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Introduction to the Special Issue "Religion, Spirituality, and Faith in a Secular Business World"

In his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber (1904) identified the Calvinist type of the Protestant ethic as a significant influence in shaping capitalism in Northern Europe. We may observe different transformation processes in geographical areas influenced by other religious traditions, such as Islam, Judaism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Nevertheless, religion also played a decisive role in forming a modern economic system. In some Western societies, religion is overwhelmingly practised in the private sphere, and religion no longer seems to have any explicit meaning in their enterprises. Nevertheless, religion continues to play a major role in other societies, and even in very secular societies, values, norms, and business convictions are not completely detached from religious beliefs. This is indicated in the modern business world by various developments: the involvement of continental European banks in Islamic banking, the dispute over the publication of religious cartoons in magazines, the debate over the wearing of religious symbols such as the headscarf in the business world, and the integration of religious groups in companies in the context of diversity management discourses.

This special issue addresses the relationship between business and religion in contemporary contexts. In the last two decades, research on faith, spirituality, and religion at work has developed as a distinct research area (Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014; Brügger, 2021; Delbecq, 2009; Fotaki, Altman, & Koning, 2020; Gundolf & Filser, 2013; Houghton, Neck, & Krishnakumar, 2016; Neal, 2013; Pio, Kilpatrick, & Pratt, 2021; Tracey, Phillips, & Lounsbury, 2014), with particular strands focusing on management (Cunha, Rego, & D'oliveira, 2006; Dyck, 2014; Steingard, 2005), leadership (Gümüşay, 2019; Keplinger & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2016), human resources management (Alewell & Rastetter, 2020; Wolf & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018; Wolf & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018), corporate governance (Ehrmann, Rost, & Inauen, 2013; Feldbauer-Durstmüller, Sandberger, & Neulinger, 2019; Gomez & Wirtz, 2018; Inauen, Rost, Frey, Homberg, & Osterloh, 2010; Rost, 2015; Rost & Graetzer, 2014; Rost, Inauen, Osterloh, &

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Frey, 2010; Wirtz, 2015, 2017), and paradigm shifts and radical change (Bisquolm & Rost, 2020; Christensen, Baumann, Ruggles, & Sadtler, 2006; Danko & Rost, 2022; Doehne, Geweke, & Rost, 2023; Ehrmann et al., 2013; Frey & Briviba, 2021; Frey, Osterloh, & Rost 2022; Frick, Hauser, & Meier-Vieracker, 2022; Kieser, 1987; Le Goff, 1986; Leeson, 2012; Mayer, 2019; Mumford, 1967; Rost & Graetzer, 2014; Schlag, 2021; Schlag & Nord, 2021; Schmidtchen & Mayer, 1997; Singler, 2020; Tyerman, 1998).

Our special issue contributes to the existing richness and breadth of research on faith, spirituality, and religion at work and in business. We have received submissions covering both spirituality as a general concept and perspectives considering particular Christian spiritual traditions. The contributions develop aspects that exemplify some of the prevailing tensions and diverse possibilities in the field: the key tension between instrumental (Alewell et al., this issue) and critical spirituality (Wolf & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, this issue) and the choice of either taking religious organisations as a research context in which to study an aspect of management and organisations (Keplinger et al., this issue) or theorising about management from spiritual traditions (Bruegger, this issue).

Here, we outline some of the states of the art in the four major research areas on faith, spirituality, and religion at work and show how our special issue adds further knowledge to these areas. At the end, we discuss the directions in which future research could go, which blind spots still exist, and which questions should be answered urgently.

Management Theories

Management and organisation theories have sought to consider the sacred in two main ways (Brügger, 2021). Some scholars have identified a distinct spiritually informed management style (Dyck, 2014; Dyck & Schroeder, 2005; Pina e Cunha, Rego, & Oliveira, 2006; Steingard, 2005). Others have drawn on basic concepts relevant to managing and organising that are rooted in spiritual traditions (Sørensen, Spoelstra, Höpfl, & Critchley, 2012). Key works focus on the concepts of *oikonomia* (Deslandes, 2020; J. H. Reumann, 1967; J. H. Reumann, 2014; Schwarzkopf, 2020) and the corporation (M. T. Black, 2008; M. T. Black, 2010; Schwarzkopf, 2020; Sørensen et al., 2012).

