

1 Researching Christianity at work

The scandal invoked by reference to the label ‘Christian’ is still effective today, even if someone’s positioning as a Christian in contemporary Western societies rarely faces direct opposition in the form early Christians experienced it, by being forced to either abandon their Christian commitment or be executed.¹ As far as contemporary workplaces are concerned, deep-seated unease with the Christian label can currently be observed, for example, in the emergence of a whole field of research that addresses faith, spirituality, and religion in present-day workplaces, and for which Christian existence seems to be nearly a non-topic. It only refers to the term ‘Christian’ reluctantly, and if it does, then mainly as a historical remnant, which it does seem not to know what to do with exactly, and thus prefers to speak, in more neutral terms, of concepts like faith, spirituality, and religion, thus trying to keep the Christian scandal at a distance. Unease with the Christian scandal can also be observed in the public relations work of some contemporary theologians who engage with questions of current workplaces by making an effort to convince their readers that Christianity is not obtrusive but useful, implying that it does not confront humans with any existential claims, but is roughly in line with nice and decent conduct. Now, ironically, this attempt at taming Christianity has hardly been attractive or useful to either Christians or non-Christians because the very effectiveness and attractiveness of Christianity is hidden, as I will argue, right in the midst of the bloody scandal in which a Christian mode of existence participates. The study of Christians at work which I propose here is an attempt to recover an existential understanding of the term Christian as it relates to modes of daily living in contemporary workplaces in Western societies.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I will describe this study’s research questions and objectives (1.1), and subsequently briefly sketch the three types of data (or *voices*) which I am going to consider: first, two main bodies of research literature relevant to the study of Christians at work (1.2); second, empirical data from a study of Christian managers in Switzerland (1.3); and, third, a combination of various sources, or ‘hermeneutical lenses’, which are themselves not particularly concerned with work contexts, but which help to explore and accentuate the embodied character of a Christian mode of existence (1.4.). In addition to the discussion of the types

1 On the role of executions in Christian identity formation, see Horrell (2007) and chapter 5 of the present study.

of data I am going to use, I will sketch the outline of the present dissertation (1.5).

1.1 The study of Christians at work: Research question and objectives

The present dissertation addresses the question of Christian modes of existence in contemporary workplaces in Western contexts. A main starting point for this research is the seemingly unspectacular observation that there are people who are Christians *and work at the same time*. Given their existence, I ask how Christians are Christians at work, how they engage with the relationship between their Christian identity and their work activities, and how they *experience* and *embody* their Christianity at work and make sense of it. In other words, what does it mean to work and be a Christian at the same time? In this section, I am going to address different options to narrow down the research question (1), specify the particular terminology employed in the phrasing of the question (2), and identify the research objectives (3).

1) The empirical data² discussed in the present study focuses on Christian managers in business contexts in Switzerland. Even though particular definitions of terms like ‘business’ and ‘manager’ can help to confine the fieldwork sampling of research subjects³, I argue that these terms are not well-suited to limiting the research question. First, these terms (in particular the terms ‘management’ and ‘manager’) entail a certain vagueness and abstraction (see 3.5), and second, the distinction of managers from non-managers is of little help when studying Christian existence at work (see, again, 3.5). Taking account of Henry Mintzberg’s (2009:12) definition of a manager as “someone responsible for a whole organization or some identifiable part of it” and Michael Black’s (2008, see 5.4.3) contention that in corporate contexts it makes sense to refer to *every* member of the corporation as a corporate manager, I hold that the term Christian, existentially understood, indicates a form of existence in which it becomes secondary whether individuals are labeled as managers or not.⁴ In this respect, while

2 See sections 1.3, 6.1, and 6.2 in the present dissertation, and Brügger (2018); Brügger and Huppenbauer (2019).

3 For example, the term ‘business sector’ is helpful as an empirical sampling criterion (I use it to refer to the context of *for-profit* organizations (even if the term ‘business’ can be used in a broader sense): <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748922629-17>, am 31.05.2024, 00:12:26

my own empirical work has (so far) been concerned with business management contexts in particular,⁵ in the present study I adopt a focus on (Christian existence in) work contexts in general and include studies across a variety of work contexts, types of work, and professions in the literature review (see chapters 2–5).⁶

Geographically, while I review studies across a variety of contexts,⁷ many of the existing studies concentrate on contemporary Western societies. In the light of this literature, it seems suitable to focus the research question on ‘contemporary Western’ contexts. While my perspective is, of course, influenced by the particular geographical context in which I have been

- 4 A similar point applies to the notion of ‘the secular’ with reference to work contexts. In terms of empirical sampling processes, it seems to make sense to speak of *secular* workplaces in contrast to religious workplaces and thus to focus, for example, on people working in business contexts instead of, say, church or para-church contexts. However, in the context of the study of Christians at work, the relationship of Christians to ‘the world’ (see chapter 4.2) becomes important in a way which cannot be adequately considered through the simple allocation of secularity and religiosity along the lines of different work contexts (on secular workplaces, see e.g. Whipp 2008:52–72, on secularity, see also Brügger 2010:60–78).
- 5 See Brügger (2018, 2010); Brügger & Huppenbauer (2019); Brügger & Kretzschmar (2015).
- 6 Current research on faith, spirituality or religion at work covers different work *contexts*, such as, for example, the business world (e.g. Brophy 2014, Delbecq 2009, Lambert 2009, Nash 2007), the finance and retail service industries (e.g. Chen and Yang 2012, Chen et al. 2012), manufacturing (e.g. Chen et al. 2012), factory farming (e.g. Zuzworsky 2001), aviation (e.g. Milliman et al. 1999), hospitality (Gatling 2015), policing and law enforcement (e.g. Moran 2017), the public sector (e.g. Inauen et al. 2010), higher education (Bell-Ellis et al. 2015, Epstein 2002, Konz & Ryan 1999, Sikkema & Van der Werff 2015), healthcare (e.g. Delbecq 2010, Kinjerski & Skrypnek 2008), religious contexts (e.g. Inauen et al. 2010, Lewis-Anthony 2014, Payer-Langthaler & Hiebl 2013, Pfang 2015, Yahanpath et al. 2017), and secular organizations (Whipp 2008). Another group of publications addresses faith, spirituality or religion at work with respect to different *types* of work or different *professions* (for an overview, see e.g. Zolnai & Flanagan 2019), such as physicians (Miller and Dorjee 2013), lawyers, judges, law professors and legal staff (Sullivan 2013), accounting and reporting work (Rodgers & Gago 2006), or engineering (Sikkema & Van der Werff 2015).
- 7 For example, Arab Middle East (Tlaiss 2015), Australia (Crossman 2015a, 2015b), Brazil (Vasconcelos 2010), China (Cao 2007, Zhang 2020), France (Bell 2008), Germany (Moll 2020), Ireland (Cullen 2011), India (Hicks 2003), Indonesia (Neubert et al. 2015), Kenya (Neubert et al. 2015), New Zealand (Singh, Corner, and Pavlovich 2016), The Netherlands (Mazereeuw, Graafland, Kaptein 2014), Nigeria (Nakpodia, Shives & Sorour 2018), North America/US (Hicks 2003, Mitroff & Denton 1999a, Lambert 2009, Neubert and Dougherty 2013, Sikkema & Van der Werff 2015), Puerto Rico (Escobar 2011), Singapore (Hicks 2003), South Korea (Jeon et al. 2013), Sri Lanka (Fernando & Jackson

engaged empirically, I try to sketch a broader account of Christian living⁸ at work contextualized⁹ for present-day Western contexts. I leave it to others to assess the validity of my analysis for contexts other than ‘contemporary Western’ ones. Thus, the present study focuses on Christians engaged in contemporary workplaces and asks the questions *how Christian existence is embodied in present-day work settings* and *what it means to live as Christians in work contexts in contemporary Western societies*.

2) In an earlier formulation of the research question, I conceptualized the problem of Christian living by employing the notion of faith and by asking: how do Christians integrate (or relate) their faith and their work?

