To everybody...
ABSTRACT

Leadership is one the most appealing and challenging area of interest and research field from time immemorial. In this thesis, we focus on leadership from a perspective which can be called historical-religious, as it consists in the study of the history of two of the greatest religions in the world: Chinese Buddhism and Christianity. In particular, for each religion we take into consideration a timespan which, for Chinese Buddhism stretches from 140 B.C. to 589 A.D., while for Christianity, the timespan goes from the first to the fourth century A.D. In these periods of time, both Chinese Buddhism and Christianity had to deal with two powerful empires, respectively the Chinese Empire and the Roman Empire. We consider history and religion as two promising fields where to find and study leadership. In this sense, the purpose of this thesis is that of providing a better understanding of the concept of leadership by applying modern theories of leadership to the history of Chinese Buddhism and Christianity.

Keywords: leadership, Buddhism, Christianity, Roman Empire, social identity, followership, moral authority, ethical leadership, values, vision, hierarchical structure.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

“Leadership is one of the least understood phenomena on earth” (Burns 1978, p. 2).

As students of this Master Program, we have given the chance to realize that leadership is one the most indefinable and fleeing concepts we could have met. It is a concept that shuns every all-encompassing definition whatsoever. Despite the huge availability of definitions of leadership from the related literature, they give the idea that the quest is never over; they might sound rich but never wholly complete. Who knows where this incapacity comes from? It could be due to the fact that human capacity to transform thoughts into words is limited by nature. It sounds a bit like the aphorism of Saint Augustine on time: “What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know”. Or it could be that researchers and scholars have not addressed the issue from the right side, which, in all likelihood, is not the case, being leadership a major area of interest from time immemorial. The fact is that, as Bennis (1959, pp. 259-260) said a long time ago, “more has been written and less is known about leadership than about any other topic in the behavioural sciences”. And nowadays, for what we know about this issue, which is not much, the situation has not changed. Many approaches have been used, several theories have been developed, but still the quest is not over. There is always something more to say about leadership. After all, it is exactly this difficulty to grasp the essence of leadership that makes this concept so appealing.

1.2 Purpose

No ultimate definition of leadership is available, we said. But maybe, there is no point in defining leadership. And probably, finding an ultimate definition is not the right motivation to be placed behind the research on leadership. Also because there would not be any further research; the quest would be over. Rather, it seems to us that the point lies elsewhere; the approach should be different. We really think that we should apply to the study of leadership that approach called “continuous learning” (Bennis & Thomas, 2007) about which we have talked
many times in this Master Program. Such an approach addresses the issue of leadership by seeking to better understand it every time we study it.

In the light of this learning approach, we present our thesis, whose purpose is essentially that of gaining a better understanding of the concept of leadership. We have embarked on this work exactly to see if we can give our contribution to the understanding of this attractive and challenging concept. It remains to be seen what path we will choose to do that.

1.3 Research subject

The history of leadership research can be traced back to more than a hundred years ago, during which leadership as a research subject has gone through gradual evolution. It started from the Great Man Theory (Carlyle 1888), via the trait approach (e.g. Cowley, 19318), the style approach (e.g. Stodgill 1949) and the contingency approach (e.g. Fiedler 1967). Then, from the 1980s on, the leadership theory moved towards the so called New Leadership Approach, which covers transformational leadership (Bass 1985; Tichy & Devanna 1986), charismatic leadership (House 1977; Conger 1989), visionary leadership (Sashkin 1988; Westley & Mintzberg 1989), and simply, leadership (Bennis & Nanus 2004; Kotter 1990; Kouzes & Posner 1998).

In our personal opinion, many researches and studies on leadership, being focused on business and organizational level, might be limited by an important environmental factor, namely the monetary transaction between employee and employer. In effect, the great majority of people go to work to make a living out of it. True, they may choose to follow leaders due to personal reasons, such as leaders' traits, charisma, organizational value, and individual development. Nevertheless, these factors, to some extent, are influenced by the material transaction between leader and followers. People may compromise and change their attitudes, though within a tolerant range, for the sake of material wealth. Far from being a criticism to the totality of the studies on leadership, we think that it could prove to be interesting and rewarding the study of leadership from a different perspective.

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1 For a review of the history of leadership theory, see Bryman (1996).
Therefore, due to the aforementioned limitation and driven by our personal interests, we decided to study leadership from a perspective which can be labelled as *historical-religious*, as it consists in the study of the history of two of the greatest religions in the world: Chinese Buddhism and Christianity.

In particular, for each religion we take into consideration a timespan within which we focus on specific moments, events, roles and characters that are relevant for our purposes. Regarding Chinese Buddhism, we will study the period of time in which the Chinese Empire went through divisions and wars. The period in question goes from 140 B.C. to 589 A.D.. As for Christianity, the selected timespan stretches from the first to the fourth century A.D. and, geographically speaking, it covers the whole extent of the Roman Empire.

### 1.4 Research question and starting assumption

There is one main reason behind our choice of the history Chinese Buddhism and Christianity: we argue that the study of religion might be relevant to understanding of leadership.

On the one hand, religions, defined as “particular institutionalized or personal system of beliefs, values and practices relating to the divine” (Worden, 2005; p 221), usually gather around themselves a large number of faithful or believers. This is even truer for Buddhism and Christianity, which are two of the most followed religions in the world. Now, if we consider the faithful as followers, then we can assume the existence of some form of leadership within a religion. As Worden (2005, p 221) notices, "several components of religion can be shown to be relevant to, and indeed enrich, crucial elements of strategic leadership”.

On the other hand, in the timespans we have singled out, both Chinese Buddhism and Christianity share an analogous process of growth and spread. Over the centuries, this process had raised them to the role of state religions of their respective empires, that is Roman and Chinese. It is exactly this process of massive spread among the population, together with the relationship with the *ruling power* of the empires, the subject within which we assume the existence of interesting elements regarding leadership.
All these considerations lead us to the formulation of the central, starting assumption of this thesis:

“Religion is a promising field where to find and study leadership”.

More specifically, the study of a religion by focusing on the historical period in which it settled, thrived and finally triumphed, can be relevant for leadership. This consideration leads us to a second, subsequent assumption:

“The success of a religion, in terms of its spread among the population, as well as its rise to role of state religion, is an indicative factor of leadership”.

Therefore, in the light of these two starting assumptions, we articulate the research question as follows:

“What can we say about leadership from the study of the history of Chinese Buddhism and Christianity, in the timespans we consider?”

1.5 Structure of the content: the amazing journey of this thesis

One of the most demanding tasks of this thesis has been that of staying the course. In the beginning of this work, while we were reading historical books, we were like wanderers in a forest of historical facets, religious principles, prominent characters and huge events. We realized that history, especially when it intertwines with religion, was continuously leading us into metaphorical round rooms, each of them equipped with an unlimited number of doors looking onto different worlds made of concepts, characters, points of view and authors. We have actually strived for a while before finding the track, and once found it we hit the ground running. In this regard, the light that has helped us to find the track was our growing ability to see traces of leadership in what we were reading.

Immersing ourselves in history, wandering, finding the track, following it and finally reaching our destination, are all parts of the journey we have undertaken. After all, this thesis is nothing else but the written tale of this amazing and adventurous journey, in which we have learnt many things. First of all, we have learnt something more about the concept of leadership. Besides, we have also enriched our culture, from both the historical and religious point of view. This, in turn, has triggered our interests for future readings on this issue. And we are
sure that there are many other gifts that this journey has bequeathed to us, but we will discover them in the future.

However, let us now introduce in a nutshell the structure of this work. In the next chapter, we present the methodology we have adopted and the research process we have outlined to carry out this thesis. Following the metaphor of the journey, we would say that the methodology represents the equipment, both mental and physical, that we have brought with us. Chapter three contains the review of the literature that we have used to, both from the historical-religious and the theoretical one. The fourth chapter deals with the analysis of the historical-religious part by applying the theoretical part. The fifth chapter presents the summary of the findings and draws the resulting considerations, so as to give an insightful answer to the research question.
2. METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, we have presented the purpose of our work in the form of the research question, thus introducing the subject of this thesis. Now, we turn our attention to how we have actually carried out this work from a methodological point of view. In other words, this chapter presents the way we have conceived ourselves as creator of knowledge (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009). In the first paragraph, we present the process that we have developed to obtain relevant findings from our research. The second paragraph reports the classification of the literature we have worked on. The third paragraph deals with the methodology that, in accordance with the process of the research, we have chosen to conduct our research.

2.1 The process of our research

As we have already said, the work we have embarked on is proving tough because it requires us to be on two sides at the same time. In effect, while we were reading history and especially the history of Christianity and Chinese Buddhism, we have strived to stay the course by always maintaining a leadership perspective on history. In other words, we have read history through the lenses of leadership.

However, it is worth saying that, though hard and new to us, this work has proved extremely challenging and captivating. Certainly, the role of the researcher who seeks something in something else is exciting per se. In addition, we are motivated by our personal interest in history and religion. In this sense, the issue of leadership is giving us the chance to work on issues we are keen about, but it is also providing us with a new frame of reference through which to interpret history and religions.

Therefore, in order to carry out this demanding research, we have personally designed a process that we think is the most effective for us to work both on the historical-religious side and the theoretical side. This process is composed by five phases and it is portrayed in Figure 1:

- Reading history of Christianity and Buddhism;
- Individuating relevant facts - events –points from a leadership point of view;
- Deriving the theories leadership from the aforementioned points;
• Connecting and interpreting the points according to the theories of leadership.

**Figure 1. The process of our research**

As one may note, the process of researching-deriving/extracting-interpreting depicts a sequence in which history-religion and theories act on each other in a circular manner. In the first place, our previous knowledge on leadership (our starting theoretical lenses) allows us to focus our attention on specific historical-religious aspects rather than others, that is to say that we see “traces of leadership” in history. Then, depending on these “traces”, for each historical-religious aspect, we derive one or more theories which, in turn, will be used to interpret the related historical-religious aspect.

**2.2 The sources**

For the sake of completeness, in this paragraph we give a summarizing description of the material we have used to carry out this research. In this sense, we classify the literature in three types.

• *The general historical books*

This literature part is composed by historical books regarding the two historical moments we take into consideration in our work. This kind of material is defined as general also because it just hints at the religions we are concerned with. The aim of these readings is to gain an insight into the historical context, so as to place facts and characters in our mind. This part of literature mainly answers the question: What happened? Besides, this part of literature is the base where to find interesting starting points for further reflections. Clearly, these books are
built on the original literature of the period in question, which, as Grant (1994, pp. 3-14) notices often lacks impartiality. Nonetheless, it is still an informative source about facts and people of that time. Indeed, going deeper into historical events is not the focus of this thesis; our perspective is not that of students of history, on the contrary, it is that of students of leadership. As we said earlier, this part of literature is just the point of departure; in other words, it is our basic knowledge.

- **The specific historical material**

This part of literature, though still based on the historical moments, deals with the role of Christianity and Chinese Buddhism within them. It includes books and articles that consider aspects such as politics and power as related to religions, but also the values and the impact of these two religions on society of that time. Clearly, this part proved to be pivotal to our work as it is the place where we have found the factors that, according to our understanding, might explain the success of Christianity and Buddhism in their time. In addition, it should be noted that this part of literature acts as a link between the historical-religious side and the leadership side.

- **Theories of leadership**

This part of literature comes out as the result of the previous part. These theories, which come from several fields, all together compose the theoretical framework that we will use to interpret the historical moments we focus on.

In addition to the secondary material, we have used also an interview (Appendix) with Marco Rizzi, associate professor of the Faculty of Arts and Literature (Department of Religious Studies, at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, in Milan). The interview includes questions regarding the leadership in early Christian communities and it proved to be a source of interesting cues for our research.

**2.3 Hermeneutics, understanding and interpretation**

In the previous chapter, we have presented the purpose of this work in terms of better *understanding* the concept of leadership. Further, in the previous paragraph, we have presented the research process within which the pivotal
phase concerns the *interpretation* of historical-religious side, by applying the theories we derive from them. Besides, we have seen that this thesis is focused almost entirely on secondary material, namely *texts*.

*Understanding, interpretation* and *texts* are three terms that represent how we go about this thesis. Specifically, if we are to put these three terms in a logical sequence, we could say that, “we have been interpreting texts in order to gain a better understanding of leadership”. This sequence shows exactly the methodology we have used in this work. To the more expert reader, it cannot escape the fact that this kind of methodology bears a specific name, which is *hermeneutics*.

Born as a discipline attempting to interpret biblical and legal texts (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009, p. 382), hermeneutics has been defined by Ricouer (1981, p. 43) as the “theory of the operations of understanding in their relation to the interpretation of texts”. As we can see, this definition includes all the aforementioned three terms. In particular, following the thought of Dilthey\(^2\) (cited in Ricoeur 1981, p. 150), we can also say that interpretation is a derivative form (a province) of understanding, as it is the art of understanding the signs of another mental life, which are fixed in a durable way, that is in written documents.

We found this approach suitable for our work because it actually makes clear what we have done, that is *understanding by interpreting*, and, by reflex, what we have not done, that is *explaining*. In effect, we cannot explain history, because the act of explaining implies that we depict the reality in a way to resemble the truth as closest as possible. This is not possible because, no matter what we say about history, it will always be our personal interpretations. And, at least in this case, there is no truth in personal interpretations whatsoever. Therefore, we cannot explain, but rather we can understand history, and in this case the history of two

\(^2\) According to the German hermeneutic philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, *understanding* refers to the capacity of men to transpose themselves into the mental life of others. On the contrary, *explanation* refers to the model of intelligibility borrowed from the natural sciences, in which phenomena are distinct from men and thus offered to scientific observation (Ricouer 1981, p. 145). As Ricoeur (1981, p. 49) states, “the difference of status between natural things and the mind dictates the difference of status between explanation and understanding”. In Dilthey’s thought, *understanding* and *explanation* are alternative as they serve to separate human sciences from natural sciences (Ricouer 1981, p. 145).
religions. Understanding means that we use our frames of reference (Weick, 1995) to see leadership in the historical moments we are focusing on, and we present the result of our findings in this thesis. And the result is our own understanding of the matter. Someone might understand the same moments, the same facts and interpret the same literature in a totally different way. That is why we cannot give an explanation of history.

Therefore, hermeneutics represents the approach on which our methodology is based. It should be noted that traces of hermeneutics, as it was theorized by Gadamer, can be found in the methodological views presented by Arbnor and Bjerke (2009). Especially, Gadamer’s theories of hermeneutics have influenced the development of the actors view and systems view, as far as the understanding mode is concerned (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009, p. 382).

Nonetheless, we decided not to adopt any of the three methodological views, as we think none of them seems suitable for the purposes of our work. In this regard, let us now briefly motivate our choice. First of all, the analytical view and the systems view are not applicable to our case as their aim is to eliminate the influence of the researcher in the scientific process as an interpreter as much as possible. On the contrary, we have seen that our role as researcher in this work is not only impossible to eliminate, but it is also central, as the whole thesis is based on our personal interpretations of texts. In this sense, our aim is not that of coming out with models intended to give a representation of the reality as truthful as possible. In fact, as we have already said, in our work we do not give explanations, rather we provide our understanding. Yet, it should be noted that we actually draw some inspiration from the systems view to the extent that the latter considers the reality as made of several parts interacting with each other (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009, p. 60). In effect, when dealing with the factors behind the success of Christianity and Buddhism, we assume that these factors are to be seen as interacting variables of a systemic reality.

