

ABSTRACT

Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of Faith at Work

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This study examines how full-time Christian employees perceive their faith as an advantage or disadvantage in the workplace. I frame these perceptions in two ways: religious cultural capital which reflects employees' religious dispositions and socialization; religion as cultural toolkit which amplifies their experience of workplace as culturally unsettled. Interview findings from 63 full-time suggest that religious disposition and socialization enhance psychological coping, improved work relationships, and work performance. Also, the most commonly perceived challenges to their faith including the mixed expectations within religious tolerance policies, anti-Christian hostility, higher ethical and civic expectation of Christians, and heteronormative religious dissonance reflected their perceptions of workplace as culturally unsettled. Bonding with other fellow Christian colleagues or evangelizing others suggest serve as responses or tools which help them to make sense of contemporary workplace culture.

Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of Faith at Work

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of Sociology

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts

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August 2014

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Religion plays a distinctive role in society compared to other social institutions as it provides, promotes, and generates social capital, moral values, political mobilization, and civic engagement to an individual's private and public life as well as to society as a whole (Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Gill, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Stark & Finke, 2000; Smidt, 1999; Kuran, 2004). Beyers (2011) explained the way religion is understood, expressed, and practiced is determined by culture. In American society, salience of religion and religious participation are higher than other Western societies.

Most previous literature on the role of religion in society focused on social capital, political mobilization, and civic engagement whereas religion's significance specifically in the workplace is less well-studied. Considering the dominant fields of one's life within society, the workplace is a central non-religious field beside family. Research on religion and workplace in sociological studies was established by Weber's (1958) work on the role of religion on work in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He explained that religion has an important role in the perception of economic performance and values, which in turn become internalized at the individual level such as self-discipline and positive attitude toward economic performance and achievement. Thus, Weber's work has contributed to studies of work to recognize religion's significant role on individual workers. Previous literatures developed further support that one's religious identity and commitment reflect and internalized as one's

core identity which has a significant effect on an individual worker's performance and work outcome (Martin, 1976; Rokeach, 1968).

However, the role and effect of religion on work specifically in the contemporary workplace have been under-investigated due to the prominence of the theory that interest in the eventual privatization and secularization of religion in the 20th century (Weaver & Agle, 2002; Morgan, 2005; Lawrence & King, 2008). Since the mid-1990s, however, there has been a growing interest in researching religion in non-religious organizations including the workplace (Cash et al., 2000; Roundy, 2009). Thus, this current study asks: how is religion significant to Christian full-time employees?

Using data from in-depth interviews of Christian full-time workers' experiences and perceptions in the workplace, I find that in the contemporary American workplace, religion can be perceived as a form of cultural capital, and as a cultural toolkit in unsettled space. The first theme suggests that religious capital provides resources to religious individual workers through prayer, meditating words, and feelings of support from God. The outcome of utilizing religion as cultural resources includes stress coping, perceived better relationship with others at work, and better work performance. The second theme suggests that religion is a cultural toolkit in unsettled space. The contemporary religiously tolerant workplace culture creates challenges for religious employees who experience difficulty tolerating those who do not share the same religious worldview and experience anti-Christian micro-aggression at work. I argue that these religious employees respond to the culturally unsettled space through bonding social capital with other fellow Christian colleagues or evangelizing others at work. Overall, these findings suggest that religious employees perceive and experience that their

understanding the advantages and disadvantages of religious faith in the workplace is based on what and how they use their religion as cultural resources.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Religious Cultural Capital

In sociological perspectives, religion serves as a powerful cultural system influencing both the individual and society (Pargament, 1992; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Pargament (1992) explains that one's ability to control and practice elements in religion such as religious knowledge, rituals, and beliefs can offer powerful resources in various social situations of one's life. Based on this explanation, it is assumed that religion can be viewed as a form of capital. The notion of religion as a form of capital began with Becker's (1976) idea of human capital and its relationship to economic performance. Iannaccone applied Becker's concept to religion and defined religious capital as "skills and experiences specific to one's religion, including religious knowledge, familiarity with church ritual and doctrine and friendship with fellow worshippers (1990, p.229). He explained that all of these elements allow individuals to produce valuable religious resources particularly with respect to social networking with the religious community for the religious individual. Stark and Finke redefined religious capital as "the degree of mastery of and attachment to a particular religious culture (2000, p.120)." Religious capital based on Becker's human capital perspective assumes religious individuals as rational actors who make rational choices. Most studies based on this assumption have examined the outcomes and use of these resources within religious communities.

Unlike these ideas of religious capital with Becker's (1976) "human capital" approach, Bourdieu (1991) conceptualized religious capital focusing more on actors'

choices and actions that are rather dispositional not as rational choices or strategy. For Bourdieu, these individuals' actions are the result of the assembled capital and dispositions from socialization and present opportunities as well as constraints of fields where they act. Some scholars argued that these definitions of religious capital assume religion as an unchanging system which pushes a religious individual's actions to a consistent direction. This assumption then suggests religious resources play an independent role of an individual actor in any social situation or social structure (Verter, 2003; Smilde, 2012). However, recent studies argue that religious capital is indeed an innovative cultural resource which can be utilized and incorporated in various ways to an individual's life (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2010; Smidt, 2004). Since this study focuses on examining religious individuals' use of religious resources in the workplace, my analysis concentrates on a specific characteristics of religion as cultural capital: internalized knowledge, skills, and disposition. This approach reflects Bourdieu's embodied forms of cultural capital and resembles internalized facets of religion at the individual level such as their thoughts, perceptions, and actions which in turn distinguish religious individuals from others at work such as their ways of coping with stress, relating to others, and work performance and attitude. Thus, this approach of religion as cultural capital helps not only to explain how religious individuals understand and practice their religious norms and values but also the distinctive consequences of utilizing them in the workplace.

Religion as Cultural Toolkits

Religion not only works as cultural capital providing resources but also plays a role as cultural toolkits in certain social settings. Swidler (1986) explained that individuals use culture as a toolkit in their strategy of action, which indicates organizing

action without planning consciously, to obtain desirable goals in the specific situation. She argued that culture does not influence or lead action to a certain or consistent direction, rather the individuals select different tools to organize their actions in a certain situation. The key difference between religion as a cultural toolkit and religious cultural capital is that the notion of toolkit focuses on the situation which influences an individual's strategy of action as well as the selection of toolkit. Thus, the notion of religion as a cultural toolkit is more likely to view religion as mutable. Geertz defined religion as a system of symbols which builds "powerful, pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivation in an individual by formulating conceptions of general order of existence and clothing these perceptions with such an aura of factuality that moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (2002, p.63). Thus, religion as a cultural system becomes internalized at the individual level as values, attitudes, and behaviors which align with Swidler's (1986) notion of culture as a toolkit. She explained that the selection and use of different tools in the specific setting can imply for the benefits but also adaptation to the situation. Bourdieu's concept of religious capital in particular is different from Swidler's (1986) view of religion as cultural toolkit. Although both of them focus on individual actors and practice-oriented characteristics of culture, Bourdieu is more interested in examining an individual's action in terms of her or his dispositions and socialization in the group whereas Swidler's cultural toolkit emphasizes more on one's perceptions and reactions in the situation.

