2 Introducing contemporary research on faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts

The theme of faith, spirituality, and religion in the workplace (fsw) has developed as an academic field of study, roughly speaking, in the last two decades. It has emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies, but is heterogeneous in terms of the variety of authors from different academic backgrounds that contribute to the field. There has been, to date, much debate about basic definitions and what the main aspects and dimensions of fsw and the key areas of study should be. Between 1995 and 2015, more than 300 peer-reviewed journal articles related to the subject of fsw[1], and over twenty special issues related to fsw[2] were published.

Many reasons have been suggested for the rising interest in fsw. As negotiation of the role of faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts in present-day Western societies is still under way, Ramarajan and Reid (2013:621) argue in their "Shattering the myth of separate worlds" that recent developments are "blurring the distinctions between work and non-work life domains." Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen (2009) indicate the "religious affiliation of a sizable portion of the global workforce" and Miller (2003) points to a growing movement of practitioners who seek to integrate faith and work. Walker (2013:453.459) outlines the individual costs of separating one's faith and work, such as tension and stress, and the positive life and work outcomes of perceived faith–work integration.[3]

The chapter will proceed as follows. In section 1, I will address how fsw research can be situated with regard to relevant theoretical contexts. In section 2, I will discuss available definitions of key terms.

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1 For statistical data on articles on spirituality in the social sciences in general, and in the area of business and management in particular, see for example Oswick (2009). See also the citation analyses by Fornaciari and Lund Dean (2009) and Gundolf and Filser (2013), Cullen's (2016) bibliometric review of research on religion and spirituality with reference to management, and Tackney, Chappell, and Sato's (2017) analysis of MSR papers.
2 See the list of journals with special issues in 1.2.
3 On different ways of justifying fsw, see section 3.4.2.

2.1 Fsw in theoretical contexts

As a starting point, I will address the question of how the field of fsw is referred to in relevant review articles, and I will present the key issues that the authors of these articles identify (2.1.1). Subsequently, I will situate the study of fsw in its relationship to relevant academic disciplines and discourses (2.1.2.), influential thinkers (2.1.3), and relevant methodologies (2.1.4).

2.1.1 *Naming of the field and key issues raised*

A number of overviews of the field and discussions of the current state of research are available (e.g. Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014, Benefiel 2007, Delbecq 2009, Fornaciari & Lund Dean 2009, Gundolf & Filser 2013, Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar 2016, Long & Driscoll 2015, Lynn & Burns 2014, Miller & Ewest 2013a, Oswick 2009, Tackney, Chappell & Sato 2017, Tracey 2012, Vasconcelos 2018).[4] A look at these texts reveals a number of things: First, a variety of different terms and expressions are used to name the field, with no consensus in sight. Second, a variety of different themes are identified as key issues, which then shape the different maps of the field, with no consensus on how the "territory" (e.g. Benefiel 2007, Smith 2008) is to be mapped, or what the main "trails" (Benefiel 2007) leading through fsw terrain are.

   1) As regards the naming of the field, which I refer to as fsw (faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts), a number of different terminologies are used: workplace spirituality, spirituality in the workplace (e.g. Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar 2016, Long & Driscoll 2015, Lynn & Burns 2014, Miller & Ewest 2013a, Oswick 2009), MSR (management, spirituality, and religion; e.g. Fornaciari and Lund Dean 2009), SRW (spirituality and religion in the workplace; Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014), spirituality and business, spirituality within management studies, spirituality and leadership (Delbecq 2009), research in management with regard to religion (Gundolf & Filser 2013), and spirituality in organizations (Benefiel 2007). This list, which indicates the diversity of the terminologies used by the authors of overview articles, can easily be expanded to include other phrases used in the broader body of fsw literature to refer to the field, such as faith and spirituality at work (Phipps & Benefiel 2013), organizational spirituality (Smith 2008),

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4 See also three overview articles published in German: Alewell & Moll (2019, 2018) and Schneider (2012).

faith at work (Lynn, Naugthon & VanderVeen 2009, Miller & Ewest 2013c, Miller 2007, 2003, Whipp 2008), integration of faith and work, faith–work integration (Lynn, Naugthon & VanderVeen 2009, Walker 2013), faith and business (Wood & Heslam 2014), religion and work, work–faith integration (Lynn, Naugthon & VanderVeen 2010), spirituality at work (Tourish & Tourish 2010), spirit at work (Kinjerski & Skrypnek 2006), and spirituality of work (Ligo 2011, Ottaway 2003).

What conclusions (if any) can be drawn from the use of these diverse terminologies? And does it make sense at all to speak of one field in the face of such a diversity of terms? In chapter 1, I introduced my suggestion that, from the viewpoint of the study of Christians at work, it makes sense to speak of *one* field or research area of fsw, despite the fact that common terminology of how this field should be referred to is lacking (and notwithstanding the different nuances the various terms may be carrying). Broadly speaking, the diversity in terminology can indicate three different things: First, a term (e.g. spirituality) can be used to distance one's approach from other approaches which use another term (e.g. religion). Second, it can be a matter of nuances, while the terms have considerable overlap of meaning (e.g. religiosity and spirituality as used in Brotheridge and Lee 2007). Third, the terms are used interchangeably[5] (e.g. faith and religion in Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVenn 2009).[6] I will further discuss the relationships between the terms faith, spirituality, and religion in the discussion of their definitions below (2.2.4).

2) A look at the available overview articles also reveals the variety of aspects and dimensions deemed to be relevant for the field of fsw. There is no single valid map of the field. The availability of different maps and proposed structures of the field indicates that any map of the field is dependent on the position of the one who is drawing the map and on the particular drivers of one's interests. A diversity of positions is also mirrored in the variety of approaches that are employed to create an overview of the field, such as, content analysis of scholarly papers (Tackney, Chappell & Sato 2017), citation analysis (Gundolf & Filser 2013, Fornaciari & Lund Dean 2009), discourse analysis (Long & Driscoll 2015, Oswick 2009), network analysis (Lynn & Burns 2014), and a personal review of the field (Delbecq 2009). In spite of this variety, both with regard to perspectives on the field

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5 Note also how the terms business, leadership, and management seem to be used interchangeably, for example in Delbecq (2004).

6 For more options on how to conceptualize the relationship between religion and spirituality, see Phipps and Benefiel (2013, see also 2.2.4 in the present study).

of fsw, and in terms of aspects that are identified and used to provide a map of the field, a few key topics which are deemed to be relevant by most of the authors can be identified: definitions of fsw, the relationship between spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work (or management, business, or leadership), and the problem of integrating spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work.[7] Framed as questions, these topics point to three (interrelated) key questions that occur in the literature: 1) What is fsw?[8] 2) How are spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work related? 3) How can spirituality (or religion, or faith) be integrated at work? Most other questions raised, such as legal issues of fsw, the instrumentalization of fsw, outcomes of fsw, or the role of ethics in fsw, can be read as variations of these three basic questions.

