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Ghosts in the Machine: Beliefs, Values and Worldviews in the Workplace and Business Environment

This paper analyses the role and impact of beliefs, values and worldviews (BVW) in the business and work-based environment, and how they are translated and negotiated in non-spiritual and non-sacred spaces. Based on pilot research with a cohort of English Roman Catholic employees and managers conducted within a retreat setting, and as part of a wider research project across religious and non-religious cohorts, the article traces an emerging framework identifying the different variables informing the relationship between BVW and public workplace settings. These variables include: how material structures of the workplace are shaped by the ethical and moral teachings generated by BVW; the close links between BVW (also known as spiritual capital) and agency in the business and work environment; the overlapping but also contrasting relationship between religious and non-religious BVW; and innovative and resilient forms of leadership and change management strategy generated by the reflective prioritising of BVW within these contexts.

The Beliefs, Values, and Worldviews at Work (BVW@Work) project seeks to understand the role and impact of beliefs, values and worldviews (BVW) in the contemporary business and workplace environment.[a] It does this by critically enquiring into the 'why' that creates the 'what' – in other words, how the motivational impetus and energy we derive from our BVW orientates us in the public sphere and influences and shapes our actions and responses. We call this spiritual capital (Baker and Skinner 2006). Spiritual capital refers to the deeply motivating power of religious belief and faith to shape one's actions and stance within the public sphere. As our world becomes increasingly globalised and interconnected, how the 'why' shapes the 'what' becomes a major central research question for our age. Our new globalising modernity (Beck 2011) is generating an ever-increasing diversity in relation to local proximity but also in our workplaces, and these deep trajectories are creating pressures to learn how to engage with difference and 'otherness' in what Taylor (2007) defines as an increasingly 'cross-pressured' public sphere.

A key element in this new globalised proximity and diversity of our localities and workplaces is the renewed visibility of religion and belief in public space (Juergensmeyer et al. 2013; Butler et al. 2011). Our research aims to critically problematise the following thesis: the more we can talk about religion and belief and understand the centrality it has in most individuals' lives, the more we understand the nature of our public diversity. And as we feel increasingly at ease with that diversity, then the more creative, inclusive and efficient our workplaces can potentially and

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[a] The project comprises a multi-stranded approach involving both consultancy and research with global companies and human resources departments across both public and private sectors. It investigates the value, of an open and confident approach to the role of beliefs, values and worldviews in the working environment. As well as business-based qualitative data, the project is developing quantitative surveys to determine the relationship between beliefs, values and worldviews and ethical, relational and leadership practices.

incrementally become. In addressing these issues, our research unearths an emerging framework, not yet explored in the academic literature. This framework unpacks the role and impact of both religious as well as non-religious sources and expressions of BVW in directly shaping all dimensions of the business and workplace environment; its material structures, hierarchies and environments

This article analyses the findings of a pilot study, funded by the University of Liverpool's Knowledge Transfer programme and supported by Good Works, a charity that supports ethical practice in the workplace. The study was conceived as part of a wider research application, which had at the heart of its data gathering the structure of a retreat. A cohort of English Roman Catholics was chosen for the pilot, which was run over the first May Bank Holiday Weekend of 2016. A Roman Catholic cohort was selected due to the explicit teachings of the Second Vatican Council that lay Catholics should create and internalise a synthesis of culture and faith or vocation which contributes 'to the good of society as a whole' (Second Vatican Council 1965a §728). The nebulous nature of such instructions and the on-going tensions within the Catholic church regarding the teachings of the Council (Faggioli 2012), however has meant that, with the exception of the field of education (Sullivan 2001), little academic attention has been paid to the manner in which Catholics translate these teachings into practice in the workplace, let alone a wider religious or public landscape. We develop the findings from this pilot into a new theoretical framework of BVW@Work that reflects the interaction of the following elements. *Physicality* of the environment and *externality* of belief: this data delineates the external boundaries of the work-based environment in terms of identified professional roles, as well as espoused theological ideas that are deliberately engaged in the workplace; *Affect*

refs to data that demonstrates how people feel about their work and interactions in the workplace in relationship to their BVW; *Negotiation and Praxis* explores how the externalities of the work-based environment and the affects generated by BVW in that environment are negotiated and translated into tactics and responses to others and workplace and business structures; *Leadership and change-management strategies* refers to the complex and strategic responses to the challenges of the globalised and diverse work and business environment that emerge from the interaction of the previous three elements. It is important to note that different religions and their social teachings will generate different areas of content under each of these four modalities. What we are suggesting is that these modalities represent a consistent template by which to understand the relationship between these different elements across any given working environment. The proposed framework also highlights some of the inevitable tensions between what we might, after Cameron et al. define as the formalised or normative tenets of religious teaching and tradition, and the ways that they are espoused and operationalised in practice (2010).