The contribution to this special issue by Wolf and Feldbauer-Durstmüller synthesises an important set of voices in the field of management theory: critical spirituality. Echoing critical management studies, critical approaches to spirituality adopt a critical stance toward the idea of instrumentalising spirituality to serve the purposes of management and organisations. However, as the authors show in their integrative review of these voices, this line of work is rich and nuanced and has more to offer than criticism of instrumentalisation.

The authors analyse important studies of critical spirituality to identify philosophical, sociological, theological, and religious theoretical foundations, key themes of critical spirituality, and implications for management theory and practice. The authors use four key themes as a framework for categorising implications. Critical approaches to spirituality imply a deep concern for 1) the political, social, and economic context of management theory and practice, 2) the values and purposes of organisations, 3) a conception of human beings that is more holistic than that of conventional management theory and practice, and 4) alternative approaches to management that are more critical, reflexive, and morally sensitive than conventional approaches. The authors help the reader perceive critical spirituality as an important stream of work with many facets and common themes and concerns that invite further reflection.

Human Resource Management

At first glance and an explicit level, religion, spirituality, and faith seems to be more or less non-existent in HRM in many business organisations. Spirituality and HRM may thus appear as two more or less unrelated fields (Wicks, 2014; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Gebert et al., 2013). Nevertheless, research on faith, spirituality, and religion at work and HRM highlights areas where this relation is relevant in organisations.

A main question about faith and business concerns the basic stances of employers and employees on religion, faith, and spirituality at work. Several frameworks have been developed to describe employers' stances on faith at work (Miller & Ewest, 2015; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2005; Alewell & Moll, 2021b; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Hennekam et al., 2018; Tabesh & Jolly, 2019; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010a; Ashfort & Pratt, 2010). However, quantitative empirical research on employers' stances in different countries and cultures is still rare. Scant quantitative empirical results for Germany give the impressions that many employees do not know what their employer's stance is on religion and spirituality and that the perception of neutral or negative employer stances prevails where employees can distinguish their employer's stance (Alewell & Moll, 2021b; Alewell et al., 2021). Positive and proactive stances on faith are expected in organisations founded on a religious basis (Miller & Ewest, 2015). The findings for employee stances seem to be quite similar: for Germany, the first results indicate that employees often do not self-describe as spiritual and/or do not wish to live their spirituality at work, with only a small fraction of employees advocating living out faith, religion, and spirituality at work (Alewell et al., 2021).

This scant evidence on the stances of the parties to the labour contract is closely related to our lack of knowledge about integrating faith-related activities into the functional fields of HRM. More or less obvious candidates in HRM functions include diversity and discrimination management, occupational health management,

compliance activities, and the management of the performance, competences, resilience, and well-being of employees. However, including religion or faith as a diversity criterion for Germany seems still rare (Alewell & Rastetter, 2019; Ghumman et al., 2013; Lund Dean et al., 2015; Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2016). Discussions on religious freedom at work and related questions about the acceptability of religious clothing, jewellery, and wall decorations occupy German courts from time to time and relate not only to national regulations on equal opportunity but also to European ones (Meyer, 2020). Spirituality and faith can be integrated into occupational health care management by offering courses, groups, training, and time and space for mindfulness, yoga, meditation, and prayer. However, to our knowledge, only scant research has reported on the frequency of such offerings by firms and the related demand and attractivity of such offers for employees (Alewell & Moll, 2021a; Reb & Atkins, 2017). A remarkable exception is the case of workplace chaplains as spiritual counsellors offered by firms (Wolf & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018).

