated with duty, and destiny in the special role we each have to play for the greater good, based on our God-given gifts, talents and opportunities (i.e. our station in life as a key determinant of our proximal possible callings). In contrast, a modern call is work that a person perceives as their purpose in life following a self-directed search for self-fulfilment and personal happiness, a personal choice to pursue self-actualisation by following personal passions for their own sake.

	Religious view	**Secular view**
Source of calling	From God/higher being	Within the individual
Who is served?	Community	Individual and community
Method	Discernment (prayer/listening)	Introspection, reflection, meditation, relational activities
Meaning	Enacting God's purpose	Enacting individual's purpose

Table 1: Two views of calling (Hall and Chandler, 2005: 162)

Whilst the neo-classical definition does acknowledge an external source of calling, the nature of this is still not really explored, and could be understood as coming from a divine transcendent being (sometimes given the name God) or another form of commitment or summons such as a cause. As Kjærgård, Shulstock, Hooley & Hanson (in press) note, "an individual could perceive an external summons to be a medical doctor because it is what God wills, because it is what [society] needs, or because it is their family's destiny to be medics". As the WCT develops, some consideration of antecedents is given and even acknowledged to include a religious faith. Indeed, some studies draw particularly on religious populations (French & Domene, 2010; Sturges, Clinton, Conway & Budjanovcanin, 2019; Schermer Sellars, Thomas, Batts, & Ostman, 2005; Connell & Yates, 2021). However, overall the literature works hard to avoid discussion of source and to maintain a secular view. Consideration of whether the calling is accurate remains absent. The tricky territory of whether there is an actual transcendent summons, a higher power with a will for a person's life, is not addressed and the focus is on how the individual in career development understands it. Arguably, if the calling is seen as a social construction it does not really matter if the individual sees it as coming from God or not. Indeed, the cultural-lens approach advocated by Uzunbacak, Yastıoğlu, Dik, Erhan & Akçakanat (2022) shows us how it can be understood in different ways for different populations, so it will depend on the client base and context. This research, undertaken with nurses in a Turkish Islamic collectivist culture, shows how in this context, work is understood as a means to honour God and parents and thus calling aligns with the pro-social emphasis of Duffy and Dik (2013). Yet the researchers argue that the roles of faith and culture are only indirectly represented within existing calling theory.

Bunderson and Thompson's (2009) work finds neo-classical definitions more congruent for their zoo-keeping research participants. Moving from a binary to a continuum, Duffy and Dik's (2013) definition integrates modern and neo-classical perspectives in an attempt to honour more traditional and enduring views and a diversity of cultural perspectives, as well as maintaining contemporary relevance. They therefore posit that calling may be reported along a spectrum, summarising the wider literature as follows:

> A calling might best be defined as an approach to work that reflects the belief that one's career is a central part of a *broader sense of purpose and meaning in life* and is used to *help others or advance the greater good* in some fashion. A *calling source* is integral to most conceptualizations

> of the term but is *variable*, and may arise from an *external summons, a sense of destiny, a sense of fit* with one's passions, or other areas which have not yet been assessed (Duffy & Dik, 2013, p. 429, my emphases).

They go on to leave room for those for whom a calling is experienced as divine by arguing that this is not the main issue at stake here:

> The role of the perceived source in how a sense of calling develops is not yet well-understood…. However, in research to date, the *perceived source* of an individual's calling *appears to play very little role* in the degree to which an individual is *living out her or his calling* or is satisfied with work and life (Duffy & Dik, 2013, p. 429).

In the following chapter we pay attention to God as calling source in the context of this study. What is noteworthy here is that Duffy and Dik (2013) argue that, from a career studies perspective, the source of the calling is less relevant than if and how it is being lived out by the individual in their career. By the time of the publication of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* special issue of 2019 we see in the overview article a further movement from these binaries to a continuum, with a sense of fluidity between the two extremes even for the way an individual makes sense of their calling. Indeed, there is merit in paying specific attention to the calling source. Berkelarr and Buzzanell (2015) argue that the historical invocations of calling often presume and reproduce dominant interests, and simultaneously perpetuate dynamics of domination and control because the calling sources are assumed to be external to the person being called. The Thompson and Bunderson (2019) literature review characterises 'outside in' and 'inside out' ends of the continuum and transforms this into a four-box model which differentiates non called work (a job or career) from a transcendent calling (2019, p. 492).

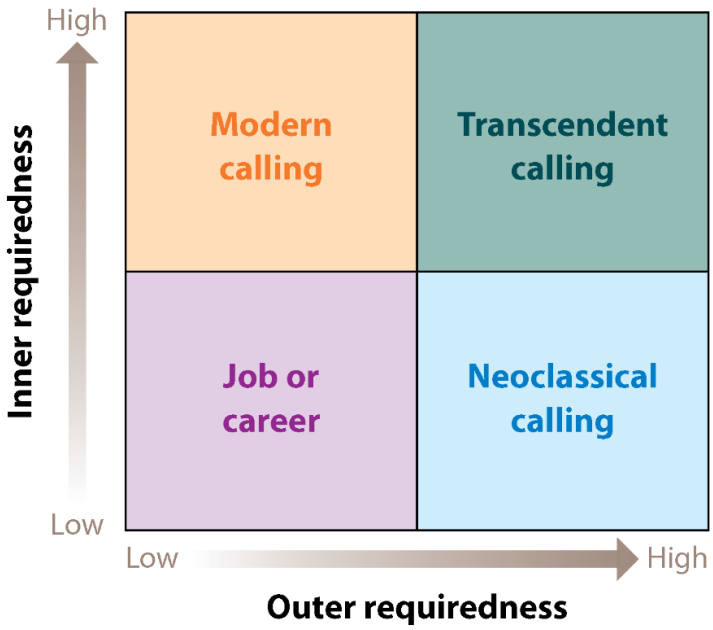

Table: 2: Thompson and Bunderson's (2019) four box model

A further trajectory in the literature is a move from early idealisation of the concept to a more nuanced position. Duffy and Dik's (2013) overview paper and the WCT paper of 2018 somewhat idealise the concept, with an emphasis on the positive outcomes that can be associated with living a call, in terms of job and life satisfaction and job performance: "Generally, perceiving a calling has been linked to greater career maturity, career commitment, work meaning, life meaning, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction." (p.434).

In the end-to-end process of perceiving then living a calling, it is living that correlates with good outcomes. The focus is firmly on work (for the WCT, Duffy et al note and lay aside the role of calling in other life domains) and the virtue of a call is presented as helping us to work well, rather than any intrinsic benefit of experiencing call itself.

Studies show extensive benefits to individuals (work satisfaction, wellbeing, life satisfaction) as well as to organisations (discretionary effort, motivation, turnover and hours worked). Thompson and Bunderson (2019) detail outcomes for attitudes to work, as well as for career choice, health and wellbeing, career behaviours and career outcomes. However, by the 2019 special issue, there is greater acceptance that it is not necessarily an asset with idealised outcomes but has pros and cons. There is a dark side, discussed below, and concerns raised about how calling can interact with working

conditions. As a further example, the study of nurses in Turkey during the COVID-19 pandemic shows the benefit of looking at calling as a major contextual disruptor (Uzunbacak, Yastıoğlu, Dik, Erhan & Akçakanat, 2022). They demonstrate that adverse working conditions can lead people to stop seeing work as a calling, leading to concern about losing a calling. The authors ask the field to consider a broader array of outcomes including potential combinations of positive and negative outcomes at the same time.

Perceiving and living a calling

Looking in more depth at the WCT depicted in Figure 4 below, the primary focus is on the relationship between perceiving a calling (whatever it is, wherever it is from) and living a calling:

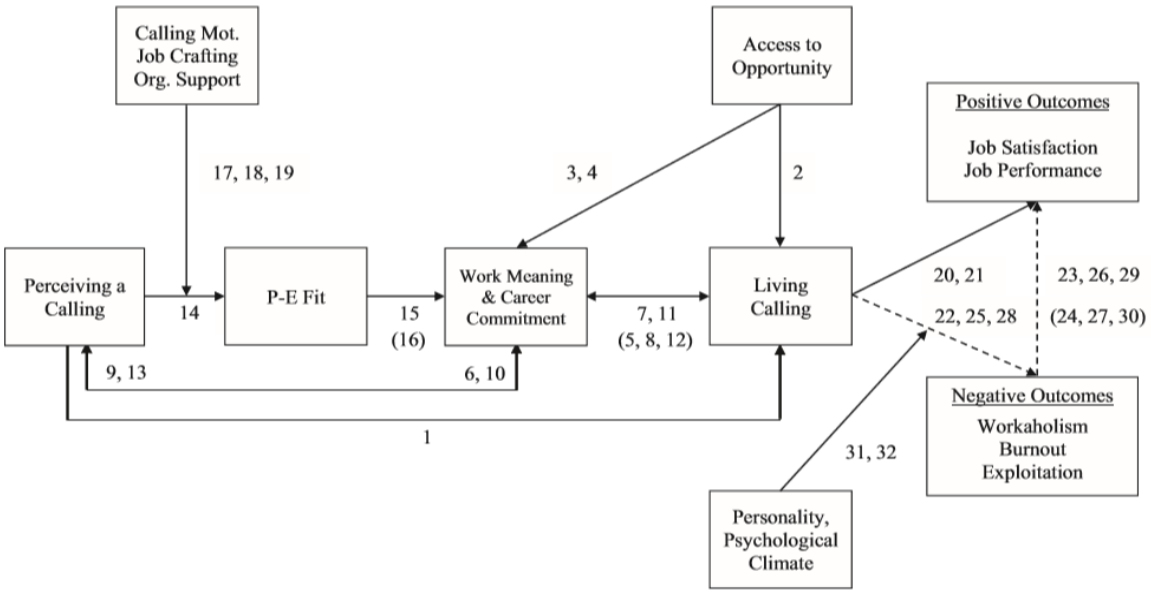

Figure 4: Work as Calling Theory, Duffy et al, 2018 p. 424

A perceived calling that is not being lived out is presented as a 'problem' to be addressed through career development work. It is living a calling that is required in order to leverage the associated benefits. A perceived and unlived calling is seen as a recipe for regret and dissatisfaction. How this mismatch can be addressed is one potential focus for practice (see below).

Various nuances and details emerge as this model is explored. First, the move from perceiving to living a calling is seen as a 'person-environment fit' process which is in turn influenced by developing career commitment. In Berg, Grant and Johnson's (2010) study, where callings are seen as social constructions, this process is acknowledged as recursive: positive experiences make one feel fulfilled at work which can lead to work being viewed as a calling, whereas negative experiences can accumulate to make one feel unhappy and, therefore, inclined towards feeling that a calling has been missed or lost. This qualitative study also suggests that work meaning will also be constructed differently at contrasting career stages and highlights the role of personality, with higher levels of extraversion indicative of perceiving additional callings and higher levels of neuroticism linked to missed callings. This observation lays out the potential for a STF informed consideration of calling, where systemic influences interact and learning is foregrounded.

Duffy et al's (2018) theoretical model places emphasis on propositions which explore the relationship between calling perception and enactment, focusing in particular on the person-environment fit (broadened to include social fit and recognising the dynamic and recursive nature of the interrelationships, in line with the STF), motivation to pursue the calling and organisational support. A virtuous cycle is presented, where living a calling can influence calling perception: "individuals who grow a sense of commitment in their career will over time view that career as more of a calling" (Duffy et al, 2018, p. 428). Here the concept of job crafting as micro-means to enhance person-environment fit by changing the relational, behavioural and cognitive engagements in work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) are introduced, as discussed further in the practice section below.

The 'access to opportunity' dimension reminds us of the role of context and structure in the process. Contextual limitation based on structural factors is one of the main barriers identified to living out a perceived calling. Opportunities to live out a calling can be inaccessible for a variety of reasons connected to variable levels of choice, horizons for action, experiences of oppression and discrimination and accumulated social advantage. Indeed, research has shown that higher levels of education and income correlate positively with living out a calling.

Earlier work in the field seemed to accept this unproblematically (Hall & Chandler, 2005). However, more recent work considers more deeply the potential impact of context on the perceived call, as contextual antecedents of calling. Afiouni and Karam (2019) explore experiences of oppression as

instrumental in their research sample's recognition of call, an important precursor to their galvanising of commitment and determination. That said, it must be noted that, whilst the oppression had led to calling for 50% of their sample, the other 50% of experiences were not analysed in the selected paper.

The dark side

The WCT does make way for consideration of negative outcomes of calling, a dimension coined as 'the dark side' (Duffy & Dik, 2013). This strand of the literature explores how focusing on call can also be negative for wellbeing and leads to risks of workaholism, exploitation, neglect of other life domains and burnout. A feeling of calling amongst staff affects both organisations and their employees, serving as a 'double edged sword'. In Bunderson and Thompson's (2009) zookeepers study, potential exploitation and heightened expectations about management's moral duty related to their work led to an employment relationship characterised by vigilance and suspicion.

Just as the positive outcomes have a recursive and self-perpetuating dimension, any of these downsides, in particular workaholism and burnout, are shown to compound one another, leading to decreasing levels of both satisfaction and performance, and therefore negative for both the individual and their employer. Avoidance of organisational exploitation is also a factor for everyone working with calling to consider. These negative factors are moderated further by both individual and contextual factors. With regards to individual personality, both perfectionism and low self-esteem are proposed as speculative influences on negative outcomes of calling. Of relevance for those considering career development in organisational contexts is Duffy et al's (2018) proposition about psychological climate – some unhealthy climates being linked to an increased likelihood of these negative outcomes.

Overlaying the mutuality and recursivity of the STF on to the WCT, we can see the potential for benefits of calling to be mutually reinforcing for individuals and organisations (what is good for the individual will also make them a better employee) or mutually exclusive (e.g. working longer hours is good for the organisation but bad for individual wellbeing).

Reminiscent of the matching origins of career development theories discussed in the previous chapter, the WCT has a rather mechanistic appearance. This can give the impression that callings are singular, clear and measurable, yet more recent qualitative research frames the processes as more dynamic and recursive. When the calling experience is explored through qualitative research, thick descriptions of

how calling work out in peoples' lives are surfaced. Thus we begin to see the 'learning turn' in career development work as the focus moves to how people learn to change within and between callings. Berg et al (2010) present a qualitative analysis of people with unanswered callings: either those that have been missed or are additional callings to others being lived. By its nature, an additional calling acknowledges that multiple callings are legitimate. Building on the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) job crafting proposition, Berg et al (2010) outline different crafting techniques deployed (task emphasizing, job expanding, and role reframing) and broaden the scope to consider the interplay of work and leisure by showing how people use leisure time for crafting purposes (vicarious experiencing and hobby participating). Analysis reveals the challenges of regret (either intermittent or long term) of missed callings as well as stress, frustration and overload from trying to craft towards a calling on top of existing commitments. Whilst on the face of it an attractive mechanism to incorporate into practice, this shows that crafting is also part of the dark side in that it can lead to negative outcomes.

In a further study designed to replace any heroic and simplistic understanding of calling with one exploring longitudinal sense-making, Schabram and Maitlis (2017) remind us that calling is not a one off process but one that continues over time. In their study of how people working in animal shelters respond to inevitable challenges in their workplaces, they demonstrate three different 'calling paths', based on response to change and adverse work circumstances. They outline a process of 'enacted sense-making' within the context by people with a calling, differentiating between identity oriented, practice oriented and contribution oriented calling paths. They showed how those with identity oriented paths (who saw themselves as uniquely suited to the work) and contribution oriented calling paths (who focused for longer on their ability to enact change in the workplace) would ultimately choose to leave the setting, whereas those with practice oriented paths (who adapt and change according to challenges experienced) would be better able to respond to challenges as opportunities for learning. They call for a move from distinguishing between calling and other work orientations (along the job/career/calling distinction) to looking at types of calling. They advocate for consideration of the recursive interactions of called and their context according to calling as an identity, calling as a contribution, and calling as an ongoing practice.

Is it for everyone?

To evaluate the value of the work as calling literature for career development work, just as in chapter one for career at a conceptual level, we need to ask if it is for everyone. For this we must return to the definitions cited earlier. The Bellah et al (1986) separation of work, career and calling seems to reveal that each of these are salient for only one third of the USA workforce, let alone having a global relevance. The recognition of contextual impact perhaps suggests that for those having to prioritise economic survival, it is a luxury, an elitist term. This inbuilt assumption that only a proportion of the working population will find this concept salient does inadvertently limit its scope. Yet Schabram and Maitlis (2017) propose a shift of framing to look at difference within more expansive understandings of calling. Indeed, Wrzesnieswki and Dutton (2001) show how through job crafting, even lower paid and less qualified workers find meaning in their work, the example of hospital cleaners being particularly salient.

Thus the debate remains as to whether calling is more salient for certain types of work and worker. The argument can be made that that calling has particular contemporary relevance due to changes in career patterns that require greater personal career management (Hall, 1996). However, these changes in themselves are the subject of debate, with models of career that assume high levels of mobility, progression and flexibility challenged by those who point out that such organisationally fluid careers are only available to a privileged elite (Mayrhofer et al, 2020). As Thompson and Bunderson (2019) point out, the field of organisational psychology has tended to overlook the working poor (p. 437). This reveals powerful assumptions that underpin much discussion of career as referring only to particular forms of organisational or professional work with structured progression.

Other scholars approach calling from a more inclusive perspective and suggest that anyone could have a calling through crafting. Furthermore, over the period reviewed, research has broadened out from its early focus on the USA and Western Europe and has now been used on six continents (Lysova & Khapova, 2019) with studies cited in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* special issue from Lebanon, Turkey, Japan, Italy and the Netherlands. Thompson and Bunderson (2019) express reservations as to the cross-cultural relevance of the concept given the propensity to refer back to the Christian reformation in Western Europe, but find that this might be a colonial academic legacy given that

studies in Asian work settings have also found significant effects of work as calling (Guo et al, 2014; Jo et al, 2018; Lan et al, 2013; Lee, 2016; Xie et al, 2016).

What about women?

The bulk of the literature reviewed in this chapter does not consider gender in relation to calling. From the wider literature on women's career development covered in the previous chapter, we can begin to map the potential impacts of gender on calling and speculate about how it plays out for different genders, but empirical studies are still needed. Fortunately, as qualitative studies in this field have increased, a number have focused themselves on the experiences of women, or discussed gender differences in a wider sample. Following the review of wider literature in chapter one it is worth considering how the three areas identified by Coogan and Chen (2007) of early gender role orientation, employment inequities and family responsibilities might impact on first perceiving and then living a calling. The STF enables us to see how gender recursively influences beliefs and values within the individual system as well as interplaying with a variety of relevant contextual influences. We might then consider gender to be most relevant to the process of perceiving a calling in terms of self-efficacy, aspiration and work volition. When it comes to living out a calling, we might focus more on social, organisational and relational barriers. But most critically, the recursive meaning making of the STF runs counter to the more rigid assumptions of a testable model. Whilst noting of course that this is not relevant to all women, family and caring commitments are often flagged as a significant dimension and as such it is perhaps not surprising to see that in the qualitative study cited earlier by Berg et al (2010) there are two women with unfulfilled callings who mention marriage as a barrier.

Three further studies focusing on women are both located in Christian contexts: women working in Christian education settings and undergraduates in a Christian University (French & Domene, 2010; Schermer Sellers et al, 2005; Longman & Bray, 2017). These show a blend of the material covered in this chapter and that of the next chapter and provide a particularly relevant context for this study. French and Domene (2010) have considered themselves to be going 'beyond historical religious definitions' (p. 1) into career studies terrain by exploring specific career goals as callings with their sample and linking these to other career theories, such as social cognitive theories based on ideas of self-efficacy. Themes emerging focus on: personal experience of the calling process, highlighting its

intensity but also relational dimensions; the role of supporters, particularly mothers; the altruism of the calling and the pro-social focus; and the extent that the calling is recognised as a burden. The recursivity of the STF features in the sense that, for many, having a calling meant wanting to facilitate the discovery of calling in others. Schermer Sellars et al (2005) too considered the callings of women academics within Christian higher education and their findings surface relational commitments as central to calling in the workplace and beyond.

In contrast, a further study by Afiouni and Karam (2019) takes a feminist lens to women and calling in Lebanon and explores the role of contextual hardship and oppression in formulation of career callings for a subset of Lebanese women, as discussed above. This study cites Schermer Sellars et al (2005) and Longman and Bray (2017) as considering gender only from the point of view of biological categories based on sex characteristics and contrasts that with their own social constructionist view of gender. They argue that for some women contextual hardship actively facilitates the pursuance of calling and the dynamics of this process need to be better understood.

Synthesising these studies, it seems that the process of perceiving a calling and living it out have potential to be influenced by gender as one of the influences within the individual system. As calling is explored, the social context will affect the role models and opportunities that are available to women and the experience of over-identification may lead to acute challenges, especially for women with caring commitments. Perhaps the dark side of calling presents particular challenges for women.

What does practice look like?

The bulk of the literature reviewed here makes only tangential links to practice. Indeed, within their Organisational Psychology and Behaviour framing, Thompson and Bunderson (2019) look for value for "those interested in developing a sense of calling among their workers" (p. 439), not even considering value to those working on behalf of a career development client. Whilst my experience with clients and students is that many find it salient and bring it to career development work as part of their own personal theories-in-use of career, researchers have largely developed this field of inquiry in isolation from practice. Thus it remains for the practitioner to develop creative ways to build calling into their work. Indeed, Duffy et al (2018) are up front about their main intention being to stimulate further

empirical study, particularly to shine light on latent structural influence. Thompson and Bunderson (2019) make recommendations to scholars alone.

Integrating calling with career development practice requires continued balancing of the benefits and drawbacks outlined above. Whilst on the one hand, if "perceiving a calling has been linked to greater career maturity, career commitment, work meaning, life meaning, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction" (Duffy & Dik, 2013, p. 434), then it aligns well with the outcomes sought for career development work. Career development practitioners can use the ideas reviewed here to support clients in solving career problems and improving their wellbeing and satisfaction. In this section I explore some of the ways it can be used in practice and attendant concerns to be considered. In some ways, this is quite nuanced and might not involve use of calling as a direct concept with clients at all. We could frame the development of particular skills of career management as calling-related. Hall and Chandler (2005) identify the 'meta-competencies' of identity awareness and adaptability which are required for people to work with calling as a construct, suggesting practitioners may simply focus their work on these, allowing people space to reflect on how they are coping with changing circumstances. French and Domene's (2010) study demonstrates that tenacity, proactivity and resilience are all needed to live out a calling, so these could be a focus for development via learning activities.

The section above on definitions alerts us to differing personal and cultural interpretations of the term. As such, working with calling in practice requires an exploration of what calling might mean to each client. Skilled practitioners continually negotiate the roles, tasks and goals of their interventions and there is scope through this to explore what work might mean to people. It is significant simply to put calling on the table for career coaching at an early stage, being explicit that calling might be a feature of the conversation. This might occur before clients enter a career coaching encounter, or at the start of a coaching session when a learning alliance is being established. Simply acknowledging that emotional and spiritual reflections on career can be included in the agenda can be liberating for clients who might expect a cognitive rational process.

If calling then becomes a focus for career development work, the practitioner needs some ways to explore how the client sees this, unpacking how they see it in terms of the balance between individual purpose and pro-social orientation and between internal and external origins. Practitioners may use psychometric instruments with clients at an exploratory stage, and in this field the two scales that have

been developed by Dik and Duffy (2009) could potentially be deployed here. In a 2009 paper they laid out a framework for the development of a scale, a validated quantitative instrument that enables aspects of calling to be measured in individuals and then compared to a previous population study. This was followed by the publication of validating study for two scales (Dik, Eldridge, Steger, & Duffy, 2012). The Basic Calling Scale (BCS) looks at presence of a calling and the longer Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ), which includes three sub scales assessing the Dik and Duffy components of external summons, pro social motivation and meaning/purpose, integrating these into a total score. The shorter BCS was designed to be integrated with studies measuring other aspects of career, allowing for comparisons and triangulation with other theories. The CVQ is more fine-grained and suited to more focused studies, perhaps looking at how calling is experienced in different contexts and by different populations. The Thompson and Bunderson (2019) literature review finds a further 12 measures in use across the studies they review. A practitioner might then ask a client to complete a scale and use their score compared to the population sample, as well as their reflections on the process as material through which they can mutually determine appropriate decisions and actions for the client to take. In line with the constructivist approach enshrined in the STF, Patton and McMahon (2021) devote a chapter to career assessment that uses such tools in a congruent way to stimulate reflection, meaning-making and learning. Rather than a practitioner objectifying the client by using their expertise and the scale to diagnose and direct, they propose a process where the salient concepts are used with clients to support their learning as an 'Integrative Structured Interview process' (McMahon & Watson, 2008; McMahon & Patton, 2015). For example, a card sort or imaginative activity could use the scale items to generate discussion. Similar creative approaches can be to explore values and goals through imaginative activities or to tap into dreams and goals to support perception of call.

Callings may not have been perceived, or not formulated in sufficient detail to provide a basis for action. This requires the practitioner to work in the space of antecedents of calling. As noted earlier, there is not much attention given in the literature to how calling can be perceived. Returning to Table 1, Hall and Chandler (2005) make suggestions for some processes that might be useful in perceiving a calling, and a career development practitioner could work with these to support reflection, meditation and relational activities which allow for discernment.

