

MODERN FRANCISCAN LEADERSHIP*

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ABSTRACT: *This article combines two important areas of practical theology: Monastic rules and leadership in a cloistral organisation, using the Rule of Saint Francis as a prominent example. The aim of this research is to examine how living Christian tradition in a monastic order affects leadership today, discovering how the Rule and Franciscan spirituality impact managing a convent. The research question is answered within this inductive research applying the methodology of the ‘theology in four voices.’ Based on the results, it is possible to build a coherent leadership system based on Biblical and Franciscan sources.*

Introduction

How are the Rule of Saint Francis and Franciscan spirituality influencing the management of a convent? Does a monastic rule from the 13th century still impact practical theology and spiritual leadership in a cloistral organisation? What are boundaries between theological rules and labour law? And are the Rule of Saint Francis and his teaching the dominant guidelines for social functions and human relationships in a Franciscan monastery, in particular with regard to the results of leaders’ behaviour? The aim of this article is to discover how ‘living Christian tradition’ affects cloistral leadership.

Management and leadership are not only crucial questions for private enterprises and public authorities. Management and leadership have been and still are formative for monastic organisations. And in addition to monasterial rules, leadership theory and practice might play an important role for abbots and abbesses today. This article will discuss cloistral rules in a contemporary context focusing on how to manage people. It explores main motives for modern Franciscan leadership, in particular regarding components such as spiritual guidance and leadership behaviour. The research question is answered within this inductive research combining theology and leadership theory. Following the methodological approach of the ‘theology in four voices,’ it employs grounded theory to construct an empirical approach to Franciscan leadership.

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There are several implications both from a theoretical and practical perspective: There is a lack of research about modern monastic management or leadership. In particular, there is no study about applying the Rule of Saint Francis with regard to contemporary leadership. Results from this study will thus fill an existing research gap and provide new theory. Furthermore, there is an impact for religious orders, as they might be able to better understand what drives leadership in a Christian organisation. Monastic leaders have the opportunity to be more adaptive, and their behaviour can be informed by the findings of this study.

This part provides the background to the research explaining the importance of monastic rules for religious orders as well as the crucial role of leadership in organisations. It will also provide an overview on the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart, a monastic order based in south-western Germany where this research has been conducted. In addition, research aims and objectives will be shown. Finally, an overview of the article will be discussed explaining the overall structure and approach of the study.

Background

This research combines two important areas related to practical theology: The Rule of Saint Francis, and leadership behaviour in a monastery in the 21st century.

Monasticism is a special form of Christian belief and practice. For many Christians, an ascetic or monastic way of life is both a calling and a vocation following an apostolic way of human existence: "I have no command from the Lord" (1 Cor 7, 25), but because Jesus loves me, I trust that one has to "sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven" (Mk 10, 21). I might believe that poverty is a requirement because "any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14, 33). I can focus my life upon silence and seclusion if I want to live the "higher way, the more perfect way, the more apostolic way, the more Christ-like way."¹ Or I understand that it is Jesus Christ's counsel to "come, follow me" (Mt 19, 21). And if I want to follow Christ in virtue, the gift of each might become common to those living together in a community with likeminded men or women.²

But monasticism, mostly meaning to live together in a community with likeminded men or women, also requires rules. In general, organisations operate more efficiently if they follow a framework of rules and regulations. Monastic rules have been

¹ Daniel M. La Corte and Douglas J. McMillan, *Regular Life: Monastic, Canonical, and Mendicant Rules* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), 1.

² Giorgio Agamben, *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 9.

created to guide men and women choosing the way of life in confraternities of likeminded Christians.³ Famous authors are Pachomius the Great, Benedict of Nursia and Francis of Assisi. For example, the Rule of Saint Benedict comprises more than 70 chapters addressing essential topics of monastic life, in particular prayer and work.⁴ Making close reference to the first monastic rule, the Rule of the Master, Benedict gives detailed regulations for the spiritual attitude but also on organisational and leadership behaviour in a monastery.⁵ And although his rule is a “wonderful empathy of the human soul’s strengths and weaknesses”⁶ and was certainly not intended to create business leadership theory, it gives remarkable guidance on how to lead people in a cloistral organisation. The same applies for another monastic leader: Francis of Assisi.

How to lead people, how to take care of followers, colleagues or employees, and how to motivate and control them is relevant for public administration, non-government organisations and for companies as well. Northouse mentions that there are innumerable definitions of leadership.⁷ For example, leadership can be described as a relational activity where an individual guides followers to attain a certain goal.⁸ Leadership can be an element of excellence management and a reflection of a value system.⁹ Or leadership might be defined as an interactional process transforming people with regard to a higher level of motivation and morality.¹⁰

But however we conceptualise leadership in a monastic or secular environment today, it always had and still has a major impact for successful development of organisations. Leadership is affected by several important variables such as society, culture and politics.¹¹ Leaders have to motivate and influence followers in a positive manner because

³ Gert Melville, “Regeln – Consuetudines-Texte-Statuten. Positionen für eine Typologie des normativen Schrifttums religiöser Gemeinschaften im Mittelalter,” in *Frommer Eifer und Methodischer Betrieb. Beiträge zum mittelalterlichen Mönchtum*, ed. Cristina Andenna and Mirko Breitenstein (Köln: Böhlau, 2014), 165.

⁴ Kristina Krüger and Rainer Warland, *Monasteries and Monastic Orders: 2000 Years of Christian Art and Culture* (Potsdam: H.F. Ullmann, 2012), 24.

⁵ Kit Dollard, Anthony Marett-Crosby and Timothy Wright, “Opening Words,” in *Doing Business with Benedict*, ed. Kit Dollard, Anthony Marett-Crosby and Timothy Wright (London: Continuum, 2002), 16.

⁶ Leodegar Hunkeler, “Benedictus,” in *Die Großen Ordensregeln*, ed. Hans Urs von Balthasar (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 2010), 178.

⁷ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (London: Sage, 2016), 2.

⁸ Annabel Beerel, *Leadership and Change Management* (London: Sage, 2009), 64.

⁹ Matthew R. Fairholm and Gilbert R. Fairholm, *Understanding Leadership Perspectives* (New York: Springer, 2009), 3.

¹⁰ James M. Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 83.

¹¹ Helen Deresky, *International Management: Managing Across Borders and Cultures* (London: Pearson, 2014), 350.

of human beings' hierarchy of needs.¹² Positive leadership today is associated with a different, a more appropriate approach to hierarchy, control and correction.¹³ And 21st century leaders are often defined as adaptive, authentic, spiritual or servant leaders utilising values and encouraging followers to solve challenges.

Summarising the background of this research, monastic rules play a significant role in cloistral management and leadership. Leadership behaviour and motivation based on business and management theory is also highly relevant for public and private organisations. This includes cloistral organisations, which relates leadership theory and implementation to practical theology in monasteries. Surprisingly, this topic has never been explicitly researched with regard to monastic orders. There is no major theory or analysis how monastic rules affect contemporary leadership in religious orders.

The Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart

This research has been conducted at the motherhouse of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart in the south-western German city of Gengenbach. The order was founded in the middle of the 19th century in the Black Forest. The sisterhood received Pope Leo XII's appropriation at the end of the 19th century. In 1904, the growing community became part of the regulated Third Franciscan Order, thus confirming Saint Francis' spirituality as the central religious orientation.

Growing quickly with more than 600 sisters already at the beginning of the 20th century, the community sent its first missionaries to Chile in 1936. Today, approximately 300 Franciscan sisters are active in various places in south-western Germany, Bavaria and Switzerland, as well as in Chile and Peru. Due to a shrinking sisterhood, there is an increasing number of now 350 lay employees working in administration, facility management, education or geriatric care. The sisters' work focuses on pastoral care, but also on medical and elder care, as well as education and support of young adults. In Germany, the sisterhood runs, for example, a college for social pedagogy, a student hall of residence and several homes for the elderly. A theological centre demonstrates their orientation towards spiritual guidance. Sisters in Chile and Peru are also active in schools, nurseries, homes for the elderly and in a sheltered workshop.

¹² See generally Ruth Bender, "Why Do Companies Use Performance-Related Pay for their Executive Directors?" *Corporate Governance* 12, 4 (2004): 512-533.

¹³ E.g., Heather Getha-Taylor and Ricardo S. Morse, "Collaborative Leadership Development for Local Government Officials: Exploring Competencies and Program Impact," *Public Administration Quarterly* 1 (2013): 71-102.

The Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart are led by a senior monastic management team including the reverend mother, a vicar-general and five general counselors. The tenure of office is six years followed by an election involving all sisters in the community. Furthermore, an extended management team comprises functions such as financial officer, secretary general or missionary executive. Sisters in the extended management team are appointed by the reverend mother upon approval by the general council. Other monastic executive functions include regional heads as well as head of convent. In addition, lay executives are responsible for operational tasks.

Research Aims and Objectives

The aim and the objective of this research are to discover and understand what factors influence cloistral leadership in a Franciscan monastery. The research question is: What impact does the Rule of Saint Francis have on leadership in a Franciscan monastery today? In order to answer the research question, this article aims to set the context characterising the background and role of rules and leadership, discover and discuss the most relevant literature to identify the research gap, design the methodology and the method to develop new theory, analyse and discuss findings in order to fill the research gap and create new theory enabling others to develop further empirical research, and contribute to knowledge and practice.

Structure of the Research

This article is divided into five parts. Following the introduction to the research, the second part gives an overview of the existing literature. This includes an insight of monastic rules, the Rule of Saint Francis, and approaches to leadership theory, in particular regarding servant and spiritual leadership. The literature review is driven by the idea to identify drivers affecting the behaviour of leaders in religious organisations. Part two will highlight the research gap. This is followed by a brief overview on the research philosophy and the theoretical perspective resulting in interpretivism in part three. The methodological approach of the theology in four voices as well as grounded theory are also explained. In addition, it is described how interviews with sisters from the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart in Germany have been used in this research. Part four focuses on the analysis and the discussion of the results. What guides monastic leaders is a general question which will be discussed, and, more specifically, main aspects of servant leadership behaviour and outcomes will be shown. Part five will conclude, building a model of modern Franciscan leadership. Furthermore, contributions to knowledge and

practical implications will be highlighted. The final part will also present limitations as well as recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

This literature review will give an overview with regard to history and content of monastic rules. In order to build a theoretical framework for this research, I will discuss the development and main themes of the Franciscan Rule focusing on leadership aspects. This is followed by an overview and an in-depth discussion about leadership theory and practice. It will also cover specific aspects of several leadership approaches. The aim is to identify existing theory with regard to, and literature about, leadership aspects of the Franciscan Rule in the context of managing a monastery.

History and Development of Monastic Rules

Hermitage or separation was a key concept of the early Christian Church. Following Jesus Christ in a radical approach, for example by a partial or full separation, was a way for believers to come closer to God. After the Edict of Thessalonica and the Edict of Milan in the early 4th century combining the Roman Empire and the Christian communities to a Roman state church, persecution of Christians and martyrdom became seldom.¹⁴ But separation, asceticism and abstinence remained important for many Christians. Obeying a monastic rule was a common option to many Christian believers favouring a life dedicated to the Heavenly Kingdom over an earthly existence. Having its origins in particular in Egypt,¹⁵ rising monasticism in the West of the Roman Empire was also connected to an increasingly unstable political environment.¹⁶ In addition, monastic life often provided the opportunity for education or economic security.¹⁷

Friars and sisters oriented their whole existence toward prayer and work, silence and seclusion, as well as poverty and obedience.¹⁸ And although a legal norm is usually associated with individual actions of a person and not with the entire life of a human being, linking the earthly existence so closely to a theological rule that it is inseparable from it became the monastic ideal for many religious orders. In addition to the incorporation of monastic philosophy and experience, members of monastic orders often see the

¹⁴ See generally Jason A. Whitlark, "Restoring the peace: The Edict of Milan and the Pax Deorum," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 37 (2010): 309-319.