In addition to these key questions, some of the overview texts also point to critical issues in the formation of fsw research activities and outcomes, such as the importance of the person of the researcher (Delbecq 2009), her or his affiliations in terms of academic networks and religious traditions (Lynn & Burns 2014), and the discursive contexts which influence one's research (Long & Driscoll 2015, Oswick 2009). These additional critical issues will be addressed in the following subsections on the academic discursive contexts of fsw (2.1.2) and methodologies of fsw (2.1.4), and then again in section 4.1 on the relationship between fsw and tradition.

2.1.2 Fsw in academic disciplines and discourses

The study of faith, religion, and spirituality at work has no single academic home discipline. The subject is addressed within a variety of disciplines and is touched upon by publications that draw on various fields, among them economics, management and organization studies, neuroscience, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and theology.

How is the study of fsw related to these different academic contexts? With reference to *management and organization studies*, Quatro (2004) argues that the contemporary emphasis on workplace spirituality in the business and academic world is firmly rooted in classical management theory and traditional organized religion, and Hudson (2014:36) holds that the ques-

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7   Some might want to add to this list the methodological requirements and intricacies of studying fsw, which is a favorite topic of a number of authors (on methodology, see 2.1.4). For an overview of the topics addressed in overview articles, see also the chart in the appendix.

8   More precisely, what is spirituality (or religion, or faith) at work?

tions addressed by the contemporary spirituality at work movement are old and have long been asked in management theory. Pinha e Cunha, Rego, and D'Oliveira (2006) propose an understanding of the evolution of management thinking where there is a pendulum which swings back and forth between viewing spirituality as an integral part of organizational life and excluding spirituality from the organization (2006:219). Tracey (2012) argues that in management and organization studies, religion has often been neglected (see also King 2008, and Tracey, Phillips & Lounsbury 2014). Various authors with a background in *psychology* have contributed to the study of workplace spirituality (e.g. Hill & Dik 2012). With reference to *sociology*, Grant, O'Neil and Stephens (2004:267) suggest that sociologists rarely study spirituality in the workplace because of a tendency to take organized religion as their reference point when studying the "sacred". *Theology* can be viewed, broadly speaking, as related to the study of fsw in two different ways. On the one hand, theologians have been working in the areas of theology of work, theological business and economic ethics, and other related areas (e.g. Charry 2003, Grand & Huppenbauer 2007, Heslam 2015, Huppenbauer 2008, Ligo 2011, Posadas 2017, Stackhouse, McCann & Roels 1995, Tucker 2010). On the other hand, a number of management and organization scholars have begun to explore and develop theological approaches to business, management and organization (e.g. Daniels et al. 2012, Dyck & Schroeder 2005, Dyck & Wiebe 2012, Miller 2015, Mutch 2012, Sørensen et al. 2012).[9]

Additionally, fsw is also addressed in relation to a variety of themes and theoretical conceptions, such as attachment theory (Mitroff, Denton & Alpaslan 2009), corporate social responsibility (Van Aken & Buchner 2020), diversity research (Gebert et al. 2014, Hicks 2002), human resource development (Fenwick & Lange 1998), identity research (Gebert et al. 2014, Ramarajan & Reid 2013), institutional theory (Almond 2014, Gümüsay, Smets & Morris 2020), managerial law (Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle 2014, Cash & Gray 2000, Miller & Ewest 2015, Morgan 2005), normative stakeholder theory (Carrascoso 2014, Ray et al. 2014), organizational development and transformation (Benefiel 2005, Dehler & Welsh 1994), religious education (Van Buren 1998), and sensemaking (Long & Helms Mills 2010, McKee, Helms Mills & Driscoll 2008, Scheitle & Adamcyk 2016). In sum, fsw appears as a multidisciplinary field of study which has so far attracted con-

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9 I will discuss the relationship between theology and the study of Christians at work in more detail in chapter 5.

tributions from various academic disciplines and prompted lively and diverse theoretical engagement.

2.1.3 Fsw and influential thinkers

How is the study of fsw related to the thinking of 'influential thinkers'? Hudson (2014:38) notes that

> In the spirituality at work literature, there are virtually no articles which take the ideas of a major thinker—whether a philosopher, theologian, or psychologist—and apply them to the question of spirituality at work.

While Hudson identifies a broader tendency within fsw literature, I nevertheless found some studies which apply the thinking of a 'major thinker'[10] to fsw.[11] King and Nicol (1999) draw on the frameworks of Carl Gustav Jung[12] and Elliot Jacques to argue for the importance of recognizing *individual* spirituality for *organizational* enhancement. Driver (2005) proposes a framework with which to evaluate organizational spirituality discourses based on the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, in particular his distinction between empty speech and full speech (2005:1093). While empty speech expresses an "alienated reflection" (2005:1097) of the self, full speech "allows the fragmented, dislocated, and fleeting discourse of true subjectivity in the symbolic order to emerge", says Driver (2005:1097). Wozniak (2012) draws upon the thinking of German philosopher Georg Simmel to explore the dynamics of spirituality, religion, and organizations. She outlines how navigating through possible tensions between one's spirituality and particular work contexts is not directly accessible by science and its objective methods (2012:45), but is an internal matter of individual conscience. Driscoll and Wiebe (2007) draw on Jacques Ellul's notion of *technique* to offer a critical evaluation of the predominant instrumentality in current approaches to workplace spirituality (see also 3.4). Bell, Taylor, and Driscoll (2012) draw on William James's notions of 'healthy-mindedness' and a 'sick

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10 The answer to the question of who counts as a major thinker may be influenced by what discourses (see 2.1.2 and 3.4.2) one prioritizes.

11 The purpose of this section is to make visible (usually explicit) interconnections between fsw and thinkers known to a broader audience. Even though this will become obvious in my further treatment of fsw literature, I hasten to add here that when evaluating a contribution to fsw, I am *not* particularly interested in whether an author seems to count as a 'major thinker' or not, but more in *what* an author is saying.

12 For other fsw studies with reference to Jung, see for example Abramson (2007), Bell and Taylor (2004), and Rozuel (2019).

soul' to contribute to critical organization theory with respect to the expression of religious beliefs in organizations. Additionally, and with particular regard to Christian living at work, some authors have taken up the work of Søren Kierkegaard (Tucker 2010, see also 4.1), Simone Weil (Radzins 2017, see 4.3) and Abraham Kuyper (Daniels et al. 2012, Diddams & Daniels 2008, Heslam 2015, see sections 5.4, 5.5, and 6.1).