Swidler distinguishes social situations into two contexts: settled and unsettled. Settled contexts are predictable with minimal disruption; in this context, individual actors choose available cultural tools to reinforce their action. Thus, culture plays an integrative

role, reinforcing the structure. Unsettled contexts, on the other hand, are unpredictable, thus individual actors attempt to use cultural tools that are familiar, significant, or available to them to obtain new strategies and to achieve desirable goals. The workplace can be perceived either as settled or unsettled space in which religious tools might inform a religious individual to respond or act in that specific context. However, in this study, I argue that the contemporary workplace is perceived as culturally unsettled by Christian full-time workers due to religious pluralism and the privatization of religion promoted and encouraged by workplace policy. For example, if a Christian full-time worker perceives the workplace as hostile to her religious beliefs and practices as a result of discriminatory policies, she might turn to those beliefs to find solace or a reaffirmation of her religious identity. Alternatively, her perceptions of hostility may result from her particular beliefs that anticipate discrimination in non-religious situations. In either case, religion is a significant factor in the real or perceived unsettledness of the workplace.

Earlier literature on religion as a cultural system assumed that religion is a cultural tool which consists of religious ideas, beliefs, and symbols used almost exclusively in religious communities for the purpose of stress coping, meaning seeking, social networking, and charitable giving among others. Most of these studies assumed religion as an independent tool that is resistant to change. None of these studies have examined religious faith as a toolkit in the non-religious workplace. Because my study focuses on religious individuals' use of religion outside of the religious community, more specifically, the individual's perception of experiences in the workplace, I concentrate on recent literature which addresses the relationship between religion as a cultural toolkit and specific nonreligious settings. Religion is expected to reflect not only the religious

employees' perceptions of the secular workplace but also to illustrate how religion is actively utilized as a flexible toolkit in their strategy of action in the workplace.

Religious Cultural Capital and as a Toolkit Outside of the Congregation

Studies on religion as a cultural toolkit often view religion as a resource utilized within religious congregation in terms of power structure and relations (Becker, 1998; Gill, 1999; Stark & Finke, 2000); however, this approach limits religion's capacity to the private sphere in the individual's life. This view of religion also assumes that religion as cultural resources does not change (Bonnell, c1999). However, more recent studies on religion suggest that religion is not an unchanging resource or a toolkit especially regarding non-religious behavior, but scholars argue that this religious resource indeed can change and adjust depending on the social context (McGregor et al., 2008; Predelli, 2004). Thus, there are two main problems in the study of religion as a cultural toolkit: religion as a private matter; religion as a fixed toolkit. This limits the role and the effect of religion in nonreligious fields of the society.

Iannaccone (1988) explains characteristics of religion which consists of patterns of beliefs and behavior that are repeated in one's life and one's interaction with others. In other words, his idea of religion in practice is more broadly applicable and implies adaptability since it does not emphasize the religious congregation. Until now, only few studies have examined everyday religious practices and interaction in one's life outside of the congregation (Jeanings et al., 2010; McGuire, 2008; Marshall, 2010). There has been a growing interest studying religion, specifically focusing on everyday religious practices and the way religious individuals perceive and make sense of reality with their religious activities (Neitz et al., 2010). Some scholars refer to "lived religion" as everyday

religious activity and the ways individuals interact with sacred sources and internalize religious meanings (Hall, 1997; Orsi, 2005; McGuire, 2008; Riesebrodt, 2009). Most of these studies attempted to look at a wider range of religious expressions and beliefs in different social contexts including non-traditional religious settings (Cadge & Daglian 2008; Ignatow 2009; Jeanings et al., 2010; McGuire, 1998).

For example, Cadge, Levitt & Smilde (2011) investigated the hospital as a non-religious setting, particularly the negotiation that occurs in hospital chapels. They examined how hospitals regulate and negotiate religion and spirituality, focusing on the relationship between the social setting and religious actors. Their work demonstrates how religious pluralism is conflicted and negotiated in contemporary American hospital chapels. They found that most hospital chapels, most of which were originally founded by Christian denominations, have become more diverse and integrated with other religious faiths and spirituality, yet some Christian traditions and symbols still remained in the system. This new working environment challenges chaplains as well as directors to make strategic actions for others in which they often had to move away from their Christian traditions. The authors referred to changes in dynamics and regulation of religion in the secular space as “religious ideas and practices in motion.” As they note, "Clearly, religion is not just a property of individuals, nor of organizations and/or nation-states, but also of the public spaces where religious ideas collide" (2011, p.443). Their argument suggests that religion is malleable outside of the boundaries of the religious community. The problem they identify is that much of our understanding of religion is drawn from studies within religious communities that often do not change or adapt their beliefs and practices. And they discovered that our definition of religion needs to change

because religion is adaptive outside of the religious community (2011). Although religion is adaptive outside of the congregation, our scholarly tendency to define religion within congregation makes religion appear static.

Since my study focuses on religious workers' perceptions and experiences in the workplace, some scholars suggest using a specific approach which looks at specific social context or culture. In *Religion on the Edge: De-centering and Re-centering the Sociology of Religion*, Bender and co-authors (2012) explain that because previous study of religion particularly in the context of American society often identify religious faith as one's identity (Neitz, 2004), studies tend to ignore the individual's action and its consequences (Ammerman, 2006; Besecke 2005). Thus, the authors suggest a "pragmatic" approach which does not focus on actors' actions and attitudes but rather focuses on particular social settings in which individuals might behave and respond differently. The "pragmatic" model views religious individuals' actions as more closely related to and affected by various situations in life which motivate religious individuals to respond in different ways (2012). Thus, this approach builds on Swidler's argument that the perception of culturally settled or unsettled settings varies by social situations and these settings have a significant influence on individual's strategy of action. Religion in settings perceived as unsettled can "either" presume a subsequent "or" amplify the perception of cultural unsettledness.

In sum, even though scholars have begun to look at religious individuals' qualitative experiences and expressions in non-religious settings, they have missed the workplace as a primary social setting of an individual's life outside of the religious

congregation. And religion as a cultural toolkit can explain a religious worker's behavior as part of strategy of action to obtain a desirable goal in the workplace.

