

Franciscan Spirituality and the Challenges of the Modern Management World

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Abstract

What can we learn from Franciscan tradition with regard to the management and leadership world today? The focus of this paper lies on the 800-year history of the Franciscan family as a learning organization to explore the question of transformation as a key concept of Franciscan life and Franciscan leadership. To do so, we look at the founder of the Order, Francis of Assisi (1181–1226), first. Francis himself stands for a personal, continuous process of transformation in which he chooses the Gospel as a basic orientation for his life or as the foundation of his self-leadership. He completely changed his life goals and defined the identity of the entire Franciscan organization. In this context, the core values of the Franciscans, such as evangelical poverty, serving character and the aspect of brotherhood (which includes all sexes) will be discussed. The Franciscan approach serves as a perfect field of practice for bringing together attitude and action, which is also the basis of leadership theories from the light side of leadership. Finally, practical experiences from the Franciscan tradition, like the development of structural elements (e.g., the annual chapters) are related to the management context. By focusing on practice and transformation, the Franciscan example can inspire modern organizations and leadership practice in times of current challenges.

Keywords: Franciscan Spirituality, VUCA World, Transformation, Leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

There have always been changes in society and organizations. However, today the processes for change take place at an unprecedented speed (Dienberg et al., 2018, 797). Often people in various organizations have to cope with volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity in the so-called VUCA World (Thompson et al., 2014, 66). In addition, for the past two years, there has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a massive impact on management and all processes of life. These diverse changes create new burdens that have an impact on the performance and well-being of people in the working and private world. Traditional professional skills and organizational strategies are no longer sufficient to meet these challenges. A particular challenge is presented to the leaders. In the wake of these external developments, organizations are required to adapt to constant change. Along with organizational strategies that must be set considering today's global competition, concentration on human resources is also becoming a crucial aspect, meaning that a person with their own individual attitude, experiences, abilities and talents is becoming more important. Especially in the context of leadership on personal, team and organizational levels.

It is against this background that a question arises: what drives leaders to inspire, orientate and motivate their employees and, first of all, themselves? We need leaders who transform organizations and society at large; who are authentic and moral examples; who know how to discern given the interest of the people they serve; who have transformed themselves by the cultural and power-related forces of history. Transformative, authentic or servant leadership is highly valued, but there is a lack of knowledge as to how to develop or educate leaders in this way. The question of theory development centres around the concept of spirituality. Different disciplines, such as management sciences, psychology, education and business ethics, study the concept of spirituality concerning leadership and organizations (Hermans, 2020, 1). Although the current body

of spiritual leadership research has provided greater familiarity with the spiritual side of leadership, there are still gaps in the understanding of spiritual leadership (Krishnakumar et al., 2015, 18).

One area of research that connects spirituality with management and leadership addresses the following question: what impulses can the great orders such as Benedictines or Franciscans provide for a connection between spirituality and leadership? To get a first impression, this paper focuses on the Franciscan perspective.

The Franciscan leadership philosophy is described as serving, democratic and fraternal (Dienberg, 2016, 21ff). The two principles of spiritual poverty—first, meeting each other at eye level and, second, the ideal of communion—are crucial for Franciscan leadership and organizational culture. Furthermore, the basis of St. Francis' attitude is to follow and serve the Lord and to ask him "what do you want me to do?". Although it is quite difficult to transfer these issues into daily business, it is important to raise the question of what could be an idea for the management world today. It is definitely about the attitude of looking at the human being as a whole and enhancing its hidden potential. In other words, it is a kind of self-leadership competence. This is also to be connected to academic research. Connecting theology and philosophy with management and leadership research can be an innovative approach here.