Busse and colleagues (2018), De Klerk (2005), Driver (2007), and Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) draw on Viktor Frankl's conception of meaning in life. They explore the difference between the management of meaning and meaningful work (Lips-Wiersma and Morris), possible meanings of suffering in organizations (Driver), and the relationships between work wellness and meaning in life (De Klerk).[13]

Numerous authors on fsw explicitly refer to Max Weber and, in particular, to Weber's thesis (1988[1905]) on the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism (e.g. Assouad & Parboteeah 2017, Bell & Taylor 2016, Cao 2007, Dyck 2014, Gundolf & Filser 2013, Kalemci & Kalemci Tuzun 2019, Stackhouse 2014, Steiner, Leinert & Frey 2010, and Zulfikar 2012). Steiner and colleagues (2010) argue that, from a macroeconomic perspective, Weber's thesis that Protestantism is a causal reason for economic growth has not been supported by recent research. In addition, "empirical research has not been able to establish any consistent effect of denominations on economic growth and per capita income" (2010:12). According to Calvacanti, Parente & Zhao (2007:106), the controversial status of Weber's thesis is attributed to the fact that the social sciences have failed to "adequately quantify the effects of religion on the aggregate performance of economies". Ryman and Turner (2007:184) review empirical and conceptual literature related to Weber's thesis and conclude that Weber's thinking remains highly relevant for studying the "interactions between religion, ethnicity, culture, politics, and economies in a dynamic world". From a historical viewpoint, Schneider (2007) indicates that Rodney Stark has corrected Max Weber (as others have done before him, says Schneider) by observing that "capitalism took root in Catholic Italy centuries before Protestantism existed" (2007:290). He also observes that Catholic theologians adapted to developments in commerce by lifting the ban on interest, forging concepts of investment, strengthening the affirmation of property rights, and sanctifying frugality and commercial work as virtues (2007:290). In spite of such reservations concerning Weber, Stackhouse (2014) argues that Weber's thinking remains highly relevant in that it indicates that economics should

13 On Frankl's notion of meaning in life as it relates to Christian living, see 6.2.

take religion and theology seriously. As regards Christian living in secular contexts, Andersen (2005:124–127) has pointed out how Weber indicates the re-evaluation and new estimation of secular work mirrored in Luther's understanding of the term *Beruf*. Luther uses *Beruf* to translate the Latin *vocatio*, which in Catholic theology referred at the time to spiritual occupations in contrast to secular ones. Luther applies *Beruf* to secular work, a move which has resulted in a new appreciation of secular work, says Anderesen. In addition to these explicit references to Weber, Dodd and Seaman (1998) have pointed to Weber's implicit influence, arguing that theoretical approaches to enterprise and religion are still haunted by Weber's "spectre" (1998:71) and interpreted through a "Weberian prism" (1998:73).

Interestingly, Long and Driscoll (2015:953) outline that some workplace spirituality authors are clearly influenced by the thinking of Abraham Maslow, but without making any explicit reference to him. The implicit influence of major thinkers on current debates on fsw is explored by some studies, for example the influence of Maslow on the workplace spirituality discourse (Bell & Taylor 2003, Long & Driscoll 2015) and the influence of Abraham Maslow, Erich Fromm, Carl Gustav Jung, and Roberto Assagioli on spiritual management development (Bell & Taylor 2004). In sum, even though this might not be a dominant approach to fsw, there is a strand of fsw research that relates fsw questions to the work of 'influential thinkers'.

2.1.4 *Methodological contexts of fsw*

Studies on fsw discuss and draw on a wide range of methodological perspectives and discourses, such as positivist versus post-positivist approaches (Fornaciari & Lund Dean 2001), positive, critical, and existential approaches (Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2014), methodological agnosticism as an alternative to secular and theological perspectives (Bell & Taylor 2016, 2014), the integration of a social scientific perspective and a philosophical/theological perspective (Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014:183), a "gender-based" perspective (Zaidman 2019), a post-structuralist perspective (Tourish & Tourish 2010), a practical theological perspective (Miller 2015), discourse analysis (Bell & Taylor 2003, Elmes & Smith 2001, Long & Dricsoll 2015, Nadesan 1999), and a sensemaking methodology (McKee, Helms Mills & Driscoll 2008). Many have called for more empirical research (see, e.g. Bell-Ellis et al. 2015:2, and the literature there) and there have been a number of attempts to quantify or measure fsw or some aspects of it (e.g. Ashmos & Duchon 2000, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003, Jurkiewicz & Giacalone 2004, Kinjerski

& Skrypnek 2006, Lynn, Naughton & VanderVeen 2009, Miller, Ewest & Neubert 2018, Miller & Ewest 2013b, Pandey, Gupta & Arora 2009, Westerman, Whitaker & Hardesty 2013). Noting the dominance of quantitative approaches, some (e.g. Benefiel 2010:34) have called particularly for qualitative research to capture unconsciously and habitually lived religiosity at work (see Brotheridge & Lee 2007:304) and to access the "lived experience" of fsw (Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014:183).[14] Qualitatively oriented research includes, for example, grounded theory studies (Almond 2014, Crossman 2015a, Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2014), ethnography (Cao 2007, Whipp 2008), and autoethnography (Cullen 2011).

The methodological discussion has dealt with the arguments for and against "measuring workplace spirituality" (Krahnke, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz, 2003), and some have emphasized that particular methodological choices are closely interrelated with basic assumptions on fsw (Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2014, Brooke & Parker 2009:7). In particular, Lips-Wiersma (2003) has argued that a researcher's own spirituality and religion inevitably influence the research process.[15] Acknowledging the implications of certain methodological choices for one's understanding of fsw, Brooke and Parker (2009:7) rightly ask: "If we consider an idea of a spirituality as one which may be quantified and implemented within an organization, then how does this affect the way we view spirituality in the workplace?" In particular, quantitative approaches share the assumptions that fsw can be observed and measured, that the degree to which it is present varies from context to context (e.g. Ashmos and Duchon 2000:137), and that this degree can be influenced. Others have argued that spirituality refers to immaterial concerns and that an understanding of spirituality as measurable is necessarily limited (Benefiel 2003). Critics have also argued that a quantitatively oriented understanding of fsw is linked to an emphasis on the outcomes and benefits of fsw and reveals an attitude which seeks to instrumentalize fsw.[16] Overall, there is a broad discussion on methodological issues, with varying levels of awareness of the methodological challenges of studying fsw.

In this section, I have addressed the naming of the field of fsw, key issues raised, and how fsw is related to a number of theoretical contexts, such as academic discourses, the thinking of influential writers, and methodologies.

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14 For the debate regarding the possibility of accessing 'lived experience' in organizational ethnography, see Watson (2011) and Van Maanen (2011).
15 On the influence of traditions on fsw research, see 4.1.
16 On critical approaches to fsw, see 3.4

In the following section, I will address the first of the key issues identified above, that of definitions of fsw (1.2). The two other key issues raised above, namely the questions of the relationship between spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work, and the problem of integrating spirituality and work will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

2.2 Definitions of fsw

The purpose of this section is to introduce the problem of definitions of key terms in fsw research[17] and to sketch the unfinished and fragmented state of the definition project. The question of definitions has been approached in a number of different ways. In the following, I will first introduce definitions found in empirically oriented research[18] (2.2.1); second, present some of the main criticisms raised against the available definitions (2.2.2); and third, introduce an approach which takes up these criticisms in an attempt to avoid a neat definition by understanding fsw as centering around a 'conceptual convergence' (2.2.3). Fourth, I shall present a number of proposals to clarify the meaning and role of the three terms of faith, religion, and spirituality and how they are related to each other in the context of fsw research (2.2.4.). Finally, I will identify the main open questions and problem areas (2.2.5).