¹⁵ See generally Darlene L Brooks Hedstrom, "The Geography of the Monastic Cell in Early Egyptian Monastic Literature," *Church History* 78 (2009): 756-791.

¹⁶ Krüger and Warland, *Monasteries*, 19.

¹⁷ Hans J. Hillerbrand, *A new history of Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), 84.

¹⁸ La Corte and McMillan, *Regular Life*, 1.

glory of God behind a rule.¹⁹ This approach became even more dominant over the centuries. Because economic security in Western societies is now also provided in a secular environment, spiritual or theological aspects are often regarded as the main motivation to join a monastic order today.²⁰

Three rules are often described as original sources of monastic life: References for a Christian monastery organising the institution from Pachomius the Great in the 4th century, Saint Basil's description of ascetic life composed between 358 and 364, and the outline of Saint Augustine about life in a Christian monastic community from circa 397.²¹ Augustine, Basil and Pachomius had no other real source for rules or regulations than themselves. Their works are important descriptions of early monastic life forming the basis for most Orthodox and Catholic monasteries. However, these rules were not intended to be constitutions or "rules" such as the instructions we define today as monastic rules. Only the following centuries of the Christian era formed concepts of spiritual and organisational constitutions, representing much more than historical narratives, organisational references or spiritual guidelines.²² As discussed by Agamben,²³ it was "the relationship between human action and norm, 'life' and 'rule'" making life "no longer be distinguished from the rule".

In the 5th century, the *Regula magistri*, the Rule of the Master, was written by an unknown author. For the first time, it contained detailed descriptions about spiritual life and organisational or 'management' guidelines.²⁴ Familiar with the *Regula magistri*, Benedict of Nursia further developed his monastic rule addressing essential issues of cloistral life. Written in the 6th century, the Rule of Saint Benedict has not only survived for nearly 1,500 years, it also provided the basis for many other regulations and guidelines.²⁵ During the last centuries, the concept of rule and life laid down in monastic rules has become a source of theoretical theological concepts.²⁶ Monasterial rules serve as constituent acts founding the respective monastic community giving spiritual and practical guidelines to their followers.

¹⁹ James L. J. Nuzzo, "The rule of Saint Benedict: The debates over the interpretation of an ancient legal and spiritual document," *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 20, 3 (1997): 867, 868.

²⁰ See, e.g., Veronika Peters, *Was in zwei Koffer paßt. Klosterjahre* (München: Goldmann), 72.

²¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Die Großen Ordensregeln* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 2010), 46.

²² Victoria Zimmerl-Panagl, "Donati Regula," in *Monastica I*, ed. Victoria Zimmerl-Panagl (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 23.

²³ Agamben, *The Highest Poverty*, 4.

²⁴ Krüger and Warland, *Monasteries*, 22.

²⁵ See generally Marilyn Dunn, "Mastering Benedict: Monastic Rules and Their Authors in The Early Medieval West," *The English Historical Review* 105 (1990): 567-594.

²⁶ Balthasar, *Die Großen Ordensregeln*, 29.

Benedict of Nursia's Rule, authored between 535 and 540, has the work of God as its central concept. The three main characteristics are the conversion of the individual life into a community, the local stability staying in this community for the entire life, and the obedience to the monastic leader. And in addition to Old and New Testament Scriptures, Benedict developed a handbook of organisational design as well as a sustainable leadership model.²⁷ In 73 chapters, he covers guidance for both individual spirituality and monastic organisation. Benedict hands out advice regarding qualifications for leadership or delegation and participation,²⁸ although his intention most likely was not to develop leadership theory. As discussed by Kennedy,²⁹ however, several core principles from the Rule of Saint Benedict can be found in modern management theory as well, for example in the famous 'Principles of Management' developed by Henri Fayol.³⁰

According to Tredget, it was Benedict's "practical experience as a community leader and manager, tempered with prudence, balance and wisdom", which enabled him to compose a unique management tool.³¹ He also describes the rule as a "manual for high performance coaching".³² Klassen discussed this in a context of humility, mentioning that leadership includes the willingness to let the leader's idea become the joint vision or project of the whole community.³³ And although this might be an overexpansion of the Rule of Benedict to some extent, his management and leadership principles are even used in popular literature for managers, for example 'Benedikt für Manager',³⁴ 'Sales Coaching by Benedict'³⁵ or 'The Benedictine Rule of Leadership'.³⁶

²⁷ Karin Reiber, *Organisationen im Spiegel der Regula Benedicti* (Münster: Waxmann, 2005), 68.

²⁸ Aquinata Böckmann, *Christus Hören, Exegetischer Kommentar zur Regel Benedikts. Teil 1: Prolog bis Kapitel 7* (Sankt Ottilien: Eos, 2011), 125.

²⁹ E.g., Michael H. Kennedy, "Fayol's Principles and the Rule of St Benedict: Is There Anything New Under the Sun?" *Journal of Management History* 5, 5 (1999): 269-276.

³⁰ Henri Fayol, *Allgemeine und Industrielle Verwaltung* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1929), 10.

³¹ Dermot A. Tredget, "Practical Wisdom and the Rule of Benedict," *Journal of Management Development* 29 (2010): 716, 717.

³² See generally Dermot A. Tredget, "'The Rule of Benedict' And Its Relevance to The World Of Work," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 17 (2002): 219-229.

³³ John Klassen, "Leadership and joy: Insights from the Rule of Saint Benedict," *Vision* 15 (2014): 28-35.

³⁴ Baldur Kirchner, *Benedikt für Manager. Die geistigen Grundlagen des Führens* (Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, 1994).

³⁵ Karl Herndl, *Sales Coaching by Benedict. Vertriebserfolg mit klaren Strukturen und Herz* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2013).

³⁶ Craig S. Galbraith and Oliver Galbraith, *The Benedictine Rule of Leadership* (Avon: Adams Media, 2004).

The Rule of Saint Francis

Although the Rule of Saint Benedict is one of the most famous monastic rules, there are other paradigms of spiritual and organisational regulations giving remarkable guidance for organisation and leadership. Examples for later rules are mendicant orders, rules for orders of canons and sisters, as well as rules for orders of lay persons. The Carthusians moved back to a more primitive root of monastic life, and the Cistercians interpreted rules more literally focusing on seclusion. The Dominican approach was to establish a detailed system of rules to concentrate on preaching as well as missionary work.³⁷ And in addition to a more diverse and heterogeneous approach, there were also ideas to agree on joint rituals establishing closer ties between monasteries such as the Rules of Confraternity.³⁸

Franciscans became a further dominant community over centuries. Following a dream where Jesus Christ appeared to him, Francis's conversion to "a life in the footsteps of Jesus Christ" was a longer personal change and can be described as a "gradual process."³⁹ Responding to new social conditions in the early 13th century, Francis' idea of monasticism was radically different from existing monastic life growing away from urban settlements with monks or sisters often owning extensive properties.⁴⁰ As discussed, for example, by Stadler, Saint Francis' ideal was to convert apostolical life into practice.⁴¹ He decided to follow a life based on the Acts of the Apostles with missionary work in medieval towns and complete poverty. He wanted to follow Jesus' order not getting "any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belt - no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff" (Mt 10, 9-10). Similar to Saint Benedict, Francis' concept of living in cloistered communities was based on three main characteristics. But in addition to Benedict's idea of obedience, the concept of poverty and chastity became essential for the orders of the friars.⁴²

³⁷ Gert Melville, "Die Rechtsordnung der Dominikaner in der Spanne von constituciones und admoniciones: Ein Beitrag zum Vergleich mittelalterlicher Ordensverfassungen," in *Grundlagen des Rechts*, ed. Richard H. Helmholz, Paul Mikat, Jörg Müller and Michael Stolleis (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2000), 299.

³⁸ E.g., Benjamin A. Saltzman, "Writing Friendship, Mourning the Friend in Late Anglo-Saxon Rules of Confraternity," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41 (2011): 251-291.

³⁹ See generally Krijn Pansters, "Dreams in Medieval Saints' Lives: Saint Francis of Assisi," *Dreaming* 19 (2009): 55-63.

⁴⁰ Krüger and Warland, *Monasteries*, 284

⁴¹ Volker Stadler, "Die Bullierte Regel im Licht der Heiligen Schrift," in *Regel und Leben: Materialien zur Franziskus-Regel I*, ed. Paul Zahlner and Damian Bieger (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2007), 81.

⁴² See generally Theodore Gillian, "St. Francis and Medical Practice," *The Linacre Quarterly* 75 (2008): 83-86.

Francis was first resistant about creating rules and processes. With a growing brotherhood, however, he recognised that the community needed some basic organisational guidelines for communal life.⁴³ With a combination of the three main characteristics followed by citations from the Gospel and providing individual and organisational poverty, he first wrote down only essentials as the basis for rule and life in 1209.⁴⁴ Saint Francis wanted to express that life means a succession of Christ in poverty, humbleness, prayer and intimacy with God.⁴⁵ Clearly, his ambition was not to create managerial knowledge or leadership theory for organisations. Some scholars such as Lehmann describe Saint Francis as a reluctant leader, and reluctance with regard to the establishment of formal regulations for the friars can be observed after the founding and establishment of the order.

The most obvious example might be that the community suddenly moved away from Francis' leadership and was transformed into a different direction against his objectives. His response, however, was able to bring back the order to the essential characteristics dominated by the idea of apostolic poverty. As discussed by Carlson, Saint Francis "asserted an evangelical 'spirit of liberty' and the right of individual conscience against the oppressive dogmas and stern legalisms of an authoritarian, traditionalist regime".⁴⁶ The Second Rule and, in particular, the *Regula Bullata* became necessary to safeguard his ideals and persuasions for a sustainable future of the expanding community. Feld also mentioned that a combination of religious traditions and Renaissance ideology was a substantial driver for Saint Francis.⁴⁷

The 1223 rule, the *Regula Bullata*, is the third and final regulation for the Franciscan community.⁴⁸ In addition, the Testament of Saint Francis from 1226 is a key guidance for monastic behaviour and Franciscan spirituality. The regulated Third Order further developed guidelines based on the *Regula Bullata*, Saint Francis' Testament and his teachings. Incorporating main paragraphs from the 1223 Rule and transforming it into modern times, the prevailing guideline for the regulated Third Order is now *The Rule and*

⁴³ Krüger and Warland, *Monasteries*, 287

⁴⁴ Neslihan Senocak, *The Poor and the Perfect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 2, and Helmut Feld, *Die Franziskaner* (Stuttgart: Eugen Ulmer, 2008), 20.

⁴⁵ Leonhard Lehmann, "Die Gründungsidee des Franziskanerordens," in *Regel und Leben. Materialien zur Franziskus-Regel II*, ed. Johannes Schneider (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2009), 26.

⁴⁶ E.g., Charles P. Carlson, "St. Francis and the Early Government of the Franciscan Order," *Ilfiff Review* 31 (1974): 3-23.

⁴⁷ See generally Helmut Feld, "Elemente antiker Religiosität in den Frühen Franziskanischen Quellen," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 1 (1994), 23-36.

⁴⁸ Julio Micó and Benedikt Mertens, "El Charisma de Francisco de Asís," in *Regel und Leben. Materialien zur Franziskus-Regel I*, ed. Paul Zahlner and Damian Bieger (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2007), 37.

Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis. It was last amended and approved by John Paul II in 1982.

As a form-of-life with the main characteristics of obedience, poverty and chastity, the 1223 Rule is one of the most important examples of monastic guidelines.⁴⁹ As normative sources, the *Regula Bullata* and the contemporary 1982 Rule play a crucial role for individual and monastic conduct today. Clearly, they are spiritual documents asking to live according to the Gospel. Joy over God, joy about every human being and joy over the Lord's creatures are fundamental notes of the Rule of Saint Francis.⁵⁰ Franciscan spirituality is often defined as a way of joy, gratitude, as well as care for the poor.

But the monastic rules are not only a body of spiritual guidance. The Rule of 1223 shows that questions of monastic organisation, leadership and human resources management became important in Saint Francis' approach to lead the monastic community. It includes several formal and organisational regulations such as how to accept new brothers. The rule governs that "clerics are to perform the divine office according to the rite of the Roman Church" (chapter 3), and that "brothers are always bound to have a brother of the order as general minister and servant of the entire brotherhood" (chapter 8). And the joy over God, joy about every human being, and joy over brothers include guidance for management and leadership in the cloistral community: work has to be performed "faithfully and devotedly" (chapter 5). Ministers have to take care of their brothers, they "must visit and admonish their brothers, and they should correct them humbly and lovingly, prescribing nothing against their soul" (chapter 10). This is also reflected in the equivalent paragraphs in the 1982 Rule, incorporating, for example, Saint Francis' guidelines about fraternal and sisterly life as well as loving obedience in chapters 7 and 8.

Understanding the concept of poverty as a main driver for Francis of Assisi gives the opportunity to understand his approach to lead the community. His claims of evangelical poverty were not towards the Church and the Christian authorities. He accepted, for example, that non-conformism can be associated with obedience.⁵¹ And because Francis recognised that the Church has "a kind of a dual-sided nature – both rich and poor, both particular and universal,"⁵² he obviously followed an approach of generosity and solidarity, being able to integrate even opposing elements in his leadership behaviour. His

⁴⁹ Laurentius Casutt, "Franziskus," in *Die Großen Ordensregeln*, ed. Hans Urs von Balthasar (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 2010), 268.

⁵⁰ Casutt, *Franziskus*, 284.

⁵¹ Leonardo Boff, *A Model for Human Liberation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 111.

⁵² See generally Brian Hamilton, "The Politics of Poverty: A Contribution to a Franciscan Political Theology," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 35, 1 (2015): 29-44.

famous dreams and visions might be a further driving force for this conduct. In addition to several spiritual stages Saint Francis went through,⁵³ his faithful and caring behaviour towards his brothers and sisters might be also driven by his spiritual experience.

Carlson gives a perfect example of this conduct and caring approach: With a provision in the early 1209 Rule that a friar is not obliged to obey a minister if an order is contrary to the Rule or against the friar's conscience, Francis both strengthens the Rule and gives the opportunity to follow an 'ethical' behaviour.⁵⁴ And although this clause was slightly amended in the final Rule in 1223 mentioning that ministers are not allowed to prescribe anything against the brothers' soul or the Rule (chapter 10), it shows the idea of leadership driven by spiritual or ethical behaviour and not by autocratic hierarchy or power. Allegiance is not primarily obeying and following a principal and supervisor. True obedience is "making an offering of one's will to God."⁵⁵ For Francis, leadership might be also a form of peace, which is described as a form of interior and spiritual tranquillity for Saint Francis.⁵⁶

In chapter 10 of the Rule of Saint Francis, his "goodness, his generosity, and his humility"⁵⁷ can be found in particular. It is a remarkable example of an 'ethical' leadership approach. A number of verses cover the hierarchy and relationship between the ministers and their brothers.⁵⁸ According to Francis of Assisi, the leaders of the community have to treat their brothers "lovingly and generously and treat them so intimately that the brothers can speak and act as lords do with their servants". Therefore, true leadership is not an approach of hierarchy or power. For Francis, it is the opposite as "the ministers should be servants of all the brothers". This is one of the most obvious examples of what Neff describes as the "fraternal bonds and humble, mutual service of each member of the group".⁵⁹ This is also reflected in chapter 8 of the 1982 Rule. Brothers and sisters are not allowed to "dominate nor seek power over one another." In fact, they have to "willingly serve and obey each other with that genuine love which comes from each one's heart."

⁵³ Pansters, *Dreams*, 62.

⁵⁴ Carlson, *St. Francis*, 21.

⁵⁵ John C. Maraldo, "The Hermeneutics of Practice in Dogen and Francis of Assisi," *Eastern Buddhist, New Series*, 14, 2 (1981): 22-45.

⁵⁶ See generally James M. Powell, "St. Francis of Assisi's Way of Peace," *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007): 271-280.

⁵⁷ E.g., Carol Zaleski and Philip Zaleski, "Saint Francis, the Catholic Church, and Islam," in *Nova et Vetera* 13 (2015): 39-55.

⁵⁸ Mark Weaver, "The Rule of Saint Francis: What was Really Lost?" *Franciscan Studies* 69 (2011): 31, 36.

⁵⁹ See generally Amy Neff, "Lesser Brothers: Franciscan Mission and Identity at Assisi," *The Art Bulletin* 88 (2006): 676-706.

In addition to a more narrow definition of leadership within his community, a number of authors discuss Francis' leadership through his approach of living out Catholic faith according to his vision to follow Jesus Christ in poverty. Clearly, a major driver for Francis was to create change and social impact. But in contrast to a number of revolutionary approaches in the 13th century, his concept of fraternal minority followed a different approach. Francis of Assisi placed his community below and outside the existing structures of Catholic institutions.⁶⁰ His idea of creating and managing change, of a renewal of the Catholic Church, was a fraternal relationship. Pansters argued that, to a certain extent, God showed him the future success of his order through visions and dreams.⁶¹ If this idea is transferred to the Rule of Saint Francis, creating change and social impact is a clear commitment of the community to live out the Bible. It is also a clear commitment to show and live leadership out of the Bible.

Leadership Theory

For Benedict of Nursia or Saint Francis, leadership of their monastic order was obviously a highly valued commodity, but their spiritual leadership as well as their management ideas and guidance for their followers were not developed as a theoretical framework. Leadership theory and practice is usually associated with secular organisations such as companies, public entities or non-government organisations. It has been a major research area in business and management since the beginning of the 20th century.

The evolution of leadership definitions in the 20th century included several core theories.⁶² For three decades, leadership was associated with power and influence or even domination.⁶³ Moore described leadership as the ability to induce "obedience, respect, loyalty and cooperation."⁶⁴ In the 1930s, leadership trait theories followed an approach that effective leaders share several character traits and talents such as a sense of responsibility and self-confidence.⁶⁵ The approach focuses on the leader component in organisational settings and individual actions. However, a main criticism was that leadership trait theories failed to show unambiguous results also because of a lack of objectivity.

⁶⁰ Neff, "Lesser Brothers," 676.

⁶¹ Pansters, *Dreams*, 59.

⁶² Horst Steinmann and Georg Schreyögg, *Management, Grundlagen der Unternehmensführung* (Wiesbaden: Gabler, 2005), 645.

⁶³ For a recent discussion about leadership and power, see Jon K. Maner and Nicole L. Mead, "The Essential Tension Between Leadership and Power: When Leaders Sacrifice Group Goals for the Sake of Self-Interest," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 99, 3 (2010): 482-497.

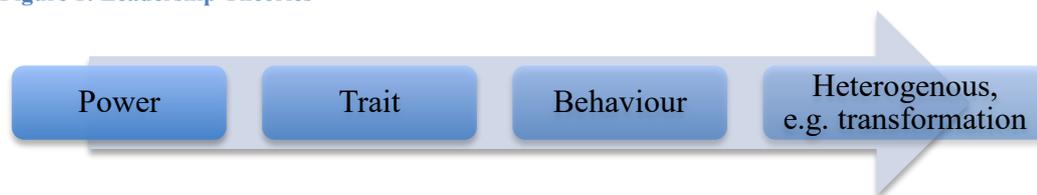
⁶⁴ E.g., B. V. Moore, "The May Conference on Leadership," *Personnel Journal* 6 (1927): 124-128.

⁶⁵ Ralph M. Stogdill, *Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research*, (New York: Free Press, 1974), 81.

Later, behaviour approaches focused on leaders' conduct considering how they act or what they do, for example following an autocratic behaviour. With a heuristic approach, several authors broadened the scope of research showing that leaders are driven by tasks and relationship behaviours. However, scholars were not able to give evidence for a consistent link to employment satisfaction or organisational productivity.⁶⁶ How a situation influences proper leadership is connected to contingency theories arising in the 1960s matching a particular situation and the corresponding leadership style.

Burns mentioned that leadership should be defined as an interactional process transforming leaders and followers with regard to a higher level of motivation and morality.⁶⁷ With a refined model connecting transformational and transactional leadership with charisma, Bass split leadership into transformational leadership including influence and charisma with transactional and non-transactional factors.⁶⁸ Therefore, Bass added an emotional element to the theory also offering a full range of behavioural factors. Figure 1 shows theories of conceptualising leadership in the 20th century.

Figure 1: Leadership Theories



Several new directions regarding leadership such as authentic, cross-cultural and value-based as well as servant, ethical and spiritual leadership emerged in the 21st century. The global mindset of successful leaders includes, for example, cross-cultural communication, a balance of global and local perspective as well as a broad and systems perspective in international leadership theory.⁶⁹ Authentic leadership emphasises the authenticity of political or business leaders. According to Winkler, value-based leadership often includes a collective vision formulated by the leader.⁷⁰ Servant leaders put themselves in the role of servants and focus on caring principles, taking into account their followers' needs.⁷¹ Servanthood often comes first for leaders using their influence and position within an organisation in the most positive way. Spiritual leaders motivate followers, colleagues or employees in a meaningful work, for example "through vision, altruistic love,

⁶⁶ Gary A. Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1994), 75.

⁶⁷ Burns, *Leadership*, 83.

⁶⁸ Bernard M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*, (New York: Free Press, 1985), 20.

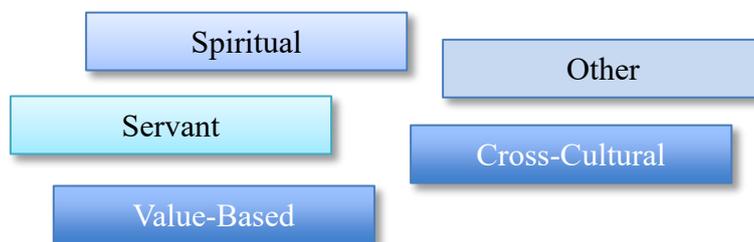
⁶⁹ Deresky, *International Management*, 362.

⁷⁰ Ingo, Winkler, *Contemporary Leadership Theories*, (Berlin: Physica, 2010), 36.

⁷¹ Northouse, *Leadership*, 5.

and hope or faith".⁷² This motivation also includes empowerment through delegation and trust based on forgiveness, humility, care and concern for others.⁷³ Figure 2 provides recent approaches of leadership theory and practice.