1.1 Research Method

This present paper is based primarily on my long-term research activities at various universities and institutes in the field of spirituality and management. The focus lies on the conditions of a holistic ability to act which is based on a reflected framework of values. The ultimate question is how spirituality with a reflected value foundation can be transferred into personal action in an organizational context. This basic orientation was transferred into two questionnaires before being practically validated in the paper 'Religious Practices Questionnaire as a Measure of Christian Religious Practices in a General Population' and then in 'Religious Persons' (Büssing, Recchia, et al., 2017), as well as in another paper detailing Franciscan-inspired spirituality to which this article is oriented and briefly presents (Büssing, Warode, et al., 2017). This approach focused on a cross-sectional study among 418 participants to validate an instrument measuring a specific aspect of Franciscan-inspired spirituality (FraSpir). Exploratory factor analysis of this FraSpir questionnaire with 26 items pointed to four main factors: "Live from Faith/Search for God"; "Peaceful attitude/Respectful Treatment"; "Commitment to Disadvantaged and Creation"; and "Attitude of Poverty"). The 26-item instrument was found to be a reliable and valid instrument for use in training and education programmes. The centre of this work is the Gospel and the development of specific attitudes and virtues as a process of inner transformation, which is very important for the "spirit" of this paper: it is not about presenting a technical approach to deal with bad behaviour and characteristics in daily business; it is about a reflected attitude in the sense of a source of thinking and acting that needs to be trained continuously. The FraSpir questionnaire sought to operationalise and make measurable relevant values and behaviours related to Franciscan spirituality in a general population. Particularly, the core dimensions ("Living from the Gospel" and "Searching for the Spirit of the Lord") and the transformative outcomes, specifically an "Attitude of poverty", "Awe and respect for the Creation" and "Considerate acting in the world" were in the forefront of interest. As described above, the 26-item FraSpir questionnaire was found to be a reliable and valid instrument, which might be useful in training and education programmes and also in academic research that refer to value-based attitudes and behaviours derived from specific Christian contexts (Büssing, Warode, et al, 2017, 10-12).

The central question for this approach is to search for ways to transfer the reflected attitude into practice. The basic idea is to connect theology and philosophy with management and leadership research, which is done normatively and with the help of a descriptive model for a holistic value-oriented ability to act. This approach has selected three areas that combine to create this holistic, value-oriented ability to act.

Regarding the social, value-oriented ability to act two aspects are in the foreground. On the one hand, the reflection of one's value-oriented attitude as a precondition for independent action and, on the other, the ability to participate in the development of the organizational community in a self-responsible manner in multi-personal structures (Kailer et al., 1999). This is especially important for executives since the primary aim is to shape relationships, empathise with other people, perceive the needs of the other person and consider them in their actions. The second aspect is the willingness to act. This is the motivation to work for something with a full and inner reflected conviction which is based on a reflected foundation of values. The third aspect touches on the systemic (internal and external) influencing factors that affect the individual's capacity to act. This aspect includes, for example, the ability to take on the formal responsibility of certain processes (Kriegesmann et al., 2007, 183ff). In addition, trends such as New Work, common purpose or agile business strategies have to be included.

In the context of the whole project "spirituality and management", a specification was made in this process on the Franciscan tradition of leadership, which subsequently serves as an anchor for the development of the two research aspects that are discussed in this paper. It should be pointed out that, initially, it is only a matter of identifying common themes that make further scientific discussion meaningful, which is an attempt to mirror the tradition of the Franciscan movement in a structured way with some challenges of today's management and leadership topics.

Against this background, two main aspects arise that will be considered in this paper:

- Personal attitude as the basis of the ability to act;
- The aspect of transformation as a principle for sustainable individual and organizational ability.

It should be added that the selected aspects have been used successfully in various leadership workshops and seminars with different target groups for years. The aim was to make participants aware of their attitudes, and to reflect on their attitude and their faith in the context of their organization (system) to identify new perspectives and approaches for the daily business. Franciscan spirituality, especially the person of St. Francis, provides many incentives for attitudes toward social relationships and change. This addresses two aspects that also apply to the management world.

Thus, the FraSpir questionnaire described above seems to be positively confirmed via qualitative surveys and various experiences, especially in the context of training and education programmes.

1.2 Structure of the Paper

In a further step, the foundations of the Franciscan tradition are described with an emphasis on the attitude of the person of St. Francis and his role in the community. To facilitate the transfer of Franciscan content into the management world, a few tendencies and approaches from the management world are then briefly outlined. Finally, the connection between Franciscan tradition and the management world will be briefly discussed. The paper tries to initiate a dialogue between the two areas. Thus, a discussion is started after the introducing points have been disclosed ensuring a positive input of Franciscan tradition for today's management world and an introduction to the meaning of spirituality.