2006), Turkey (Kalafatoğlu & Turgut 2019, Karakas & Sarigollu 2019, Kirkbesoglu & Sargut 2016), UK (Bell 2008).

8 I will use the terms ‘Christian existence’ and ‘Christian living’ interchangeably, partly because I do not want to give too much weight to any particular term referring to Christian modes of existence (see chapters 6 and 7) and to remind myself that the label Christian(s), existentially understood, qualifies first and foremost people, not concepts. Terminologically, I have followed Arthur Rich (see also 5.3.5) in referring to a Christian way of life as Christian existence (see, for example, Rich 1984:132). However, to explore the meaning of the term (see chapters 4–6), I have only selectively drawn on Rich’s writings and his metaphoric (see Rich:1984:121) understanding of resurrection, and have focused more on the notion of Christian existence as characterized by the actual and bodily participation of individuals in Christ’s death and resurrection (see e.g. Miller 2014, Kelly 2010). For a discussion of Rich’s ‘existential’ position, see Behrendt (2014:58). I do not particularly identify with a theological existentialist movement (see McGrath 2011:147f), but I do, as many others have done before me, emphasize the importance of “the immediate, real-life experience of individuals” (McGrath 2011:147). A (merely) metaphoric interpretation of Christ’s death and resurrection in their relationship to the formation of a Christian mode of existence might appear to be an intellectual way-out for those who do not want to ignore the New Testament accounts completely in this regard, but still try to avoid some of the conceptual and existential force of the New Testament accounts. However, if the Christian location of individuals at the intersection of the timeless and the timebound (see 4.2) is taken into account, there is no longer a conceptual need for such a way-out and one can, instead, explore the existential contours and implications of the participation of contemporary Christians in Christ’s death and resurrection (see Kelly 2010, Miller 2014:134f). In Rich’s (1984:121) metaphoric understanding of ‘resurrection’, the term “will nicht eigentlich etwas erklären, was am dritten Tage nach der Kreuzigung geschehen ist”. I am not sure what Rich means by “eigentlich” and by “erklären”, but, the term has surely been used, for example in Paul’s epistle to the Romans, to describe *how* “was am dritten Tage nach der Kreuzigung geschehen ist” shapes the formation of the way of life of those who (bodily) belong to Jesus Christ (see also the discussion in 5.3.6).

9 It is contextualized in that it draws on empirical data from Switzerland and considers literature covering a variety of different geographical contexts, of which many can be subsumed under the label ‘contemporary Western’ contexts.

However, this turned out to be potentially problematic phrasing in the light of contemporary research on faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts, as it emerged primarily in management and organization studies (see 1.2). By putting the question this way, I assumed that ‘faith’ is the element which characterizes a Christian as *Christian*. While the assumption of faith as determining Christian identity can be justified in a Christian theological context,¹⁰ it turned out to be somehow *misleading* in the light of current research relevant for the study of Christians in contemporary work contexts. In this research, instead of a single focus on faith, there are *three* main terms used which relate to Christian living at work: faith, spirituality, and religion¹¹ at work. In the light of this research, which employs a diversity of understandings of the key terms of faith, spirituality, and religion at work (see 2.2), the assumption of faith as a key characteristic displayed by Christian managers becomes particularly problematic. In the relevant research discourses, the notion of faith is used in a variety of different ways, and while its implied meanings are not necessarily unrelated to Christian living, faith is definitely *not* (and quite plausibly so) understood as a particular characteristic of *Christian* identity. If the usage of the notion of faith is related to Christian identity or living in these discourses, then primarily in such a way that the term Christian serves to categorize a certain *type* of faith (among other types), differentiating it, for example, from “Islamic faith” (Al Arkoubi 2013, Neal 2013). It turned out that there is no agreement in current research concerning the definition of the key terms of faith, spirituality, and religion in their relationship to work contexts (see 2.2). Given this terminological situation, I reframed the earlier question of ‘how do Christians integrate faith and work?’ in a way that targets more explicitly the meaning of the term ‘Christian’ and the formation of Christian existence by asking how Christian existence is embodied at work and what it means to live as Christians at work.

It turned out that, conceptually, clarification of the term Christian with regard to the formation of Christian modes of existence can serve as a basis from which to clarify and conceptualize the notions of faith, spirituality, and religion at work, not in general, but *in their relationship* to a mode of exist-

10 By drawing, for example, on the Pauline writings (see e.g. Eastman 2018, Ueberschaer 2017, and Schliesser 2016) or from the work of various ‘classical’ Christian theologians (such as Anselm of Canterbury, Martin Luther, or Karl Barth, see McGrath 2011). On the Augustinian *fides qua creditur/fides quae creditur* distinction, see McGrath (2011:409) and section 7.3.1 in this dissertation.

11 Additionally, the term religion occurs in different variations, such as ‘religiousness’ and ‘religiosity’.

tence pertinent to *Christians*. Thus, clarification of the term Christian(s) provides the basis for consideration of the notions of faith, spirituality, and religion in the study of Christians at work.

This conceptual work is omitted by those who explore Christians at work by simply employing one of the terms faith, religion, or spirituality to refer to the Christianity of their research subjects. This becomes a problematic move in the light of the present diversity of meanings of the notions of faith, spirituality, or religion, as they are used in relevant contemporary research discourses. The consequence of this terminological diversity for a conception of Christian living which leans heavily on one of the notions of faith, spirituality, or religion at work, without clarifying their location in the overall project of Christian living, is that the talk of faith, spirituality, or religion at work in connection with the theme of Christian existence becomes potentially misleading. Faith, as a characteristic of Christian identity, so this dissertation's argument goes, refers primarily to and implies a particular mode of existence (as marked by allegiance or belonging to Christ, see chapter 4). Such an existential Christian understanding is, however, usually not implied in the notion of faith as it is used in current discourses on faith, religion, and spirituality in management and organization studies (see chapters 2 to 4). This is why the phrasing of the research questions explicitly targets the existence of Christians. This allows me to explore the available usages of the term Christian(s) and relate them to Christian existence at work and to key terms used in extant research.

3) Given the present terminological–conceptual situation in current research, my aim is to appreciate present contributions of the research relevant to the study of Christians at work and advance extant research by exploring and accentuating the concrete and bodily character of how Christians live at work. A main step in support of this focus on Christian embodiment will be recovering a historically informed existential understanding of the term ‘Christian/s’.

The two main objectives of the present study are thus:

- 1) To identify and assess the contributions of and gaps in existing research with regard to the study of Christians in present-day Western workplaces.
- 2) To advance the understanding of Christian living at work by exploring its concrete and embodied character.

In the following section, I will identify the two main bodies of literature which I suggest represent the bulk of ‘existing research’ relevant to the study of Christians at work.

1.2 Target discourses: management studies and theology

To sketch the contours and contents of a social scientifically and theologically informed study of Christians at work, I will take into account two main bodies of literature: first, the literature corpus on faith, spirituality, and religion at work (fsw¹²), as it has emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies and, second, theological approaches to contemporary workplaces.¹³ This distinction refers broadly to the academic disciplines that are used as starting points, contexts, and target discourses to address various aspects of Christian existence at work.¹⁴ I consider these

- 12 Given the trinity of ‘faith, spirituality, and religion’, in which each of the three terms can (but does not have to) refer or relate to Christian existence, I will, in the following, refer to this field of research on faith, religion, and spirituality in work contexts, as it has emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies, as fsw research. Fsw is meant to be a descriptive label of extant research which employs the terms of faith, religion, and spirituality with reference to work contexts (for alternative labels for the field, see 2.1).
- 13 The anthropology of Christianity is a further stream of research from within the social sciences, in addition to management and organization studies, which is relevant to the present study in important respects (for an overview, see Robbins 2014, and Bialecki, Haynes & Robbins 2008), even though it has, to my knowledge, not focused on work contexts in contemporary Western societies. While I focus mainly on literature from management and organization studies, as well as on theology in this study, I think a more systematic attempt to bring together the anthropology of Christianity and the study of Christians at work would be a worthwhile future endeavor. In this dissertation, I will confine myself to hinting at some connections in 1.4, and I will also try to roughly place my approach to Christians with regard to conversations about definitions of Christianity in the anthropology of Christianity in 7.2.
- 14 The distinction works well to roughly identify two distinct bodies of relevant literature, even if it is an oversimplification (on the different theoretical and academic contexts of fsw research, see 2.1). I will differentiate between fsw and theological approaches, even though theological approaches also sometimes employ the terms faith, spirituality, or religion with regard to workplaces, and this is, therefore, not a watertight distinction. I discuss theological approaches to the workplace which emphasize that theirs is a *theological* approach in chapter 5, but have included some of the theologians that address questions of faith or spirituality at work, without particularly claiming a theological frame or stance, in my discussion of fsw research in chapters 3 and 4. Writers with a theological background that are thus included in my discussion of fsw research include Margaret Benefiel (chapter 3, she also served as Chair of the Academy of Management’s MSR

two types of research literature to constitute the bulk of what can be termed ‘existing research’ with regard to the study of Christians at work. For the present dissertation, these two bodies of literature represent the reference points in terms of extant research, as well as the target discourses to which I seek to contribute.

