An Institutional and Status Analysis of Youth Ministry[1] in the Archdiocese of Detroit

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Abstract: This study finds that a weak institutional infrastructure of youth and young adult (YYA) ministry exists in the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit (AOD). This helps to explain why there is a disconnect between the Archdiocese proclaiming YYA ministry as a top priority since 1995 and youth ministers self-reporting that they feel like second-class citizens. Moreover, this disconnect is occurring in an increasingly social context in which the current generations of young Catholics are participating less in their faith than previous generations. Interviews with 44 youth ministers and 12 pastors reveal details of this disconnect between archdiocesan *policy* which states YYA ministry is a top priority and the *practices* of the archdiocese which indicate otherwise. Youth ministers are marginalized workers who feel insecure about their employment, causing many to obtain second jobs or routinely search for better employment. The sociology of organization literature, particularly the concepts of decoupling and social status are discussed to help explain this disconnect. Data are interpreted and the conclusions made that ecclesial officials take youth ministry for granted and that a weak institutional infrastructure of youth ministry continues in the AOD.

Keywords: institutional infrastructure; social status; decoupling; marginalized workers; policy *vs.* practices; NONES; lay ministry; youth ministers

1. Introduction

Studies have found the Catholic Church to have a weak institutional infrastructure for youth and young adult ministry (YYA). This research investigates a specific case study of the Archdiocese of Detroit (AOD). The purpose of the study is to collect interview data from youth ministers and pastors in order to understand infrastructural issues from their perspective and then analyze the data through the application of social theories. Institutional and social status theories are applied to the case in order to elucidate explanations for the persistence of weak infrasctructure, despite stated policy priorities to support and institutionalize youth ministry.

2. Background

2.1. Studies of Religious Participation and Leadership

One of the most relevant insights in extant studies of youth ministry is the assessment that the Catholic Church has a weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry compared to other religious

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[1] Youth ministers are named Coordinators of Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Detroit, referring to those paid parish ministers who coordinate a parish ministry for high school teens in the parish—primarily for teens in grades 9 through 12. We use the term 'youth ministers' because it is more commonly used.

denominations [1]. This weak institutional infrastructure may help to explain why many Catholic teens have lower levels of religiosity compared to Protestant teens. As Smith notes:

> Simply put, the U.S. Catholic Church appears in its institutional infrastructure to invest fewer resources into youth ministry and education than do many other Christian traditions and denominations in the United States ([1], p. 216).

Smith and colleagues investigate nationally representative data of youth and find that Catholic teen religiosity is lower than the religiosity of some other religious traditions, such as evangelical Protestantism. In theorizing why this is the case, they identify a weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry in the Catholic Church as one possible explanation. In a series of local and more nuanced data, McCallion finds that the conclusions from this national study actually underestimate the extent of the weak institutional infrastructure in Detroit [2,3]. Specifically, the number and percentage of youth ministers in the Archdiocese of Detroit are lower than these national estimates.

Importantly, this weak institutional infrastructural problem has a history that goes back to at least the 1930s in the United States and, some authors believe, was exacerbated by the Church's response to the events of the 1960s. According to Bergler [4,5], the Catholic Church during and after the 1960s lost the strong network of mutually supportive institutions to form young people in the faith, mostly due to the decline of Catholic schools and "has yet to provide an equally effective replacement for its pre-1970 youth-forming institutions" ([4], p. 215). Although the social upheavals of the sixties, Vatican II and the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* often receive blame for this fallout, Bergler notes that "confusion, conflict and collapse in Catholic youth ministries during the 1960s and 1970s also contributed" ([5], p. 216) to the disaffiliation of youth. Bergler's summarized his most telling findings concerning youth ministers when he stated:

> In the late sixties, institutional investment in young people slumped in the Catholic world and has not yet fully recovered. The number of Catholic schools has declined steadily. Catholics were among the last American Christians to hire youth ministers. Catholic youth ministers enjoy lower job satisfaction and support from their fellow Catholics than other fulltime workers in the Catholic church. Catholics adapted quite well to the relatively conservative youth culture of the 1950s, but have not learned how to adapt on a large scale to the newer, more voluntary religious climate ([4], p. 217).

Numerous studies find overall trends of declining youth religious participation [6–12]. For example, Mercadante found that the highest percentage of "nones"—people claiming to have no religious affiliation—is the millennial generation [13]. She describes this trend in saying:

> The results of the extensive General Social Survey shows "nones" at 5 percent in 1972, 7 percent in 1975, 8 percent in 1990, 14 percent in 2000, 18 percent in 2010 and at least 20 percent in 2012. There are now more "nones" in America than mainline Protestants ([13], pp. 1–2).

The author continues by saying that "nones" are largest among Millennials, with trends indicating that their lack of religious participation is not merely a life course phase and can be expected to last as they settle into adulthood. As other studies found, she concludes that the youngest generations are now the mostly religiously unaffiliated of generations tracked to date.

Other studies also found that low youth participation rates have more direct measures of institutional infrastructure. For example, Williams and Davidson found more individualized conceptions of faith among younger generations of Catholics [6]. He argued that the generation of the 1930s and 1940s viewed their faith primarily in institutional terms, whereas the Baby Boom generation generally described their faith as less institutionally based. The generation of the 1970s and 1980s, as the post Vatican II generation, emphasize individualistic views of faith even more than the Vatican II generation did and now, the Millennial generation born since the 1980s represent an

individualized conception of faith even more so. The youngest generation, which some call Generation Z, appears to be following this same individualizing pattern [14].

As a result, one major issue confronting religious instiutions is who will fill future leadership roles, as Williams and Davidson suggest:

> Well-documented declines in priestly vocations and religious orders seem even more ominous when listening to the post-Vatican II generation. As the shortage of priests, sisters and brothers suggests a need for greater participation of lay persons in active leadership roles, one is left wondering whether today's young Catholics will be willing to take on such institutional responsibilities ([6], p. 287).

This is especially concerning given that Murnion and DeLambo found that encouragement from church leaders is the best means for engaging youth to consider a vocation in ministry [15]. They stated in their national study of lay ministry that "Nearly 40 percent of all lay ministers were recruited by the pastor or a member of the parish staff" ([15], p. 39). The authors also point out that many laypersons come to the ministry through various church movements, renewal programs and spiritual type experiences. Given the importance of these studies, Murnion and DeLambo are concerned because "the church may be suffering from a decline in spiritual movements that foster both the spiritual life of its members and vocations to the various forms of ministry, ordained and non-ordained" ([15], p. 40). This concern over filling ecclesial institutional positions is related to the weak institutional infrastructure problem, as it forecasts the continual and even weakening lack of institutional support for transmission of the Catholic faith to younger generations. Indeed, these concerns are why one youth minister said: "I don't understand why the bishops don't fund university campus ministry programs to a much greater extent because that is the most likely place where young adults will discover a vocation to the Church whether lay, religious, or clerical" (interview field notes). The situation of future leadership is perhaps even more prescient given the Archdiocese of Detroit has purportedly made youth ministry a major priority.