Figure 2: Recent Leadership Approaches



Leadership Ethics and Servant Leadership Approaches

Looking at recent leadership theories, there is a growing interest and application of ethical, servant or Christian leadership approaches. This includes an increasing number of scholarly works discussing leaders as servants, moral role models,⁷⁴ leader humility,⁷⁵ stewardship as a leadership model,⁷⁶ and sustainable entrepreneurship through ethics and governance.⁷⁷ In addition, faith and spirituality play a more prominent role. Fry developed a causal theory of spiritual leadership comprising faith and altruistic love in addition to a management vision.⁷⁸ Karadag recently tested spiritual leadership behaviour in a structural equation model.⁷⁹ Crossman explores the concept and context of spiritual leadership in the context of secular organisations.⁸⁰ Meynhardt discusses the underlying Christian value system in the context of Drucker's famous management and leadership approach.⁸¹

⁷² Sen Sendjaya, *Personal and Organizational Excellence through Servant Leadership* (Springer: Cham, 2015), 24.

⁷³ Louis W. Fry, "Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (2003): 693-727.

⁷⁴ E.g., Ronald R. Sims and Johannes Brinkmann, "Leaders as Moral Role Models: The Case of John Gutfreund at Salomon Brothers," *Journal of Business Ethics* 35, 4 (2002): 327-339.

⁷⁵ See generally, J. Andrews Morris, Céleste M. Brotheridge and John C. Urbanski. "Bringing humility to leadership: Antecedents and consequences of leader humility," *Human Relations* 58 (2005): 1323-1350.

⁷⁶ E.g., Morela Hernandez, "Promoting Stewardship Behavior in Organizations: A Leadership Model," *Journal of Business Ethics* 80 (2008): 121-128.

⁷⁷ E.g., Clemens Sedmak, "Sustainability: Ethical Perspectives," in *Sustainable Entrepreneurship*, ed. Christina Weidinger, Franz Fischler and René Schmidpeter (Heidelberg: Springer, 2014), 51.

⁷⁸ Fry, "Spiritual Leadership," 693.

⁷⁹ See generally Engin Karadag, "Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Culture: A Study of Structural Equation Modeling," *Educational Sciences* 9 (2009): 1391-1405.

⁸⁰ E.g., Joanna Crossman, "Conceptualising Spiritual Leadership in Secular Organizational Contexts and its Relation to Transformational, Servant and Environmental Leadership," *Leadership & Organization* 31 (2010): 596-608.

⁸¹ E.g., Timo Meynhardt, "The Practical Wisdom of Peter Drucker: Roots in the Christian Tradition," *Journal of Management Development* 29 (2010): 616-625.

And Fry and Copen focus on spiritual leadership aspects with regard to workaholism and organisational transformation.⁸²

It is difficult to argue that an ‘ethical leadership’ theory and practical approach can be defined and applied. As discussed by Beerel, “effective leadership is intrinsically ethical leadership,” and because of this close connection, leadership cannot be effective if people do not act or behave in an ethical manner.⁸³ But as leadership associated with business ethics play an increasingly important role, ethics are at the heart of leadership for many scholars. Lawton and Páez try to develop a framework for ethical leadership looking at characteristics, behaviour and results.⁸⁴ Because of the heterogeneous nature of ethical concepts and the reflection of other leadership theories such as servant leadership, it seems to be more appropriate to discuss ‘leadership ethics’ rather than ‘ethical leadership’. Ethical theories then fall into two main categories: Character and conduct of leaders.

Northouse mentions that virtue-based theories focus on leaders’ character.⁸⁵ Hood, for example, explores the relationship between leaders’ values, leadership style and the ethical practice in organisations focusing on leaders’ values.⁸⁶ Conduct of leaders can be differentiated between duty and consequences of actions. And although human beings often primarily look at and act in relation to consequences, duty describes if the action itself is something ‘good.’ Being a servant, respecting followers, treating colleagues and employees in a fair and equitable way or keeping promises are examples of an ethical leadership conduct focusing on duty.⁸⁷ Sims and Brinkmann argue that leaders shape an unethical behaviour or an ethical organisational atmosphere through their behaviour such as reaction to crisis, allocation of rewards, as well as human resource development.⁸⁸ Figure 3 shows domains of ethical theories.

⁸² Louis W. Fry and Melanie P. Cohen, “Spiritual Leadership as a Paradigm for Organizational Transformation and Recovery from Extended Work Hours Cultures,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, 2 (2009): 265-278.

⁸³ Beerel, *Leadership*, 199.

⁸⁴ See generally Alan Lawton and Iliana Páez, “Developing a Framework for Ethical Leadership,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 130 (2015): 639-649.

⁸⁵ Northouse, *Leadership*, 333.

⁸⁶ E.g., Jacqueline N. Hood, “The Relationship of Leadership Style and CEO Values to Ethical Practices in Organizations,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 43 (2003): 263-273.

⁸⁷ For the development of the social contract in employer-employee relations, see, e.g., Roger Eugene Karnes, “A Change in Business Ethics: The Impact on Employer-Employee Relations,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 87 (2009): 189-197.

⁸⁸ Sims and Brinkmann, *Leaders*, 327.

Figure 3: Theories of Leadership Ethics

Conduct

- Teleological theories: Consequences
- Deontological theories: Duty or servanthood

Character

- Virtue-based theories

Source: Northouse 2016, 333.

Servant leadership is a relatively recent approach to leadership ethics. Although there have been academic discussions since the 1970s, scholars have contributed mainly prescriptive approaches with a lack of empirical research. The theory is based on Greenleaf describing that servant leadership can be mainly characterised that leaders have “the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first.”⁸⁹ According to Spears, there are main conducts of servant leaders such as an interactive process through communication, empathy and stewardship.⁹⁰ Hernandez focuses, for example, on a stewardship model where leaders show an attitude placing the long-term best interest of the organisation ahead of individual goals serving personal interest.⁹¹ Other important aspects include developing a number of individuals into a community and helping followers to become whole. Scholars such as Wong and Davey⁹² or van Dierendonck and Nuijten⁹³ concentrate more on characteristics such as humility and selflessness. Figure 4 describes dimensions and values of servant leadership.

⁸⁹ Robert K Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader* (Westfield: Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 1970), 15.

⁹⁰ Larry C. Spears, “Tracing the Past, Present, and Future of Servant-leadership,” in *Focus on leadership: Servant-leadership for the 21st century*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michelle Lawrence (New York: Wiley, 2002), 343.

⁹¹ Hernandez, *Promoting Stewardship*, 122.

⁹² Paul T. P. Wong and Dean Davey, “Best Practices in Servant Leadership,” *Regent University Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings 2007*, https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2007/wong-davey.pdf (accessed 15 November 2019).

⁹³ See generally Dirk van Dierendonck and Inge Nuijten, “The Servant Leadership Survey: Development and Validation of a Multidimensional Measure,” *Journal of Business Psychology* 26 (2011): 249, 252.

Figure 4: Servant Leadership Dimensions and Values

Subordination, e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a servant • Acts of service
Authentic self, e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humility • Integrity
Convenantal relationship, e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Equality
Morality, e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral reasoning • Moral action
Spirituality, e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcendental beliefs • Interconnectedness
Transforming influence, e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Empowerment

Source: Sendiava, 2015, 11.

Fry has also introduced a spiritual leadership theory focusing on the creation of a vision as well as values in accordance with strategy, team empowerment, organisational commitment and productivity.⁹⁴ Although this development of a theory of spiritual leadership is still at an early stage, Fry was able to offer an approach that leaders can create a humanistic system leading to organisational success through leadership based on faith, a vision and altruistic love. Kriger and Seng explore an organisational leadership model driven by main characteristics of major religions such as Christianity and Islam.⁹⁵ As an example, leaders are regarded as role models with a core vision of love, and the Bible is the dominant source of wisdom for leaders in Christianity. Crossman discusses that spiritual leadership is closely connected to other value-based theories such as transformational, environmental or servant leadership.⁹⁶ Chan, McBey and Scott-Ladd introduce a relationship between Saint Benedict and ethical leadership but do not develop a theory or examine a specific leadership model.⁹⁷ This includes the vague idea of a consultative approach and climate with regard to leadership behaviour and organisational change.

A spiritual leadership approach is therefore driven by a number of specific perspectives, although they are primarily related to both character and conduct. Clearly,

⁹⁴ Fry, *Spiritual Leadership*, 693

⁹⁵ E.g., Mark Kriger and Yvonne Seng, "Leadership with Inner Meaning: A Contingency Theory of Leadership Based on the Worldviews of Five Religions," *The Leadership Quarterly* 16 (2005): 771-806.

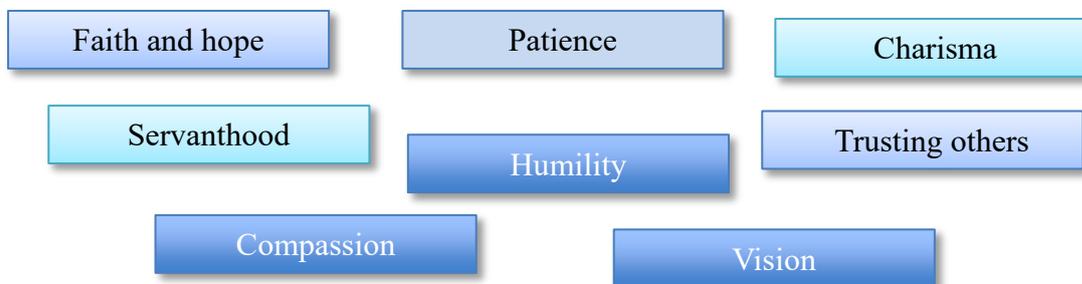
⁹⁶ Crossman, *Spiritual Leadership*, 604.

⁹⁷ See generally Christopher C. A. Chan, Kenneth McBey, and Brenda Scott-Ladd, "Ethical Leadership in Modern Employment Relationships: Lessons from St. Benedict," *Journal of Business Ethics* 100 (2011): 221-228.

spiritual dimensions such as faith and servanthood play a dominant role. Questions of compensation through remuneration or ‘the praise of God’ seem to be relevant as well.⁹⁸

Figure 5 shows examples of spiritual descriptors.

Figure 5: Examples of Spiritual Descriptors



Research Gap

This article addresses several relevant gaps in existing knowledge with regard to monastic rules, in particular the Rule of Saint Francis, and leadership theory and practice. These research gaps occur in the area of rules and guidelines for monastic orders in combination with leadership aspects in organisations such as monasteries.

With regard to monastic rules in general, it has been shown that scholars focused on the history and development of monastic life including an interpretation of rules. Other authors described the characteristics of the Rule of Saint Benedict or made connections between the Benedictine Rule and modern management theories. Research about Saint Francis has been undertaken in several studies as well. In addition, there has been scholarly work about specific aspects of monastic management. Dobie⁹⁹ analyses the development of financial management and control in medieval times. Inauen et al. recently provided a quantitative study about monastic auditing.¹⁰⁰ Other authors such as Smyrlis¹⁰¹ or Alexopoulos¹⁰² discuss the management of monastic estates. However, there is little

⁹⁸ E.g., Christopher P. Scheitle “Leadership Compensation in Christian Nonprofits,” *Sociology of Religion* 70 (2009): 384-408.

⁹⁹ See generally Alisdair Dobie, “The Development of Financial Management and Control in Monastic Houses and Estates in England c. 1200-1540,” *Accounting, Business & Financial History* 18 (2008): 141-159.

¹⁰⁰ E.g., Emil Inauen, Margit Osterloh, Bruno S. Frey and Fabian Homberg. “How a multiple organisation of control reduces governance failures: a focus on monastic auditing,” *Journal of Management & Governance* 19, 4 (2014): 763-796.

¹⁰¹ See generally Konstantinos Smyrlis, “The Management of Monastic Estates: The Evidence of the Typika,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): 245-261.