As calling emerges, the role of the career development practitioner is to support the client in enacting or living the calling on an ongoing basis despite change and challenge. Transitional processes such as researching opportunities or negotiating with gatekeepers are needed here. Practice can even help clients come to terms with missed and unanswered callings and job crafting approaches can be used to help clients move towards their calling. Studies such as Berg et al (2010) show how both job crafting and leisure crafting lead to psychological states that map to both hedonic and eudemonic wellbeing. Supporting clients to find those crafting opportunities thus has value. Breaking this down into the different crafting types, they can seek to alter their assigned tasks to spend more on those related to calling, add new tasks to their workload that reflect such a calling or cognitively reframe to increase alignment of a job duty with a wider social purpose. However, whilst Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) and Duffy and Dik (2013) report positive outcomes from job crafting, there is potential for it to be seen as a naive attempt to address structural disadvantage or to lead to the stress and overwork associated with the dark side of calling.

For clients who find calling a salient lens, the research shows that ongoing callings can present career problems through ongoing discernment and contextual challenges. Whilst WCT makes finding and living a calling look reasonably simple, Schabram and Maitlis (2017) show that there is more involved in ongoing maintenance of a calling. Crafting and career management skills are ways in which clients can be helped to respond to challenges in living their calling.

The centrality of person-environment fit to WCT shows a challenge to working with calling that actually permeates all careers work. Fit is an enduring metaphor for all those in career development, but the idea that both individuals and their contexts are stable enough for one perfect fit to be found is not borne out in contemporary labour markets. Much career development work involves shifting client perspectives from the compelling idea that one truly fitting career exists for them, and that career fulfilment will come from identifying that match and pursuing it. Rather, we support a reframing of perspective to one where there are multiple 'good enough' fits and the focus of attention is on the process of responding to personal and contextual change. As such, working with calling is likely to be as much about this continual refinement, responding to change and challenge and ongoing discernment as it is about finding one true fit. However, a calling lens on career development work, or a calling-informed approach can increase a sense of calling, giving space to exploration of a client's worldview

and existential concerns and focus on eudemonic wellbeing in terms of meaning and purpose of work. Such a lens can also support efforts to balance callings within multiple life domains, assist clients in navigating barriers using effective self-advocacy and help clients cultivate critical consciousness as an internal resource for coping.

Emancipatory potential

We move now to consider the potential for a calling informed approach to align with a social justice approach to career development, as mapped out in chapter one. By including 'social fit' within the process, practitioners are able to help clients see themselves as socially situated, which can help in building critical consciousness as well as the other signposts to social justice. Through working with a career development professional, barriers to perceiving or living a calling may be made evident which individuals cannot address alone, but by questioning what is normal and naming oppressions, the career development professional can help people consider their response to such barriers and find ways to overcome them. This in turn can lead to collaboration and advocacy.

To be primed for this type of emancipatory work we do need to have considered however whether both perceiving and living a calling are equally available to all. As discussed earlier, it can seem hard to imagine that calling would be a priority for someone seemingly trapped in precarious and low paid work. Duffy and Dik (2013) showed that, although people across education and income backgrounds were equally likely to discern a calling, those who were more highly educated and with higher incomes were more likely to be living their calling. In this study they argue that 'work volition' (i.e. perceived freedom of future work choice despite constraints) is an important mediator explaining why those with higher social class backgrounds are more likely to agree they are living a calling (Duffy et al., 2018).

In contrast, the study by Afiouni and Karam (2019) cited earlier argues that, for some, contextual hardships can trigger an awareness of a calling. They use theoretical understandings of oppression as multifaceted (Young, 2014) and feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 2004) to show how awareness of exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence actually resource some women in their sample to identify their calling and move towards it. They make a powerful case for calling to be recognised widely as a resource, and yet acknowledge that this process is evident with only half of the women interviewed. It is liberating to demonstrate ways in which individuals have

overcome structural barriers, but the attendant risk of therefore responsibilising all those experiencing barriers and not addressing them by working at a range of levels, remains.

In practice contexts where clients present with callings being lived but challenges experienced, the dark side issues highlighted earlier raise further dilemmas. A focus on supporting clients who feel they have lost a calling or are struggling with excess work, stress or perfectionism is another way in which calling and socially just careers work can align.

How does this relate to me?

Like the last, this chapter also ends with a reflexive response to the material reviewed. I find calling a helpful lens to explore the subjective dimensions of career that affect how a person finds purpose in their work and makes meaning in their working life. I have found this helpful personally in my own career development and also in my practice. My response to the bulk of the work emerging from organisation studies is to be immediately suspicious that it might have a narrow view of work and only be relevant to those in relatively privileged positions. I am reassured to see recognition of the dangers of this and deliberately widening of research bases as the field has developed. What is missing for me, as a person of faith, is an integration of faith and calling and it is to this we turn in the next chapter.

To conclude this chapter, the literature reviewed here shows how calling can be integrated into career development provision. Whilst the calling literature is not extensively wrapped into the review of theories that underpin the STF, we can see how it could be integrated into both the individual and social systems. To begin with Duffy and Dik's (2013) definition, we would perhaps highlight meaning and purpose and pro-social motivation as part of the individual system and transcendent summons coming from context: be it the proximal social system or the higher power operating beyond the bounds of the figure itself. Process-wise we would then explore how contextual influences recursively interact to impact the way that an individual makes meaning and constructs their own understanding of calling within their career development. As such, a calling-informed approach to careers work can be defined broadly to: include space for discussion of transcendent summons, as well as what is personally meaningful; recognise the dark side and avoid idealising calling or reducing it to a one-off lifelong matching process; and facilitates ongoing recursive sense-making. It would also consider how context

might play into both perception and living of calling, and crafting activities which people undertake when moving towards a calling.

Chapter Three: Women, work, calling and the Church of England

Having considered the nature of careers work and the variety of contexts in which career development learning takes place, as well its underpinning theory in general and its consideration of calling in particular, this chapter moves on to consider one particular context: the Church of England. Here we explore the question of what the Church of England has to say about work and calling for women, albeit by reading between the separate lines of its gendered reality and its treatment of work and calling. This setting is pertinent because, as noted in chapter two, the ancient roots of calling and vocation are inexorably tied to Christian history, its influence on (and by) western philosophy and the development of Christianity as a world religion. Even more particularly, ideas about calling run through the history of western Catholic thought and the European Reformation which precipitated the formation of the Church of England as the initiating province of the Anglican Communion. Anglicanism is distinctive in holding together a broad range of theological belief and ecclesiastical practice within its doctrinal umbrella as both 'Catholic' (a Western Episcopal Church with roots traceable back to those commissioned directly by Jesus Christ) and 'Reformed' (a Church which has followed the Protestant Reformation in a focus on scripture and personal salvation for all believers). As the Established Church in England, the Church of England offers a place for all, with a network of parishes covering the entire country and holds a space for the value of faith and belief in our national life. This gives it continued relevance to the contexts in which the career development of those living in England takes place and in which those who live here might consider calling in relation to their working lives. In relation to the STF, the Church of England or a part of it may: form part of the social system in which an individual is contextualised; has a relevance to the wider societal-environmental system; and for some be the organisational system within which faith and calling are nurtured.

In designing a study exploring calling, career and faith for women, I have chosen to focus on the Church of England for a number of reasons. It is broad enough to contain a breadth of theological perspectives and as an Established Church has a presence in all parts of the country, even if it is not always the largest Christian denomination in terms of the number of regular worshippers. Given my particular focus on women, denominations who formally bar women from leadership or clerical roles (to be defined below) were excluded. The Church of England has officially endorsed women's roles at all levels since their ordination as priests in 1994 and appointment to the episcopate in 2014, although

does also make provision for those who cannot accept women's leadership. Nonetheless, for anyone exploring calling in their lives, options for ministry are available to women, albeit with gendered pathways and trajectories. As such, remaining lay is not the only option for a woman considering God's calling on her life. Another practical reason is the institutional context of the Church with managed resources and processes to support calling, vocational discernment and the facilitation of ministry. This gives me access to resources and insider practice knowledge through my own involvement in such processes.

This chapter then provides an overview of the relevant themes and concepts from this arena that I am taking into my fieldwork. The focus will shift from wider ideas about work and calling over Christian history, acknowledging the significant turning point in establishing vocation (like career in chapter one) as relevant to all, which came about through the Protestant Reformation. Related ideas such as theological understanding of work and the long history of spiritual formation to support discernment are also woven in here, although space prohibits a full theological treatment or even comprehensive literature review. I continue to interrogate gendered thinking and the relevance to women of the key concepts and the emancipatory potential and challenges for working in this space.

Background

This section situates the Church of England within a wider historical frame, beginning with consideration of two linked areas: work and vocation. These are overlapping, but not identical. Work can be considered without reference to which specific work a person finds themselves in or chooses to pursue. Similarly, vocation or calling can be considered in ways much broader than working lives. We need to explore both in order to consider how faith intersects with a person's path through life. As noted earlier, language is used slightly differently. The literature in chapter two tends to lean primarily on the word *calling*, as noun and verb, occasionally also incorporating 'vocation' as noun. In the space considered here, we more commonly see vocation in use, interchanged with calling.

Early Christian thinking is influenced, as in so many other areas of doctrine, by the prevalent attitudes in Greek and Roman culture that saw a binary distinction between the mind and the body, with the latter firmly inferior. Those who had to, worked, freeing the elite to focus on the mind and consider art and philosophy. This led to a worldview that saw work as a necessary evil and conveyed higher

status to those who were called away from such toil to religious life. In the medieval world this view led to the founding of many monastic orders where lives of prayer and spiritual discipline were followed. Work was of course done in these settings to maintain the infrastructure of the order, integrated with prayer (such as the Benedictine rule of 'ora et labora': prayer and work). Metaphors from this era endure in contemporary Christian spirituality. However, the implication here is that to pray is best and the need to work is redeemed by its facilitation of prayer. The linked parallel to this dualism is to see the celibate life as superior to a married state, and to associate masculinity with the mind and reason, therefore of higher status than femininity with its association with the body and emotion. From this context, a clerical class of celibate male priests emerged with much ecclesiastical power.

Vocation, or calling, is a component of faith which precedes work and is more fundamental to the Christian life as lived in covenantal relation to God. God calls each Christian to faith, and therefore understanding the calling process leads us into consideration of the nature of God. Nested within that primary call is a nuanced understanding of how specific callings may be perceived, which may include calling to a life state (e.g. marriage), a type of work, a particular job, or even a particular course of action. Relating this to the literature covered in the previous chapter, then, the emphasis is very much on the 'perceiving a calling' aspects of the WCT theory (Duffy et al, 2018) through a process of discernment. Such discernment of God's calling(s) sits within a wider sense in which one's faith develops and is understood and nurtured.

A recent and insightful collection of essays edited by Placher (2005) provides a coherent theoretical framework on which this thesis can build. Placher begins by noting that scriptural accounts of calling tend to refer either to a call into covenantal faith or to a specific task allocated at one time, rather than a lifetime vocation. He goes on to review the whole history of Christianity, defining four historical periods, whilst acknowledging a context of a lack of occupational choice until recently. For much of the periods covered, people undertook the work associated with the family into which they were born, be that ruling or roofing. Placher distinguishes between the four stages of *klesis* (the New Testament Greek used by the Apostle Paul when discussing call to faith), *vocatio* (the Latin term used for a call to the religious life), *beruf* (the German term Luther used as translation for klesis referring to occupation or station and *disciple* (reflecting a contemporary focus on lifelong learning in fast moving secularised contexts).

In the *Klesis* era, the focus falls on the calling to Christian life in the early Church, a minority sect that would render one an outsider and pose considerable risks, including martyrdom. The dominant question of discernment was 'Should I be a Christian?' when this will mean loss of family and status. Once a highly Christianised culture was established in Europe, through the middle ages the emphasis moves to *Vocatio*, with distinctions made between having a vocation, (i.e. becoming a priest, monk or nun) or remaining in society, marrying, working and continuing your family line. Despite this very focused definition of vocation, Placher notes that religious life differed from secular life by providing a form of social mobility. For the majority, until very recently there was very little opportunity to move away from the social stratum in which one was born. Within this station, Reformation scholars such as Luther emphasised *Beruf,* which dominated from the Reformation to the twentieth century, to emphasise working where we find ourselves in order to serve God there. Here emerges the idea of two types of calling: what Luther called a spiritual and external calling; later referred to as a general and particular calling. This contrasts between being generally and spiritually called (along with all the baptised) to be part of the people of God or externally and particularly specifically to a station in life. The latter is understood to inform the work available to you proximally to where you have been born, being providentially assigned by God. There was therefore an equality between types of calling but limited social mobility available.

Corresponding with the origins and growth of career development work charted in chapter one, beyond this reformation period we see a significant increase in the perceived range of options and choices to which a person can be called. The focus shifts to the individual as *Disciple.* Placher argues that changing means of production and division of labour mean that people work longer hours, and are simultaneously more alienated through work as well as seeking more internal and external reward through work. Here we see the dark side from chapter two coming into play and the risk emerges that emphasising work as part of Christian calling increases risk of over identification with work success. Others, unable to follow perceived callings are excluded, feeling they are lesser Christians through no fault of their own. In determining how contemporary Christians can be equipped and supported to consider their vocation and calling in relation to working lives, paying attention to the dark side is an important consideration.

The *beruf/disciple* distinction can be mapped onto the neo-classical/contemporary continuum of calling considered in the previous chapter, with *beruf* closer to the neo-classical emphasis on duty and service.

'Discipleship' relates better to the 'transcendent' call in Thompson and Bunderson's (2019) four box model (Figure 4). In relation to the STF, the individual in context of course represents the tensions and interaction between the specific context in which one finds oneself, with structural constraints, the individual capacity to enact their own agency in carving new paths, and the recursive and mutual interplay between the two.

Specific to this study, the relevance of calling to all lay Christians is established with reference to the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England's distinctions of ministerial, social and relational vocations. In looking at contemporary thinking about calling within the Church of England, where much discussion of calling is viewed collectively, there is a noticeable framing in terms of how individual call is tested by the Church as ecclesiastical organisation in the context of selection for ministerial roles. The role of collective call in discernment of the Church's approach to mission and ministry is also discussed.

Key concepts and features

In this section I begin with a brief consideration of the theological framing on work and calling, as expressed in Catholic Social Teaching such as papal encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (John Paul, 1981). Through this I highlight a series of salient concepts relevant to this thesis: a creational foundation; general vs specific callings; the notion of individual and collective callings; the nature of God and our discernment process. I go on to consider the Church of England's stated position on calling and the messages communicated implicitly and explicitly when it talks about calling, both in general terms and in relation to ministerial responsibilities of institutional church life. This section outlines how callings are understood to be ministerial, social and relational for all, whilst unpicking messaging that can unwittingly emphasise ministerial callings and especially ordained ministry.

An important starting point for a wider view of lay vocations is God as creator and the idea of work as our co-creation with God. The main thrust of *Laborem Exercens* is redemption and valorisation of work, claiming the relevance of vocation to all and a role for the Church in commenting on work, as the "Church considers it her task always to call attention to the dignity and rights of those who work" (John Paul, 1981, p. 1). A spirituality of work is encouraged where the person is understood to be engaged in co-creation with God through their work. Holding this in its rightful place is understood to

create tensions: on the one hand "From the beginning therefore he (sic) is called to work" but is also "more precious for what he is than for what he has".

Thus we see a Catholic attempt to move beyond a church-centric, traditional emphasis on vocations to priesthood/monastic life/church ministry, the very emphasis that reformation scholars such as Luther and Calvinist rejected. This enables a holistic understanding of vocation through the whole of life, resisting distinctions between sacred and secular and seeing the spiritual relevance and potential of the whole of life, especially work and domestic life. *Laborem Exercens* expresses this in terms of family life.

This wider secular domain then becomes the context for the specific callings, where our general calling meets the particularities of our lives, as Christians prayerfully consider what to do in multiple vocations as spouses, colleagues, friends, citizens etc. in the light of faith in Christ, discerning "what our call means for our callings" (Schuurmann, 2004, p. 37). However, beyond acknowledgement that jobs differ and mention of 'suitable employment', which suggests that some decisions on suitability are made, there is silence on the process of determining a specific work-related call.

This material takes us into the territory of the providential nature of God and how the complexities of our lived experience might intersect with God's call(s), affecting our ability to both discern their nature and to enact them. It is important to stress the experiential component of call, that it cannot be wholly and accurately known and that many factors interact to affect our ability to live out what we discern callings to be. Theologies of vocation debate the implied statis of a Lutheran view, in which created order is seen as God has planned. Volf (2001) points to the 'dead hand' of vocation as originating in 'fairly static feudalist and early capitalist societies' as both "inapplicable to modern societies and theologically inadequate" (p. vii). Just as contemporary career development theory has emerged alongside potential for change and mobility, Volf argues that to say that the station in life to which people are born is where they are called, is too limiting and static for our times. Instead, Volf's contemporary theology of work is based around charisms where we discern and use our spiritual gifts to support this cooperative transformative process towards a new creation. Noting that mobility and progression are a common feature of industrial and information societies, a disservice is therefore done to teach a static theology of vocation. This maps on to the career development world in the shift from initial career decisions to lifelong change and career development. A focus on charisms, that is gifts given by the Holy Spirit, allows for subjective success measures to be the basis for this career development.

If work is one of many social vocations to which an individual may have a calling, then theologies of work are also a resource for us in career development practice. Volf (2001) grapples with many of the same problems as we have seen in the career development literature. In particular, the tendency to align charisms with a specific elite who possess particular gifts must be avoided, instead emphasising a model where charisms are learned by all through faith and integrated with our prior shaping through genetic heritage and social contexts. This reflects the recursivity highlighted in the STF. This pneumatological understanding allows not just for lifelong change but has a lifewide scope too, allowing for plurality across roles and life domains (p. 116), for as Volf writes, "every Christian can simultaneously have different charisms and contribute to the edification of the church and transformation of the world" (p. 156). It does not assume a static fit between person and environment – in short, it allows for careers to develop and for multiple callings in different life domains to co-exist: the ministerial, social and relational at the same time. Moreover, it speaks to the changing human needs that work can meet as well as inherent dangers of overvaluing work over leisure – aligning it with the risks of overidentification warnings in chapter two. As with Bunderson and Thompson (2009), Volf (2001) relegates the work as duty idea to the past and argues that "work thrives today more on the insatiable hunger for self-realisation than on Protestant work ethic" (p. 129) and argues for a balance of work and leisure.

So, if calling is a complex and lifelong process, we also need to examine thinking about how callings are discerned. The discernment literature places an emphasis on openness in prayer and reflection on experience and practices such as private and corporate prayer, forms of spiritual accompaniment and other formational experiences sometimes summarised as 'discipleship'. I explore how these activities with their common focus on learning, align with career development practice. Just as career development work balances the needs of the individual and the labour market, vocation and discernment work in its current form in the Church of England does not simply help people with the internal process of discerning a call, it also helps them work out how to pursue it. I argue that rather than a static and dualistic process of matching what someone wants to do with what work God wants doing, or the Church wants doing, discernment work can be seen more richly as mapping recursive parts of linked systems.

There are points of connection with the wider careers literature in terms of process of discernment. Many of the means of determining a call can apply whatever the source of the call. In research with

people of faith about their decision-making processes, Hambly (2011) identified the interdependence of a combination of means that included those specific to people of faith (prayer and meditation), as well as those which people of no faith might identify (interaction, researching opportunities, being open to the unexpected and listening to inner voice or feelings). In literature and guidance on vocation and call in Christian contexts, common concepts are used: for example, considerations of issues of identity, gifts, passions and experiences as well as feedback, opportunities and needs (Dewar, 1999; Parker, 2000; Rees, 2006; Warren, 2002).

Christian spirituality focuses us on the process of discerning and following a call and the decisions we take along the way, as a response to a call. It also confirms, through its positive affirmation of all creation and humanity, not just the 'what' of work, but the 'how'. Synergies between this and the job crafting approaches of minor shifts to tasks, relationships and mindset at work as outlined by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) and Berg et al (2010) in chapter two are worthy of exploration. Through discernment, Christians may identify opportunities to pursue a call through task, cognitive and relational crafting, through emphasising tasks, expanding their jobs or reframing their roles, as well as identifying what can be experienced vicariously or through leisure time pursuits, including potential ministerial church based activities. Discernment also allows potential space for considering the 'dark side' of the calling, as highlighted in the careers literature. Thus, any negative impact of following a perceived calling on individual wellbeing and discipleship through overwork, unmanageable stress and potential burnout can be considered and addressed.

As a final overarching concept before moving into a more detailed consideration of the Church of England context, we must consider the collective as well as individual nature of a theological understanding of vocation. The language of discernment is used, not just as individuals consider what they personally should do in response to their faith but what should be done collectively by the Church, or by other collective bodies. Mapping this on to the Church of England as an organisation, this informs institutional decision-making and is evident in contemporary debates about the future polity of the Church of England. This dynamic comes into particular focus in relation to ministerial vocations: the Church calls its selection for training for ministry its 'discernment process', framed as a mutual one where an individual is supported to discern their calling at the same time as the Church is discerning and assessing their suitability (articulation of a 'genuine call' being one of several criteria).

The ‘organisational system’, as Patton and McMahon (2021) style it, has a role to play in shaping individuals’ experiences.

To support a mapping of the way that the Church of England operates, a close reading of the recent publication, *Kingdom Calling* (Church of England, 2020), gives insights into the thinking behind the vocational activity undertaken by the Church, as well as its institutional strategy for the future. Published by the ‘Faith and Order Commission’, a collective body which provides theological resources and reports to support the church’s work, its title relates calling to the theological concept of ‘Kingdom’ and subheading draws in ‘vocation, ministry and discipleship of the whole people of God’. Without space for a theological discussion of these concepts, suffice it to say that unlike the scholarly material in chapter two which is firmly focused on the study of individuals and work, here we have a broader canvas and a supernatural foundation. Calling begins with God. We are also looking at calling in relation to the Church, which can be variously defined as God’s collective people on earth, a particular organisation, or a type of building for worship. Given the practice nature of this thesis, the dominant definition here is Church as ecclesiastical organisation which organises itself so as to pursue its *ministry* (the work and activities undertaken) to achieve its *mission*. Mission in turn can be understood in an Anglican context through the articulated five marks of mission, which includes proclaiming the Kingdom, making new disciples, loving service, transforming unjust structures and safeguarding the integrity of creation (Anglican Communion, 2023). Relevant to this thesis are the noun *disciple* and its adverb *discipleship,* also in the *Kingdom Calling* subheading of “The vocation, ministry and discipleship of the whole people of God”. The term ‘disciple’ is based on the same origin as learner and thus conceptually linked to a learning approach to career development discussed in chapter one. The reference to unjust structures is also worth foregrounding now as points of connection between faith formation and career development work.

The context for *Kingdom Calling* and the need for a more considered theological discussion of calling comes from what was happening at the time in practice in the Church of England, at a time when the Church was considering how best to organise and resource itself for ‘Renewal and Reform’ under the leadership of Archbishop Justin Welby. The context here was a recognition that social change and the rapid decline in church attendance had massively changed the landscape in which the Church operates. The ‘Setting God’s People Free’ (SGPF) report (Church of England, 2017) came about from a

consideration of the people within the Church and their role and impact within the gathered (i.e. meeting for worship as parish or other form of worshipping community) or sent (i.e. integrated within other community settings, families and workplaces) Church. The report argued that the leadership and ministry of lay people had been marginalised in a Church where the focus was primarily on those ordained as clergy. SGPF identified a need for culture change and an enriched theological understanding of the role of lay people in the church. A culture change programme was developed with an advisory group formed, of which I was appointed as a member in 2019.

Subsequent to the SGPF report, publications such as *Calling all God's People* (Church of England, 2019) and the aforementioned *Kingdom Calling* (Church of England, 2020) chart the history and complexity of the Church's considerations of the respective ministries of clergy and lay people. Put simply, the concern can be seen as relating to a professional class of clergy paid by the Church as opposed to the voluntary work of lay people, although the picture soon becomes murkier than that. Those called, selected and trained for ordination are deemed to be either 'stipendiary' or 'non stipendiary' to reflect whether they receive financial support from the Church and there is a significant group of self-supporting, non-stipendiary clergy who are essentially volunteers in ministry. Alongside this, lay people are sometimes in the employment of the Church. However, in governance structures, clergy and lay people are grouped differently with representative 'houses' in dioceses (regional groups) and nationally.

This consideration of clergy and lay callings and ministry remains critical however, for a number of reasons. First, calling is the primary lens through which decisions to enter ordained ministry are framed. The Church has a range of criteria for selecting candidates for training but an articulated sense of call has primacy. This sense of mutual discernment reminds us that the Church is discerning callings collectively, as well as individually, and considering the corporate calling of the Church as well as the calling of each individual. It also filters down from that initial selection for training through all stages and levels, before ordination as deacon and priest and through to deployment and selection to particular roles. Second, and following this, the resources required to manage mutual discernment processes are considerable and therefore the focus on how they are spent occupies space. Thirdly, the links between calling and wellbeing we surfaced in the previous chapter, alongside the challenges of the clergy role in a rapidly changing context, mean that clergy issues rightly require consideration. For example, the Living Ministry longitudinal, mixed methods study of clergy wellbeing running from 2015-

2025 has produced detailed, rich insights into the support clergy need, as well as exploring the vocational and spiritual challenges of working within the church (Graveling, 2020).