2.2. History of Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the Archdiocese of Detroit

In 1994, the Archdiocese of Detroit (AOD) resurrected its vicariate structure of 8 to 20 or so parishes engaged in pastoral planning. As early as 1995, YYA ministry[2] surfaced as a top priority in most vicariates. Between the years 1997 and 2000, parishes within these vicariates completed a survey (94,000 responses) asking parishioners what pastoral priorities were most urgent. YYA ministry surfaced again as the number one priority[3]. In 2009, the 16 vicariates were broken down into 40 study groups for more detailed planning and these study groups also named YYA ministry as a top priority.[4]

In 2010, seven Archdiocesan Pastoral Council subcommittees were formed, based on the seven top priorities emerging from years of surveys and vicariate pastoral planning, to flesh out in detail objectives and goals for each priority. After a year of planning the YYA subcommittee formulated

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2   Youth and young adults (YYA) refers to young Catholics in general, both high school youth and those 18 to approximately 35 years of age. In archdiocesan planning, most references are to YYA not just to high school teens or youth ministry. It is important to keep in mind that this research focuses primarily on youth ministry and youth ministers although some sources of data refer to both youth and young adults.

3   In 1995, the AOD started surveying all parishes to determine what parishioners felt should be the top priorities of the archdiocese (AOD). As parishes in vicariates administered and returned surveys to the AOD over a 3 year period (94,000 responses), youth ministry was the top priority that emerged at the vicariate level (based on the question—"Vicariate level planning allows us to pool our resources with neighboring parishes. What should be our vicariate planning priorities?"—85.4% of parishioners named youth ministry or "programs for teens" as the top priority with young adult ministry or "programs for young adults" close behind at 80.5%). As vicariate planning became known as *Together In Faith* in the early 2000s and then *Together in Faith II* in 2005, "programs for teens and programs for young adults" became more specified as YYA. Moreover, another priority emerged along with YYA ministry as a top priority of the AOD—New Evangelization (NE).

4   The 40 study group data is housed by the AOD Department of Parish Life and Services. Indeed, most survey data and vicariate data are held by the Department of Parish Life and Services—see AOD website [16].

their number one objective for Archbishop Vigneron as that of finding monies to train and hire YYA ministers for AOD parishes. Given the results of the work of these subcommittees, it was decided to conduct another survey of all AOD parishioners about these seven mission priorities. In 2014, a survey was administered and 41,000 responses were gathered. Once again, YYA ministry was ranked a top priority.[5]

During the above diocesan, vicariate and parish planning processes out of which the mission priority of YYA ministry emerged, the specific voices of youth ministers were missing. In the field, anecdotes were heard over and again from parishioners and parish staff about the declining attendance and increasing disaffection of youth from the church. The voices and opinions of youth ministers were needed to better understand the overall picture concerning YYA ministry and if youth ministers perceived a disconnect between the AOD proclaiming YYA ministry a priority and what they actually experienced as youth ministers at the parish level.

Consequently, interviewing youth ministers was the focus of our research beginning in 2014 (44 interviews, see Appendix A for interview protocol). It was also decided to interview priest/pastors about their perceptions of youth ministry and that research began in 2015 (12 interviews have been completed to date, see Appendix B for interview protocol). As the subsequent case study data summarize, these sources of data show the AOD has a weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry, meaning that youth ministry positions are not taken for granted as necessary status positions in parishes, and little is being done about it, although diocesan leaders would most likely contest this assertion.

3. Research Methodology

Qualitative interview methods were used to explore how YYA ministry as a top AOD priority has been perceived by youth ministers and priests/pastors. Examples of the questions investigated in this study are: How do youth ministers perceive YYA ministry and how do they feel about those perceptions? Do youth ministers believe the AOD was adequately funding or otherwise resourcing YYA ministry? What obstacles do youth ministers think YYA ministry faces? What would youth ministers tell the archbishop about YYA ministry if they had the opportunity to speak to him one on one? Finally, do youth ministers or pastors perceive a disconnection between YYA ministry being a top priority and little being done about it in practice? Methodologically, collecting qualitative interview data from youth ministers and pastors was important to better understand the situation of YYA ministry from these actual practitioners at the parish level.

Qualitative interviews, therefore, provided youth ministers and pastors a venue through which to "voice" their perceptions and opinions about their ministry. In other words, a goal of qualitative research is to give "voice" to those under study. Marginalized social groups in particular, are given a voice to be heard through qualitative research. Youth ministers are a marginalized group (not all, but most) within the institutional church and more particularly within the realm of lay ecclesial ministry (lay *vs.* ordained). Because of pastors' position of power and less marginalized status within the chuch's institutional infrastructure than youth ministers, it was important to hear if their perceptions about YYA ministry aligned in any way with the perceptions of youth ministers. We maintain therefore, that we have interviewed "real" youth ministers, in "real" parish situations, in "real" time and in the process of doing so have arrived at certain commonalities that youth ministers share regardless of social class, gender, age, or geographic location. After about the 25th interview, the results of this

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[5] After the 40 study groups concluded their work, 7 or so mission priorities surfaced and so the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC), which is the lay body that consults and advises the archbishop, broke down into subcommittees based on the 7 seven mission priorities—one of which was YYA ministry. Hence, there was first vicariate planning; second 40 study group planning (vicariates broken down into 40 groups); third APC was broken down into 7 subcommittees to continue pastoral planning. Again, the Department of Parish Life and Services collects and houses these data sources.

research made clear that youth ministers can be described as a joyful but a beleaguered, marginalized group. The remaining 19 interviews confirmed this description.

Qualitative research is important as well because it allows researchers to "pick-up" or "intuit" interviewees' emotional states or body language [17]. The interview transcriptions do not adequately reveal the intense emotions many interviewees felt about their ministry, especially the lack of support they received. There has been a good deal written about the ability of qualitative research to investigate perceptual and emotional dynamics that fall outside the realm of conscious deliberative and/or discursive processes. In other words, qualitative methods allow researchers to collect, analyze, and present findings about extra-deliberative emotional (non-cognitive) processes and how these same processes shape action. As to this research specifically, attending to the emotional dynamics of the interviewee was as important as what they said. For example, no youth minister directly stated he/she was "beleaguered", but attending to the extra-deliberative processes involved clearly revealed this to be the case. Qualitative research allows access to such non-discursive sources of data.

Finally, quantitative data were collected from AOD surveys, vicariate planning meetings and AOD sub-committee meetings between 1995 and 2014. Two main AOD surveys focused on priority issues of most concern to parishioners, asking them what they believed to be the most important issues facing the parish/church. In addition, an annual survey (1999–2009) of lay ecclesial ministers in the AOD was accessed to gather quantitative data on YYA ministers across the diocese. Another important data source was the 40 study groups created out of the vicariates which were commissioned by the archbishop to discuss and recommend what priorities the AOD should focus on in its pastoral planning.