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17 In the following, I will focus on approaches to defining spirituality, faith, and religion in their relation to work contexts. This discourse, which is prominent in the context of management and organization studies, has gained some independence and seems to be only loosely related (if at all) to broader sociological approaches to the concepts of spirituality and religion (for general sociological approaches to spirituality and religion, see e.g. Kippenberg & von Stuckrad 2003, Knoblauch 2006, Pollack & Rosta 2015, Woodhead 2011). For a broad interdisciplinary conception of religiosity, see Huber (2009).

18 Most proposed definitions appear in this context. In addition, some definitions are proposed in non-empirical publications, for example by Gotsis and Kortezi (2008) or Sheep (2006). Gotsis and Kortezi (2008:587) equate workplace spirituality with a "system context of interwoven personal and cultural values permeating all levels of organizational life". In their understanding, workplace spirituality consists of four core dimensions (transcendence, connectedness, completeness, and joy) and of seven spiritual values (honesty, forgiveness, hope, gratitude, humility, compassion, and integrity). In my impression, such non-empirically oriented definitions borrow heavily from those offered in empirically oriented contributions. Some of the non-empirically oriented definitions will be discussed below in the context of the conceptual convergence approach to definitions of fsw.

2.2.1 *Definitions in empirically oriented fsw research*

In empirically oriented fsw research, I identify two main approaches to the question of definitions. The first approach explores conceptualizations of faith or spirituality at work held by practitioners.[19] The second defines fsw in the first place, and then seeks to measure the degree to which fsw, as defined in advance, is present in particular settings.

   With regard to the first approach, I have identified two studies which explicitly focus on practitioner conceptualizations of spirituality at work. On the one hand, Mitroff and Denton's (1999a, 1999b) research among American executives suggests that there is *a similar definition* of spirituality held by many practitioners centering around the "feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe" (1999b:83). The executives tend to distinguish spirituality from religion and to view the former as highly appropriate in the workplace and the latter as an inappropriate topic and form of expression in the workplace. On the other hand, Crossman (2015a:72), who conducted semi-structured interviews with Australian professionals and managers, finds that their conceptualizations of spirituality are "highly individualized" (2015a:72), and that "eclecticism" (2015a:59) might be an under-appreciated construct in the study of spirituality. However, she also identifies a number of values, which are *commonly* associated with spirituality (such as honesty, respectfulness, caring, and connectedness), and which may provide the "necessary glue" (2015a:59) amidst the diverse perceptions of spirituality.

   In the second approach to the empirical study of fsw, researchers focus on quantitative measurement. They develop a conception of fsw with the intention to measure it empirically. The most prominent proposals are, in my view, the following five:[20]

1) In "Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure", Ashmos and Duchon (2000) identify three aspects of spirituality at work (which in their approach includes both the individual and the organizational levels): inner life, meaningful work, and community. "We define spirituality at work as the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community" (2000:137).

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19 In other words, they explore what Hubert Knoblauch (2006:91) has called an "Ethnokategorie".

20 For more extensive presentations of approaches to measuring fsw, see Miller and colleagues (2018), Miller and Ewest (2013a), and Neal (2013).

2) In "Measuring the intangible: Development of the spirit at work scale", Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) focus exclusively on individual experiences of spirit at work, measuring four factors or dimensions[21]: engaging work, sense of community, spiritual connection, and mystical experience. They suggest that spirit at work is a distinct *state* in which one can be.

3) In "A values framework for measuring the impact of workplace spirituality on organizational performance", Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003:91) define workplace spirituality as a "framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy". The respective organizational values are benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility, and trust (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone 2004:131). Individual spirituality in the workplace entails the same ten values (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003:87).

4) In the "Faith at work scale (FWS): Justification, development, and validation of a measure of Judaeo-Christian religion in the workplace"[22], Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen (2009) propose a measure for the degree to which an employee perceives her work and religion to be interrelated. They have generated a model of workplace religion "informed by historical, theological, and sociological writings across Judaeo-Christian traditions" (2009:231). Based on this, Lynn and colleagues (2009:232) developed construct dimensions, items, and indicators, measuring five dimensions of faith at work: relationship, meaning, community, holiness, and giving.

5) In their "Spiritual climate of business organizations", Pandey, Gupta, and Arora (2009) propose that the individual spirituality of employees is reflected in the work climate of an organization. Their 'Spiritual Climate Inventory' measures three aspects of spirituality in the workplace: harmony with oneself, harmony within the work environment, and transcendence (2009:316f).

21 This four-dimensional construct builds on an earlier six-dimensional definition proposed by Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004; see also Miller & Ewest 2013a:41).

22 They use the term 'faith' because they believe that workplace spirituality research has largely ignored workplace religion so far, and they feel that the term "faith" expresses their aim of emphasizing the substance of one's religious beliefs and practices at work.

I will discuss the criticism mounted against such definitions in the following subsection. Here it is important to note that the question of definitions and the question of methodology are interrelated (see also section 2.1.4). Both of the above approaches toward definitions of fsw found in empirically oriented research, the analysis of practitioner conceptions, as well as quantitative measurement of predefined constructs, come with particular methodologies that tend to imply certain understandings of fsw. At a very basic level, both approaches favor 'what individuals say about fsw' (collected via surveys or interviews) over 'what they do' as a source for understanding fsw. When one compares surveys and interviews, it seems that face-to-face interview techniques may be better suited to considering the complexity of practitioner understandings of spirituality, while quantitative "surveys may not capture" (Crossman 2015a:72) it adequately (it can be argued, however, that this is exactly the point of quantitative measuring, to simplify a construct in order to be able to perform research on a larger scale).

As particular implications of empirical research with regard to the substantial understanding of fsw are built into the respective methodology, the question Brooke and Parker ask is, again, particularly instructive: "If we consider an idea of spirituality as one which may be quantified and implemented within an organization, then *how does this affect the way we view spirituality in the workplace*?" (2009:7, emphasis mine). For example, one implication of quantitative measurement approaches is that spirituality is construed as being scalable. In such a view, spirituality is thought of as observable and measurable, and the degree to which it is present may vary from context to context (see e.g. Ashmos and Duchon 2000:137). But is spirituality really scalable or is it best thought of as scalable? However one answers such questions, the assumption of spirituality's scalability is not a result, but a *presupposition* of quantitatively oriented research. But it might equally transpire that such an assumption becomes an obstacle to understanding fsw. A number of authors[23] have suggested that the assumption that spirituality is measurable is a manifestation of management interests to harness spirituality for organizational purposes. Thus, they argue that the issue of spirituality's measurability is related to that of its manageability. This leads to the broader question of the instrumentality of fsw and fsw research, which is raised by a number of authors, and which I will discuss below (see 3.4). At this point, it is important to note that questions of definitions and methodology of fsw are interrelated, and that these are inextricably bound to the very basic questions of the assumptions and intentions a researcher brings

23   See the literature discussed in 3.4.

to bear on this subject.[24] In the following section, I will focus more narrowly on a number of criticisms raised concerning existing definitions of fsw.