Context and Literatures

In extrapolating this new BVW@Work framework, our project is responding to the increased interest in this area, prompted by recent debates surrounding both the negative and positive values that religion and beliefs bring to public life (see Heljm, 2016; Dinham and Francis 2015,). These debates in the UK also include recent media framings of national tragedies, such as the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London, and the Grenfell Tower tragedy and the impact they have had on national political life, including the 2017 General Elections.

The reporting of these events prominently portrayed religious actants (Latour 2007) as destructive protagonists as well as exemplary citizens, but these framings also embody deeper trajectories of more recent cultural, ethical and political change Namely, a shift away from increasingly critiqued neo-liberal notions of citizenship and political economy back towards a renewed appreciation of the role of ethics and values in public life (Skidelsky and Skidelsky 2012). These include a sense of the importance of the common good, connecting to transcendent sources of meaning and imagination as part of the search for a more authentic and activist life, and the care of the human and non-human environment (Purcell 2013). Other research has shown that being able to act upon your beliefs in the workplace and business environment leads to increased happiness and well-being, strengthened productivity and creativity, and helps move debates towards more ethical and sustainable forms of work and business practice (Akemu Whiteman and Kennedy 2016; Deloitte, 2016). Our findings around the positive business impacts associated with an enhanced sense of authenticity and vocation correlate with main themes in business and management literatures, not least in the debates about transformational vs. transactional leadership. Luthans et al. in Burke and Cooper (2006), for example, see authenticity as the 'root construct and foundation that serves as the point of departure for all other forms of leadership' (85). They suggest it as constituted from four interlocking values and practices: self-awareness; unbiased processing (i.e. in accordance with ones' own deepest values); authentic action and relational transparency. Meanwhile Bono et al. (2007) examine the psychological impacts of different types of supervision on employees, and found that negative impacts associated with regulating emotion brought about by rules-based and non-transformative management techniques where traceable in the body up to two hours later and were not easily shifted by other variables.

However, sociological literatures imply that this 're-enchantment' is not simply the preserve of those already religiously affiliated. By re-enchantment we are inverting Weber's classic sociological theory in which he predicted on-going *disenchantment* created by a modern world predicted on ideas of instrumental rationality expressed in bureaucracy and mass-production. We would, he suggested, lose our susceptibility to the power of transcendent narratives, non-material sources of wisdom and the efficacies of charismatic leadership (1930) However, there has, since the Millennium, been a clear cultural trajectory back to an active interest in spirituality, Eastern religions, and mindfulness – sometimes called 'the spiritual turn' (see Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Partridge 2005). There has also emerged a specific trajectory relating to millennials in the West who define themselves as 'no-religion' or 'spiritual but not religious' (Putnam and Campbell 2010) but who are attracted to both new and traditional meta-narratives of transcendent connection and solidarity as well as proactive social engagement (Kristeva 2016; Stacey 2017).

Other clusters of literatures influencing our emerging thesis include what we call the 'new materialism imperative'. These literatures reflect a wider set of discourses and debates instigated by inter-disciplinary scholars mapping global change in the 21st century; namely that the material structures of the workplace and business environment are plastic and malleable, and are powerfully influenced by the often-hidden agency of non-human or virtual actants that together create the complexity of 'an assemblage' or 'event'. This interdisciplinary consensus emerges from strands associated with New Materialism (Braidotti 2013; Barad 2007; DeLanda 2006). Actor Network Theory (Latour 2005; McFarlane 2011) and Speculative Realism (Harman 2009; Meillassoux 2008), alongside new expressions of theological realism that

engage with these currents of scientific, sociological and political thought (Baker, James and Reader 2015). Our theoretical assumption is that beliefs, values and worldviews are non-human or virtual actants that profoundly shape 'the assemblage' of the work-place; as Latour reflected in 2004, previous hegemonic political theories required humans 'to leave their gods on hooks in the cloakroom' (456) before entering the board room of the public square. We argue, along with Latour, that the new modernity unfolding in the 21st century is challenging previous assumptions concerning the possibility and desirability of enforcing over-prescriptive prohibitions against the performance of religious and belief practices and identities in the world of work.

Methods

This research project used Grounded Theory to determine the role that beliefs, values, and worldviews play in the contemporary business and work environments. In our research we followed the approach outlined by Charmaz (2006). Such a data driven approach that focused upon the emergence of a theory of BVW at Work was necessary due to the dearth of literature in the area as well as our approach which views human beings as active agents rather than passive actors in the workplace and business environment. This, when combined with the flexibility of the Grounded Theory method, allows for further refinement of the formal theory when for example case studies on specific industries or companies are carried out either by ourselves or other researchers.