Having broadly identified this study’s target discourses, I will now turn to some of the key concepts used in the respective research and discuss their function in selecting the literature on this subject area. When selecting a sample of the literature relevant for the study of Christians at work, one is confronted with terminological problems, both with regard to the part of the subject relating to ‘Christians’ and to that relating to ‘at work’. In both respects, various terms are used with considerable semantic ambiguity.¹⁵

As I have already briefly outlined above with regard to the research question (1.1), the theme of Christians in work contexts is addressed, in extant research, mainly via the notions of faith, spirituality, or religion at work. In other words, what characterizes Christians as Christians is mostly referred to in academic texts as either their *faith*, their *spirituality*, or their *religion*. In the respective journal articles, one of the most popular terms used in this regard is ‘workplace spirituality’. My impression from working with this research literature is that the recent rise in research output on the themes of faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts has emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies and leans heavily on the notion of ‘workplace spirituality’¹⁶. It is in this context of a rising interest in spirituality in management and organization studies that the related topics of faith at work and workplace religion have received fresh attention. The three main terms of faith, spirituality, and religion are used in a variety of ways, with sometimes distinct and sometimes overlapping or even identical fields of meaning. This terminological situation is further complicated by the fact that, with regard to the ‘at work’ aspect of the study of Christians at work, a number of different relevant terms are used, such as ‘work’, ‘workplace’, ‘business’, ‘corporation’, ‘management’, ‘leadership’, and ‘entrepreneurship’. However, for example with regard to management, it is not possible to clearly differentiate between two subsets of the

Interest Group), Michael Black (4.1.1, but see also 5.4), Vivian Ligo (4.3), David Miller (chapters 3 & 4), Inese Radzins (4.3), and Travis Tucker (4.1, Tucker has a background in philosophy & religious studies, but served at the Center for Faith and Culture at Yale Divinity School).

15 On definitions, see section 2.2.

16 And/or the related notions of ‘spirituality at work’ or ‘organizational spirituality’.

aforementioned literature, one concerned with managers and managerial work, and the other not addressing management.¹⁷ This is partly due to the variety of different conceptions of ‘management’ and ‘work’ available and the broadness of these terms. A similar point also applies to the focus on *business* contexts.¹⁸ Although there are studies which explicitly focus on business contexts in terms of for-profit contexts, many different workplace-related concepts, such as work, corporation, business, management, leadership, and entrepreneurship, can be related to *both* for-profit *and* not-for-profit organizations and work contexts. It will become clear in the course of the literature discussion (see chapters 2 & 3) that, because of the semantic ambiguity of these terms (both with regard to the part of the study of Christians at work relating to ‘Christians’ and that relating to ‘at work’), they do not qualify as appropriate criteria for the selection of the literature I focus on, even though, for reasons of manageability of the literature sample, it would be convenient to focus strictly on, say, the literature on ‘faith’ in ‘business’, or ‘spirituality’ in ‘management’. However, a publication which uses the terminology of ‘faith at work’ can be just as relevant for the study of Christians at work as a publication which employs the terminology of ‘religion’ and ‘management’. Thus, focusing on only one combination of these terms (of, say, faith, religion, or spirituality, on the one hand, and of, say, work, business, or management, on the other hand) would produce an arbitrary sample. The only way to adequately consider the relevant literature on this subject area is by analyzing each of the different strands of texts that adopt terms like ‘work’, ‘workplace’, ‘business’, ‘corporation’, ‘management’, ‘leadership’, and ‘entrepreneurship’ with regard to the notions of ‘faith’, ‘spirituality’, and ‘religion’, and by exploring their contribution to the study of Christians at work. Therefore, this review of the literature relevant to the study of Christians at work will include the literature on the three main notions of ‘faith’, ‘spirituality’, and ‘religion’ in work contexts and will apply a similar inclusiveness in terms of the work-related concepts considered.

In the present dissertation, I will first focus on fsw research, as it is mainly shaped by contributions from management and organization studies (chapters 2–4), and subsequently address theological approaches to contem-

17 Even though it is possible to identify some texts which clearly focus on managers, such as Andre Delbecq’s (2004) “The Christian manager’s spiritual journey”, others are more ambiguous in this regard (see section 3.5).

18 Which we employ in our empirical research, in terms of for-profit organizational contexts, see Brügger (2018) and Brügger and Huppenbauer (2019).

porary work contexts (chapter 5).¹⁹ The literature selection and review have been broadly orientated toward the following questions:

- How are fsw constructs defined in the literature? (chapter 2)
- How is fsw related to and situated in theoretical contexts in terms of academic disciplines and discourses, important thinkers and methodological traditions and approaches? (chapter 2)
- How can fsw as a research area be presented from an overview perspective and how can the research area be structured? (chapter 3)
- What theory building efforts have been undertaken and what aspects of a theoretical analysis of fsw are addressed? (chapter 3)
- In what way does fsw research contribute to the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces? (chapter 4)
- What can theological approaches to work or work contexts contribute to the study of Christians at work? (chapter 5)

Formally, I have included articles and essays published in academic journals²⁰ and anthologies, as well as book publications and monographies in the literature sample.²¹ In considering the most important publication chan-

19 Which employ similar workplace-related concepts, such as, for example, work, business, and corporation (see chapter 5).

20 While some journals focus strongly on fsw topics (such as Faith in Business Quarterly, Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion, Journal of Religion and Business Ethics, Journal of Biblical Integration in Business, Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership), a number of other academic journals have (more or less) recently published special issues on fsw topics (in chronological order): Journal of Business Ethics (1986; religious studies & business ethics), Journal of Managerial Psychology (1994), Journal of Organization and Change Management (1994), Business Ethics Quarterly (1997; Western religious approaches to business ethics), Chinmaya Management Review (1999), Journal of Organizational Change Management (1999), Journal of Organization and Change Management (1999), American Behavioral Scientist (2000), Journal of Management Education (2000), Leadership Quarterly (2001; book reviews on leadership & spirituality), Journal of Adult Development (2001, 2002), Journal of Organizational Change Management (2003), Organization (2003), Theology Today (2003), Business and Professional Ethics Journal (2004; Christian perspectives on business ethics: faith, profit, and decision-making), Leadership Quarterly (2005), Journal of Management Inquiry (2005), International Journal of Organizational Analysis (2005), Journal of Management Development (2010; practical wisdom in management from the Christian tradition), Journal of Business Ethics (2011; the encyclical-letter 'caritas in veritate'), Organization (2012; theology, work and organization), Koers — Bulletin for Christian Scholarship (2014), Journal of Business Ethics (2017; Christian ethics and spirituality in leading business organizations), Journal of Religious Ethics (2017), Management Research Review (2017; innovative research methods in management, spirituality, and religion),

nels of the respective target discourses of management and organization studies and theology, the fsw review places an emphasis on articles, and the review of theological approaches includes more book publications (in particular in the discussion of theological ethics). When selecting the literature, I searched for publications by using a variety of terms and combinations (such as workplace spirituality, faith and management, spirituality and management, faith and business, religion and management, faith and work, spirituality and work, spirituality and business, God and management, Christians at work, et cetera) on the Rechercheportal of the Zentralbibliothek Zürich (<http://www.recherche-portal.ch>) and on Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.ch>).