Religious Capital and as Cultural Toolkits in the Workplace

Most of the previous literature on religion and the workplace analyzed and examined the role of religion from an organizational perspective rather than an individual-level. Most findings suggest that religiosity of an employee has an impact on the workplace (Weber, 1958; Davidson & Caddell, 1994). Weber explained that religious teachings introduce a set of workplace values and behaviors such as hard work, honesty, self-control, and innovation (Jones, 1997). Along with Weber's positive view of religion and work, other previous literature has shown that religion has a positive effect such as providing emotional support and as a guide for making ethical decisions in the workplace (Mitroff, 2003). Thus, these findings suggest that religious cultural capital results in greater preferable work-related outcomes. Most of the previous literature on religion and the workplace assumed a settled Protestant environment. It did not imagine a religiously pluralistic environment such as the United States after 1965. A religiously pluralistic workplace may be perceived as an unsettled space since there are multiple religious perspectives (including no religious perspective) that may be perceived as a threat to some religious workers.

Religious Tolerance

A dominant threat perceived by some religious employees as well as religious individuals in contemporary American society is religious tolerance (Wuthnow, 1989). One example of this threat is the potential tension of a religious employee's interaction

with work responsibilities and workplace relationships (Hicks, 2002; Dent, Higgins, & Wharf, 2005; Fernando & Jackson, 2006). As some scholars acknowledge, negotiation and tolerance to this new culture and norms have become the main issue in research (Eck, 2001; Hicks, 2003). Hicks (2003) explains that if a company holds different religious norms from a religious individual worker, religious workers are likely to experience a direct tension, more specifically a religious tension between their values and worldviews and the company. Even if the company provides religious accommodation and promotes religious diversity among workers, a worker's religiously grounded identity can still create misunderstanding and tension in the workplace. In other words, a place that promotes religious tolerance is perceived as unsettled by some religious individuals. The workplace that advocates and institutionalizes religious tolerance then is perceived as deeply unsettled for those who think that religion must be the same for everyone. Because there has not been a study that extensively examined religious belief and practices particularly in the workplace at the individual level, this study breaks new ground by presenting a qualitative investigation of religion's influence in the lives of full-time workers.

CHAPTER THREE

Data and Methods

Data for this study comes from a larger project, “The National study of Entrepreneurial Behavior, Regulatory Focus, and Religion” funded by the National Science Foundation (#0925907). The interview included various questions regarding integrating faith and work as well as interviewee’s involvement, experiences, and programs in current congregations to faith-related experiences in the workplace. In this project, my study focuses on responses to the questions pertaining to advantages and disadvantages of applying Christian faith into the workplace among full-time workers.

Researchers identified five congregations in five different States (Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Texas, and Southern California) based in part on the responses given on the 2011 national survey, and on local networks when clergy leaders could not be reached. Selected churches evidenced an emphasis on faith integration at work as confirmed by the clergy member in the follow-up phone call. These five congregations were paired with five additional congregations of the same size and denomination in the same city which does not emphasize faith-integration at work. Congregations reflected four main religious traditions (Catholic, Black Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, and Mainline Protestant) as well as Korean evangelical Protestant. The latter was chosen in part due to the high degree of entrepreneurialism among immigrant Koreans (Light & Bonacich, 1991).

Most interviews were completed face to face at the interviewee’s church or nearby coffee shops or other public venues and some were completed over the phone

(N=9) Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to more than an hour. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. I conducted interviews of evangelical immigrant Korean fulltime workers and entrepreneurs in New York City while the other sites were completed by other research project team members. For Korean full-time workers, all of them are originally from South Korea, and their primary language is Korean. These interviews were completed in Korean and translated to English.

Each pair of congregations in each location shared the same religious tradition and church size. They differed on whether the congregation emphasized or did not emphasize faith integration in the workplace. For the purposes of this thesis, I focus on the fulltime workers who attended churches that emphasize faith-integration. Limiting the study to congregations which emphasize faith-integration allowed me to examine the differences in a comparison between these groups. All of these congregations are the same since they are faith-integrated. The full-time workers in the main five congregations I study here differ in terms of denominations, and the samples are large enough to warrant comparison across groups.

All interviewees were selected through snowball sampling through pastors' or interviewees' recommendations. The total sample of full-time workers is 63 at the five faith and work integrated congregations. Interviewee occupations and occupational fields were diverse; most worked for private profit corporation/ business, non-profit organizations, or local, state or federal government, about 47 percent of the respondents were male, and in terms of racial distribution, 46% were white Anglo, 20.5% Black or African American, 30% Asian American (28% Korean American), and 3% Hispanic/ Latino. This sample is particularly unique in its high religious service attendance rate:

98% of all respondents reported attending church at least once a week or more. All demographic characteristics can be found on Table 1

Table1. Descriptive Statistics

Location	Michigan	Texas	New York	Southern CA	New Jersey
Name of the Congregation	Redeemer Evangelical	Community Baptist	Korean Church in New York	Saint Joseph	Livingstone
Age (mean)	40.2	38.4	32.4	45.3	52.1
Gender (% male)	58.3%	44.4%	55.6%	27.3%	77%
Occupation					
Manager/professional	66.7%	56.6%	94.4%	64.7%	77.9%
Technical/administrative	16.6%	43.4%	5.6%	9%	7.7%
Service	16.6%	--	--	27.3%	15.4%
Race ¹					
% White	100%	--	--	73%	92%
% Black	--	100%	--	--	--
% Asian	--	--	100%	18%	--
% Hispanic	--	--	--	9%	8%
Religious affiliation	Evangelical Protestant	African American Protestant	Evangelical Protestant	Catholic	Mainline Protestant
N	12	9	18	11	13

For this study, I examined responses to two questions. “What are the most significant advantages or benefits of bringing your faith to work?” and “What are the most significant drawbacks or challenges of bringing your faith to work?” I used an inductive approach in order to discover emergent themes from the responses. The major themes that emerged from this method are organized and elaborated in the findings below. Christian full-time workers described four main advantages of applying faith into the workplace including psychological benefit, better work performance, improved worker and customer relationship, and moral guidance. Both white and Korean

¹ Racial percentage refers to the interviewees, specifically the full-time workers.

evangelical as well as African American Protestant full-time workers also revealed a distinct perceived advantage: opportunities to proselytize. Regarding perceived disadvantages, the most common theme among all interviewees was that of required religious tolerance.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Out of 63 Christian full-time workers, 62 reported at least one advantage, and 52 reported at least one disadvantage. For the perceived advantages of bringing religious faith at work, they report that Christian faith has psychological benefits such as stress coping and relational benefits as well as better work performance and work outcome. These advantages support the argument that religion acts as a kind of cultural capital to produce workplace resources. A number of other responses revealed evidence that religion in the workplace can also be a kind of cultural toolkit in an environment that religious workers deem culturally unsettled. In some cases, these are reported as the perceived advantages such as bonding with other Christian co-workers and opportunities for evangelism. Among the perceived disadvantages: religious tolerance; anti-Christian micro-aggression; perceived higher standards of morality and civility show that diverse religious contexts are perceived unsettled by Christian full-time workers.