2. THE BASICS OF SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality has multiple definitions (Miller et al., 2018, 1).¹ Within the context of leadership and management, it is very necessary to define a theoretical foundation of spirituality from which a subsequent theory may be built. The spirituality that underlies the world's spiritual and religious traditions, which at their core are based on loving and serving others (Fry, 2016, 2; Fry et al., 2009),

¹ Fundamentally, this article refers to the theology of spirituality. In some research directions spirituality is assigned to the field of practical theology (Möllenbeck, Schulte, 2016).

can provide this foundation. Spirituality refers to the quest for self-transcendence and the feeling of interconnectedness with all things in the universe. The spiritual permeates all actions, including what we think and speak, the way we physically present ourselves, how we enter a relationship and the way we deal with our different resources (Fry, 2016, 2). Further spirituality can be described as an ongoing process—a path—that could be also a basis for individual and organizational transformation (Benefiel, 2005, 732ff). In summary, spirituality is a basic inspiration for life and provides orientation for all areas of life. Although spirituality is most often viewed as inherently personal, it can also reside or manifest in teams or organizations.

2.1 Franciscan Spirituality

What can be drawn from the Franciscan tradition and Saint Francis of Assisi for the design of management and leadership processes? If an organization has existed for 800 years and is still growing today, at least globally, what distinguishes the Franciscan idea? For this purpose, some essential basics are selected and presented below. So, what can we learn from the person of Francis, from his attitude and his experiences to lead a life of deep conversion and transformation? Moreover, where can we find some aspects which describe St. Francis' competence to act in the context of leadership? The idea of the Franciscan leadership concept is anchored in the inner attitude of St. Francis himself, which he consistently has put into practice. It is the cornerstone of his community to the present day (Warode et al., 2014, 13-14). St. Francis himself represents a radical change in his way of life. Once the son of a wealthy textile entrepreneur born in Assisi and educated in "business life" (Manselli, 1984), he embarks on a personal life crisis in search of his identity. He finds his vocation in an evangelical life and establishes his identity in the discipleship of Christ (Warode et al., 2015, 222-223). He leads a life of poverty and preaching the Gospel. This new identity shaped by the Gospel is a holistic one that preoccupies the person with all their thoughts and actions, creating a balanced lifestyle (so we talk about material and immaterial poverty). As a result, not everything is emphatically praised or drastically rejected. Consequentially, a balance between stability and flexibility is established. A stable character, therefore, can withstand tensions; it allows for a break from one's past and is open to new ideas.

On this background, St. Francis establishes his goals in life: the search for one's own identity and the continuous reflection of one's path that includes the responsibility for all of creation (Rotzetter, 2016). Thus, with the reflected attitude and ongoing process of inner transformation, the two objectives formulated above are defined as elementary components of the Franciscan philosophy of life. It focuses on the willingness to direct oneself according to the role model, which in the case of St. Francis was, of course, Christ himself.

St. Francis is, thus, living a peaceful attitude in which he meets every human being at eye level. He puts his benefit below the benefit of his community. This defines evangelical poverty that exemplifies Franciscan spirituality. Evangelical poverty is the essential criterion of the Franciscan movement (Lehmann, 2012; Schmies, 2012). Poverty means not being tied to things and places, but it is about everything that hinders our ability to communicate with each other, about being connected to the (needy) other, which also includes a recognition of boundaries. St. Francis himself withdrew from the leadership of the Order during his lifetime (Kuster, 2002). Thus, his focus always is on people with their needs, worries and habits that need to be considered. This also results in the Franciscan Order's goal of supporting the weak and the sick, while not regarding material possessions as a centre of one's life.

Serving human beings or creation is characteristic of Franciscan leadership philosophy. Francis sees himself as a servant in his community. "I did not come to be served, but to serve," says the Lord, which is the central message of Jesus and also Franciscan leadership culture (Mk 10:45). In the Franciscan world, the managers/leaders are also called ministers (Latin: servant). In addition, the leader of a monastery is titled a guardian, as opposed to an abbot.

Another aspect of the Franciscan tradition is its democratic and fraternal character, which is oriented toward the involvement of all members and practically lives the claim of fraternal