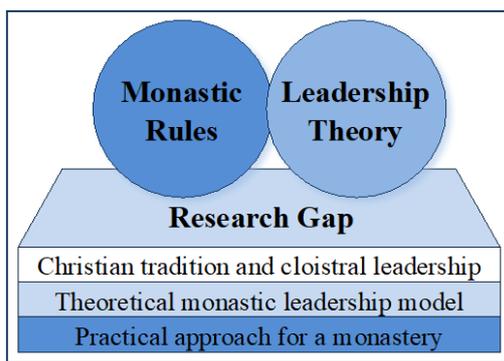
¹⁰² See generally Georgios Alexopoulos, “Management of Living Religious Heritage: Who Sets the Agenda? The Case of the Monastic Community of Mount Athos,” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 15 (2013): 59-75.

research about monastic rules and leadership theory as well as leadership behaviour of abbots and abbesses.

Furthermore, it has been shown that there is extensive research about leadership theories in general. Recent authors further extended the theoretical framework by introducing leadership ethics and spiritual leadership, and Grassl, for example, presents Saint Thomas Aquinas' psychological theory of action as a guide for understanding decision making.¹⁰³

Although scholars discussed aspects of leadership theory and management practice with regard to ethical or spiritual aspects, research has never been undertaken concerning living Christian tradition and cloistral leadership. There is no study supporting existing theories on leadership and the Rule of Saint Francis, in particular with regard to the impact of the Rule on practical theology as well as leadership in a contemporary monastery. Figure 6 highlights the research gap.

Figure 6: Research Gap



Summary

This part reviewed the existing literature on the development of monastic rules, concentrating on the Rule of Saint Francis. It also provided a framework for the connection between leadership theory such as trait, behavioural or ethical approaches and monastic rules. It was shown that there is a growing interest about leadership ethics and servant as well as spiritual leadership. However, part two also made clear that there is a relevant research gap for an approach to modern monastic leadership. The literature review thus gave an important basis for the development of an appropriate research framework in part three. As there is no analysis about monastic rules focusing on how to lead

¹⁰³ E.g., Wolfgang Grassl, "Aquinas on Management and its Development," *Journal of Management Development* 29 (2010): 706-715.

people in a Franciscan monastery in the 21st century, this research is able to fill the gap of the relationship between a monastic rule and leadership practice in a context of practical theology.

Research Framework

The various epistemologies and ontological assumptions in the context of practical theology will be explained in part three, and the theoretical perspective will be discussed. This will be followed by describing an inductive research orientation with the theology in four voices and grounded theory as the methodological approach. Furthermore, it will be shown that interviews and document analysis are the main drivers in the research method. Major steps and directions of the research framework can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Research Framework



Research Philosophy and Theoretical Perspective

Research in theology is usually described as historical, systematic and empirical. Following an empirical framework, theological research can be driven by qualitative and quantitative approaches. This applies, in particular, in the context of a study embedded in practical theology where the primary mode of data collection and analysis has emerged from social research.¹⁰⁴ Crotty mentions that it has to be considered what epistemology informs the theoretical perspective, and what lies behind the methodology.¹⁰⁵

Epistemology is related to the question of what constitutes valid knowledge, and subjectivism as one main epistemology is a social phenomenon evolving from

¹⁰⁴ John Swinton and Harriet Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM press, 2006), 1.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research* (London: Sage, 1998), 8.

perceptions following actions of social actors.¹⁰⁶ Following a subjective epistemology in the context of practical theology, the theoretical perspective can be a range of approaches such as feminism or interpretivism. Interpretivism is largely based on Max Weber's concept of understanding, *Verstehen*, and on the assumption that social reality is a subjective condition created by human insight.¹⁰⁷ In general, interpretivism often deals with human relationships and community, explaining basic social interactions such as values and communication.¹⁰⁸ Assessing dioceses, parishes or church organisations such as a monastery, interpretivism is an ideal theoretical perspective to evaluate and develop faith witness in and for monastic orders. Figure 8 highlights the relevant approaches.

Figure 8: Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective

Epistemology	Theoretical Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjectivism • Constructionism • Objectivism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretivism • Participatory • Pragmatism • Postmodernism • (Post-) Positivism

Methodological Approach

Designing an appropriate methodology and to follow the theoretical perspective is a key topic in the process of research. Practical theology is “more than a method or a curricular area,”¹⁰⁹ and also more than a methodology. It is the aim “to enable Christian practitioners to articulate faith – to speak of God, in practice” in explicit and varied ways.¹¹⁰ In this research, an inductive and explorative qualitative approach in practical theology is combined with and further developed by applying the concept of the theology in four voices. As discussed by Cameron et al., this methodology follows the idea of distinct, but interrelated and also overlapping voices.

¹⁰⁶ Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students* (Harlow: Pearson, 2009), 111.

¹⁰⁷ Crotty, *Foundations*, 67.

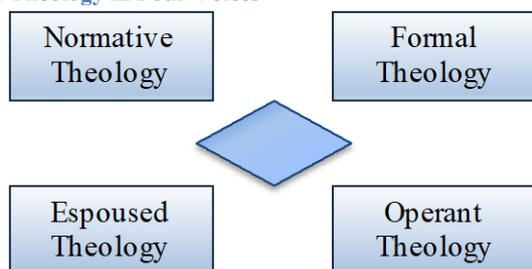
¹⁰⁸ Cathy Urquhart, *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2013), 59.

¹⁰⁹ Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, “Introduction. The Contributions to Practical Theology,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 8.

¹¹⁰ Helen Cameron, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney and Clare Watkins, *Talking about God in Practice* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 20.

These four voices are (i) normative theology, (ii) formal theology, (iii) espoused theology, and (iv) operant theology. Normative theology might be represented in the Bible, or official Church teaching. Formal theology suggests theologians' theology, also in dialogue with other disciplines. Espoused theology represents what the group of practitioners actually believes is the 'applied theology'. Finally, the methodology reflects on operant theology, meaning the theology embedded within the actual practice. Figure 9 shows the approach of the theology in four voices.

Figure 9: Theology in Four Voices



The theology in four voices method gives the opportunity to describe or even “effect change of practice through theology, but also to effect change through practice of theology.”¹¹¹ Following this methodology, valid results can be produced capturing the essence of Franciscan leadership in a monastery and extracting data that are able to provide detailed and rich information. Although leadership or motivation as a substantial part of followers' behaviour is not directly observable, it is possible to construct validity through interviews or document analysis. This methodological approach is also suitable due to the fact that a theoretical leadership model will be developed with regard to the application of Saint Francis' Rule in the context of spiritual leadership.

Research Strategy and Method

With the methodology of the theology in four voices and an explorative approach, questions of the adequate research strategy such as grounded theory and ethnography arise.¹¹² In a theological research context, action research is explicitly theological with regard to the different stages of an action-reflection cycle.¹¹³ Grounded theory offers a set of several coordinated methods supporting the development of new or the enrichment

¹¹¹ Cameron et al., *Talking*, 59.

¹¹² Jill Collis and Roger Hussey, *Business Research* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 81.

¹¹³ Cameron et al., *Talking*, 51. See also Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, “Participatory Action Research: Practical Theology for Social Justice,” *Religious Education* 101, 3 (2006): 321-329.

of existing theories studying organisations, people or processes in an authentic context.¹¹⁴ Adapted from social sciences, interviews, for example, deal directly with narrative to understand lived Christian experience.¹¹⁵

Grounded theory systematically sets procedures in order to generate or discover a theory, which can be shown, for example, in a narrative framework.¹¹⁶ Studying faith in the context of practical theology, Pieterse, for example, implements grounded theory for analysing sermons on poverty.¹¹⁷ Müller and Wepener apply grounded theory for research on African independent Churches' liturgical rituals.¹¹⁸ This research follows the Straussian approach to grounded theory using open coding, axial coding and selective coding.¹¹⁹

Research methods include, for example, survey development or data collection techniques. The samples for this research were drawn from two different sources. Qualitative data was collected from selected participants of the Gengenbach sisterhood via six open-ended, semi-structured interviews until theoretical saturation was reached. In addition, documents from the monastery were analysed using two of the three main data-collection methods for grounded theory.¹²⁰

The interviewees were senior monastic executives such as the Reverend Mother as well as a lay leader, the monastery's Chief Operation Officer. Furthermore, an interview with a sister without leadership functions has been conducted. The interviews followed a predefined set of guiding questions and took place between November 2015 and February 2016. All interviews took between 20 and 40 minutes and were open conversations letting the participant develop thoughts and conclusions. Each interview was transcribed verbatim. Document analysis has been a second data source to understand if the Rule of Saint Francis still impacts practical theology and spiritual leadership. In particular, the organisational, canonical and spiritual guidelines of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart have been dissected.

¹¹⁴ Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies of Qualitative Research* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 1967). See also Glaser, Barney G. *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence vs. forcing* (Mill Valley: The Sociology Press, 1992).

¹¹⁵ Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, "Participatory Action Research," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 238.

¹¹⁶ Urquhart, *Grounded Theory*, 5.

¹¹⁷ Hendrik J. C. Pieterse, "Grounded theory approach in Sermon analysis of Sermons on poverty and directed at the poor as listeners," *Acta Theologica* 30, 2 (2010): 113-129.

¹¹⁸ Bethel A. Müller and Cas J. Wepener, "Applying Grounded Theory to Data Collected Through Participatory Research on African Independent Churches' Liturgical Rituals: A Comparative Study," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 67 (2011): 98-105.

¹¹⁹ Anselm L. Strauss, *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹²⁰ Urquhart, *Grounded Theory*, 69.

Transcripts and document content were coded using line-by-line microanalysis. Furthermore, coded data were transferred into conceptual notes using the process of axial coding also supported by theoretical memorandums. Afterwards, the results of the first analyses were used to refine further interview questions identifying selective codes and categories. Figure 10 describes the research strategy and method.

Figure 10: Research Strategy and Method

Research Strategy	Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounded Theory • Action Research • Case Study • Ethnography • Survey Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview • Document Analysis • Observation • Questionnaire • Statistical Analysis • Other

Summary

To summarise, the aim of part three was to identify the epistemologies and ontological assumptions focussing on a research question embedded in a framework of practical theology. Furthermore, I developed a methodological approach focussing on the theology in four voices as well as grounded theory. Finally, interview and document analysis as methods were described, and ethical issues were mentioned. This discussion of an appropriate research framework is the basis for an analysis about modern Franciscan leadership in this study. The analysis and findings will be provided in the following part.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This part presents the analysis and discussion of the findings. Part four will discuss the main drivers of a complex picture as to how the Franciscan Rules influences leadership. In particular, the analysis will concentrate on the influence of the 1223 Rule and the 1982 Rule as well as the question how monastic and lay executives in the Gengenbach sisterhood lead according to the theology in four voices. This includes the question whether there are dominant dichotomies between what interviewees understand to be Franciscan leadership and what actually happens in the Gengenbach sisterhood.

Rule as Centre of a Leadership Framework

Following the main research question, it is important to understand if and how the monastic rules do influence leadership in the Gengenbach community. The first essential

observation centres on the question if the Rule of Saint Francis is the key source of leadership:

Essential Categories
Category 1 Franciscan Rule as key source of leadership

Codes and Essential Category

Table 1 shows the development of leadership sources as a central category arising from open codes such as Francis’ footprints, as well as final authority and selective codes, e.g. Franciscan leadership principles.