Research is most extensive on the relations between spirituality and faith and a broad spectrum of outcomes relevant to HRM, for example, job and life satisfaction (Alewell et al., 2022a; Altaf & Awan, 2011; Carranza et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2016; King & Williamson, 2005; Marschke, Preziosi, & Harrington, 2011; Mensah et al., 2019; Neubert & Halbesleben, 2015; Onyemah et al., 2018; Pandey & Singh, 2019; Tejada, 2015; van der Walt & Klerk, 2014; Zhang, 2020;). Although studies often support a positive relationship between spirituality at work and job satisfaction, the specific path of this relationship and the exact conditions under which this relation holds remain to be clarified. Other aspects that need further clarification include whether spirituality is to be conceived as a broadly fixed characteristic or as a spiritual need about whose satisfaction individuals may decide for themselves and the relationship between spiritual needs and characteristics and experiences of religious discrimination.

The relationship between different performance indicators and spirituality, faith, and religion has gained intense attention from researchers (Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2021; Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Faro Albuquerque et al., 2014; Fry et al., 2014; Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010b; Godwin et al., 2015; Joelle & Coelho, 2019; Karakas, 2010; Onyemah et al., 2018). In many studies, researchers expect positive relations between faith and performance indicators, and some of these expectations are supported (Joelle & Coelho, 2019). Given these relations between religion, spirituality, and faith and outcomes that are beneficial for employers and/or employees, the implicit relevance of spirituality and religion at work for HRM is supported by many studies.

Bruegger's paper in this special issue perfectly fits the preceding, partially unresolved, and contradictory aspects of human resource research. In his paper titled "Management's first responsibility", Bruegger asks what the job of corporate man-

agers is and surprises the reader with the unorthodox answer that it is to search for God. His answer is inferred from a historically contextualised view of the corporation and by summarising essential aspects of the work of Michael Thomas Black on the corporation and its historical roots and central characteristics. At the core of the argument lies the idea that corporations are entities of their own, living enterprises and not just a means to an end; shareholders and stakeholders are third parties, and the corporation is thus not saleable or to be owned by anyone. Thus, corporate interest is conceptualised as transcendent and "interest in the name of (the corporation)". The "basic violation of management is thus ignorance of the identity of the corporation." While this statement might seem surprising and distant from traditional management and economic thinking, the relationship between conceptualisations of workplace spirituality and these ideas of the corporation as an entity is very close (for example by Joelle & Coelho, 2019).

The thought-provoking arguments are bundled into two strands: one that relates the way corporations basically operate to the search for God and one that relates to what happens if managers do not search for God but pursue their own ambitions. The paper is thought-provoking and gives impulses for intense debates on four issues of a managerial theory of the firm: the conundrums of managing and the roles of stock- and stakeholders, ownership, and value creation.

Corporate Governance

Corporate governance is a major issue in the contemporary business world, and religion and spirituality have been shown to exert an influence on corporate governance systems in some instances, both in specific firms (Wirtz & Laurent, 2014) and for whole countries (Gomez & Wirtz, 2018). For example, Wirtz and Laurent (2014) study the case of Auchan, one of France's most important retail businesses, and show the impact of Catholic social doctrine in crafting a specific approach to this firm's governance mechanisms. Gomez and Wirtz (2018) explain how religious arguments and networks were instrumental in the institutionalisation of co-determination on the supervisory boards of the German coal and steel industry after World War II, which set a precedent for equal co-determination on corporate boards of all German corporations with 2000 employees and more, put in place by legislation in the 1970s.

Corporate governance defines the balance of power at the helm of any organisation, not only the modern corporation. It governs the behaviour and decision-making of an organisation's top executive (CEO) or highest-ranking officer (Charreaux, 1997; Wirtz, 2017). A corporate governance system is typically composed of various institutional and organisational mechanisms, such as corporate law, codes of conduct or best practice, by-laws, general assemblies, boards, and reporting and audit procedures, which combine to constitute a system of checks and balances. These mechanisms typically help contain conflicts of interest and support strategic deci-

sion-making. As a system of checks and balances on managerial power, corporate governance aims to ensure consistency of top executive conduct with organisational goals and balance the potentially conflicting interests of the various stakeholders.