As for the actors view, it seems to be, at the least, the closest view to our work. The fact that it accepts that everything is interpretation, well describes our approach to the historical-religious part of the study. However, the basic premise of this view is that the researcher has an “active” role in shaping the existing
reality, by means of interviews and dialogues, for instance. Evidently, the reality we focus on is not the “present” reality; on the contrary it lies in the past. Therefore, due to evident practical and logical reasons, we cannot modify a past reality, thus we cannot be “actors” in our research, in the sense of the word conceived by Arbnor and Bjerke (2009).

To conclude, while the previous two methodological views depict reality as factive, the actors view considers the reality as a social construction (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009, p. 64). This last point has significantly puzzled us; how do we conceive reality in history? As it appears to us, reality in history is made of undeniable facts, but it is also socially constructed by the interpretations of the historians, both contemporaneous and modern. Also for this reason, it is hard to include our personal methodology in one of these views.

2.4 Limitations

The main limitation of this work is that we focus only on two specifics periods of time in the history of Christianity and Chinese Buddhism. In this sense, there are many other moments, events and facts that could be relevant for the study of leadership. Also within the two timespans we consider, we have singled out only a limited number of factors and aspects which are relevant to leadership. We did so according to our understanding of the research we were carrying out and depending on our previous knowledge of leadership. In this regard, there must be further relevant aspects of these two religions from a leadership point of view that we could have missed. The same holds true for the theoretical framework that we have extracted from the study of history. There is no doubt that we had to make a selection of the articles and books to be used to interpret the historical part. However, we are aware that there could be applicable theories that we have not used.
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter has a double aim. First, it is a review of literature we have been working on, both from the historical-religious side and from the leadership side. Secondly, it shows the result of the second and the third step of our research process\(^3\), that is:

- Individuating (within the historical-religious part) relevant aspects from a leadership point of view\(^4\);
- Deriving the theories of leadership from the previous point.

We do that in accordance with our starting assumptions: (1) “religion as a promising environment to study leadership”. (2) “The success of a religion, in terms of its spread among the population, as well as its rise to role of state religion, as an indicative factor of leadership”.

Therefore, this chapter is divided in two main parts. The first part is the review of the historical-religious literature, which, in turn, is divided in two sub-parts, that is Christianity and Chinese Buddhism. Each of these sub-parts contains the factors that, according to our understanding, lie behind the spread of these religions. The second part is the review of theoretical framework we have derived from the first part and it symmetrically reproduces the structure of the latter. In other words, the theoretical framework is divided according to the historical-religious (Christianity or Chinese Buddhism) from which it has been derived, except from the social identity theory which is shared by both the religions.

3.1 The Chinese Buddhism: a value-based progress

The part of leadership in Buddhism is based on the historical period (210 B.C.-589 A.D.), during which this religion experienced growth, prosperity, ups and downs. According to our point of view, it will be fruitful to study leadership in the scope of Chinese Buddhism. It will give us more insight to study leadership through the successful example with huge amount of followers, despite the lack of a formal organization. This chapter will be unfolded in three aspects to discuss

\(^3\) See the first paragraph of the previous chapter.
\(^4\) We can call the aspects we will single out in this step as “preliminary findings”
the reason why the Chinese Buddhism succeeded: meaning, value and followership.

3.1.1 The values: a history of adoption and transformation

Buddhism was imported to ancient China by businessmen, officials and army along the Silk Road. However, it was not until the 7th A.D that it permanently established. In other words, Buddhism in our studying period was loose or barely organized, lacking united principle and theory. Because of the repulsion from intelligentsia and the state institution, the import and migration of Buddhism was difficult. The foreign religion had to cater to the local culture, adapting and absorbing the mainstream ideology, and relying on the upper class. In this process, Buddhism not only expanded, but it gave birth to the Chinese Buddhism as well. Besides, it should be noted that the values of Buddhism are integrated with Confucianism and Taoism.

3.1.1.1 Confucianism

Although Confucianism is not a religion, its influence on people was equal or even more significant than religions themselves. The formation was originated from the ethics of patriarchal blood tie system (Peng ziqiang, 2000). To the Confucian scholars, human beings are focus of the world, “the tangible agents in acquiring knowledge and cultivating morality” (Chen chi-yun, 2008). The governments in Ancient China attached great importance to the concept of Confucianism, and included it into the official education system. So the concept of hierarchy as an ideology was accepted by people of all ranks, from gentry to the poor. Now we propose the most important values of Confucianism:

- Jen theory

“Jen”, as core concept of Confucianism, is considered as the highest ethical principle and standard. It means showing respect and love to people. “Jen” includes the ethical principle of behaviour between monarch and his subjects, between parents and their children, between husband and his wife, and the moral standards for men.

- “lî”—the principle of behaviour and ethics
Humans possess “the sense mechanisms and mental faculties to know and to judge” (Chen chi-yun, 2008, p. 771), although the development of human potential varies in individuals. Therefore, in order to reach higher accomplishments in the education process, these talents and potentials should be developed and exploited in an organization with ranks and hierarchy (Chen chi-yun, 2008). Hierarchy was needed to assure that individuals with intrinsic worth could be placed in more important position than others.

The concept helped to form the strict social hierarchy, maintaining and guarding the interest of the ruling class. As an essential part of ideology, it was also an implement to law, regulating people’s behaviour from the spiritual level.

“As in a sacrificed procession, harmonious action requires a sense of common participation in all its participants, but all participants do not share the same degree of insight into the complexity of the whole. Hierarchy is accepted….. Before the arrival of the age of t’ai-p’ing, however, equality and justice must be maintained in a hierarchical order based not on birthright and inheritance, but on the intrinsic worth of each human being according to his accomplishment in the education process” (Chen chi-yun, 2008, p771).

3.1.1.2 Taoism

Taoism, as a concept, was not appealing to the ruling class, though it was vastly accepted as a way to prolong one’s life. Especially, it was quite popular for the royal family and upper class to pursue the way to become immortal.

- “wu-wei”—the ideal of quiescence or inaction

Contrary to Confucianism, this concept held the opinion that human beings were only a part, and not the centre of the world. People should work scrupulously to fulfill duties and do nothing above the job description. Man can reach a state of calm, well-being, or happiness by overcoming human weakness, for example man-made values (Loewe, 1978). Man should live in a balanced way (“yin-yang”), do things in accordance with its natural tendency, and be away from desire.

“The age of perfect purity was marked by a silence and a tranquility in which all things responded to the natural order. Basic qualities remained
unimpaired with no wasteful dispersal of energy; conformity with the order of nature was matched by rightful conduct. Action, decisions, pronouncements conformed with the natural order; in the prevailing state of harmony and concord there was no room for pretence or deceit”. (Loewe 1978, pp. 44-45).

3.1.1.3 Buddhism

“At first Buddhism found entrance into Taoist circles because it was considered as one more method of reaching Taoist goals” (Liebenthal, 1955). Buddhism was then attacked by the Chinese as being not filial. The Buddhists were quick to realize that they must:

“adopt a positive approach and emphasize their own ideas about piety if they were to gain a favorable hearing among the Chinese. They did this first by pointing to the numerous sutras in the canon that stress filial piety, and second by contending that the Buddhists had developed a concept of piety that was superior to that of the Confucians”. (Ch’en, 1968, pp. 82-83).

Based on the attachment and adjustment on Confucianism and Taoism, the main value of Chinese Buddhism was as follows.

- Away from desire and being simple—“kong”

The practice and the value behind it would weaken the bonds to life and lead to complete abandonment of interest in it (Liebenthal, 1955). Only by doing so, a man can keep calm and wise, so as to understand and practice the instructions from Buddha, which is very similar to the concept of “wu-wei” in Taoism. This similarity not only made the foreign religion easier to understand, but easier to be accepted as well.

- The equality of all beings—”pin-den”

Buddhism advocates the equality of all beings. This was reflected in two ways. One is that of showing empathy to lives and against killing, the other is about treating all beings as equal. The second meaning indicates that man doesn’t have to obey to the ethical relation regarding senior class and upper class. Besides, the
second meaning also violates the filial piety that ancient Chinese held dear. In addition, it damages the hierarchy system.

“Politically nothing had changed, but socially a fresher breeze was blowing; people felt that with the Buddha on their side their hopes had a better chance of being gratified and became less inclined to follow leaders of revolutionary mass movements” (Liebenthal, 1955, p. 57).

The conflict on values was bad for the diffusion of Buddhism. In the early stage, Buddhism absorbed the filial piety initatively so as to cater to the mainstream value; impartial attitude towards the emperor was barely spread and noticed.

However, due to the ethical threat brought by the second meaning, there are two famous anti-Buddhism events in the history during the period being studied. Because of Buddhism, the authority of the emperor and the national hierarchy system was threatened. It ended with the Buddhist followers succeeding in carrying out the acceptance of Buddhism and the ideology behind it. The conscious change is worth studying in the scope of leadership. In this regard, it will be mentioned further in the part of value and followership.

- Benevolence—being kind and generous

Buddhist followers were expected to show love to all the livings and give happiness to all the livings. When knowing someone’s suffering, one had to show compassion and try to relieve their pain and suffering. The combination of the former two practices is called benevolence. Compassion, the second of the immeasurables, is the wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering. It counters cruelty and had to be extended to all sentient beings in all the realms of existence before it becomes an immeasurable.

- Karma—retribution for sin

When combined with abstention from activities known to be wicked or harmful to others, behaviour bound by such rules could bear fruit in the happier state of existence that would await him in a future life. Contrary behaviour could produce contrary results. (Loewe, 2008) In other words, as a man sows, so let him reap. Through personal discipline and obedience to rules, man can achieve a state of bliss. Only the retribution may return in the future life.
Regarding this last value, we can see a similarity between Buddhism and Taoism. The purpose of Taoism is immortality, which is impossible to realize. (Peng ziqiang, 2000). As time passed by, the followers of Taoism turned skeptical towards the theory and started looking for other explanation of lives and mysteries. Karma, as a complement or substitution of Taoism, won vast popularity.

On the one hand, it was akin to Taoism, when regarded as a fairy technique. The similarity also reduced the exclusion against it. In the meantime, this concept attracted a lot of Taoism believers in trying to understand and accept the foreign religion. On the other hand, it was a spiritual comfort for the suffering. Especially for those who had no way to change their lives, Buddhism helped individual psychological balance and courage the bear of bitter experience. Meanwhile, in order to pursue a better life, people were more willing to subject to personal discipline and to do good works, due to the hope or fear from Karma.

To conclude, this concept matched with the ethical or moral value in ancient China, which helped consolidate the hierarchy system and the social security amid fighting and displacement. It also satisfied the thirst for knowledge of mysterious incidents, by giving religious explanations.

3.1.2 Followers

The development of Buddhism in medieval China can be described as a process of assimilation. The Buddhist followers were mainly transformed from different types of people. They usually were influenced by their own identification and cultural background, when they tried to understand Buddhism. These frames of references, on the one hand, helped to make sense out of the religion, and, on the other hand, stood in the way to really understand it (Zürcher, 1998). Nonetheless, the number of the Buddhist followers increased tremendously during the period studied.

Buddhist followers can be categorized as follows. The Taoist practice of Buddhism; the contemplation in Taoism mixed with Buddhism value; the recluse gentry who were fond of the quietness in the temple; the scholars who were interested in the pure and mercy value in Buddhism.
3.1.2.1 The recluse

They were intelligentsia with certain education background in Confucianism or Taoism. The ideal to be away from body experience by being monks was matched with the ideal of recluse who preferred to escape the dangerous political life and enjoy the pure fun of art and literature. Temple, as a shelter, was an academic and an art centre to the intelligentsia. Their join-in the temple attached a new meaning to the Buddhism. After absorbing a whole set of foreign value, “recluse” became the most popular ideal life among the intelligentsia. (Zürcher, 1998). Meanwhile, their join-in also enriched the value of Buddhism with mediaeval Chinese ideology. For them, the temple was not only an intellectual field, but also a happy field to rest.

3.1.2.2 The wandering monks

Another combination is called the traveling monks. “Buddhist seekers, who developed from the Taoists, spoke with disdain because they approached the gods in their own interest for protection and help in daily life” (Liebenthal, 1955, p. 49). Unlike the gentry who possessed certain amount of education backgrounds, these monks were illiterate population. They looked for the explanation in Buddhism, so as to transplant the Taoist practice and enriched it with frame of theory. Liebenthal (1955, p. 47) noted that the wandering monks:

“saved themselves from adverse experiences by escaping into a cosmic refuge. In a spirit body they hoped to acquire that magical omnipotence which by tradition was reserved for the Emperor. Yet, though critical and occasionally intriguing, they never revolted”.

3.1.2.3 The gentry Buddhism abbots

They were the upper class of the society, the real owner of the empire, and the feudal monopoly group with all the political and economic power. Unlike other followers, they didn’t mean to get something from the religion, whether material or spiritual. On the contrary, they were the sponsors and protectors of the sangha, by providing money, food, construction and funds for the temple. They were Confucians or Taoist scholars who were interested in the pure and mercy value in Buddhism. They could be friends or even fans of the Buddhist masters.
due to personality worship, or out of the reason of prestige. Liebenthal (1955, p. 54) notes that:

“When a prince or high official founded a temple he did something beneficial to the community and enhanced his prestige. Good deeds are rewarded in Heaven and create a fund of merit for the believer, yet, this fund is generally disposed of in turn and given to anybody else who might need it. In this way the donor acquires an even better claim to be refunded in the life hereafter and the whole community participates. The erection of a Buddha statue, the building of a pagoda or a monastery were therefore social events of highest importance. Prestige is in China more important than in other countries. There it is called ‘face’. Originally it meant the possession of emblems and rites which bestowed magical power on the owner. The Emperor had ‘face’, and his deputies shared his ‘face’ because they were authorized to carry his emblems and seal. It was this participation in the prestige of the ruler which was valued above all. Wealth and influence went automatically with it. Nothing was too valuable to be presented to the Emperor. For that ‘face’ which was thus acquired made up amply for the expenses”.

3.1.2.4 Hybrid Buddhism

The contemplation in Taoism got mixed with Buddhism value. They could be followers in the trend of academic debate on Buddhist values. “The Chinese Buddhist interpretation of the world developed through conversations” (Liebenthal 1955, p. 60). The form of the conversations varies from lecture to debate.

“The topics discussed were taken from the Chuang Tzu and the other Metaphysical Texts. Generally speaking, all interest was concentrated on the problem of overcoming the troubles of daily life, the apparent insufficiency of the state in which man is born, and death, unavoidable under these conditions. How to escape into Origin, hide in Nature, form that spiritbody which makes immune against the manifold causes of decay?” (Liebenthal 1955, pp. 60-61).
These conversations “were arranged by noblemen of philosophical inclinations, sometimes by a ruler” (Liebenthal, 1955, p. 60). Those who participated in these conversations were exclusively literati.

“Those who participated in these conversations were exclusively literati; people without manners and literary education would have been unable to move in the society of the princes.....Monks who intoned sutras and performed the ritual were called clergymen. They were bound to a routine, while the philosopher monks and the philosopher noblemen did not jeopardize their freedom by assuming definite duties; they were bound only by their own decisions..... Hui-y’uan (334-416), though himself poor and relying on a donor for the foundation of his Buddhist centre on Lu-shan, remained a member of the gentry. The circle around him was composed entirely of nobleman” (Liebenthal 1955, pp. 60-61).

3.1.3 The anti-Buddhist movement

From the 4th century, it emerged a form of anti-clericalism5. Not only Buddhist organizations were abandoned, but the activity to spread Buddhism and the Buddhist way of life as well (Zürcher, 1998).