25 Roman Catholics, consisting of an equal number of men and women, took part in this study. Ages ranged from 26 to 63, with roughly equal numbers in each age

bracket of 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55+. Those in the younger age brackets were predominately female. It was specifically decided at the start of the project to recruit Catholics who were not in the more 'traditional and vocational' careers, such as teaching and nursing, in order to understand how BVW operated in environments that would not generally be viewed as someone's calling (to use Catholic parlance on the matter). Participants came from the MRS social grades of A, B and C1, with the professions and jobs represented including: academic, NHS consultant, politician, interior designer, geologist, engineer, university administrator, and IT manager. They were recruited using advertisements in all four of the Catholic Newspapers. The retreat participants were not intended to provide a representative sample of the Catholic community in England but rather to generate as broad a range of experience and context, as well as theological worldview, as possible.

The research was carried out through a three-stage process which allowed for a systematic body of data concerning the role and impact of BVW at Work to be generated and theoretical saturation to occur. Furthermore, the methods used allowed for what Geertz (1973) has called a 'thick description' to emerge whereby detailed narratives in the form of interview transcripts were developed and extensive field notes and observations used as part of the coding, analysis and writing stages. We deployed the coding typology developed by Attride-Stirling (2001).

Each participant attended a retreat, and was interviewed by telephone before and after the retreats, resulting in 50 interviews, each approximately 45 minutes in length. Participants could not attend the retreat without having first taken part in the pre-retreat interview, and participation in the post-retreat interviews was 100%. All the

interviews were anonymously transcribed with names changed for the purpose of publication, and each gave informed consent to their data being.

The Retreats

The retreat for this study was held over 4 days and consisted of 5 sessions along with time for structured and unstructured prayer and reflection. The structure is adapted from single identity faith-based reconciliation programmes in Northern Ireland which undertake to guide participants through a process of self-awareness and cognitive understandings of their behaviour and its impact upon others (Power 2007).

The structure of these retreats focuses on a process of *listening, interaction, challenge, reflection,* and *discernment* that allows for the creation of a framework that highlights the full complexity, diversity, and richness of BVW in the workplace. These elements permit a deep and reflective engagement of the role of BVW from the participants' own experience, actions, and performance in the workplace. Listening involves not only hearing relevant input from four speakers selected to represent the range of experiences in work within that faith or belief tradition (see below), but also listening to the experience of the other participants in small groups, plenaries, over meals, and during unstructured social time. Interaction refers to both relational interaction with other participants, as well as cognitive interaction with new experiences and ideas which featured direct case studies of practical and ethical significance. Challenge refers to those elements of the retreat that emerged from conversations and presentations that challenged both existing beliefs and experiences. Reflection refers to the process whereby participants were asked to use their own experiences as a means of mirroring back to the group the understandings that they

had developed over the weekend. Discernment refers to internal reflection undertaken by the participants in the weeks after the retreat which was subsequently captured in the post-retreat interviews.

This retreat model provided a methodological innovation which allowed us to better understand the role of BVW in the work and business environment more fully than interviewing alone. By deploying the guided retreat process, BVW at Work provides a prolonged period in which to consider more reflexively issues relating to belief, mission, and participation in the workplace. This case study demonstrated the effectiveness of this technique, with many participants affirming the usefulness of this prolonged period of reflection in allowing them to recalibrate or reaffirm their BVW@Work.

The Interviews

The impact of these retreats on the participants was evaluated through interviews a month before and after the event. The rationale for the interview schedule begins with an awareness of personal experience of BVW in the workplace, before focusing down to allow the interviewees to reflect and prioritise those beliefs, values and worldviews that are significant for them, and identify the relative strength and impact of the different sources of BVW in their work and life experience. The post-retreat interview helps participants to understand the experience of the retreat and how it has, or has not, impacted upon their understandings of how BVW operate in the workplace. It guides them through a process of reflection upon their professional behaviour in the workplace since the retreat, as well as whether concepts introduced at the retreat such as spiritual capital have changed their practices and attitudes. We

introduce the concept of spiritual capital as a user-friendly term to encourage them to stand outside their work-based experience to contemplate how they conduct themselves in the working environment.

The importance of spiritual capital in the production of authentic religious agency in the secular workplace and business environment

Spiritual capital as developed by Baker and Skinner (2006) and critically expanded further by others (Dinham 2012; Cloke and Beaumont 2012) refers to the deeply motivating power of religious belief and faith to shape one's actions and stance within the public sphere. It can be summarised as 'the "why" that drives 'the "what"' (Baker and Skinner 2006: 7) Based on empirical research on the impact and role of Christian faith-based social care and community development in marginalised urban localities in the early 2000s, original research by the William Temple Foundation suggested that spiritual capital 'energized' these faith-based practical contributions by 'providing a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and a basis of faith. It is often embedded locally within faith groups, but also expressed in the lives of individuals' (Baker and Skinner 2006: 7). Subsequent work has begun to re-calibrate spiritual capital as a conceptual and analytical tool for use within the organizational and business environment thus:

> Spiritual capital is the set of values, ethical standpoints and visions for change held by both individuals, groups and institutions… shaped not only by systems and practices of belief, but also by engagement with wider sets of relationships (broadly defined) and the sense of meaning and purpose derived from work-based and other activities (sometimes referred to as the 'spirit' or 'soul' of a

business). Spiritual capital is often the source of motivation for other forms of

capital (e.g. social capital and its emphasis on the importance of trust and

norms as the basis for conducting any form of progressive or enhancing

human activity). It includes. . . how beliefs inform values . . . where we fit in

what we do (Baker, Stokes, Lichy and Atherton 2011: 6).