Religious Cultural Capital as Perceived Advantages of Faith in the Workplace

All of the responses come from answer to two questions: “What are the most significant advantages or benefits of bringing your faith to work?” and “what are the most significant drawbacks or challenges of bringing your faith to work?” These responses show that religion perceived as advantageous often resembles a kind of cultural capital. Greater investment in one’s faith has certain results like better workplace relationships, better stress management, and better work output.

Better Relationship with People at Work

The most frequently reported perceived advantage among Christian full-time workers is in their ability to relate to others in the workplace (20 out of 63). The respondents often use phrases such as "sincerely care for others" and "pray for them" regarding their attitude and behavior toward others which in return provides a better workplace.

Steven, an active evangelical, working as an assistant manager in Michigan explains that his religious faith makes him genuinely care for other people at work.

Um, I think the benefit that—in my job that it brings in for the staff is that, uh, particularly when it comes to personal crises, and everyone has personal crises, I'm really there for them, and they know that. And they've seen me step into that. And-and I think some of that has to do with my faith and, uh, that I understand hope. And I understand that, uh, you know that that's a time when they need compassion. They need some understanding.

One of the differences he perceives as he brings his religious faith at work is his compassion and understanding for other people. And he sees that his colleagues recognize the difference in him.

Christopher, an African American Protestant who works as a procurement specialist in Texas says,

I think by me being the way I am, open minded, hospitality, uh, just-just, that comes through faith. So when people see that, they seem to respond to you better, and they open themselves up, too. Everyone who knows me at work can always come and talk to me and ask me their questions. I'm always available for help, always available for information.

Christopher's personal faith influenced him to be open-minded to other people at work, and he sees reciprocity as people open themselves back to him through demonstrations of his action and attitude.

Rebecca, a Catholic whose job is a lifestyle educator in Southern California says,

Advantages? That I'm going to be a good person who sincerely cares, that I am praying for them and their success in their journey. My interest and my hope are to do well for the people. When you have God in your life, you more take things to heart of the importance of it, as opposed to just a paycheck.

Rebecca explains that her religious faith helps her to have the right attitude while working with her customers by showing sincere care and "praying for them." As she reports at the end, she perceives that this is a difference in motivation, in contrast to being motivated largely by one's pay.

Andy, a Mainline Protestant, working as a senior vice president of sales, marketing, and media in New Jersey reports that faith makes him more respectful of others and that he genuinely cares for them.

You have tolerance. You know, it's not all about winning all the time...you know, the most valuable asset you'll ever come across in business is not a piece of machinery or a building or anything like that. It's people. And so you treat your people with respect. And I think, you know, faith plays into that that, um, that you learn to, um, to respect everyone, even if you disagree with them.

Andy perceives that religious faith helps him to value people and his relationship with them more than business itself in which the emphasis is all on financial gain.

The responses of interviewees who perceive that their religious faith benefits their relationship with others at work, suggests that Christian full-time workers have an intrinsic motivation. In these responses, this motivation refers to caring for others often through prayer, encouragement, and positive attitude toward others. And some of them have explicitly negative reactions to having an extrinsic motivation such as a paycheck or promotion at work (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Fernando & Jackson, 2006). Wuthnow (1991) found that religious individuals in general believe in and value empathy and compassion

toward other people. Christian full-time workers' value emphasis on relationships suggests that religious faith can promote bridging social capital through cooperation with different people to sustain the larger community (Paxton, 1999) such as the workplace. Thus, this finding of relational benefit at work support the notion of religious cultural capital as these Christian full-time workers' internalized religious resources benefits workplace relationship.

Psychological Benefits

Previous studies have shown a consistent positive association between religious faith and well-being across demographic characteristics, geographic locations as well as across religious denominations. Scholars suggest that religion, particularly Christianity, provides a unique worldview which helps Christians make sense of the world and accept various life events whether unexpected or negative. Religious faith helps them to remain hopeful and positive as well as provides spiritual and social support (Koenig, 2009, Fabricatore et al., 2004; Perry, 1998; Frankel & Hewitt, 1994; Levin, 1994; Idler & Kasl, 1992; Pargament et al., 1992).

About one fourth of interviewed Christian full-time workers mention the psychological benefits as one significant advantage. These include having a sense of peace, hope, positivity, and sense of meaning at work.

For example, Greg, an evangelical working as a driving school instructor in Michigan says, *"I guess the peace that he [God] brings, knowing that I can do what I need to do and that I have his support and his words in hopefully most circumstances. I just, it's the peace as much as anything."* As Greg explains several times, the main perceived benefit of bringing faith into the workplace is peace which comes through

recognition that God is deeply involved with him at work. Thus his feeling of support from God and words in the religious scripture indicate that religion functions as resources to cope with a stressful working environment.

Another example is Rick, an African American Protestant, working as a director of construction in Texas, who says,

I am in a business that people are aggressive. It's expected. It's rewarded. It is the way it is. You have to learn how to deal with that and not become bitter and, you know, a terrible person to be around. If you stay prayed up, stay into your Bible, read the Word of God, let him handle it; your life is much more meaningful, much more at ease, at peace.

Rick explains that his work environment prizes aggression and notes that such an environment can create bitterness for employees. His solution to this problem is found in his religious behaviors such as reading the Bible or "staying prayed up" which is tied to his perceived connection with God. And this leads to two results: a letting-go of the problem of aggression in the workplace and peace as well as greater sense of meaningfulness in life overall.

Ann, a Mainline Protestant who works as a teacher in New Jersey, describes the perceived benefit of staying positive with less stress in the workplace.

[My faith] just makes me a happier teacher, patience or trying to see the other side of something. Everybody brings their personalities. The kids included. And it is a high stress, high anxiety job. Not all the staff members get along... I would say that the biggest thing is it always makes, it always makes me stop before reacting or know that I should always stop before reacting. Not that I always necessarily do it.

Ann explains her profession as highly stressful and anxious, but she also adds that there is relational stress with other colleagues. Despite all the stressors in her workplace, she perceives that her religious faith makes her emotionally stable and allows her to stay optimistic.