As such, and as reflected in *Kingdom Calling*, lay callings can be viewed solely in relation to ordination rather than reflective of the primary calling God places on the lives of all Christians. Challenges to this have come through a growing post-war realisation that lay people are critical to the mission and ministry of the Church, in all its forms. Following the pioneering theologies of lay people written by Congar (1965) and Kraemer (1958) in connection with the ecumenical and liturgical movements, in 1963, Kathleen Bliss was arguing that "articulate, confident lay people were vital for the church's mission in a rapidly secularising social context" (Church of England, 2020, p. 5), through their places in the world as well as the roles they fulfil within the Church. Graham's (2017) historical review of the place of lay people in the Church notes that as the place of the Church in society has shifted due to decline in regular attenders, so the Church has looked increasingly inward and focused on lay people's roles within the Church, *God's Frozen People*, as the title of Gibbs and Morton's 1963 book so evocatively states. Further considerations by the Church of England regarding lay ministry, such as the 'All Are Called' report (Church of England,1985) and update in 1999, still frame lay people in terms of their roles in supporting clergy in upholding ecclesiastical structures, rather than how their ministries are woven through their lives. The social and relational callings of all, lay and ordained, are largely ignored.

Within the context of challenging times for the Church, *Kingdom Calling* points to a theological imperative to address this, not as "an unfortunate necessity that adverse circumstances have forced upon us…[but]… a joyful response to the abundance of God's gift". It goes on to quote from *Setting God's People Free*:

> Will we determine to empower, liberate and disciple the 98% of the Church of England who are not ordained and therefore set them free for fruitful, faithful mission and ministry, influence, leadership and most importantly, vibrant relationship with Jesus in all of life and will we do so not only in church-based ministry on a Sunday but in work and school in gym and shop in field and factory Monday to Saturday? (Church of England, 2017)

However, tensions remain between a focused emphasis on equipping lay people for a ministry in the Church, a wider view of lay vocations (social and relational as well as ministerial) across the whole of

life including the growing space beyond the Church and the underpinning support of lay people's spiritual lives and the faith which underpins the practices of discernment.

Is it for everyone?

These key concepts enable us to consider the relevance of calling to all Christians both positively and negatively. On the one hand, yes, calling is for everyone as all the faithful are considered to be 'generally' called. In the Church of England where every individual is covered by the prayer and care offered in every parish, this does indeed mean everyone, not just worshipping Anglicans. As the church holds a space for faith in public life, this is a basis for considering faith and career development universally.

And yet the answer can also be no, given that not all ministerial callings are mutually discerned, supported and licensed (the term used for ordained ministries and some recognised lay ministries). Indeed, current debates such as those raging about the extension of marriage or blessing to same-sex relationships, remind us that not all social and relational vocations are supported either. Moreover, just as aspects of the career development literature seem more relevant to middle class occupations, some of the resources produced which will be considered below emphasise the scope for faith-based job crafting in similarly privileged roles. The focus on appropriate behaviours at work sometimes comes with a series of assumptions about the type of work people are doing, as including the latitude and autonomy to behave in particular ways. At a further extreme we see a concern emerge for Christians' freedom of religious expression at work in pluralist societies. Whilst the underlying principle of taking a more integrative approach than a strict sacred/secular divide is to be welcomed, as seen in the recent selection of case studies by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (2022), there is more to do to resource career decision-making with a calling perspective.

What about women?

The historical framing used earlier reminded us of the impact of such cultural contexts on the development of Christian thought, so it is important to note the patriarchal nature of the societies in which these ideas developed. Emerging from that, *Laborem Exercens* uses male language throughout,

whereas other material reviewed here has been careful to ignore gender in its theorising, albeit by including women through the mixed use of pronouns so as to assume the points made apply equally to all. I find this noteworthy yet insufficient: as with early career theories it assumes men's voices and experiences can be expanded and applied equally to women.

Once again we do not have scope in this thesis to explore fully theologies of gender, but the position of women in the Church of England can be fruitfully considered. First, evidence supports claims of higher religiosity amongst women (Pew Research, 2016) with varying reasons discussed from innate and inborn different attitudes to risk (Miller & Hoffmann, 1995) to gendered socialisation (Trzebiatowska & Bruce, 2012). However, the difference is diminishing as overall religiosity reduces. It is also noteworthy that women are numerically dominant in congregational studies of who is engaged in worship in the Church of England. Day's (2017) study of 'Generation A', the lives of older Anglican women shines a light on the experiences of an older generation whose voluntary efforts, or 'pew power', have maintained church activities on many levels. This study of religious practices draws on many of the same contextual influences that shape the career development literature: changing patterns of behaviour resulting from an emphasis on individual fulfilment over collective duties; increased participation of women in the labour market and the impact on other life domains; and the interplay between the relational and institutional in sense-making of lived experience.

Specifically to the Church of England, Day (2017) notes that much of the focus on gender has considered the impact of the ordination of women to the priesthood (since 1994) and episcopate (since 2014). Data reveals similar patterns of gender inequalities as the wider labour market (Graveling, 2015, 2016; Seagrave, 2017). Numbers of men and women coming forward for ordination are now roughly equal, but women are likely to be older and offering for non-stipendiary ministry. This precludes them from positions with more institutional power and the numbers leading larger churches or with middle management diocesan and archidiaconal roles are stubbornly static, with data compiled annually by campaign group 'Women and the Church' (WATCH) showing very small incremental gains. The settlement made to allow for women to be bishops which aims to secure 'mutual flourishing' for women as well as those who cannot accept women's ordained ministry on theological grounds and the exemption of the Church from government equality legislation colour much of the discourse on this area.

Finally, it is worth considering the discernment process as part of the faith lives of women and any notable issues of gender. The field here follows the pattern seen in the career development literature, with early theorising assuming a gender-blind position. The dominant example here would be James Fowler's (1981) stage model of faith development as an "active, dynamic, affective and cognitive process of meaning making which is a human universal engaging every human being from birth to death in the search for ultimate meaning" (Slee, 2004, p.28). Fowler's work, in claiming universal applicability follows the main contours of Donald Super's (1980) career development theory, with its maxi-cycles of stage development across the lifespan and consideration of the transitions between stages prompted by maturation, as well as transformational processes often stimulated by external life events.

The most significant and impactful review of women's faith development was published by Slee (2004) where she places Fowler centrally in her review of a range of faith development theories, whilst building an argument for the inadequacies of theories which ignore the particular impact of gender. In the same way that other developmental theories have been subject to feminist critique and the development of women specific models (e.g. Gilligan, 1982; Chodorow, 1989), she notes the development of studies which explore a particular impact of patriarchal religious institutions on women's faith development. From empirical qualitative research with women she develops her own theory of 'patterns and processes' of 'faithing', using a verb to show that developing faith is dynamic and active. These processes emerging through the 'thick descriptions' gathered from in-depth interviews are described as conversational, metaphoric, narrative, personalised, conceptual, and apophatic with patterns of alienation, awakenings, and relationality at play.

For my study, putting Slee (2004) alongside literature on women's career development highlights the value of these patterns in particular. The career development challenges experienced by women map onto her accounts of alienation, creating many of the barriers which women clients might bring to career development practice. The significance of relationships within women's social system highlighted by Richardson (2009, 2012), Schultheiss (2013) and Patton (2013) aligns with Slee's focus on patterns of relationality. Finally, the accounts of awakenings are reminiscent of the learning experiences which underpin the career development process, according to the STF. These three can potentially be used as a basis for practices which would support discernment of calling.

What does practice look like?

For this section we need to explore what practices are currently in place within the Church of England for such discernment of calling. These are broad and varied across different church traditions and in dioceses which have taken contrasting approaches to vocational discernment, as per their local needs, strategy, structure and episcopal priority. As this suggests, the dominant drivers are often in meeting demand for ministry by encouraging people to consider ordination or lay ministerial roles, the latter in particular being central to the resourcing needs of a growth strategy which looks to create new missional communities. Even if targets for ordination candidates are met, voluntary ministry is a central to the church being able to offer its ministry and mission in the future. Lay ministry training in many dioceses focuses on preparing people to take up a license, for example as a lay preacher or pastoral worker, or at least an inward facing church-based role. There is therefore an inherent tension between initiatives which seek to promote the idea of vocation as relational and social as well as ministerial, across the whole of life, and the practical requirements mutually to discern, enable and affirm vocations which relate to the Church.

The Setting God's People Free culture-change initiatives highlighted earlier have led to the development of resources designed to encourage lay people to consider their 'Everyday Faith', looking for the connections between their faith and their ordinary lives. However, as *Kingdom Calling* laments, in practice the Church continues to distract itself from flurries of activity to address this through other internal issues of its own polity, such as women's ordination, the inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals and strategic and structural change required by its shifting resource base. Indeed, the issues become enmeshed together.

Within and alongside the Church of England, a lively Faith at Work movement has developed over recent years, particularly showcased through the work of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. *A* series of resources under the 'fruitfulness on the frontline' branding, designed to facilitate Christian learning to live a 'Monday to Saturday' faith where Church (sacred, Sunday) is not kept separate from the rest of life (secular, including the working week) is one example of this phenomenon, linked as it is to the more evangelical tradition within the Church of England: the emphasis is very much on the outworking of the individual's personal salvation for their faith development and discipleship and how work can be the site of mission and even evangelism for them. Readers are encouraged to seek divine help with work-based problems, to witness to colleagues and

to connect with other Christians at work, even to draw on faith when determining appropriate behaviours. However, little is said about deciding what work to do in the first place, or using faith as a resource in moving between roles, organisations and sectors.

Of course considerable effort within the church goes into nurturing people's spiritual and faith development, through ecclesial practices such as study groups and sermons and other resources to support spiritual formation. The practice of spiritual direction perhaps sits best within this, and is worth examination in so much as it offers a parallel to the career coaching process. With roots in the catholic tradition of each Christian having access to an ordained 'confessor' for a sacramental process of confession and reconciliation, this has now broadened to encompass a wide range of one-to-one dialogic practices where one person is trained to listen, probe and support another as they discuss the interplay between their faith and wider life (Guenther, 1992; Pickering, 2008). The skills of the spiritual companion (as we are called in Coventry Diocese) are consistent with those of career development practitioners, with the added component, as observed above, that the individual sense-making is taking place in relation to God, and both parties are discerning God's will throughout the interaction.

All this serves as backdrop to the dilemma for the contemporary Christian in working out their particular callings and considering how work and other social roles fit into their lives. It informs what the church has to say to people about work, which in turn influences those decisions. And here emerges a particular tension: work is discussed primarily in relation to mission and evangelism, whereas calling is discussed in relation to ministry. A more integrative approach is needed if social, relational and ministerial ongoing callings, both specific and general, are to be included.

Emancipatory potential

Such an approach would have potential to bring in a liberating view of calling as equally important to all Christians. This could have the impact of leveraging the resource that a faith life brings to Christians in their career development. This could be seen as not mission critical to a Church prioritising its own institutional survival. But, as Elaine Graham (2017) argues an integrated framework for meaning-making that helps people discern God's call across all life spheres seems likely to have benefits in the development of an "empowered laity [which] needs a learning church" (p. 344). However, it is important to remember that the Church of England as an organisation is not always a 100% inclusive

context, and so that limits its potential to work in an emancipatory way in this space. There are documented barriers for those working for the Church around race (France-Williams, 2021; Stone, 2022) sexuality (Connell & Yates, 2021) and gender (WATCH, 2022). This, as well as the tensions between discernment of individual specific callings and the Church's collective discernment processes are concerns of note in this thesis's attempt to shape innovative practice.

How does this relate to me?

My purpose in exploring this material is to carve out a space where I can integrate my faith and my own career in career development practice, which I am spurred on to do through my own processes of discernment and spiritual formation. Alongside my work as a career development practitioner, I have trained as a spiritual director, acted as a discernment adviser in the collective discernment of suitability for ministry and offered inputs on a number of levels to the Church of England as an organisation to support its work in this area, not least through the Setting God's People Free advisory group. Through all of this I recognise the potential role conflicts and tensions in expectations and outputs. Yet I remain intrigued by the potential to integrate career development and theological understandings of calling in ways that can be particularly developmental and liberating, particularly for those who will benefit the most. My experience as a woman, numerically dominant but historically marginalised in leading the life of the Church, suggests this as a suitable emancipatory focus.

Having considered what the Church of England has to say about work and calling, and women, we find very little gendered consideration. Where this does exist it focuses on the ministerial calling of women whose paid work is in the church (Graveling, 2015, 2016). However, integrating the key concepts from these three chapters, a conceptual framework is beginning to emerge where calling and faith are mapped on to the STF. Slee's (2004) faithing patterns and processes can be understood recursively in the same way that the STF models meaning-making through interacting influences. Church as a site of influence and activity sits within the social system and also operates organisationally to support mutual discernment. From these three chapters setting the scene by reviewing contemporary theory and practice, I go on to explore how I can shape an action research study to explore the potential in this space.

Chapter Four: How can I frame an action research project to develop this practice?

Having reviewed literature from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, as well as epistemological positions, I now turn to a justification and account of my chosen research strategy. My interpretivist 'logic of enquiry' (Blaikie, 2007) has been woven through previous chapters and extends to placing a primacy on the account that social actors can give of their experiences. This is consistent with Patton and McMahon's STF (2021) discussed in chapter two, and its basis in constructivism and social constructionism. Moreover, I am being clear about my own position, centred in the project, and my concern to integrate theory and practice. I am both mapping and disrupting the map at the same time.

In this chapter I consider how I can design and carry out an action research project to develop a calling infused career development practice for Christian women. I expand upon my epistemological position and give an articulation of how my interest in faith and the interdisciplinary study of career can be aligned. I justify my selection of action research as a framework appropriate to studies such as this one, with emancipatory intent and concern to identify where oppressions have been overlooked and instigate liberatory practices. I outline how this project functions as action research, nested as it is within my overall scholarship and practice. I go on to outline my data-gathering activities through an account of semi-structured interviewing with selected Anglican lay women, giving particular attention to sampling decisions taken and ethical considerations. I explain how data has been handled and analysed, including the interweaving of other practice-based experiences to my work.

Epistemological orientations

Epistemologically, research in career studies reflects debates about the nature of knowledge that have developed across the social sciences and within each of the composite disciplinary areas. There has been a strong positivist tradition, with theories, tests and models developed by researchers and used by practitioners to differentiate individuals and match to jobs. Indeed, 85% of the papers reviewed in the Thompson and Bunderson (2019) literature review, drawn on in chapter two, were quantitative in orientation. This assumes a certain stability in both individual traits and job factors that is external and real and can be measured, associated with positivism. A growing emphasis on the process by which

individuals make sense as part of their social world and construct their own meaning has led to greater use of interpretivist epistemologies in research. Alongside this, a one-way relationship between theory and practice is typical, where research generates theory which is applied in practice. However, there are now many examples of practitioners researching their own practice and developing the necessary reflexivity to locate their own interpretations and biases within the phenomena they study. After all, we all have our own relationship with the concept of 'career' and are inextricably bound up with the social world that is being researched.

The positivist approach to researching career and calling infusing much of the work reviewed in chapter two is unsatisfactory, and begins to break down, particularly through integration with other disciplines. Duffy and Dik (2013) recognise in particular the limitations of traditional research populations and call for a focus on diversity of experience. This is arguably made even more worthwhile with a diversity of research methodology alongside, reporting responses of a variety of social groups and exploring why and how they see things differently. I am seeking, then, to foreground social constructionism, based on my belief as a practitioner that my clients construct their own meaning based on their systemic influences (so including social and societal systems), whilst also accepting critical theory's claims that there is an external reality that creates systems of oppression. With the incorporation of faith into my research, it is practical theology, as a subdiscipline of theology, that negotiates similar tensions between the "theological assumption that truth is available and accessible through revelation" (Swinton & Mowat, 2006, p. 73) with its focus on interpreting experience.

Moreover, as outlined in chapter two, I argue that career development scholars and practitioners are not seeing the whole picture around vocation and calling until they see how it interacts with women's career development. My research strategy, therefore, also needs to be consistent with feminist research's intention to surface women's experiences and create knowledge collaboratively (Letherby, 2003), as well as being pastorally appropriate, with women giving mutual care and support and drawing on my professional practice.

Feminism is just one axis of liberation in a world where political, economic, social and cultural power is unequally distributed in favour of the global north, with technical-rational, enlightenment values infusing our normal modes of knowledge production. Aligned with the claims made about career development

work as political (Watts, 1996; Hooley et al, 2017), either reinforcing or challenging inequalities, research can be used to delineate and demarcate truth from fiction. The researcher holds the power to set research questions, design studies, gather data from the field and tell the stories of the researched. Just as I seek to enact socially just career development practice, so I have sought to enshrine the five signposts outlined in chapter one into my approach to research, in particular working at a range of levels. Each stage of the project (identifying questions, reviewing literature, connecting different fields of study, engaging in interviews, analysing data and forging recommendations) aims to question what is already understood in this field of study. The thread throughout is my own position as the researcher, which I reflexively interrogate as I build my own critical consciousness.

Thus far the arguments laid out (concerning the nature of career development practice, the role of vocation and calling in career development in general, and in relation to women in particular), point towards a research strategy spacious and generous enough to handle some of the innate contradictions unearthed. This leads me to identify an action research paradigm as underpinning this study.

An action research paradigm

Action research (AR) is the selected overarching strategy of contextualised knowledge generation for this research. I will now outline its suitability for this study, particularly in relation to my practitioner researcher identity and the challenge to norms of knowledge creation. As Somekh and Zeichner (2009) note:

> Action research, as a proposition, has discursive power because it embodies a collision of terms. In generating research knowledge and improving social action at the same time, action research challenges the normative values of two distinct ways of being – that of the scholar and the activist. (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009, p. 5)

In line with my interest in integration, Reason and Bradbury (2008) describe action research as:

> A participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing

> concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 4).

It is relevant to the career development aspects of the framework developed in that it is concerned with practice, and the reflection of the practitioner active in that sphere. It is emancipatory, sharing power with participants, in line with the social justice and feminist arguments I have made (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). There are tensions here, however, in that I as researcher have exerted power in shaping the study and am pursuing my own academic goals through carrying it out. I have defined the overarching question of *How can I develop a calling informed framework for career development practice for Christian women?* I have based this on my practice experience which leads me to see potential value in equipping and supporting Christian women in their working lives. My practice knowledge from working in world of career development has given me insights into how similar challenges are reported by women in their working lives, and by Christian women in their discipleship, as well as ideas for how these challenges could be addressed through career development learning activities. However, there are not significant and clearly defined and bounded groups of women proactively seeking out this support, certainly not to the extent that I could find a group of women to work with as participants in action research.

Jean McNiff (2013, p. 27) identifies five questions to consider in defining AR as an approach to research

- what do action researchers believe in? – ontological issues
- how do action researchers come to know? – epistemological issues
- how do action researchers act? – methodological issues
- what are the implications of our knowledge for socio-political and environmental issues?
- how do action researchers use their knowledge for social and environmental wellbeing?

Action research as a strategy is ontologically appropriate for this study, seeing knowledge not just as abstract and theoretical, with codified propositions emerging from the academy, but situated, social and practical. In this instance, the situatedness is me as an insider, taking action to address a problem in which I am embedded (as a Christian, as a woman and as called). Furthermore, it promotes a connectedness and relationality that challenges the individualism of some careers literature that I am pushing against and is consistent with my conceptualisation of career development as socially

constructed, using the STF as outlined in chapter one. As Schon (1983) might say, I want my new knowledge to emerge from the 'swampy lowlands' (p. 43) of practice rather than the 'high ground' (p. 44) of technical rationality. Given this epistemological rejection of prioritising propositional knowledge, where existing literature is reviewed as a way to formulate research questions, this thesis structure, with three chapters mapping the field prior to action might be open to criticism. However, in all three I have sought to present literature not as pre-eminent but as the outcome of practices by those who have gone before and who have also given consideration to practice issues.

Action research is epistemologically consistent with the view shaping this study that there is no well-developed hypothesis to test. Rather, knowledge emerges through encounter. There is no truth to be discovered of specific callings for participants outside their own process of discernment and enactment. I cannot judge their true call. What can be known is how each participating woman explains her own sense-making processes in work and faith and what practices have potential to equip and support her, drawing on the themes generated by their accounts of calling in their career development. Proposed practices, once implemented, can be evaluated to consider how she interprets the effects of this support. As researcher, I have designed forms of career development practice for women based on my interviews, and will then go on to implement them and evaluate them beyond the scope of this study. As such, the power dynamics of researcher and researched are subverted in that whilst I am offering the career development provision, the reflection in action is both my own and the participants.

However, it is not possible to go as far as some of the AR literature suggests in terms of 'critical participatory action research' where I would be inviting participants to share in the analysis of data and generate findings collaboratively. As well as the lack of defined groups to work with, this would have been too much of a commitment to ask of busy women.

McNiff (2013) generates the following checklist for aspirant action researchers which was used at the design stage to shape the study as it emerged.

Checklist	*My response*
What do I wish to investigate?	How Christian women see their working lives develop in relation to their faith and calling and how these can be better integrated.

Checklist	*My response*
Why do I wish to investigate it?	My own sense of my work as a calling is a rich resource for my career development and I am continuing to work these issues out for myself. It is consistent with my view of mission in the world to encourage people to see their working lives as missiologically rich.
How do I show and describe the current situation as it is?	Through my existing practitioner experience, I see women disconnecting their working lives from their faith and seeking to juggle commitments to formal church institutions as well as work and family.
What do I think I can do about it? What will I do about it?	I think this puts pressure on women to continue to provide the voluntary labour for most ecclesial activity. By asking women to reflect on their career development and their faith I can design career development activities drawing on calling.
How do I show and explain the situation as it develops?	I have gathered women's perspectives and accounts of the problem in order to design activities to support them in line with their experiences.
How will I ensure that any conclusions I draw are reasonably fair and accurate, by inviting the critical responses of others and myself?	An investigative framework from integration of existing theory and practice is used to interpret initial encounters. It has been designed to be comprehensive and developed enough to identify gaps as well as stated views. Rich and deep insights from these interviews are used to identify themes reflecting an understanding of the working

Checklist	*My response*
	lives of participants and how their career development can be supported. This is used to develop resources which will be offered to women after the submission of the thesis, thereby giving them chance to respond to my interpretation of their perspectives.
How do I communicate the significance of what I am doing?	As well as this thesis, I report on my emerging work in my ongoing practices and networks.
How will I modify my practices and thinking in light of the evaluation?	I remain open to unexpected findings and nuance and will review my practices in light of the process, as well as making recommendations to the contexts I work with.

Table 3: A checklist for action researchers (McNiff, 2013, p. 91)

In terms of process, AR is usually portrayed as taking place in cycles. These cycles can be neat and regular, like the figure from Zuber Skeritt, reminiscent of machine cogs.

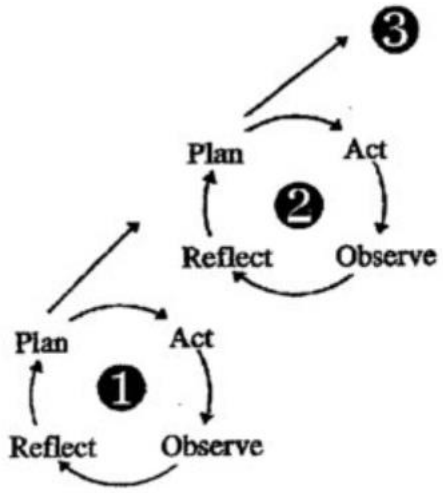

Figure 5: The Spiral of Action Research (Zuber-Skerrit, 2001, p. 20)

In this representation, this study forms cycle one of an overall process, consisting of individual interviews with selected women to discuss their working life in relation to vocation and calling. This will lead into cycle two beyond the submission of the thesis, where a designed event will be run for participating women to equip and support them, with its evaluation paving the way for cycle three way beyond the life of this doctoral research. As such, this thesis represents a particular slice of an ongoing project which both precedes and follows it. It is its emancipatory and generative underpinnings as much as the sequences of stages herein that render it worthy of the 'action research' label.

A more iterative representation from McNiff (2013), reflects this emergent and embedded process.

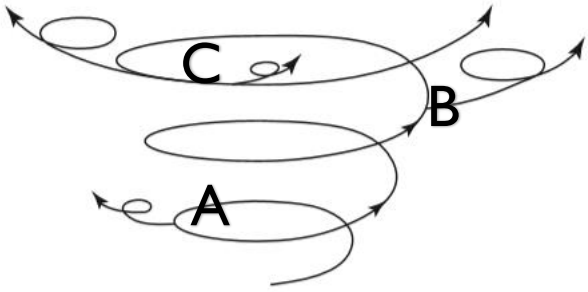

Figure 6: A generative, transformational evolutionary process (McNiff, 2013, p. 66)

A feature of cycles is that there are not always clear beginnings, and indeed my research cycle has been in play even before this study was shaped, and will continue beyond completion. This version perhaps better represents my starting point (A) as well as the potential practical offshoots along the way. For example, I have had the opportunity to feed ideas into spiritual direction or group facilitation along the way (B), and learned from the experiences. Prior to A, as well as the general and varied opportunities to observe Christian women making sense of their faith and their working lives, my ideas have been informed by the experiences of fieldwork for a pilot study undertaken within a research methods module. In seeking Anglican women, lay or ordained, to discuss calling and their working lives, I received a healthy response from ordained women but very few lay women. This suggests that there is not a groundswell of concern from lay women about this and the initial phase of my research needed to find the right questions, framed in the right way, that seem worth answering to the women who might participate.