Whilst the primary data used from this English Catholic cohort emanates specifically

out of a religious form of spiritual capital, it is significant that many of the following

categories and experiences are not necessarily bespoke to religious faith. If discovered

to be true in subsequent research, this would add weight to the efficacy and

applicability of this framework across multiple and diverse work and business

settings.

Identity Markers: The Physicality of the Environment and Externality of Belief

This section identifies an attention paid by our participants to the external

materialities of the workplace and espoused tenets of belief. The codings for this

section fall into several different categories. First, they identified the solidarity found

within a professional working environment, which for this Roman Catholic cohort of

respondents was located mainly within the public sector; namely healthcare settings,

social care settings, higher education, and, in the private sector, information

technology and engineering. Second, they referred to professional labels within these

settings - for example lecturer, team leader, social worker, chemical engineer,

geologist, palliative care consultant, support worker, psychiatrist, community

organiser, and policy consultant. A third category described the professional roles

associated with these labels, many of which were mundane and routine but which

revealed a complexity of relationality tactics and performances. Finally, there was an understanding that key categories of espoused theology and belief were important in our respondents' understanding of who they were and how they participated. Examples of espoused theology included: seeing Christ in others; made in the image and likeness of God; the incarnation; providence; liberation theology; loving your neighbour as yourself; and mercy as akin to love. The linkages between these espoused beliefs appear to cluster around deep existential concerns and teachings relating to the value and dignity of each human person, the importance of reciprocity and mutuality, and a sense of the significance of empowerment and agency. Implicit in many of these values and virtues is the influence of Catholic Social Teaching (CST).

Although the Second Vatican Council (1965a §728) had taught that CST should form a central part of the education of Catholic children, it was apparent from the interviews that this had not been the case. CST was not explicitly taught to those Catholics from the generations attending the retreat (all of whom were educated in post-council faith schools); rather it was during this period implicit within the Catholic education system both in schools and adult formation through events such as harvest festival and charity fundraising. There are a number of reasons posited in the academic literature for this: first as Arthur (1996) demonstrates the Catholic church in England and Wales has not fulfilled the practical implications of Vatican II, mainly due to ideological battles within the Catholic education system (81). Second, as Sullivan (2001), shows 'many lay teachers are neither theologically literate nor have they benefitted from deliberate spiritual formation' and they therefore 'cannot impart that which they do not possess themselves' (82).

As the interviews demonstrated then, CST was discovered in adulthood through practice, self-study and personal formation, rather than formally taught. Most participants cited it 'as part of their decision-making process' in the workplace and business environment. Although there is debate as to which concepts make up CST, from the authors' point of view the six following elements form its constitutive parts: subsidiarity, solidarity, the common good, the dignity of the human person, the preferential option for the poor, and care for creation. Each of these concepts is based upon the teachings of the Gospel and has subsequently been developed through tradition. The teachings of the Catholic church on this matter provide Catholics with a set of guidelines which are meant to focus their readings of the 'signs of the times' (Second Vatican Council 1965 §1) to enable them to be contextualised for their own particular milieu, or as one participant, Paul, an academic in his late 40s, put it 'this provides structures and boundaries through which you can operate.' That the participants had translated the first four of these concepts into their workplaces was strongly apparent both in the pre and post retreat interviews. Thus, subsidiarity, the idea that each person has the right to shape their own destiny rather than being subject to external forces, was particularly obvious in the interviews with those participants with management responsibilities. For example, a Matt, a senior policy consultant working for an international NGO in his mid 50s, commented on the importance of valuing his employees' skill sets: 'people's talents can be often neglected and wasted-they're not often given the opportunity to develop.' Another, Julia, an academic in her mid 30s, said that her management style focused upon 'encouraging people appropriately for where they are.' Finally, Peter, a financial services sector employee in his early 30s spoke about 'tailoring his management style' to empower members of his team. Fundamental to the success of work-based subsidiarity in the was the

concept of dialogue: failures in communication were seen by most participants as a problem that prevented people from successfully contributing their skills at work. Successful contribution was often linked to allowing colleagues agency in the workplace; 'listening to my colleagues' opinions and suggestions and take on board what they say' (Matt) and 'taking turns in leading, giving people support in terms of doing what's right.' (Alice, an NHS Consultant, late 50s.) In many ways, the deployment of concepts from CST was a pragmatic decision which not only benefitted the employees in terms of human flourishing, but also improved productivity for the company: as Sylvia, an interior designer in her early 20s stated 'For me it's just common sense that people are happy to work where they can be more productive.'