communion. All processes decided upon in the Order are discussed democratically. Even if in the last instance the Provincial leadership makes the formal decision, the process is based on the democratic vote of all brothers; this applies in particular to the election of the Order's leading body. For instance, a single brother is democratically elected to a function by the entire Order. The statutes of the Order stipulate that the particular executive is initially elected for three years. If the community is satisfied with the "leadership performance", the Provincial minister—leader of a province—can be confirmed and re-appointed by the top of the Order for another three years. After a maximum of six years, the Provincial is assigned a new task in the Order. The intention of these regulations points to preventing rigid and unreflective leadership structures. The idea behind a temporary management position is that after a certain period, leaders should have the opportunity to reflect on their leadership term within the framework of a time-out. Through this process, one can gain distance and objectively reflect on processes and decisions to provide impulses for the development of the community and oneself, just as the "Learning Organization" of Franciscan Orders describes itself (Warode, 2016, 356ff). This does not touch a brother's progress alone, but also a functioning developing community. Finally, the distinction between person and role must be emphasised in this context. Every person is valuable with their history, skills and talents. Franciscan leadership is universal. Every person has their place in the Franciscan community, as it is about looking at the individual with their character and their abilities as they are and not as they should be. On this basis, roles and functions must be assigned to make the organization work, yet everyone is worth the same. The distinction between a person and a role is a leadership task, which is an essential task today in our highly individualised society.

As a structural element and universal and timeless orientation, the Rule of the Order of St. Francis of 1223 is elementary as a framework for the life and understanding of community leadership. The Franciscan Rule with its 12 chapters is the foundation of the spiritual life of the community. It is not a set of rigid rules. In contrast to the Benedictine Rule, which describes in great detail and hierarchically the role of the abbot and the provisor (*cellerarius*, economic leader), the Franciscan Rule has a much wider horizon. The rule should guide the brothers in specific situations, at different times and within the respective social context to adapt the content to their own responsibility. i.e., the rule should create an awareness that life is always ahead of all previous experiences and theories. The spiritual foundation (by observing the Gospel and trusting in God) of the Rule provides orientation and security to move and decide in unknown situations (Warode, 2016, 359). This makes it a resource that can iron out burdens from management relationships and change processes, for example, in an entrepreneurial environment.

Finally, structural processes for reflection and exchange of experience in the Order are dealt with here. In the early years of the Order, the annual Pentecost chapter instituted a meeting to which all brothers were invited to talk about their experiences and exchange views. On the one hand, this has the advantage of reflecting on the common profile in the community and on the other hand of adapting the work of the Order to developments in the world. In addition to this organizational method of a "medieval audit", the hermitage also offered the opportunity for self-reflection. The brothers gathered in retreat to reflect on themselves, their sins, their mission, faith and doubts and also on their relationship with God. The hermitage (which could be a single place outside the friary) is organised in a way that there is still a brother who listens and one who takes care of the physical well-being of all. In the meantime, the Order's structure ensures that the tasks of the brothers are taken over by the community (Rule for Hermitages).

In summary, the Franciscan tradition of leadership is oriented toward the formation of relationships and continuous development. It is important to serve the community based on one's own identity. It is important to see oneself as part of a community and to contribute the whole person and abilities to it. This is based on a clear vision of community: Franciscans live according to the Gospel and work for the poor and the sick. This stands for a living connection of a reflected attitude and actions that are necessary for everyday life (Warode et al., 2018, 4).

3. ASPECTS OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP THINKING TODAY

The working world of the 21st century is undergoing a massive upheaval, not simply because of the pandemic. Technological innovations are revolutionising the way organizations operate and how we work in them, including in terms of human relationships. The pressure of transformation brought about by digitisation is one of the greatest challenges of our time. In addition, however, value-related change dynamics can also be observed, which include work-related values and attitudes (Weibler, 2021, 1). This starts with people seeing more meaning in their work again (Jenewein, 2020, 2). Against this background, management topics such as Purpose or New Work are to be classified, which will be discussed below.

Likewise, the increasing complexity in the organizational world raises new questions about leadership. What does leadership quality mean if experiences and competencies from the past do not prepare for the challenges of the future, or even constitute an obstacle to dealing with the tasks of the present and the future? This means that a new realised ability to act is required. Starting from the linguistic origin of the word “leadership”—“leith”—the original meaning “moving forward or crossing a threshold” defines a basic understanding that lends itself to an expanded ability to act (Scharmer et al., 2020, 29). The scientific framework is provided by leadership theories such as transformational leadership (Bass, Riggio, 2006), which always focuses on the connection between the person and action.

