

Summary

In modern society and scholarship, religion and economy have often been separated and placed in different spheres—as part of the differentiation of religion. However, in recent decades, many scholars have disputed such separation and argued instead for the need to study the intersection of religion and other spheres, such as economy and work, in theory, and practice.

With this new awareness of the intermingling of religion and economy, this thesis will critically examine and compare the relationship between religion and economy, and its ethical implications, in business practices affiliated with the two Christian movements: the evangelical, *Business and Mission* (BAM), and the Catholic, *Economy of Communion* (EoC). While some empirical studies have been made on BAM and EoC, these networks have yet to be examined in a comparative study. Furthermore, while there is increased interest within the field of Christian ethics to study faith-based labor organizations and religious community organizing, there needs to be more studies that critically examine and compare normative resources in everyday faith-based work. This compilation thesis aims to make explicit, challenge, and extend ethical resources in faith-based work practices to provide new perspectives on the various kinds of good that exist in different configurations between religion and economy in faith-based work. Over the course of the study, I am to answer its main research question: *How can an ethnographic study of faith-based work practices contribute to Christian ethical perspectives on economy and work?*

Hence, this is an ethnographically informed study within Christian ethics. The study is based on a practice theoretical approach and a theory of empirical ethics in practice. The empirical ethics theory can be summarized by its three main strategies: *articulation, disturbance, and expansion*.

The first article, “Negotiating Purity and Impurity of Religion and Economy,” is a comparative study that analyzes the relationship between religion and economy in policy documents. Using Bruno Latour’s theoretical account of modernization, the article shows how the two logics of purity and impurity repeatedly construct the relationship between religion and economy in BAM and EoC. Furthermore, in dialogue with Kathryn Tanner and her book *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism*, the article argues that theological, ethical studies of the relationship between Christianity and economy would benefit from starting with empirical studies of the actual intertwining of religion and economy.

Following up on the claim made in the first article about the benefits of studying morality in practices, article II, “Evangelical and Catholic Timespace in Work,” is based on an ethnographically informed case study exploring the mixing of religion and economy in one BAM business in the American South and one EoC business in Eastern Canada. Using Theodore Schatzki’s theory of Timespace activity, I analyzed how time and space were constituted in these practices and how the different timespaces affected the different religious-economic configurations in the practices—and with what moral implications. The overall findings suggest that the timespace in the Catholic business was characterized by struggling caused by a tension between certain ideals on how religion and economy should relate to each other on the one hand and how the practice evolved on the other. Furthermore, the timespace in the evangelical business was characterized by confidence, caused by the company having a rather distinct and achievable goal regarding how they wanted to be “different” and how religion should relate to the economy. However, the businesses’ confessional and theological affiliations cannot explain nuances and important significance between the cases. Instead, there seems to be something about the phenomenon of tension-filled and confident faith-based companies that causes a drive in the practices towards the common good.

The aim of article III, “Work *in Medias Res*,” was to discuss a complementary way of presenting Christian ethical logics of work using ethnography and practice theory.

While the ethnographic method helped me zoom in on religious-economic practices in faith-based work, the practice-theoretical framework enabled me to theorize further about these practices. The analysis employs Latour's concept of purity and impurity and Schatzki's conception of practices and teleoaffectivity. Their conceptual language enabled me to identify how the two practices are characterized by reform and negotiation, even though they operate in somewhat different ways. The study shows that the various processes are best understood in dialogue with each other, that both processes are essential, and that religion contributes to both in different ways. Furthermore, the conceptual framework opened the analysis to examine how the Christian ethic at work in these practices is not implemented as a foundation but through collective, impure action-oriented, and meaning-constituting practices.

Reading the articles together shows how the ethnographic study revealed insights and nuances that would have been impossible to catch through analyzing the policy documents and theological guidelines alone. Hence, this thesis argues for the importance of fieldwork when studying religious practices. Furthermore, if one had interpreted the ethical resources in the empirical material through pure philosophical ethics, one would have found ethical models, e.g., virtue ethics and deontological ethics, in the material. However, this study shows how ethical models are indeed found in the material but do not come in pure form. Something has happened to the models, which need to be written out and described without refining. Furthermore, with a practice-theoretical approach, normativity is being distributed. Hence, this study contributes perspectives of practice theory and distributed normativity to Christian ethical perspectives on economy and work.