Reason and Bradbury (2008) distinguish between first-, second- and third-person AR, with first-person AR as being founded in the reflective practice of the practitioner researcher and requiring a well-developed reflexivity. Second-person AR focuses on issues of mutual concern to a community. As an exemplar, Boyd (2015) positions his work as first-person AR (in relation to his own reflective practice and preaching vocation) and second-person AR (in relation to his collaborative enquiry with his congregation) person. In my case, this community of working lay Anglican women, is extremely loosely constituted and therefore unable to cohere around a question or concern. However, a third-person AR approach, undertaken within a wider community of enquiry, has resonance, given that I am researching as part of a wider community of both career development practitioners and Christians concerned with the ability of members of the Body of Christ to live out their callings. Indeed, I have intended outcomes for both those communities, as well as for my own practice.

Interdisciplinarity is a feature of my work, and another reason to commend AR, given that it does not preference propositional knowledge emerging from studies embedded in disciplines, but the knowledge emerging from practice. This emphasis on practice enables it to draw on a variety of disciplines as conversation partners and integration of propositional knowledge generated by more traditional forms of research with interdisciplinary approaches, congruent with the interdisciplinary basis of the career development field as discussed in chapter one.

To support the faith-based component of this project I have drawn on resources labelled as practical theology. These AR cycles are also resonant with the models of theological reflection developed within that sub-discipline. Finally, action research is relevant to the theological influences on this study, given that, after all, practical theology can be defined as 'theology in active mode, grappling with contemporary culture' (Cameron et al, 2010, p. 13). In this text, a team of researchers outline an approach they have pioneered and labelled 'Theological Action Research' (TAR). The opening chapters explore the links between practical theology and AR in principle, and this is consistent with my study. However, TAR goes on to specify an approach of two teams working in specific practice (faith-based) contexts with insider practitioners bringing in outsider researchers to work in a prescribed collaborative way, framing questions together and reviewing emergent data to agree findings together.

TAR refutes the bifurcation between theology as words and discipleship as action (Cameron et al, 2010, p. 14). Whilst this study aims to meet the TAR criteria of transforming practice with new *theological* insight, the precise process of TAR is clearly not possible in this context as a lone researcher working with a loose population rather than defined community. It also parts company at a more epistemological level in terms of the place of theology in my study. Swinton and Mowat (2006) demonstrate a preference for elevating the status of theology ("a system of knowledge that claims to be given by God" p. 83) over other disciplines (systems of knowledge created by human beings) used as 'conversation partners'. My approach differs in not seeing as clear a distinction here; my view of divine revelation as being through human beings in all contexts and theology as gracious enough therefore to be held in equal standing with the other disciplines used. Adams (2011) uses the metaphor of foraging in different fields (disciplines and epistemologies) to feed transformative praxis and I see theology as one field among many.

However, it is true to say that AR suggests that I refrain from determining all my questions upfront. Rather, I should leave space for questions to emerge from an initial cycle. There are assumptions underpinning my initial question of *How can I develop a calling informed framework career development practice for Christian women?* I assume that I can do this and that women will benefit from such provision, as well as interested and able to participate in it.

That said, the attention that TAR pays to articulating the tensions between the insiders and outsiders is relevant and vital to reflexivity and considering how I can conduct this study ethically and robustly. My 'self' as practitioner-researcher has been explicitly acknowledged throughout the preceding chapters, but here I extend a reflexive consideration of my motivation and its implications. I am reflexively aware of my own position as a well-educated, middle-class, heterosexual, cisgendered, white mother. It is appropriate to the feminist stance that I am taking that I write myself into it: as a Christian, woman, mother, as someone pursuing career goals, and as someone involved in the teaching, research and practice of supporting the career development of others. My own sense of call and the tensions I experience in balancing commitments to self, profession, employer, scholarship, family, Church and God (not in order) are writ large. I am both, as a Christian woman, and also the agent undertaking the research and with a particular kind of familiarity with the landscape through my scholarship and practice. The interplay of insiderness and outsiderness that Cameron et al (2010) discuss are held *within me*, and this is why attention to my reflexivity and potential bias is critical. Epistemologically, it would be inconsistent to seek to remove all traces of me as author and researcher in presentation of findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and I will need to write myself as practical theologian onto the page (Boyd, 2015), hence use of the first person throughout.

AR often involves an iterative process of defining questions with participants. However, a researcher needs to start somewhere. The starting question as identified earlier has emerged from my existing work in career development and discernment, prior to the A in Figure 6. The focus of this thesis is the space between A and C, in a first cycle of research where I conduct semi-structured interviews with selected Anglican lay women to hear their perspectives on working life and calling. I integrate spin off activities, such as running workshops on work as calling for interested organisations and providing spiritual direction with working women. From here, I can envisage a second cycle where the findings of these interviews are used to develop a retreat or workshop, to which I can invite participants and others. Here I can sense check my initial findings as well as guiding participants through activities that will be of benefit to them, in prayer, reflection and imagining. In this cycle, my material for review will be what is generated through it as well as documented evaluation of it. However, the thesis will conclude with the preparation of these resources which will be tested in future research.

Gathering data

The initial challenge addressed by the ethical approval form submitted for this research in March 2020 was how to identify and select the women who would take part in the semi-structured interviews. At the outset I identified one particular challenge in accessing appropriate participants. My experience suggested that Christian women often do not buy into the individualising discourse around career development or see the connections between work and their spirituality. I feared many would struggle to view themselves as having a 'career' or buy into wider social definitions of career 'success' as well as finding it difficult to prioritise time for nurturing their own spiritual and working lives, particularly given the other relational calls on their time. Nevertheless, I reassured myself that there would be numerous benefits of participation for the women who gave their time to support my career development through the gift of their data. The COVID-19 pandemic running from early 2020 ramped up these concerns, with particular impacts of lockdown restrictions on women delaying the project considerably.

University of Warwick ethical processes were followed to ensure that the research fully considers the implications of its design. Below, a series of questions posed by Thomas (2013) relating to educational research has been used to identify potential ethical considerations. Thomas asks the following questions, which serve as a useful checklist.

1. Who is the research benefitting?
2. Do I have the right to take up people's time and energy?
3. Is there possible discomfort for the participants?
4. Are the participants likely to feel under pressure to consent/assent to participation?
5. Am I invading their privacy?
6. Is a control group missing an opportunity if the experimental group are benefitting?
7. Would participants feel pressured to give particular responses?
8. Would participants be valued and respected as individuals?
9. Is data stored safely and are General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements met?
10. How will participants be made aware of the results of the study?

In response to the first question (Q1), it is clear that the research will benefit me as a career development practitioner and educator, in hopefully the award of a doctoral title. Through participation, my participants have also been able to consider their own career development, and the findings of the study might lead to improvement in the support that is available to them. My findings also have potential to benefit women more widely who may be better supported in their career and faith development in the future.

My mandate for taking up participants' time comes from their voluntary participation which was in response to their interest and provided a valuable space to reflect and consider calling and career development with the benefit of a trained career development practitioner and spiritual director. Possible discomfort (Q3) was acknowledged in that reflecting on previous career experiences might include disappointments that it is painful to consider or identify painful current and future constraints. Throughout the process I needed to be sensitive and supportive of this and establish a mutually agreed learning alliance with my interviewees, valuing and respecting them as individuals (Q8), making clear that there were no particular right or wrong perspectives (Q4) and they could share as much or as little as they chose (Q5). When trialling activities, this extends to capturing negative responses to the activities and valuing these as much as positive ones, to gain maximum learning from the project. The control group idea expressed in Q5 was not relevant here as this AR project is an ideographic study not seeking to establish cause and effect. In relation to data storage (Q9), communications with participants, recordings and transcripts were stored on password protected devices and University of Warwick GDPR protocols followed. Transcripts were shared with participants after the interview and any changes needed for accuracy or to avoid identification were made afterwards. I intend participants to be aware of my wider dissemination activities (Q10) following assessment of this thesis and in particular will share outcomes with participants by preparing an edited dissemination report as well as giving them the opportunity to read all or part of the study.

My initial intention was to pursue a snowball sampling strategy to identify women to interview, beginning locally and then extending across the Midlands, with the hope of making the subsequent event envisaged for cycle two geographically accessible. Aligned with the material covered in chapter three, my focus was on Anglican women, given the diversity of doctrines and practices across different denominations that might affect the encouragement of call. The breadth of Anglicanism allows for a diversity of perspective, whilst providing a framework in which licensed ministry is accessible for

women should they wish to pursue that. That said, for reasons discussed in chapter three, my focus is on lay women.

Ethical approval was gained in March 2020 (see Appendix A), the month which ended with the UK entering a period of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Intentions to embark on fieldwork gave way to a focus on the wellbeing of my family and the demands of switching my work to an online environment so it could be conducted remotely. With such disruption in daily lives, it felt inappropriate to ask anyone to give up time for qualitative research. Moreover, the church contacts I would have used to develop my sample were fully focused on attending to the pastoral needs of those around them, as well as moving worship online, and it would have felt like an unethical imposition to ask for help. In the event I devised an alternative strategy that did not rely so heavily on gatekeepers and initiated it in January 2021, seeking interviewees via Twitter.

On January 3 2021 I tweeted the following:

Figure 7: Participant recruitment tweet

As this tweet shows, this tweet was 'retweeted' from my account 83 times, with 72 people simply repeating it and 11 others adding their own comment before retweeting. Twitter data indicates that the tweet was seen 29,860 times. Engagement with the tweet, meaning that someone clicked on my profile, replied, liked it or followed me, is shown as 795; 218 people were curious enough to view my profile, which includes professional as well as personal information; 21 people responded to my tweet,

and coincidentally 21 women also emailed me to express an interest in participating. Some used twitter's direct messaging function and others found my email address online and contacted me directly. In all cases, I moved the correspondence to email before sending the participant information sheet (Appendix B) and consent form (Appendix C) as email attachments.

Rather than use a standardised form to gather demographic information, I relied on the detail in those documents and the information gathered through email dialogue to select the most appropriate women to interview. Two issues immediately emerged: a homogeneity of types of working experience and a preponderance of women in authorised lay ministry roles in the Church such as those discussed in chapter three. This information was usually revealed quickly in email exchanges and I soon found I had seven academic postholders. I selected one of these for interview, plus one higher education employee who had moved from an academic to third space role (Whitchurch, 2008) and one higher education administrator. Mirroring my experience with the pilot study mentioned earlier, where ordained women willing to be interviewed were easier to recruit than lay women, four women who were trained as licensed readers volunteered as well as three women who worked in lay work-based chaplaincy roles, ministering to people in work. My speculation is that their familiarity with ideas of calling based on their selection processes had sensitised them to the themes of the study. I selected three of the licensed readers based on their diversity of jobs (one academic, one nurse and one leader of a non-governmental organisation). In addition, through the course of the fieldwork I found one participant to be in discernment for licensed reader selection and another in training preparing to be licensed.

A key feature of the literature relating to womens' faith development (in chapter three) and career development (chapter one) was relationality and connectedness, and this was borne out in the approach I took to the research. For the women working in related roles, so unsuitable to be interviewed, I instead arranged an online conversation where I learned about their work and shared the overall shape of my project. My hope is that this will assist in dissemination in due course as it raises awareness of my work, but is not included in my dataset. In order to build a learning alliance carefully and to prepare for the online interview format, I proposed an initial telephone conversation with participants before fixing a time for interview. In fact a small number expressed a desire to go straight for interview, foregoing the 'phone call.

However, a further key feature to bear in mind concerns the way women's gendered experience intersects with other forms of their identities such as race, class and sexual orientation. This intersectionality concern emerged as a point of tension with the relationality between me and the participants. Through doing the interviews, I became aware that many of the women were very similar to me: white and middle class. One woman of South Asian heritage did volunteer for the study, but it soon transpired she fell outside my criteria as she was not an Anglican. A possible approach here would simply be to note the homogeneity and consider its relationship to the recent history of Christian communities in the UK, where Anglicans arriving from commonwealth countries were not made to feel sufficiently welcome in the Church of England and moved to establishing their own black majority churches. However, I felt this would not go far enough given the emancipatory intention of the research, so I determined to go back out to intentionally recruit women of Global Majority Heritage (GMH) for my study. On 16 February 2021 I repeated my initial tweet, explicitly seeking what I described as 'UKME' women:

Fig: 8: Tweet seeking UKME/GMH participants

There was less engagement with this tweet, with 1454 impressions (the times it was seen on Twitter) and only 45 active engagements. As a result, I began a targeted approach of asking contacts in ministry where there were likely to be GMH women in their congregations or milieu, e.g. urban parishes.

Several reported that to their concern, despite their setting they could not think of anyone suitable. In the end, I recruited three minority ethnic women as follows.

- My supervisor connected me with a senior GMH women in the church who connected me with an African heritage GP whom she had met through diocesan working groups.
- An early participant connected me with the churchwarden at her London church.
- A parish priest in suburban Birmingham connected me with an Area Dean in another part of the city who put me in touch with a woman from his deanery.

The extent to which these three women's perspectives differ from the initial eight was considered in analysis, with speculation that this might be attributed both to their racialised lived experience and to their means of connection to the study. None of these three participants were women who had immediately read my recruitment materials and thought of themselves as suitable, and they might have decided to take part based on that connecting relationship than connection with me or my subject.

A further weakness of my sample is the preponderance of childless women, in contrast to the overall rate of childlessness in the target population: 2018 data from the Office for National Statistics suggests that of women born in 1973 in the UK (and therefore having reached the end of what population studies considers to be childbearing years) only 19% have no children. In my sample, seven of the women had no children, although two of these expressed a wish to do so in the future. Caring commitments have already been noted as a significant influence on career development. However, only two of the interviewees had children under 18 in their care. Two others had children who were young adults. It is notable that childcare commitments did affect the interviews themselves: one mother had to rearrange her interview due to a sudden work commitment of her partners which meant he could not cover childcare. Another interview was cancelled and never rearranged due to a sick child. This was of course particularly acute at the time I was doing the interviews as the COVID-19 pandemic had closed schools. However, I decided not to take particular steps to recruit additional interviewees who were mothers: the burdens of caring on their time should be respected and, as a mother myself, I had some insights into that experience.

Participant summaries

Selected pseudonym	Age	Location	Occupation	Notable characteristics
Ada	42	Coventry	HE IT professional	Married with no children, churchwarden
Ada had spent most of her career in four different universities teaching computer science and working in research and development. Her working life had involved a series of restructures and organisational changes which had led to her decisions to move on. A move to research preceded a short period of unemployment before a move to a non-academic role, allowing her to transition into the software industry. Ada's faith and work are presented as unproblematically integrated. She did not incorporate the language of calling into her own career story.				
Cara	47	Belgium	NGO executive	Single with no children, Licensed Reader
A Scottish national, Cara narrates a career story with a clear sense of God's call working throughout, culminating with a very specific call and calling informed process which led her to her current role. Nevertheless, this leaves her with some queries about the future and how that might unfold without such a clearly discerned and enabled path opening up. A licensed reader, she has considered ministerial vocation on multiple occasions and can identify potential for an even greater integration of her work and ministry, if the Church's discernment processes can accommodate this.				
Helen	32	London	Critical Care Nurse	Married with no children, clergy spouse
Helen was raised in the Scottish Episcopal Church and trained as a nurse in Scotland before moving to work in England post qualification. She met and married her English husband, a Church of England priest, and is now working in the NHS during COVID-19. She has had breaks in employment whilst dealing with significant family trauma (father's death, husband's serious illness) but still feels nursing				

to be her calling on a par with her husband's priestly ministry. She looks ahead with hope but some uncertainty to their desire to become parents in the near future.				
Jane	45	Yorkshire	HE administrator/Church website coordinator	Married with two children
Jane became a Christian after graduating, an experience which aligned with her developing a seemingly 'calling informed' career in wildlife conservation. However, her career story of combining work with her calling to marriage and motherhood shows a number of challenges emerging. Her husband has a clear sense of calling to academia and her childcare commitments have left her looking for part-time work commensurate with her interests, skills and qualifications. Somewhat unfulfilled and frustrated by the challenges of finding the right combination of role and working conditions, Jane articulates calling as reflected in the way she approaches work as a part of her life, as well as her relational callings to family.				
Nicola	44	Germany	Translator	Married with no children, recently completed Licensed Reader training
Nicola was raised in England by her English father and Danish mother but has built her working life in Germany where she returned after studying languages, having had a deep connection with the country and language from childhood. She has recently discerned a call to licensed reader ministry and was licensed a month after the interview. She was looking to develop a fruitful and fulfilling ministry where she could redeem some of the pain of accepting infertility. As part of this, fulfilled at work, she envisaged further consideration of how faith and work could be integrated.				
Makanaka	55	Birmingham	Social Worker	Married with two children

Born into an Anglican family in Zimbabwe, Makanaka trained as a teacher, drawing on extended family support to juggle childcare commitments. She worked there before following her husband to the UK in 2003. Unable to fit supply teaching around childcare she worked in a civil service role until retraining as a social worker. She articulates her move through various social work specialisms as following a calling and draws on her faith, prayer, and a sense of God's overall control to enable her to withstand the trials of her demanding job.

Pamela	59	Kent	Community Nurse	Separated with two adult children, Licensed Reader

Pamela's career options post school were constrained by gendered expectations which led her to train as a nurse. Her work has mostly been in neonatal nursing but she is now working part time in community nursing alongside serving as a licensed reader in her parish church. Whilst neonatal nursing was expressed as calling, its demands have led her to move on. There are links between her faith and calling to licensed reader ministry and her experiences as a nurse and as a mother. She expressed some frustration with the time expected from her church as a licensed reader who is still working, and keeps the balance between church and work under careful review.

Remi	50	London	Civil Servant	Single, no children, churchwarden

Born in London, Remi was sent to Nigeria for part of her schooling before returning to the UK for university. Her early career development is a tale of unformed ideas, change and compromise, considering law and teaching before working in magazine publishing. She then entered the civil service and has worked there for 20 years. Her faith has re-emerged in her life over this period and is in part inspired by the pro-social nature of her work and seeing the role of faith communities in public life. She reports considerable challenge in being open about faith at work due to perceived incompatible positions of Christians and non-Christians.

Sarah	45	London	HE Lecturer	Single, no children, Licensed Reader
Born into a Christian family in East Germany, Sarah was only able to attend university because of the fall of the Berlin Wall. She studied English and Business and became fascinated by the link between faith and business ethics. This led her to a PhD and subsequent research/academic career in the UK. Over this time**,** she has found a home in the Anglican Church and become a licensed reader. She has been able to integrate her faith and her work fully in multiple ways.				
Sophie	39	Cambridge	Teacher (on career break)	Married, two children, currently undertaking Licensed Reader training
After a theology degree Sophie trained as a lawyer and then as an Religious Education teacher and spent many years enjoying that. She progressed into leadership, but pressures and bad experiences alongside family bereavement have led her to take a break from teaching, during which time she is studying mission and ministry. Sophie is considering a return to supply teaching and also articulates a specific interest in school chaplaincy work, although acknowledging opportunities are rare (she has since found such a role).				
Tolu	31	Leicester	General Practitioner (GP)	Single, no children
Tolu was born and raised in Nigeria and began her medical training there before moving to the UK. She has settled on general practice as a role which suits her and is manageable, despite feeling some pressure to aim for higher status specialties. She enjoys work and is fulfilled, although she finds it quite tiring so does not have time for more church involvement. She is part of a 'fresh expression' church in Leicester, noting the distinction between more traditional forms of Anglican worship and her experience in Nigeria. She was recruited to the study through a contact as I searched for minority ethnic participants.				

Conducting the interviews

A common disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic on studies similar to this is that fieldwork has had to move from face to face interviews to an online format. In fact, I had already considered the possibility of online interviews, finding it an effective mode of data gathering in my pilot study that respected the time constraints of busy working women. The lockdown period had led to even greater familiarity and comfort with interacting in such ways. In fact, its impact swung in the other direction with potential participants perhaps opting out due to 'Zoom fatigue'. For this study, the disruption related primarily to the timing of the research and the sampling strategies deployed.

Chapters one to three have enabled me to develop a robust framework for structuring and analysing the interviews which will now be explained. The interviews were semi-structured and in three parts.

After some opening remarks and opportunity to summarise the purpose of the work, ensure demographic data was in place and reaffirm consent, the first part of the interview asked participants about their current work, and then to construct and consider a timeline of their working life. Participants may have prepared this in advance having read the participant information leaflet which highlighted that the interview would cover "the history of your working life, what has influenced key decisions and also how you understand your sense of Christian call."

In part two, I then followed an activity developed by Patton and McMahon (2021) in using the STF with clients, by asking participants to pick two pivotal moments in their career development, one from the early part of their working lives and one more contemporary. For each experience in turn they were asked the following questions.

- What was it about YOU that was making you a unique factor in this decision?
- Who were the significant others who were having input or you were taking account of? And what role were they playing in the decision?
- What else did you have to consider?

Finally, I asked about a timeline of their faith development, listening carefully for ideas of calling to feature. I was particularly alert to work and non-work related callings, including

- the process of hearing a call;
- the shift to acting on a call;

- the role of other people in both hearing and acting on a call;
- barriers to hearing a call;
- any unfulfilled callings;
- any problems arising from calling;
- current challenges at work;
- sources of support for working life and calling they have drawn on.

Interviews lasted between 41 minutes and one hour two minutes, with a mean interview length of 55 minutes. The shortest interview was with the youngest participant who had a less detailed working life to chronicle. However, the interview length tended to relate to the extent to which the participant volunteered their thoughts and experiences. Significant variation in the emphasis placed and the time spent on the three phases of the interview was noted and explored in the analysis phase.

Recordings were made within the technology platform used for the interviews (Zoom) and saved according to the pseudonym selected by the participant. These were then uploaded to Microsoft Stream, with strict privacy settings, for the generation of a transcript. Transcripts were downloaded into Microsoft Word and cleaned by editing alongside at least two full play-throughs of the interviews. Transcripts were then sent back to participants for checking. Two participants asked me to amend transcripts slightly to clarify their meaning to anonymise details they felt could identify them.

Data analysis

For data analysis of the interviews I uploaded the transcripts to NVIVO12 qualitative data analysis software and began a process of reflexive thematic analysis, following the process laid down by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021). Following a landmark and highly cited paper in 2006 on this method of qualitative data analysis that they judge to be "poorly demarcated, rarely acknowledged but widely used" (2006, p. 77), Braun and Clarke have published extensively on a reflexive thematic analysis approach. I have selected this for a number of reasons: it is in keeping with the reflexivity running through this practice based project, and it is highly flexible and can be used across multiple contexts in many ways, including in alignment with AR. In particular, it enables me to work inductively, generating patterns of meaning from my data as well as deductively, relating that meaning to key theoretical concepts already identified. Indeed, I can work in both directions, abductively, in a recursive mode

aligned with the STF. In keeping with my practice focus, this method also integrates well with my academic role in that its flexibility makes it highly valuable to my students, practitioner researchers. Using it myself develops my expertise and credibility.

A further strength of this method for assessed work is that it makes a virtue of the subjectivity of the single researcher, rather than claiming improved quality through using a team of researchers to code and analyse the data. Instead, here quality is denoted by a depth of engagement, with themes reviewed against whole dataset. A mantra of Braun and Clarke is that themes do not 'emerge'. Rather than modes of analysis where data is separated into buckets labelled with topic summaries, gathering everything said about a topic into the analytical process and revealing the buried treasure that exists in the data prior to analysis, here themes evolve through a six phase process rather than being fixed at the beginning and are actively generated by the researcher. Just as I have shaped my data through sampling and gathering, my "thumbprints" (Ribbens, 1989, p.391) continue as I create my analysis. My generation of themes took place in relation to my own systems, at the intersection of the data and my interpretative framework, prior training, skills and assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The process outlined by Braun and Clarke involves six phases, so called (rather than more linear and discrete terms like 'stages' or 'steps') as they are fluid. They are described below, along with an account of the application in my analytical process.

Phase 1: Familiarisation

At this stage, the dataset was reviewed in its entirety to consider the world that is being revealed through it. In practical terms this involved reviewing the recordings and transcripts as uploaded to NVIVO, the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, and making use of the memos and annotations function to record my own responses to the data, identifying issues that I wanted to explore further in coding and build my reflexivity in by considering my own reactions and reasons for them. The familiarisation stage led to the construction of the participant summaries.

Phase 2: Systematic data coding

Here I began labelling sections of data as analytically relevant by linking to the node function in NVIVO. I began by coding concepts identified in chapters one to three, primarily relating to the STF, the treatment of work as calling in the career development literature and the way calling is framed in the Church of England. I structured these within the two systems of the individual and

social/societal/environmental systems, identifying semantic codes based on ideas overtly stated by participants in relation to the structured questioning. From here I began to develop latent codes, going beyond the surface language used by participants to underlying meanings. Spreading my attention across data items returning to earlier transcripts and reusing codes, I worked back and forth to develop a fully-coded dataset. I did this with my familiarisation notes of my reflexive responses to the data, and the research question in mind, so a particular focus on my experience as a career development professional of doing the interviews and on identifying from the stories shared what has and what would further equip and support the women.