2.2.2 Criticism of the definition project

Several authors have raised concerns that present definitions of spirituality in management and organizational research lack substance. In particular, Reva Brown (2003), when attempting to write on the relationship between "emotion and organizational spirituality", finds that, while the concept of emotion has been clearly defined and clarified through research, it is impossible to arrive at a "workable definition" (2003:393) of organizational spirituality, and she concludes that the notion is confused, imprecise, and opaque (2003:393). She therefore proposes abandoning the notion of organizational spirituality, and she is also radically skeptical of the related notion of workplace spirituality. Arguing along similar lines, Margaret Benefiel (2003) holds that the current discourse of spirituality in business and management is based on vague and broad definitions without substance, lacking in particular a philosophical foundation. In addition to these general criticisms, there are a number of specific issues raised by scholars who address the vagueness, abstractness, and confusion of available definitions, to which I will presently turn. In this subsection, I will present these criticisms to offer an overview. Later[25], I will engage in more detail with the issues raised here.

  First, Dent, Higgins, and Wharff (2005) point to one particular problem associated with the *vagueness* of available definitions of spirituality: The challenge presented by the unclear boundaries and relationships between spirituality and other concepts presumably related to spirituality:

> If humility, for example, is part of being spiritual, then the concept of spirituality needs to be sited in a conceptual landscape. We are not calling for a definition which is overly reductionist or hierarchical. However, the principle of parsimony demands that a given concept performs its role while other concepts perform theirs. In a similar vein, spirituality is such a loaded term to bring in to the organizational arena that there must be compelling reasons for theorists to do so.

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24 On the influence of traditions on fsw research, see 4.1.

25 In section 2.2.3, I will discuss a potential solution to the criticisms raised, and in section 2.2.5, I will summarize the open questions with regard to the task of defining fsw. In section 3.5, I will then discuss how extant fsw theory is partly able to mitigate the problems raised by critics. In section 7.3, I will present some orientations with regard to the relationship between key fsw terms and the study of Christians at work.

Two interrelated issues are raised here; that of the relationship of spirituality to other concepts, and that of the necessity of a justification to introduce the notion of spirituality into organizational research. In the light of the 'principle of parsimony', a number of questions with regard to the proposed definitions introduced above arise. If, for example, one defines fsw as a construct which entails the three main dimensions of meaning at work, community, and innerness (Ashmos & Duchon 2000), in what way does fsw (or in particular, spirituality) serve as an umbrella term for these three concepts? Is the concept of fsw (or a similar concept) necessary to address the concepts of meaning, community, and inner life at work, or can they stand alone? Do we need an overarching concept of spirituality at work, for example to address the theme of meaning at work (see e.g. De Klerk 2005)?

Second, in addition to vagueness, the *abstractness* of present definitions is criticized. For example, Hicks (2002:388) observes that abstract definitions do not permit clear identification of practices that count as spiritual or religious, and practices that do not. This is, I think, at least partly a reflection of the fact that the available definitions tend to rely more on what individuals say about fsw than on what they do, or on how they practice fsw. Such definitions tend to remain abstract in that their connection to concrete practices remains elusive. This relates to an issue on a more general level. The question arises *of which aspect* the notion of spirituality relates or should relate to (e.g. to practices, to people, or to the workplace).

This is, third, according to Wozniak (2012:33), the *confusion* concerning the definition of organizational spirituality, which is characterized by a lack of agreement on which organizational aspect the spiritual quality belongs to. In her view, the term "workplace spirituality" suggests that spirituality is an attribute of the workplace or the organization. However, some authors also attribute spirituality to a variety of other phenomena, such as practices, values, attitudes, perspectives, beliefs, and emotions. Thus, spirituality becomes an amorphous concept "that encompasses everything that can be associated with the human or social condition" (Wozniak 2012:33). She thus points to a present lack of clarity in the use of the term 'spiritual', and argues that an approach to spirituality in work contexts needs to make it clear what (aspects, practices, people) the terms 'spirituality' and 'spiritual' relate to.

Thus, the three issues of the vagueness, abstractness, and confusion of definitions of fsw can be translated into the question of the justification of the concept(s) of fsw in organizational research, the question of the relationship of fsw to spiritual practice, and the general question of the aspect(s) to which fsw refers (people, practices, workplaces, values, etc.).

While I will address these questions in more detail in chapter 3 (see 3.5), I will presently turn to a widespread strategy of dealing with the problems concerning the definition of fsw concepts. Many authors, while acknowledging the aforementioned problems in defining fsw concept(s), continue to argue for the relevance of fsw constructs for management and organizational research, claiming that, in spite of the absence of a widely shared definition, a consensus has emerged regarding the most important themes and concepts of fsw.

2.2.3 The 'conceptual convergence' approach

While many researchers agree that defining fsw is difficult and that a widely accepted definition has yet to emerge, a number of researchers claim to have discovered, in the variety of definitions available, a common semantic field in the sense of "a conceptual convergence" (Sheep 2006:360) around some "prevalent themes" (De Klerk 2005:66), "unifying themes" (Driver 2005:1096), "recurring themes" (Sheep 2006:360, McGhee & Grant 2016), or "themes that dominate the discussion" (Hudson 2014:27f), and a "fair amount of agreement about what counts as spirituality at work" (2014:29). To evaluate this claim, I shall, in the following, examine which themes and concepts are identified as contributing to this 'conceptual convergence'.

Driver (2005:1094f) finds three "unifying themes" or core dimensions of spirituality in research literature: transcendence, harmony/holism, and personal growth. De Klerk (2005:66) identifies three "prevalent themes": meaning in life, a sense of unity with the universe, and awareness of a life force. Sheep (2006:360) concludes that a consensus in terms of a definition may be lacking, but that a conceptual convergence has emerged in research literature around the four recurring themes of self–workplace integration, meaning in work, transcendence of the self, and growth/development of one's inner self at work. Hudson (2014:27f) proposes the connection to one's authentic self, to one's community, and to something transcendent as the dominant themes. McGhee and Grant (2016:3[26]) argue that spirituality is a composite of four recurring themes: transcendence, interconnectedness, meaning, and innerness. In a manner similar to that of identifying dominant themes, Krishnakumar and Neck (2002, see also Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar 2016) offer a classification of definitions of spirituality at work based on the dominant theme to which a definition relates: intrinsic-origin views, religious views, and existentialist views (2002: 154–156). "The

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26 They draw upon the writings of Sheep (2006) and Nelson (2009).

intrinsic-origin view of spirituality is that which argues that spirituality is a concept or a principle that originates from the inside of an individual. (…) religious views of spirituality are those that are specific to a particular religion". Existentialist views are characterized by "the search for meaning in what we are doing at the workplace".