Solidarity, which compels people to take account of the impact of their actions on others, was defined by one participant, Nathan, a consultant psychiatrist in his mid 50s, as 'make sure the decisions made benefit everyone'. It is closely linked to the CST concept of the dignity of the human person or as Sam, (IT manager, early 60s), put it 'valuing someone as a person rather than as a resource'. People were therefore y put before profits, and a sense of horizontal team structures emerged from those in leadership positions. One NHS consultant, Alice, spoke of solidarity as 'working together as a team to solve problems rather than just pointing them out'. This approach epitomised a wider view that the business and work environment should aim to be a supportive community, rather than cutthroat and competitive environment and that such structures were of benefit to the company or employer. An interviewee, Clare, a scientist in her mid 20s, reflected; 'if you see your friend is very happy working with a company you're probably more likely to want to buy from them.'

Another, Charlotte, (engineer, late 30s), suggested that 'dehumanisation leads to demotivation which means people perform less well.'

Valuing others as you value yourself: relational affects in the workplace

The data under this heading reflects the diversity of individual experience within the workplace. This includes negative affects- i.e. work-based experiences that create difficult and challenging situations around belief identity such as anxieties about being 'outed' as a Catholic based on external indicators such as the wearing of a crucifix or value judgements about the Catholic identity: for example as James, an academic in his early 40s suggested 'I shouldn't be worried about saying what me beliefs are, but I think we Catholics are much more worried about saying … we are Catholics than perhaps like other groups – like Anglicans or Hindus.' Feelings associated with isolation also featured alongside emotions of embarrassment at being labelled a person of faith or belief. These was identified as partly emerging from the prevailing media and political discourse associating religion with regressive and discriminatory behaviours and attitudes.

The second source of negative affects was linked to ethical and moral issues. Examples included feeling compelled to tell untruths: 'I have been asked to lie to obtain terms and conditions from a competitor; a situation that ended up with me being practically forced on knowing that if I didn't do that, I wouldn't have a job' (Sylvia); to harm others chances of progression in order to secure your own due to an overbearing culture of competition: 'it was an environment where he pitted everybody against each other, because they were hiding quite a few dodgy things, we didn't notice what was going on because we were too busy fighting each other to see the big

picture' (Charlotte) and being forced to partake in a culture of blame in which people are seen as resources rather than human beings where 'employees well they'd come out as a sort of production rather than as people' (Matt).

Such management styles tend to be characterised by what one participant, David, an outreach worker in his late 40s, called an 'almost fundamentalised managerialism,' in which company success is prioritised over employees' wellbeing, competition is valued over collaboration and where people are treated 'as though they are yours to do with as you wish'. This style was described by participants as 'restrictive' and seen as a block to professional development, preventing employees from bringing their full selves to work.

However, many participants also identified positive affects and experiences associated with the workplace., especially for those participants in positions of authority or power, and able to exercise personal and professional agency. James described how their professional role conferred a sense of confidence in their identity. 'For me, it is about transparency, personal integrity and it's about me being able to look at the values system I have, which is Roman Catholic Christianity and have the confidence to let others know that sometimes I didn't to the expected thing because I know the thing I did was done for the right reasons.' Several respondents spoke in terms of theirs and others human flourishing within an enabling and supportive working environment based upon positive emotional feedback and relationships. Matt, recalled this insight to the various teams he oversaw: 'What you do is, you talk to the people that they're managing, and if a smile appears on their face as they talk about that person, then generally speaking I know that they will be working, that person will

be flourishing, and if they're flourishing, they're almost certainly doing the best job they can.' David related the deep sense of wellbeing derived from knowing 'that the ethos of the organisation I work for matches my own personal belief', whilst another reflected their considerable satisfaction from working for an organisation whose mission was explicitly stated as 'to meet the needs of those not yet met'. Nathan, related how the ethos of service in his workplace intertwined with his belief system: 'I need to feel I am of service, that I am a contemplative in action.'

Negotiation and Praxis – how Roman Catholic beliefs and values are embodied and performed within the work-based and business-environment.