Phase 3: Generating initial themes.

From here, I reviewed data items by codes, splitting, merging and linking codes to begin to develop themes based on shared meaning across the dataset. Whilst I paid attention to frequency counts and the most commonly used codes, I focused more specifically on the themes that would enable me to answer the research question. Reviewing the data by codes in NVIVO proved to be a quick way to pull data together as topic summaries, enabling me to see all that was evident about particular aspects of the women's experiences, such as family influence or ministerial vocation. However, my use of reflexive thematic analysis required me to progress beyond this to identify themes with greater analytical power. I began to realise that three broad themes would work well for my presentation of data, enabling me best to tell the rich and complex stories I was privileged to have shared. This also aligns with Braun and Clarke's (2021) distinctive approach which contrasts with other forms of thematic analysis where a theme represents one idea. In this case, many themes and sub themes are likely needed from such a rich data source. In contrast, reflexive thematic analysis involves themes that are rich and complex and multifaceted so not so many are needed.

Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes.

As I continued to check against the coded data, in reference to ideas about potential calling-informed practice, I began to map the dominant ideas together and consider themes that were distinct and bounded as well as related and proximal. I identified three broad clusters that focused my analytical attention on the social system in relational proximity to the individual women, their use of calling to make sense of relational, social and ministerial vocations and their orientations towards career that might inform the sort of practice they would engage with. Some decision-making was needed: for

example, the focus on breaks and space could be seen as an STF process issue, but I concluded was most relevant to attitudes to career in terms of the importance of affirming and normalising non-continuity of career. Considerations of church matters might seem initially to link most with calling, but the connective power of the study was maximised by seeing church as part of system, hence theme one.

Phase 5: Defining, naming and renaming themes.

Following a final check of all the coded data relevant to each theme, I considered the boundaries and names of theme with the intention that even theme names would have impact. The crowdedness of theme one for example chimes with the complexity of each woman's systemic influences and the ongoing realisation that this mirrored the complexity of my own career. I envisage dissemination in my scholarly community as well as my ongoing practice being informed by these themes so wanted to use language that would connect widely.

Phase 6: Writing report

Here I presented an analysis of my themes into one chapter blending verbatim data extracts with my own explanatory and exemplary account to bring the stories in the themes to life, unpicking their complexity and showing where there is both coherence and difference within the dataset in line with the unique experiences of each participant. The analysis of each of the women's accounts of calling across their working and faith lives is related to the research question, thus focusing in on possible ways to equip and support similar women in the future. Following the presentation of themes, I move on to my final chapter where I draw conclusions across themes, referencing back to the literature reviewed earlier and concluding my thesis with recommendations made in a range of directions. In keeping with my AR methodology, the majority of the recommendations are for future action for me as researcher.

Woven throughout: prayer and practice

The diagram at Figure 6 shows how AR is 'a generative, transformational evolutionary process' (McNiff, 2013, p.66) with small arrows shooting off from the main spiral, whilst remaining within scope of the

overall project. As such, I am drawing in this project on ongoing experiences of practice undertaken alongside the data gathering period. These experiences include the following

- An online reflective day for the organisation CHRISM, which brings together ministers who are based in secular employment. Whilst the audience were largely ordained and not exclusively Anglican, I was able to trial ideas and activities to support their consideration of vocation and calling in their own working lives and in the lives of those they meet.

- Regular input to diocesan activities on calling. Whilst these are advertised as relevant to those considering calling in relation to licensed ministries, my session explores calling in its general sense aligned to the ideas covered in chapter three, including discernment of call to all potential vocations: social, relational and ministerial.

- Involvement in the advisory group for the workstream in Ministry Division that followed the 'Setting God's People Free' report and several round table events and working groups looking at how churches and parachurch organisations can support mission in the workplace.

- Spiritual companionship offered to two Anglican women.

- Membership of the General Synod of the Church of England, representing lay people from Coventry diocese.

Fieldnotes taken through all my practice experience form part of my evolving thinking alongside the interviews and informed my analytical processes and the ideas generated. It is impossible to bracket them off and so notes are used to capture those thoughts. However, the core of the analysis comes from the interviews, treating women's experience as the 'source and norm' of (Dickey-Young, 1990) for the theorising whilst also drawing on my wider experience through reflexivity.

A further dimension of the integration of research and practice is my prayerful consideration of the data and positive intent for my participants, seeking revelation of insights from beyond myself (Flanagan, 2014).

This chapter has answered the question, how can I frame an AR project to develop this practice and provided an account of my overall research strategy, justifying a positioning as AR as it presents a segment of one cycle. I have detailed my approaches to data gathering and analysis and paid attention to ethical issues, so that the reader has evidence to support the robustness and value of my findings, which I now go on to present.

Chapter Five: Themes generated from interviews with Anglican women about faith, work and calling

This thesis now proceeds to consider the themes emerging from interviews with lay Anglican women about faith, work and calling. As a reminder, my overall research question is how I can develop a calling informed career development practice for Christian women. As such my thematic analysis is inductive enough to let women's perspectives speak, but also deduces as a practitioner what I could develop and offer in this space. From my analysis, I am looking to formulate a coherent conceptual framework that integrates understandings of calling from both a career studies and practical theology perspective and that can be used to support women with the integration of their faith and their work. Potential components of the framework are drawn from 11 semi-structured interviews with Anglican lay women.

From the 11 semi-structured interviews with Anglican lay women, here I use the STF to form a broad understanding of their career development and integrate this with faith formation considerations. I am considering, from the stories told, how career development activities could be used to support them in ways that also draw on their faith. Whilst it is of course significant that the 11 women interviewed did not come forward seeking support with their career development (rather, they responded to requests for research participants willing to discuss calling and their working life), their accounts of their career development can help me to identify what career development support might be of value to women in similar circumstances. Careful reading of the stories of faith and work have enabled me to generate common themes that could form the basis for developing and trialing such equipping and supporting. From here I can consider the arguments for further equipping and support from either career development or the church as would be possible or desirable.

Here I present an analysis of my themes, blending verbatim data extracts with my own explanatory and exemplary account to bring the stories in the themes to life, unpicking their complexity and showing where there is both coherence and difference within the dataset in line with the unique experiences of each participant. The analysis of each of the women's accounts of calling across their working and faith lives is related to the research question, thus focusing in on possible ways to equip and support similar women in the future. Following the presentation of themes, I draw conclusions across themes, referencing back to the literature reviewed earlier and concluding my thesis with recommendations

made in a range of directions. In keeping with my AR methodology, the majority of the recommendations are for future action for me as researcher to develop, trial and evaluate means of further equipping and supporting. There are also recommendation for other ways women can be equipped and supported by the church and other actors, such as employers and policymakers.

Three themes have been identified:

- It's crowded in here: the complexity of the social system
- Calling as sense-making
- Career 'mindset' ambivalence

Theme One: Its crowded in here

The theme explores the extensiveness of the systemic influences on the participants, highlighting in particular the prominence of the social systems in the accounts given of pivotal career transitions. There are evidently many relevant components reflecting dominant themes in contemporary life, such as labour market change and global mobility. Family is very strongly referenced, from family of origin, particularly parents at the point of early career transition, as well as beyond when caring responsibilities switch to the impact of family creation as adults. This is as pertinent for the single and childless as for those with children, although presenting differently. In each story there is a sense of many moving parts, recursively influencing one another. The Church appears as an aspect of the social system, influencing contexts particularly through interaction with local worshipping communities where faith is formed and lived, as well as serving as the organisational system through which some callings are mutually discerned.

In relation to the overall research question, this theme indicates that forms of career support need to acknowledge contextual complexity and help participants consider the relational natures of their career. The challenge here is to support each participant in positioning themselves where they want to be in relation to their contextual commitments and challenges. This requires care and sensitivity, so as to challenge with respect rather than perpetuating social role constraints and expectations. This theme reflects the challenge that the STF has in being both comprehensive and comprehensible. As a meta-theoretical framework, I regularly find that it is challenging to introduce to people as the complexity of

Figure 1 is overwhelming at first sight. In practice I find a build up approach slide by slide highlighting individual, social and then societal-environmental systems works best.

At any particular point in their career, as described by the participants, in terms of the key influences stated as they were asked to identify an early career transition and a mid-career transition the STF could be used to map these out and explore how they are working together.

In early career transitions, parents, teachers, peers and other social system influences interact with their individual abilities and circumstances in mutually influencing, recursive ways. For example, Jane's childhood desire to go to the 'best' University and her mother's academic pressure for her to study science combined to point towards her natural sciences at Cambridge. For Sarah, the political environment of East Germany and her family's exclusion from some activities due to their faith led to a constrained position which shifted radically on the reunification with West Germany. In navigating this sudden change the influence of her father remained constant. Helen's path towards nursing was influenced both by her practical and caring skills but also her sense of difference from her more academic family and school context, as well as her experience of her father's death.

In midlife, this recursive interplay of the individual system and the context continued. Ada's job changes were largely triggered by challenging working conditions and change processes, leading to stress, but were also enabled by her sharing financial commitments with her husband. Similarly, Sophie's break from work following a very stressful period was made possible by her husband's financial support. Jane's frustration at her lack of career progression came from her commitment to working part time and a resultant perceived lack of progression opportunities, in contrast to her husband's academic career. Pamela, at a later career stage, had reduced her working commitments to care for her mother with dementia. Career decisions were described with significant reference to immediate family context whether support was there or not. For example, Makanaka described her decision to study social work alongside an account of her husband's lack of support for the career move and wider messages from people she knew in the field about the challenges it would present:

> So influence from community which I was in and also I'm thinking for my husband, he thinks it was competition, but it wasn't, to be honest, I didn't want to. It's like I wanted to prove that I can do it and so on, I followed him in but that was not the point. (Makanaka)

In an interesting juxtaposition, Sarah used her single status as part of her rationale for rejecting the possibility of a call to priesthood, a route she thought would be too challenging without a partner's support. In contrast, the impact on partner and children was part of Sophie's reticence about this option:

> It's something that has been on the at the back of my mind, but I just I always felt in terms of my financial situation and maybe also because I didn't have like support from a spouse or something, I just I would need a lot of support to actually do that. (Sarah)

> You know, occasionally somebody mentions the O word. And I say, yeah, not now. Not at the moment. And just because it's my call doesn't mean that you know [husband's name] and the children should have to live in a parish. (Sophie)

Family featured a great deal in the stories, from the impact of birth family, parents and upbringing to new and ongoing family commitments in adult life. Sometimes these were highly significant features of the career history as told and in other times passing remarks which provide insights into lived experiences. The most concrete manifestation was the shaping of working lives by caring commitments. Whilst predominantly for children, wider caring commitments were also evident, from the significance of parental illness on Pamela's decision to reduce hours and Sophie's need for a break from work. Passing reference was also made to mother's and sister's illness (Remi) in determining where support is needed, and from where it can be sought. Makanaka's sister-in-law helped with childcare as her Mum was too ill to do it. Indeed, bereavement and loss featured in some stories too, with the death of her father clearly a significant part of Helen's career journey, and the death of her brother had played a role in Sophie needing to take a break from teaching.

A feature of my online sampling as necessitated by the pandemic was slightly lower than expected number of mothers. However, nearly all the participants mentioned motherhood, even if to make a point about their current childlessness. Tolu and Helen both spoke about potential future childcare commitments affecting their working lives. Sarah, Cara and Nicola all referenced their childfree status in some way, with Nicola in particular seeing acceptance of her infertility as a significant part of her faith journey. Sarah commented as follows:

> But I would not have been able to have an academic career and to be so much involved in church with my reader ministry if I had had children, so I guess it is becomes more complex for women who have children as well. (Sarah)

Some participants found it was harder to identify for themselves the wider societal impacts that affected their career but they were evident nonetheless. Relevant influences included fluctuations in the labour market, employer behaviour, and political change which affects their chosen workplace (for example, expansion of higher education and increased student numbers impacting academic workload).

The range of international mobility across the participants was striking, perhaps in contrast to my own life history. Nicola, Cara, Sarah, Jane, Tolu, Makanaka and Remi had all experienced major international moves and the remainder, with the exception of Pamela, had been mobile within the UK. Many benefits and impacts were shared, such as Nicola's up-bringing in a multilingual environment with a Danish (and German speaking) mother and English father and Remi's experience of schooling in the different cultural contexts of London and Nigeria. Mobility brought some challenge too, such as Nicola finding that having graduated in a different education system from Germany brought some disadvantage in the job market, Makanaka struggling to enter teaching in the UK and Jane reporting that she was unable to work during her family's time in Zambia due to work permit issues. Even moves within the UK had led to some disruption of ministerial vocation. Sophie's official discernment process for reader ministry had been interrupted when her family had moved cities and she had to restart in a different diocese.

Supply and demand issues in the job market had a clear influence on the career management behaviours exhibited. Although Helen had come to England due to a jobs freeze north of the border at the time of her graduation, both she and Sophie were now in the position where their skills were in short supply. This had enabled Sophie to move around the country following her husband's career and gave Helen the confidence to take a break in working, confident that she would be re-employed:

> Yeah, the geographical ability that I can pretty much get a job anywhere has has allowed us to move. You know, has allowed me to move down because actually [husband's name] is quite niche in his in his work. Yeah, he can only work in a certain, you know, few places [city] being one of them, the [region] being another. Um and so. We've we've

> moved with his his job, he's the one that earns, earns more more money, but also because actually I each time I've sort of been ready to to go. (Sophie)

> I said could I get a career break because that's, uh, an obvious thing to ask job stability wise and he said you probably wouldn't get it unless you are going to better the world in some way more actively than making sure that you're a healthy human, then they probably won't give it to you and if we did, we'd give you a very set amount, whereas if you just quit, you know there's going to be a job waiting for you. Like, you know we're not going to get our full complement of band sixes, and you know that we will take you back with open arms and so in a leap of faith I was like "sure, see you later". (Helen)

However for the mothers in the sample, seeking to combine work with children presented some labour market challenges. Jane describes her situation as the mother of primary aged children when she was trying to get back into work having returned from the family's time in Zambia:

> So, my son started reception. My daughter started year three and they settled in very quickly and you know, within a few months I was thinking OK. I could do something now, and I started looking around and it was just really hard to find. I was determined I wanted to work very part time. I didn't want to have to travel, you know, add lots of travel time on. And I wanted to do something I thought was worthwhile and turns out that's really hard and I became very aware that actually, you know if you take maternity leave from a job and then go back to it, you might be able to go back and work part time and have flexible hours and everything. But if you're trying to come in from scratch looking for that, that's really hard and there really isn't much around. (Jane)

This is a very common pattern for women job applicants and career development practitioners often discuss more proactive responses to this common dilemma, as will be discussed below. A further challenge was articulated by Makanaka as mobility, labour markets and caring commitments intersected. Although a qualified teacher in Zimbabwe, once she had relocated to Birmingham, the time-honoured way to gain local experience would have been to undertake 'supply' teaching. Supply teachers are deployable at short notice across wide geographical areas but Makanaka explains why the

combination of unfamiliarity with the area and public transport made this unsustainable for her:

> When I came here I was supposed to be a supply teacher… I got the places for supply teacher at that time I couldn't, I didn't drive and I did register but the places I was getting there were too far and also my younger son at that time was 10. I felt going outside in the area where I live, I couldn't do that too because I had that caring responsibility for the young one. My children were still young at that time. So I decided to take a job which was, which could give me some flexibility in terms of the time I started the time I finished to be back home to be able to be with my children. (Makanaka)

Part-time work was normalised for women with childcare commitments, in line with many progressive policy responses to gender equality in the workforce being about individual women having the right to request flexible working. The accepted position that mothers work part time wasn't questioned and was even endorsed by Pamela, who argued that "to me four days a week is full time when you've got family as well". I noted this use of family to mean 'children' in the intention of Pamela's words, a relatively common trope I note amongst older women who will ask one another 'do you have a family?' instead of 'do you have children?', ignoring the truism that even those who do not have children of their own do indeed have a family!

This is a well-worn argument in research about gender equality in the labour market, and particularly the imperative to retain mothers in the workplace, with many commentators uncritically accepting that allowing access to reduced hours for working mothers should be the main policy response from employers. The more radical arguments that work should be reshaped if it cannot be done full time alongside parenting, and that gendered parenting norms which assume women do the bulk of childcare are heteronormative and oppressive, were not raised by any participants.

The most obvious wider societal impact at the time of the interviews (2021) was the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which had affected not only the mode of fieldwork but the daily lives of participants. COVID-19 had affected jobs, family and church. At work, Helen's nursing work was the most directly affected but Pamela was staffing vaccination clinics, altering her shifts and Makanaka also gave a detailed account of how the pandemic made the context for her social work more challenging. Domestic life

was affected particularly for those home-schooling children and at church participants reported getting involved in new activities in response such as streaming worship.

Other process issues highlighted by Patton and McMahon (2021) within the STF include change over time and chance events. The first of these was highlighted, with reference made to change over time e.g. Pamela commenting that her daughters had much wider career opportunities than she had had; Tolu's perception that the stereotypically narrow academic pressure from Nigerian parents was less of an issue now than for her peers and elders; and Makanaka's comment about paternal involvement in childcare having increased since her children were infants.

In considering the role of the Church in calling stories, a distinction was noted in coding between worshipping communities as an aspect of the social system in which individuals are based and the wider church as an organisational system within which callings are mutually discerned and validated. The majority of participants had been raised within the Anglican Church and all were currently within it, although the breadth of expression of faith found within the Church of England makes it hard to generalise. Numerous expressions of Anglicanism were referenced, a central or more Catholic tradition was evident, with Remi, Ada and Sarah specifically referencing the Anglo-Catholic orientation of their local church. Others had experienced different denominations over the course of their faith lives, with Remi and Tolu particularly discussing the different experiences in Pentecostal and black majority churches. Cara was raised in the Church of Scotland and Sophie spent some time in a Methodist church, but missed Anglican liturgy and tradition, citing "big stone buildings" as central to her sense of home. Pamela even articulated some interest in exploring Methodism in the future. During her childhood in East Germany, Sarah had been part of free churches.

Primarily, church community was described as the site of a ministerial vocation, particularly for those with some formal role such as licensed lay minister/reader (Sarah, Pamela, Nicola, Cara). However, church communities were also referenced as a wider source of support for work. Ada drew on college chaplaincy support during a difficult time at university and has also used church as a way to ease transitions when moving area. Cara described the Anglican chaplaincy as pivotal to finding her feet in Brussels. However, there is a need to be sensitive to context. In a previous church, Ada articulates this in the following way:

> There were a large number of people who are unemployed and a large number of people who employed in very kind of precarious, low paid sort of work, and so. It always felt like it would have been a bit quite insulting, sort of to come in and say, well, my job that pays you know more than 40 grand year is just terrible so you know please tell me how you're coping on minimum wage you know it's just not kind of appropriate to have those conversations. But that did make it quite difficult when things were really bad at work and there was sort of difficulties with you know all sorts of management things that were going on and bullying at work and things like that. Yeah, yeah. (Ada)

Churches tended to be discussed at congregational level, local and social. Here, the impact of working relationships with clergy on calling was evident. Sarah had ploughed a very fertile furrow in a church-based activity closely linked with her professional background, but a change of vicar had deprioritised this in her parish. There were other references from Pamela, Sophie and Ada to challenges when the clergy they led alongside were going through difficult times, changing posts or leading change processes.

Beyond the congregational, there was also a more systemic perspective to take where the Church was considered as organisation, at diocesan or national level as modelled in Fig 2 (with the Church's official gatekeepers taking the place of the career counsellor as expressed by Patton and McMahon). Cara voiced her frustration with the discernment process as too procedural in her tale of considering a potential move from reader ministry to distinctive deacon.

> The previous Archbishop started to consider the idea of ordaining readers as deacons, as distinctive deacons. Yeah, yeah. And I spoke to our two chaplains […] I said wow, if there was anything that I would be interested in, that would be it, because it would absolutely match what I'm doing anyway. And they were like, yeah, this is absolutely for you. We spoke to our Bishop. I just said, you know, we're just raising this. And he was like 'cause he knew me… and he said yeah, I totally see that that for you doing what you're doing you do that. But then when it went into the people responsible for training they were just like no, you just have to apply for ordination like everybody else. And I was like how narrow sighted are we? That we have to make sure everybody fits the

> boxes we've created as an institution. And not follow with the right qualifications and training, what people are already doing. (Cara)

Pamela also made reference to the wider Church and the leadership of the current Archbishop of Canterbury, particularly with reference to the decisions made to close churches during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In discussions of vocation and Church, as identified in *Kingdom Calling* and other documentation reviewed in chapter three, the risk of viewing a calling to ordination as a reference point for vocation was evident. This was mentioned both in terms of participants' own consideration of it, and the wider discussion of calling and the Church. For those who had felt some sense of call from God, whether that was a calling to priesthood seems to have been a question that must be considered. An example of it as part of a personal experience of call from Cara and Sarah are given here, with similar points made by Sophie and Pamela:

> And my faith grew during that time and was very helpful in all the rest of it. But there came a certain point where I felt a vocation. And I wondered if it was a vocation to go into full-time ordained ministry. (Cara)

> So I started exploring what could I do in the church and then sort of people gave me options and what I decided and then obviously some people challenged me and said maybe you should become a priest. (Sarah)

Others spoke of full-time ordained ministry in more general terms as a reference point:

> To me, if you're a vicar then your vicaring is your vocation, but if you're a lay person, then your work is your vocation. (Ada)

Of those who had considered ordination, both Sarah and Pamela had ruled it out but, for Cara and Sophie this was still a possible future. Interestingly in sharing their considerations, the dominant model of full-time stipendiary parish ministry was clearly uppermost in mind, rather than a wider

understanding of priesthood which would leave open ministry in secular employment or other forms of self-supporting ministry.

Theme Two: Calling as sensemaking

This theme reflects the core understanding of callings evident in the dataset and particularly the vivid storytelling and rich and nuanced way that participants make use of the concept to make sense of their lives. Given the context of the research, it is unsurprising that a faith-based understanding is evidenced, mapping onto the more expansive career calling definition with an additional nuance of transcendental summons as divine providence. We see how callings are viewed positively and aligned with contemporary definitions, whilst also being sites of uncertainty, ambiguity, and lack of control. Hindsight offers new perspectives and the dark side is present too, with examples of burnout and exhaustion. Rather than being exclusive to work, calling is nested within a wider project to integrate faith and all life domains, from the perspective of using God-given gifts or crafting towards a faith-based approach to career, as picked up in theme three. This theme suggests there is traction for a calling-informed career development practice, albeit one that can critique notions of calling and hold some of the tensions that emerge. The practice would advocate for integration whilst also prioritising wellbeing and grace.

A faith-based understanding of calling was a significant part of the individual system for the majority of participants and is worthy of specifying. As detailed in my sampling section, the majority of women volunteered to participate in the study in response to a request for interviewees about work and calling. The three black heritage interviewees were identified in different ways, which might suggest they were less primed to describe their work as calling, but the semi-structured interview identified faith-based calling influences nonetheless. Issues of faith and calling were the most dominant codes within the individual system, with other, perhaps more conventional career-related concepts also appearing and interwoven.

In chapter two, the broader definition of calling proposed by Duffy and Dik (2013) which sees it as giving life meaning, having a pro-social orientation and resulting from some external transcendental summons, was contrasted with the more narrow and subjective meaning focused definitions of other scholars (Dobrow, 2004; Wrzesniewski at al, 1997). Analysis of the interviews where participants

talked about their jobs does seem to align with this broader definition, and in particular see the external summons component as coming from God.