The following table (figure 1) presents an overview of the themes as proposed by the different authors (with similar themes allocated to the same column). The overview of recurring themes indicates that there seems to be no agreement on which themes exactly count as unifying themes or conceptual convergence, but that some recurring themes among the proposed unifying themes can be discovered, nevertheless. Interestingly, the 'conceptual convergence' or 'unifying themes' approach arrives at an understanding of fsw which is quite similar to that of the empirically orientated approaches (this is why I have included empirically orientated researchers in italics in the last three lines of the table). In fact, some of the authors even draw directly upon the definitions proposed by empirically orientated researchers (see e.g. Sheep 2006:360 or Driver 2005:1094).

	Integration	Meaning	Transcendence	Innerness	Community	others
McGhee & Grant 2016	Interconnectedness (self–workplace integration)	Meaning	Transcendence (toward an ultimate concern, toward meaning)	Innerness		
Hudson 2014			Connection to something transcendent (universe, higher power)	Connection to one's authentic self	Connection to one's community	
Sheep 2006	Self–workplace integration	Meaning in work	Transcendence of the self, becoming part of an interconnected whole	Growth/development of inner self		
Driver 2005	Holism and harmony (Integration)	Personal growth toward a meaningful life	Transcendence			
de Klerk 2005		Meaning in life	Sense of unity with the universe			Awareness of a life force
Krishnakumar and Neck 2002		Exsistentialist view		Intrinsic-origin view		Religious view
Mitroff and Denton 1999a, 1999b			Feeling of being connected with the entire universe	Feeling of being connected with one's complete self	Feeling of being connected with others	
Ashmos and Duchon 2000		Meaningful work		Inner life	Community	
Pandey, Gupta, and Arora 2009			Transcendence	Harmony with the self	Harmony within the work environment	

Figure 1 Recurring themes

The difference between the empirical researchers who propose definitions and the authors who propose dominant themes lies mainly in their evaluation of the robustness of their proposals. While the former authors propose a definition, the latter argue more tentatively for conceptual convergence (around the similar themes that the former use for their definition), but tend to conclude that a widely accepted definition has not emerged. A nuanced position is adopted by Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar (2016). They point out that, in terms of the original classification by Krishnakumar and Neck (2002), a "reasonably well-accepted definition of workplace spirituality" (2016:2) with regard to what they call the intrinsic-origin and the existentialist views has emerged in research literature,[27] but that the role of religion in workplace spirituality is still controversial. In their claim that a definition has emerged, they tend to side with the empirically oriented researchers, who propose a definition. In contrast, most of the other authors who propose a 'conceptual convergence' or 'recurring themes' approach, tend not to call their proposal a definition.

In so doing, they take seriously the criticism of *vagueness* raised against the mainly quantitatively oriented definitions (without necessarily providing a remedy). With this move, they are able to react to a major issue, which is implied in the question of the necessity of the spirituality concept, namely that of its legitimacy as a research subject: Although no agreement on definition has emerged, and in spite of some remaining vagueness, there is a kind of 'semantic field' of recurring relevant themes uniquely related to the subject.

However, the conceptual convergence proposed is not able to silence the criticisms of the *abstractness* and *confusion* of the constructs, in that it proposes themes or dimensions of fsw with which the abstractness in terms of an unclear relation to practices cannot be remedied, and with which the confusion in terms of aspects (people, workplaces, values, practices, etc.) is still not addressed.

In addition, as Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar (2016) have pointed out, this conceptual convergence does not include the issue of the relationship between *religion* and spirituality, which remains controversial. And, in addition to spirituality and religion, the term faith is also used by a number of authors. Therefore, as regards the terminology of what I have referred to as the field of faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts (fsw), the pro-

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27 To them, the common definition of workplace spirituality has emerged around the three dimensions (originally conceptualized by Ashmos and Duchon 2000) of inner life, meaningful and purposeful work, and a sense of community and connectedness.

posed conceptual convergence does not clarify the relationship between these three terms. While most of the authors discussed so far tend to use the term 'spirituality', the terms 'faith' and 'religion' are also used. In the following subsection, I will thus address the use of the three main terms faith, spirituality, and religion in fsw research.

2.2.4 Spirituality, religion, or faith at work?

In the following, I will first introduce perspectives on the relationship between spirituality and religion in the workplace. Subsequently, I will sketch different understandings of the notion of faith at work. Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar (2016:6) argue that on the question of the role of religion in research on spirituality at work, two camps have developed: those who want to include religion and those who want to exclude it from the study and promotion of workplace spirituality. Phipps and Benefiel identify six juxtapositions of spirituality and religion present in the "field of faith and spirituality at work" (2013:33): mutually exclusive, overlapping, synonymous, religion as a subset of spirituality, spirituality as a subset of religion, and contextually determined. They evaluate the available juxtapositions in the light of four underlying considerations (practical needs for differentiation, protecting individual rights, fostering cross-cultural dialog, opening avenues for relevant research), and conclude that spirituality and religion should be treated as *distinct but overlapping* constructs and that researchers should make it clear whether their focus is on spirituality (without religion) and management[28], or on spirituality and religion and management, or on religion (without spirituality) and management (2013:41f).

Wozniak (2012) proposes an understanding of spirituality and religion as distinct, but related. In particular, she suggests that the problem of confusion in the definition of workplace spirituality can be remedied by introducing a concept of spirituality which builds on the notion of 'religiosity' or 'spiritual rhythm' from the philosophy of Georg Simmel (Wozniak 2012:33; Simmel 1997 [1906]). Simmel associates *religiosity* strictly with a person. Religiosity denotes the form of being "characteristic of an individual" (2012:33). It is distinct from *religion* as a social form, which may be consti-

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28 Note the use of the term 'management' here, while they earlier refer to the "field of faith and spirituality at *work*" (2013:33, emphasis mine). This interchangeable use of management and work seems to be a characteristic feature of fsw literature (I will comment on this use in section 3.5).

tuted by practices, rituals, systems of beliefs, discourses, et cetera. Wozniak identifies Simmel's 'religiosity' (or 'spiritual rhythm') with spirituality, as a form of being which is related to but distinct from social forms of religion, in which spirituality may materialize in such aspects as practices, systems of beliefs and morals, attitudes, and values. Thus, spirituality has no object, says Wozniak: It is a state or quality of the form of being of people, a quality of an individual that may be accompanied by such aspects as practices, systems of beliefs and morals, attitudes, and values. These aspects are referred to as 'religion' by Simmel, while the basic individual quality from which they emerge is called 'religiosity' or 'spiritual rhythm' (by Simmel) or 'spirituality' (as suggested by Wozniak). Thus, objects of religion "emerge as materializations of the spiritual impulses of human beings" (2012:34).