Europe's oldest extant organisations are Benedictine monasteries. In the Middle Ages, abbeys from the Benedictine family were also among the most significant economic and entrepreneurial ventures, accumulating and managing significant wealth (Kieser, 1987). These monastic organisations were, and still are, characterised by specific governance mechanisms, such as the chapter, which is a sort of general assembly of the monks, the monastic rule, such as *Regula Benedicti*, which contains definitions of an abbot's power and responsibility, and visitations, which are the monastic equivalent of modern organisational audit procedures.

Contemporary standard corporate governance theories generally start from the assumption that sound corporate governance enhances an organisation's sustainability and long-term survival (Fama & Jensen, 1983). Due to their exceptionally long life span, Catholic orders are an ideal testing ground for this assumption (Wirtz, 2019b), and there is some evidence in the literature to support this claim (Feldbauer-Durstmüller et al., 2019; Hanson & Keplinger, 2021; Rost et al., 2010).

Because this particular organisational form explicitly features specific religious and spiritual goals (cf. *Regula Benedicti*; Winkler, 2019), the role that such spirituality may play in the specific composition, functioning, and effectiveness of monastic governance is a legitimate and straightforward object of inquiry. Thus, Wirtz (2019a) compares the governance systems of three ancient Catholic orders (Benedictines, Dominicans, and Jesuits) and highlights the role that the very specific spirituality of each one plays in the three very different but internally consistent governance systems (cf. table 1).

Because spirituality is particularly present in those ancient religious organisations, to the point that it is a central determinant in the definition of organisational goals, one may wonder if and how this precisely influences the *modus operandi* of an order's approach to its governance, especially when compared to profane organisations. Why is this important? Well, if the specific governance of certain orders is at least in part responsible for their sustainability and long-term survival, and if spirituality is a defining feature of such governance, one may legitimately search for a better understanding of the link between spirituality and such governance effectiveness. Moreover, one may wonder whether and how the knowledge gained from such an inquiry is transposable to other types of organisations in the modern business world in an effort to enhance sustainability.

Table 1. Comparison of the Governance Systems of the Benedictines, Dominicans, and Jesuits

| | Benedictines | Dominicans | Jesuits |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Motto and organisational goals | <i>Ora et Labora et Lege</i> (pray, work, and study) | <i>Laudare Benedicere Praedicare</i> (praise, bless, and preach) | <i>Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam</i> (for the greater glory of God) |
| important activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spiritual ■ Economic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spiritual ■ Preaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Missionary |
| key governance mechanisms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Values and spirituality (<i>Regula Benedicti</i>)/ Socialisation ■ Consilium ■ Chapters ■ Visitations ■ <i>Stabilitas loci</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Values and Dominican Spirituality/Socialization (Unity of the Order and recognition of the diversity of the brothers) ■ Constitutions (evolving) ■ Different types of chapters (base, priors) at different levels (convent, province, order) on a regular basis. ■ Regular renewal of all offices ■ Mobility within a province | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spirituality of Ignatius (Spiritual Exercises)/Socialisation ■ Constitutions ■ Vow of obedience (to the Pope and the Superior General) ■ General Congregation (irregular and rare) |

Source: adapted from Wirtz (2019a)

It is to this endeavour that Keplinger and Feldbauer-Durstmüller (2023) contribute to this special issue. They provide an in-depth analysis of the very specific Benedictine approach to the concept of accountability, which can be characterised as positive and supportive. The conclusions gained from their empirical case study of an Austrian Benedictine abbey grants precious insights, because accountability is also one of the central building blocks of corporate governance. In mainstream theories of corporate governance, which lean heavily on agency theory (Daily, Dalton, & Cannella Jr, 2003); however, accountability is generally approached from a negative perspective, where its main function is to reduce information asymmetry, check on potential opportunistic agents, and sanction deviant behaviour. This stands in sharp contrast to the way Benedictines actually practice accountability in their day-to-day business.