Table 1: Leadership Sources

Open Codes	Selective Codes	Category
Bible as driver, Gospel as foundation	Biblical sources of leadership	Leadership-Sources
Francis’ approach to leadership, final authority, poverty and obedience	Franciscan Rules as guidelines	
Francis’ footprints, Franciscan spirituality, Francis of Assisi as a role model	Franciscan leadership principles	
Spiritual Guidelines, Constitutions	Specific guidelines substantiate rules for leadership	
Civil law, property right, labour law	Labour law as resistance	

Findings

All interviewed sisters in the Gengenbach community emphasise that both Scriptures and the Rule of Saint Francis are their impetus and the dominant guideline for life and leadership. One respondent answered the question about the importance of the Bible for leadership tasks in interview 1:

For me, looking at it from the Bible’s perspective is very important, how do I look at a person. (...) How do I identify with Jesus Christ, what he says, what he wants. (...) For sure, Jesus provided clear guidelines: mercy, helpfulness.

Leadership behaviour is also bound to the Rule of Saint Francis. Focussing on theological leadership, one sister said in interview 2:

The Franciscan Rule, that is the Saint Francis' way of life, is the basis of the monastic life for me. (...) It is the guidelines of Saint Francis here in Gengenbach toward we orient our life.

This was also stated with a focus on leadership in interview 5. For the sister, the sources are "the Scriptures, the Gospel, and the Rule, Saint Francis."

It is also a guiding theme for leaders of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart to follow the footprints of Francis of Assisi. He is a role model, and they claim that Franciscan spirituality guides the sisters through daily routine and life. In part, the Rule seems to apply also for a lay senior executive working in the monastery with regard to leadership in practice. She mentioned in interview 3: "I have dealt with the Rule because I am often faced with it also in critical discussions with lay employees, if I have to deliver a written warning or written notice."

The Franciscan Rule as the fundamental source of spiritual life is also mentioned in the monastery's Spiritual Guidelines and their Constitutions. These documents reflect the Rule of Saint Francis, but Spiritual Guidelines also provide many details about the sisters' identity, roots, sources of theological life as well as their Franciscan spirituality. Updated recently in a longer discussion and decision process, the Spiritual Guidelines also mention life in a sisterly community, for example about unity in diversity, leadership as well as inward-looking and outward-looking service. The Constitutions of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart provide spiritual regulations as well, but focus specifically on entrance and resignation, property law, tasks and missions. In addition, there are detailed regulations about the order's organisation, legal structure, leadership positions and responsibilities. The Constitutions have been updated recently also and are, together with the Spiritual Guidelines, key sources for the Gengenbach community. One sister described the importance in interview 4: "(This) is of course our compass." In interview 2, a sister stated it this way: "We ponder on these texts in a personal consideration, we have a joint conservation, and this leads to prayer. It is a three-step approach."

However, there are also difficulties with regard to sources of Franciscan leadership. Chapter 4 of the 1223 Rule forbids Franciscans to receive money in any form either directly or through an intermediary, but already in Franciscan times it was clear that a monastic order can hardly survive with no economic basis. This applies, in particular, if a monastery runs nurseries, schools and homes for the elderly in today's market economies. And although this regulation has been slightly amended in chapter 6 of the 1982

Rule, which mentions that “we do not need anything else than food and clothing”, one sister mentioned challenges to deal with Franciscan Rules in interview 4:

In a recent advanced training session (...), poverty was an important topic. We have a wonderful house, we are better secured than others regarding home care and retirement provisions, we are privileged. But how to deal with poverty in practice? And there was a beautiful idea: Actually, our creaturehood is our poverty.

A major difficulty arises in relation to Franciscan leadership behaviour and civil law, in particular labour law. Whereas the Rule of Saint Francis mentions that members of the monastic community should be corrected ‘humbly and lovingly, prescribing nothing against their soul or our rule’ (chapter 10), labour law seems to play a major role with regard to lay employees. The lay executive said in interview 3:

The issue is Christian behaviour and labour law as an area of conflict. There are issues: I am in a Catholic house, I have this freedom, I have more rights. It is sometimes a crucial test that we also have a business organisation where revenues are important, where I have to manage in a commercial manner.

In particular, it is a major challenge for the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus’ Sacred Heart that fewer sisters are active and many tasks have to be performed by the approximately 350 lay employees. Most conflict arises in the area of the relationship between the Rule and labour law as indicated by a sister’s statement in interview 1:

It is a tightrope walk. (...) I have to consider that it works according to labour law, or where I have to temper justice with mercy, what corresponds to our Franciscan model.

This seems to be also a matter of different leadership behaviour, as the sister said in interview 4:

Recently someone told me if I would be as pragmatic as the lay executive, it would not work. I thought, that he was somehow right, because the lay executive is a ‘law person’, (...) this is her business.

Franciscan Leadership Sources in Four Voices

According to the methodology of the theology in four voices, the monastic leaders’ normative and formal theology are examined. Franciscan leadership sources will also be analysed with regard to the congruency of espoused and operant theology.

Based on the findings from the interviews, the *normative theology* of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus’ Sacred Heart are the Gospels and the Rule of Saint Francis. Scriptures guided Francis of Assisi’s ideal for the new Franciscan fraternity. He founded the

order on the idea to convert the Bible and the life of the Apostles into contemporary practice, and his Rule fundamentally reflects Scriptural guidance. Francis advises, for example, “to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience without anything of our own, and in chastity” (chapter 1). And this observation of Scriptures is a key driver for the monastic leaders of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus’ Sacred Heart.

In addition, the Rule of Saint Francis gives clear guidance for the sisters how to live their Franciscan spirituality. The Rule is their second major normative guideline for cloistral leadership. Francis’ leadership often concentrates on theological aspects. And for the Gengenbach sisters, this theological approach seems to be clearly reflected in people leadership. In line with the Rule’s chapter 10, monastic leaders want to correct other sisters “humbly and lovingly, prescribing nothing against their soul and our Rule.” If there are difficulties following the Rule spiritually, they treat their sisters “lovingly and generously and treat them so intimately that they can speak and act as lords do with their servants” (chapter 10). Similar to Saint Francis, leadership is not mainly a question of authority, hierarchy and control for them. The Gengenbach sisters accept that the main principles of the Rule are associated with patience and compassion. In fact, the “behaviour how to serve and work” (chapter 5 of the 1982 Rule), as well as the loving obedience and the obligation to “visit, admonish and encourage” their sisters “with humility and love” (chapter 8 of the 1982 Rule), is the source of their Franciscan leadership.

This idea of loving behaviour with regard to leadership decisions has been discussed by several theological scholars. Looking at *formal theology*, the monastic leaders of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus’ Sacred Heart refer to a number of Franciscan sources. However, the main sources for their formal theology seem to be the Spiritual Guidelines and the Constitutions of the Gengenbach sisterhood. These documents insist as well on the application of Scriptures and the application of Franciscan Rule and spirituality. Para 4.1 of the Spiritual Guide mentions that “the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Communion, the Liturgy of the Hours and personal prayer are basis and sources for a living spiritual life as Franciscans.” In addition, the community “adopted the new rule of the regulated third orders of Saint Francis.” and “the Franciscan spirituality is the central spiritual fundament” (Spiritual Guidelines chapter 2 para 4). This is also mentioned in chapter 1 para 1 of the Constitutions because “rule, testament and writings of Saint Francis are fundamentals of our spiritual life.”

Furthermore, a number of Franciscan sources are relevant for the monastic leaders. Examples are Casutt describing that Saint Francis’ spiritual leadership is driven by

the idea of a rightfully and appropriate transformation into an apostolic life.¹²¹ Other sources are scholarly articles regarding the Franciscan Rule. For example, Micó and Mertens describe that the Franciscan Rule is the only answer to the Biblical calling even in completely different situations, and that it is the literary expression of the evangelic form of life.¹²² As poverty in the 21st century is an area of conflict, formal theology in this context is also related to the approach to poverty which has to be understood primarily Christologically because “God made himself poor in this world” (chapter 6).¹²³ The message for the Gengenbach sisters is that poverty is not a social status or an ascetic virtue. It is the central command if Franciscan brothers and sisters want to live in a succession of Christ: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8, 9). The Spiritual Guidelines try to transform this approach into modern times: “The vow of poverty has a social and theological dimension and is more than a simple lifestyle. Poverty has an aim and is no value per se. It is an attitude where you grow into deliberately and not a condition where you want to emerge.” (Spiritual Guidelines para 5.4)

As respondents in this research almost universally mentioned that both the Bible and the Rule of Saint Francis are the most important spiritual and practical sources for their leadership, an incisive example of the sisters’ *espoused theology* is a statement in interview 4:

I would claim that I have taken many things in (...), the demand for communal life, the demand for spirituality or for our life in prayer, and also the demand for behaviour. This behaviour is important with regard to considering the sisters, but also with regard to leadership.

A similar approach and description were given in interview 5: “The Rule is our pivot. (...) And (in my leadership position) I consistently ask myself: Is this right, is it suitable?”

In addition to participants’ *espoused theology*, it became clear through analysis that *operant theology* and *espoused theology* in the Franciscan sisterhood are mainly consistent. In interview 3, the lay executive simply stated regarding the Rule of Saint Francis: “Yes, this drives the monastic leaders.” This was also mentioned in interview 5. The monastic leaders continuously use the Franciscan Rule for a reflection of their leadership: “I

¹²¹ Casutt, *Franziskus*, 268.

¹²² Micó and Mertens, *El charisma*, 37.

¹²³ Johannes Schneider, “Regulam spiritualiter observare,” in *Regel und Leben. Materialien zur Franziskus-Regel I*, ed. Paul Zahlner and Damian Bieger (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2007), 19.

have to endeavour, I have to be close to the Rule, read it, contemplate, and exchange with others. (...) This continues for the whole life.”

However, there are two main areas of conflict or resistance. The first deviation is that Francis clarifies that “I strictly forbid the brothers to receive money in any form either directly or through an intermediary” (chapter 4) translating Mark’s Biblical passage into a clear rule for the monastic community. And although the sisters emphasise and in fact have a very modest lifestyle, it is not the strict poverty Saint Francis mentioned in his original rule. Poverty, in addition to a modest economic lifestyle, is more regarded as a mind-set: The creaturehood is poverty, it has an aim, it is not a value per se. Secondly, civil law is an important aspect in the leadership behaviour. Labour law clearly emerges as resistance because Christian behaviour and labour law is partially regarded as an area of conflict. A younger sister mentioned in interview 6:

Actually, (...) the person should take centre stage in a monastery. At the same time, we have the civil law, the labour law, and everything we do has to be water-tight in the light of labour law, in the light of civil law.

Servant Leadership Behaviour

The analysis showed that leadership in a Franciscan monastery is tightly bound to servant leadership behaviour, and this is driven by the monastic leaders’ spirituality. The second essential observation centres on the approach that senior monastic executives in the Gengenbach community can be regarded as servant leaders:

Essential Categories
Category 2 Franciscan leaders are (spiritually inclined) servant leaders

Codes and Essential Category

Table 2 describes servant leadership as a central category arising from open codes and selective codes such as servanthood, humility and sisterliness. This servant leadership is driven by a spirituality, based on Scriptures and the Franciscan Rule.

Table 2: Servant Leadership

Open Codes	Selective Codes	Category
Leadership as service, custodian, Franciscan spirituality	Being a servant	Spiritually inclined Servant Leadership
Humility, solidarity through poverty, Franciscan vows	Humility	
God's love, fraternity, worry for each other, communal life	Love for the community	
Curiosity, openness, hearing	Hearing	
Empathy, mutual interest, temporary leadership, patience	Sisterliness	
Delegation, joint leadership, motivation, empowerment	Empowering followers	
Acts of service, support the poor, organising the transition	Creating value	

Findings

Servant leader traits and behaviours have been mentioned in all interviews. Therefore, the observation stood out that being a servant and humility seem to be the dominant components with regard to leadership. This was mentioned by one sister in interview 4: "I perceive my tasks as a service. I do not belong to reverend mothers seeing the position as a matter of prestige or luxury. (...) It is a service to the community."