With respect to fsw research, I started by identifying and reading overview articles, and asked how the research area is approached and presented in these articles. Subsequently, I followed the literature references in the overview articles and complemented this literature with texts found through additional searches on the Rechercheportal and on Google Scholar and by considering the various special issues on fsw which have been published by a number of academic journals (see above). In addition, I also searched for fsw articles in journals directly (in particular, the *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* and the *Journal of Business Ethics*). The sample of fsw literature discussed includes more than 400 texts, most of them journal articles. New studies are being published continually.²²

Academy of Management Perspectives (2019; papers from the symposium ‘faith in management scholarship and practice’), *Business & Society* (2020; the macro-social level impact of religion on business), *Organization Studies* (2020; spirituality, symbolism and storytelling), *Journal of Business Ethics* (2020; values, spirituality and religion: family business and the roots of sustainable ethical behavior).

- 21 By focusing on academic discourses, I do not address the large body of (mainly exhortational) practitioner literature on faith at work (for a recent example, see Curtas 2015). A hybrid form (between practitioner and academic literature) is represented by publications authored by academics with a target audience that includes practitioners (see for example Buszka & Ewest 2020, Daniels & Vandewarker 2019, Keller & Alsdorf 2014).
- 22 I have been using e-mail alerts from the following journals to continually add relevant publications to the sample: *The Academy of Management Review*, *Action Research*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *American Sociological Review*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, *Body & Society*, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Business & Society*, *Critical Research on Religion*, *Currents in Biblical Research*, *Dialog*, *Faith and Philosophy*, *Field Methods*, *Human Relations*, *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, *International Review of Mission*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *Journal of Religious*

While doing this search for fsw literature, I also encountered a few theological approaches to the workplace. Addressing the contribution of theology to the study of Christians at work poses the problem that there is a huge amount of theological literature which seems to be somehow peripherally related to the study of Christians at work, yet a dearth of literature that actually addresses it directly. Therefore, I will discuss texts that address the question of a theological neglect of the workplace (see 5.1). To offer an idea of the broadness of the conceptual space addressed, I will sketch the use of different ‘entry concepts’ in theological engagement with the workplace (see 5.2). To illustrate and discuss some of the problems and possible contributions of theological engagement with the workplace, I will explore five theological ethical approaches to the workplace (5.3), as well as different ‘theologies’ related to workplaces, such as the theology of work, of business and management, and of the corporation (see 5.4).

Except for a focus on German-speaking contributions to theological ethical engagement with the workplace,²³ I have not limited the literature sample to studies from particular geographical contexts (although many of the studies available focus on Western contexts), assuming that the concrete incorporation of faith, spirituality, and religion at work may display both context-specific characteristics and properties which are similar across geographical contexts. Therefore, I have treated studies from various geographical contexts as potentially contributing to fsw and to the study of Christians at work in contemporary Western contexts.²⁴ In addition to considering existing research, the study also incorporates insights based on pri-

Ethics, Journal of Sociology, Labor Studies Journal, Leadership, Management and Labour Studies, Missiology, Organizational Research Methods, Organization, Organization Studies, Qualitative Inquiry, Qualitative Research, Religious Studies Review, Reviews in Religion & Theology, Sociological Methods & Research, Sociology, Strategic Management Journal, Studies in Christian Ethics, Theological Studies, Theology, Theology Today, Work and Occupations, and Zygon.

23 For more detailed information on the literature sample concerning theology, see the respective sections in chapter 5.

24 With regard to Switzerland, I have not found any publications in academic journals addressing Christian living in contemporary workplaces in a Swiss context, apart from the publications by Brügger and Huppenbauer (2019), and Brügger and Kretzschmar (2015). As far as the German context is concerned, there is a study of Christian managers in Germany by Andrea Werner (2008), published in the Journal of Business Ethics. On German managers, see also Eugen Buss’ (2012) work in his *Managementsoziologie*, and the study by Kaufmann, Kerber, and Zulehner (1986). On the historical role of religious socialism in Switzerland, see for example Fluder (1996), Fluder and colleagues (1991), Ruffieux (1969), and Schmid (2015:105–109). I thank Daniel Waeger for

mary data collected among Christian managers in Switzerland, to which I will turn presently.

1.3 Empirical data and method

In addition to reviewing relevant existing research, I conducted a study of Christian managers in the German-speaking part of Switzerland which served to provide an empirical grounding or foundation for the account of Christians at work presented in this dissertation (see chapters 6 and 7).²⁵ In the present section, I will briefly describe the data (1) and methods (2) employed in the collection and analysis of the data. The status of the theoretical sketch developed on the basis of this empirical study in relation to other theoretical elements considered in this dissertation will be addressed in chapter 6. For more on the role of practitioner perspectives in this research approach, see 1.4.

1) The main intention behind collecting the empirical data was to produce a diverse set of accounts of scenes of Christian existence embodied²⁶ at work that provides a basis on which to develop an empirically grounded theoretical sketch. These accounts have been generated through a combination of manager observations and manager interviews. I have used Henry Mintzberg's (2009:12) definition of a manager as "someone responsible for a whole organization or some identifiable part of it". The sampling focused on managers from the business sector in the German-speaking part of Switzerland²⁷ who identify themselves as Christians and with an interest in faith, spirituality, or religion at work. The original goal was to conduct

pointing out to me the importance of Pier Luigi Giovannini and other Christians in the events that preceded the formation of Ethos (a Swiss foundation which promotes socially responsible investing), and to the fact that Dominique Biedermann, co-founder of Ethos, has been a practicing Catholic (in personal correspondence with the author. On Biedermann, see also Waeger & Mena's 2019 study on shareholder activists as moral entrepreneurs).

25 The results of this empirical study (conducted as part of SNSF Project No. 169838 on faith-work integration) will be published via this dissertation and a planned additional article (for a draft, see Brügger & Huppenbauer 2019).

26 The research focus on embodiment will be described in 1.4.

27 Most of the managers were located in Switzerland, except research participant 1 (P1), who was located in southern Germany (which is geographically adjacent, as well as culturally, linguistically, and economically close, to the German-speaking Swiss context.). I included some data from her because I hold it to be instructive and because it was her report of a working situation which first inspired the idea to focus the data collection on concrete scenes of Christian existence embodied at work.

observations and interviews with 8 to 12 managers.²⁸ For the sampling, I put together a list of potential research participants.²⁹ We³⁰ contacted the managers from the list via e-mail, telephone, or in person, to arrange a date for an interview plus (if possible) observation. During the data collection process, we found that half of the managers interested in participating in the study were prepared to give an interview but said that it would not be possible for us to accompany them during their work, mostly for reasons of confidentiality. Finally, while 9 out of 27 managers contacted either did not answer or rejected the invitation to participate in the study, we conducted interviews with 18 managers and made additional observations of 9 out of the 18 managers interviewed.

We have included variation in the sample with regard to sector and size of organization, as well as with regard to the hierarchical position, gender, and denominational orientation of the managers. Variety was a crucial criterion for the selection process, since the aim was not to find some kind of universal ‘ingredient’ of Christian existence at work, but to produce accounts that offer a glimpse of the variety of Christian existence embodied in work contexts. According to Mintzberg (2009:238), variety is a characteristic feature that should be considered in the study of managing:

There are so many managers in such a wide variety of places that I made no pretense of developing a scientific sample, even if I could have figured out what that means. In any event, my intention was not to test any hypothesis or prove anything specific, so much as to gain insight into managing in its many varieties.