Ksenia Keplinger and Birgit Feldbauer-Durstmüller show that, in the particular context of the Benedictine monastery they studied, the practice of accountability is complex and multidimensional. Applying the tridimensional conceptual framework of accountability, initially proposed by Schlenker et al. (1994) combined with Joan-

nides (2012), the authors propose a systematic content analysis of semi-structured interviews with various members of the monastic community: the abbot, monks, and external collaborators. This analysis shows that accountability is more than a formal procedure of surveilling monks' actions and compliance with prescriptions. Instead, it is construed as a social relationship and an ongoing process of social balancing in the dynamic interaction between individuals, prescriptions, and events. In this context, informal mechanisms of socialisation and trust play a significant role. Hence, accountability assumes a positive function in building a sustainable community. Each monk is accountable to the community, but the ultimate principal to whom the community as a whole and each of its members are responsible is God. In discussing their results, Keplinger and Feldbauer-Durstmüller (2023) then reflect on which dimensions of monastic accountability could be transferred to modern business enterprises and under which specific circumstances to enhance sustainability.

Research on the issue of spirituality and religion in corporate governance is still in its infancy, and the authors make one specific contribution concerning the central concept of accountability, which is typically approached from a negative perspective of surveillance and compliance in traditional corporate governance research. Contemporary corporate governance analyses would gain from integrating an approach of continuous social balancing, as suggested by the authors.

Dealing With Paradigm Shift and Radical Change

"The transition from a paradigm in crisis to a new one from which a new tradition of normal science can emerge is far from a cumulative process, one achieved by an articulation or extension of the old paradigm. Rather it is a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalisations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications." (Kuhn, 1970: 120)

Religious organisations have been exposed to many paradigm shifts in their long histories (Doehne & Rost, 2021). They survived until today because they have been great innovators (Kieser, 1987; Tyerman, 1998). The rigid timetable and the introduction of organisational rules in religious organisations worldwide bring to mind the work regulations Henry Ford imposed on his assembly lines 1500 years later (Rost & Graetzer, 2014). Organisational decision-making and monitoring practices have often emerged in religious organisations (Ehrmann et al., 2013; Leeson, 2012), for example, lotteries to promote neutrality and prevent oligarchies (Doehne et al., 2023; Frey & Osterloh, 2016). Purgatory within the medieval church was an innovative incentive system for appropriating rents (Le Goff, 1986; Schmidtchen & Mayer, 1997). In their attempts to increase productivity, medieval Catholic monasteries in Europe generated technological advances largely responsible for Western civilisation equalling and then surpassing the technological inven-

tiveness of China, Korea, Persia, and India (Mumford, 1967). Furthermore, much scientific knowledge has been invented in religious organisations, such as medical knowledge (Mayer, 2019) and the art of handwriting (Kieser, 1987), leading to a differentiation of scientific professions and the foundation of today's universities.

Religious organisations were not only innovative in the past; they are today as well. They are reacting to the radical technological shift currently occurring due to digitalisation (Bisquolm & Rost, 2020; Christensen et al., 2006). On December 31, 2022, for example, the whole world learned within seconds that former Pope Benedict XVI had died. Benedict XVI was a religious "pop star" in social media. Digitalisation enables the emergence of completely new forms of a religious organisation, such as online graveyards, digital blessing and confession robots, and churches in the metaverse (e.g., Life.Church; Frick et al., 2022; Singler, 2020). Religious organisations also develop novel virtual visitation concepts to protect cultural heritage from over-tourism. For example, the number of visitors to the Sistine Chapel has quadrupled in the past 40 years (Frey & Briviba, 2021). Further, the technostress in modern societies triggered by digitalisation opens up new fields for religious organisations, such as digital detox in monasteries for stressed managers and seminars on the search for meaning and sustainable living (Danko & Rost, 2022). Most recently, the lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many prayer rooms around the world remained closed, accelerated the digitalisation of worship (Schlag, 2021; Schlag & Nord, 2021).