There were two famous movements in the history that repelled Buddhism. These movements led to the temporary decline of Buddhism. With the efforts dedicated by some philosopher monks and the philosopher noblemen, such as Hui-yuan, the Chinese Buddhism was formed and as a state church won privilege over other religions. The principal arguments used against the Buddhists were:

“(1) Their foreign origin; they introduced un-Chinese costumes. This was serious because the Emperor had to watch over the habits and customs of the people. (2) The wealth of the country belonged to the Emperor and should not be expended by private people for unproductive purposes. Parsimonious officials took offence at the waste of labor, metals and other materials used for buildings and statues. (3) Monks were unproductive of wealth and offspring. To these accusations the Buddhists retorted that they had the vocation of showing the way prescribed by the Sage and that this justified the introduction

5 Anti-clericalism is quoted in Zürcher (1959) referring to anti-Buddhism. We will use the term of anti-clericalism in the following chapter.
of new rules and customs. The decision depended on the discretion of the ruler.” (Liebenthal 1995, p. 81).
3.2 Christianity, the Church and Constantine: the creation of the ecclesiastical leadership

The study of the history of Christianity covers a timespan that goes from the first century A.D. to the end of the third century. This is the period of time in which Christianity, from being a minority religion, gained the majority of followers and became the official religion of the Roman Empire. As a matter of fact, this part of the thesis delves into the history of this religion to grasp the aspects that made it so followed and powerful. In this respect, our research allowed us to single out three fundamental factors that were critical to Christianity’s success: the vision it gave to the faithful, the man who set up the transformation of the ancient world from pagan to Christian, that is emperor Constantine the Great, and the hierarchical organization that represented this religion, that is the Church. To this last factor, we will add a fourth factor concerning the central of bishops as leaders of this institution.

3.2.1 The project of God for humanity: a never seen before vision

What made Christianity so successful was the fact that it was actually original. This originality stems from many of its characteristics. First of all, the God of Christians was way different from the bunch of gods and goddesses who populated the pagan pantheon. The Christian God is caring, passionate and merciful towards to human race. Unlike pagan divinities, who mainly cared about themselves, the Christian God is concerned with the fate of his living creatures. It was a religion that “found its basis in a mutual passion shared by the deity and the humanity” (Veyne 2010, p. 19).

True, Christianity is said to be superior to paganism, both spiritually and intellectually. Its metaphysical nature, defined “monist polytheism” (Veyne 2010, p. 21), in which plural figures came together in “cosmic order that, for its part, was a unity”, made it superior. Although this superiority could only be appreciated by the elite, Christianity managed to combine the intellectual dignity of a philosophical school, thanks to the meeting with Greek philosophy, and the openness to all and sundry. On the one hand, it touched every level of society; on the other hand it considered itself a philosophy that implied a metaphysics and a lifestyle, in so doing attracting the elite of the society (Veyne 2010, p. 43).
Another novel aspect is that Christianity was a religion of love. Love towards the family, the poor and the next in general. Yet, there is another feature that is even more important than love in Christianity’s framework, that is morality:

“Love did occupy the subconscious of minds of believers and motivated their faith, but their primary occupation was morality and it was this that they needed to demonstrate […] Once one had been admitted to the Church, the keyword was discipline rather than love” (Veyne 2010, p. 32).

Therefore, Christianity embeds in its framework the obedience to the authority, which on a cosmic level is represented by God and His Law, but on a more practical level, that is on earth, is represented by the bishops.

But, what made Christianity so appealing was its main message to the faithful. This message declaimed that the merciful and loving God had a divine project for all humanity. This project includes the hope for Beyond, the afterlife and the immortality to be achieved by behaving in this world, but it was more than that. God had a sublime destiny in store for humanity and the salvation of our soul is just a part of the project. What this message gave was a general sense of direction to human beings; all of a sudden, human beings knew where they come from and they were going. In this way, “we are not temporal beings dissolved in times, in some degree we can lay claim to greatness; above all we belong to the One who takes pity on us”. (Acts of Andrew cited in Veyne 2010, p. 29). As a consequence, this enchanting vision made human life more meaningful. In fact it acquired an external significance within a cosmic plan, “it received the unity of a magnetic field in which every action and every internal response took on a meaning, either good or bad” (Veyne 2010, p. 19).

Besides, it should be noted that Christianity poses the question of the truth. To some extent, paganism was a religion prone to accept and absorb foreign cults into their pantheon. On the contrary, Christian theology asserted that only God is the Truth bearer, all other gods were inventions and falsehoods. Christianity was a belief, whereas paganism was just a religion. As a consequence, one had to profess his or her faith to prove to be Christian (Veyne 2010, p. 35).

Therefore, we have individuated the first critical factor to the success of Christianity. The latter took the form of a divine project in which the Christian God granted a final, eternal and wonderful “place” to be for humanity. This plan had contributed in
attracting new followers and it should be noted that concepts like immortality and salvation were only the concrete implications of this plan. In Veyne’s (2010, p. 29) words:

“Conversions were due not to any hope of a Beyond, but to a consideration of greater magnitude: namely, the neophyte’s discovery of a vast divine project designed for human beings and in which immortality and even the uncertainty of salvation were no more than implied. Thanks to the historical metaphysical epic of Creation and Redemption, with all its effects of light and darkness, one knew where one came from and for what one was destined”.

The new divine vision devised by Christianity needs to be associated with the second factor that we have found, that is the role played by Constantine the Great.

3.2.2 Constantine the Great: the visionary leader

As a matter of fact, Christianity had remained a sect for three centuries, and only thanks to Constantine’s conversion it became the standard religion of the Roman Empire: “It was thanks to him that the slow but total Christianization of the Empire began” (Veyne 2010, p. 15). The question is why he chose to convert. True, the issue of the motivations behind Constantine’s conversion might sound too related to historical debate and, as we have argued in the introduction, we are not concerned with it. Yet, by unfolding the reason why he did convert we can gain a better understanding of the kind of leader he was. In this respect, we assume Veyne’s (2010) argumentation according to which Constantine converted because he believed: “he owed his conversion to nobody else; his only master was God. He became a Christian all on his own” (Veyne 2010, p. 78).

On the one hand, he saw something special in Christianity that paganism lacked. In his mind, Christianity was a religion worthy of a sovereign, “he did sense in Catholicism an energy and an understanding of power and organization akin to his own” (Veyne 2010, p. 63). On the other hand, he had envisaged himself in the history as the champion of God whose goal was to spread and favor Christianity (Veyne 2010, p. 5) and open for the human race a way of salvation (Veyne 2010, p. 49), thus changing the faith of humanity (Veyne 2010, p.52) Therefore, we might agree with Veyne when he says that a vision of the future, a “great Utopia”, must had seized hold of Constantine.
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In this future, Christianity was the place to be and towards which the humanity must be guided by the champion of God.

Further, he had been the first important political and military leader in the western world to embrace the Christian faith. He declared himself to have played an immeasurable role in the human history, the greatest since Adam and Eve (Veyne 2010, p. 50). In this regard, it should be noted that at the time when he converted, 312 A.D., only the 5-10% of the population of the Empire was Christian. Indeed “it must never be forgotten that Constantine’s revolution was perhaps the most audacious act ever committed by an autocrat in disregard and defiance of the vast majority of his subjects” (Veyne 2010, p. 2). In this sense, he was a kind of forerunner. As Veyne (2010, p. 63) argues:

“It often happens that if an ambitious man has a wider view he does not much calculate the relation of the forces involved and the chances of success but is attracted by the dynamism of the avant-garde and by its powerful machinery and organization”.

In conclusion, we see Constantine as the second factor that allowed Christianity to succeed throughout the Empire. He wholly embraced the divine project and considered himself to be the spiritual leader of the world (Veyne 2010, p. 63). His importance as a leader was that of an avant-garde forerunner, who kicked start the process in which the Church was to be first tolerated and then to triumph.

3.2.3 The rise of the Church: the origin the ecclesiastical hierarchy

The third critical factor to the proliferation of Christianity within the Roman Empire deals with the official organization of this religion, that is the Church. Indeed, we assume that the hierarchical structure that the Christianity gave to itself was fundamental to its success.

In this respect, the aim of this paragraph is to present briefly the process that had led the Church from being a sect to become a structured organization. We will see that this structure had a hierarchical feature that some centuries later would have resulted in the episcopal monarchy of the Pope. However, our historical analysis does not go as far as to expose the emergence of papacy. We focus on a point where the role of bishops was the most important within the Church. In this regard, we will also see what the
leadership of bishops was about in early Christian communities and the relationship of the formers with the imperial power.

To depict the developing process of Church’s structure, we will take into consideration the main characters who played a role in this process. In doing so, we will use Allen Brent’s book *A Political History of Early Christianity* (2009) as a solid background. In addition, we will use some points from the interview with Professor Marco Rizzi.

Let us begin the narration of this process with a premise. In the ancient western world, nature and society were not distinguished as they are today, as a result of Enlightenment. The peace of society reflected the peace of nature and vice versa. In other words, political order reflected metaphysical order (Brent 2009, p. 24).

It is in this light that we must see the context in which early Christianity found itself. In the first century B.C., Augustus was refashioning the Roman constitution by shifting it from a republic to an empire. He used his political ideology, in which he claimed to have restored the natural and social order and inaugurated a golden age, to justify this massive political change and to legitimize his exercise of power (Brent 2009, p. 24). In effect, “he was making a claim to stand at the centre of the cosmic process that had secured the pax deorum both in nature and society” (Brent 2009, p. 105). The *pax deorum* was the maintenance of the natural and social order, which is part of government task, represented by the emperor (Brent 2009, p. 33).

In this regard, another important aspect of the context faced by early Christianity is the myth of historical decline and renewal, according to which the history of humans is cyclical and passes through different phases. The notion of the historical cycle dates back to Polybius as well as Plato’s myth of the four ages (Brent 2009, pp. 93-94). However, the metaphysics that played the major role in the age of Augustus was that of Stoicism. Also Stoic’s cosmology conceived an eschatology which deals with the close of history and its beginning again (Brent 2009, pp. 93-94). We also have to include in the equation the extraordinary natural signs. These portents or prodigies were observed by *pontifices, augures* and *haruspices*, and from them the latters divined the future so as to understand whether a proposed course of action would be accompanied by peace or anger of the gods (Brent 2009, p. 97). Therefore, Augustus, by acquiring the office of *pontifex maximus*, asserted to have reestablished *pax deorum* through acts of augury, in
so doing he claimed to have inaugurated a new golden age that had replaced the previous age of iron.

In a few words, this is the context in which Christianity was to take roots. Therefore, what was the response of early Christianity to such a context? We can individuate two main courses of action. The first is that of Markan community which is quite uncompromising towards the pagan political society that it opposed (Brent 2009, p. 70). According to the members of this community, the present order is unstable and “cannot be trusted to deliver to human beings the justice that is their final due of their final state” (Brent 2009, p. 72). Their eschatology envisaged the second coming of Christ as glorified Son of Man. Therefore, there was to be neither compromise or accommodation with the present order nor transformation of it. According to them, the history goes beyond human control and its course, “pre-ordained by God’s will, would finally deliver new power relationship in which their downtrodden position would be set right” (Brent 2009, p. 127). In other words, that of Markan community was a pacific stance in wait for the realization of the future. John he Seer was to continue the themes of Markan community by challenging the Augustus’ claim to have achieved pax deorum and hence the political legitimation of Augustan revolution (Brent 2009, p. 166). Here as well there is no room for compromise and symbiosis with the imperial structures. According to Brent (2009, pp. 164-165) this all-or-nothing approach did not manage to achieve its goal of replacing the present social and political order. In effect, Christianity needed to transform the present order rather than replace it. In Brent’s words (2009, pp. 129-130):

“If the Jesus movement was to be able to become the world-widest religion, it had to find new ways of engaging with Graeco-Roman society. It required a new consensus, new agenda that would satisfy more than a narrowly Jewish perspective: it needed to combine the sensibilities of Jewish Hellenistic groups with positively pagan ones. Only if it could find the means of satisfying those agenda could it become a universal religion capable of politically transforming the pagan society and the acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the power of its own leadership within it”.

The second response was actually the one that pursued this aim. It consisted in an approach to the imperial power that allowed the rapprochement with the imperial
political ideology. The second-century writers supporting this approach were St. Luke, Clement of Rome and Justin Martyr. Generally speaking, these authors suggested a synthesis between their present social reality and that proposed by Christianity, “As long as their values are preserved, the way they see the course of their implementation - and by means of what new social structures - are negotiable with the wider society” (Brent 2009, p. 127). This alternative political project finally proved to be successful in leading to toleration first and then to the emergence of Christianity as the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. (Brent 2009, p. 166).

Specifically, Luke managed to reconstruct Christian theology providing a present social order of the Christian community that reflected the metaphysical achievement of a present *pax deorum* on nature and society, thus without posing any threat to Augustan revolution (Brent 2009, p. 127).

With Clement we have the first reference to the Church as an organization. He was the first who actually tried to figure out the role of the Church and its authority structures within the imperial ideology (Brent 2009, p. 180). In this respect, he assumed that the Church was a *πολιτεύμα*, that is a Greek word that meant the body of citizens within a constitution and also the exercise of citizenship in leading a good life in conformity with the laws of both their human nature and society (Brent 2009, p. 181). Besides, he used the concepts of *homonopia* (ομόνοια), that means concord, developed by the Second Sophistic movement, together with the Roman conception of peace, eirene (έιρηνη) and he put them in the centre of the cosmic order that must be reflected in the Christian community (Brent 2009, p. 189) In other words, Clement “is seeking a place for Christianity within the structure of Roman imperial society” (Brent 2009, p. 192). He conceived the Church, and the Christian communities that composed it, as an autonomous body within imperial political order and in peace and concord with the latter.

Thanks to Luke and Clement, Christianity gained an ideology that appeals to a broad base, and a self-understanding in compliance with the present political structures with which it coexists. What it needs now to succeed in coming to power is an organization. Especially, it needs such an organization that allows it to “maintain its self-identity by the exercise of a relevant discipline, but also an organization that will also appear as legitimate to those outside with whom is seeking to engage” (Brent 2009, p. 194). In this
respect, the man who first gave the Church a clear form of government was Ignatius of Antioch.

Although his was just an embryonic view, he was the first who theorized the theology of the Church in terms of a political ideology (Brent 2009, p. 195). The structure he envisaged consisted in a community in which the ministry had to be in the three-fold hierarchical form of a single bishop, with priests (presbyters) and deacons in cooperation with him (Brent 2009, p. 195). Hence the primary leadership role of bishops within the communities. Interestingly, the three-fold order was representative of concrete images of Father, Son and Spirit-filled, that is the Trinity. And the three-fold order, with the bishop on the top, performed a “drama of replay” anytime the community gathered to celebrate the liturgy. Here we see the metaphysical and theological order reflected in the political order, “the unity of the bishop in the three-fold hierarchy not only leads to incorruptibility, but also to such heavenly concord (homonoia) reflected in a undivided church” (Brent 2009, p. 199). According to him, only with such a structure the Church could be validly governed. Therefore, Ignatius of Antioch was the man who set up the model for the Church with the bishop as the cult leader that was later to become the historic Church order of Christendom (Brent 2009, p. 204). So this is the way the hierarchical structure of Christianity had emerged6.

To sum up, we have individuated in the three-fold hierarchical structure of the Church the third critical factor that might explain the success of Christianity. In this structure the bishops played a pivotal role in terms of leadership as they controlled the resources, both material (goods and money) and spiritual (mediation with the Almighty). In so doing, they were able to gain consensus within the community. According to Rizzi (see Appendix), the power of bishops was also of use to Constantine who, in order to counteract the power of the elite, though declining, “leaned against the ones who could boast functioning and effective social networks”. In this way, the emperor sought to grant himself the social support by using the branched bishops’ leadership in each big city of the empire.