Christian full-time workers perceive religious faith as a cultural resource which helps them to be peaceful, hopeful, positive, and have a sense of meaning at work. Most of the responses show a connection between their religious faith and daily work experiences where their religious faith helps them to cope with daily stresses even if they are minor. Most previous studies on religion and mental health in the workplace often focused on examining people who are in helping professions such as nurses, social workers, and clergy (Koenig & Larson, 2001; Arnold et al., 2007; McKee et al., 2013). This finding expands previous research that was limited to the helping professions, suggesting that Christian full-time workers in general perceive that there is a psychological benefit by utilizing their religious faith as cultural capital as resource in the workplace. Thus, religious capital helps these workers to cope with work-related stress. These resources are manifested as prayer, relationship with God, and reminding of religious words and teachings in the workplace.

Better Economic Performance and Outcome

Studies have found that there is a positive correlation between religious faith / spirituality and motivation and commitment to work (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Dik & Duffy, 2009). And some of the interviewed Christian full-time workers perceive that their religious faith functions as a cultural resource for work-related benefits, and these benefits include confidence and motivation at work.

For example, James is an active Catholic and works as a system engineer in San Diego. He says that his work attitude benefits his company. "*[Faith] provides for, you know, a more productive environment, and then it obviously with, uh, if my time's better spent actually doing work there, obviously it's more productive environment.*" For James,

his religious faith influenced his attitude toward work. As Max Weber (1958) pointed out, religion shapes an individual's views on economic performance. James adds that the benefit does not only come from his hard work but also through having a good relationship with other colleagues at work which creates a better or more efficient and cooperative working environment.

Eric, a Mainline Protestant from New Jersey working as an instructional designer reports,

I think it helps you--at least in my case, I feel like it helps me do my--my work...better, maybe, than I would do it before. And then, in turn, of course, you know, if you do the work better, you get recognized for that. You get promoted and that kind of thing.

Compared to his past work experience, Eric recognizes that as his faith grows, it also improves his work performance. And by working better, it benefits him and his career through receiving promotions at work.

Another example, Dave, a white Evangelical male, working as an auto mechanic in Michigan says, *"To live and to work with integrity in all that you do. Either for me and the way I work or how hard I work and that, that, if I, that I've, that I'm a good or that I'm a great employee for him [God]."* Dave perceives that his religious faith influenced his attitude and view toward work. And his different view and attitude makes him more committed and work hard for the company. Unlike Eric, Dave speaks of a broader benefit, saying that his hard work benefits the company he is working for. This supports findings in previous literature that religious beliefs and active involvement influences not only the individual but also an organization's performance. (Weaver & Agle, 2002)

Christian full-time workers who perceive religious faith benefits work performance are more likely to hold a positive view on economic performance and its

outcome. And what they perceive as a benefit is not just for themselves but also to the company and the overall working environment. These responses suggest that Max Weber's argument that religious beliefs shape a religious individual's attitude toward economic performance and outcome continues for religious workers today.

Common Advantages Associated with Religion as a Cultural Toolkit

Religion not only functions as cultural capital providing resources but also as a cultural toolkit in the workplace which these religious workers perceive as culturally unsettled.

Bonding Social Capital with Other Christian Co-workers

Some Christian full-time workers reported that bonding social capital with other fellow Christians is one perceived advantage, and this finding reflects the use of religion as a cultural toolkit. Putnam (2000) describes bonding social capital as the strengthening of group ties. Bonding social capital not only serves as a cultural toolkit but also strengthens the significance of cultural tools since those tools are shared by individuals with the same religion for sharing the same culturally unsettled workplace.

Betty, an African American Protestant, working as a director at a Christian leadership institute in Texas describes that her perceived benefit is having and working with coworkers who are all Christians. *“It's good to be around like-minded people. It can make work very insular sometimes. You know, always [need to] hear new ideas and see new things. But it is still nice to, to be around like-minded people.”* While Betty acknowledges the potential drawback of having fewer new ideas in a workplace predominated by followers of her religious faith, she emphasizes the greater benefit of

being around co-workers who share similar religious assumptions. Wuthnow (2000) explains that bonding social capital provides emotional support and deeper intimacy among members and is more likely to happen where groups share the most homogeneous characteristics such as race/ethnicity, class, and religious tradition. For Betty's case, she may perceive stronger bonds in her workplace as all of her colleagues are Christians.

Sookyung, a Korean evangelical who works as a registered nurse in New York says, *“There are some Christian co-workers around me. We pray for each other often. And some people come to work really early and read Bible. Some Christian colleagues read Bible even during lunch time.”* Sookyung is clear about the benefit of having Christian colleagues- they pray for her and exemplify commitment to their religion by their behavior.

James, a Catholic system engineer in Southern California reports his perceived advantage saying,

There's some good, some really good, uh, Christians at my work, and we talk a lot, and-and we all talk about our struggles and stuff, and-and they [other Christian coworkers] had a lot of the same feelings, too...I think a lot of my-my Protestant and Christian friends at work... I mean, they have this sense of like, you know, human life... a sense of like this is sacred. You know?

James perceives that his relationship with other religious co-workers as there is a shared similar religious view regarding experiences in the workplace.

Those interviewees who report having bonding social capital with other Christian workers in the workplace often use words such as “we” or “together” when they describe relationship with them. Previous literature explains that the bonding relationship with other fellow Christians provides emotional strength and support which are beneficial especially to daily life stresses (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2005). The workplace is often one

filled with stress, uncertainties, and characteristics that can be collectively defined as an unsettled context. In such spaces, some Christian full-time employees find solace through same-religious co-workers. This is due in part because of the shared cultural tools found in Christian faith and practice such as prayer, support, and like-mindedness.

Evangelistic Benefit for Evangelical Christian Full-time Workers

Six out of 39 respondents of evangelical Christian full-time workers: white evangelical (N=2); Korean evangelical (N=3); African American Protestant (N=1), report that evangelism is at least one perceived advantage of bringing religious faith at work. Ellison (1992) explains that Evangelical Christians, especially those who are more committed, are more likely to perceive their interaction with others in the society as evangelistic opportunities.

For example, Tom, a director of environmental services of health care in Michigan says,

Well, because my, um, insight or the, or the spiritual gifts I've been given, because ultimately it has to do with evangelism. Uh, I try to take that same impetus in my work. And I try to, um, develop relationships that might ultimately lead to someone putting their trust in Christ. So that would be the number one reason why I would, I would work, to be a fisher of men.

Tom explains that the main reason and the final goal of his employment directly link to evangelism. Also, Tom perceives his relationship with other workers as crucial opportunities for evangelism.

Erin, a Black Protestant, working as a tax accounts administrator in Texas, also reports that evangelism is her main perceived advantage at work:

You're bringing more people to God. That, that's the big advantage, you're making his kingdom bigger, and that's what he wants...where there's a will there's a way. You can't force anybody to talk to you. But

say, like I said, two weeks ago, you know, I didn't force anybody. I didn't force anybody to come to our revival. I just opened and asked. I didn't ask her to come talk to me. You know? She was just kind of was like, "Hey, how do I get involved?" you can invite people to anything.