4. The Archdiocese of Detroit as an Instiutional Case Study

In this section, we present quantitative data showing YYA ministry is a priority in the AOD along with statistics on the number of youth ministers in the AOD over the past 20 years. Secondly, we summarize qualitative interview data from forty-four youth ministers and twelve pastors, revealing taken-for-granted ecclesial processes that perpetuate a weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry in the AOD. Finally, the data is analyzed by applying theories drawn from the sociological organizational literature on institutions and social status, toward revealing underlying explanations for the persistence of weak youth ministry infrastructure despite stated priorities.

4.1. Quantitative Data on Youth Ministers

Quantitatively, it helps to first note the number of youth ministers in the AOD and their salaries because these figures suggest, as mentioned earlier, that a weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry exists. For example, data in Table 1 shows that the largest number of youth ministers was in the year 2000—the year with the greatest parish response rate—and yet it shows that only 41 percent of parishes have a youth minister.

Table 1 also shows that the number of youth ministers in parishes has not grown substantially in the AOD between 1999 and 2009. For example, in the year 2001 there were 108 professional paid youth ministers in the Archdiocese's 312 parishes, meaning only 39 percent of parishes had a paid youth minister. Moreover, of the 108 youth ministers, 63 or 58.3 percent were part-time. These percentages have remained constant between 1999 and 2006, with the number of all youth ministers, part and full time, declining, growing slightly and then declining again between 1999–2009 (see Table 1). This decline needs to be qualified given the decline in the number of parishes during those same years. Recognizing that parishes have closed throughout all dioceses of the United States, the number of parishes in the AOD has declined from 313 parishes in 1999 to 273 parishes in 2009 (Table 1) to 240 in 2013 (data missing for years 2010–2012), and 226 parishes in 2015 (see AOD website [16]). Keeping these numbers in mind, the *percentage* of parishes with youth ministers has gone up and down as well, with percentages of youth ministers declining since 2006 (Table 1).

Table 1. Youth Minister Trend Data 1999–2009.

Year	Number of Parishes	Number of Parishes Reporting	Percent of Parishes	Youth Ministers	Number of YM if 100% Parishes Reported	Ratio per Parish
1999	313	280	89.5%	112	125	0.40
2000	313	302	96.5%	124	129	0.41
2001	313	280	89.5%	108	121	0.39
2002	313	291	93.0%	104	112	0.36
2003	313	238	76.0%	107	141	0.45
2004	312	214	68.6%	87	127	0.41
2005	310	231	74.5%	119	160	0.52
2006	306	221	72.2%	119	165	0.54
2007	298	243	81.5%	100	123	0.41
2008	282	214	75.9%	88	116	0.41
2009	273	226	82.8%	87	105	0.38

Source: AOD Department of Parish Life and Services.

Table 1 also shows that in 2005 and 2006 there was a spike in the number and percentage of youth ministers after a gradual decline between 1999 and 2004. This is unexplained, other than it had something to do with the high parish response rate during those years. Nevertheless, whether one examines the high or low numbers, both appear low given YYA ministry has been a top priority since 1995. Moreover, youth ministers make up the lowest percentage compared to all lay ecclesial ministers at 10.6 percent (DREs are at 30.7 percent, musicians 30.2 percent, pastoral ministers 11 percent, and Christian Service 10.9 percent). Given these figures, the preferential option for YYA Catholics that Coleman called for in 1990, Hoge and colleagues called for in 2001 [8], and the AOD have been calling for since 1995, has not prompted much ecclesial action from the AOD to increase the institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry with, in particular, more monies and youth ministers, as stipulated by the AOD subcommittee on YYA ministry discussed below.

Moreover, the data in Table 2 show only full-time salaries, revealing that youth ministers are the lowest paid ministers for the year 2009–2010 (section heads are DRE assistants and hence not considered) and received the lowest full-time salaries during the previous decade as well. More revealing still is the fact that the average salary of a youth minister was 20,471 dollars between the years 2000 and 2009—the lowest of all salaried lay ecclesial ministers (data from AOD Dept of Parish Life and Services).

Table 2. Annual Salary of Full-Time Parish Ministers: 2009–2010.

Position	Salary
Music Director	46,002
Pastoral Minister	42,117
Liturgical Musician	41,999
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA Coordinator)	39,000
Director of Religious Education (DRE)	37,960
Christian Service Coordinator	37,325
Liturgy Coordinator	34,048
Youth Minister	32,759
Section Head—Religious Education	28,025
Average Salary All Positions	39,400

Source: AOD Department of Parish Life and Services.

As mentioned previously, the AOD conducted surveys between 1995 and 2014 that consistently identified youth ministry as a top priority.[6] In 2005, however, the 16 Vicariates of the AOD were broken down into 40 study groups, all of whom reported back to their respective vicariates. This breakdown was done to allow more time for smaller groups of parishioners to delve more deeply into pastoral planning. The 40 study groups identified seven pastoral priorities—again YYA ministry was a top priority (the other six being vocations, Catholic Schools, Lay Leadership, the New Evangelization, Christian Service and Stewardship). Consequently, seven archdiocesan sub-committees were formed based on the seven mission priorities identified by the 40 study groups. After months of discussions, the AOD sub-committee on YYA ministry concluded that its first objective had to be:

> The Archbishop will recognize the limited resources of parishes and locate FUNDING for certified and trained lay ecclesial ministers and vibrant ministry programs, encouraging all stakeholders, especially Pastors, to be well versed in comprehensive ministry to young people and more actively involved in ministry to youth and young adults(August, 2010).[7]

This particular objective (there were 16 objectives total from the YYA subcommittee) was the first objective mentioned because the committee strongly believed that additional monies were necessary if significant changes in this area of the Church's life were to occur. Both youth ministers and pastor interviews show this to be a clarion call of theirs as well, that more monies for salaries and programming are needed for YYA ministry—data we discuss in the next section. We argue these could be considered clarion calls for strengthening the institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry.

4.2. Qualitative Interview Data from Youth Ministers

Of the 44 youth ministers interviewed the majority were white (92.3 percent), female (70 percent), between the ages of 40 to 59 (70 percent), married (71.8 percent) and working in suburban parishes (80 percent). Educationally, 34 percent had master degrees. Both their voices and their non-verbal emotional body language expressed their beleaguered situation and their perception that diocesan Church leadership was not building-up YYA ministry as much as it could.[8]

One of the first questions we asked youth ministers was, "What attracted youth to the youth group or parish?" (see Appendix A) and although the question may seem irrelevant to this study the answers prove otherwise. For example, the first answer most often heard was "other youth" and in combining the response "other youth" with "parish welcomes youth" it became clear that more than 50 percent (50.6 percent) of responses are *relational* in nature. "Social activities" (14.8 percent) and "authentic leadership" (8.6 percent) were the next two most likely responses pertaining to attraction and if combined with the previous answers, shows 74 percent of responses have to do with relationships. The relevancy therefore, is that youth ministers building relationships with teens, parents, and parishioners was essential to having a strong parish youth ministry. Sociologists have long noted the importance of social solidarity for any kind of community building and so it is reasonable that more youth ministers and more financial resources are central to having a more personal relationship-oriented youth ministry, especially given that more than half of youth ministers are part-time. Interestingly, the data also show that programming or content of what occurs in a youth

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6　The first archdiocesan wide survey started in 1995 and was administered to vicariates and parishes as each was prepared to take the survey through 1998. It took approximately four years for every parish to conduct the survey—with over 94,000 responses collected. In 2014, another archdiocesan wide survey was administered based on the seven mission priorities that came out of the *Changing Lives Together* pastoral planning process. Over 40,000 responses were collected from this survey. Both surveys showed YYA ministry as a top priority.