Behaviour and traits are obviously important drivers to be a servant leader, as a monastic leader stated in interview 2: "My first task is the service. Service to the community, to the individual sister, to the individual lay employee, who are all given to me." A sister described this servant leadership as an attitude and behaviour in interview 6: "They do not want to be the top brass and we are down there. (...) They accepted (...) to serve us, and we serve them."

Love of human beings, love of human nature, and love for the community are also central components of Saint Francis' behaviour. Leaders in the Gengenbach community expressed this behaviour in a similar way in interview 4: "I love this community more than anything else."

This love for the monastic order is also reflected in the aspects of hearing and sisterly community. The Franciscan Rule and spirituality inform the daily behaviour according to the interviewees with regard to hearing and openness. One sister mentioned in interview 2: "First of all, I have to listen. I am not able to understand without hearing."

Another respondent emphasised openness and sisterliness as part of her monastic leadership trait in interview 4:

Openness belongs to me as a person. I think openness is part of my traits. (...) If there is an enquiry to me, I think about what we can do with it and how can we deal with this.

This leadership behaviour was endorsed by a sister in interview 6: “I can feel a huge openness... They really make an effort to respond to the individual sister or employee.”

Furthermore, empowering others and creating values were two major themes in the discussions. Spiritual as well as practical empowerment guides the Rule. Saint Francis mentions that work should be executed “faithfully and devotedly” (chapter 5), and the impetus is always to perform and bring forth good fruits.¹²⁴ Empowering means for the Gengenbach leaders, for example, working in teams as well as delegation. One sister said in interview 2: “I am a person who works in teams. I know my responsibility, and that I am not able to delegate some topics. (...) But I do not go alone (...), this is not me.” Empowering others was stated by a monastic leader in interview 4:

If I would have more young sisters, I would ask them all to do apprenticeships. (...) I chase people, that the younger sisters learn something, also in a spiritual manner. This is very, very important. And I have to take care of the younger sisters, because they often have a thousand tasks.

Franciscan Leadership Behaviour in Four Voices

Servant leadership is a substantial part of the *normative theology* of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus’ Sacred Heart. Chapter 10 of the 1223 Rule says that “the ministers should be servants of all the brothers,” and this approach can be described as the sisters’ theological guideline. Her servant leadership is reflected as well in the understanding of the 1223 Rule’s chapter 5 and their approach to leadership as work because those “whom the Lord favours with the gift of working should do so faithfully and devotedly.” If they look at Saint Francis and his view at Christ to follow the Lord in humility with a servant behaviour, they claim to receive their sisters lovingly and generously. According to the analysis, the sisters’ theology or spirituality seems to be the connective element for the different servant leadership behaviour because leaders, “we servants and subjects at the feet of the holy church, firm in faith, will always observe the poverty, humility and holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which we firmly promised” (chapter 12). It was mentioned in several interviews that this is a key driver for leadership.

¹²⁴ Micó and Mertens, *El charisma*, 55.

Servant leader traits and behaviours are also reflected in the Spiritual Guidelines of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart and their Constitutions. Therefore, the observation stood out that servanthood and humility also are the dominant leadership components in their *formal theology*. Hearing and community as fundamental drivers of the Franciscan Rule are expressed in the Spiritual Guidelines and Constitutions. Together through the generations, "every sister shows esteem, support and respect for the other" (Constitutions chapter 2, para 11). The community "subsists on personal relationships, mutual interest and mutual concern," and "the term 'sister' is an attitude to life for us" (Spiritual Guidelines chapter 6 para 4). This formal theology shows that Franciscan life devoted to God has its foundation and its orientation in God's word. Monastic life grows through a consistent hearing to the word of God, experiencing its power and continuity. Leadership is closely related to humility, and for the sisters in the Gengenbach community, this is also reflected in relevant scholarly work. Poverty and humility form a double term and are two sides of a coin. The leader is a father or mother of the family, the good shepherd, with an authority to lead but not with an authority to discretionary dominion. Leaders' servanthood has to be guided by humility and love or mildness.¹²⁵ Similar to Stadler's discussion about leadership and the friars' salvation,¹²⁶ the caring reprehension is the moral compass for the Franciscan sisters in Gengenbach.

In this analysis it could not be discovered that espoused theology in the Gengenbach community substantially differs from *operant theology*. The different tasks are seen first and foremost as servanthood. The lay executive stated the servant leadership approach of the Franciscan sisters this way in interview 3:

A sister is present for 24 hours... This support, if the worst comes to the worst... A sister just does it without further discussions, without delegation, without passing on the task to someone else.

This is in line with a response from a senior monastic executive in interview 2: "Servanthood is my first duty." And in interview 5, the sister stated: "To serve (...) is my tenor."

The same applies for sisterliness as well as a curiosity and openness. The Spiritual Guidelines mention that this "*curiosity and openness accompany us a whole lifetime*,"

¹²⁵ Johannes Schneider, "Unser Kloster ist die Welt. Überlegungen zur Bullierten Regel, Kapitel 3, 10-11," in *Regel und Leben. Materialien zur Franziskus-Regel II*, ed. Johannes Schneider (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2007), 170.

¹²⁶ Volker Stadler, "Die Regula bullata im Traditionsstrom ihrer Zeit," in *Regel und Leben. Materialien zur Franziskus-Regel II*, ed. Johannes Schneider (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2009), 60.

and this is obviously a guiding principle for the monastic leaders. In interview 4, one sister said: “Openness is my trait, and I think openness is something which has very much characterised Saint Francis.”

The question of empowering others and creating values are a further critical part of the Gengenbach leadership behaviour. The lay executive described this aspect of the sisters’ monastic leadership behaviour in interview 3:

I experience an openness, I experience an opportunity, where I can ask questions, also when they are difficult. I experience that it comes to business in a constructive way.

This is in line with the self-perception of a monastic leader mentioning in interview 4:

What I see is that, I think, the other sisters value my leadership. They really appreciate that I always try to be transparent. And I think that they value that I respond to everyone individually.

Further Aspects of Leadership Behaviour

In addition to the formal theology, the approach to servant leadership in other disciplines has to be mentioned, in particular in the management and business leadership context. Monastic leaders in the Gengenbach community described additional management skills from other positions and tasks as well. One sister founded a technical college for organisation and mentioned that she became acquainted with legal and financial issues. Another monastic leader has a psychology background and mentioned that for her a servant leadership approach is not only a motivation to lead but also a strong desire to serve. In line with business leadership sources, servant leadership behaviour as an interactive process based on communication and empathy was discussed. Therefore, corresponding characteristics of servant leadership behaviour at the order were identified as business leadership principles such as ethical behaviour or empowering and putting followers first in order to help them to grow and succeed.

Servant Leadership Results

Models of servant leadership often consider a potential or actual result of the leadership framework as well as servant leadership behaviour. The third main observation is that societal impact and empowering followers are major outcomes, and both results are closely connected with Franciscan leadership.

Essential Categories
Category 3a Franciscan leadership results in societal impact
Category 3b Franciscan leadership results in follower performance

Codes and Essential Categories

Table 3 shows open codes and selective codes leading to these categories:

Table 3: Societal Impact and Follower Performance

Open Codes	Selective Codes	Categories
Preaching, mix with people, preach to non-believers	Theological mission	Societal Impact
Support the poor, spread Franciscan spirituality, solidarity with the needy, safe life	Support the poor	
Mutual respect, tolerance, esteem, supporting interreligious dialogue, cross-congregational network	Interreligious dialogue	
Integrity of creation, humility, changing structures, transformation, long-term approach	Sustainable business behaviour	
Franciscan spirituality, spiritual leadership, theological practice	Theological fundament	Follower Performance
Attentiveness, mutual respect, esteem	Sisterliness	
Empowerment, for God's love	Motivation	
Leadership and share of responsibilities, equal rights	Delegation	

Findings

Several interviewees from the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart emphasised the societal impact of their servant leadership behaviour. One sister describes this as the theological mission and mentioned in interview 4: "I want to bequeath a community of sisters (...) facing the people, noticing the human being, encountering people with openness."

Spiritual leadership working in the community and being effective within the community is an important aspect of another Franciscan leader. She mentioned in

interview 2: “I have been mostly active in an intellectual and spiritual sense, in a pedagogic sense, and leadership questions have always been relevant here.”

The shrinking sisterhood has to take challenging decisions how to further support the poor, and how to further operate. This arises from the need to transform existing structures into innovative collaboration or abandoning monastic locations, and societal impact appears to be a key driver according to statements in interview 2:

We run a student hall of residence (...), sisters there grew older (...), and we thought about closing the hall, renouncing. Then we developed something wonderful, a new constellation, (...) and we felt that we can take courage, and opened new ways, where life can take place.

One sister explained the solidarity with the needy and the need for servant leadership results in interview 4 as:

The nursery school is a recent project we are managing very well...Or the hospice where we want to relocate...No one wants Aids patients...And then it is Franciscan behaviour for me: When I was not successful last year, when I did not succeed, I thought we make a clear break, we close. And then I realise again, that I am looking (for a solution).

Focusing on the second outcome of Franciscan leadership, members of the Gengenbach community highlighted the aspect of follower performance. Although sisters are limited with regard to divine service due to Catholic Church regulations, a theological fundament leading to followers' theological performance was emphasised as a key topic in interview 4:

Studying theology (...) was too arid for one of the sisters, (...) and now she does a pastoral course. I really want this. The younger sisters must learn, also in a spiritual manner.

One sister stated in interview 6 that sisterliness is a main driver for the monastic leaders, and this leads to follower performance as well. This applies for sisters in the community, but also to lay employees: “There is no graduation from the monastic leaders, that lay employees are less valuable than sisters.” This was also mentioned by a monastic leader in interview 2: “Even if someone failed, to accept him in love and compassion.” The same applies for motivation, and she mentioned in interview 6 that the leadership behaviour and the community motivate her: “Because I participate in the community...And due to this esteem (of the monastic leaders).”

Finally, delegation was mentioned as a central aspect in follower performance in interview 4:

I think I have delegated many tasks in our house: The kitchen is independent...or a sister does the liturgical topics...But it is a good delegation, also with the head of house who takes care of the house and the older sisters.

Franciscan Leadership Results in Four Voices

The Franciscan approach to life has a strong orientation towards societal impact. This was a major driver in Saint Francis' life as a wandering preacher, and this is strongly reflected in the Gengenbach sisters' *normative theology*. The Franciscan Rule does not have extensive passages about behaviour and actions towards and within the society. But for the monastic leaders of the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart, this approach seems to be covered by the approach to follow and imitate Jesus. Similar to the Apostles, Francis' idea for the community was to convert Scriptures, and to combine Rule and life. Chapter 1 of the Franciscan Rule distinctly reflects this foundation as "the Rule and life of the lesser brothers is this: To observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Further guidance is mentioned in chapter 9 where Francis tells the friars where and how to preach. Again, Scriptures guide the Rule as "the person who does the commandments shall live by them" (Rom 10:6). Other examples are given in chapter 12 showing the members of the Franciscan order how to deal with other religions, "concerning those who go among the Saracens and other infidels." This societal impact of preaching draws the attention to the results of servant leadership impact of the Gengenbach sisterhood.

Performance with regard to spiritual and practical work according to the Rules is a second example of the sisters' leadership results. Performing 'the gift of working' in a faithful and devoted manner is the key proposition in the Rule's chapter 5, and payment for labour will be "that which is necessary for themselves and their brothers, but not money." As mentioned by a monastic leader in interview 2: "God's praise is our remuneration."