In principle, it should be noted that current concepts and trends in the management world are increasingly focusing on the interests and needs of employees and other stakeholders as a basis for organizational action. These include approaches to talent or customer management (Evertz et al., 2017, 28). However, these approaches require new skills to integrate other people’s needs into leadership and organizational processes. As described at the beginning of this paper, the competence to act is not just based on hard skills to reach certain business goals. Personal characteristics, the reflected attitude or social competencies become more and more important as a part of employability. As part of the management trends, we read a lot about agile organizations or the phenomenon of the “New Work movement”. One problem is that the deep meaning of all these concepts does not appear in current discussions and publications. When we look seriously at the New Work concept for example, which was developed by F. Bergmann in the 1970s, we can lead a valuable dialogue with the challenges in the management world today. The New Work concept originated in the 1970s during the automotive crisis in the USA. Digitisation in car production has released work capacity. The idea of the New Work was to allow employees to find their vocation during the vacant working hours (Bergmann, 2018). This requires new forms of training and leadership and the awareness to offer a lot of time and space for experiments. Moreover, it is about getting involved in an ongoing process, a process that asks you to question yourself again and again. It is the question of a personal development process. No concept can be transferred to an organization in form of clear and useable instructions. In each organization, a way must be found individually to implement the basic idea of New Work. That requires leadership (Furkel, 2018). It is not possible to completely renounce leadership. Many employees want to know what they have to do and do not want to be completely free-floating (Bischoff, 2018). However, it takes a new form of leadership driven by a holistic perception.

One approach that focuses on holistic attention and cooperative relationships, in particular, is Otto Scharmer’s “Theory U” (which can only be briefly touched on here) (Scharmer, 2015). The concept of Theory U with the so-called ‘presencing’ describes a learning process aimed at discovering and implementing future solutions in the context of organizational tasks and processes. Thus, the approach reacts or rather acts exactly to the conditions of VUCA World with its dynamic and disruptive changes as briefly outlined in the introduction. The learning process in the context of Theory U starts with the inner perception of a manager/an employee and places intuitive thinking in the foreground. Routine and (successfully) tried and tested patterns of thought and judgement must be withheld. Scharmer speaks of the cultivation of attention. This means that something new is not immediately put into familiar thinking pigeonholes and processed structurally. It is primarily a matter of listening empathetically to take in new things with holistic attention and to open up the

knowledge in a deeper process calmly and at a distance. They are looking for a deeper source of creativity. The question of self-reflection and its relation to function in an organization plays a central role. Both in terms of the method and the attitude of the method. Within the framework of self-reflection, it is primarily a matter of referring back to one's person, which is very close to the Franciscan idea:

Who am I?

Whom do I want to be?

What do I stand for?

What's that got to do with me? (Scharmer, 2016, 26-32)

Based on this fundamental orientation, connections can also be made to St. Francis' path or to the management pioneer Peter F. Drucker who says that there's only one person you can lead, yourself (Drucker, 2006, 245). Development processes start with your person in the attitude to perceive them and to shape them from a deeper perspective. As with Francis, new knowledge must also be put into practice and tried out. The experience involves being active. The connection between attitude and action is emphasised once again here. In Scharmer's approach, cooperation within an organization is of immense importance. The solution to challenges is seen above all in forms of cooperation. The task of leadership is therefore to bring people together to initiate development processes. The concept of co-creativity should also be mentioned in this context. It is important to create a living culture in organizations in which people work together and learn from each other across their different functions. The goal must be to design these processes in a future-oriented manner and to anchor them in organizational structures. This is to support an awareness that continuous development must be an integral part of securing the future. Ultimately, Scharmer's concept includes the roles and interests of stakeholders from a holistic perspective. This means that the approach is not merely limited to the personal level but also integrates the levels of function and system, thus safeguarding the link to practice (Warode et al., 2018, 5-6).

4. FIRST STEPS FOR THE MERGER OF FRANCISCAN TRADITION AND MANAGEMENT NEEDS

In the management world, there are already various approaches which can serve as a model for the specific Franciscan approach. In this respect, the servant-leadership approach of Robert Greenleaf may be worth mentioning. While servant leadership is a timeless concept, the phrase "servant leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*:

The servant-leader is a servant first: it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first before conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is a leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them, some shadings and blends are part of the infinite variety of human nature. "The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?" A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible (Greenleaf, 2018, 2002).

This approach, which comes very close to the Franciscan concept, is not the only one in management research. In addition to the servant-leadership approach, there are concepts for authentic or even spiritual leadership. This type of management concept, which is linked to ethical

principles, is assigned to the light side of leadership as part of leadership research (Nerdinger, 2014, 96-98). Harvard professor Barbara Kellerman characterises the light side of leadership with the following key sentence: "We presume that to be a leader is to do good and to be good." So, successful leadership is created by leaders who are distinguished by special character traits (e.g., trust and humility) and who transfer these good qualities into responsible thinking and acting (Kellerman, 2004, 10; Warode, 2020, 118-119).