7　All of the mission priorities can be found on the AOD website. Also, a pastoral letter from Archbishop Vigneron was mailed to every parishioner in the Archdiocese that listed and explained the seven mission priorities as well as his appreciation to everyone who participated in *Changing Lives Together* (the pastoral planning program).

8　These interviews were conducted during the year 2014. A final report, including a statistical and verbal summary of each and every interview are available through Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Dr. Michael J. McCallion, Director of Catholic Social Analysis. The report carries in its title "Joyful and Beleaugered..."

group gathering is secondary. Obviously programming is important, but what mattered most, as many respondents emphasized, was strong, positive relationships with youth ministers, peers and parishioners [18], which is less likely to occur with a weak YYA institutional infrastructure.

Another aspect on the relational dimension is the stress and strain described by youth ministers in conducting their ministry—evidence picked-up in their verbal and non-verbal responses. Sociologically, role strain occurs when an individual feels stress in managing the competing obligations of her/his role. Several youth ministers mentioned the strain they experienced in negotiating their pastor's minimalist expectations for the youth ministry program with their own belief that more, not less, time and resources should be devoted to the ministry. Others felt role strain because they incorporated lots of social activities in order to build relationships (a major reason for joining—relational) and yet at the same time felt like they were being judged as not leading a "Catholic" enough program (because, for example, social activities were paramount over catechetical activities). As one youth minister stated:

> "The vocal parents and also the pastor sometimes would complain the teens are not getting doctrine or as they say it—"what it means to be Catholic"—but I am trying to get them to gel as a group, you know, just feel comfortable enough to keep coming to the youth group and that means relationship stuff not catechesis first and foremost. So that is a drag as well—trying to meet everyone's expectations".

It appears from accounts such as this one that role strain developed because of either the pastor's, parents', or peers' expectations and what the youth minister was trying to accomplish in terms of relationship building. Indeed, many of the youth ministers' showed signs of being bodily and emotionally weary while responding to our questions.

Additional data supporting the conclusion that youth ministers are marginalized, was gleaned from responses to the question "What works and what does not work in your ministry". Methodologically, the concern was that this question was really two questions. Consequently, some respondents answered either "what works" or "what does not work" but not both, and therefore the results are not clearly representative of the combination "what works or does not work". Nevertheless, the questions are separated out below for the sake of clarity.

The number-one item mentioned as working was Christian Service (15.8 percent), followed by having a paid youth minister (14.5 percent) and then regular quality youth group meetings (10.5 percent). Talking or teaching or lecturing was not what primarily works. What works is "doing" things together, especially if that "doing" involves helping others—hence Christian service was mentioned most often. One interviewee was quite specific about this:

> "I know catechesis is important but for these teens the best way I can engage them is through Christian service projects, especially if the project is, you know, over a period of time, not just a one-time thing, although one-time things work a little too, but really a long-term project is really good because now you have time to build stronger relationship with them, you know, you are hanging out with them more and not just talking at them".

The data suggests that a potential area through which to establish stronger relations with teens is Christian service. Perhaps in order to justify their positions, several youth ministers were adamant in arguing that this "doing together" with Christian service is going to happen best if there is a paid youth minister on staff to make it happen.

Another interview finding was the fact that some pastors only provided a stipend rather than a salary to their youth minister and moreover, these youth ministers were not members of the parish staff. In one parish, the youth minister received a minimal stipend and did not even know who the parish full-time Director of Music was. Another mentioned an older youth minister receiving such a small stipend that he decided he would give it back to the youth ministry program by buying pizza with it each week they met. These responses were further evidence that youth ministers occupy a second-class citizenship status in the overall field of lay parish ministry.

In the reverse, we also learned from youth ministers what does not work. Youth ministers mentioned an "overemphasis on catechesis" (19 percent) as what most *does not* work. The next largest single category mentioned was "no full-time youth minister" (9 percent). Many respondents mentioned "paid youth minister" in answering the question "what works" and so we believe that is why answering "not having a youth minister" is infrequently mentioned here. It should be noted that in both questions concerning what works and what doesn't work, technology is important but does not play as large a role as relationships. Having a youth minister, doing Christian service together, parents being involved, *etc.*, all have to do with face-to-face or actively engaged relationships—this is what works according to youth ministers. Understanding technology is increasingly important to youth and many youth ministers mentioned its importance in presenting information. One youth minister, for example, said "If I am trying to communicate something, it is best if I put it up on a big screen because I have found that it increases the likelihood of making the topic real and authoritative to them". In addition, several respondents used varied approaches in their ministry which meant that several types of technologies were used each week to maintain and increase the interest of youth. But again, according to youth ministers, if youth are not making regular connections and building relationships with youth ministers and other adults, then the various technologies used were less effective. The belief in youth ministry as essentially relational, along with an emphasis on consistent meeting times, as well as meeting places, with consistent leadership present is what "works".

Another question receiving relevant responses for this study was, "If you had the archbishop's ear, what would you tell him he needs to know about youth ministry?" The primary responses were: Parishes must welcome youth (22 percent), parishes and the AOD need to provide more money and resources to youth ministry (20 percent) and the archbishop needs to provide more support and resources to youth ministry (15 percent). In other words, 57 percent of the responses had to do with receiving more money, resources and support for youth ministry. Indeed, including the item "more presence of church leaders" (10 percent) and "being more pastoral and less judgmental" (6 percent), both of which could be interpreted as "being more supportive", it would be over 70 percent.

The most striking feature about these interviews were the extra-deliberative or extra-discursive or non-verbal responses of the interviewees (data not displayed) and the overwhelming sense among the interviewers regarding how beleaguered, marginalized, yet joyful these youth ministers were because they loved working with youth. In summarizing our additional interview data, our assessment is that youth ministers are beleaguered, regularly seeking better employment and feeling marginalized in their persistent emphasis on the relational dimension of YYA ministry. Their qualitative interview data validate that a weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry exists in the AOD for supporting this kind of emotionally intensive, relational youth ministry.

4.3. Qualitative Data from Pastor Interviews

Twelve pastors were interviewed about their perceptions of youth ministry, especially as to why they think so few parishes have a youth minister (see Appendix B). The third question of the interview was "What do you think are some of the obstacles as to why other pastors don't have a youth minister?" Ten out of twelve pastors (83 percent) answered "money!" For example, one pastor said, "The other obstacle, besides seeing it as a need, is the importance of the archdiocese providing more funding if it truly sees it as an integral part of the parish." Another pastor said it bluntly, "Money". And then he went on to say, "the other thing is the older pastors are tired and the young ones don't seem to care". And yet another pastor said, "It's the money. First you hire a musician, then a DRE and then maybe a Christian service coordinator and then you give one of them responsibility for youth ministry."