Like Tom, Erin perceives one of her main roles in the workplace as a Christian worker is to evangelize other co-workers. The importance of not forcing others to her faith, but rather inviting them to participate in the activities of her community, exemplifies her awareness and understanding of religious tolerance. It includes respectful engagement that is non-coercive but expressive.

Byungsoo, an immigrant Korean Evangelical, working as a salesman in New York also gives his personal example of having witnessed to one of his co-workers at work.

One of managers of my department decided to go to church after getting close to me. I bought many co-workers Bible and continuously talked about how awesome God is. I know God wants other people to know him by seeing and talking with me. So I can't behave bad or selfish at work. I wish to set a good example to everyone in my workplace.

Byungsoo explains that evangelism is closely related to and influenced by his actions. In addition to talking about his religious beliefs like Tom and Erin, he has purchased and gifted religious products to his co-workers. Unlike the other two examples, Byunsoo adds that the advantage of being able to share his faith in the workplace entails exemplifying Christian behavior (not behaving "badly" or selfish).

Most evangelical full-time Christians who report evangelism as one of perceived advantage at work explicitly express that their goal is evangelism as seen in the imperatives in their answers ("God wants me to...", "I have to..."), their use of biblical allusions that envision a community of believers ("his kingdom"), and the task of adding to this community ("a fisher of men"). Smith (1998) explain that Evangelical Christians

feel a strong responsibility to evangelize people around them and broadly, to the whole world. And in order to achieve this goal, Evangelical Christians perceive themselves being on stage, performing an alternative lifestyle relative to what they perceive as a non-Christian norm. Since the workplace is not a culturally Christian-dominant environment, this cultural unsettledness draws out the use of religious cultural tools to make sense of the working environment. For some evangelistic Christian workers, one of these tools is introducing and inviting coworkers to their religious community and activities sponsored by their faith organizations of the workplace as a means of asserting cultural tools in an unsettled context.

Common Disadvantages Associated with Religion as a Cultural Toolkit

Out of a total of 63 interviewees, 52 had at least one response to the question of the perceived disadvantage of bringing their religious faith into the workplace. There are three big themes drawn out of their responses: religious tolerance, anti-Christian micro-aggression, perceived imposed higher expectations of Christians and heteronormative religious dissonance. All these themes such as religious diversity, anti-Christian hostility, and perception of non-Christian co-workers and managers' monitoring context reflect their perception of the workplace as culturally unsettled, and these Christian full-time workers perceive themselves as a minority.

Religious Tolerance

Nearly half of these Christian full-time workers report religious tolerance as at least one perceived disadvantage when they bring religious faith into the workplace. The most common responses include being silent about their religious beliefs, being cautious

about religious expression, or feeling “judged” or “questioned” by other non-Christian workers because of their religious beliefs and practices.

Erin is an African American Protestant and works as a tax accountant administrator in Texas. She says, *“The only drawback or challenge is actually not talking about religion and not talking about, you know, to people how God really is. You know? That’s the disadvantage. It’s like they want you to be quiet about something you believe in.”* Erin clearly points out that having to be silent about her religious belief at work is the main perceived disadvantage as a Christian worker. Her response presents the structural limits to religious expression that were not identified by other workers who saw evangelism as an advantage.

Kelly, a white Evangelical, working as an administrator of a resource team at a hospital in Michigan explains her relationship with her boss. Kelly says that she has a conflict with her boss regarding different views about religious expression at work.

My boss—she is very, um—I mean, she’s got beliefs, but she doesn’t think that any of that should be really vocalized...everything has to be very neutral. And, like, this summer we’re having, um, our annual picnic, and it’s going to be Christmas in July, and I’m actually shocked that she’s actually letting me call it Christmas in July. So there’s conflict there, for sure. Just some of the conflict there and, um, the legalities of it all and then the-the political correctness of it all can get really discouraging. There are just so many rules, embracing of all these other beliefs. I feel like our belief is being really silenced.

In this example, Kelly perceives conflicting messages about religious expression and tolerance in the workplace. On the one hand, her boss emphasizes silence on religious belief, and on the other hand, use of terms like “Christmas” is paradoxically acceptable for a group function or celebration. The end result for Kelly is that her personal beliefs are muted in the face of a culture over-regulated by rules on religious tolerance.

Roy, a Mainline Protestant and an accountant as well as a chairman of a hotel chain business in New Jersey, perceives that tolerating other religious beliefs is a big part of workplace culture, and he is very cautious about following the norm.

Well, I'm-I'm very conscious not to, um, not to tread, uh, over somebody. Like-like, uh, we have, particularly in our other building; we have a lot of Muslim people. And so I don't think that it's fair to them for me to say, my religion is the right religion Um, I worked-I worked heavily in my first, you know, 15 years, I would say 70 percent of the people I worked with were Jewish...Um, but—So for me if I were a, uh, you know—Jesus Christ is the supreme being. In that audience it probably would not resonate very well. So I-I know-I-I know how I need to temper it because I'm tempering it more broadly about-about faith...Yeah, you don't want to—you don't want to create an environment that makes people uncomfortable.

Although Roy believes his religion is superior to other religious beliefs, he is aware not to bring his religious faith into the workplace and express it publically. He acknowledges that workplace culture promotes and values religious tolerance; thus introducing his religion and his belief in its superior over other religions is not appropriate or can upset others in the working environment.

Rebecca, a Catholic who works as a lifestyle educator in Southern California, responds similar to Erin and Kelly.

I think there's a challenge to not being able to bring your faith to work, of talking about it as openly as I would like to. I mean, there are already a few things I think of in the classes I would love to talk about that are spirit filled, and I know I can't just go right into that. So I know that it'll happen the way it needs to, but as far as challenges of, like, expressing it, or...Yeah, just that, because it's kind of a secular world.

Like Kelly, Erin, and Roy, Rebecca also perceives that expressing her religious belief and values at work is not acceptable. Also, as Roy reports, increasing number of non-Christian religious believers in the US such as Buddhists and Muslims has brought a new kind of religious diversity culture into various spheres of the US society (Wuthnow &

Hackett, 2003). The workplace is secular and not accommodating to religious expression. Although religious tolerance is perceived as a big challenge for many Christian full-time workers, these respondents acknowledge that they have to abide by the rules of the workplace culture. The norm of limiting religious expression in the workplace is perceived as culturally unsettled particularly for committed Christians like Kelly, Erin, Roy, and Rebecca.