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6 Some historians went as far as to say that Christianity had triumphed in Europe “at the cost of losing its ancient purity and spiritual refinement” (Brown 2003, p. 18). However, Brown himself tends to discard this point of view.
Therefore, in the next paragraph we will go deeper into the figure of the bishop within Christian communities in late antiquity. We will see which kind of leadership they exerted so as to show their contribution to the success of Christianity.

3.2.4 The leadership of bishops in late antiquity

In the previous paragraph we have seen where the primary role of bishops within Christian communities came from. We have also seen that the bishop resided on the top of the clergy’s hierarchy and thus we have revealed his undisputed leadership within the Christian communities. But, what kind of leadership did the bishops exert? This paragraph aims at answering this question by delving into the figure of the bishop as the leader of Christian communities in late antiquity. In order to do so, we will rely on Claudia Rapp’s book (2005), *Holy bishop in late antiquity: the nature of Christian leadership in an age of transition*.

Let us begin with saying that, in late antiquity, there were two kinds of authority, religious authority and secular authority, which represented the opposite ends of a continuum. At the secular end there was the emperor, while the religious end was personified by the holy man. In between these two extremities lied the bishop (Rapp 2005, p. 6).

What did the bishop usually do in those communities? Professor Marco Rizzi (see Appendix) gives us an insightful preliminary understanding of their role:

“The leadership of bishops was based on a combination as well as a transfer from the political power to the power of religious mediation. On the one hand, from a religious point of view, the bishop was the one who acted as a mediator between the faithful and God. In so doing, he could gain the consensus from the Christian population and thus superseding the old administrative structures of the empire. His role towards the faithful, that is the followers, was that of spreading among them an otherworldly hope. On the other hand, from a more earthly point of view, the bishops were the hub of powerful social and economic networks in which they played a welfare role. Moreover, the real power of bishops lied in the control of resources, whether monetary, goods or...

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7 According to Rapp (2005, p. 6), the dichotomy between secular religion authority in late antiquity is an anachronistic interpretation. We should rather conceive the two powers as “the opposite ends of a sliding scale”.
individuals. In particular, they actually ruled the inflow and outflow of faithful from the community.".

To sum up, we might classify the role of bishop in two categories. The first is the religious power in which he acted as the shepherd of the flock, with duties that stretched from the pastoral care and the preservation of doctrine unity, to the celebration of liturgy and rites. He was actually the preacher to his community, the teacher to the catechumens, the administrator of baptism to neophytes, and he was also responsible for charitable works (Rapp 2005, p. 23). The second one is the political power which included the material administration of the diocese, in financial terms (he amassed a great wealth), buildings (he became an important building patrons), and he was also involved in the defense of the cities and in some cases he acted as judges in civil cases. Clearly, as the head of the structured ecclesiastical hierarchy, he acted in the way that the word “bishop” suggests, that is as the “overseer” of the community.

Further, regarding the nature of episcopal leadership in late antiquity, Rapp (2005) proposes an interesting model that categorizes the authority of bishops in three areas: spiritual authority, ascetic authority, and pragmatic authority.

Spiritual authority is given by God as a gift and it is personal and self-sufficient, that is to say that it can exist in the individual independent of its recognition by others. Its bearer has received the pneuma, that is the spirit directly from God. It has its source outside the individual (Rapp 2005, p. 16).

It should be noted that spiritual authority is embedded in the episcopal office per se. According to the Apostolic Tradition, the Spirit is conferred on the bishop-elect by other bishops through the imposition of hands and the prayer of ordination. This means that the apostolic succession is an external source of the Holy Spirit that is attached to the episcopal office. Therefore, there existed two distinct kinds of spiritual authority: the institutional spiritual authority inherent ex officio in the episcopate and the personal spiritual authority held by the bishop and displayed in his conduct, “the former is bestowed as a confirmation of the latter” (Rapp 2005, p. 29).

Ascetic authority comes from the practice and it is achieved by subduing the body and by practicing virtuous behaviour. Being this kind of authority dependent on the efforts

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8 Short extract from the interview reported in the Appendix.

9 The word “bishop” comes from the Greek episkopos, from the verb episkopein that means to oversee, thus overseer (Rapp 2005, p. 27).
of the individual, it is accessible to all and it makes itself visible. Therefore, it needs the recognition by others as it is made evident in the individual’s appearance, lifestyle, and conduct (Rapp 2005, p. 17).

Pragmatic authority, as the word suggests, is less related to the faith and more linked to actions. Evidently, the access to this authority is restricted and it depends on the individual’s wherewithal, in terms of social position and wealth. Moreover, it is always public and its recognition depends on the extent and success of the actions that are undertaken on their behalf (Rapp 2005, p. 17).

The spiritual and the pragmatic authority, as distant as they might seem, were linked by means of the ascetic authority. In fact, on the one hand, the practice of asceticism prepared the individual for the receipt of the spirit, thus for the spiritual authority from God. Ascetic authority was also a gauge of the presence of spiritual authority. Therefore, ascetic authority appeared as the outward face of spiritual authority; it was the precondition and the confirmation of the latter (Rapp 2005, p. 17).

On the other hand, ascetic authority was the motivation and legitimation of pragmatic authority. As Rapp argues (2005, p. 18):

“bishops are always held to a higher code of conduct, and their ability to exercise leadership is conditional on their adherence to that code. In contrast to civic leaders, their pragmatic actions on behalf of the community are considered to be a manifestation of their ascetic authority, so much so that the successful exercise of the former is believed to be a direct consequence of the latter”.

Concluding, in this paragraph we have seen how the role of bishops looked like in late antiquity. Their role was exactly what Ignatius of Antioch had previously called for, that is as strong episcopal leadership, with the bishop at the head of each large urban community, in what has been defined as “monarchic episcopate” (Rapp 2005, p. 7). On top of that, the tripartite model proposed by Rapp (2005) provides us with an insight into the complex conceptions of leadership in late antiquity: “whether it relates to

10 People in late antiquity reasoned as followed: if one can stand the harsh ascetic practices, there must be God behind him (Rapp 2005, p. 17).

11 Then, to what extent bishops complied to this ethical conduct is another issue. Brown (1992, p. 120) speaks of lithomania, the itch to build as the greatest sin of some bishops. For instance, Theophilus of Alexandria is said to have spent on the construction of new churches the money donaterd to him to buy shirts for the poor.
emperors or bishops, pragmatic authority never seems to exist on its own but is embedded in a larger context where spiritual and ascetic authority also play their part” (Rapp 2005, pp. 129-131).

Therefore, we have motivated our assumption according to which the leadership role of the bishops within the Christian communities was one of the main factors behind the success of Christianity. As Rapp puts it (2005, p. 7) “the rise of Christianity goes hand in hand with the rise of the bishop to political prominence”.

However, from our research on the role of bishops in late antiquity, we have noticed that there are two built-in aspects in their authority that are worth studying in depth from a leadership point of view. These two aspects are the role of the bishop as an exemplar model for the community and the administration of penance that allowed them to wield a moral authority over the faithful. Therefore, in the next chapter, we will take these two prominent tasks of bishops in late antiquity and we will interpret them according to the theories of leadership we will have derived from them.

The historical-religious part is concluded. The next part deals with the theoretical frameworks we have derived from this first part. As we said in the introduction, in the second part we maintain the distinction between Buddhism and Christianity.

3.3 The theoretical framework of Buddhism

Regarding the historical features, several leadership aspects will be discussed and studied in the Buddhism part. They are construction of meaning, values and followership.

3.3.1 Construction of meaning

When Buddhism came to medieval China, it had difficulties to be understood. As a foreign religion, its values were not easy to be comprehended. Nonetheless, Buddhism became the state religion, with large number of followers from different areas and levels. Therefore, we hold the opinion that it is necessary to study the construction of meaning in Chinese Buddhism. It itself is a perspective from which to view leadership and it will help to study value further in Buddhism as well. According to Smircich and Morgan (1982, p. 262), leadership works by influencing the relationship between experience and definition of the context as a whole.
“Leadership action creates a focus of attention within the ongoing stream of experience which characterizes the total situation. Their action isolates an element of experience, which can be interpreted in terms of the context in which it is set. The leader’s action may generate a variety of interpretations that set the basis for meaningful action. It may serve to redefine the context into a situation. The leader has a specific figure-ground relation in mind in engaging in action; other members of the situation construct their own interpretation of this action. Action is grounded in the interpretive process which links figure and ground”.

There are three main concepts in the construction of meaning: sensemaking, frame of reference and cue.

Sensemaking can be understood literally by making sense. It is about placing items into frameworks, that is:

“comprehending, redressing surprise, constructing meaning, interacting in pursuit of mutual understanding, and patterning [...] The process of sensemaking is intended to include the construction and bracketing of the textlike cues that are interpreted, as well as the revision of those interpretations based on action and its consequences” (Weick 1995, p. 8).

In other words, sensemaking is a process of constructing meaning in certain context.

Frame of reference is a wide range of ideas from an organization point of view, including the ideologies, local assumptions and definitions that are taken as granted, collective cognitive structures.

The intensity of the contribution from cue to sensemaking is largely determined by the faith or belief in the individual’s heart. The more faith he has, the more action he will take. When looking back and evaluating, he will also interpret in accordance with the direction of his faith, making more sense out of it and rationalizing his behaviour (Weick, 1995).

Frame affects what is extracted as a cue. Cue can be everything as mentioned above, but not vice versa. Among all the things we meet every day, some are
regarded as normal routines while others stand out and attract special attention. Those being noticed are called cues (Weick, 1995).

3.3.2 Values

“Values represent, in the form of conscious goals, responses to three universal requirements with which all individuals and societies must cope: needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and requirements for the smooth functioning and survival of groups” (Ros et al. 1999, p. 51).

Based on the differences types of motivational goals in values, Ros et al. (1999, p. 53) gave nine definitions. They are power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. These values are sorted further by extent of openness to change and self-enhancement.

Openness to change emphasizes one’s own independent thoughts and actions; self-enhancement emphasizes the pursuit of one’s relative success and dominance over other individuals; conservation emphasizes submissive self-restriction, preserving traditional practices, and protecting stability; and self-transcendence emphasizes acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare. Below, we report Ros et al.’s (1999, p. 53) schematized representation of this set of values.

**Figure 2. The structure of relations among the value types according to theory**

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12 Elaborated from (Ros et al.’s 1999, p. 53).
A central notion for value generation is value-in-use as it catches much the value creation purpose. It is the value that stems from the use of goods or services (Grönroos, 2008) and the fulfillment of a specific purpose from the customer’s point of view. Grönroos (2011, p. 303) describes it as follows:

“when customers use suppliers’ resources (goods or services) and add other resources (goods, services, and information) and skills held by them, the value potential of the re-sources is developed into value-in-use”.

3.3.3 Followership

Leadership is a relational concept involving active leaders and followers. In the study of Buddhism, we found out that the leadership in Buddhism was not obvious or fundamental. On the contrary, followers gathered without any constraints like law. So we think that it is better to view leadership in Buddhism from the perspective of followership. The role of follower varies depending on the activeness of the follower: followers as recipients of the leader’s influence, followers as moderators of the leader’s influence, followers as substitutes for leadership, followers as constructors of leadership, and followers as leaders. (Shamir et al., 2007).

3.3.3.1 Followers’ roles in leadership

- Followers as recipients of the leader’s influence

Followers, as subordinates, implement the orders coming from leaders. Leadership is one-way event by means of the leader affects the subordinates (Northouse 2004, p. 113). Followers act passively and are regarded as “an empty vessel waiting to be transformed, by the leader” (Goffee & Jones, 2009, p.148)

- Followers as moderators of the leader’s influence

Followers are not just recipients of the leader. Effectiveness depends on the leader, the followers and situational factors. In the interaction, follower’s reaction and characteristics also moderate leadership style (Shamir et al., 2007).  

- Followers as substitutes for leadership

According to dispersed leadership, leaders are viewed as mentors, facilitators and team builders. Empowerment is valued in the leadership process. Therefore,
followers are given “a potentially more dominant role” (Shamir et al., 2007) to better support the leader. In this sense, the leader’s influence on followers is weakened due to this fact.

- Followers as constructors of leadership

According to Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich, (1985), organizational members ascribe power and causality to leaders and therefore achieve understanding and control over their environment. In this process, followers construct leadership through cognitive communication. This is what Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich, (1985) call the “romance of leadership”.

- Followers as leaders: shared leadership

Leadership can be “shared, distributed or dispersed” (Shamir 2007, cited in Shamir et al. 2007, p. xvii). This kind of perspective is a unique opinion of viewing leadership. In fact, it doubts the distinction between leaders and followers.

One the contrary, Manz and Sims (1987) pointed out that self-leadership and self-managing work teams make it possible to share leadership among members. Besides, everyone should be regarded as both leader and follower (Shamir 2007, cited in Shamir et al. 2007).

3.3.3.2 Follower types

There are various theories of follower types. Zaleznik (1965) categorizes the followers according to their keen level in submitting themselves to their work. Kelley (1988) used a two-by two matrixes to examine the behaviours of followers, which are dependency and critical thinking. In addition, Carsten et al. (2010) defines three types of followers according to their attitudes and dedications to followership.

Furthermore, Steger, Manners and Zimmerer (1982) ground their theory in self-interested motives. They build their follower types on the basis of two dimensions, the desire for self-enhancement and the desire for self-protection. In this regard, nine types of follower based on the different levels of attraction to each dimension, which are: apathetic, bureaucrat, game player donkey, kamikaze, deviant, artist, achiever, super follower. To sum up, Steger, Manners and
3.3.3.3 The social construction of leadership and followership

Meindl (1995) generates two models to explain the construction of followership; the first focuses on individual-level processes, while the second is based on group-level processes. These two processes together form leadership from the perspectives of the followers (Meindl, 1995). In the individual-level process, the construction of leadership is generated by the input of individual level processes and group level processes. As a consequence, leadership influences individual’s evaluations of leadership and generates followership action correspondingly. In the group-level process, the construction of leadership is realized by psychological activities, such as cognitive mechanism and affective mechanism, which are triggered by the interactive dynamics among followers during the process of group composition (Meindl, 1995). Then, Meindl (1995, p. 336) describes the group-level process as “a collaborative, negotiated, intersubjectively shared system of leadership concepts that link and unify followers within the group”. Although Meindl (1995) discusses group process in the social construction of leadership, the same line of reasoning holds true for the social construction of followership.

Carsten et al. (2010) discuss in their article that social constructions of followership are influenced by schema and context. Schemas are knowledge structures (Shondrick & Lord, 2010) that provide an underlying structure of the meaning of followership (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007 cited in Shamir et al., 2007). While schemas persist overtime and shape the perceptions, interpretations and behaviours of individuals. The latters are developed through socialization and past experiences and are stored in memory (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007 cited in Shamir et al., 2007). Therefore, followership schemas are activated when followers interact with a person in a leadership position and/or with other followers (Uhl-Bien & Pillai 2007 cited in Shamir et al., 2007).

According to Carsten et al. (2010), schemas provide a general understanding of followership behaviour. However, the context influences the constructions around specific behaviours that are acceptable or appropriate in a particular environment. Therefore, when speaking about the social constructions of
followership, individuals disclose their underlying schema and parts of the context that make schematic traits and behaviours more or less appropriate (Carsten et al., 2010).

Lord and Brown (2001) suggest that values and self-identities can impact on regulating followers’ behaviours. They provide a model (Figure 3) to explain the linkage of exogenous factors to followers’ internal self-regulatory structures. In this sense, they think culture and leadership influence the form of values in followership, as exogenous factors. Values and identity are “relatively enduring criteria used in generating and evaluating behavior, cognitions, and affect” (Lord, brown 2001, p. 137), in which “values are organized in a manner that complements various self-identities”. Values, as moderating factors, put constraints on self-identities; and vice versa. Only when these two factors are in coherent, interrelated patterns, leadership effects are realized (Lord & Brown, 2001). Lord and Brown (2001) view this model as an important mechanisms through which leaders can influence work behaviour. Their research is grounded on follower cognitions. Nevertheless, it can also be useful to study the construction of followership, since both are based on follower-centric view.