Other reasons were more along relational lines, especially the issue of priest sexual abuse. One pastor said, "You know, I used to go through the parking lot and the kids would jump all over me and I would play with them, even some of the 7th and 8th graders, but I can't do that anymore because of the sexual abuse stuff. That is why I started 'Hi-fiving' the kids when I walk down the aisle for Mass—it is allowable because the parents are there". Another pastor spoke bluntly: "Pastors are

scared of the sex abuse thing," while another said, "Priests are discouraged by the sex abuse thing and of course they see more losing than winning in terms of the youth, you know, winning them over, most don't come and it's discouraging." Another pastor who was more philosophical about the issue believed, "Some pastors just don't know how to speak to youth about truth given their (the youths') highly secular and relativistic views of life. They just don't know how to do it and so they shy away." Given these few responses, were these the sentiments that discouraged them from hiring a youth minister? Perhaps, but the main reason and dominant response was money.

The other main issue in the pastors' responses was the fewer number of teens participating in church or simply the lack of teens in their parish. One pastor said, "You know, they are just busy with high school, they have lots of demands on them from that and so they don't come." Another pastor said, "They have high school and work, they just don't have time." Another pastor was more deliberate saying, "We need more kids to show and so the diocese needs to find funding for parishes to pay youth ministers who have the charisma for ministering to youth to be hired to attract and bring in the youth. It is not just going to happen. We need paid ministers to make it happen." Along similar lines, another pastor said, "Why can't we use the CLT monies (Changing Lives Together—An AOD fundraising campaign) to build a youth room or center at parishes so youth can gather there, have a place they know they can go." Another said, "I need to first find the right person, with the right charisma, you know, someone who can really be with teens and then find the funding, maybe from AOD, but I need to do it NOW but can't without money." Another said the same thing, "Hire a dynamic youth minister and pay him/her a good salary."

Most pastor and youth minister responses did not directly address the issue of a disconnect between policy and practice or of a weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry in the AOD, but it is clear from their interviews that they feel underesourced, undersupported and generally marginalized. Consequently, the next section is an attempt to sociologically assess and explain this disconnect between YYA ministry being a top stated priority of the diocese and the practice disconnect. Overall, little seems to be in process for implementing this stated goal. Instead, a weak institutional infrastructure is maintained, allowing the ongoing weak institutional support for youth minsitry to become institutionally normative, taken-for-granted as the way it is.

5. Theoretical Analysis and Discussion

In this section, we provide some theoretically grounded explanations for the disconnect between stated policy and the observed reality of youth ministry practice. We begin by applying two sets of institutional theories: decoupling and backstage organizational processes. Subsequently, we apply social status theories to explain the ongoing marginzalization of youth ministers. These theories are applied in order to examine the presented data on this case study within its broader social context and to reveal the potential social patterns underlying these taken-for-granted trends.

5.1. Institutional Analysis

5.1.1. Decoupling of Policy and Practice

Decoupling refers to the gap between an institution's stated policies and its actual organizational practices. Meyer and Rowan have researched social institutions and found that processes of decoupling are ubiquitous in these settings [19]. Wittberg, for example, found that several Catholic colleges and hospitals decoupled their religious identity from their everyday practices because of pressures from government or other professional stakeholders [20]. As she writes: "Thus, in order to attract the credentialed, high caliber staff and administrators demanded by secular professional standards, a hospital, university, or social agency might downplay its religious identity—while simultaneously emphasizing that identity to alumni, foundations, or denominational supervisors." Wittberg argues, therefore, that "many institutions have responded by decoupling their religious identity from their everyday practices" ([20], p. 151). In other words, decoupling allows organizations to verbally comply

symbolically without changing their practices substantially. This appears to be the case with youth ministry in the AOD. The organizational church is giving voice to the importance of youth ministry, raised by so many parishioners via surveys and meetings, but in reality the Church puts little into practice that actually enhances youth ministry. Church leaders, in other words, claim it is a top priority (policy) and then proceed on with other business (practice).

Another explanation for why this disconnect or decoupling exists between YYA policy and practice is that it is not consciously enacted by leadership but exists because of the nature of how things work in large organizations. For example, Pattison's research found that managers/bureaucrats are far from being calm, reflective, systematic planners and instead work "at an unrelenting pace, ... their activities are characterized by brevity, variety and discontinuity and they are strongly oriented to action and dislike reflective activities" ([21], p. 12). Indeed, he argues that "fighting fires is a good way of ensuring ongoing busyness." Of course, this subverts the need to seriously reflect on priorities that have been named via surveys or planning meetings or any other social process the AOD has initiated. Once the policy is written or the report is typed, managers or ecclesial leaders can move on to other business (busyness) because there are many other burning issues to deal with that are more practical and need immediate attention. Pattison questions, therefore, whether an organization's strategic planning is actually strategic:

> Quite apart from the questions of time-scale and proper use of human resources, it is questionable how useful this kind of planning really is. Organizations must have some sense of where they are going and what they are trying to do. The trouble is that the more specific plans are, the more futile often they prove to be. In organizations and the environment around them, so many crucial factors can change so quickly that plans quickly become irrelevant. Like religious faith, much of what strategic planning does is to help people to feel they have some sense of control and direction in the midst of chaotic, unpredictable reality. The planning process allows managers to feel that they are doing something and serves as a ritual activity that brings a sense of efficacy. ([19], pp. 30–31). The only thing that can be safely concluded here is that effective leadership, like being market focused and strategic planning, is an elusive, perhaps longed-for-chimera, a kind of holy grail for managers ([21], p. 32).

Continually naming YYA ministry as a top AOD priority for the last twenty years is a decoupling strategy which allows the institutional church to say, on the one hand, "yes, this is a priority, it is even one of seven mission priorities for the entire diocese and we are working on it," while on the other hand, the AOD goes about devoting its resources to other issues deemed more important and not necessarily doing so consciously or intentionally but because of the nature of how large organizations operate. Some scholars argue therefore that organizations are more *intendedly* rational than actually rational, that is, "more capable of achieving consistent and efficient action than unorganized individuals, but far from synoptically rational" ([22], p. 8). Why then is the stated AOD mission priority of YYA ministry not put into practice? One main reason is because AOD officials consciously or unconsciously participate in institutional decoupling processes.

5.1.2. Backstage Organizational Processes

Another reason, one that is highly correlated with decoupling and the reality that organizations are more intendedly rational than actually rational, is the fact that a whole series of relationships and interactions occur backstage to which ordinary parishioners are not privy and it is in and through these backstage interactions that decisions are actually made. Decisions not based on data that committees have worked hard to compile but on church officials' own backstage cognitive and emotional interactions. Goffman and others have studied these backstage or shadowland interactions and discovered these types of informal interactions often turn an organization this way or that [23]. Taking into account this "shadowland", several theorists have argued that social organizations are

"organized anarchies", suggesting that goals and objectives of organizations are always ambiguous and contested and the fulfillment of goals and objectives often depends on who does or does not show up to the meeting. Perhaps this has happened with the YYA ministry—people who have other agendas keep showing up at the meetings and thereby focus attention on priorities other than YYA ministry.