In this light, my aim was to gain insight into Christian existence as embodied by business managers ‘in its many varieties’. To ensure variation in terms of *sectors*, the sample includes managers from the consumer goods

28 See Truschkat, Kaiser, and Reinartz (2005) on the problem of sample size in grounded theory studies.

29 Some of the managers were publicly known as Christians, others were personally known or recommended by research participants or others. We also contacted a few networks to ask for recommendations of potential research participants: the Bankenbibelgruppen, the Unternehmergebet, the VBG, and alliance f.

30 The SNSF support, which covered part of my employment as a doctoral researcher, allowed us to engage Daniel Schäppi as a research assistant to help with the data collection, in particular in recruiting managers for the study, and conducting interviews, field observations, and transcription (as part of SNSF project no. 169838 on faith–work integration). While I developed the research design, Daniel Schäppi conducted 13 interviews and 6 observations, while I conducted 5 interviews and 3 observations. I assume full responsibility for how the empirical data is used in this dissertation to support the theory development concerning the study of Christians at work.

industry (P2³¹), delicatessen trade (P15), finance (P9, P10), health care (P17), industry (P3, P6, P8, P11, P13), information technology (P1), management consulting (P7), marketing communications (P14), online-marketing (P16), real estate (P12), retail business (P5), and telecommunications (P4). In terms of organization *size*, the sample includes managers from all four categories of enterprises³²: microenterprises (1–9 employees; P14, P15, P16, P18), small enterprises (10–49 employees: P6, P7, P8, P12), medium-sized enterprises (50–249 employees: P11, P13), large enterprises (250 and more employees: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P9, P10, P17).

In terms of *hierarchical positions*, we have included managers from the three main hierarchy levels ('top', 'middle', and 'bottom', see Mintzberg 2009:6). In particular, the sample includes 3 chairpersons of the board (P3, P12, P14), 8 CEOs (P5, P6, P7, P8, P13, P15, P16, P18)³³, a CFO (P11), 4 department managers (P2, P4, P9, P10), an education manager (P17), and a project manager (P1). In terms of *gender*, the sample includes 5 female (P1, P4, P15, P16, P17) and 13 male (P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P18) managers.

As regards *denominational orientation*, we often found dynamic orientations which were modified throughout the managers' biographies, and which could also include parallel affiliations³⁴ with more than one denomination³⁵ at the same time. The denominational orientation of the managers can be specified according to the denominational background in which the managers grew up and with regard to current participation³⁶. The sample includes 1 manager with a Lutheran background (P8), 11 managers with a Reformed Church background (P3, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P16, P17, P18), 5 managers with a Roman Catholic background (P1, P4, P5, P11, P15), and 1 with a Salvation Army background (P14). The sample includes

31 P2 stands for 'research participant 2'.

32 As proposed by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. See <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/industrie-services/entreprises-emplois/structure-economique-entreprises/taille-forme-juridique-secteurs-repartition-regionale.html> (accessed 4 June 2018).

33 Of these, P6, P7, P15, P16 identified themselves as founder-CEOs and P8, P18 as owner-CEOs.

34 For example, P15 partakes in both Catholic and Reformed Church events and activities.

35 For an overview of the religious landscape in Switzerland, see Stolz and colleagues (2014), and Baumann and Stolz (2007).

36 I counted all managers as active participants with regard to church institutions, where they currently engage in some form of regular activities (for example, P16 is engaged in volunteer work in religious education in the Reformed Church, and at the same time participates in particular worship services at ICF on a regular basis. I thus categorized her both as an active participant in the Reformed Church and ICF).²⁶

3 active participants in the Roman Catholic Church (P1, P11, P15), 1 active participant in a Chrischona congregation (P8), 2 active participants in an FEG congregation (P5, P13), 2 active participants at ICF (P6, P16), 7 active participants in the Reformed Church (P3, P7, P9, P12, P14, P15, P16), 2 active members of an SPM congregation (P2, P10), 1 active member of a Vineyard congregation (P18), and one practicing Christian manager currently not affiliated with any institutional church organization (P17). The fieldwork and data analysis consisted of a range of activities, which I will describe now.

2) The main instrument employed in the data collection was a combination of observation (see Lüders 2000:384–401, Knoblauch 2003:77–81, Mintzberg 1970, 2009, Martinko & Gardner 1985) of the managers during sequences of work and semi-structured interviews (Hopf 2000:349f, Flick 2014:207–227). The combination of observation and interviews seems to be well-suited to producing accounts of Christian existence embodied at work, which, first, display the actual practice of the managers and, second, also take into account the Christian experience and practice which informs and shapes their lifestyles. In the interview, one or more scenes from the working sequence observed were discussed in more detail. This allowed us to triangulate the manager's perspective and the observer's perspective on particular situations. This provided the basis for producing accounts of scenes of Christian existence embodied in real-life working situations, which I then used to develop an empirically grounded understanding of Christian existence at work.

If the managers allowed us to accompany them during a sequence of their working day, we usually conducted the observation prior to the interview. The first interview phase consisted of questions about the scenes observed and about the managers' experiences at work.³⁷ The second interview phase included questions about the managers' spiritual or faith biographies and about their current form of Christian living and practice(s). In the third interview phase, we asked questions about the relationship between the managers' current Christian lifestyles and their work, first, with regard

37 If the managers did not allow us to accompany them during a work sequence, we asked them to recall relevant scenes from their recent work experience to link our questions to concrete situations.

to the scenes observed and, second, in general. This resulted in a quadripartite structure³⁸ for the data collection process:

- 1) observation during a sequence of work
- 2) interview phase 1 (questions on the scenes observed)
- 3) interview phase 2 (questions on spiritual or faith biography and on current form of Christian living)
- 4) interview phase 3 (questions on the relationship between Christian existence and work)

For the study's observation activities, Mintzberg's (2009) observation of managers served as a point of orientation. He accompanied the executives for one day, wrote down what he saw chronologically and analyzed this conceptually. However, while Mintzberg adopted a general perspective on managing, our own focus was more specifically on the relationship between Christian existence and work. We accompanied the managers during a meeting or another sequence of a working day. For the interview part which followed the observation, the manager and the interviewer selected one or more scenes from the working sequence observed for further discussion. The managers were asked to name a scene or situation which was particularly relevant or interesting to them. The interviewer could then suggest (an) additional scene(s) according to the salience of noticeable aspects. These selected scenes provided the key content for the first interview phase, where we sought to reconstruct the scenes by asking what happened, how the managers experienced the respective scene(s), and in what way it/they was/were relevant to them. In the second interview phase, we sought to reconstruct the crucial aspects of the managers' faith or spiritual biographies and Christian lifestyles by using the notions of 'religious'³⁹ habitus' and 'body pedagogics' as the conceptual background with which to study the embodiment of particular orientations, as acquired through particular means (activities), and in having particular experiences, which result in embodied outcomes.⁴⁰ In particular, we asked the managers to describe the activities and practices that characterize how they live out their faith, spiri-

38 In some cases, the data was collected in two meetings, whereby the questions from interview phase 2 were discussed in a first meeting because they had no direct link to the scenes observed, and observation and additional interview parts were conducted in a second meeting.

39 On the relationship between the label 'religious' and Christian existence, see 6.1 and 7.3.2.

40 See Mellor & Shilling 2014, 2010a, 2010b; for a discussion of their approach, see 1.4, 4.2, and 6.2. <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748922629-17>, am 31.05.2024, 00:12:26

tuality, religion, or Christian identity⁴¹, and how these practices and orientations had developed in the course of their biographies. In addition, we asked them to describe the experiences related to these activities or practices, as well as the concrete effects these (activities or related experiences) provoked (in terms of ‘embodied outcomes’ and orientations).

The interviews were designed as semi-structured one-on-one interviews. As in the ‘problem-centered interview’ developed by Andreas Witzel (see Flick 2014:223–227), we used narrative stimuli to collect biographical data focusing on a specific problem, namely the formation of a Christian mode of existence at work. Similarly to Witzel, we combined different interview styles, ranging from conversational to confrontational. In contrast to Witzel’s approach, the interviews do not stand alone in our research, but draw directly on the observation data and seek to reconstruct the interconnections between concrete work situations and the managers’ Christian orientation. Different types of question have been integrated to do justice to the problem-centered interests: from open and narrative stimuli, prompting and ad hoc questions, to more directive questions. If possible, we also collected general data (professional and personal background, specific jobs and functions of the managers, sector-specific challenges, etc.). We tried to formulate short, simple, specific and concrete questions (see Foddy 1994:51; Berg 2007:105) which we could use as starting points and adapt them to the needs of particular interview situations.