**Figure 3.** *Linkage of exogenous factors (culture and leadership) to subordinates’ internal self-regulatory structure (values and self-concepts)* (Lord & Brown, 2001, p. 135).


3.4 The theoretical framework of Christianity

3.4.1 The visionary leadership and the concept of vision

3.4.1.1 Vision

Bennis and Nanus (2004, p. vi) describe vision as “one of the most critical elements of successful leadership”. The unique importance of vision in organizations stems from its ability to get everyone involved in an organization by giving a clear sense of direction (Bennis & Nanus 2004 p. vi). A related pivotal feature of vision is that leaders, by managing it, animate and mobilize action, thus transforming purposes into action (Bennis & Nanus 2004 p. 29). Hence the necessity for leaders to effectively create, communicate and use visions.

Especially, according to Bennis and Nanus (2004, p. 19), vision-giving and its translation into reality characterize leadership, so much that vision is considered as the commodity of leaders (2004, p. 19). Furthermore, Bennis and Nanus (2004, pp. 26-31) set the concept of vision into the first of the four “strategies” they present in their book, that is “attention through vision”.

Therefore, vision is essential to leadership and leaders as it represents a tool aimed at mobilizing followers’ actions. But, when can a vision achieve this task? What makes a vision more effective than other visions? Stam et al. (2010) found that visions that focus on followers (by addressing followers personally and involving them in the vision) enhance followers’ performance more than visions that do not focus on followers. In fact, visions that focus on followers’ may enable followers to create an ideal self (a desired image of the self). This focus, in turn, may motivate followers to make the ideal self, and thus the vision, reality.

3.4.1.2 Visionary leadership

Westley and Mintzberg (1989, p. 18) describe visionary leadership as a three-step process, whose steps are: vision (idea), communication (word), empowerment (action). Then, Westley and Mintzberg (1989, pp. 18-22) use the metaphor of drama to describe this process. This metaphor is articulated in a model composed by three phases: repetition, representation and assistance. While repetition deals with the practice (rehearsal), that is the period of time in which the visionary leader crafts the vision, the representation is the moment that turns the vision from craft into art. In the
representation, the vision stops being a private mental image of the leader and starts being articulated, represented and communicated in words and actions: “just as a leader cannot exist without followers, so too strategic vision cannot exist without being so recognized by followers” (Westley & Mintzberg 1989, p. 19). Hence, the importance of having an active audience that stimulates the leader, insomuch as “it would appear that leader and follower participate together in creating the vision” (Westley & Mintzberg 1989, p. 21). This is the phase called “assistance”.

Moreover, Westley and Mintzberg (1989) assume that visionary leadership can take different forms, namely five different styles. The first style is the “creator”, who is characterized by two qualities “the originality of his or her ideas or inventions and the sudden, holistic quality of their realization” (Westley & Mintzberg 1989, p. 25). The second style is called the “proselytizer”, whose main feature is the capacity to promote his or her ideas. The third style is the “idealist” who is the kind of visionary leaders that “speculates on the ideal, who dreams intensely of perfection and minimizes or ignores the flaws aid contradictions of the real” (Westley & Mintzberg 1989, p. 26). The fourth style is labeled the “brycoleur” and refers to the capacity of certain visionary leaders for building. The last style is called the “diviner” whose salient capacity is insight in moments of inspiration (Westley & Mintzberg 1989, p. 29).

3.4.2 The hierarchical organization and leadership

As we have seen in the historical-religious part, the hierarchical organization of the Church is said to be one of the factors behind the triumph of Christianity. Therefore, in this paragraph we review the literature concerning the two concepts of hierarchical organizations and leadership.

Ogawa and Bossert’s article (1995) provides us with two competing perspectives on organization theory. Each of them emphasizes different organizational aspects and thus offers diverse explanations of leadership within organizations (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 227). The first perspective is taken from the technical-rational theory of organizations. This perspective portrays organizations as technically rational systems and it stresses two organizational features: goal and formal structures (Scott 1992, cited in Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 227):
“Organizations exist to attain specific, predetermined goals [...]. Formal structures are the organizational rules and procedures that govern the behavior of members by precisely and explicitly prescribing roles and role relations.”

It should be noted that, according to this perspective, the task of designing the formal structure of an organization lies on the top level of the latter; in other words, it is part of top management’s authority. For this reason, according to this perspective, leadership is confined to the highest levels of organizations’ hierarchy. Therefore, leadership is related to organizational roles, with the leader exerting the so-called authority of position (Barnard 1968, cited in Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 234). Moreover, function of leadership is that of influencing the performance of organizations by affecting the minds and behaviours of individuals. In this sense, “successful leaders are those whose organizations reach their goals” (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 228). Further, according to this perspective, leaders are said to have certain traits that set them apart from other individuals (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 228). Finally, leaders perform their roles within organizational cultures and they try to shape the latters to affect how individuals interpret and make meaning out of organizational events (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 229).

The second perspective is taken from the institutional theory of social organization and it is alternative to the technical-rational one. According to this perspective, institutional environment has an impact on the structures of organizations, so much that the latters adopt a certain structure to reflect the institutionalized rules, rather than to enhance internal efficiency (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 232). Accordingly, leadership’s function differs from the previous perspective. In this perspective leadership’s function has to do with social legitimacy and organizational survival. In this respect, rather than affecting the minds and behaviour of participants, the institutional perspective requires “affecting the mind and behaviors of external constituents” (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 233). That is to say that leadership must have an influence on the whole system where actions of individuals take place. As for the roles within an organization, unlike the technical-rational perspective, the institutional perspective asserts that leadership can be exerted at different levels. The point is that role per se is not the fundamental unit of analysis for understanding organizations. Rather, the critical concept is the network of relations that binds different roles, as this
network encompasses the whole organizational system. In other words, leadership does not lie in exerting the authority of position, rather we have leadership when organizational members “gain compliance by deploying resources needed by others to enact their roles” (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 234). For these reasons, leadership is defined as a systemic quality of organizations, which is embedded in the relationship among roles.

As a consequence, there is a shift of focus from people isolated actions to their social interactions, and thus the “interact, not the act, becomes the basic building block of organizational leadership” (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 236). That is to say that leadership is relational and both the leader and the follower are essential components. On top of that, as leadership occurs through interaction, it can flow both top-down or bottom-up; in other words, leadership is bidirectional.

In addition, the institutional perspective goes further by shifting the focus from leaders’ traits to traits as resources for the organization. Independent of the formal position and roles, each individual within an organization can exert influence or leadership according to his or her personal resources (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 236). As far as the context of leadership is concerned, leadership is said to be a cultural phenomenon and organizations “have or are cultures” that produce patterned behaviours and interactions (Ogawa & Bossert 1995, p. 237).

The second literary source of leadership and hierarchical organizations is to be found in Schneeweirß (1995). According to the author (1995, p. 5), “hierarchical structures are imposed in order to understand a system’s behaviour and to be able to manage it.” Furthermore, leadership, which is defined as “a framework within which execution processes can be performed” (Schneeweirß 1995, p. 28), can be brought into a hierarchical ordering by three levels. At the first level there is the strategic leadership which deals with notions like corporate identity, corporate culture, and corporate ‘philosophy’. At the second level we find the tactical leadership which has to do with the leadership styles. At the third level there is the operative leadership which instead deals with decisions concerning people. This last level is the domain of human leadership: “operational leadership particularly uses emotional instruments like motivation or charisma to accomplish decisions” (Schneeweirß 1995, p. 28).
Other literature combining leadership and hierarchical organization is to be found in De Church et al. (2010), where leadership is considered as a multilevel phenomenon:

“Although leadership research tends to isolate and study leadership at a particular level of the organization, the reality of organizational leadership is that leadership is being simultaneously enacted by leaders at multiple levels within the organization. Top-, middle-, and bottom-level leaders are actively engaged in motivating and shaping behavior” (De Church et al. 2010, p. 1082).

3.4.3 Ethical leadership, role modeling and compliance under threat of punishment

As we have seen in the historical-religious part, there are two aspects embedded in the role of bishops that are worth focusing on from a leadership point of view. These two aspects are the role of the bishops as exemplar models for the community and the administration of penance that allowed them to wield a moral authority over the faithful.

In this section, we present the theories that we have extracted from these two aspects. Respectively, for the role of bishops as exemplar model of conduct, we derive the theories concerning the concepts of leading by example. Whereas, as for the administration of penance, we will deal with the relationship between threat of punishment and compliance.

However, before dealing with these issues, we introduce the concept of ethical leadership. In effect, ethical leadership represents the theoretical framework that embraces role modeling and management of followers’ unethical behaviour. The latter, in turn, will allow us to introduce the concept of compliance to threat of punishments.

3.4.3.1 Ethical leadership

According to Brown et al. (2005, p. 120) ethical leadership is:

“the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making”.

54
Further, Brown et al. (2005, p. 120) suggest that there are three main features of an ethical leader. The first one considers leaders as models of ethical conduct so as to become the targets of identification and emulation for followers. The second concerns leaders’ behaviour that is seen as normatively appropriate (e.g., openness and honesty) and motivated by altruism (e.g., treating employees fairly and considerately). The third one is about actively managing morality.

3.4.3.2 Moral person and moral manager

Treviño et al. (2000, p. 128) help us to frame the features of ethical leadership as follows: “reputation for ethical leadership rests upon two essential pillars: perceptions of you as both a moral person and a moral manager”. In other words, moral person and moral manager are the two dimensions of ethical leadership through which leaders are perceived by followers.

The first pillar, that is moral person, represents observers’ perceptions of leader’s personal traits, behaviours and decision-making attitudes (Brown & Treviño 2006, p. 597). In particular, traits are about integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. Behaviours include doing the right thing, concern for people, being open and personal morality. Decision-making means to hold values dear, being objective and fair, concern for society and follow ethical decision rules (Treviño et al. 2000, p. 131).

The second pillar is labeled moral manager and includes role modeling through visible action, rewards and discipline, and communicating about ethics and values (Treviño et al. 2000, p. 131). This aspect of ethical leadership “represents the leader’s proactive efforts to influence followers’ ethical and unethical behavior” (Brown & Treviño 2006, p. 597).

3.4.3.3 Moral identity

Ethical leadership is also said to be related to the concept of moral identity (Mayer et al. 2012, p. 152). First of all, Lapsley and Lasky (2001, p. 347) argue that a person who has a moral identity is “one for whom moral schemas are chronically available, readily primed, and easily activated for information processing”. Then, Hart, Atkins and Ford (1998, p. 515) describe moral identity as “a commitment consistent with one’s sense of self to lines of action that promote or protect the welfare of others”. Further, Aquino and Reed (2002, p. 1423) suggest that moral identity is one kind of self-regulatory
mechanism that motivates moral action. Besides, moral identity is central to predict various forms of moral behaviour (e.g. Shao, Aquino & Freeman 2008). Therefore, from the previous description it seems clear that moral identity can be positively associated with the enactment of moral behaviours.

Furthermore, Aquino and Reed (2002, p. 1427) argue that moral identity has two dimensions. The first dimension is called *symbolization* and it refers to the public aspect of moral identity. In this respect, Mayer et al. (2012, p. 153) suggest that moral identity symbolization is positively related to ethical leadership because, “these leaders are more likely to demonstrate morally positive behaviors, which manifest as ethical leadership”. The second dimension is labeled *internalization* and represents moral traits that are imbedded in an individual’s self-concept. Still, Mayer et al. (2012, p. 153) suggest a positive relation between this dimension and ethical leadership. However, what is interesting to us is that, according to Mayer et al. (2012, p. 153), individuals who score high on this dimension are likely to avoid behaviours that are seen as immoral, but, most importantly, they are “more likely to pay attention to, correct, and punish unethical behaviors”.

Concluding, in this paragraph we have outlined the concept of ethical leadership in order to provide a solid theoretical framework from which to introduce the next two concepts, which are of role modeling and management of followers’ unethical behaviours. Regarding the latter, we will focus on a specific aspect of the interaction between leader and follower, that is the punishment, and especially the influence of the threat of punishment on the compliance of the follower with the leader. We have seen that these two concepts can be included into the moral manager aspect of ethical leadership identified by Treviño et al. (2000, p. 131). Besides, we have also seen that the stimulus of the ethical leader to punish unethical behaviours arises from the dimension of his or her moral identity called *internalization* (Aquino & Reed 2002, p. 1427).

3.4.3.4 Leading by example

First of all, let us highline the relevance of leading by example in the leadership field. Leading by example (or role modeling) is considered as one of the possible ways through which leaders use referent power, because it may enhance followers’ emulation of leaders’ behaviour (Yukl 1998 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 808). Moreover, both the
literature on leadership (e.g., Manz & Sims, 1980, 1981; Trevino & Brown, 2005 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 808) and organizational socialization (e.g., Moreland & Levine, 1989; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Weiss, 1977 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 808) suggests that learning by observing leaders’ behaviours plays a key role in shaping followers’ conduct and misconduct.

Secondly, we need to clarify what role modeling is about. As Yaffe and Kark (2011, p. 810) note, the term role model draws on two prominent theoretical constructs. The first is the concept of role and the human tendency to “identify with and emulate other people occupying important social roles” (Katz & Kahn 1978 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 810). The second is the concept of behavioural modeling, that is “the psychological matching of cognitive skills and patterns of behavior between a person and an observing individual” (Bandura, 1977b; Bandura, 1986 cited in Gibson 2004, p. 136).

Consequently, Gibson (2004, p. 136) defines role model as the:

“cognitive construction based on the attributes of people in social roles an individual perceives to be similar to him or herself to some extent and desires to increase perceived similarity by emulating those attributes”.

Besides, Gibson argues that role models serve three interrelated functions: providing learning, providing motivation and inspiration, and helping individuals to define their self-concept (2004, p. 149).

In other words, we might say that leaders, if they are viewed as worthy role models, represent what people would like to be and to achieve (Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 810). Therefore, this leaders might influence followers identity, so much that the latters, by internalizing leaders’ values and beliefs as well as emulating leaders’, “define and develop aspects of their self-concept, including their role identity and social identity” (Ashforth, 2001; Kark & Shamir, 2002 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 810).

Further descriptions of role modeling are provided by Schein (2004, cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 809), according to whom role modeling is a mechanism through which leaders “create, maintain, and sometimes change their group culture”. Besides, role modeling is also considered an important means by which work group leaders transmit their belief systems to their groups (Dragoni, 2005 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p 809).
However, it should be noted that the concept of role modeling draws in part on Bandura’s social learning theory (1977 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 808). According to this theory, most human behaviours are learned by observation, so much so that “individuals will strive to emulate the behaviors of their role models, leader, and coworkers to ensure that their behavior is in line with accepted norms” (Bommer, Miles, & Grover, 2003; Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004; Mayer et al., 2009 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 808).

Further, some empirical testing on leading by example are provided by Gächter et al. (2012), who undertook a study made of a simple leader-follower game in which efficiency and self-interested behaviour were in conflict. In the first place, they found that group’s performance depends positively on leader’s degree of cooperativeness. But, most importantly, they discovered that such cooperativeness expressed by leader’s behaviour might influence, in turn, follower’s behaviour, thus buying him or her into the cooperation: “by contributing Leaders might, if the Follower is sufficiently conditionally cooperative, induce the Follower to contribute as well”. (Gächter et al. 2012, p. 964).