Anti-Christian Micro-aggression

Another common response is experiencing an anti-Christian micro-aggression by other colleagues in the workplace. Jaewoo, a Korean Evangelical, who works as a computer engineer at IT Company in New York City, shares his experience of hostility and micro-aggression toward him as a Christian from his previous workplace.

My co-workers do not want to talk about religious issues. In my previous company, there were so many Jewish people and they attack me time to time by saying religiously sensitive things. For example, one of my former co-workers told me that he couldn't understand why Christians treat Jesus like a person who really existed. Based on one documentary that he Jwatched, he kept humiliating Jesus and Christians in front of me. He definitely knew that I was a Christian... and there were few people like that. But now I don't have any around me, but there are many events that require me to meet people. If all employees are supposed to go, then I go and try to enjoy. But if not, I don't. Some people might talk behind my back, but not in public.

Jaewoo describes that his Christian beliefs were deliberately mocked at his previous workplace. Some of his colleagues explicitly and publically questioned and judged him about his religious belief at work. Although he does not experience micro-aggression at his current job, not participating in employee functions may indicate that he fears a recurrence of micro-aggression at his current job. In the long run, frequently

withdrawing from social events at work could reduce Jaewoo's potential bridging social capital.

Another example is Jinkyung, a Korean evangelical, working as an architect in New York City. Like Jaewoo, she also experienced hostility and conflict with other co-workers who do not understand her religious belief.

There are many co-workers who are hostile to Christians. They sometimes ask me why I attend church, and it hurts my heart. People ask me if I'm okay to spend vacation on missionary trips, and I answer yes. When I first start to work in my previous company, I asked other people how they didn't know God and it became a quarrel. Now I know that I spoke too roughly at that time. I still get a question of what Christianity is by people around me. Sometimes I just want to talk back, but I try not to. I still don't know how to handle those situations.

Jinkyung acknowledges that the ways she argued about her specific beliefs with her co-workers was not appropriate in her previous job. Thus, in her current job, she is more cautious of her behavior and words and still struggles with how to engage with her colleagues about her faith.

Most of these Christian full-time workers who report religious tolerance as one perceived disadvantage of bringing faith into the workplace view that expressing their religious belief is not welcomed or not allowed in the workplace, especially one perceived as secular and public. The most commonly reported challenges include the feeling of being unable to express his/her religious faith openly at work in order to avoid being judged or threatened by other colleagues. In some cases, these Christian full-time workers experienced micro-aggression and hostility from other colleagues because of their religious beliefs and practices. And their perception of anti-Christian hostility makes these religious workers presume their workplaces are culturally unsettled.

Previous research showed that expressing certain religious doctrines and beliefs can affect relationships with others. These religious individuals can be viewed as antisocial and may experience physical and emotional distance from other people who do not hold those same beliefs. This is more prevalent among evangelical Protestants who tend to participate more exclusively in religious activities (Wuthnow, 2002; Hoge et al., 1998; Jelen & Wilcox, 1990). Thus, some Christian full-time workers' negative experiences with other colleagues can discourage bridging social capital, which in turn may increase isolation in the workplace.

Some scholars explain that declining in religious traditional values and practices and increasing religious tolerance in the society result in growing negative perceptions toward Christianity (Alwin, 1986; Hartmann, Zhang, & Wischstadt, 2005). Based on the responses from the interviews in this study of Christian full-time workers, greater religious tolerance or diversity result in a growing perception of a culturally unsettled workplace. And both findings on religious tolerance and micro-aggression toward Christianity indicate that diverse religious context is perceived and experienced as culturally unsettled.

High Expectation of Christians and Heteronormative Religious Dissonance

In other responses to the question of perceived disadvantage in religiously diverse workplace contexts, some Christians report feeling singled out and held to higher moral and civic exemplary behavioral standards compared to their colleagues. Korean Christian workers notably mentioned religious dissonance between their church-based training and workplace policy regarding tolerance of sexual orientation.

Betty, an African American Protestant, working as a director for leadership institute in Texas, says,

It's hard to be frustrated when your job is to one, motivate other people. Um, and I think that would probably even be harder if I were in a different work environment where you constantly feel like people are watching the Christian. That's—um, I think there's such a, a caricature about faith and about Christianity that you have to be perfect, you have to be smiling, you have to always be joyful, you have to always positive and, um, your faith is always 100% strong all the time. And, um, it's challenging to live in reality that says that's not always the case.

Betty struggles with the expectation that Christian workers are expected to model civic and ethical virtue due to their identification with the Christian faith. As she notes, she experiences a feeling of surveillance due to her religious identity.

Miran, a Korean Evangelical who works as a graphic designer in New York City, also reports that her perceived disadvantage as a Christian full-time worker is to keep her Christian image in the workplace, especially when she has conflict with other colleagues.

When there is a trouble between me and other co-workers, I cannot make my argument aggressively if I remind myself that I'm a Christian. What if other co-workers blame me for not being generous as a Christian? I wish to carry my point without being mean or aggressive.

Miran says that even if she wants to be aggressive, like Betty, she perceives that there is certain pressure and struggle over keeping her image as a Christian in the workplace.

These pressures and struggles are because Miran is aware of her words and actions at work, which may convey negative connotations of her Christian image.

These Christian full-time workers tend to show more concern about their attitude and behavior, specifically their relationship with other people at work. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1959) explains that individuals attempt to manage or control the impression of others on them, and each individual negotiates and justifies her identity through interactions with other people. Thus, some Christian

full-time workers who report the challenge of maintaining the image of being a good Christian also state constant awareness of one's behaviors and attitudes given the perceived surveillance they feel from others at work. This reflects a perceived culturally unsettled context for Christian workers.

Unlike the tolerance of other religious groups, a few interviewees, particularly the Korean evangelical workers in New York, took special issue with tolerance of sexual orientation differences. Their comments also exhibit the perception of a culturally unsettled environment where their beliefs put them at odds with some of their co-workers for no other reason than their sexual orientation.

Hyewon is a graphic designer in New York City. She describes her working environment as supportive of LGBT persons and rights. Hyewon struggles with how to react and interact in the workplace as she perceives such tolerance as contradictory to her religious belief.

There are so many homosexual people, and other people are also so generous with that issue, right? Even my company is supporting gay rights movements. I didn't know it before, but when I heard it, it surprised me a lot. In my office, there is a homosexual co-worker and he got proposed recently. When he announced it, all of the people in my office applauded him with delight. At that time, I was just stunned and couldn't think what is right or wrong. But when I heard that our pastor criticized that kind of atmosphere later, I got to realize how it is a serious problem to accept that kind of situation without doubt. I've never studied Bible seriously so far, so it is not easy for me to figure out what is right or wrong based on God's word.