5.1.3. Institutional Analysis Conclusion

Applying these institutional theories leads us to conclude that people, problems, solutions, planning and choices are "loosely coupled, that the definition of a choice may change over the course of deliberations, that most decisions are made by oversight or avoided altogether and that most of them do not solve problems, but simply defer them to another day" ([21], p. 11). Perceiving the AOD as an organized anarchy explains, at least partially, why little has been done to advance YYA ministry. Therefore it would be important to study this "shadowland" of informal relations within the AOD as a next research step. Qualitative methods would be necessary, but exactly how to gain access to this backstage behavior and thinking is another question entirely. It appears, in this case, that under the conditions of ecclesial institutional bureaucracy, the policy of YYA ministry being a priority becomes decoupled from the practice of providing more resources to such ministry. In addition to institutional theories, sociological theories of social status also help to explain why the marginzaliztion of youth workers continues in this case study despite stated priorities.

5.2. Social Status Analysis

5.2.1. The Social Status of Youth Ministry

Another sociological concept that sheds light on the data is the central and popularly known concept of social status. The question of "Why don't pastors hire full-time youth ministers?" quickly reveals that one of the answers is that youth ministers have little social status within the vineyard of lay ecclesial workers. DREs and Musicians have status, youth ministers do not, or have comparatively much less. So why don't pastors hire full-time youth ministers? Because within the institution of the church, youth ministry in general does not have a professional status and more surreptitiously, because a taken-for-granted *inequality* exists perpetuating the degradation of youth ministry. Examining more closely the sociological concept of "social status" will help clarify this ecclesial situation (also, see Appendix D for a case study of a suburban parish and its reluctance to hire a youth minister).

There are three powerful ingredients to social status: resources, power and respect/esteem, therefore the underlying issue of inequality is ever present. For example, comparing DREs to youth ministers clarifies the inequality that exists in that DREs clearly have a higher status than youth ministers (DREs have acquired such status legitimately and without malice to youth ministers). Indeed, many DREs have responsibility for youth ministry and if the DRE is not the youth minister him or herself, the youth minister reports to him/her (the DRE). This is not positive or negative; it is only to say this is the present ecclesial situation. Indeed, DRE's social status has a lot to do with the fact that 80 percent or more of parishes hire a DRE while only 47 percent of parishes hire youth ministers (indeed, there are more business manager types (57 percent) than youth ministers—see AOD Report on Lay Ecclesial Ministers, 2014, Appendix C).

Nevertheless, the question remains as to why does this inequality exists? Of the three ingredients of social status, the primary mechanism behind this inequality is one based on differences in respect/esteem rather than on differences of power or resources—however important these may be. Sociologists are aware that power and resources follow an occupation if respect for such position has been embedded within an organization. In other words, sociologists have long argued that as a micro-motive for behavior, status based on respect is as significant as money and power. Therefore, it is the phenomenon of status inequality based on differences in respect/honor/esteem between lay ecclesial ministers that might shed further light on the issue of the disconnect between YYA ministry being a top priority and little being done about it.

In much of the sociological literature on social status, respect/honor/esteem is the weakest of the three ingredients or variables investigated in predicting social status, but this is an oversight. We often overlook how much people care about being valued by others (society, parish, social group), that is, "respected". I want my son, for example, to have money and resources, but more so I want him to be respected by his peers and others—that he is regarded as an honorable, good man. From this perspective, it becomes even more obvious that youth ministers are not given the respect they deserve in relation to other parish ministries, not because of malice or a veiled disdain for youth ministers, but for reasons associated with social status. There is an unequal distribution of respect amongst lay ecclesial ministers, as there is with the distribution of resources and power, but this inequality is unseen because it is built into the ecclesial structures of dioceses and parishes. Moreover, these hidden social status processes have much to do with why priests exhibit poor youth ministry hiring practices which only perpetuates the weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry (again, see Appendix D).

Inequality, in other words, has become a durable ecclesial institutional reality in terms of occupational trajectories among lay ecclesial ministers. The bottom line is that youth ministers are perceived as non-professional or semi-professional at the conscious and unconscious levels by other ecclesial professionals. And consolidation around this "disrespect" definition of the situation amongst pastors and others stabilizes this ecclesial inequality because it transforms the situational control over resources and power into a "status difference" between types of ministries—with DREs ranked diffusely better than youth ministers. As Ridgeway stated in her presidential address to the American Sociological Society: "Status construction studies show that when control over resources in a social setting is correlated with a salient categorical difference (DRE *vs.* YM), people quickly link the appearance of mastery in the situation that the resources and power create with the associated difference between types of people" [24]. In the parishes of the AOD (given the number of youth ministers and their salaries), those in power (pastors and others) have formed a "status belief" (rightly so in many instances) that DREs should receive more resources and power than youth ministers because of their professionalism and ecclesial status earned since Vatican II. Youth ministry and consequently youth ministers have not earned equal status with DREs because of their less formalized professional training and perceived lower status among those in hiring positions. This situational perception by those in power legitimizes this ongoing ecclesial inequality, reinforcing both the weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry and the ongoing decoupling of policy and practice.

Conscious or not, these status beliefs fuel social perceptions of difference between DREs and youth ministers. In other words, status processes are now in place that legitimately mobilize the continuing construction of culturally/ecclesially defined social differences on the one hand and on the other hand, high status actors (DREs and Pastors) rely on this difference to justify their channeling less power and resources to youth ministry. This status process then is deeply implicated in the making of obdurate patterns of inequality between various ecclesial ministers based on social status differences.

With this obdurate pattern of inequality now taken for granted via widely shared status beliefs and consequent status differences, these beliefs constitute that difference as an independent dimension of inequality with its own sustained social dynamic. Ridgeway uses the example of gender and says that men have acquired an advantage in resources and power compared to women which fosters the status belief that men are better than women [24]. Once these status beliefs develop they give men the advantage because they are men and *not* because they are richer or more powerful. Even in a situation where men and women are equal in power and resources the man still has more influence. Hence, status beliefs allow an autonomous dynamic to work which maintains inequality. Moreover, this automatic dynamic works at the social relational level—mostly in the arena of self-other expectations and this relational dynamic is examined next by looking at three well documented status social processes, namely, status bias in judgments and behavior, associational preference biases and reactions to status challenges.

5.2.2. Status Biases in Judgment and Behavior

Status biases about a social difference, in this case between youth ministers and DREs, become salient in contexts in which people differ on some social distinction such as mixed-social class or mixed-race. In this case, the social difference becomes salient because of primarily mixed-educational social distinctions. Moreover, the social difference becomes even more salient in contexts in which that social difference is culturally understood to be relevant to the settings' goals—in this case an ecclesial setting that formerly had Catholic schools to handle youth but now does not, except for those who can afford private schooling—which has resulted in most Catholic children and teens needing some kind of religious education. Given Catholic school decline, pastors are expected to provide religious education and so DREs are hired (rightly so). But when it comes to teens there are many perceptions that tend to add up to the fact that teens' high schools dominate their lives and so youth ministry cannot compete and is therefore comparatively insignificant (see pastor interview data). Nevertheless, the thinking goes, "we (the pastor or local parish) have to do something so let's just hire someone part-time or get a volunteer to organize some activities for teens"—status biased thinking.