The interviews and observations were conducted between 21 May 2014 and 23 April 2018. Wherever possible, the interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed⁴². For reasons of confidentiality, all sensitive information, such as names of people and organizations, has been anonymized. I analyzed the data with the aid of the software MAXQDA (see Kuckartz 2007), employing a grounded theory approach of open, selective, and theoretical coding (see Glaser & Strauss 1967; Flick 2014:397–417; Breuer 2010; Kuckartz 2007:72–82) as a frame of reference for structuring the coding and theory development process. The results of the data analysis were discussed at a meeting in March 2018 with the doctoral supervisor (and SNSF project no. 169838 main applicant), Prof. Dr. Markus Huppenbauer, and

41 We tried to formulate our questions in a conceptually open way and work with the terminology the interviewees used, usually by, first, offering them different options and, subsequently, sticking to their preferred terminology. However, our efforts were sometimes crossed by the efforts of the managers to adapt to our terminology (e.g. P8).

42 The data collected from the interviews with P1, P3 and parts of the data from P2 were generated out of ad-hoc situations and were not recorded but written down after the interview.

with Daniel Schäppi, the research assistant employed within the respective SNSF project. In addition, the empirical data analysis and theory development were also presented and discussed at a meeting of the *praktisch-theologische Sozietät* at the University of Zurich under the guidance of the co-supervisor of this dissertation (and SNSF co-applicant), Prof. Dr. Ralph Kunz in April 2018, at a conference on ‘Glaube und Management’ at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in June 2018, at the Faith@Work Summit in Chicago in October 2018, and at a session on Christian perspectives on management, spirituality and religion at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management in Boston in June 2019.

1.4 Research approach: Christian embodiment

This dissertation’s focus on the embodied character of Christian living corresponds to a stress on embodiment which can currently be found in a number of disciplines, and which refers not so much to a well-defined concept, but to an attitude or perspective in which phenomena, such as mental processes or social interaction, are viewed and explored in their relation to the body (Tschacher & Storch 2012:259f, for an introduction, see Fingerhut, Hufendiek & Wild 2013). The basic assumption of an embodiment perspective is that these phenomena and processes are always embedded in a bodily context. In the following, I will briefly address two particularly interesting notions⁴³ related to embodiment which I hold to be relevant for

43 Two other important notions related to embodiment, which I can only mention here briefly, are those of embodied cognition and the somatic marker. 1) Recent approaches in the field of cognitive sciences propose the notion of embodied cognition, which questions a neat mind/body separation, that is, the idea that there is a given separation between one’s mind and one’s bodily actions and behavior. Instead, they propose that cognition itself is an embodied phenomenon. Such an embodiment perspective implies an understanding of cognitive entities (such as thoughts and beliefs) as always embedded in a bodily context (e.g. Gallagher 2012, Tschacher & Storch 2012, Hoffmann & Pfeifer 2011, Norris 2005). 2) Another interesting concept which highlights the crucial role of the body in the formation of human behavior is the idea of a ‘somatic marker’. Originally presented as a hypothesis of how body signals influence behavior (the ‘somatic marker hypothesis’, see Damasio 1996), it has since been developed into a broader theory of decision-making (the ‘somatic marker framework’, see, e.g., Reimann & Bechara 2010). Some authors try to combine it with economic theory (Bechara & Damasio 2005) and ethics (Sobhani & Bechara 2011). As a neurological account of how somatic signals shape human behavior, it is an interesting conversation partner for an embodied account of work behavior. I thank Barbara Studer for bringing the idea of a ‘somatic marker’ to my attention.

the study of Christians at work⁴⁴, that of the religious habitus (and the related body pedagogics) and the Christian notion of incarnation (1). Subsequently, I will describe a conglomerate of resources that I will draw on in this study to explore and accentuate the bodily character of Christian living at work (2). In addition, I will address two questions concerning the relationship between insider and outsider perspectives with regard to studying Christians at work (3).

1) With the notions of the religious habitus and body pedagogics, Philip Mellor and Chris Shilling (2014, 2010a, 2010b) introduce a conceptualization of patterns of the embodiment of religious attitudes and orientations in a person's biography. Mellor and Shilling emphasize the role of the body for the perpetuation of religious orientations. In their 'body pedagogics' approach, they describe three analytically distinct factors for research: First, the *means* and activities through which people encounter their key values, techniques, and dispositions. Second, the *experiences* and perceptions they have while they acquire or fail to acquire these values, techniques, and dispositions. And third, the acquisition of these attributes results in the embodied *outcomes* (techniques, dispositions, orientations) of religious transmission. Mellor and Shilling refer to the set of embodied outcomes as a religious habitus. The guiding research questions in the study of religious body pedagogics are thus: Which embodied (religious) orientations, dispositions, values, and techniques can be identified in a concrete situation or person? And how and through which activities and experiences were they acquired? Transferred to the study of managers, the notion of the religious habitus permits the study of the biographical emergence of spiritual or religious orientations in their relation to current bodily practices.

For the study of Christians at work, the recent emphasis on the body, as developed in various academic accounts of embodiment, can also be made intelligible with reference to the Christian notion of incarnation. As I will argue, an empirically orientated description of how Christian modes of existence are embodied at work displays interesting similarities in structure and substance to a Christian incarnational account of existence (see 6.2).

44 For research on the body in organization studies, see, for example, Heaphy and Dutton (2008), Pullen and Rhodes (2015, 2014), and Styhre (2004).

The Christian notion of incarnation is a traditional concept which resonates in the writings of a variety of contemporary scholars.⁴⁵ The notion of incarnation, as shared by mainstream Christianity, indicates that God is embodied in the human being Jesus Christ. Traditionally, incarnation is understood as *both historical and ongoing*. In its historical dimension, it holds that the historical person Jesus of Nazareth is the self-embodiment of God in human form. In this light, Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension can all be understood as aspects of the embodiment of God in Jesus Christ (see e.g. Kelly 2010). In its ongoing aspect, the notion of incarnation refers to the idea that Jesus Christ is *continually* embodied in concrete contexts through those who belong to Him. The importance of the concept for an understanding of Christian living in contemporary work contexts lies in the notion of incarnation as ongoing, which is expressed in the Pauline writings⁴⁶ and has been received by mainstream Christian theology: the risen Christ is embodied in those who belong to him. Their *bodies* are members of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor 6). They are members of the *body* of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor 12). In this light, an individual's belonging to Christ, which is indicated in the term Christian (see 4.2), is marked by a bodily mutuality between Christ and His members (see chapters 5 and 6). A number of writers bring up the notion of incarnation in its ongoing sense and ascribe a formative power to the dynamics it refers to, speaking, for example, of a "continuing" (Nelson 1995:47) or "expanding" (Kelly 2010:792) incarnation. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2005:94–99)⁴⁷ and Colin Miller (2014) have particularly taken up the Pauline notion that it is the historical incarnation, in particular Christ's life, death, and resurrection, which defines the shape of the ongoing incarnation in the life of human beings. In such incarnational

45 See, for example, Brock 2011, Cahill 2013 & 1995, Cole-Turner 2013, Dumitrascu 2014, Flaman 2011, Fotiade, Jasper & Salazar-Ferrer 2014, Glancy 2010, Green 2011, Hamori 2010, Hauerwas 2004 & 1995b, Hays 1996, Henry 2000, Holmes 2012, Kelly 2010, Kim 2008, Kohli Reichenbach 2011, Martin 1995, McFarland 2014 & 2005, McGrath 2011, Meiring & Müller 2010, Mount Shoop 2010, Nelson 1995, Nesson 2012, O'Donnell Gandolfo 2014, Prusak 2014, Radzins 2017, Richardson 2003, Roose 2005, Schwartz 2010, Shi 2008, Sigurdson 2008, Simmons 2019, Thomas 2007, Tjørhom 2009, Verhey 1995, and Wright 2011.