Hyewon perceives that there is conflict or dissonance between the heteronormativity she is taught about LGBT issues in her congregation and the way Christians should behave and interact with gays and lesbians in the workplace as a worker. Thus, the tension comes from the dissonance between religious heteronormativity and the norms of sexual

orientation tolerance in the workplace. This in turn increases Hyewon's perception of the workplace as culturally unsettled.

Sung-kyu, a hotelier in New York City, like Hyewon, also struggles with interacting with sexual minorities in the workplace who he encounters in a daily basis.

I didn't have many challenges. I just needed to be nice to customers. But while working in a hotel in New York City, I have many chances to serve homosexual customers. Even straight people get sexually promiscuous when they stay at hotel. So it is hard for me to interact with them as a Christian. I got used to it, but it is still hard.

Sung-kyu does not explain specifically what is hard and challenging, but there is a conflict between following his Christian identity and following the norm in the workplace. And Sung-kyu perceives that his faith is at odds with workplace norms of tolerating non-monogamous and non-heterosexual clients. However, none of these interviewees have had any experience of argument or physical conflict with sexual minorities in the workplace since all of these Christian full-time workers are aware that they have to follow the rules and norms of the workplace culture.

The norm of tolerance whether religious or sexual informs the perceptions of many Christian employees in a socially diverse environment; for them, the workplace is full of uncertainty, potential hostility, and engagement with others who do not share the same worldview. Thus in the contemporary workplace, many Christian workers make use of their religious toolkits to make sense of their unsettled environment.

Overall findings on the perceived disadvantages suggest that religious tolerance in the workplace excludes the possibility of cultural settledness for most Christian workers. They have to recognize and tolerate other religious perspectives but often encounter a hostility and feel singled out to exhibit civic and ethical ideals in the workplace. Religion

as a cultural toolkit helps these workers make sense of their cultural unsettledness. And for some, this can be done through developing networks of fellow Christian co-workers where they are present. For a few, their faith motivates them to proselytize, or at the very least, invite others into their religious community.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examines the significance of religion in the contemporary workplace. Unlike the previous studies which examined religious individuals' experience and behaviors such as social capital, political mobilization, and civic engagement within the religious communities or nonreligious settings (Gill, 1999; Stark & Finke, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Kuran, 2004), this study provides in-depth insight into religion in the contemporary workplace as a specific social context. It is one of the first studies to examine how religious workers perceive and experience their religious beliefs and identity at work. I used two interview questions which asked religious workers how they perceived the most significant advantages or disadvantages of bringing their religious faith to work. I exclusively studied workers who attend congregations which support or have programs regarding faith and work integration. The reports from the total of 63 Christian full-time workers in five different locations, confirm that religion has a positive impact on these religious employees. These positive effects include psychological benefits through stress coping, improving relationship with others, and better work-related performance and outcomes.

The study findings, however, draw two themes that further developed from previous studies on religion. First, religious cultural capital provides resources. Second, religion can be used as a cultural toolkit in unsettled space. These two main findings elaborate that first, religious cultural capital provides resources for stress coping, improved relationships with others at work and work performance. These results itself

may support religious capital with a rational choice perspective; however, by further examining the way these religious employees perceive and utilize these resources reveal that these are rather influenced by their religious dispositions and socialization. For example, findings on these religious employees' perceptions toward coping with stress, relating to others, and performing work-related task suggest that these perceptions and actions are the reflection of their internalized religious beliefs, values, and actions. This result supports the notion of religious cultural capital as internalized facets of religion at the individual level in particular the workplace which represents non-religious communities and organizations.

The second finding on religion as a cultural toolkit in unsettled space reflects particularly the contemporary American workplace culture. In this workplace culture, religious employees face some challenges such as religious tolerance and anti-Christian micro-aggression at work which informs their perceptions of the workplace as culturally unsettled space. Thus, bonding with other fellow Christian colleagues or evangelizing others suggests that these can be responses to the culturally unsettled space. Their religious faith highlights the tension of religious pluralism by enhancing their perception of difference between themselves and their non-Christian or non-religious workers. This is exemplified in the disadvantages the workers perceive about their faith at work. And religious cultural tools help these workers make sense of their cultural unsettledness.

Findings from this study show that when Christian workers see their faith as an advantage, it promotes bridging ties with non-Christian co-workers. However, when they view the workplace as unsettled, then their faith promotes bonding ties with fellow Christian workers. Thus, these findings can be used for creating and improving

workplace culture by acknowledging and understanding religious salience in the workplace. Morgan (2005) found that religious workers today are more likely to practice and express their religion at work. The study shows that the percent of workers who report the need to experience spiritual growth and allow its expression in their work has increased from 30 % in 1994 to 78% in 2004. Previous research found that employees' perceptions and variation in religious expressions are associated with organizational culture (Lawrence & King, 2008). Organizations which acknowledge and encourage religious expression of a religious worker in turn can lead to higher job satisfaction and work commitment, positive work outcome, and reduce work-related stress (King & Williams, 2005; Mobley et al. 1979; Organ & Ryan, 1995). As the increasing number of employees report their faith as an important part of their work time, it is critical to understand how religious belief and religious workers' perception influences work attitudes, performances, outcomes, and working environment for future research in organization and management (King & Williams, 2005).

The findings of this study suggest managers could promote bonding social capital among religious employees by regulating time and space for them. Also, managers can create workplace culture which welcomes religious practices and expressions so that these religious employees would not feel being judged for expressing their beliefs. In this workplace culture, these religious employees in turn would have greater understanding and respect toward employees with other religious beliefs.

This study has contributed new ways of understanding the role of religion in the contemporary workplace. The study findings show that the contemporary workplace, in some ways, is perceived as culturally unsettled by some religious employees. However,

this study was not able to determine whether religion creates a perception of unsettledness or whether the contemporary work environment is unsettled for religious workers. Thus, future research should include questions or variables which can examine the unaddressed mechanism by including sample with non-religious full-time workers. Another limitation of this study is that the potential variations such as classification of employment (i.e. professional, administrative, or service), sectors by ownership (i.e. private, public, or nonprofit), and potential regional variation of different workplace location were not addressed due to the small sample size. These variables might provide more detailed and distinctive analysis and explanation on these workers' perceptions and experiences in the workplace. Therefore, future studies should consider and include all these potential variations to examine the association between religion and the workplace.

Overall, the main findings of this study further support the significance of religion and its distinctive functions in the contemporary American workplace. The main themes of this study finding suggest that religion can be a cultural resource for better workplace relationships and performance of religious employees. Secondly, religious cultural toolkits in the culturally unsettled space help to make sense of the cultural unsettledness experienced by employees. These two main themes highlight the need for a greater research agenda on the salience of religion in contemporary organizations and management but also in other social organizations in American society today.

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