The Gengenbach community's *formal theology* with regard to societal impact is mentioned in the Spiritual Guidelines and the monastic order's Constitutions. The sisters want to "live among the people" (Spiritual Guideline para 6.3). Their intention is "to identify themselves with the needy and to stand by the poor and disenfranchised" (Spiritual Guideline para 6.9). A further driver is the interreligious dialogue. The Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart want to "encounter other religions and cultures as well as non-believers with veneration and interest, with cosmopolitanism not excluding anyone" (Spiritual Guideline para 6.11). This is in line with the approach that societal impact is

guided by an imitation of or conversion to a life in Jesus' footsteps.¹²⁷ Francis of Assisi wanted to wake up and affect contemporary society, and not be solely theological and abstract, and Francis' approach of preaching or conversion was a mission of peace. Although the sisters are not allowed to preach, spreading the word of God, and pastoral care, is also a central element of their behaviour.

A further important aspect with regard to the results of Franciscan theological leadership is follower performance. Maturing and spiritual growth are key drivers, and it is "every sister's history, trait, talents and capabilities informing her life and spiritual history" (Spiritual Guideline para 7.3). The same applies for the recognition of the sisters' performance and motivation. The Spiritual Guidelines mention joint responsibility and delegation, and according to the findings, follower performance as a major outcome is closely connected with Franciscan leadership and the monastic leaders' formal theology.

Looking at *espoused theology*, several interviewees from the Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart emphasised the societal impact of their servant leadership behaviour. *Espoused* and *operant theology* in the Gengenbach sisterhood seem to be mostly consistent. One example is the interreligious dialogue in Gengenbach: Expectation and reality are closely aligned with a recent interreligious cultural project of the monastery presenting pictures of women from the five world religions on the occasion of the 150th anniversary. This highlights their approach to mutual respect, tolerance and dialogue.

The same applies for the sisterhood's engagement in the community focusing, for example, on theological aspects and societal impact. A theological centre in the Black Forest offers spiritual accompaniment and courses. The charity is run by a joint leadership team from Gengenbach sisters and lay members of the local parish focusing on transformation of traditional organisational structures and a long-term approach.

The second aspect of servant leadership also shows a close alignment between *espoused* and *operant theology*. Follower performance through sisterliness is reflected, for example, in an observation from the lay executive in interview 3: "We argue as well, but it will always lead to a consensus. And this is what I appreciate with regard to the monastic leaders." A younger sister gave an example of follower performance as a result of motivation in interview 6:

¹²⁷ See also Pansters, *Dreams*, 62.

The Reverend Mother always has in mind how she can deploy us according to our proclivities for the collective good...And I enjoyed when she asked me to assume a duty.

Summary

A central result of the findings is that the Franciscan Rule has a strong influence on monastic leadership today. The Gengenbach monastery's normative theology is based on Scriptures and the Franciscan Rule as the dominant spiritual source of everyday leadership. In addition, the monastic leaders' decisions as well as actions are mainly based on Spiritual Guidelines and Constitutions as the sisters' formal theology. However, labour law emerged as a major resistance. Second, it was argued that the orientation towards the Rule results in an approach which can be identified as a servant leadership behaviour. The observation stood out that servant leadership driven by the sisters' spirituality is the dominant component. Open codes led to a number of selective codes showing that Franciscan leadership is influenced by sub-categories such as servanthood, humility, hearing or creating value. Finally, outcomes of leadership behaviour were analysed and discussed causing positive impact in the society such as interreligious dialogue and pastoral care. Leadership behaviour also results in follower performance focusing on the theological fundament but also an approach of sisterliness and delegation.

Conclusions

Following the analysis and findings, part five will discuss the overall results of the study by presenting the research conclusions. This includes a Franciscan leadership model as well as a discussion about the article's contribution to knowledge and practice. Limitations and opportunities for further research will also be highlighted.

Research Conclusions: A Franciscan Leadership Model

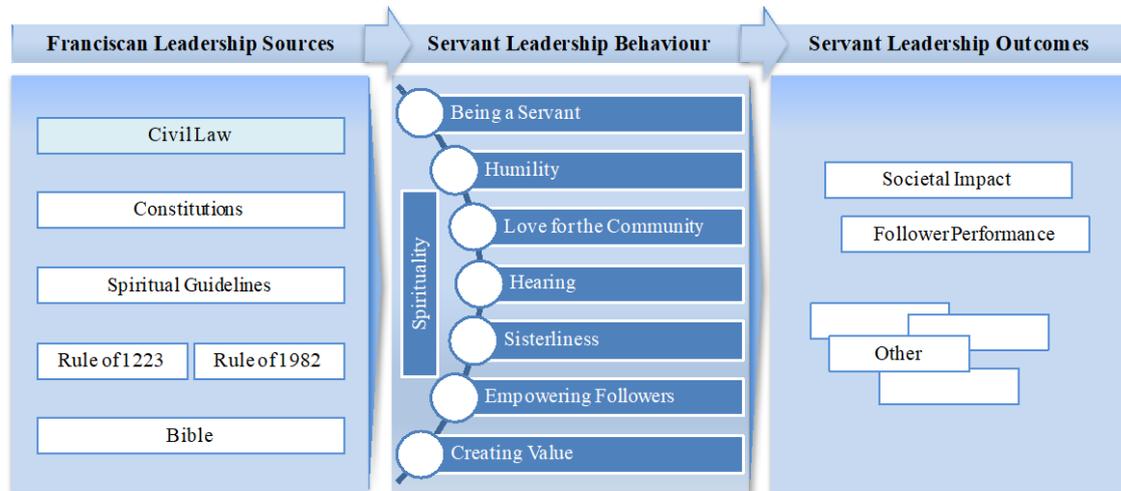
There are several important findings emerging from this research. As an overall result, theological sources are the basis and dominant guidelines for modern monastic management. The findings from the research indicate that Biblical sources are highly relevant, and leaders in the Gengenbach sisterhood understand that the Gospels are a foundation and driver for them. The same applies for the Franciscan Rules. The *Regula Bullata* and their contemporary sister, *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis*, are the monastic leaders' final authorities. Francis of Assisi, his spirituality and approach to leadership guides the sisters in the Gengenbach community. They want to follow his footprints, seeing Saint Francis as a role model.

The formal theology is a major source of leadership behaviour as well. The Franciscan Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart have their own Spiritual Guidelines and Constitutions, and these texts are 'living documents' for them. They use the documents for personal consideration and joint consideration leading to prayer, and the Spiritual Guidelines and Constitutions are constantly updated. However, a result of this research is that the intention is always to reflect Scriptures and the Rule of Saint Francis. Difficulties arise with regard to civil law. Labour law is a major resistance, an area of conflict. However, this conflict traces back to the fact that a rising number of lay employees are active in the community. Monastic leaders describe the relationship between Franciscan Rules and civil law as a tightrope walk.

Based on the Bible, the Franciscan Rule, as well as the Gengenbach sisters' formal theology, modern Franciscan leadership can be categorised as a servant leadership behaviour which is spiritually inclined and driven by the community's spirituality. Servanthood and humility are central aspects. The monastic leaders also show a thorough understanding of the organisation concentrating on love and worry for the community's purposes, missions and complexities. Other dominant factors are hearing, as well as empathy and sisterliness. The study gives evidence for the sensitivity to personal concerns and the well-being of their sisters and employees. In addition, the spiritual and servant leadership behaviour helps followers to grow and succeed, making their spiritual and personal development a priority and providing them with remarkable support. The same applies to the leadership behaviour as an act of service aiming to create value for the society, linking goals of the Franciscan community with a broader purpose.

In leadership theory, servant leadership mainly focuses on the behaviour of the organisation's leader. However, the results of servant leadership driven by a spiritual approach became a third central category in this research. Societal impact was identified as a central category. The Gengenbach community clearly has a theological mission. Two examples were the interreligious dialogue as well as a sustainable behaviour in pastoral care. A second outcome was follower performance. The monastic leaders want to empower their followers, and helping the younger sisters to realise their full potential was an important driver for them. Based on these results, it is possible to build a coherent leadership system based on Biblical and Franciscan sources, spiritually driven servant leadership behaviour as well as outcomes. Figure 15 shows a basic Franciscan leadership model.

Figure 11: Franciscan Leadership Model



Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

In some important ways, the results of this research extend findings from prior studies. This article discusses the Franciscan Rule in a leadership context. First, it provides the first empirical analysis based on the theology in four voices and grounded theory. In addition, this study conceptualises determinants revealed to be key aspects of a Franciscan leadership behaviour. Third, it analyses Franciscan leadership outcomes, and this research now adds empirical evidence. Scriptures and Franciscan spirituality can be seen as a source for a holistic servant leadership model integrating behaviour such as servanthood, humility, hearing and empowering followers. This approach to modern Franciscan leadership combines practical theology and management behaviour building a new servant leadership paradigm for monastic organisations. Monastic and secular leadership behaviour do not have to be regarded as independent domains. In fact, modern Franciscan leadership is driven by servant leadership behaviour and outcome and further enriches leadership theory.

This research has also important practical implications for a number of parties involved in leadership. First, Franciscan monasteries can analyse if their sources of leadership are Franciscan Rules and spirituality, and if their contemporary guidelines reflect the historic rules. They are also able to assess if they follow a servant leadership behaviour, and if their leadership outcomes are consistent with sources and behaviour. Second, this underlying concept of the Franciscan leadership model can be applied to other monastic communities using, for example, the Rule of Saint Benedict as the source of leadership. Third, this research raises issues for leaders of other Christian organisations.

Given the importance of a theological basis leading to servant leadership driven by spirituality, lay executives in Christian organisations can reconsider or even review their leadership approach and model.

Limitations and Further Research

There are a number of limitations to this article: First, the research is based on data from a single monastery with a limited number of interviewees and thus cannot be generalised. Further discussions with sisters without leadership position as well as lay employees would have been useful to extend the model. The same applies for time constraints because a longer research period could lead to more details, in particular with regard to servant leadership outcomes. A second limitation is that it was not possible to observe the functioning of the sisterhood, and results for operant theology were mainly deduced from different interviews with sisters and the lay executive. However, in a grounded theory approach it is acceptable to use only document analysis and interviews as sources for theory building. In addition, there is consistency between results from the interviews and the sources of the sisters' formal theology. There is also consistency between the different interview results.

Future studies might use the opportunity to undertake research in several Franciscan monasteries comparing leadership sources, leadership behaviour and leadership outcomes. This would allow to create a cohesive Franciscan leadership framework. Future work might also contain other monastic communities such as the Augustinians or the Benedictines in order to provide a comparative study of practical theology. This would allow adding relevant hypotheses or building an extensive monastic and not only a Franciscan leadership model. Following an extensive inductive study, it would then be valuable to test hypotheses on leadership.

Summary

The aim of this research was to discover how 'living Christian tradition' affects cloistral leadership. The main research question centred on the question of how the Rule of Saint Francis and Franciscan spirituality influence managing a convent. It was the intention to fill the gap between existing literature about monastic rules and modern Franciscan management in a contemporary context. This aim led to a review of the relevant literature concerning monastic rules and Saint Francis, as well as leadership theory and specific forms of leadership approaches. Thereafter, the four voices in theology as an appropriate methodology, and grounded theory focusing on document analysis and interviews, were considered. Part four analysed and discussed findings from the Franciscan

Sisters of Jesus' Sacred Heart. Essential categories and the sister's normative, formal, espoused and operant theology were discussed. This part presented the research conclusions. It also included limitations of the study and the identification of further research areas.

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