The meaning and purpose of the work itself was often discussed in the same terms as the enjoyment of the work, as this quote on nursing care from Helen shows:

> I remember it so vividly, I was looking after long term patient and she finally started doing something neurologically started waking up and I'd washed her hair. Basically had this cracking day at work where I just had like progress and joy and it was lovely. (Helen)

The variety involved in a role was often presented as an essential component of both enjoyment and meaning:

> Yeah, I enjoy it a lot. I enjoy the variety of it. I enjoy working with adults in particular, and although I discovered very quickly that tax law, and those related areas, they're not my speciality and I don't have a background in that at all, but what I've really enjoyed discovering is finding that there are a lot of people who are really passionate about these things and having contact with those people. So some of that passion and interest that they have for these topics that I find really dry actually really motivates me in my work because they're always wanting to explain things to me and I need them to explain things to me so that I can understand, especially for translation work, […] That's very that's very inspiring to see on a daily basis. So even though the subject matter itself can sometimes be very dry and just the environment that I'm in is really quite motivating. (Nicola)

Equally, a lack of variety is associated with reduced enjoyment and meaning, as Ada described a job she was keen to leave behind:

> So practically my time was kind of months and months of just writing software and nothing else. And months and months of just writing text and charts and nothing else. And that was a huge contrast to, you know, working in lectureship roles where there's you know multiple different modules at once and there's research and there's admin and there's lots of other bits and pieces. (Ada)

Variety was valued, and where this was lacking, that led to a need to keep moving, to keep revising what is interesting and enjoyable and meaningful and moving roles if necessary. Sarah's ability to keep moving within her role is contrasted here with Jane's:

> I have conversations with friends who change or with a friend who changes jobs quite frequently and, but she said to me and for the way you talk about your work is like it's different every year and it will because you do have different research projects. And then I mean the teaching. (Sarah)

> My current job, it's you know, it's not uninteresting, but it's not brilliant either. And I find that once I've been in something for a few years and I feel like I've got to grips with it, then I want to move on and learn something. (Jane)

Meaning, ability and reward, however, were not enough, as we might expect with the wider calling definition, where a pro-social component of the role is also specified. Here, Makanaka describes the unfulfillment of a job that can be done with ease:

> My job didn't get any contact with the public. Yeah, it was more of just going there on my computer, print out my worksheet then start working on that. That is, it was like every day you are coming in. That's all you can do. I thought it wasn't, I am not developing anything. I was good at report writing. I was good at my calculations. I was good at that, but I thought hmm it wasn't rewarding for me personally, because whatever the paperwork I sent out in the day, they do whatever the fraud investigations whatever they do, it wasn't like I would know the outcome. (Makanaka)

Contact with the public is clearly key to what would make a job both meaningful and pro-social for Makanaka. The aspect of the Duffy and Dik (2013) definition that requires pro-social motivation for a role, however, opens up a complexity about whether any job can be a calling, particularly if understood as such by the worker, or whether the term is reserved for certain roles and precludes others. Helen

laments a narrow view of calling in relation to its public perception with her example of the pro-social but low status role of the hospital cleaner:

> Like I don't know how many people would say you could have a vocation to be a cleaner. But I've there's someone at my work, who I'm like you are incredible like. A, she's very good at her job, and B she's a great like personality, but there's something more to it than just those two factors or something that she brings to it, a spark and a life that she doesn't think is her own, and I think that's really fascinating, but I think for most of us we tend to think of medical field, nursing medicine whatever, teaching, the priesthood are like the top three, probably not order but actually I do wonder how many people we exclude by that? (Helen)

In contrast, as our conversation touched on the idea of work as worship, Tolu felt that there were roles that could be excluded from the pro-social aspects of a calling frame:

> Um, I have a friend whose a lawyer and sometimes you have to. you have to be… lawyers to people who you're not sure if they're saying the truth or not. I think that I think that's difficult to see that as worship. I think for me as a doctor its almost easy to say. Oh yeah, I can see it as worship, but if I was if I was a financial analyst or something, I'm not sure I would see that, I think will be difficult, more difficult to see that. (Tolu)

A secondary pro-social aspect of calling was articulated by Remi from her work in community cohesion, which she describes as 'humbling':

> …it very rewarding 'cause the work I do is we reward people … I find it incredibly rewarding and because one aspect of my job before was I travelled around the country … trying to get more people involved … and also mainly the BAME community …so it's meeting all kinds of people hearing what they do. It's just such an amazing thing and it really makes you humble and then really makes you question what you do yourself. (Remi)

The third component of calling, the external summons, was framed from a faith perspective, with some interesting distinctions and nuance in considering how that process works; that is how a call from God is perceived. This was more subtle for many than a clear feeling of being led in a particular direction.

Three women, (Sarah, Jane and Helen), point towards calling as they framed their discussion of their own skills in the language of gifts, sacralising them and emphasising their self-concept as being created by God. This was done unconsciously by Jane and Helen, as this example from Helen shows:

> I think that I have a lot of skills and I think a lot of them come from I just like I don't think they're innately mine like I don't think I don't even know how to articulate that better. (Helen)

Remi came close to this in describing her written abilities as "effortless", which led to her interest in publishing and journalism. For Sarah it was more intentional: calling is a conscious means used to integrate her faith and life, linking her desire to use her abilities to her duty to God across social and ministerial vocations:

> The other thing is the concept instead of gifts and skills like if God has given me certain gifts I should be using them. Yeah, so I figured out what kind of jobs in my department would fit with my gifts and skills. And so I organized being the organizer of our seminar series because I'm good at organizing. And the reviewer, did the reviewer job because I'm thorough. Yeah, those kind of jobs that I've taken on I think are in line with my gifts and skills. And interestingly… I do similar things now in the church. Like I organize our theology in the pub evenings. Yeah, they know, or I used to chair meetings a lot in the church, group meetings, 'cause that's sort of in my gifts. (Sarah)

Calling also came with some commitment to work and motivation towards it, in language reminiscent of the Bellah et al (1986) job/career/calling distinctions:

> I see it as getting a salary rather than being paid to do a job. Yeah, I mean, there's a subtle difference, isn't it? You become more flexible when you sort of see it as a salary. I think I don't know if that makes sense to you. Make sense to me. (Pamela)

Stories of calling were presented in their complexity and with some controversy. Cara spent a significant portion of her interview telling the detailed calling story of her route into her current job, a felt sensation coupled with external confirming signs. Sarah recounted a transformational encounter with a Christian friend at university which sparked her interest in business ethics, which has been an abiding focus since. Helen and Sophie described calls to nursing and teaching as young adults, with metaphors of calling included speaking of things having 'clicked', having felt strongly, a nudge, jolt or pull, a pressure of God or being drawn towards. Callings emerged in social, relational and ministerial terms, not just in relation to work. Nicola described having 'unfinished business' in Germany on graduation that led to her return. For the most part such language reflected a reciprocity and mutuality of call and response, although Tolu placed a more passive spin on this: "I wouldn't be a doctor if it wasn't what God wanted". These phrases revealed shifting understandings of God's providence both in general and at specific times in a calling story: such as the stage in a faith journey when "God took charge" (Jane) or the protection sought by Makanaka in the challenges of her daily work: "its in God's hands". Sometimes hindsight was pivotal in identifying something as 'of God'. As Cara said, "looking back now of course I believe all these things were guided by God, but at the time I would not have seen that." But hindsight works the other way too and something can seem right at the time but then with hindsight was not, such as Sophie's step into a management role.

The calling processes described included bargaining with God, paying attention to coincidence, feeling a sense of peace or a compulsion to obey, as these two quotes illustrate:

> I remember it sitting in my flat at the time and feeling the real pressure of, of God on me. To apply for this job. And. It wasn't that I heard God speak or anything like that. It was really that a sense of you have to do this. And I'm not, you know, I'm not letting you not do it. So, I wrote an application. (Cara)

> I applied for a job at Addenbrookes in Cambridge, and I got it and I remember just like I remember on the train back between Aberdeen and Peterborough. And just it was all I could see was Sky. Like it, it's very flat. The fens are just like there's nothing to them. But the Sky was so huge and I felt like real sense of peace. And I really enjoyed the interview and I was like cool. It's good. Good life choice. (Helen)

Having experienced a calling to conservation work that she had latterly been unable to blend with her work availability, Jane linked her lack of work-related calling to her overall career anxieties about her career progression. She contrasted this with her academic husband, whom she sees as clearly called to his conservation-related work, and for whose career they had moved to Scotland and then England:

> you know, I'm not sure I would know a calling if it came up and bit me on the nose. Frankly, in retrospect I can see God's guidance in what I do and (pause) I would like to think of it as a calling, but I'm not sure I do if I'm honest…. ….no, and I think there are some other people, especially my church communication job. I think there are probably people I know in my church who would say Oh no, you're really called to do that, you know, and you've been equipped to do that and you've got skills and the gifting and. You know, maybe they're right. I don't know, but yeah, I find it hard to feel that about myself. (Jane)

However, in relational life domains such as her role as wife and mother she feels more comfortable identifying with calling. This avocational concern for lack of calling, and the positive framing of calling stories by those who had them, does suggest that callings are seen in positive terms, as something it is good to have. Whether this is because it suggests positive dimensions to work (e.g., job satisfaction, motivation) such as those indicated in the literature in chapter two, or a pride in having been tasked by God with a particular role, is unclear. However, callings are also partial and incomplete, and several respondents clearly articulated an 'anti-call': being in a particular place without feeling called to it. Interestingly these were both relational vocations: Helen's as clergy wife and Cara as a single person. This suggests some vestige of an idea that vocational activity should by its nature be fulfilling, and is recognisable through that fulfilment. This is closer to the contemporary end of the spectrum that a duty inspired understanding that Bunderson and Thompson (2009) attribute to Luther.

The retrospective structure of the interviews, asking participants to comment on calling as they narrated their career, revealed further tensions and challenges. Participants articulated feeling called in a particular direction and then, once pursued, finding out in hindsight it is not for them. Sophie uses this justification for her decision to work at senior level in school and then to leave. At a different point in time she might reframe her experience to see herself as called to, through and beyond senior

leadership, particularly if the difficult experience in that role and learning through it becomes a resource she calls upon.

Calling is also temporary and shifting. Some of the challenges of calling are linked to the lack of certainty associated with them. Cara describes the shift between the certainty of knowing she was called to her current job with previous times when "something was holding me back" as well as not knowing what might be next now that such obvious signs cannot be discerned. Callings are uncontrollable and can call you to somewhere you don't want to be (the example given being the Church of England). Remi blamed herself for not having enough faith to be more certain of a very vague unfulfilled ministerial calling to international development work:

> At one point I, I was actually thinking of going into, this is going to sound weird not becoming a nun but doing something for other people I really wanted. I wanted to serve in a mission somewhere, not in this country… overseas, if I could. Something that I felt very strongly about but then. I suppose then life got in the way. I have all these ideas of things I wish I could do, and I don't really do them all and it was that was one of the things, but then I thought to myself, am I really that strong? You know that is my is my Christian faith that strong will I be able to cope because not only will I be doing, you know doing, I don't know community things for them. I suppose another aspect would be I'd have to do religious things as well and I didn't feel I had the knowledge, the necessary knowledge to be able to do it. So that's one of the reasons why I kind of pulled back from it. (Remi)

More positively, calling is an asset in its resourcing and sustenance through difficult times:

> Even in these ridiculous times when my job is just shit and I could think of, idly think about other jobs I could do. I cannot, I cannot picture myself doing any of them. Not because I'm not capable, but because I just don't feel that is where I should be or where I'm being invited to be. (Helen)

The value of calling also goes beyond the choice of work to relate to the way work is done (Jane, Ada) discussed below in the job crafting section, and the ability to express hitherto unexpressed parts of the

self (Nicola). Ultimately, calling is an integrative device that is used to bring together life domains, with Sophie describing her life as "shot all the way through" with and Sarah valuing a way of seeing life as less compartmentalised.

> So for me, this is how I make sense of my vocation in the workplace through this sort of I actually serve God there. Through serving my neighbour. (Sarah)

When participants speak about calling, there are both subjective, discerning dimensions that form part of an individual system and objective, living dimensions that are hard to unpick and are enmeshed in the wider systems. The work as calling theory suggests that to have discerned a calling is connected with personal faith and prayer whereas to live a calling requires divine action to confirm the calling. In reality the stories of calling here show that these are recursively linked. Cara's sense of call towards her job grew as external events continued to connect her with it, such as coincidentally sitting next to someone at a party who worked for the same organisation and the exact form of words being used in two different conversations, one with a friend about deciding on the job and the other with the recruiting trustee.

A final point in relation to the calling literature reviewed in chapter two was the examples from participants who had experienced work related difficulties associated with the dark side of calling: the perfectionism, over identification with work and resultant stress that can make callings unsustainable. The term 'burnout' was used by some participants and described by others. Ada described becoming burnt out from academic roles which led her to get off what she described as the 'treadmill' and take a step down and risk on a short-term contract. Sophie's teaching role was described sacrificially as 'inherently exhausting' and Pamela had left neo-natal nursing describing herself as burnt out from a physically demanding job. Others were aware of the future risks, with Makanaka speculating that her safeguarding role may not be sustainable for long and needing to pay attention to the risks of burnout:

> One of the lecturers at … University, not City where we go and do some of our trainings was saying two years in safeguarding is enough. More than that you can burn out. But I have worked with people who have been safeguarding for 20 years. They are still going. I've been there now

> eight years, so it's OK. It might depend with the personal resilience and how passionate one is with the job as well. (Makanaka)

Ultimately, to frame a working life as a calling can be pressure in itself, as Tolu articulated:

> I put a lot of pressure on myself to think oh I need to know my purpose. I need to know why I'm here. I need to have a plan for my life. I mean, it just feels like, yeah, I had too many expectations. But now I feel like why was I so hard on myself. I could have actually just chilled and enjoy the process, as opposed to thinking Oh, I just need to know where I'm going but sometimes. You just need to enjoy the ride, really yeah. (Tolu)

Work-related calling is nested within a wider theme of the *integration of faith and work.* This is a two-way, recursive process. Most of the participants spoke about how their faith informs their work, but references were also made to experiences of work informing faith, with Remi in particular presenting a compelling argument that her experiences at work had inspired her faith. Participants varied to how clearly they articulated this integration, with some (Cara, Ada, Sarah) able to express a reflective understanding of how their faith connects to all systemic levels and others seeing more compartmentalisation. Whilst some focus on faith as a personal resource, informing the way they work as well as the work they do, others developed this further:

> You know being a Christian at work, it was more than a sense of being a Christian at work in the world. You know, not in work but at work in the world. Showing that the values, the principles, the beliefs of Christianity are actually compatible in our society and can lead to positive structural and systemic change when it comes to issues of radical justice. (Cara)

Pamela was able to describe the 'faithing' process of this integration when her 'world collided' and her new-born daughter was seriously ill. But there were other faith development experiences that weren't necessarily calling or work related for example. Helen choosing baptism aged eight, Sophie and her spiritual experience aged 15 and Jane's conversion to Christianity aged 22.

Two participants, Remi and Makanaka, both black heritage and both working in the public sector, also shared difficulties at work in being open about their faith. Makanaka prays "in secret" for the service users she works with; Remi has had conflict at work in faith-based discussions both with non-Christians and with colleagues in Black Pentecostal Churches who are critical of some Anglican doctrine and practices. In contrast, this was a tension not experienced by white women in the study. Ada put it quite straightforwardly:

> Probably all my colleagues have known that I go to church, and I have a faith and that sort of thing. Some of them have some strong opinions about that, which is fine and I'm happy to, you know, have those entertaining discussions. Most of them probably aren't really very interested in one way or another. And of course, some of them have very strong faith of their own, you know which may be Christianity, but it often isn't. (Ada)

Finally, it is worth noting how faith can be a resource when work is difficult, and Makanaka shared how her faith sustains her when she experiences racism, from service users as well as colleagues. Tolu drew on her understanding of God's providence to come to terms with the disappointment of a particular career option being closed off:

> Hindsight, I see that. Yeah, God had a plan. I couldn't quite figure that out the time at the time I was upset I was disappointed. I was angry. I feel like I wasted my money and time, but in hindsight I think it worked together for my good. (Tolu)

This sense-making theme also provides space for us to explore the process of job crafting. This was discussed in chapter two as a particular approach taken by people to adapting their working lives in response to calling. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) highlight task, cognitive and relational crafting whereas Berg et al's (2010) study of people with unanswered calling distinguishes between task emphasising, job expanding, role reframing, hobby participating and vicariously experiencing. Subtle forms of these crafting activities were evident in the participants' stories, albeit differing in terms of their scope, based on the nature of their roles and their approaches, and their career management behaviours.

Two most prominent examples come from Sarah the academic and Nicola the translator. Academic roles are particularly known for the levels of autonomy and proactivity required to set and work towards a range of priorities. Following her PhD when seeking an academic post, Sarah found a four days per week job, enabling her to have the time to slice publications from her doctorate and therefore build an academic career. She reports that she has now been able to task craft within her academic role and manoeuvre herself into a reasonable position at work in response to her gifts and call:

> I think I've created a space for myself now at (name of employer) where I can do the research I want to do so and also in terms of sort of leadership responsibilities I've taken up. I'm in a really good place. I don't have to do a lot of things that I don't want to do, so.. (Sarah)

Similar crafting at the interface between roles was undertaken by Nicola, who had applied for a 20 hour week role, but when offered it realised that she could not make that work financially. Having negotiated up to 30 hours she works over four days and has the fifth weekday which, as reported earlier, has provided the space for her calling to reader ministry to emerge. Jane also tells the story of returning to the conservation charity who had previously employed her. They were seeking volunteers and she negotiated her way into a financially viable role, albeit at no cost to the organisation.

> And they were looking for volunteers, and I said I'd like to do it for Scotland where we are, but I'd like to be paid. Thank you very much, um, and that conversation developed, and I ended up doing a paid job, but having to get the funding like a mission partner having to sort of get people to support me... (Jane)

This is reflective of the challenges of working in religious organisations and the leverage of calling to extract low or no cost labour that forms part of chapter two's 'dark side'.

More subtle crafting is detectable that might be labelled as cognitive crafting (reframing a way of thinking about a particular role) and relational crafting (focusing on the relational aspects of the role) albeit with a faith dimension where participants are inspired by their faith to think differently about

their work. Jane tells the story of improved relationships at work through the solidarity of industrial action and the chance to hear the perspectives of the academics whose work she supports:

> It really changed my attitude, I felt bad about my previous attitude I'd slipped into, and I want my attitude to be. I am here to facilitate what you are doing to help you stay within the law within the university rules but you know. To work proactively with you. To do that and enable you to do what you do, which felt much more positive than that. Sort of, you know, I'm going to tick you off, I'm going to tell you off for not doing this, or you know, um? And I think that's sort of constant thing throughout life and work. If you like, it's going, hang on. I've slipped into a bad way of doing this. I need to sort of check my attitude and then forward. (Jane)

Further reframing by Nicola has changed her perspective on her infertility. She explains that after the pain of unsuccessful fertility treatment she had heard a sermon that spoke of fertility in general terms as "having a kind of fertile environment around you or being or nurturing, being able to help other people grow and develop, even if not your own biological children". She has found this a particularly useful device in integrating work and faith:

> And I made that connection with my work, certainly. Because that's a lot about what I what I've always done in my work is to help people to grow and develop their skills in English in particular, but being a link person between people who would otherwise find it more difficult to communicate if I wasn't there. So certainly, that sense of nurturing and developing, but also in church. Being part of a community where there were going to be vulnerable people or people who need someone to listen or to be there so that also became very strongly a place where I felt that this 'cause I had to have such a maternal instinct. And then having an environment where I can actually bring that to the people that I'm with. (Nicola)

Cara also crafts her calling into her work by considering the value of the relationships she has at work, focusing on the non-Christians she interacts with beyond her own faith based organisation:

> And that vocation is not necessarily for me about being the most biblically literate Christian or liturgically correct. But being a presence where there aren't usually Christians 'cause there's very few of us are right in this. (Cara)

Theme Three: Career mindset ambivalence

This theme relates to the varying orientations and attitudes towards career evident in the dataset and how these affect the accounts of career transitions. Participants centre themselves to greater or lesser extent in their career stories and sometimes contrast their own view on work with what they see as traditional or worldly understandings of career. Particularly prevalent here is how discontinuous working patterns and part-time working have been significant in calling related breakthroughs. Crafting and integration from theme two are ways in which participants reframe work as a social good beyond their own career fulfilment (or lack thereof). This ambivalence is evident in some of the references made to previous experiences of career service provision. In relation to the research question, this raises a potential concern about how to position a calling informed practice so it appears aligned with the target audience's worldview. Practical advice on liaison with potential employers is one potentially fertile track. That said, the positive responses to other forms of dyadic helping such as spiritual direction and even the interview itself, show a positive orientation towards discussion of faith/work integration.

For chance events, there was not so much an attribution of opportunity to chance as a passivity in some of the storytelling of career change and transition. Some respondents narrated a story that did not seem to have them at the centre, where change happened We can contrast the narratives of Ada, Nicola and Cara, for example, who can present an account of changing roles after a careful discernment of what is no longer suitable about a particular role and a clear sense of what a new job will provide, with more passive tales of moving from role to role seemingly on a whim, being buffeted about by the end of contracts (Jane), employer behaviour (Remi) or response to word of mouth news about vacancies (Pamela).

This reframing has at its core an assumption that for a Christian, work as a social good has a purpose beyond the individual's career, and therefore the assumptions associated with career in chapter one, of ambition and individualism, are to be resisted. In describing her ongoing career struggles Jane criticises

herself for this and says she is "realizing that actually a lot of my worth was tied up in doing a job that seemed important" (Jane).

This perspective on career is also evident when participants recounted their previous engagement with careers services. A few specific comments were made which revealed reluctance to use careers services because of assumptions about the sorts of jobs they broker and the nature of careers work being to endorse particular high status options. Helen spoke of the aspirations encouraged at her school:

> I went to private school in Edinburgh and they do a lot of sort of 'career fairs' [voice deepened] where they try and encourage you to like, you know, be 'aspirational'. (Helen)

And Jane recounted a vignette from her time at university, using a careers service very heavily targeted by large graduate recruiters seeking to attract graduates to corporate life:

> I remember very clearly sitting in the careers service, reading one of those endless brochures from a management consultancy company and or it was some big advertising company. I can't remember company. I remember reading it and suddenly realizing that basically all the text on the page was saying "come work for us. Help us sell things and we'll give you lots of money". I'm thinking. What's the point in that? What? Do I want to devote my life to helping you sell things? (Jane)

This can be looped back to Tolu's view that some jobs cannot be viewed as calling, and other critical comments about ambition and materialism from Remi and Sarah:

> In Germany, I don't think businesspeople are very admired. I mean, as, this kind of thing, you know. If you work in business, you're money grabbing or you're only sort of interested in the material. (Sarah)

Less conceptually damning, but nonetheless, critical comments about careers services are noteworthy, as they may stand between a likely target audience for tailored career calling provision. Pamela

remembers limited help with exploring options and comments that "careers advice from school was sort of teaching, nursing or secretarial. It wasn't very imaginative" (Pamela), and Sophie was also critical of school based careers support being supportive: "he was the one that told me to phone Durham 'cause the careers advisor turned around and said don't don't even bother. They won't let you in with those grades" (Sophie).

There was one positive tale of using a career coach from Ada, who had access to a university-based advisor due to her short term contract, after not being shortlisted for a post:

> I went to see one of the careers advisors and I showed this her this job spec and my application and said you know what? What went wrong? What did I do? And it was actually incredibly helpful exercise. I was really glad I did it, and I don't think I'd be in the role. I mean, now, if I hadn't had that conversation, but it was a really helpful thing, and it was mostly about kind of the difference between academic job applications and other ones (Ada)

This, plus two other points from this theme, however, provide some hope that women like my participants might be interested in appropriately tailored career support from a faith-based perspective. A number spoke positively about their spiritual directors and the reflections on the experience of being interviewed.

Five of the participants made specific reference to spiritual directors and others offering some form of formational and pastoral support. Cara uses the services of a Christian business coach and Helen pays for a therapeutically-trained spiritual director and counsellor that she refers to as her 'wise woman'. For Sarah and Nicola, having a spiritual director came with their reader training and they report finding a supportive, safe relationship that helps with recognising where God has been present, drawing threads together, offering a macro perspective of development over a period of years as well as challenge where needed. These are all activities that could be included in faith-based career development work, as detailed in the next chapter. Nicola notes that from her perspective in considering her calling in the workplace, it is important that it is a lay person and Remi cites the support she gets from her churchwarden, who is a retired civil servant and fulfils the role of 'spiritual mentor': "it's just amazing because I can bounce ideas off him. I talk to him and it's brilliant and he talks to me as well" (Remi). This points to an appetite for working with material from work life in this way.

Moreover, comments made by participants on the experience of the STF based interview show some benefit to taking the time for this sort of one-to-one reflective conversation, which could be enhanced if the focus shifted from research interview to development session. Remi commented at the end of her interview in the following way:

> I was trying to make the connections with my work that I do, and also church…and I was thinking. You know, in my head I was thinking Oh yeah, that's true. You know I did do that and and I did that because of that. So yeah, you made me reflect more. (Remi)

My ability to hold a space for a useful conversation was affirmed by Tolu, who like Remi had been referred by a mutual contact for interview rather than volunteering so had a different perspective on how useful or enjoyable it might be.