Moreover, this status bias has become implicitly salient in that this bias has warped people's expectations of what is competent and suitable for youth ministry and these status biases are all the stronger, the more relevant the social difference is perceived to be to the goals of the setting. So the status bias is strong in this case, because the social difference perceived is between "education in faith" (DRE who has credentials) *vs.* having "fun" (youth minister who does not need credentials) in a church context. The social difference is that the DRE is a professional and the YM is not and that has become an embedded bias within the institution. So the status advantaged DRE or musician speaks up to be heard while the status disadvantaged youth minister hesitates to do so given the status bias in place—much like a medical doctor speaks up and the lay person does not. Often in such status bias situations the same idea simply sounds better from the status advantaged person than from the status disadvantaged one. The cumulative result has been the status advantaged is tracked into positions of greater resources and power because of their greater respect/honor or social status (they are simply better).

5.2.3. Associational Preference Biases

Next, this status bias consciously and unconsciously leads to inequalities as to who associates with whom—associational preference bias, the second status concern. As mentioned earlier, our research found youth ministers not attending parish staff meetings or other important parish meetings because youth ministers occupy such low social status. These are experiences of status degradation as Goffman (1963) would state. Associating only with higher status others is necessary but it also feeds into a process of cloning by "actors" from higher status groups.From an organizational perspective, one reason for this cloning has to do with the inherently uncertain conditions of exercising power in organizations. The powerful in the organization tend to favor others similar to themselves and upon whom they feel they can rely [25]. Again, conscious or not, pastors and DREs associate minimally with youth ministers and thereby perpetuate the separation of these status groups and in doing so, maintain power and resources for themselves (pastor and DRE), further exacerbating material and status inequalities between them as well as maintaining the weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry.

5.2.4. Status Challenge Biases

Status biases and associational preference biases create and maintain an implicit motive for people of higher status groups to defend their valued sense of group position, according to Ridgeway and others. When lower status groups challenge higher status groups they encounter backlash from higher status group members. Still today, women who seem too dominant in a given social situation are sometimes considered pushy or aggressive, while men saying the same thing are considered

competent. Indeed, research shows that much racial prejudice can be understood as a defense of racial group status position. Whereas (1) status bias; and (2) associational preference bias produce relatively unthinking biases in favor of status privilege for those in higher status positions; (3) defense of the status hierarchy bias results in more intentionally hostile actions to constrain lower status individuals who are perceived to go too far. This defensiveness is not necessarily the case in many parishes, so status challenges may be few and far between. But when a pastor is asked (status challenge) about youth ministry he often has a ready answer with "we don't have the money to hire someone but we do have someone part-time helping those teens who do want to gather." Without having to discuss status biases he might harbor about YYA ministry, the pastors can easily decouple policies from practices with respect to YYA ministry at the parish level as can ecclesial hierarchs at the diocesan level.

5.2.5. Social Status Conclusion

These three processes—status biases in judgement and behavior, associational preference biases, and status challenge biases—are culturally influenced interpersonal processes that act as subtle but powerful mechanisms by which exploitations (not having to pay a youth minister or paying them a very low salary) and opportunity hoarding (having one person perform multiple roles, DRE and also youth minister e.g., rather than increasing the division of ecclesial labor within the parish) are accomplished by pastors (high status group). Hence, this status differentiation among ecclesial workers depends on the maintenance of distinctive cultural practices to mark the status boundary, that is, the practice of hiring DREs to be the youth minister or hiring part-time youth minister often with few qualifications (academic degrees), or obtaining a volunteer—all of which maintain the weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry.

Our application of these theories leads to our conclusions that, much like gender, race and class have become biases stamped into the structures of society, these ecclesial biases toward YYA ministry are stamped into the ecclesial structures and procedures of employment in the AOD. Having no institutional academic professional degree for YYA ministry as there is for DREs or Musicians is highly problematic from this perspective. The historian Thomas Bergler, mentioned earlier, has delineated the history of the Catholic Church with regards to youth ministry and found it far behind the YYA ministry enhancing efforts of most Protestant denominations—especially in noting Protestant congregations' practices of hiring "youth pastors" (Bergler, 2012, [4]). It behooves the Catholic Church, from what has been said, to consider instituting such a professional degree.

Once Catholic schools started closing in large numbers, the Church did not establish a viable ecclesial infrastructure of YYA ministry which could put into practice, processes of status enhancement for YYA ministry. Instead, processes of status degradation and bias resulted in its absence. Religious education and the role of DRE procured most of the status enhancement processes developed after Vatican II and thereby the requisite power and resources. Consequently, there has only been, for the most part, a part-time effort to build a new ecclesial infrastructure for ministering to, with and for youth. And although this part-time effort is something, it has partly fueled processes of status degradation and status bias in most but not all parishes of the AOD. Because of ecclesial beliefs about YYA ministry's degraded status compared to DREs (structural level—status bias) and the minimal interaction other parish staff have with youth ministers (interpersonal level—associational bias), ecclesial inequality toward YYA ministry is institutionalized into diocesan and parish organizational forms and practices. Despite all diocesan and parish level efforts to enhance YYA ministry (naming it a mission priority), the weak institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry supported by status biases toward such ministry prevent ecclesial leaders from perceiving the social inequalities that persist and seem only to continue to deplete the Church's infrastructure of YYA ministry.

6. Limitations and Future Studies

Despite the strength of this case study data in hearing the perspectives of youth ministers and some pastors regarding their experiences of the archdiocesan priorities, all the data presented in this

study are non-representative and self-reported. Such self-reported data rely for their validity on the accuracy of the youth minister perceptions. As highly relationally based youth workers, the youth ministers generally reported intended interventions that rely on relational connections to youth as the ways to form their religiosity. It is worth noting that youth could acquire their religiosity through other, less relationally based approaches. There also could be other ways that the archdiocese could support ministry to youth without supporting youth ministers. However, presuming youth ministry and relational connection to caring adult mentors within the church are the intended change mechanisms, this study raises a number of concerns regarding the successful implementation of these practices.

Future studies should investigate these findings further. For example, studies could compare the approach of this diocese to that of other dioceses, or to that of other religious traditions, especially in order to assess the relative success of approaches that do not rely upon youth ministry. Based on the initial evidence presented in this study, future investigations could seek to collect data from representative samples, especially involving multiple locations. Another fruitful line of inquiry could be to collect data with participating youth to assess the extent to which youth minister perceptions of youth needs align with what their participating youth report. Finally, another approach to future studies could be to collect data on other kinds of religious organizations. Presuming religious youth participate in a number of religious organizations, including para-church groups, it would be important to assess the extent of religious formation they receive from sources outside the archdiocese. These and other studies are revealed to be needed based on the initial contributions of this case study on the weak institutional support for youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Detroit.