We now explore in greater detail how personal values and narratives appear to be fused into a series of professional tactics by Roman Catholic spiritual capital within the business and work Environment. These personal values are grouped under four interconnecting clusters of virtues and their impacts, and include:

- Authentic (witnessing to who I am and what I aspire to be)
- Development (developing an appropriate sense of agency and autonomy, both in themselves and within others)
- Relational spaces (valuing others, noticing others, and attending to feelings and issues within and outside the workplace)
- Flourishing (commitment to happiness and wellbeing)

Authenticity is a virtue that powerfully emerges from a series of related values and virtues including: always being truthful; witnessing to 'ones faith'; and agency (being seen to 'walk the talk'). Telling the truth was highlighted several times. Clare argued

that you should always 'play things with a straight bat. Don't promise what you can't deliver'. Julia, referring to her colleagues' inability to prepare for meetings or conferences added 'for me the mere fact that we signed a contract to do this, it is really important to give it the best shot: it doesn't matter if we have done it well or not, but you have done your part.'

'Witnessing to my faith' is closely linked to being willing to talk about the 'real me' and whilst this form of witness included the possibility of spoken communication, it was more likely to be seen as a truthful and authentic *way of being* in the workplace. 'I suppose it is about authenticity. I have always felt that the people at XXXX cafe, because they were people that I worked with, there was some sort of genuine commitment to people and it was an extension of their beliefs and values.' (David) This will include being professionally transparent in the way of chairing meetings and mentoring in ways that encourage others to bring their authentic and truthful selves to the way they work, manage and lead.

Development The virtue of authenticity is also intimately linked to a sense of agency. Witnessing to one's whole being (in word and action) and being transparent and truthful reflect the motivating power of BVW to directly shape how one acts in the public sphere: 'Now I know there is no difference between my faith, values, and ethics in the workplace. I can see clearly that it is all the same. I believe that if our own faith is grounded it will inform everything' (Sam). Agency was defined by Paul as: embodying a sense of mission, '… it has become increasingly apparent to me on reflection … that these are the tasks that I have been allocated rather than them being what I have chosen'; of being responsive to, or submitting to, a sense of higher calling

and service, 'I started to hear this message of service, but I didn't know how…I felt it was my calling to be of service, but I didn't know what that meant' (Emily, linguist, mid 30s); or seeing one's work as part of a greater pattern or design, 'it's the attitude that we offer our whole life to God, and that gives me peace' (Clare). Here lies a theological and spiritual paradox: an enhanced sense of agency requires the relinquishing of a sense of personal autonomy for a sake of a wider whole; namely directing one's activities towards achieving positive outcomes for those beyond yourself who are 'other' to you.

Linked to the idea of authenticity is the notion of vocation. The word 'vocation' is a recurring motif in the data and proposes that the work place can be an arena where one can bring the fullness of one's identity, shaped by centrally-held beliefs, to bear in effecting a transformational difference and change, moving it beyond something purely instrumental.

This fullness of vocational development is often a lifelong process of growing maturity in ones' faith and beliefs, whereby the focus on externalities and 'outward appearances' gives way to a relationship with God based on a deeper understanding of the direction and purpose of one's life. This allows for a more critical focus on the priorities of both life and work, and to recognise deeper patterns of service and engagement. One interviewee, Alice, said, 'I feel more purposeful – I wanted in my work to address the public lack of awareness over dying… I have come to see that my work-based roles have been allocated and not chosen in order to better fit a higher plan and purpose', what she goes on to summarise as a 'providential God'. A public health worker in our survey reflected, 'What brings me the greatest satisfaction is

knowing that I can offer a genuine commitment [to my work] that is in fact the extension of my beliefs'

The congruence of these three elements – the whole self, deep belief, transformational change – is what several of our respondents suggest leads to the greatest sense of wellbeing and satisfaction in the work place. This quotation is characteristic: 'I have a much stronger feel that, what I am doing and the way that I am doing it is purposeful in a spiritual sense and not just in a practical sense. I am not doing anything different, but I am doing it differently, or approaching it differently.' (Julia) The notion of transformation meanwhile is envisaged by Peter as contributing a change to the quality of human relationships and the material structures of the workplace for the better: 'its amazing what you can achieve when you have real working relationships and personal relationships. These really matter, they are the key to change, the key to progress, to making things happen in the best possible and most functional way.'

Promoting and augmenting spaces and practices of **relationality and solidarity** is another key facet of Roman Catholic BVW emerging from our pilot data. Thus 'human beings are seen as the most important thing' (Matt) in which it is important to develop strategies of mutuality (treating all with professional respect and equality), complementarity (being generous towards, and not jealous of, the skills and creativity of others) and solidarity (providing safe spaces and relationships of support for those who are vulnerable, stressed or abused). On this point, many interviewees reflected on the experience of the retreat, in which they had felt a deep sense of solidarity that is absent from most workplaces, and which they wanted to, in some way, replicate. The dimensions of this solidarity included for Alice 'a groundedness of being with a group

of strangers who nevertheless share a common purpose', and 'understanding the same centrally-held beliefs', the feeling of being immersed in a community of faith' and hearing and reflecting on 'inspirational and confidence-building' stories from other Catholics, 'whose faith had led them to change the places in which they work' (Julia).