These inputs from contemporary leadership and management concepts provide a good framework in which to reflect on a Franciscan management approach. The target categories described above, attitude as a basis for action and self-responsibility for the continuous development of relationships and processes, are characteristic of the Franciscan leadership tradition. Exactly at this point, a transfer can be made to today's management and leadership processes. The solution to challenges lies in becoming aware of one's own identity and initiating and shaping new processes at this level. This can be very well illustrated by the example of relationships. In this context, it should be noted that St. Francis and the brothers understood themselves as role models and good examples. To live this one's own attitude was ultimately the prerequisite for helping others and supporting them.

The appreciation of another person leads us to expect a sustainable relationship in the context of leadership. Through a serious interest in the other person and active listening, it is possible to identify potential and perspectives that can be positive and valuable for the community, both for the development of one's attitude and knowledge, as well as to promote and support other people in their development. The core of evangelical poverty is to encounter every person at eyelevel, which means that no distinctions are made between people. To attain this goal, the aspect of personal and community reflection must be emphasised. To discover one's own identity and to think about it, again and again, requires a deeper reflection and time. Only in this way knowledge can be built up and invested in the innovative development of processes. The basic structure of the Franciscan guiding is thus highly topical for today's management processes.

Further on, the aspect of cooperation or participation is to be emphasised independently of functions in an organization. To this end, the organization needs a clear aim and also a common code of conduct. If the undiscovered potential is to be tapped, all people must be taken into consideration and a reliable framework is needed. However, in democratic processes that involve the participation of all members, the challenge lies in finding the right balance. Can the quality of results be improved or is it rather counterproductive to have many opinions and a higher expenditure of time? This question ultimately requires the decision and competence of the leader, who has to consider the individual interests of the community (Warode, 2016, 356-357). However, there must be a culture to involve all people working in an organization on an equal level; it is a matter of clearly distinguishing between person and function.

Another aspect lies in the preservation of creation. Society and the management world today integrate a sustainable perspective into all processes. This means economic, social and ecological aspects. This holistic perspective is increasingly becoming a strategic field of action in the management world. The Franciscan tradition takes the whole of creation into account and provides a philosophical influence for the direction of the company.

In summary, it is crucial that action is taken based on an attitude based on a fixed set of values: an attitude that can function as a corrective against resistance and conflict, but also as a motor for development and innovation in organizations today. This attitude or identity is needed on a personal and organizational level in the context of the whole creation to form the basis for the person, their role(s) and a fundamental orientation on how to deal with the organizational influences (Warode et al., 2018, 7). This interaction can ultimately be described as the basis of self-leadership competence.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper attempts to encourage a dialogue between the realm of Franciscan leadership tradition on one side and the management world on the other. The following questions formed the basis of the explanations: What can be learned from the Franciscan leadership tradition for today's management and what trends in management today make the integration of Franciscan ideas in a normative understanding? By combining the Franciscan tradition of leadership with today's management topics, I want to provide an impulse for alternative solution processes in organizations; it is not about developing another functional and technical approach. In the tradition of St. Francis, it is important to be aware of one's attitude (of poverty) and to put it into practice. It is also important to live out of one's own attitude in the organizational context and the whole creation (which integrates all levels of sustainability). The Franciscan approach is characterised by the idea of serving. It is about putting your skills at the service of the whole community and involving other people. Through continuous reflection of attitude, a development process is initiated, which involves ongoing self-reflection. A clear moral stance and a willingness for self-development are two components of the Franciscan tradition that can be easily transferred to the management world since they provide basic orientation and inspiration for everyday actions such as shaping changes or coping with challenges. As described at the beginning in the context of the FraSpir questionnaire, one aim is to create a basis for training and educating programmes that will support the personal transformation process and focus on the individual attitude. In addition, the impulse serves as an inductive approach for an academic discussion of the topic. The links to leadership theories are there and so is the relevance of systemic organizational theories. The integrative connection of the attitude of Franciscan teaching is a topic area to be further explored. The successful transfer to a changing environment needs to be highlighted. For example, the further development of FraSpir is a concrete approach. The rapid changes of recent years (pandemic, energy crisis, war) have led to even more uncertainty. The reference to the impact of the VUCA world is obvious and calls for new solutions for practise. Likewise, further research in the relationship between spirituality, attitude, behaviour and the organizational aspects emerges for academic discussion.

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