Yaffe and Kark (2011) explore the concept of leading by example (or role modeling) in work organizations by proposing a study that seeks to assess the effect of leader’s OCB13 (organizational citizenship behaviour) on the work-group OCB. The results of the study reveals the importance of leading by example by providing evidence that “the significant effect of leader OCB on group OCB implies that by setting a personal example of contribution to the organization, leaders can promote similar contributions from their groups” (Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 819).

Concluding, in this paragraph we have introduced the concept of leading by example. This part of the theoretical framework has been extracted as a result of the analysis we did on the role of bishops in late antiquity. As we have seen in that section, bishops were expected to lead by example within the community if they wanted to be accepted as the spiritual leader of latter. Therefore, later in the next chapter, we will apply these theories to the case of bishops.

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13 Organizational Citizenship Behavior is defined as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ 1988, p.4). In other words, OCB refers to the efforts undertaken by employees to behave as good citizens within their organization (Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 808).
3.4.3.5 Management of unethical behaviour: the threat of punishment

In the previous paragraph, we have argued that individuals may learn appropriate behaviours by observing that of leaders’ and taking it as an example. This is one of the possible ways available to leaders to influence followers’ behaviour and, especially, we could consider it as a “passive” way. Besides, there exists other more active ways to exert this influence. One of these active actions concerns the use of power by leaders to exert punishments.

However, for the purpose of our later analysis, we will not focus on the punishment in itself. In accordance with our findings from the religious-historical side, we are more interested in studying the process of influence of the leader over the follower from another perspective, one that chronologically precedes the possible punishment. We are interested in examining the mechanism behind the coercion that fuels the compliance of followers to leaders, the former being under threat of punishment.

In this respect, Luckenbill (1982, p. 811) states that, “coercion requires two roles, a source and a target. In coercion, the source exacts compliance from the target, despite a conflict of interests, by means of actual or threatened punishments”. Then, social scientists have been studying the conditions under which the target will comply with the source given a threat of punishment. For our purposes, we have individuated a set of conditions that we will later use to interpret the moral authority of bishops:

- more compliance is given to threats issued by a high-status source than to those from a low-status source (Faley & Tedeschi 1971, p. 197);
- the greater the credibility of threatened punishment, the higher the chance that the threat caused compliance (Horai & Tedeschi 1969, p. 168);
- the greater the severity of the threatened punishment, the higher the chance that the threat caused compliance (Horai & Tedeschi 1969, p. 168);
- there is a positive relation between source’s capacity to inflict punishment and target’s compliance (Tedeschi, 1970; Luckenbill 1982);
- the lesser the target’s capacity to oppose the source, the higher the chance that the threat caused compliance (Tedeschi, Bonoma & Novinson, 1970; Luckenbill 1982).
3.5 Religion and social identity theory

In this section, we introduce the last theoretical framework that will be used to interpret the findings from the historical-religious side. This section is composed by two parts. The first part addresses the concept of social identity and group membership from a general point of view. In this part, we first introduce the social identity theory and then we move to the issue of intergroup behaviour. In the second part, we address a specific kind of group membership, that is membership in religious groups. In this regard, we will present the characteristics that make this kind of groups so special. It should be noted that this section does not fall into any of two previous parts as it contains a theoretical framework which will be used for both the religions.

3.5.1 Social Identity Theory

Triandis (1989 cited in Lustig and Koester 2010, p. 350) conceives the one’s identity as a tripartite distinction among collective self, public self and private self. Analogously, Lustig and Koester (2010, p. 142) propose a three-dimensional identity whose parts are: personal identity, cultural identity and social identity. While the personal identity is “the self-conception in terms of unique properties of self or of one’s personal relationship with specific other individuals” (Hogg 2011, p. 188), cultural identity, “refers to one’s sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group” (Lustig and Koester 2010, p. 142).

The third dimension of identity is social identity, which Tajfel (1972 cited in Hogg 2001, p. 186) defines as the “individual’ knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership”.

The social identity theory of Tajfel has been one of the most influential frameworks providing an insight into the relation between the self-concept and the social groups to which one belongs. It is actually used to explain how much the group membership is essential to self-conceptualization of people, so much so that the identification with groups “creates and defines an individual’s own place in society” (Tajfel 1972 cited in Hogg 2001 p. 186).

In order to explain this point, let us start relating the individual to social groups. In this regard, Hogg (2001, p. 186) proposes three basic social cognitive processes, in which individuals:
• conceive of themselves in terms of the defining features of a common and distinctive ingroup (self-categorization);
• cognitively and behaviourally assimilate themselves to these features (depersonalization);
• perceive others not as unique individuals but through the lens of features that define relevant ingroup or outgroup membership (stereotypical homogenization).

In other words, individuals perceive the social environment as composed by *ingroups* (in which the individual holds membership) and various *outgroups* (of which the individual is not a member). Therefore, being part of a group helps the individual to define him or herself. In addition, group membership is said to be integral to individuals’ positive self-esteem and self-enhancement. In fact, following the work of Tajfel and Turner (1979, p. 40), if we assume that:

• individuals always strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem, and thus their self-concept;
• social groups or categories and the membership of them are associated with positive or negative value connotations, whose evaluation is determined with reference to specific other groups through social comparisons in terms of value-laden attributes and characteristics.

Then, we can realize that individuals, by associating positive values to ingroups in comparison with outgroups, enhance their social identity, and thus they increase their self-esteem.

3.5.2 Group membership and intergroup behaviours

Let us now focus on a specific aspect of social identity as related to group membership, that is the intergroup relationships. Especially, we are interested in the influence that group membership has on intergroup behaviour.

First of all, it is worth mentioning that social interaction can be portrayed as a continuum whose extremes are the “interpersonal extreme” and the “intergroup extreme”. The former is described as “interaction between two or more individuals which is very largely determined by their individual characteristics and the nature of the personal relation between them” (Tajfel 1979 cited Tajfel 1982, p. 13). While the latter comprehends “interactions which are largely determined by group membership of
the participants and very little-if at all-by their personal relations or individual characteristics” (Tajfel 1979 cited in 1982, p. 13). In this paragraph, according to our purposes, we will focus on the second end of the social interaction continuum, that is “intergroup extreme”, and especially we will go deeper into intergroup behaviour.

In this respect, Sherif (1966 cited in Tajfel 1982, p. 1) provides a general description for intergroup behaviour: “whenever individuals belonging to one group interact, collectively or individually, with another group or its members in terms of their group identification, we have an instance of intergroup behavior”.

Further, Tajfel (1982, p. 13) underlines two interesting characteristics of intergroup behaviour. The first refers to the uniformity displayed by members of the ingroup in their behaviour and attitudes towards an outgroup. The second refers to the process through which ingroup members perceive less the variability of the characteristics of the outgroup members, so much so that the latters become “undifferentiated items in a unified social category” (Tajfel 1981 cited in Tajfel 1982, p. 13).

These two intergroup behaviours, both displaying uniformity of attitudes towards the outgroup, can arise for four different reasons, which Tajfel (1982, p. 14) calls antecedents:

- social differentials in status, power, rank, privilege, access to resources;
- intergroup conflict or competition;
- movements for change initiated by social groups;
- individually determined pattern of prejudice.

Further evidence on this issue suggests that “social groups seem to be more competitive and perceive their interest more competitively than individuals under the same functional conditions” (Tajfel 1982, p. 15).

Another important issue concerns the concepts of conflict and cohesion. The question here is: does conflict enhance cohesion inside the groups engaged in it? As Tajfel suggests (1982, p. 15), there is a long tradition of positive answers to these questions. In this respect, we report the words of Stein (1976, p. 165), who states that:

“external conflict does increase internal cohesion under certain conditions…the external conflict needs to invoke some threat, affect the entire group and all its
members equally indiscriminately, and involve a solution. The group must be able to deal with the external conflict, and to provide emotional comfort and support its members”.

However, it should be noted that, independent of explicit or institutionalized conflict or competition between the groups, ingroup members always tend to display ingroup-favoring behaviour. This is determined by the need to preserve or achieve positive group distinctiveness. This distinctiveness serves, in turn, to protect, enhance, or achieve a positive social identity for members of the group (Tajfel 1974, 1981, Turner 1975, Tajfel & Turner 1979 cited in Tajfel 1982, p. 24). As we have already said, individuals favour ingroups to protect and enhance their social identity.

3.5.3 Religion and social identity

In the previous paragraphs, we have introduced the theoretical framework regarding social identity and group membership from a general point of view, and with general we mean without specifying which kind of groups we were talking about. Now, we turn to a specific kind of group, which is the religious group. Religious groups are, in fact, one of the most important group of which an individual can be part.

Our main assumption is that religion, as a commonly held system of beliefs, values and practices relating to the divine (Worden 2005, p. 221), represents a special kind of group as it provides particular personal significance exceeding that of normal membership in other groups. Let us now motivate our assumption.

In the first place, we argue that social identification with religious group can enhance all the three factors of social identity identified by Cameron (2004). In this sense, we might say that religious groups display an enduring psychological salience and thus they are central to individuals’ self-concept. Secondly, we might argue that religious groups are usually ascribed a higher level of emotional valence (ingroup affect). Thirdly, we migh argue that religious groups presents stronger ingroup ties (Cameron 2004, p. 253).

Furthermore, keeping in mind that religion relies on sources of moral and spiritual authority that “cannot be empirically disconfirmed” (Wellman & Tokuno, p. 294), identification with religious groups provides ontological security and reduces existential anxiety (Kinnvall 2004, pp. 746-749). As Kinnvall (2004, p. 763) puts it:
“religion supply particularly powerful stories and beliefs (discourses) through their ability to convey a picture of security, of a “home” safe from intruders. They do this by being portrayed as resting on solid ground, as being true, thus creating a sense that the world really is what it appears to be. The world, in this view, “really” consists of a direct primordial relationship to a certain territory (a “home”) and/or to a certain god(s).”

Besides, it is worth noting that religion as a system of guiding beliefs provides sense of meaning and purpose through which to interpret one’s experiences (Park 2007, p. 321). In this sense, one of the soundest beliefs that a religion can preach is to be the depository of the truth.

About the concept of truth in religions, Wellman and Tokuno (2004, p. 293) note that truth claims, whether implicit or explicit, are powerful motivators to individuals and groups in expressing beliefs about their religion. Besides, it should be noted that since religious belief systems (e.g., existence of God) can be neither proven nor disproven, “the faith inherent in religious identification is able to thrive regardless” (Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, p. 61). As a consequence, individuals may feel that their religion is the correct one to follow, and thus, by comparing their positive intergroup to outgroups (Tajfel & Turner 1979, pp. 40-43), they are likely to foster perceived superiority (Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, pp. 61-62). In so doing, they also reinforce the centrality (Cameron, 2004) of religious group membership to their self-concept.

Therefore, what makes religious groups really distinctive than other groups? Basically, religions, unlike other kind of groups, provide faithful with a worldview, in the sense of the word expressed by Koltko-Rivera (2004, p. 4):

“A worldview is a way of describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and what ought to be. A given worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done. In addition to defining what goals can be sought in life, a worldview defines what goals should be pursued.
Worldviews include assumptions that may be unproven, and even unprovable, but these assumptions are superordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for other beliefs within a belief system.”

This is what religions do; they give the prospect of an eternal group membership. To conclude, membership in religious groups represents a special kind of social identification as it provides a compelling and comforting worldview which is also likely to bring about benefits to personal wellbeing, equaling or exceeding those associated with other group memberships (Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, p. 62).
4. ANALYSIS: INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORICAL-RELIGIOUS FINDINGS THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE THEORIES

Once achieved the second and the third step of the research process, we now move to the following step that consists in the interpretation of the historical-religious preliminary findings by applying the related theories we have derived from them. Therefore, this chapter is structured as follows. We still maintain the separation between Buddhism and Christianity. For each of them, we interpret the historical-religious aspects by using the theories singled out in the previous chapter.

4.1 Analysis of Buddhism

Based on chapter, we now use the model generated by Lord & Brown (2001) as an all-inclusive theoretical framework for the interpretation of Buddhism.

4.1.1 Sensemaking in Buddhism

Based on the framework given by Lord & Brown (2001), several aspects will be studied in the history of Buddhism from leadership’s perspective. In regards of the culture, the focus will be put on the medieval Chinese ideology, which is representative. The construction of meaning (Weick, 1995) is used to understand the influence of Chinese culture on the form of local values and the adaption of foreign values. Due to the characteristics of Chinese culture and values, leadership is found implicit in the religious activities and organizations. Therefore, though leadership is an important component in Lord & Brown’s model, little can be said to interpret the history of Buddhism.

Buddhism was heretical for the people in medieval China when it arrived. The sensemaking of Buddhism was strongly influenced by the existing culture and ideology in China. These factors, as frame of reference, influenced how the Buddhism was understood and accepted. Frame of reference is the premise of sensemaking, providing the stage and scene. When facing an unexpected situation, people started to figure out what is happening. “Context affects the extraction of cues, and that small, subtle features can have surprisingly large effects on sensemaking” (Weick 1995, p.52). Without frames of reference it is impossible to conduct sensemaking. For Buddhism, frame of reference was the Confucianism and Taoism and the elite culture during that time.
These frames of reference were once helpful, though turned out to be against the development later. As Deephouse (1999) puts it, following the frame can bring a lot benefits, for example be recognized, accepted and supported by corporations in supply chain. The industry recipe is the accumulation created and experienced by the wisdom of former generations. Copying the strategy saves time and effort, while promising the success, to some extent (Deephouse, 1999). The value and concepts in Buddhism was interpreted from the Confucianism and Taoism’s view at the beginning. Because of its similarity to frames of reference, repulsion was little found in spite of its foreign origin and background.

The frame of reference determines what is extracted from routines (Weick, 1995). Frame also affects how the extracted cue is then interpreted. The extracted and interpreted cue triggers sensemaking. So it can be said that the frame affects the process of sensemaking by the mediation of cues. In the beginning, only part of values or theories in Buddhism was introduced, those that were similar to existing ideology. Because of the strong cling to hierarchic society and ethical principles in medieval China, only those values that were in line with the frame of medieval Chinese ideology spread and developed. The import of Buddhism, as an extracted cue, activated sensemaking. The process was influenced by the frame of medieval Chinese ideology, leading to the transformation of Chinese Buddhism.

Based on personal circumstances, the extraction of cue varies from person to person (Weick, 1995). This explains the existence of different types of Buddhist followers who interpreted according their former knowledge, identity and value.

4.1.2 The formation of Chinese Buddhism in terms of values

In the values’ chapter, there are three levels. The chapter starts with understanding how the Buddhist values blended in with other Chinese traditional values; the second level is how the Buddhist values maintain and enhance itself from the perspective of organization; the third level focus on the effects on individual followers’ concepts and behaviours through the cognitive process.

In the first level, the theory of connectionism is used to view the composition of values as an entire network. It is showed that the Buddhist values and medieval Chinese values are compatible with each other, using the value types given by Ros et al (1999).
In the second level, in order to study the process of Buddhist values expansion in medieval Chinese society, each specific value that dedicates to organizational health and effectiveness is discussed (Kriger & Hanson, 1999). The values, such as integrity, benevolence and karma, help to build trust among Buddhist followers and masters. Values, like compassion and “kong” help to maintain trust harmony. And trust is good to the organizational health and effectiveness (Kriger & Hanson, 1999). The values in Buddhism are conductive to its own spread.

In the third level, we focus on the impact of values on the generation of social-identity and individual behaviours, which are related to the leadership and followership effects (Lord & Brown, 2001; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). The motivations behind the values reveal the social and physical needs of the Buddhist followers, which provide the basis for forming social identity. Therefore, we might argue that the creation of Chinese Buddhism is viewed as a process of value generation (Grönroos, 2008), in which the followers take the responsibility of creating.