In this outlook, religious forms (practices, beliefs values, etc.) are manifestations of spirituality. It is, however, not clear why the concern of workplace spirituality research with "spiritual workers doing spiritual work" (Long & Driscoll 2015:948) should be reduced in such a way that the spiritual quality should be allocated only to people, but not, for example, to work. In any case, a theory of spirituality in the workplace which adopts such a narrow definition would still have to address the question of how this spirituality is manifested in the workplace, even if it conceptually distinguishes spirituality from its manifestations.[29] In addition, as far as I understand Wozniak, people who would consider themselves spiritual, but not religious (see e.g. Mitroff & Denton 1999a & 1999b, Johnson et al. 2018), would still be categorized as religious because, in such an outlook, one's being spiritual inevitably leads to some form of religious expression.

A different solution to understanding the spirituality–religion relationship is proposed by Brotheridge and Lee (2007, see also 3.4.1). They conceptualize spirituality and religion as distinct, yet overlapping concepts, based on the distinction between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated religiousness[30]. Spirituality overlaps with intrinsic religiousness because both are based on "deep-seated beliefs" (2007:291), either secular or religious, and they share a "common core of values" which "engenders the same moral and ethical behaviors among all workers" (2007:297). Spirituality does not, however, overlap with extrinsic religiousness because the

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29 Note the distinction between pure spirituality and applied spirituality, which a number of theorists use to make a similar conceptual move (section 3.2.2).

30 The terms 'religiosity' and 'religiousness' are, as far as I can judge, used interchangeably, and in contrast to religious affiliation.

latter is based on "instrumental purposes" (2007:291). Secular spirituality does not overlap with religion because it is based on secular beliefs. However, as far as the workplace is concerned, both share a "common core of values" (2007:297). These distinctions lead to a typology of five different groups of people: the disconnected, the extrinsic, the intrinsic, the pro-religious, and those whose spirituality is based on secular beliefs. The disconnected are people with low intrinsic and low extrinsic religiousness. They are non-spiritual and non-religious. The extrinsic are low in intrinsic and high in extrinsic religiosity. They are religious, but not spiritual. The pro-religious are high in intrinsic and high in extrinsic religiosity. They are religious and spiritual. The intrinsic are high in intrinsic and low in extrinsic religiosity. They are also both religious and spiritual. The individuals of the fifth group, whose spirituality is based on secular beliefs, are spiritual but not religious (2007:296f). In this approach, secular spirituality is formally treated as a specific type of religiosity ("religiosity based on secular beliefs" 2007:296), which is similar to intrinsic religiosity, and which functions as a quasi-religion, but which is not part of the overall category of religion. However, in this approach, the distinctiveness of spirituality is to be questioned because both religion and spirituality are conceptualized on the basis of religiousness. Although secular spirituality is explicitly distinguished from religion, there is, nevertheless, a tendency to view spirituality as a quasi-subset of religion.[31]

Phipps and Benefiel (2013:39) argue that to view religion and spirituality as separate domains with "some shared content" allows researchers to "study either or both when appropriate" (2013:39). However, as the examples of Wozniak (2012) and Brotheridge and Lee (2007) indicate, it is questionable whether this is a position which can be realistically maintained. Wozniak, acknowledging a relationship between spirituality and religion, conceptualizes this relationship *on the basis of spirituality*. Brotheridge and Lee assume some shared content between spirituality and religion and tend to conceptualize their relationship *on the basis of the concept of religion* (or religiousness). I have not found an approach which treats spirituality and religion as distinct, but as overlapping without conceptually clearly prioritizing

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31 On the other hand, if one wishes to establish a unique concept of secular spirituality as independent from religion, it seems that the spirituality–religion relationship is then to be conceptualized on the basis of this basic notion of spirituality, and religion is consequently conceived of as one possible form of spirituality, resulting in the conceptualization of religion as a subset of spirituality.

one of the concepts over the other by conceptualizing one on the basis of the other.[32]

It seems that the only way to maintain the distinctiveness and overlap of the concepts at the same time, without favoring one concept over the other, is by introducing an overarching term, which allows for both religion and spirituality to be distinct constructs of the same category, and thus share some similar content, while still being distinct. Such an approach has been suggested by Miller and Ewest (2013a:37, see also Miller, Ewest & Neubert 2018). They propose 'faith at work' as an umbrella term which includes both religion and spirituality in the workplace. Faith is used here as a generic socio-historical term, with subcategories such as Islamic faith or Jewish faith. In this understanding, the term is used similarly to how the term religion is used in the social sciences (as a generic term with subcategories), and in addition, it is argued that the term faith is suited to encompassing secular spirituality as well as religion (Miller & Ewest 2015:2).

However, the question arises of whether faith is well-suited to serve as a generic category subsuming both religion and spirituality, or whether faith is to be understood in quite different terms. In fsw research, in addition to Miller and Ewest's usage, at least three quite different additional ways in which faith is to be conceptualized are presented.

A second[33] usage is presented by Fry and Cohen (2009). They use the term faith alongside the notion of hope as a component of their theory of spiritual leadership. Faith, in their model, refers to one's hope and trust in the realization of a "transcendent vision of service" (2009:80) to others. This faith/hope is nurtured by one's inner life and spiritual practice (varying in form and content; it can be religious, but does not have to be), and by one's attitude of altruistic love. Thus, spirituality (as an inner life nurtured by spiritual practice) is conceptualized as a source of faith. The object of faith is a "transcendent vision of service to key stakeholders" (2009: 80), and thus a combination of an understanding of the mission and purpose of a particular organization, and an idea of what the world will look like when this mission and purpose are accomplished. As such, it differs from what

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32 This problem of the tension between and the conceptual interdependence of the notions of spirituality and religion is by no means restricted to the study of religion and spirituality at work. See, for example, Knoblauch (2006) on the question of whether spirituality is to be treated as a discrete sociological form of religiosity. He identifies its distance to organized forms of religion as one of the key characteristics of spirituality, construing as he does a conceptual tension and interdependence between the concepts at the same time.

33 Miller and Ewest's being the first.

others have called "existential" or "religious" faith (Krishnakumar et al. 2015:23) by being oriented toward the accomplishment of an organization's mission.

Third, Lynn, Naughton and VanderVeen (2009) use the term 'faith at work' as referring to a substantial understanding of workplace religion and in contrast to an understanding of spirituality in the workplace, which sidesteps religion (what others have called 'secular spirituality'). Thus, they use faith as a synonym for a particular (substantial) understanding of religion.