In functionally differentiated societies, individuals are concurrently members of various organisations, such as in faith of religious organisations and in the gainful employment of business organisations. In this respect, the resources produced in religious organisations are also available for the secular business world. As shown in the contribution by Alewell, Conen, Moll, and Wiese (2023) in this special issue, especially in disruptive times, religious organisations that provide resources for the secular business world are of great importance. The article highlights the COVID-19 pandemic, which profoundly changed many people's lives. Family members and friends died. People lost their jobs. Many suffered from social isolation. Families were challenged by homeschooling and home office. Alewell et al. show in their contribution that faith, religiousness, and spirituality increase a person's capability to cope with high uncertainty and *Unverfügbarkeit*. This, in turn, has positive effects on secular business organisations: it reduces the negative effects of disruptive events on employee well-being and thus increases the organisation's resilience. Using a large, representative survey of employees in Germany conducted before and during the pandemic, the authors impressively substantiate their argument. They show that for employees with higher spirituality at work, the pandemic's negative effect on life and job satisfaction is much smaller than those with lower spirituality at work.

Open Questions Beyond This Special Issue

Our special issue contributes a small, further part to the theme of religion and spirituality in a secular world. Due in part to the spirit of the Enlightenment, which particularly affected sciences such as management and economics, the topic has been neglected for a long time. Only in recent years has attention to this subject been renewed. The number of open research questions is correspondingly diverse. We want to list some of these questions at the end of our editorial. We hope that they will inspire future contributions to the topic.

In the area of management theories, we see the following open research questions:

- What kind of spirituality are we referring to in management theory and practice, especially when considering such religions as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism? (Brügger, 2021; Gümüşay, 2020)
- What role does the concept of *oikonomia* play in the management of contemporary organisations? (Deslandes, 2020; J. Reumann, 1967; J. H. Reumann, 2014; Schwarzkopf, 2020)
- Many management theories distinguish between economic, social, and cultural capital. What role do religious and spiritual capital play? (Neubert, Bradley, Ardianti, & Simiyu, 2017; Wegner, 2019; Ocasio, Pozner, & Milner 2020) Is this a separate dimension of capital, or does it take different forms of economic, social, and cultural capital in the business context?
- What role does religion play when it comes to the debate about how selfish, moral, or altruistic humans are, and what significance does this have in economic life? (Gümüşay, 2019) Can contemporary economic theories, for example, from behavioural economics and evolutionary biology, on the inequality aversion of individuals or altruism, be combined with concepts of religiosity? What is the significance of religion in such theories?

There are also a number of unanswered questions in the area of human resource management.

- Which wishes and concerns shape employees' attitudes towards their own and others' spirituality in the workplace? Do they want to express their own spirituality in the workplace, or do they prefer to do so in other fields? Is spirituality seen as a helpful resource in working life? Is it viewed as a personal characteristic that is simply always there? What fears, for instance, of proselytising or hopes of empathic leadership, do employees have about the spirituality of colleagues and leaders?
- What experiences of religious discrimination and disadvantage have employees already had? How do these shape their attitudes toward spirituality in the workplace?

- What is the role of mindlessness, mindfulness, and mindfulness training in organisations? (Kudesia, 2019)
- What is the possible role of workplace chaplaincy in modern employment and labour relations? (Wolf & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018) What can we learn from the critical view of workplace chaplaincy in our working world? (Wolf & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018)
- What can we learn from religious rules, for example, from St. Benedict's or other religious founders or leaders, for actual work-related problems in today's world? How can we understand such religious rules in their particular context and yet also apply them to the working world today? What can the analysis of the topic of work in the special context of these rules teach us nowadays?
- Where do employers place the topic of spirituality and religiosity in human resources work: diversity, health management, and personnel recruitment and retention?
- What attitude do employers take toward the religiosity and spirituality of employees: a supportive, positive one, a wait-and-see neutral one, or a rejecting, negative one? (Miller & Ewest, 2015) Why and under which conditions are which attitudes to be expected? What positive and negative expectations are associated with these attitudes?