4.1.2.1 Blend-in value

As we have seen, the ideology in medieval China attached importance to hierarchy and morality, forming a theoretical system of coherent values. According to connectionism, the coherent patterns of values compose an entire network. In the network, values fit with each other, supporting, explaining, and overlapping. (Lord & Brown, 2001). The ethical and moral values in Jen theory explained and supported the need for “li” principle, while the latter consolidated Jen theory through the framing behavioural rules in “li”. The values in both were coherent to each other, generating an ideology which should be viewed as an entire network.

Facing coherent patterns of values, Buddhism had difficulty in getting acceptance when entering medieval China. “Strongly organized or coherent networks create strong constraints on each value from other values in a network” (Lord & Brown 2001, p. 139), so it is difficult to change a specific value or related behaviour without converting the whole network. There are two implied meanings in Lord and Brown’s (2001) view. One implies that the intrusion of heterogeneous values is a process of invasion, overturning or replacing the original conflicting values.
The other implies that blend-in of heterogeneous values requires adjustment in themselves to be close to the network of values. The entry of Buddhism is obviously the second one, changing itself to get acknowledged.

Referring from the categorization of values (Ros et al, 1999), the value system in medieval China was based on self-transcendence and conservation. In addition, the value system in Buddhism was about self-transcendence and conservation. In this regard, Figure 4 shows the detailed values types revealed in both value systems.

Figure 4 The structure of relations among the value types in medieval Chinese ideology and Buddhism values.

Ros et al (1999) also noted that competing types of value are: openness to change and conservation; self-enhancement and self-transcendence. And compatible value types are: openness to change and self-enhancement; conservation and self-transcendence. From the values point of view, Buddhism and Chinese ideology are compatible with each other. Lord and Brown (2001) indicted that values that are compatible with each other will fit in, and those that are competing with each other will be inhibited. To conclude, this coherence in value provided the base for Buddhism to blend in Chinese spiritual life.
4.1.2.2 Value expansion: the effect of values in organizational health and effectiveness

Social process of communication and leader’s behaviours contribute to value expansion (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Lord & Brown, 2001). Then, according to Rokeach (1973, p. 5) a value is “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite mode of conduct or end-state of existence”. Values are said to be instrumental to organizational competence enhancement, long-term organizational health, and effectiveness (Kriger & Hanson 1999, p.306).

The values in Buddhism, such as integrity, benevolence and karma, help to forge trust (Becerra and Gupta, 1998; Mayer et al., 1995). These values have the power to lead people to behave to the good direction, thus providing the predictability of behaviours. Trust facilitates greater organizational effectiveness and an overall social fabric (Kriger & Hanson, 1999, p.307). Moreover, trust forged by the values had an impact on maintaining itself. On the one hand, the values in Buddhism won the trust from the people. On the other hand, trust, as a source of competitive advantage and a form of social capital, allowed individuals to take risks and dedicate themselves willingly (Barney & Hansen, 1994; Becerra and Gupta, 1999).

In the modern organizational research, trust, treated as social capital, has several advantages: lower monitoring costs, faster decision making, greater innovation and entrepreneurship, faster knowledge transfer, and a greater external focus on customer (Kriger & Hanson, 1999, p.307).

The value of “kong” in Buddhism represents forgiveness, which is to let go of “our feelings and beliefs about what others should have or could have done” (Kriger & Hanson, 1999, p.308). Clinging to past errors could lead to “continued isolation which in turn, creates further false perceptions” (Kriger & Hanson, 1999, p.309). On the contrary, forgiving others gives new initiatives and lessens the stress, thus allowing a healthier life (Kriger & Hanson, 1999). Besides, the value of “kong” in Buddhism gave hope to people in medieval China; it resonated with the yearning for a life away from the political conflicts and wars. Facing the disappointing reality, individuals lacked the hope and the ability to change. Out of frustration,
individuals chose to change their way of perception instead of changing the environment they lived in. The value of “kong” cannot bring material improvement to individuals, rather spiritual consolation, even though people can find spiritual happiness and calm by practicing. For the organization, the adoption of “kong” can increase effectiveness and harmony.

Compassion is the main value in Buddhism, emphasizing the relationship with others, such as human, animal, plants, and the physical environment. Through recognizing the connection with others, people can feel what another is feeling and can become more relaxed and at ease with others due to the mutual understanding, which increases feelings of trust and the chance of realizing organizational values (Kriger & Hanson, 1999).

To gain a further understanding of the values in Buddhism, we can add that values in Buddhism emphasize on the “letting go of delusions and aspiring to enact what is highest and most uplifting to the human spirit” (Kriger & Hanson, 1999, p315). The enactment of the values helped to consolidate the continuity of Buddhism and spread the common understandings within a larger range.

4.1.2.3 Value in the construction of identity, leadership, and followership

Values keep people together working in shared goal, which is realized by affecting individual’s conceptions and behaviours. This can be viewed from the motivations behind these values (Ros et al, 1999).

The key aspect to distinguish values is “the type of motivational goals they express” (Ros et al, 1999, p.51). A parallel relation between higher-order type of basic values and work values is found. Specifically, conservation is parallel to extrinsic or security or material values and self-transcendence is parallel to social or relational values (Ros et al, 1999). Here, work values, which are sorted according to human basic needs (Maslow 1943), can be adapted to situation with wider ranges.

“The crucial content aspect that distinguishes among values is the type of motivational goals they express” (Ros et al 1999, p.51). Ros et al (1999) noted in their empirical analyses that the four types of values are parallel to work values. They argue that the motivational meaning of “openness to change” is intrinsic;
the motivational meaning of “self-enhancement” is prestige. Conservation values are expressed out of “the requirement needed for general security and maintenance of order in their lives” (Ros et al, 1999, p.55). While social values are based on the pursuit of self-transcendence values (Ros et al, 1999). These personal pursuits and motivations will be discussed further in the part of identity and followership. Based on the analysis above, the values in Buddhism can be categorized by two kinds, self-transcendence and conservation. The motivations behind the values that Buddhist followers insisted on can be summarized as the need for basic living maintenance and security and the need for social life.

One prevailing opinion is that values influence individual behaviours, cognitive processes and leadership (Lord & Brown, 2001; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Values provide coherence and purpose to an individual’s behaviour. In addition, values conform with the behaviour to the need of groups. Particularly, work values constraint the generation of goals and behaviour (Lord, brown, 2001). Besides, value expansion has several positive outcomes, such as creating meanings, raising enthusiasm, bringing commitments and efforts from the followers (Cha & Edmondson, 2006).

The creation of Chinese Buddhism can be view as a process of value generation. Grönroos (2008) argues that the value generating process is considered a set of activities carried by the supplier and the receiver. In the growth process of Buddhism, the impact of the value receiver was significant. They interpreted Buddhism in the frame of reference and generated the Chinese Buddhism which was a blend of Chinese ideology and Buddhism. Supported by Grönroos’s theory (2008), the role of the supplier can vary, while the customer is considered as the value creator. In cases when the supplier is actively participating and thus influencing the customer’s value creation process, the supplier takes the role of a value co-creator in a joint value creation process. (Grönroos, 2008).

4.1.3 Social identity in Buddhism

In this section, we start with arguing the existence of social identity in different Buddhist groups. In this sense, we assume that each Buddhist group was based on emotional or value significance. Especially, according to the literature, there existed four types of groups: recluse based on need for security; the wandering
monks based on spiritual safety and a sense of superiority which comes from affiliation; the gentry Buddhist followers based on both ontological security and sense of superiority; hybrid Buddhism based on a sense of exclusion and superiority.

Furthermore, we discuss the influence of prototypical leader on the follower’s behaviours and the inverse impact of followers on leader. Especially, the gentry Buddhist followers and hybrid Buddhist followers had stronger influence on their leaders and the construction of leadership.

4.1.3.1 The formation of social identity

According to *The menu of secret cabinet four books* (431 B.C.), there were only 438 books collected by royal library, while the total amount is 15074. (Zurcher, 1998) This indicates that most gentry Buddhist followers had little knowledge of Buddhist value. Although the educated upper class was fond of Buddhist values and theories, they had never studied the classic Buddhist sutras seriously. For them, the reason of being Buddhist followers may vary from keeping up with trend to personality cult.

The same situation also happened in recluse. Temple, as a political refuge, satisfied the need for protection, attracting many intelligentsias, who could not realize their ambitions to convert to Buddhist. Moreover, for the low-level intelligentsias, these Buddhist followers who transformed from intelligentsias set an example and created a trend of going into an ashram.

All the facts lead to our contemplation on the social identity theory. Social identity theory of Tajfel indicates that identification with the group “creates and defines an individual’s own place in society” (Tajfel 1972 cited in Hogg 2001 p. 186). This kind of group membership is integral to individuals’ positive self-esteem and self-enhancement (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity theory provides another reason, besides value, to understand why people in medieval China would accept and practice Buddhism.

It is not difficult to see that Buddhist followers, as a social mark, associated positive values to the gentry and the intelligentsia, enhance their social identity,

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14 Translation from Chinese.
and thus increase their self-esteem. The belongingness and recognition emerged from self-concepts promotes and enhances the social interaction continuum, which forges the intergroup (Tajfel, 1979). According to Sherif (1966), such group interaction and group identification will lead to intergroup behaviour. Tajfel (1979) noticed that intergroup behaviour may result in uniformity displayed by members of the ingroup in their behaviour and attitudes towards an outgroup. This explains how the Buddhist groups were formed and why they kept on attracting more members.

There are of course a lot of reasons why people would want to follow Buddhism. The reason can be summarized as follows: self-protection, self-maintenance and self-enhancement. Being a monk can bring material advantage and prestige to the family to which he belonged. Besides, he can get literary education, and even political influence if gifted (Liebenthal, 1955, p58).

Recluse, as it has been mentioned above, looked for protection from the temple. Their desire for peaceful life echoed with the value of “kong” in Buddhism; their need for security was satisfied by their identity as Buddhist followers, those individuals who abandoned the social world in order to liberate themselves from the bonds of transient existence and who became symbolically dead to the social world (Burghart 1983, p. 635). Temple not only satisfied their physiological needs and physical requirements, but it also constructed a feeling of safety and harmony. The emotional significance, together with their knowledge of being Buddhist followers, comprised their social identity (Tajfel, 1972).

The wandering monks found theological continuation in Buddhism, which enabled them to defeat fear by digging into alchemy, astrology and other magical practices (Liebenthal, 1955). In spite of the fact that they hided themselves in the dream of being immortal, Buddhism gave hope and spiritual protection, forming identification with religious group (Kinnvall, 2004). As for the immortal fantasy that the wandering monks interpreted based on their experiences in practicing Taoism, Ysseldyk et al (2010) give the explanation that “the faith inherent in religious identification is able to thrive regardless” (Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, p. 61). Though the fantasy seeming absurd and ridiculous, the wandering monks kept trusting due to superiority perceived by comparing their
positive intergroup to outgroups (Tajfel & Turner 1979, Ysseldyk; Matheson & Anisman 2010). This helped strengthen their recognition as a member of Buddhist group, forming religious identity.

The gentry Buddhist followers, with wealth and power, basically had no needs for physical security or spiritual protection. What Buddhism could provide them with was prestige and more wealth and power. On the one hand, donating money to temple, for instance, brought them the psychological comfort to “be refunded in the life hereafter” (Liebenthal, 1955, p54). The psychological comfort works in the way as ontological security, reinforcing the religious identity to the gentry’s self-concept.

On the other hand, the behaviour of sponsoring represented how wealthy and powerful the gentry were. Moreover, it showed the mercy and nobleness, which are highly valued in medieval Chinese ideology. Only those with intrinsic worth (which includes the moral qualities, such as mercy and nobleness) could be placed in more important position than others, which means hierarchy (Chen chi-yun, 2008). That is to say, being a gentry Buddhist follower could produce a sense of superiority; meanwhile implementing Buddhist practices such as sponsoring the sangha could consolidate and reinforce their prestige, which is superiority itself. According to Tajfel (1982), social differentials in status, such as power, rank, privilege, and access to resources, serves as antecedents for uniformity displayed by members of the ingroup in their behaviour and attitudes towards an outgroup. This distinguishes the ingroup from the outgroup. The former’s members, in turn, feel protected and achieve a positive social identity (Tajfel 1974, 1981, Turner 1975, Tajfel & Turner 1979 cited in Tajfel 1982, p. 24).

As mentioned in the literature review, hybrid Buddhism developed through the Friends of Lofty Conversations to overcome the problems in daily life or to answer the true meaning of life (Liebenthal, 1955). The participants were exclusively literati who possessed literary education in Confucianism and Taoism and were members in the society of the princess; and Buddhist masters like philosopher monks and clergymen (Liebenthal, 1955). Regarding the participants, hybrid Buddhist group was composed entirely of nobleman, which derived a sense of
exclusion and superiority. Therefore, psychological salience displayed by hybrid Buddhism group was central to individual’s self-concept (Cameron, 2004).

4.1.3.2 Influence on follower’s behaviour

In the case of gentry Buddhist followers and hybrid Buddhist followers, due to social status, follower had a strong influence on the leader and the leadership. Nevertheless, the leader who, as a prototype of the group, possesses the concentrated trait or identity which is shared by the group members, enhances perceived entitativity (Hogg & Reid, 2006). From Hogg and Reid’s (2006) work, we can get the reasons, why Buddhist masters, though without outstanding social status, were influential on extraordinary upper-class followers.

First of all, Buddhist masters embody the value and practice in Buddhism precisely and thus they were “the focus of conformity within the group”, which also allowed them “to gain compliance with their wishes” and made them “appear to occupy a higher status position within the group” (Hogg & Reid 2006, p. 19). Secondly, prototypical leaders usually leave such an impression that they “identify more strongly with the group than do others” (Hogg & Reid 2006, p. 19). As a result, their behaviours are regarded beneficial to the group, which is responsible for generating trust in the leader. Therefore, innovations taken by leaders are accepted in the group for its own sake. Last but not least, Buddhist masters, as prototype, were “the best source of information about the group norm” (Hogg & Reid 2006, p. 19) to the upper-class followers. Therefore, the group members are more likely to attribute their behaviour to prototypical leaders.

However, from a social identity perspective, prototypes tend to be shared within one group. Group prototypes are group norms. In this sense, the meaning is created by the group, including the leader and the followers, rather than the leader himself. Followers act as supervisor and power grantor and they can dismiss the leader if his behaviour is far away from the prototype. They are relatively high on critical thinking and activity (Kelley, 1988). To narrow further, the Buddhist followers from upper class had a positive influence upon both team members and leadership (Carsten, 2010). They regulated themselves in line with
the group norms. This kind of self-management can be regarded as leading themselves.

4.1.4 Followership in Buddhism: a voluntary gathering process

In this chapter, several aspects will be discussed considering followership. Given the Buddhist follower types listed in the literature review (recluse, the wandering monks, the gentry Buddhists, and the hybrid Buddhism), a further categorization is analyzed in the view of followership. Recluse and the wandering monks are viewed as constructors of leadership due to their personal pursuits and their social identities accordingly. The gentry Buddhists and the hybrid Buddhist followers are viewed as both followers and leaders, which forms a shared leadership. Different follower’s behaviours are activated due to the group-level context which includes culture and leadership style, and the individual-level schema which is composed of values and social identities (Carsten, 2010; Meindl, 1995; Lord & Brown, 2001). Recluse and the wandering monks are inclined to adopt passive behaviours and gentry Buddhists and the hybrid Buddhist followers are inclined to take up proactive actions.

4.1.4.1 Follower types

If someone may notice that the distinction between followers and leaders is little for recluse and the wandering monks, this distinguish almost doesn’t exist for abbots and hybrid Buddhist. Generally speaking, Buddhist followers in medieval China can be viewed from two aspects, according to their activeness. Recluse and the wandering monks were the constructors of leadership, while abbots and hybrid Buddhists were regarded as partners or even co-leaders in the relationship (Carsten, 2010).