Fourth, Nash (2007:173), speaking from a protestant perspective, argues for an understanding of faith which views faith "not as a source of ready-made answers to ethical conundrums, but as a process". The focus of the person of faith is not mainly on applying specific religious positions in a business setting, but on tapping into "the dynamics of faith" (2007:178) as a process that should constantly and actively intrude on one's consciousness as a business leader.

The term faith is thus used in at least four different ways: faith as a socio-historical category encompassing religion and spirituality (Miller & Ewest 2013a), as an attitude with regard to organizational goals (Fry & Cohen 2009), as (substantial) religion (Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen 2009) and as a process that intrudes on consciousness (Nash 2007). In addition, others have explored the way in which management practices require faith (Olohan & Davitti 2017, see also Black 2008:50–52[34]) and the parallels between trust in organizational contexts and faith within a religious framework (Caldwell, Davis & Devine 2009).

In sum, there is not only much diversity in terms of various different understandings of faith, spirituality, and religion at work, but also in terms of understanding the relationship between faith, spirituality, and religion at work. In the following subsection, I will briefly recap the main points of this section and relate them to the study of Christians at work.

2.2.5 Current state of fsw definitions and the study of Christians at work

Having introduced fsw with reference to relevant theoretical contexts, and having reviewed the main definitions available, there seem to be a number of open questions in contemporary fsw research. When looking at this research with the intention of studying Christians at work in mind, two main areas of open questions seem to be critical. The first area concerns

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34   For a discussion of Black's approach, see 5.4.3.

the main terms and definitions of fsw research in general. The second area concerns questions with regard to how the main fsw terms and definitions relate to the study of Christians at work in particular.

With respect to the first area, fsw constructs are sometimes criticized for being (too) vague, (too) abstract, and (too) confused. The issue of *vagueness* has been linked (see 2.2.2, and also 3.4.2) to the question of the legitimacy or justification of fsw as a field of study. Authors advocating a conceptual convergence approach have indicated a number of recurring themes and have thus sought to make a case for fsw as a field of study in its own right which emerges around these respective recurring themes.[35] However, a certain vagueness and conceptual unclarity remains (why should, for example, the concept of meaning at work be part of the broader concept of spirituality at work?). In addition, the definitions proposed on the basis of conceptual convergence can be criticized for being *abstract* because they largely ignore spiritual practices.[36] In addition to this neglect of practices, there is, as Wozniak (2012) has pointed out, *confusion* or a deep-seated ambiguity in the use of the terms spirituality and spiritual. It is often unclear what (aspects, practices, persons) they actually refer to.

Adding to the problems regarding vagueness, abstractness, and confusion (which have been mainly raised with respect to fsw constructs involving the notion of spirituality), other terms apart from spirituality, like faith and religion/religiosity, are also used in fsw research. There is no consensus on the relationship between these terms, and as a consequence, there is also no consensus on how the field should be properly named.[37]

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35 Such an identification of themes functions similarly to a definition, marking the appropriate scope of research (see e.g. Van Dam et al. 2018:38). However, it is not clear why the existence or absence of a widely accepted definition of a term (or a consensus on what the basic themes of a construct are) should account for the existence of a field of study or its legitimacy. Woodhead (2011:121) has pointed out that other genral concepts (such as 'the economy', 'politics', 'society', or 'history') face similar problems when it comes to definitions, and that "scholars in all these areas proceed quite happily without necessarily being able to define their object of study."

36 In other words, the problem here is not so much the abstractness per se (since, arguably, e.g. research on embodiment needs to operate with a certain degree of abstraction, see Cregan 2006), but a specific kind of abstractness where the terms lose their resonance with the object of study in terms of how it is practiced.

37 Adding to this vagueness is a terminological problem which I will address in chapter 3: the fact that the workplace-related concepts (such as management, work, business, and leadership) to which faith, spirituality, and religion are related in fsw research, the notions that pertain to work, to aspects of work, to workplaces or to work contexts, also tend to be very broad and general constructs (see section 3.5).

Second, at this point it must be noted that, as far as fsw research is concerned with Christians, religion, faith, and spirituality seem to be the three main terms used in extant research to refer to what is at stake in Christian existence at work (see also chapter 4). All these three terms are used to refer to the key characteristic of Christians at work, that is, their spirituality, religion, or faith. Thus, for those studying Christians at work, an additional question is how these terms relate to the study of Christians at work. While a social scientifically informed study of Christians at work[38] takes account of the terminological situation in fsw research, it must also ask the question of the relationship between fsw terms and the term 'Christian(s)'.

While, at first, this may seem either to be an unnecessary question or to complicate things even further, I will indicate below (6.1) how different understandings of Christian identity adopted by practitioners can serve as a framework in which the Christians we studied position themselves by using the terms faith, spirituality, and religion in particular ways. Thus, while the terminological problems in fsw research seem to be resistant to a general solution, I intend to contribute to the clarification of fsw terms as they concern the study of Christians at work by taking into account how practitioners use these terms.

In addition to practitioner usages of fsw terms in relation to Christian existence, there are broader theoretical questions concerning the relationships of fsw terms to the semantic field around the term Christian/s. I will now briefly indicate some of the relevant questions: To what does the term 'Christian/s' refer and what is its function in relation to fsw terms (such as faith, spirituality, and religion)? How are these terms related to Christian living or existence at work? Is there something (and if so, what is it?) which marks someone's faith, spirituality, or religion as Christian faith, Christian spirituality, or Christian religion? And does the term Christian mainly function as a possible categorization of faith, spirituality, or religion in a socio-historical sense, referring to one (religious, spiritual, or faith) tradition as a subtype of a particular set of traditions, for example Christian faith, compared to Jewish, Islamic, or Buddhist faiths? And, more generally, is the term Christian best described by reference to these concepts of faith, spiri-

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38 In our empirical study of Christians at work in Switzerland, we also found some diversity in meanings of fsw terms (such as faith, spirituality, and religion at work). With respect to faith, for example, the term is sometimes used more in the (particular) sense of an attitude of confidence (see 6.2) and at other times it seems to be more a (general) label for Christian identity/existence (see 6.1).

tuality, or religion? What are the meaning and function of the term 'Christian' with reference to Christians in current work contexts?

In the present chapter, I have addressed theoretical contexts of fsw research and definitions of key terms. I have identified, first, the problem areas of the vagueness, abstractness, and confusion surrounding the main terms of fsw, and, second, the question of how fsw terms relate to the notion of 'Christians' and to the study of Christians in present-day work contexts.[39] In chapter 3, I will discuss the available theory of fsw and how the present theory base offers possible answers to the vagueness/abstractness/confusion problems. Toward the end of chapter 3 and then again in chapter 4, I will take up the question of the term 'Christians' in relation to fsw and address the question of the relationship between fsw and the study of Christians at work.

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39 Note that the first problem area is addressed by fsw researchers themselves, while the second problem area is rarely addressed in fsw research, but was identified by me while approaching fsw research with a focus on its potential contribution to the study of Christians at work.