7. Conclusions

The church at the archdiocesan level can gather youth and young adults from various parts of the archdiocese (which it is doing as of this writing) and ask them "what they want", but if an ecclesial institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry, a youth minister being paid a just wage, is not operative to implement "what young people want" in any long-term systematic way, then the Church is simply putting the cart before the horse and perpetuating further decoupling processes already in place. As the data shows, what youth want is pastoral care which means to "walk-along-with, to listen to, to hang out with youth and young adults" and when the time is right, to offer solid Catholic catechesis about the Catholic faith. This is unlikely given decoupling processes and status degradation of youth ministry—all of which maintain and perpetuate a weak YYA institutional infrastructure. The findings of this study strongly suggest that the stakes have been raised significantly for the AOD to find realistic and workable measures to strengthen the institutional infrastructure of YYA ministry in the AOD.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Youth Ministers (begin January 2014)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (This Is Anonymous—names and parish)

1. Are you paid full-time or part-time? *What other responsibilities*?
2. How long have you been in this position? *Have you had other positions*?
3. How would you describe the parish community? I know that is a very general question, but is it liberal, moderate, or conservative politically or theologically? Is it lower class, working class, middle class, or upper class in your estimation?
4. Are you aware that youth and young adults is one of the mission priorities for the AOD?
5. If yes, has it changed anything? *Your ministry perhaps? Your parish?*

6. Does the Parish have a NE or Evangelization Committee: yes___, no___, starting one___, thinking about starting one___, *etc.*

7. If the parish has a NE committee are you/your ministry connected to it? How?

8. What do you make of the NE? Do you like/dislike it? How do you feel about it? Is it effective?

9. Please describe the main activities offered by your ministry? (could dig deeper by asking questions 13 through 16 below or SKIP if already answered in 12):

10. How does the youth group pray? Do they pray a particular devotion?

11. Does your ministry include Christian Service? Any projects monthly or annually?

12. What Catechesis takes place? How often?

13. Socializing? How often? Anything repeated or a regular activity?

14. *OR ask*, What are the opportunities open to youth at the parish?

15. What most attracts youth to the youth group/parish?

16. What works and what has not worked in your ministry here?

17. If your work with youth or young adults was to be *completely* successful, what might that look like to you? Examples? (the ideal)

18. What do leaders & decision makers need to know about your youth or young adults & the program here that they don't already know (have misconceptions about)? If you had the ear of the Bishop what would you tell him!

19. Is there a designated space for the group to meet?

20. What do you find to be inspiration for your work with youth?

21. The social science literature indicates that youth today are more individualistic in their faith lives than previous generations. So my Dad's generation was more committed to the institution of the church than my generation and now today's generation is even less committed to the institutional church. In other words, they tend to do their own thing and not pay much attention to what the Church teaches. Do you tend to agree with that assessment or not? Why?

22. For example, do you know if they give an envelope each week to their parish (or give electronically)? If not, do you give any money? If so, what do they give?

23. Is there anything else you would like to add at this time?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Pastors

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (This is anonymous—names and parish)

1. Do you think high school age kids are attending mass or otherwise engaged in the Church these days and why or why not?

2. If you have or don't have a youth minister here at your parish, why is that so? If not, what are the reasons (barriers) for not having one?

3. What do you think are some of the obstacles as to why other pastors don't have a youth minister (given that about 40% of parishes don't have one)? As you know, youth ministry is one of the mission priorities of the AOD. Has that changed anything here at your parish? Why or why not?

4. Is youth ministry connected to the New Evangelization in anyway at the parish (youth sitting on NE committee for example)?

5. What resources, tools, or training do you feel you need to advance the quality of youth ministry here at your parish?

6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C: AOD Paid Lay Ministers 2014–2015

Position	Number	% Laymin	% Parishes
PastoralMinister	74	8%	35%
Director of Religious Education	164	19%	78%
Section Heads	88	10%	42%
Musicians	205	23%	98%
Christian Service Coordinator	72	8%	34%
Youth Ministers	98	11%	47%
Young Adult Minister	5	1%	2%
RCIA Coordinator	31	4%	15%
Worship Coordinator	16	2%	8%
Business Manager	124	14%	59%
Total Paid Lay Ministers	877	100%	

Response Rate: 96% (223 of 233 parishes). Percent of Parishes with Paid Lay Ministers: 94% (210 of 223 reporting parishes). Source: Archdiocese of Detroit: Department of Parish Life and Services

Appendix D: Case Study of a Suburban Parish: Process of Hiring a YYA Minister (2014–2016)

Background and Rationale for pursuing a YYA Minister at this Suburban Parish:

- YYA Ministry has been a top AOD priority since 1995;
- A Survey conducted of AOD Parishioners indicate YYA Ministry is the *number 1 and number 4 priorities* across the Diocese with around 94,000 responses;
- During a review of priorities at the parish in the fall of 2013, Hiring a YYA Minister received the *highest* votes of all of the approximate 100 goals/objectives. <u>*Summary of Activity*</u>:
- Many efforts were made throughout 2014 to approve a YYA Minister position at this parish, but despite the fairly widespread support from the Parish Council, the item was placed on hold pending the appointment of a new pastor;
- In late 2014 and early 2015, the YYA Liaison for the AOD was contacted and provided advice/support. The Vicariate Vicar was also contacted but never returned the calls;
- In early 2015 a conceptual agreement was formulated to <u>share</u> the YYA Minister position with a neighboring parish, including funding. A joint <u>Job Description</u> was developed that completely encompassed all job requirements;
- After a considerable effort and many discussions over several Parish Council Meetings, the position of YYA Minister was approved for the 2015/2016 budget in June of 2015;
- The position was advertised, resumes were reviewed, interviews were conducted during the summer and a selection was made on 8/15/15 (and recommended) to the Pastors;
- The Pastors wanted to meet with the successful candidate but their schedules wouldn't allow for a meeting prior to September 10, and at the meeting, the Pastors asked the candidate to generate a detailed plan and expanded the scope of the position;
- The candidate compiled a detailed plan and submitted it to the two Pastors;
- Subsequent to the detailed plan submittal, the neighboring parish indicated they could not afford the position because collections were down and decided to opt out of the plan.
- Then the initiating parish indicated that they could not afford to fund a full-time position by themselves;
- At the Parish Council Meeting in late October, the recommendation was made to hire the candidate on a <u>part-time</u> basis and the Pastor indicated the candidate agreed to do that with a reduced scope commensurate with the reduced compensation;
- At the Parish Council Meeting on December 9, the YYA Minister had not yet been hired so a recommendation was <u>again</u> made to hire the YYA minister on a part-time basis in January of 2016. 11 members of the Parish Council voted to support this proposal; the remaining 4 members, all paid-staff members, voted against it;

- At the January, 2016 Parish Council Meeting, it was decided to utilize vicariate resources on a limited basis instead of hiring the YYA minister on a part time basis as planned.

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