46 On Johannine incarnation and Pauline embodiment, see in particular Kelly (2010). On Pauline Studies, see also the recent special issue of the Journal for the Study of the New Testament on Susan Eastman's work (in particular, Eastman 2018, Linebaugh 2018 and Rabens 2018).

47 On Bonhoeffer, see also Kohli Reichenbach (2011:305–310).

terms, Christian living concerns one's bodily existence in quite specific ways, as I will explore in chapters 5 and 6.

Thus, the theoretical background of the embodiment perspective employed in this study is characterized by these two notions, a sociological understanding of embodiment and a theological notion of incarnation as ongoing. I will combine both lenses to form the interdisciplinary theoretical background and as sensitizing conceptions for studying Christians at work. Conceptually, I will bring the lenses of embodiment and ongoing incarnation to bear upon the study of Christians at work by employing the concept of 'Christians'. As I will outline in chapters 4 to 7, the concept of 'Christians' opens up a space in which to bring together crucial theological, Christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological, sociological–anthropological, ethical, and organizational–managerial facets with regard to how people live their lives.

2) To explore the bodily character of Christian living at work, I will, in addition to a review of the two main bodies of relevant literature (see 1.2 and chapters 2–5) and to empirical data from Christian managers at work (see 1.3 and chapter 6), draw on a number of concepts and resources. These have no particular focus on contemporary workplaces. However, I will bring them to bear upon the study of Christians at work as 'hermeneutical lenses' and in a comparative way (or as 'conceptual conversation partners'), in which I contrast some aspects with and integrate others into the present account of Christian living at work. The main conceptual resources in this regard are:

- the notion of a religious habitus as proposed by Philipp Mellor and Chris Shilling (4.2.1, 6.2.1)
- Shannon Smythe's work on *παράδομι* and *παράδοσις* and the correspondence between divine and human handing-over (4.2.2)
- the synoptic and Pauline accounts of the notion of *παράδοσις* (4.2.2)
- Clive Staples Lewis' account of Christian living in its relation to morality (4.2.2, 5.3.6)
- David Horrell's work on the label *Χριστιανός* (4.2.2, 5.3.6, 6.1.2)
- A Pauline perspective on the life of followers of Christ and, in particular, Colin Miller's interpretation of Romans on participating in the body of Christ through practice (4.3, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, & 6.2)⁴⁸

48 I am particularly grateful for the work of Colin Miller on Paul. Yet I also believe that his work in particular, and Pauline theology in general, has much more to offer to studies on Christians in work settings than what I have been able to consider in the present

- the notion of a habitus as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (5.5 and 6.1)
- Anthony Kelly's work on the life of faith as an actual form of participation in the body of Christ (5.5; 6.2),
- Viktor Frankl's notion of finding meaning in life (6.2)
- Ephesians 2:10 with regard to the question of the embodiment of Christian existence at work (6.2)

While these concepts and accounts are quite diverse, the main aim which organizes my reference to these approaches is to explore and accentuate the contours and contents of the bodily character of a Christian mode of existence at work. Let me add here a word on the role of the biblical scriptures in the present study. In the study of Christians at work, it is, first, to be taken into account that the practitioners studied use biblical texts as a point of orientation for how they live their lives (see 6.1 and Brügger 2018; Brügger & Huppenbauer 2019). Second, my approach to the biblical texts differs in its hermeneutical aims from standard exegetical literature, in that the *object* of my exegesis is, properly speaking, not the biblical texts but the mode of existence pertinent to Christ-followers, whereas the biblical texts function as an instrument⁴⁹ with which to *interpret* Christian existence.⁵⁰ With respect to this hermeneutical process, which is informed by historical sources but targets contemporary formations of Christian living, the above resources are diverse: some of these resources are biblical texts (the syn-

study. I am particularly aware that I could not give enough attention to the topics of justification (which I believe could shed more light on the nitty-gritty of the just life that Christians live, at work and elsewhere) and the practicalities of the communal aspects of Christian living independent of or outside of their work contexts (this study has focused more on the basic situation of many Christians in contemporary Western work contexts who are there as individual Christians in not particularly 'Christian settings'). I hope that my study will shed some light on the potential of the notion of Christians in order to open up a conceptual space for further theological work on work and work contexts, and as a conceptual basis or reference point for linking basic theological topics like justification or sanctification to current work contexts.

49 Or as the basis for particular *lenses*, as Gümüşay (2018) has recently suggested.

50 This said, my reading of New Testament texts (except for a short glance at Isaiah 36f in a footnote in 4.2.2, the texts engaged in this study are from the New Testament) is in some respects close to what has been termed an 'apocalyptic' exegesis, which is associated with the writings of Ernst Käsemann and, more recently, for example, with Christian Beker, J. Louis Martyn, Douglas Campbell, and Susan Eastman (see Miller 2014:1). In this interpretative school, 'apocalyptic' refers to the "concern for the centrality of the revelation of Jesus Christ as the all-determining and world-making reality" (Miller 2014:1). On Christian apocalyptic theology, see for example Duff (2018) and Siggelkow (2018).

optic and Pauline accounts of the notion of *παράδοσις*, Ephesians 2:10 and other New Testament passages), others represent primarily exegetical work on biblical texts (Miller, Horrell), while others relate exegetical texts to contemporary questions (Kelly, Smythe), and still others directly address more contemporary forms of life (Lewis, Bourdieu, Mellor & Shilling, Frankl). These various sources will be discussed with regard to current relevant research from management and organization studies (chapter 4), theological approaches to the workplace (chapter 5), empirical data from the study of Christian managers at work (chapter 6), and the study of Christians at work more broadly (chapters 6 and 7).

3) Let me address here two related possible reservations about the approach to the study of Christians at work sketched in this introduction. First, one could argue that it is problematic (or even inappropriate) to bring together social scientific and theological research on the subject because of a demand upon academic research to clearly differentiate between outsider and insider perspectives. Second, one could also argue that it is problematic (or even inappropriate) to include practitioner perspectives in theory building, due to the same demand to clearly differentiate between outsider and insider perspectives. These are important reservations to be addressed, since this study draws upon social scientific approaches (chapters 2 to 4), theological approaches (chapter 4 and 5), and empirical data from Christian managers (chapter 6). Questions of perspectivity will thus play a role at various points in this study, but here I wish to address them with the purpose of the present study in mind. I will proceed by, first, specifying the intention of this research in the light of these reservations and, second and third, addressing the two reservations individually.

First, both reservations relate to what I hold to be a crucial quality for researching Christian embodiment with regard to work contexts. Even if this study offers some indications of how various perspectives with regard to Christians may or may not differ, the goal of my research has been neither to presuppose nor to establish a simple insider–outsider perspective distinction concerning Christians. Rather, the intention of this study has been to put forward an academic perspective on Christians at work which can be made *intelligible* to academic researchers from various fields (that is, observers, ‘outsiders’, who may or may not be Christians at the same time, and thus also ‘insiders’), as well as to practicing Christians (‘insiders’). The demand for transdisciplinary and practical intelligibility is a demand pertaining to the *academic* quality of the study. The two reservations sketched above focus on different aspects of that claim, to which I will now turn.

Second, one might argue that, when one is studying Christians academically, it is crucial to differentiate clearly between Christian insider perspectives and (an) academic outsider or observer perspective(s).⁵¹ But what would that mean? A study of Christians at work has to take account of, engage critically with, and incorporate the perspectives of the practitioners studied. The actors studied

have perspectives on and interpretations of their own and other actors' actions. As researchers, we are required to learn what we can of their interpretations and perspectives. Beyond that, grounded theory requires, because it mandates the development of theory, that those interpretations and perspectives become incorporated into our own interpretations (conceptualizations). ... its procedures force researchers to question and skeptically review their own interpretations at every step of the inquiry itself. A major argument of this methodology is that multiple perspectives must be systematically sought during the research inquiry. This tenet contributes to building theory inclusive of lay conceptions and helps to prevent getting captured by those (Strauss & Corbin 1994:280).