Flourishing and wellbeing is created through a variety of values and tactics, for example, valuing and affirming workers often located at the periphery or invisible borderlines of the work-based environment; for example, the cleaner or the receptionist. James said, 'it's about taking the time and trouble to see the human person behind the role', and then going on to engage them in conversation that communicates care, respect and value. 'I always go out of my way to offer kind words to those with whom I work, as well as words of encouragement. You never know the hidden and future impact those few kind words will have on that person.'

This noticing and valuing of people in the working environment is further augmented by the conscious act of listening to them, and 'hearing them into speech' (Morton 1985). One powerful example of this was the care offered by an interdisciplinary palliative care team around those who are near the end of life. This care, for Alice, revolved around giving the dying person as much space and autonomy to reflect on their life in their own terms and, as far as possible, voice their spiritual and medical needs. 'That person is being looked at as a whole, with a physical being and an emotional life, in a social context of spiritual worth. Whether the health and social care team subscribe to the patient's spiritual values is not material. They are prepared to work with the values that are important to the person, even to the point where that

may in fact involve them temporarily suspending values of their own to deliver care that is required.'

This extending of autonomy and the 'right of speech' is an excellent example of the fusion of professional and personal ethics, whereby instead of being seen as at odds with professional 'secular' work-based standards, the spiritual capital of the Roman Catholic interviewed, reinforced and made these standards more resilient and effective. However, it was noted by several interviewees that many 'secular' professional codes are rooted within a Judeo-Christian framework, which one respondent, Nathan, described as an invisible but still 'powerful golden thread that helps stitch together the public life of our institutions'.

Models of leadership and change management emerging from Roman Catholic Spiritual Capital

Our final section focuses on the vision for leadership and change management that emerges from Roman Catholic spiritual capital or BVW. This is the level at which espoused theology, affect, values and virtues, and tactics and negotiations are crystallised into strategic interventions that shape the material structures and ethos of the work-based and business environment. We have identified five dimensions of leadership and management that reflect Roman Catholic ideas of what it means to be a flourishing individual located within a flourishing community.

The concept of the Common Good has a long history dating from Aristotle onwards, that predates the Roman Catholic Church but which the Church has adopted more recently as one of the central tenets of CST seeing it as 'the sum of those conditions

which allow individuals and groups to achieve their proper purposes more fully and quickly,' (Second Vatican Council §26). This concept was reflected in notions of vocation and service to one's colleagues and institution, so that personal and communal flourishing were mutually dependent. This is expressed in a leadership approach that is courteous, respectful, interactive and based on an inner-confidence that is embedded within a foundational framework. This framework provides a strong sense of ethical and moral principles that guide day-to-day decisions often made under duress or stress. As Paul articulated it '… we are here for a shared purpose, we have centrally held beliefs; within which there will be a spectrum of takes but there is a central set of truths here, that we subscribe to – and they help you see the wood for the trees when there are times of emotional or informational overload'.

The inherent value of the person is a recurring motif that encompasses the value of seeing the whole person in their physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions. This aspect of Roman Catholic inspired leadership was summed up in phrases like 'people are the most important thing' (Matt); 'I try and see the best in other people' (James); 'everyone matters' (Sylvia) and 'in my professional dealings with colleagues I try and appreciate the uniqueness of everyone of them' (Clare).

Critiquing and challenging hierarchies and practices is a dimension of leadership aimed at fostering values of inclusion, recognition and encouragement, as well as critiquing norms or hierarchies that were perceived to be unjust or disempowering. Common phrases and concepts associated with this expression of leadership included 'Treating less senior personnel with respect' (David); 'Playing to the strengths of everyone rather than simply correcting weaknesses' (Matt); 'Not being concerned

with status but doing something for your fellows' (James); 'Living out an ethics of equal worth- we don't do this any better than non-Christian colleagues' (Emily) and 'Giving voice to the voiceless' (David). In other examples, our interviewees felt compelled to question the assumptions behind increased efficiencies and cost-cutting exercises which undermined ethical, professional and theological norms around the care of the most vulnerable. Nathan said, regarding deep cuts within NHS, 'I constantly wrestle with the thought that if [NHS care] can't be delivered in the best way, is the service still better than nothing at all?' Alice asks, 'Should we take NHS money if we are not making a difference'. She finds her Roman Catholic BVW gives her increasing confidence to 'let people think that I didn't say or do the "right" thing as far as management are concerned'.

The idea of a **values-driven life** was expressed as leading by example, and included ideas of 'witnessing to my faith in actions' (Matt) and 'promoting awareness of my faith through the things that I do' (Clare). The concept of witnessing, as previously discussed, connotes an extra drive and desire to be held publicly accountable for the faith or belief one has. One interviewee ventured the view that this level of visible attachment to virtues and values is more obvious in religious people: 'religious people are more highly motivated' and that there is 'a difference in the quality and ethos of care in projects or sections run by faith groups' (James). Paul reflected that he attempted to model in his dealings with students and colleagues, 'a genuine commitment to professionalism and the wellbeing of others that is a direct extension of my beliefs'.