Corporate governance is certainly one of the more researched areas in the field of religion and management. Nevertheless, there are a number of blind spots:

- What kind of skills do managers need to deal with religion at work, for instance, in religiously diverse workplaces: religious literacy (Burrell & Rahim, 2018), specific knowledge (Gerdeman, 2018), and/or specific virtues or even religious-spiritual competencies? (Huppenbauer, 2008)
- What are the specificities of the governance of organisations with ecclesiastical sponsors, such as Jesuit universities, ecclesiastical associations and NGOs, and cooperative banks with a religious background? An interesting question to investigate concerns the tension between the ecclesiastical identity of such organisations, the isomorphic pressure of contemporary corporate governance, and how these organisations deal with this tension (Mabey & Mayrhofer, 2015).
- What roles do religion and spirituality play in educating responsible business leaders and managers in religiously affiliated universities such as IESE, Vlerick, Duke, and Emory, their secular counterparts? (Mayrhofer & Steinbereithner, 2015)
- How can knowledge about governance models of religious orders contribute to a better understanding of specific corporate governance issues in secular business organisations? (Ehrmann et al., 2013; Feldbauer-Durstmüller et al., 2019;

Gomez & Wirtz, 2018; Inauen et al., 2010; Rost, 2015; Rost & Graetzer, 2014; Rost et al., 2010; Wirtz, 2015, 2017)

- How does Catholic social teaching relate to corporate governance? (Cremers, 2017; Vaccaro & Sison, 2011)
- What are the religious roots of shareholder activism in countries such as Switzerland with organisations such as the Ethos Foundation, the Berne Declaration, Public Eye, and individuals such as Pier Luigi Giovannini and Dominique Biedermann? (Waeger & Mena, 2019)
- What is the relationship between religion, corporate social responsibility and socially responsible investment? (Berry & Junkus, 2013; Capelle-Blancard & Monjon, 2012; Louche, Arenas, & Van Cranenburgh, 2012; Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten, Graafland, & Kaptein, 2014; van Aaken & Buchner, 2020)
- What role, if any, does religious inspiration play in the institutional framework of various national corporate governance systems? (Gomez & Wirtz, 2018)
- How can men's and women's monasteries cooperate to succeed in the long run?

Finally, the role of religion and spirituality in radical change has been explored only sporadically. This is partly because religion is associated more with permanence and tradition and less with change. However, openness to change is a fundamental prerequisite for something as enduring as religion. Accordingly, research in this area is still needed.

- How do religious organisations deal with technological change, for example, digitalisation? Due to imprinting, have these organisations learned to deal with technological innovation differently than modern ones?
- What role do countertrends to technological change, for example, ecological, sustainable animal husbandry in monasteries and agriculture and temporary monasteries, play for the future of companies? Is there a conscious or unconscious imitation of these trends? How do such religious innovations diffuse?
- New monasticism (Harrold, 2010): What are monastic practices in secular business contexts, such as the spiritual practices of workers, managers, and entrepreneurs and the influence of new religious communities such as *Stadtklöster* (i.e., monasteries located in cities) and networks of practitioners of contemplative prayer) on managerial orientation and practice?
- What differences are there in the views of entrepreneurship in the various religions? (Gümüşay, 2015)
- How can we explain networks and communities of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim business people regarding their history, goals, organisation, independence from established religious organisations such as churches, and their impact on employees, managers, and entrepreneurs?

- What are the religious origins of union organising, and why have they been secularised over time? (Fluder, 1991, 1996; Oesch, 2008; Ruffieux, 1969)
- How do hybrid organisations with a religious-spiritual imprint, such as social enterprises like Stiftung Wendepunkt, Islamic banks, and business enterprises with explicitly Christian owners or managers like Deichmann, Hipp, Läderach, Rohner, and Victorinox navigate between different institutional fields and logic (Gümüşay, Smets, & Morris, 2020)?
- Are the entrepreneurial initiatives of religious organisations supported by profane modern business tools such as crowdfunding? Does the trend towards digitalisation in the secular business world spur entrepreneurship in religious organisations?

Conclusion

At the end of this introduction, we want to thank all contributors again. With this special issue, we hope to offer a small but stimulating contribution to the lively conversations on religion, spirituality, and faith in a secular business world. We hope you enjoy reading it and look forward to seeing this special issue taken up in the literature.

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