Thus, researchers conducting research on Christians have to be careful to use terms and concepts appropriate for studying Christians, and to *incorporate* the Christians' perspectives into their own interpretations. Additionally, in my view, it should be possible to make such research intelligible to practitioners. Research perspectives which are intelligible only to researchers, but cannot—at least to a certain degree—account for and resonate with practitioner perspectives and practices, show a lack of 'fitness', in terms of their being "faithful to the everyday realities of a substantive area" and with regard to their being "closely related to the daily realities (what is actually going on) of substantive areas" (Glaser and Strauss, quoted in Strauss & Corbin 1994: 276).⁵² So, the quality needed here seems not to be so much that of a strict separation of perspectives, but that of critical consideration and integration of multiple perspectives.

51 On the us/them dichotomy, see also Scott (2005).

52 I will argue below that, with regard to Christians, some approaches to fsW are actually largely unfit. They cannot, however, be blamed for that if they do not explicitly adopt a focus on Christians or claim that their approach to faith, spirituality, or religion at work is inclusive of Christians. A good example of the 'fitness' of a theory with regard to the study of Christians can be found in the sociological understanding of a 'Christian cultural repertoire' by Mellor and Shilling (see 4.2.1), which takes into account and systematizes the practices, perspectives, and interpretations of Christian actors. For other examples, see McDougall (2009), and Robbins' (2014:161) description of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity. Studies in the anthropology of Christianity (Robbins 2014) seem to show particular sensitivity toward the subtleties of questions of 'fitness' in this regard.

Third, I have stated that this study of Christians at work is to be both social scientifically and theologically informed. However, one might say that it is problematic to combine approaches from these two different research backgrounds because of a need, again, to differentiate clearly between insider and outsider perspectives. Theology, one might argue, represents a Christian ‘insider perspective’, and the social sciences an ostensibly more neutral ‘observer perspective’. However, such an allocation of disciplines according to an insider–outsider schema would ignore, first, that an academic study of Christians, irrespective of its disciplinary starting point, necessarily takes on an observer role and, second, that both social scientific and theological research are never completely neutral or objective, but operate within complex dynamics of discursive and traditional influences.⁵³ I will address some of these traditional influences on fsw research in 4.1.2. The demand for a social scientifically as well as theologically informed study of Christians arises already from the fact that both of these strands of academic work have produced relevant and critical approaches with regard to studying Christians at work. I have therefore sought to consider a variety of essential research helpful to the study of Christians, without applying a preconceived schema of insider and outsider perspectives along disciplinary or other lines to judge which kind of approach is fitting. And I will show how different perspectives resonate with each other (see e.g. 4.2). My intention and hope are that the present study will be accessible for researchers interested in the subject from the social sciences (in general, and from management and organization studies in particular) as well as those from theology and other disciplines.

1.5 Structure: Approaching the Christian body at work

Having introduced the aim and scope of this dissertation in the present chapter, I will now offer a brief overview of the following chapters. In chapter 2, I will sketch how fsw is situated with regard to theoretical contexts and discuss important definitions of fsw terms. Furthermore, chapter

53 On the question of the differentiation between insider and outsider perspectives with regard to the relationship between the (social scientific) study of religion and theology, focusing particularly on the work of Fritz Stolz, see Brügger (2012). Questions of perspectivity with regard to the study of Christians have been recently raised and addressed in anthropology of Christianity, see for example Robbins on definitions of Christianity held by anthropologists (2014:162) and by those whom they study (2014:166). On the relationship between the social sciences and theology with regard to the study of Christians, see also Jenkins (2012) and Cannell (2005).

2 identifies open questions in terms of two terminological problem areas: first, the vagueness, abstraction, and confusion of the three main terms of faith, spirituality and religion at work and, second, the problem of the meaning of the term Christian(s).

In chapter 3, I will sketch the main theoretical contours of current fsw research focusing on the theory of spiritual practice, different levels of analysis of fsw, the notions of leadership, management, and entrepreneurship in the light of fsw, and ways of assessing fsw. In addition to the two terminological problem areas identified in chapter 2, I describe the use of workplace-related concepts (such as management, work, business, leadership, etc.) as a third terminological challenge to fsw research in chapter 3. In the light of chapter 3, the problems encountered in chapter 2 can be addressed as this research adds clarity with regard to the relationship of spirituality to the notions of work, management, and leadership. However, I argue that a residual vagueness remains and that the fsw research available is not able to adequately address the terminological problems related to the trinity of faith, spirituality, and religion at work and that no *general* solution is in sight, but that a clarification of the term Christian(s) permits a *contextual* understanding of these terms in relation to the study of Christians at work.

In chapter 4, I will point out how, in fsw research, Christians are mainly conceptualized as members of a tradition or of a group of related traditions (where membership is marked by the adoption of particular beliefs and practices). I will look at the roles tradition plays with regard to fsw research. Additionally, I will consider the particular relationship of Christians to traditional influences from a sociological perspective, as well as from a Christian perspective which draws on traditional sources. Consideration of the particular relationship between Christian modes of life and tradition makes it clear that a simplistic and linear construal of Christians as members of (a) tradition is deficient. Such a traditionally oriented understanding of Christians tends toward a reductionistically nominal understanding of the term Christian (where it is used as a mere label without a clearly specified substance) and is prone to ignore the existential connotations of the term. These more existential connotations of the term Christian(s) are addressed in accounts of a Christian spirituality at work, which indicate the role of the existential (and existentially disruptive) experience of participating in Jesus Christ in the formation of a Christian mode of existence.

In chapter 5, I will discuss theological approaches to the workplace by addressing the question of a theological neglect of contemporary workplaces, theological entry concepts to the workplace, theological ethics and the workplace, and theologies of work, business, and the corporation. I will

outline how some accounts explicitly consider the existence of Christians in work contexts, while others display what I term the ‘blindness’ and ‘lame-ness’ problems of theological engagement with the workplace. In terms of ‘blindness’, some theological approaches address or propose Christian perspectives on work and workplace-related issues, but tend to ignore the Christian mode of existence as the actual existential location in which a Christian perspective on work contexts is necessarily embedded. The ‘lame-ness’ problem refers to a theological approach which does account for a Christian mode of existence, but does not consider in particular how such a Christian mode of existence may ‘walk’ or be embodied in contemporary work contexts. The direction for the cure is indicated by theological approaches that do explicitly consider the existence of Christians in present-day work settings.

In chapter 6, I will outline how the terminological–conceptual challenges of fsw research with regard to the study of Christians at work, as well as the ‘blindness and lameness’ challenges of theological approaches, can be remedied by recovering the existential aspects of the term ‘Christian’. This can be achieved in part, I propose, by studying actual Christians at work and by building on empirical accounts of Christian living at work. In particular, I will draw from the framing practices of Christians to offer a possible frame in which to locate the notions of faith, spirituality, and religion with regard to Christians’ existence. In addition, I will also draw upon an empirically oriented analysis of Christian existence at work to sketch the contours and contents of Christian living as embodied in present-day work contexts. To set the empirically informed account of Christian living in a broader conceptual context, I will discuss it against the background of extant research and some additional relevant theoretical accounts, such as Bourdieu’s habitus and Frankl’s meaning in life, in order to describe and argue for the priority of the existential aspects of the term. I will propose ‘being a Christian’ or Christian existence as a key category for the study of Christians at work.

In the conclusion (chapter 7), I will recap the main line of thought this dissertation follows and offer some concluding comments concerning the terms and concepts which have featured prominently in the discussion of fsw research and theological approaches, that is, faith, spirituality, religion, ethics, and tradition. I will argue for the notion of ‘Christians’ as a key concept which opens up a space for taking into account crucial theological, Christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological, sociological–anthropological, ethical, and organizational–managerial aspects of living at work. The

chapter sketches the relationship between the terms faith, spirituality, religion, ethics, and tradition and the study of Christians at work.