Pragmatic and professional – being a good team player. This is a persistent trope associated with a Roman Catholic view of leadership and management. It can be best summed up by the idea of 'balance'. This means holding in tension the motivational energy derived from the compelling need to witness to belief in some way, with the need to also give a 'good account of faith' by being seen as a conscientious member of staff who adheres to professional and ethical codes wherever possible.

For others however, the strategic and reflexive balancing of spiritual capital and 'professional' capital leads to creative possibilities that work with a both/and approach rather than a simple either/or strategy. For example, Alice suggested that 'Pastoral ethics and clinical ethics should mix', and this was the axiom she sought to live out in her leadership role. This theme of balance was reframed by another interviewee 'It is really important that I work with the values of the patient, and it's an approach that I live out amongst my colleagues, but in that context, I choose to temporarily suspend my values, but without compromise.'

Several less wholesome examples of leadership and management were also identified including: 'not dealing with difficult issues when they emerge' (Sylvia); 'allowing bad work cultures to develop where bullying and lying are seen as normal' (Sylvia); 'observing management styles that create compliance and dependency' (Peter); 'favouring those who agree with you' (Peter); 'hard management for the sake of it – it creates deep unhappiness amongst the staff, but hard managers themselves are no happier for doing it' (Matt).

Emergent theoretical framework and future research agendas

Our pilot research has identified an emerging framework which isolates the different variables that constitute the relationship between BVW (which we are also conceptualising   as spiritual capital) and the public space of the workplace. These components are: *external signifiers and boundaries* (e.g. professional roles and hierarchies within the workplace, rules and regulations and working practices and official theological beliefs); *affect* - namely the emotional and psychological (i.e. internal) and often visceral impacts these external signifiers generate in the lives of those engaged in the work and business environment; n*egotiation and praxis* – namely how BVWs are brought implicitly and explicitly into play to manage, reflect upon and counteract both consonant and dissonant associations between external environment and internal affect; and *leadership and change management* tactics which can emerge as an innovative and synthetic response to the combined impact of the other three elements in this new framework. Our analysis suggests that BVW is deployed and embodied in three different ways within the business and work environment.

The first suggests that BVW is being fed into the wider environment as a form of *background influence* – a quietly humanising and nondescript variable that can work to mitigate the worst impacts of isolation and dehumanisation. The second, and related to this, is the clear use of BVW to form networks of solidarity often based on shared affinities of belief and background within the work place. This form of deployment can clearly have both progressive and regressive impacts, if used as a form of exclusionary or discriminatory practice against other expressions of BVW and identity.

The third type of deployment of BVW involves explicitly promoting those outputs we have coded as 'development' and 'agency'. Within these scenarios, BVW moves from being a background moulder to one that is more foregrounded and strategic as it shifts into a more active mode of shaping the work-based and business environment in accordance with the more transformative and obviously energising aspects of BVW or spiritual capital. Thus, as well as BVW working at both implicit and explicit levels, we are suggesting that it also operates, at visible and invisible levels within the work-based and business environment. These levels are critical to this debate because of how we now understand the interaction between both visible and invisible social actors within a machinic assemblage, or between material and virtual processes. The impact of this research is that we can now begin to critically address and analyse how religious and non-religious BVW is a key actor within public assemblages.

We conclude with three potential research agendas regarding the implementation of BVW beyond the work-based and business environment. First, the need for a deeper understanding of the role of BVW in the redistribution of agency and power for progressive ends. Our research identifies the close relationship between cognitive and affective elements of BVW (in this instance CST and its implicit transmission), and intentional (and indeed prophetic) leadership and change management strategies for redistributing value and dignity, as well as encouraging relational and solidaristic expressions of power. Second, the processes by which actors reclaim and redefine ethical and belief discourses by publicly deploying the values inherent in their BVW. For example, recognising the innate dignity of the human person in an end of life setting. The final research agenda could analyse the extent to which BVW creates a disposition towards a social imagination that seeks to affect deep structural change that incorporates emotional, political, social and spiritual dimensions within the public

sphere. There is immense value in studying the comparative impacts of religious and non-religious BVW in respect of this agenda and important progress in this regard is intended by the BVW at Work project. For example, assessing the combined impact of the cluster of identified principles and practices associated with the common good concept.

The challenge implicit in all this research, at that a time when religious and non-religious belief and identity are gaining more academic and policy acceptance in what we might now call a post-secular public sphere, is to ask this single question. Does BVW simply become co-opted into existing neo-liberal paradigms as a gloss for surface change? Or does a greater recognition and understanding of its role and impact allow us to consider the possibility of deeper frameworks of change and transformation within our increasingly globalised and diversifying society.

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