> I've actually enjoyed talking to you. Yeah, I think you're a good listener or you you find it easy to get people talking, which is good. (Tolu)

I sensed from some participants a surprise as to the depth and nature of the connections and themes that were explored. When Nicola shared her experience of infertility and Sophie spoke of personal loss, they both seemed not to have anticipated such painful material being relevant to an interview about work. Their reactions led me to check that they were okay to continue and offer some reassurance that personal issues do often arise in career-based conversations. Sophie's response was "I think actually this is come at a really good time." (Sophie)

As well as gathering data for my own research, the interviews had value in helping the participants think about the value and meaning of their work and how this relates to their faith. Lamenting her lack of energy and time for church activities around her work as a GP, I reminded Tolu "Yeah but you've done your worshipping during the day as you were joining in with God in your healing.". Her response gives us a lesson for the church in the messages sent to working people:

> Yeah, I mean I, I think obviously saying it out loud I think. Oh yeah, I should actually remember that, but I don't. It is interesting that even though it's at the back of my mind somewhere, I

> don't actually think of it as worship because I just think, Oh yeah, we need to go to work. And yeah, let's get it going. Well, I don't actually think of it or remember that its worship. But yeah, thank you for reminding me. (Tolu)

A striking finding was how many of the participants spoke of the positive experiences of discontinuity in their working lives as giving them the breaks and space they needed to manage their range of commitments. Sophie was taking a break from teaching at the time of the interview, following a very gruelling period in a senior management role:

> Suddenly like a bolt I just thought I need some time out and I need to go and do something different. (Sophie)

And Helen explained a previous six-month period of not working. There was some recognition that this goes against the norm and is perhaps not aligned with career success:

> I mean to be honest, it wasn't my idea because my pride comes in or my pride at the time came in strongly as in "you would be weak if you did this". However, like there is bit of me that just wanted to not work for a while. Wanted just, I really wanted, so I wanted to learn to drive. And I wanted to go on a silent retreat. (Helen)

However, across the range of participants, there were also plentiful examples of the benefits of breaks from work or space created by reducing work commitments. Sarah managed her transition into academia by taking a four day per week job, giving her time to write publications (technically still working so perhaps not a break!). Notably, part time work was also discussed by some of the childless respondents as a way of make sufficient space for work and life commitments to be manageable:

> Later and then they picked up where I left off just part time I dropped my hours a bit because I wanted to have the capacity to do my job really well and I didn't feel like I was able to do that full time. And it allowed a bit of space for me to do some other things outside of work … (Helen)

This space becomes a helpful condition to identifying and pursuing calling, to be discussed below. As Nicola explains:

> I went down from having a 40-hour week position to a 30-hour week position so I suddenly found myself with more time in the week. I have Fridays off, and over quite a long period of time, I became quite a lot more active in the Anglican chaplaincy here, and found myself being called more and more towards reader ministry and I think very strongly, God was opening a window or a door in having my working life not consume quite so much of my time and energy. That released a load of time and energy and curiosity about other things, and so I've actually just finished my training to become a reader[…]and I think that that was a really massive no, I think that job change was a really, really massive point on that step towards Reader Ministry, because suddenly I had the opportunity to do it, and. Yeah, and I had the curiosity and the energy to do it as well. (Nicola)

This chapter has taken a deep dive into the interview data and drawn themes from my reflexive engagement with the material, linking stories with the key concepts highlighted in the first three chapters, exploring integration of faith, work and calling in the lives of my participants. It highlights the complexity of work-based callings emerging within the wider context of social, relational and ministerial vocations and how the 11 women who participated have shaped their working lives as individuals of faith in particular contexts. From here, I can go on to consider activities that could be developed in the future to equip and support them in leading called, liberated, fulfilling and happy working lives.

Chapter Six. Based on these themes, what career development practice shall I design, deliver and evaluate?

In this final substantive chapter of the thesis I am integrating the literature presented in the first three chapters with the themes of chapter five. Here I will weave together key concepts to develop a framework for future practice and make recommendations to myself and others. I map these against traditionally understood activities of career guidance (SCAGES, 1992) as well as the five signposts for social justice (Hooley, Sultana, and Thomsen, 2017), thus demonstrating an emancipatory intent, and set myself an agenda for the ongoing development of my practice.

A key tension emerged as early as the end of chapter two, where the work as calling literature and its exclusive focus on paid work was contrasted with my preferred wider definition of career: that life-wide, lifelong understanding as articulated by Robertson et al (2021, p. 11). Indeed, the STF takes this wider view in positioning career development holistically. Notwithstanding this, there remains a value in explicitly integrating calling into the STF and the systems-based practice that emerges from the framework. It remains noteworthy that the calling literature explored in chapter two is not included in the review of theories that underpin the STF, which calls into question the respective boundaries that different scholars place around career development as an interdisciplinary field.

It was noted then that calling can be mapped into both individual and social/societal systems. The individual system as shown in Figure 2 (p. 15) does feature both 'beliefs' and 'values', and from the perspective of breadth of definition, this covers all beliefs and values, not just those relating to work. Patton and McMahon (2021) do address spirituality within their work and see it as a "less tangible and more esoteric construction" (p. 78) but urge counsellors to explore spirituality with clients as they use the systems, which includes beliefs and values, to tell their stories. We can also see from systems thinking how these beliefs and values are recursively shaped by and shaping the wider social world, from families and community groups in the proximal social system to wider societal influences. As chapter two ended, the Duffy and Dik (2013) definition of calling as meaningful work chosen through pro-social motivation and transcendent summons is mapped across all parts of the framework: suggesting that a transcendent divine would exist beyond the bounds of the framework. As such, a calling-informed approach to careers work was imagined as follows:

- including space for discussion of personal meaning AND transcendent summons;
- understanding callings as recursive, multiple and multi-level and lifelong, rather than a one-off matching process;
- acknowledging and addressing the potential 'dark side' of calling and inviting discussion of potential drawbacks.
- considering how context might play into both perception and living of calling;
- identifying through lifelong experiential learning, the crafting activities which people undertake when moving towards a calling.

Following a review of work and calling within the Church of England in chapter three, this was enriched with a connection to faith formation patterns and processes (Slee, 2005) and located the Church as site of influence and activity sitting within the proximal social system as well as a wider societal institution. From this wider perspective, the Church's connections with work and calling can be viewed through historical and socio-political lenses, reflecting both neo-classical (beruf) and contemporary (disciple) understandings of call that might feed into what Thompson and Bunderson (2019) label 'transcendent call'. The impact of the Church itself operating organisationally to support mutual discernment of ministerial vocations was also noted. This paved the way for use of STF principles in research interviews with a view to considering how a calling-informed revisioning of the framework could be used in career development practice.

In considering this, given that the participants were recruited for research interviews rather than for career development sessions, I begin by asking myself what career challenges participants had experienced, for which career development support as understood in chapter one could be useful. I find many examples as all the women were reflecting on the impact of COVID-19 at work, the stressful environments they worked in, poor Human Resources practice in their organisations or lack of challenge and progression opportunities in their roles. The interface of care and market work also involved constant sense-making, with Pamela actively rebalancing her licensed reader and nursing commitments, Sarah considering whether her new relationship might see her move out of London and Helen and Tolu looking ahead to potential motherhood. Ada spoke of her upcoming end of contract and aspirations to move to industry. Tolu voiced aspirations to become a GP trainer, noting the importance for trainees from GMH backgrounds of working with trainers who share their heritage,

and Makanaka spoke of the worry of potential burnout due to the pressure of the safeguarding aspects of her role.

Given that the work as calling literature is not integrative enough of a broad definition of career and does not adopt a market work/care work dual perspective and the faith and vocation literature considered is too ministerially focused, I see problems with using either as a basis for considering these issues. However, an STF enriched understanding can be used to help clients to integrate, move beyond what Patton and McMahon (2021) call a "compartmentalisation of their lives" and to better recognize the "themes and patterns that permeate their lives" (p. 502).

The thematic analysis of the interview data underlines this relevance. The theme 'It's crowded in here' acknowledges the contextual complexity of calling and the importance of relational commitments to how they are navigated. Whilst individualised assumptions about career development might indicate an expected focus on individual traits and autonomous decisions, using the STF enables us to view all participants in their contexts. As Schultheiss (2013) advocates, a relational cultural paradigm can be utilised in careers work to positively enable women to identify and overcome any constraining relationships that need renegotiation, as well as enabling connections that could be used. For example, a process of reflection for Jane on her and her husband's work might be fruitful, particularly if she was able to contrast with other women's experiences (such as Helen, Sophie or Makanaka) of the juggling of two callings within marriage.

The calling as sensemaking theme reveals something of the processes involved in calling, with nudges, jolts, senses, unfinished business, unexpected opportunities and perceived pressure from God all made evident. The wider sense in which women were moving towards an integration of their work and faith life is a rich seam for reflection in both faith and career development. A calling informed use of STF could also assist with resolving any career ambivalence, recognising the value of work as well as the rightful place for it across the whole of life. It reveals work as a site of learning and discipleship and place to be the 'sent church', rather than feeling like all worthy Christian activity must be within the gathered church. As some participants began to articulate through their interviews, a systemic reflection on career can facilitate the transformation of experience that underpins experiential learning (Kolb, 2015). The forms of crafting revealed through the interviews are forms of learning and paying attention to these unmasks a faith development process. This reminds us to consider how learning is enabled and supported in the lives of these women. In the policy debates about adult career

development, formal lifelong learning is a significant focus and there is some reflection of this in the data. Higher education was a pivotal experience for all, and for Makanaka with her social work degree, Pamela with her degree level top up and postgraduate training and Remi with her journalism masters, part-time formal adult learning was also a significant part of their story. Others told of the impact of adult theological education such as training for licensed readership too, emphasising the academic challenge. But there are also vignettes which reveal learning to be taking place informally and recursively, intentionally and unintentionally, such as Jane's cognitive reframing from cross-team conversations at work and Remi's inspiration from the community cohesion work she witnesses in her civil service role.

So there is much that could be material for calling-related career development conversations and inputs. However, there is scant evidence of the Church addressing the dark side of a lifewide, social and relational framing of calling along with ministerial vocations. Indeed, contemporary concern for clergy wellbeing through a working culture which normalises long hours could be extended to concern for lay volunteers feeling called to ministerial roles that are unsustainable alongside social and relational commitments, including paid work. Career development practitioners, however, are well placed to explore potential dark side considerations with individuals, probing the sustainability and compatibility of commitments across all life roles. As an example, Pamela's sense of unfair expectations of her time available for reader ministry alongside her working life could be the basis of a discussion about how she can renegotiate this with ministerial colleagues. And yet, of the 11 women, only one as an adult had made positive use of a career development professional (Ada) and others volunteered a perceived mismatch between their needs and career services.

Remembering that informing practice was one of the purposes of the STF as identified in chapter one, this integrative analysis maps well onto the practice dimensions of the STF that Patton and McMahon (2021) identify in part three of their book: connectedness, reflection, meaning-making, learning and agency. Patton and McMahon work through a wide range of implications but most relevant are in narrative career counselling, career assessment and organisational responses, and these form the basis of my recommendations.

Recommendations for practice

The ideas for calling-informed practice generated from this research could be implemented by me, or indeed by other career development practitioners interested in offering integrated faith and career development provision. I now move on to consider how to develop this.

Firstly, a form of *one-to-one practice* which Patton and McMahon (2021) style as *narrative career counselling* could be offered, marketed explicitly to Christian women. Questions remain about how compelling such an offer would be to this group, however, given that the research interviews revealed an ambivalence about career and the relevance and value of career development services. A deliberately integrative perspective would need to be articulated and promoted.

Whilst the interview process did not precisely mirror a career counselling session, there were commonalities between the process and outcomes and what Patton and McMahon describe, with several participants commenting on the value of the experience particularly in relation to meaning-making. Connectedness was developed through the transcript checking process and evidently generated in some cases with women seeking to continue dialogue after the interviews. However, the analysis of a set of interviews was distinct to the research process. To treat each interview or client as freestanding and shift towards having the analysis co-constructed between the two participants would alter the client/participant and the researcher/career counsellor distinction further. In their account of storytelling for narrative career counselling, Patton and McMahon (2021) identify three levels of story crafting questions: at level one, we elicit information and facts; at level two, we focus on connectedness, recursiveness and client's subjective experience and at level three we focus on identifying themes and patterns. Reviewing my interviews, I note examples of both levels one and two during the interviews, however the themes and patterns that I identified, both during the interviews and in the subsequent analysis, were my analysis of the collective dataset after the interviews. On the one hand, this was a missed opportunity as the women could have gained even more from the process than they did if I had moved to level three with them. However, on the other hand, it is vital to remember that this was not what I had invited them to participate in or agreed with them, so would not have been ethical or appropriate. Reviewing transcripts, I note that I could have reflected back themes to participants more clearly and sought their comment. Examples of this include the repeated use of "someone told me" in Pamela's account of her job transitions to explore those work

relationships or exploring Remi's expectations of her employer's behaviour given the repeated examples of poor Human Resources practice affecting her career development.

Patton and McMahon (2021) offer a few examples of narrative career counselling processes derived from the STF that can be expanded to include calling. This develops into career assessment practices such as the My Career System Interview (MSCI). The MSCI is commercially available as a 12 page booklet providing information, instructions, examples, and space to record reflections. This process moves from "My Present Career Situation", where the user reflects on career aspirations, work experience, life roles, support networks, and previous decision making, guided by open-ended questions such as (a) "What career decisions do you need to make in the future?" (b) "What strategies or approaches have you used in your previous decision making?" and (c) "Who has helped you or provided advice with your previous career decisions?". Each of the next four pages of the booklet build up the STF with diagrams corresponding to a subsystem of the STF (i.e., the individual system, the social system, the environmental-societal system, as well as the context of time). With examples of systemic influences provided, users select from them or add their own, thus identifying and prioritising their influences on diagrams. These pages are entitled:

- "Thinking About Who I Am" (the individual system);
- "Thinking About the People Around Me" (the social system);
- "Thinking About Society and the Environment" (the environmental-societal system);
- "Thinking About My Past, Present and Future" (the context of time).

The booklet goes on to assist users in summarising their reflections on their influence, producing a diagrammatic representation on a chart titled "My System of Career Influences." By this stage then the user has constructed their personal STF. Following this, sections on 'Reflecting on my System of Career Influences' guides the user through a process of eliciting meaning and learning and 'My Action Plan' identifies and records next steps. A space for six month follow-up embeds the process.

The MSCI has been under development for over 20 years and by now has extensively trialled in a variety of contexts (Albien & Naidoo, 2018; McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2003, 2015; McMahon, Watson & Patton, 2005; McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2015). Further examples of this sort of qualitative career assessment tools derived from the STF include the Career Systems Interview and career writing tool My Career Chapter (McIlveen, McGregor-Bayne, Alcock, & Hjertum, 2003).

Chapter 16 of the 2021 edition also details a number of quantitative tools, including the Career Development Influences Scale (Bridgstock, 2007) as well as providing a framework for an STF informed approach to using other well known quantitative career assessment tools in an 'Integrative Structured Interview Process' (2021, p. 522).

This consideration of *career assessment* leads onto a further recommendation for the future which is the explicit development of new qualitative or quantitative tools based on the calling-informed use of STF, thus further incorporating work, faith and calling. Language derived from this study could be usefully deployed, such as: I feel drawn to… I feel nudged by faith towards…to provide a grounding in other people's accounts of calling processes. There are some such guides available with a Christian focus, but often using language from particular church traditions rather than across the breadth of the Church of England, and also without the career development perspective. By seeking to be inclusive of people who are not engaged in market work, such resources (for example, Greene, 2014) seems to often miss chances to connect to work at all.

A further option would be develop and offer some *group based activities* such as small group sessions, retreats and quiet days: what might be described as the common 'currency' of Christian spiritual formation support in the Church today. These could offer a mix of teaching and activities including space for prayer, reflection and discernment in supportive surroundings. The group nature would also introduce opportunities to learn from one another and to have norms and assumptions gently challenged by those with different circumstances. For example, Ada's straightforward experience of being a Christian at work voiced alongside Remi and Makanaka's contrasting accounts might lead to some reflections on why these differences emerge. It is about the different workplaces or does their contrasting individual systems somehow play into how others at work view them as a person of faith?

A key decision for any badged activity I might develop is the balance between activity that *targets women* and that which is made available to all. On the one hand, an offer of provision to women exclusively does signify that gender is a factor within the perception and living and calling and that it is recognised and will be explored as part of the recursive unique interplay of influences in any one system. It also makes it easier to highlight that being a woman might not be 'normative' in other resources and sensitises women to that, developing critical consciousness. For group-based activities in particular, a women only space would affect which gendered perspectives might be shared. The danger of this would be that others might make simplistic assumptions about causal gendered

differentiation of calling rather than seeing it as part of understanding complexity in each unique individual. On the other hand, it might be revealing to offer to all, despite resources being based on fieldwork conducted with women. After all, women have benefited for many years from resources such as early career assessment tools that were developed solely with men. A calling-informed STF has potential to be positive for everyone. Engaging men in conversations about gender impacts is key to developing allyship and solidarity and challenging gendered assumptions that affect their lives too. It is also intrinsic to raising awareness with others with more power to give them insights into women's perspectives.

To conclude, my calling informed framework, taking the list from p. 121 in conjunction with the thematic analysis can be presented as follows:

Imagined from the literature	**My practice: in groups and one-to-one**	**Dimensions of the STF process**
Discussion of personal meaning and transcendent summons	Include calling in the learning alliance	• Connectedness • Reflection • Meaning-making • Learning • Agency
Callings as recursive, multiple and multi-level and lifelong (not a one-off match)	Provide possible terminology for the calling process	
Acknowledgement of potential dark side of calling	Probe and challenge sustainability and wellbeing implications of calling across relational, social and ministerial roles	
Consideration of context regarding perception and living of calling	Map personal and work relationships	

Identify learning and crafting activities that move towards a calling	Link to formal adult theological education and informal learning	

Table 4: A Calling informed approach to career development for Christian women

Beyond an explicitly badged career development provision, I can also consider how I can incorporate a calling informed use of STF in other work I undertake, such as spiritual direction and accompaniment. This reminds me to explore connecting systems with pilgrims and question how they see their contexts in ways that encourage them to integrate work, faith, calling and their other systemic influences. To focus on this I might identify myself as a potential companion principally to pilgrims of working age.

Furthermore, a wider range of activities is also available to me to involve myself in that support lifelong learning and faith formation, some of which I already do. This could include preaching, writing small group resources and offering input to vocations programmes. The practicalities and implications of these recommendations will be considered in my concluding remarks.

Comparing these recommendations with wider faith development resources then, I note that they span the three main settings for which Slee (2005) offers principles based on her work on women's faith development. These include formal theological education (which some of my participants have accessed either for personal development or as ministerial training); the wider educational and pastoral life of churches (which all have accessed, includes preaching, liturgy, small groups, and spiritual direction) and purposely created women only spaces (it is noteworthy that none of my participants specifically mentioned anything of this nature.) Slee's (2005, p. 168-181) principles are that such activities should be grounded in women's experiences, create relational and conversational settings and foreground the imagination as well as embracing silence and paradox. As such, from this study I can usefully share case studies of real experiences women have had integrating work, faith and calling. This study suggests that normalising the formative nature of hidden, difficult and personal experiences such as Nicola's infertility and Sophie's break and burnout stories. A career development learning group work facilitation would typically draw on experiential learning approaches and create space for conversation and for participants relating to one another and there is scope for creative and

imaginative activities. Finally, the case studies can recognise the times when language is inadequate and calling is unhelpfully idolised, holding for participants the challenges of unanswered and missed calls or occasions where calls are unclear or absent, and the implications thereof.

Overall, this study shows the potential value of creating easily accessible calling testimonies that reveal the process of perceiving and moving towards a call but do not idealise it. Such testimonies should recognise the complex, transient, risky and unprovable nature of calling and avoid creating any pressure to claim a specific or particular calling. I would seek to offer reassurance that it is just as valid to frame life as 'generally called' or to focus on something else in the relational/social/ministerial range. With the Church's tendency to over emphasise ministerial vocations, I argue that this is particularly needed for lay people and for women.

Finally, for recommendations to myself as a practitioner, this analysis prompts me to consider my own career systems and to incorporate that into my development. My own calling, as well as a systemic view of my work and life, can enrich my own decision making about future activities.

Recommendations to others

Beyond my own practice, the study leads to recommendations *for others in the career development sector*. Some others may wish to emulate or collaborate on the practice delivery ideas above. For others who are engaged in more mainstream career development work, the framework I have built can be a useful resource to consider work, faith and calling integration for all client groups based on the STF. If nothing else, points about career ambivalence reveal potential perceptions of career development work that can interfere with our developing connectedness and agency with our clients. The significance of breaks and space in career development is just one significant example of career development learning processes that a systemic analysis can identify. So, the potential exists for the study to reinforce the benefits of working systemically and therefore benefiting not just individual beneficiaries but all part of the system.

Most practitioners will work with a wide range of clients of any faith or none, and so will need to consider integration of faith, work and calling across a broader canvas than this Anglican focused study.

However, this study proves the relevance of a faith-based lens to the career development of individuals for whom religious belief is part of their interpersonal system and who have faith communities in their social systems and religious organisations and influences in their societal-environmental systems. The emancipatory potential I have demonstrated provides a hook for this approach and a justification to present to practitioners. Arthur (2014) shows how practitioners committed to social justice must be equipped to work at individual, organisation, and societal levels and the STF is helpful in enabling that, given that systems thinking is multi-level by its nature and "broadens the range of intervention options for career counsellors" (Patton & McMahon, 2021, p. 496).

To consider this lens, many practitioners would benefit from developing a greater understanding of theological interpretations of calling to enable them to enter credibly into such discussions with clients. There is potential to extend research into other faith areas and to also consider the interplay of faith and culture, even for those of no personal belief but for whom religious communities have formative influence. In addition, the faith backgrounds of practitioners themselves are influential in both their personal career systems and the therapeutic systems they form with clients. This would make a valuable topic for consideration in continuing professional development and supervision.

Finally, I seek to make recommendations for *others involved in Christian pastoral care, discernment, and formation* in a range of roles. For anyone involved in ministry, the framework shows the importance of faith, work and calling integration for people in the labour market and there are myriad examples of recursive influence that might make those preaching and leading worship consider their impact on the working lives of others. If nothing else, Nicola's reframing of her infertility from hearing a sermon is a powerful example of the impact on another's calling. I also hope that disseminating a study based on the lived experience of Anglican women, I can help people to consider normalised gendered assumptions about career that might slip into their work if unchallenged, such as women working part time or doing the bulk of childcare in traditional family settings.

I can also advocate for these issues and press for others to take them up. As the 'Setting God's People Free' five-year programme concludes (Church of England, 2022) and the vision and strategy for the church continues to develop (Church of England, 2023a), the sought after culture change needs continued emphasis. The published information in the new vision and strategy on support for faith formation and discipleship does show admirable commitment to lifelong learning. Unfortunately, there is a counter pull towards establishing new missional communities which some emphasise as the key to

replacing declining forms of established gathered churches. The creation of new worshipping communities will always require ministerial vocations and often depend on lay vocations in the absence of deployable stipendiary clergy or other resource. If this means people of working age, integration with work becomes a significant issue and the Church has much more to do to emphasise social and relational vocations and to move away from focus on ordination or wider ministerial vocations.

Some might argue that the Church does not make a natural or appropriate site for career development activity and that it is not core to missional activity. However, the counter argument is that it would model a more integrative 'Monday-Saturday' faith and reinforce the church as relevant and contemporary. As a comparable contemporary social issue in 2023, the Church of England has risen well to the cost of living crisis (Church of England, 2023b) but has less to offer for people experiencing the stress, burnout and alienation that we have seen comes from vocational work.

Systemic recommendations

Assessing the comprehensiveness and emancipatory value of my recommendations, here I map them against the broad range of practice activities based on SCAGES (1992) list, as well as the five signposts of Hooley et al (2021):

Informing	Individuals need access to information about job market options that align with perceived calling. Breadth of information affects the perception process.
Advising	Practitioners might offer advice about activities which would support the perception of calling or craft towards living one.
Assessing	Qualitative and quantitative career assessment tools can be integrated into systemic interventions, including those with a calling or spiritual formation focus.
Teaching	All career development work is teaching in the sense that it facilitates learning. However, in a traditional sense this

	might refer to delivering group work activities designed around particular learning outcomes.
Enabling	Narrative career counsellor centres on developing client agency to take action based on their systemic evaluation.
Advocating	Reminding career development practitioners of issues of faith and work for clients and religious organisations of the integrational challenges their adherents may experience.
Networking	Group based activities would support the development of networks.
Feeding back	One to one and group based activities provide multiple opportunities for sharing perspectives that can be useful feedback.
Managing	Managing my own provision and practice and making recommendations to church and other organisations.
Innovation/Systems change	All STF informed activities have systemic change potential. Further development and evaluation of this programme of activities.

Table 5: Recommendations mapped against activities of career development (from SCAGES, 1992)

In relation to the five signposts for socially just career guidance, STF informed practice has a wide range of potential outcomes, not just for those who might participate in activities. An important dimension of the STF relevant to socially just practice is the way it enables what might have been seen as individual issues to be reconceptualised as systemic. In this way it can be used to 'question what is normal' and be used with clients to build critical consciousness and name oppression, particularly in working in the historical and political contexts that are present in varying systems. Some of the recommendations about collaborative working would by definition 'encourage people to work together', but even for individuals, an awareness of the relevance of proximal social systems would foster interdependence. Finally, one of the underlying principles of systems theory is that fostering

change in one part of the system will bring about change in other parts of the system, so any systemic intervention is by definition working at a range of levels.

Conclusion

This chapter has integrated the concepts and findings of the thesis into a practice programme for the career development of Anglican lay women, as befits the AR orientation of the work. Indeed, as the research has been undertaken it has informed my practice in discernment work, spiritual direction and career development. In doing so it acknowledges that there are questions to answer about the coherence and relevance of career development to my chosen group. However, the positive response to my request for interviewees from a narrow subset of Anglican women suggests there is some potential there. The integrated and systemic way I have explored faith, work and calling shows the potential for similar future studies to add to understanding of how calling works for women today.

Conclusion

In this concluding section I review the overall research process which has led to the production of this thesis and offer concluding remarks that will shape further work and dissemination. Structurally, I adopt the same section headings that were used early in the chapters reviewing relevant literatures.

Key concepts and features

As a practice-based piece of work, the thesis demonstrates how AR can be used as an organising framework even when circumstances prohibit a complete cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. In one sense, the acting resulting from my recommendations are what will need observing and reflecting upon. And yet the changes that were made to the overall project proposal at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic enabled a much deeper review of relevant literatures across a broader landscape and a depth of insight from the semi-structured interviews. The narratives therein explore how the participants tell their story, constructing meaning from their experiences, and this aligns well with the constructivist and social constructionist turn in career development theory on which the STF is based. At the same time, my practice has continued as per the whirlwind and offshoots in figure six, and the ideas developed have informed this.

The thesis is original in that the interdisciplinary nature of career development scholarship and practice is extended to include practical theology and the particular activities of the Church of England in relation to work and calling. The identified and recommended approach to integrating calling into STF based career development practice makes a new contribution to the field.

Is it for everyone?

I have made a consistent argument for inclusion, from the widest definition of career as encompassing the whole of life, not just 'market work' to the centrality of the 'general call' to people of faith who might not have discerned any particular call towards a form of work. However, in my sampling I have come up against age-old challenges for both the Church of England and career development work in reaching a widest population. The educated profile of my participants and the lengths that were

needed to explore the experiences of women of diverse ethnicities reflects concerns that the Church of England remains predominantly middle class (Cullens, 2019) and institutionally racist (Church of England, 2021).

One of the barriers to inclusion or continued participation in the Church of England for those from UKME/GMH and other backgrounds has been the challenge of "cultural assimilation" into the Church, where there is perceived to be little or no room for cultural expression outside an environment which is predominantly white and middle class. Given the class concerns of careers work anyway, there is a danger there. After my COVID-19 induced sampling issues I would need to trial activities in a deliberate range of contexts and make sure I am including woman outside professional circles.

There is also further work to be done in analysis of the interview data gathered from the three women of GMH. The comments made about expressions of church and the tensions experienced at work and at church are worthy of further analysis and consideration with the support of a more detailed consideration of a wider literature than was in scope for this study. In particular, the interplay of historical and political influences as mapped by the wider societal-environmental system of the STF can be a useful analytical device in considering tensions between Black Majority Churches in the UK and the colonial origins of the Anglican Communion.

What about women?

The study has value in that it gives rich and deep qualitative insights into the experiences of a particular group of women involved in the Church of England from a different angle. They are not engaged in priestly ministry, not younger (Morgans, 2020) not older (Day, 2017), not all mothers, nor playing any other role within the Church. In addition, as noted early, the voluntary input of lay women is critical to the Church of England's new vision and strategy's focus on new worshipping communities, so it is important that their lives are understood.

Questions remain, however, from the literature reviewed and from the diversity of the women interviewed, about the benefits and pitfalls of a women-only approach. After all, the main settings for women only teaching in the Church are places where a complementarian theology would necessarily limit the range of a woman's potential call. The literature and data both tell us that social relations are pivotal to working and faith lives and yet it is reductive and essentialising to then declare that 'women's

working lives are more relational'. The more nuanced approach of Richardson and Schaeffer (2013) in promoting the market care work dual approach for all genders is to be commended.

What does practice look like?

The recommendations for practice range across a variety of delivery contexts, from those occupied by other career development practitioners working with clients of faith, to my own (largely *pro bono* independent practice, church and para-church contexts and teaching) role. Recommendations extend to the Church of England and other faith-based organisations whom I am inviting to think about how these ideas can align with their own vision and strategy. Church as a community can be a fruitful context for career learning, along the lines of Thomsen's (2012) research, and is a way of providing access to career support in contexts where people will have the added benefit of "knowing they are not alone." (p. 216).

Emancipatory potential

The thesis has linked the STF and its potential for life-wide integration to a socially just approach to career development work and shown how it can form part of more radical and progressive practice. However, we have also seen how the dark side of calling presents traps, and that the Church colludes with these in its over emphasis on ministerial callings. Calling informed career development work can challenge this by opening up space for individuals to recognise and address potential dark sides.

Returning to Blustein et al's (2005) challenge in chapter one, the thesis works inductively, starts from the bottom and incorporates advocacy and activism. According to Hooley et al (2021) the research sees me, researcher, educator and practitioner working at a range of levels. According to the STF, the primacy of the individual as career actor and agent must not be lost, all the time recognising that the interplay with context will be explored through meaning making. According to Watts' (1996) four box model, this research therefore operates at both individual and social level, and therefore has both progressive and radical aspects to it.

How does this relate to me?

Finally, the thesis has been a significant step in my own career development, as a scholarly process as well as supporting my emerging practice. As an interdisciplinary piece of work, it has shifted and changed according to the sometimes conflicting identities of the composite perspectives on enquiry. I have felt like a theologian in career development communities and *vice versa*. This dual identity has seen me adopting a challenging and occasionally prophetic role and holding this breadth together has required resilience.

There are many ways these ideas can be developed. However, a critical dimension will be managing my own wellbeing given that the Church is unlikely to pay me for this and so I would run it alongside a full-time job. Further, having emphasised the importance of reflexivity, I need to take the medicine, to continue to consider my calling, avoid dark side traps and nurture my faith. A part of this will require me to consider the balance between scholarship, teaching and practice and how closely to the centre of the church I want to operate.

Reflecting on my own calling, I believe I was called into careers work on the basis of its congruence with my particular gifts and abilities, as well as by paying attention to the pathway that emerged for me at key points, leading to my first appointment as a careers adviser in 1999, progression to management in 2002 and move to an education role in 2010. I can also see how at key points in my life I have either resisted or embraced a call towards theological study, and this can be integrated with my journey of faith formation. This has led me more recently on a path to integrate practical theology with career development in projects such as this thesis. However, at aged 51 with 10 to 15 years of working life ahead of me, I am primarily concerned with potential impact on my scholarly field of career development and want to focus on that rather than oscillate between the two spaces. To run the range of activities I have identified alongside a full-time academic job is unsustainable and I must discern if, when and how to blend new ideas into my work. My own system too is crowded, and the sensemaking process continues.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Research Ethics Approval Form

Ethical Approval

For PhD, EdD and

Masters by Research Students

All research undertaken by the students and staff within CES must conform to the University's ethical guidelines. There are separate procedures for staff and students.

All students receive training in research ethics and are required to complete this form before undertaking research, including small projects, dissertations and theses as appropriate. Ethical approval should first be sought early and certainly before any fieldwork. For doctoral students a completed ethical approval form should therefore accompany your upgrade paper.

The completion of the form is an opportunity to discuss ethical issues with your supervisor/tutor and is intended as a learning exercise as much as an administrative process to ensure compliance with CES policy. Your response should be detailed but not overlong. For example, in writing about your methodology you do not need to rehearse the rationale of your research but be specific about the steps you are taking. And if the bulk of your data collection consists of interviews with teachers, explain whether these interviews will be semi structured and whether they will be undertaken in home or school contexts. In writing about confidentiality, explain that you will be using codes but explain that your list of names of interviewees will be stored in a separate physical location. In writing about competence explain which courses and programmes you have attended but ask yourself what will you do when faced with the unexpected. And In writing about integrity go beyond explaining that you will follow recognised procedures in terms of data analysis and consider how you can avoid reporting in ways which are judgemental and / or discriminatory.

Many education students are carrying out projects which, on the face of it, do not pose strong ethical dilemmas. But think this through carefully. In particular consider *what might happen* and how you would deal with it. For example, what you would do if:

- in the course of an interview about CPD, a respondent tells you about how another individual is bullying him or her
- you are observing a class and you feel that there is a health and safety issue arising
- an interviewee is visibly upset about something that has arisen earlier at work and cannot stop crying
- you are being pressured by a sponsor to present that organisation in as positive light as possible

You should complete this form, sign it and have it countersigned by your tutor/supervisor. The form should then be returned to the Research Office (C1.10) for processing.

The form will then be reviewed by the relevant member of staff. The proposal may be approved, approved subject to minor amendments, or declined. The form will then be returned to the Research Office for recording and then returned to the Course Administrator who will report the outcome to yourself and your tutor/supervisor. If any changes are required you should undertake these **in consultation** with your tutor/supervisor. The form should then be resubmitted to the Research Office, when it will be reviewed.

Further Guidance

Further guidance and support is available from the University's website:
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ris/research_integrity/researchethicscommittees/

Your bench mark for educational research is the code from the British Educational Research Association:
https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018

Similar advice is offered by subject bodies such as British Psychological Society
https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated%20July%202018%29.pdf

And the British Sociological Association:
https://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf

Application for Ethical Approval
for Research Degrees
(PhD, EdD, MA by research)

Student number: 1038153

Student name: Gill Frigerio

PhD ☐ EdD X MA by research ☐

Project title: How can career development and theological perspectives on calling be used to equip and support Christian women in their working lives?

Supervisor: Leslie Francis/Ursula McKenna
Funding body (if relevant):

Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.

Methodology

Please outline the methodology, e.g. observation, individual interviews, focus groups, group testing etc.

This doctoral project is being conducted using action research. I am a practitioner in my field of study in that I work in career development and am also a discernment adviser and spiritual director, supporting individuals and the church with the discernment to calling to licensed ministry.

In respect of the cyclical nature of action research, I am beginning my fieldwork with a series of semi-structured interviews with Christian women. Due to the Coronavirus outbreak I will be doing these remotely, using Skype and recording technology, as I did for my ARM2 assignment. For this previous work I interviewed one lay and one ordained woman. However, I have decided to focus on lay women working in secular contexts, so as to focus more deeply on the connections between their faith and secular work.

It is intended to invite contact from lay Anglican women doing paid work working in secular contexts and who are interested in discussing calling via a snowball sampling method. I will begin by approaching women I know from my own networks and seek referrals from them. I will endeavour to ensure some diversity of class, race and marital and maternal status using purposive sampling. If necessary I will advertise via social media.

Contact with potential participants will be followed up with a telephone conversation during which a scheduled online meeting will be arranged. Before the meeting the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix A) will be emailed to the potential participant. This will allow potential participants to withdraw in an informed way from the process prior to the meeting, or equip them to ask informed questions via email prior to the meeting. If agreeable, the potential participant will then be invited to confirm their participation and return a signed consent form via email. (Appendix B).

The first six agreeable participants will constitute the research sample.

A date will be confirmed with each participant for the main interview. It is anticipated that the interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

The interview will be semi-structured and in three parts:

- the first part of the interview will be to construct and consider a timeline of their participants working life and their faith development. Participants may have prepared this in advance having read the participant information leaflet. These two interwoven timelines will be documented and points of connection and divergence considered.

The second part of the interview will use the Systems Theory Framework of Patton and McMahon (2014) to explore influences that participants are able to identify on their lives from within the individual, social and societal-environmental systems. I will prompt for

- Work and non-work related callings

- The process of hearing a call
- The shift to acting on a call
- The role of other people in both hearing and acting on a call
- Other relevant factors in that shift (individual, social and societal)
- Barriers to hearing a call
- Unfulfilled callings
- Problems arising from calling
- Change over time

Finally I will ask participants what sources of support in terms of working life and calling they have drawn on or what they would value in the future.

After the interview I will make field notes looking at:

- How the interviewee seemed to experience the interview
- My own emotional responses to listening prayerfully
- Ethnographic detail about the interview such as location and visible clues, where the respondent was going next, any interruptions (Merrill and West, 2009)

My intention in using individual interviews with a small group of participants and a qualitative methodology is to provide narrative depth that can be drawn on throughout the action research cycle to inform design and delivery of a bespoke intervention.

The resulting recorded conversations will be analysed for key themes, especially those pertinent to a discussion of the value of the Systems Theory Framework in understanding women's calling and working lives. The results will be presented and discussed in the thesis.

These interviews will inform the design of a further intervention such as retreat, course or quiet day to resource women in work. The design process is also part of my research. In line with the slightly messier interpretation of action research outlined by McNiff (2013:66) and described as a 'generative, transformational evolutionary process', where the spiral of action and review has multiple offshoots and inputs (see fig 1), I will also draw on my ongoing practice to inform my work. For example, issues of work and call arise in my regular spiritual direction and ongoing discernment work. Here I may take two courses of action. 1. I will make and draw on ongoing fieldnotes in a research journal. 2. I will invite directees and advisees to also be research participants, drawing them into the informed consent process.

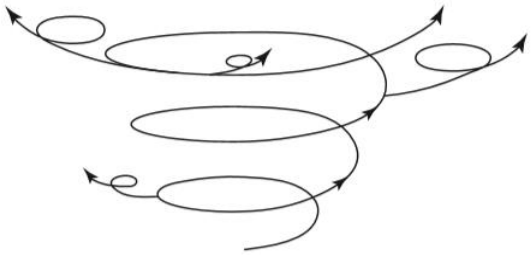

Fig 1: Action research as generative, transformational, evolutionary process' (McNiff, 2013:66)

As an example of sources outside the codified cycle of AR, I am currently preparing an online retreat for the organisation 'Chrism' (Ministers in secular employment) to be run in July 2020. Whilst this group are a specific group of ordained ministers and therefore out of scope of my study, the material is likely to overlap with the intervention I design, and therefore my fieldnotes and their responses to the material are of relevance and interest.

In order to draw these responses appropriately into the study, I have made clear in the pre-publicity that I am doctoral student and that a consent process will be in place for them, also stating that not wishing to be part of the study is no barrier to participation in the event.

Participants

Please specify all participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. children; as a result of learning disability.

Participants will all be adult Christians. The majority will be lay Anglican women, aged roughly 40-55, and it is not anticipated that there will be any particular vulnerabilities.

I will also draw on other sources such as my experiences of spiritual direction and teaching of career development in relation to vocation and calling.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

My career development practice has a person centred basis and I will carry this in to my research, respecting the fundamental dignity of each person and their views and keeping their views confidential.

Privacy and confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

Protecting privacy and confidentiality of participants is part of my professional practice both in the University context and in the Church context. It is part of the code of ethics of the Career Development Institute to which I have worked for over 18 years, my practice as a teacher and also as a Discernment Adviser and Spiritual Director.

Participants who are interviewed at stage one of the action research cycle will be invited to choose a pseudonym which will be used throughout transcription, analysis and writing up. A document matching real identity and pseudonym will be kept in my OneDrive directory which is password protected. The pseudonym and interview date will be the only identifying feature on the recording filename, and if recordings are sent for transcription by a private transcriber from a list approved by the University's Information and Data Compliance (IDC) office, they will not have any identifying features of the participants. Consent forms with this information will be stored at my home and the transcripts and recordings kept in my work space for 10 years. In both cases this will be held securely, on a password protected online space or in a locked cupboard accessible only by me. After 10 years it will be securely destroyed or deleted.

Consent

How will prior informed consent be obtained from the following?

From participants:

When I approach participants to make arrangements for interviews, I will send in advance a copy of my participant information sheet to consider.

From others:

The contact with the Chrism committee has agreed from the outset that my research be woven into the weekend and that this is my main motivator for offering my time and expertise to their group on a voluntary basis. Attendees will be notified via my biographical details that I am a current student working on this doctoral study. In the opening session I will explain the way that data will be used (e.g. fieldnotes, images, evaluation forms) and give people the opportunity to exclude themselves from the

study. Written evaluation forms will have a bespoke statement to inform consent with a tick box. These forms will be agreed with my supervisor before their use.

The event for women that I design as a result of the interviews will be clearly labelled when advertised as connected with a doctoral research study and consent sought as part of the sign up process. I will seek the appropriate ethical approvals at that point.

I am trained and experienced in conducting one to one interviews in a variety of contexts as well as designing and delivering group based learning and formational activities. I also teach and supervise masters level practitioner research so have understanding and experience of action research and analysing qualitative data. I have some experience of conducting qualitative interviews for previous research undertaken (Frigerio, 2010; Frigerio 2011) and have participated in the Centre for Education Studies Advanced Research Methods training.

I am also am experienced career coach and spiritual director which gives me a good understanding of one to one interactions and creating a safe environment in which people can speak openly.

For these interviews there is something of a parallel between coach and researcher, client and participant. I believe this will assist in terms of establishing rapport, showing empathy, listening carefully to what is said and not said, gently probing when necessary and managing the time. However, a critical distinction between a research interview and career coaching conversation is that the latter is usually built around a stated issue brought by the client rather than the coach. The coach may well end by encouraging some reflection and action to resolve an issue brought up by the client. I will be attentive to any bleeding into career coaching that may occur during the interviews. Talking about something as personal as calling may well lead participants to identify issues that they would benefit from trying to resolve. In this case I will consider an appropriate response, maybe offering career coaching at a further time on a pro bono basis or referring to other sources of support, so as to not leave needs unmet.

Protection of participants

How will participants' safety and well-being be safeguarded?

The interviews will be at a time of the participants choosing. They be assured that at any time they can withdraw from the research. Participants will be told that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure anonymity and that all data will be held in strictest confidence. Participants will be advised that the researcher is familiar with the ethical code of conduct as outlined by the British Educational Research Association (https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018) and is subject to the ethics procedures of the University of Warwick).

There is a small risk that the issues discussed will trigger emotional responses in participants that might lead to feelings of sadness, regret, anger or distress. I will draw on my professional training to handle this skilfully and sensitively. For example, in a one to one interview, I will pause the recording and offer the interviewee space to compose themselves before continuing or if necessary abandon the interview altogether. I will be sure to follow up with interviewees in following days and have sources of support I can offer to them.

These risks are particularly acute at this time of global pandemic. Participants may be under stress due to self isolation, concern for loved ones and general anxiety. I have contemplated pausing my studies at this time, but decided on balance that it is appropriate to continue. However, I will mention the Coronavirus outbreak in my communications to participants so that they know that I am aware there are unusual pressures on everyone and particularly emphasise their ability to withdraw at any time. I will also acknowledge this through the interview as the current situation may well be raising existential questions for participants in terms of faith, mission, work, calling and caring. It would be remiss to ignore this in my study. However, by asking about people's previous life experiences my research focus and question still stands.

In keeping with the emancipatory underpinnings of my research, in speaking about their sense of calling it is the intention that there will be a positive benefit from narrating their own experiences. Should this include revisiting some difficult experiences such as confusion or job loss/rejection I would aim for the contributing of difficult experiences into research to be helpful and cathartic in making meaning from the experience itself.

Child protection

Will a DBS check be needed? Yes No X (If yes, please attach a copy.)

Addressing dilemmas

Even well planned research can produce ethical dilemmas. How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research?

Dilemmas that I can anticipate include discussing my work with others who know the participants in my practice world and in particular the relatively small world of scholars with my particular interests. I will ensure that biographical identifying details are kept to a minimum when writing and discussing my work.

Further dilemmas that I have not anticipated which may arise will be discussed with my supervisors along the way. If needed I will seek advice from the University ethics committee if necessary, and act accordingly.

Misuse of research

How will you seek to ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

I have no sponsor and no constituency to satisfy other than the research code of practice of the University of Warwick. I will aim to design, produce and disseminate work of the highest quality and ethical standards. It is my intention in relation to this research to publish in peer-reviewed academic and professional journals or similar media.

The research and evidence collected will be driven by clearly planned research aims which have been formatted in consultation with my supervisor, Leslie J Francis, and will have been approved prior to commencing data collection. The data will be kept in a secure database and no one other than the researcher and supervisor will have access to the research and the evidence resulting from it.

I shall be the only one interpreting the evidence. Only myself and, if necessary, my supervisor will have access to the data.

It will be publicly available only in restricted formats, such as the thesis and peer-reviewed academic publications.

I will seek feedback through regular supervision and presentation of findings and data at seminars, conferences, and symposia.

Support for research participants

What action is proposed if sensitive issues are raised or a participant becomes upset?

As discussed above I will pause or abandon the interview and offer pastoral support plus other sources of support. Once the moment has passed I will ask the participant for their view on whether they are able to continue as a participant. The balance to be sought is between safeguarding the participant and authentically researching the lived experience of my research participants.

Management of your data

Who will have access to the data?

I will be looking for technical solutions to produce transcripts of my interviews in a time efficient way. If this is unsuccessful and I need to pay for transcription services, then recordings will be sent through secure file transfer to approved transcribers with only pseudonym and interview date as identifiers. I will use a transcriber with whom the University has a data sharing agreement in conjunction with Information Data Compliance.

Only my research supervisor and I will have access to the raw data. The dissertation will be read by my supervisors and examiners.

How and where will the data be stored?

Data will be stored both on my personal encrypted hard drive, which is password protected, and on the Microsoft OneDrive service, which is fully encrypted, and password protected. Any email communications will be made through my secure university email address. Hard copy, anonymised transcripts will be stored at my home for 10 years.

For how long will the data be kept?

Consent forms, recordings and transcripts will be stored electronically in a password protected One Drive space for 10 years.

Integrity

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

My research strategy includes recognition of my own positionality in this field and this will inform my analysis and presentation of findings, so as to minimise bias. In addition, the emancipatory principles of action research and feminist standpoint I bring to choosing this field of study mean that I am researching with and for my participants and seeking to produce something of value to Christian women. This orientation is built on my respect for participants.

I will ensure this: firstly, by scrupulous recording of the data and, in the results and discussion, staying in disciplined engagement with the recorded and analysed data; secondly, honesty and respectful fairness are required by my own professional code of ethics (the Career Development Institute) as well as by the university code of research ethics; and thirdly, by regular review with my supervisor.

I will ensure the integrity of the research by following carefully established research methods in a professional way, which is balanced, objective and also respectful to the diverse beliefs and values of the participants. I will also ask the participants to check their transcripts to ensure that I have not misrepresented their views or misheard.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?

I will be sole author of the majority of publications arising and will keep my supervisor informed of these. I am aware of the important dialogue between supervisors and doctoral candidates on the intellectual properties of originality and creativity. The two supervisors and I have agreed to discuss this issue fully should any joint-authored publications arise from my research.

Other issues

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.

References

Frigerio, G. (2010) *Narratives of Employability: Effective Guidance in a Higher Education Context. A qualitative evaluation of the impact of guidance.* Coventry: University of Warwick.

Frigerio, G. (2011) 'Reinventing Careers: Creating Space for Students to get a Life', *The NICEC Journal*, Issue 26.

McNiff, J. (2013) *Action Research: Principles and Practice.* London: Routledge.

Merrill, B. & West, L. (2009) *Using biographical methods in social research,* London: Sage.

Patton, W. & McMahon, M. (2014) *Career development and systems theory: connecting theory and practice* (3rd edition) Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense.

Signed:

Student: [redacted] Date: 5/3/2020

Supervisor: Date:3/3/2020

Appendix B – Participant Information Leaflet

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title:	Calling and Career Development: Equipping and Supporting Christian Women in their Working Lives
Researcher:	Gill Frigerio
Research Institution:	The University of Warwick

Introduction

You have been invited to take part in a one to one interview as part of a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Overview of the Study

I am working on an action research project for my Doctorate in Education that will identify ways to equip and support lay Christian women in their working lives, particularly in integrating this with their understandings of calling and career.

At this stage I am seeking to interview a small number of lay Anglican women who are employed in secular workplaces. I am interested in hearing about the history of your working life, what has influenced key decisions and also how you understand your sense of Christian call.

I had planned to conduct face to face interviews but in the current global pandemic context have decided to conduct online interviews. I have done this for previous studies and found it successful.

Your Participation

It is entirely up to you to decide if you are happy to participate. I will describe the study in an initial telephone call when we go through this information sheet, which is yours to keep. If you choose to participate, I will ask you to sign the consent form attached to this Information Sheet and return it to me via email.

You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and this will not affect you or your circumstances in any way.

If you are happy to take part and sign the consent form attached to this sheet, you will be invited to connect with me via Skype for a one to one 45-60 minute interview. Please log in from at location with a good network connection and where you will not be interrupted. I will provide some questions for you to think about in advance if you wish to. The interviews follow a semi-structured process, with the interviewer making notes and the session audio recorded. All responses will be anonymised.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be maintained at every stage. I will not ask you embarrassing questions. I will ask you to complete a separate profile sheet, outside of the interview, to record your age; gender; educational background and ethnicity. I will also ask you to choose a pseudonym that will be used throughout the study.

All interviews will be conducted in confidentiality, and interview transcripts, completed questionnaires and published reports will not contain data that will allow individuals to be identified.

All transcripts, recordings, notes and data of interviews and questionnaires will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, only accessible to myself, in a locked office.

All information gathered will be treated as confidential and will only be accessible by myself, my supervisor and examiners. The anonymity of participants will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms during data analysis and reporting. Data will be stored on my personal encrypted hard drive, which is password protected.

I am familiar with the ethical code of conduct as outlined by the British Educational Research Association (https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018) and this study is subject to the ethics procedures of the University of Warwick.

Any possible risks or benefits to participants

It is not expected that participants will become distressed by the research. You may withdraw from the research at any time.

I hope and expect that the experience will prove beneficial to you as you reflect on your experiences of work and understanding of Christian call, and may influence how your approach faith and working life in the future.

Complaints

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to my supervisor:

Professor Leslie Francis

University of Warwick, Gibbet Hill, Coventry CV4 7AL

Email: Leslie.Francis@warwick.ac.uk

Further Information

If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, or your participation in it, not answered by this participant information sheet, please contact me on 024 76528158 or by email g.frigerio@warwick.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet.

Appendix C Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

An information sheet has been made available to you. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of this please contact g.frigerio@Warwick.ac.uk or speak with me before you start the interview.

Please tick against your answer to the following questions and sign at the bottom of the form if you are happy to proceed with taking part in this study.

I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information.

Yes ☐ No ☐

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

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to the interview being electronically recorded.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to allow anonymised verbatim quotes to be used for the purposes of reporting.

Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to take part in the above study.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Signature _____

Date of Signature _____

Full Name _____

Email Contact _____