In the process of creating the meaning of Chinese Buddhism, recluse was an active follower. Active followers define their role “in terms of offering opinions when given the opportunity, but remaining obedient and loyal regardless of whether they were in agreement with the actions of the leader” (Carsten, 2010, p556). Due to the identities before they joined the Buddhism, they brought their knowledge to the Buddhism, and attached a new meaning to it through cognitive communication. They defined a new life style in temple. Active followers express the “importance of remaining loyal to their leaders and always maintaining a
positive attitude” (Carsten, 2010, p556). As long as the recluses decided to join Buddhism, they had to abandon their former roles and follow the practice in Buddhism, which required obedience and loyalty from the recluse. Active followers may avoid overtly challenging their leaders for fear of violating social norms (Courpasson & Dany, 2003) or damaging relationships with their leaders” (Glauser, 1984; Milliken et al., 2003; Tynan, 2005). Out of personal reasons, the recluses subscribed their independence to their leaders and helped construct leadership. These personal reasons are more out of self-protection, as to keep them safe from political conflicts, or out of self-interest, as not to suffer from hunger and cold. This kind of personal pursuit restrained them from challenging Buddhist masters and promised a certain level of devotion and compliance to the environment they belonged to.

Despite of the fact that the wandering monks were different from the recluse in several ways, they dedicated the same effects to understand and develop a new meaning out of Buddhism, based on their own knowledge and cognitive abilities.

“Overall, it appears that active followers were responsive to their leaders’ requests, but lacked the self-initiating behavior to proactively identify a need and respond to it without a direct request from their leader” (Carsten 2010, p556).

On the one hand, the gentry Buddhists and the hybrid Buddhists were followers because they followed the instruction from Buddhist masters and donated a lot of wealth as well as protection and privilege. On the other hand, in the relationship with masters, they usually had the control over them. The relationship between the upper class Buddhists and the Buddhist masters was not based on dominance or submission; rather it was partnership which is a social construction of leadership (Carsten, 2010). The gentry Buddhists and the hybrid Buddhists can be viewed as proactive followers or co-producers in the leadership process (Shamir, 2007). Proactive followers view themselves as “quiet leaders”, working to advance the mission and challenge their managers if necessary (Carsten, 2010). An obvious distinction between superior and subordinate did not exist in the interaction of the upper class Buddhists and Buddhist masters. Moreover, the upper class followers usually had a higher social status than their
Buddhist masters. The interactive activity did not have to follow compulsory rules or organizational structure, which was established on the base of voluntary and equality. This equal relationship facilitated the co-production of leadership.

4.1.4.2 The construction of followership

According to Carsten (2010, p. 545), “both schema and context influence how one socially constructs a definition of followership and, by extension, how they enact the follower role”. In the medieval China, the formation of Buddhist followers was influence by the mix of individual factors and the social factors. Carsten (2010) also noted that followers have different schema (personal qualities and behaviours) of followership, ranging from hierarchical views (Konst & Van Breukelen, 2005) to contemporary views (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Shamir, 2007). Recluse and the wandering monks were from the lower level of the hierarchical society. Being unconsciously influenced for a life time, they got used to be silent and compliant. On the contrary, the gentry Buddhists and hybrid Buddhists came from the ruling class. As the owners and the managers of the country, they were educated and trained to generate their own thinking model, to govern, and to administrate.

Follower’s behaviours are not independent activities, but “behaviors of individuals acting in relation to leaders”, including “the way followers choose to take responsibility relative to leaders, the way they communicate with leaders, their approaches to problem-solving with respect to leaders, etc.” (Carsten 2010, p. 545). The gentry Buddhists and hybrid Buddhists were more willing to express their opinions and to take responsibility. Their identities, as owners and managers, allowed no disengagement in front of problems. When a problem came, they were active in problem-solving. However, the case in recluse and the wandering monks was different. Judging from their personal qualities, they should be passive followers, though their turned out to be the opposite. Without being proactive in taking responsibility, communicating, and solving problems, the transformation of Buddhist followers from their former identities would not happen. The mismatch between personal qualities and behaviours brings out the discussion of the effect in context on followership.
In the construction of followership, organizational climate and leadership styles are two variables that may have fundamental effects (Carsten, 2010). The effects are realized “by activating followership schema that is relevant to particular situations” schema and by influencing the individual behaviours in the followership roles (Bresnen 1995; Carsten 2010, p. 546). The activation is viewed as settle-in that “many values that fit with each other would be activated while conflicting values would be inhibited”, the process of which “then serve as cues for related identities, goals, and behaviors” (Lord & Brown, 2001, pp. 139-140). Given an environment that called for equality and openness, values like benevolence and conformity were activated in recluse and the wandering monks. Though they were clinging to passive before they join Buddhism, the open and equal climate in Buddhist groups encouraged them to be more active. Therefore, the changes in individual behaviour were realized though limited because their personalities were bound to Chinese ideology for long term.

4.1.4.3 Followership behaviours: an extended model by Meindl

The two models of Meindl (1995) matches with the model proposed by Lord & Brown (2001). The individual-level process explains how leadership affects values and forms followership; the group-level process explains how leadership and values influences the form of identity and generates the followership behaviours.

In the group level process, interaction networks are important because “they are the channels of communication” and influence the “diffusion of leadership concepts, attributions, and evaluations within groups” (Meindl, 1995, p336). Conversations between followers and masters had a crucial impact on the form of hybrid Buddhism. The bond among the members of the literature discussion groups is vaguely voluntary or compulsory. Due to the fact that the conversations were arranged by upper class, the participants may attend for the fear of damaging relationships with their superiors, for the worry of isolated from the social network, or for the worship or love of Buddhist values. No matter out of which motivation, such conversations facilitated the basis for interaction networks in which the construction of leadership was formed due to a contagion process that leadership concepts spread within a group of followers over time (Meindl, 1995). Tajfel (1979) defines this contagious process within a group as a...
formation of social identity. The prototype of the group, who is the centrality of the followers, has “greater weight in determining”, and hence has “views that are more indicative of” (Meindl 1995, p. 337). The social self-identity, which is parallel to interdependent self-construal was found “positively related to the value of benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security” (Lord, brown, 2001, p143). In the interactive network of hybrid Buddhism, the masters were the prototypes, who were the best in practicing the value advocated in Buddhism such as benevolence, tradition, and conformity.

4.1.4.4 The resistance against Buddhism

As a social identity, Buddhism formed a group where only those who believed in it and practiced accordingly can be members. This provoked the member from other groups to resist it. Anything that is different from normal conventions was used as excuses to oppose to it.

From the view of connectionism, the coherent patterns of values consist of an entire network. In the network, values fit with each other, supporting, explaining, and overlapping, when conflicting values, from outside of the network, would be inhibited. So it is difficult to change a specific value or related behaviour, because “strongly organized or coherent networks create strong constraints on each value from other values in a network”, which differs from person to person (Lord & Brown 2001, p. 139). In other words, people who possessed coherent values were activated to identify Buddhism and become followers when it came to China; meanwhile, those who had conflicting values were activated to inhibit Buddhism. This, on the basis of value, explains why several anti-clericalism events were traced in medieval China, in the name of different noble excuses, to exclude Buddhism. Moreover, Zurcher (1998, pp. 256-257) noted that ideological factors were the main focus of the controversy issues, which were based on “the conflict between the spiritual ideals of a religious community and the cynical materialism of a group of politicians” that mingled with tradition and other religious elements. The sangha were “free from any obligation towards the secular authorities and not liable to state supervision doesn’t have to respect the emperor” (Zurcher, 1998, pp. 256). Not to mention, they barely showed filial obedience to parents, which is opposite to “li” principle of the Confucian state doctrine.
In addition, social identity theory provides another angle to understand the hostility that uniformity of attitudes and behaviours displayed by intergroup may lead to hostility or hate towards the outgroup (Brewer, 1999). Although, we have concluded how the social identity was formed among different Buddhist groups, this chapter will elaborate the anti-clericalism process from opposite perspective, that is to view the Buddhism groups as outgroup and to analyze how the hostility was formed. In this regard, three types of anti-clericalism were found in the Buddhism history in our studying period. The controversy issues lie in “practical objections of the secular powers against the existence of an asocial and unproductive enclave within society” (Zurcher 1998, p. 236).

On the one hand, the repulsion mainly occurred between Buddhist followers and the gentry class, which refers to the bureaucrat and the government of the emperor (Zurcher, 1998). When groups are political entities, the hostility may be exacerbated on purpose to secure or maintain political power because of the threat to ingroup, whether actual or imagined (Brewer, 1999). This explains why it is difficult to convert the gentry class to Buddhist followers, because their control on the country was threatened by the rising influence of Buddhism monks in social and political stage. Deliberate manipulation towards outgroup, such as public exclusion, was implemented by group leader to ensure the benefit of his group. The famous example is Huan Xuan’s criticism and disputes on Buddhist groups.

One the other hand, nationalism played its role in the repulsion, too. Tajfel and Turner (1979) suggest that ingroups also strive for positive group distinctiveness. Ingroups with obvious advantage will seek to maintain or exaggerate the positive distinctiveness, while ingroups with disadvantage are inclined to show deprivation and resentment towards the outgroup (Brewer, 1999). Buddhism was excluded due to its foreign background, since a strong sense of superiority and self-sufficiency was traced in Chinese, strong enough to block their eyes and resist any other culture without second thoughts (Zurcher, 1998).

The anti-clericalism activity ended up with the success of apologetical activities. The success can be viewed from different causes. First of all, it can be viewed as a success of value blend-in. Anti-clerical Chinese authorities seemed to fail in
understanding the nature of Buddhist (Zurcher, 1998). One prevailing opinion for defense was that Buddhism worked as tool to serve for royal authority. Despite that partial practice of sangha was against values in Chinese ideology, Buddhism value deserved an authoritative position because it has higher moral standard. Therefore, the good fortune due to practicing Buddhist values is more beneficial, and more influential, which can manipulate people’s mind and consolidate the central authority (Peng zi-qiang, 2000). The redefinition of Buddhist value eliminated the worry of losing power and influence that Buddhism may bring to the gentry class, as well as tried to prove that positive distinctiveness in Buddhism was even greater. To sum up, the changes in Chinese Buddhism overthrew all the reasons that other social group came up with to protest Buddhism.

Secondly, it succeeded because of getting social recognition. As has been mentioned above, prototypical leaders can “gain compliance with their wishes” (Hogg, 2006, p19). Moreover, prototypical leaders can generate trust from followers since their behaviours are regarded beneficial to the group. Thus, innovations taken by leaders are accepted in the group for its own sake. When Buddhism was protested by other groups, one famous and influential Buddhist master, Hui-yuan, stood out and argued on behalf of Buddhism. Since he was knowledgeable and authoritative, he was regarded as “the best source of information about the group norm” (Hogg, 2006, p. 19). And trust was generated due to his morality and practices. Buddhist followers were willing to attribute their behaviour to him. In the debate of justifying Buddhism, he explained the reason to protect Buddhism and showed his desire to enhance the religious group as well, which received a lot of support from different followers. This reflection from vast followers provided the basis for the success of apologetical activities.

Last but not least, the success of apologetical activities lied in the dedication of all the Buddhist followers, especially followers from the upper class. They were both proactive followers, co-producer of leadership, who were more willing to express their opinions and to take responsibility. The interactive activity was free from compulsory rules or organizational structure, which was established on the base of voluntary and equality.
Therefore, the upper class followers were more willing and able to defend for Buddhist groups and Buddhism during the Anti-clerical activities. Following Tajfel’s *antecedents* (1982), we can interpret this last point as follows. First of all, social differentials in status, such as power, rank, privilege, and access to resources, served as for uniformity displayed by members of the ingroup in their behaviour and attitudes towards an outgroup. Secondly, the upper class followers usually possess large amount of wealth and power, so their social influence is also considerable.

### 4.2 Analysis of Christianity

#### 4.2.1 Vision and visionary leadership in early Christianity

In the historical part, we have ascribed the success of Christianity to four factors. The first two are the new divine project of God for human beings and the role of Constantine as the leader who started up the massive conversion of the Roman Empire from paganism to Christianity. We consider these two factors as connected as they stand in the same theoretical framework that we have extracted from them. In particular, we assume that the divine project of Christianity was a vision of the future which, by giving a sacred sense of direction, was able to mobilize the souls and thus the actions of the faithful. Analogously, we assume that Constantine’s leadership was such that can be labeled as visionary.

The vision is defined as “one of the most critical elements of successful leadership” (Bennis & Nanus 2004 p. vi) that is useful to give everyone involved in an organization a clear sense of direction. This recalls what we actually said about the divine project that the Christian God had in store for humans, a project that changed human lives by making them more meaningful because it gave them actually a sense of direction. More specifically, vision can be “equated with a capacity for 'imagination', 'inspiration', 'insight', 'foresight', and 'sagacity’” (Westley & Mintzberg 1989, p. 22). In other words, vision is about the ability to predict future directions. In this sense, leaders endowed with vision see in advance how a specific aspect of the world is changing.

This point confirms our findings about Constantine, who apparently had a future vision of the triumphant Christianity. Interestingly, according to Bennis and Nanus (2004 p. 82) vision is also something resembling a dream. In this respect, we may find something similar in the life of Constantine: the night on the eve of the battle of Milvian
Bridge, he had a dream in which he saw a cross in the heavens with the inscription “Hoc signo victor eris (by this sign you will conquer)” (Eusebius of Caesarea 337 cited in Firth 1905, pp. 40-48; Grant 1993, p. 140; Smith 1971, p. 103; Veyne 2010, p. 54). Right from this point we can extract the critical feature of Constantine as a leader that had helped Christianity in spreading throughout the Empire: he was a visionary leader. As Veyne (2010, p. 120) puts it “he belonged to the race of visionaries and prophets. He was a prophet armed with an ideal, a Christian Empire”.

It is also worth mentioning how a vision originates in human mind. In this regard Westley and Mintzberg (1989, p. 22) argue that the mental origin of vision is a combination of mental and social dynamics, “vision may arise primarily through introspection or interaction, or through the combination of the two”. In this case, we would say that the vision of Constantine was in all likelihood more about introspection, as he was said to have undertaken a conversion on his own (Veyne 2010, p. 78).

As far as visionary leadership is concerned, Westley and Mintzberg (1989) assume that the latter can take different forms. Among them, we have found the style of visionary leadership that better describes the figure of Constantine, that is the creator visionary. For this kind of visionary leader, the vision:

“occurs in moments of inspiration, which seize the leader suddenly and unexpectedly and which become, for that leader, a driving preoccupation, a single-minded focus which evokes, at least metaphorically, the notion of all eyes turned in a single direction. Such vision is often experienced as deriving from a source outside the self; as in the classic case of religious leaders who claim to be the receptacles or channels of divine inspiration” (Westley & Mintzberg 1989, p. 24).

Clearly, we can see here how well this definition suits the case of Constantine. In particular, let us focus on the point where the vision is said to be something originally “external” to the leader. Indeed, it should be noted that Constantine’s vision is not original in the sense that it came from the outside as a result of his conversion. We should keep in mind that the “original” in the sense of “origin” vision is that of Christianity. On the other hand, Constantine’s vision can be considered original to the extent that we refer to his personal vision of the future of the Church within the Empire. Nonetheless, it always appears as chronologically subsequent and logically
submitted to that of Christianity. We might say that while the vision of Christianity resides on a metaphysical level, that of Constantine is more on a practical level.

Furthermore, Westley and Mintzberg (1989, pp. 18-22) use the metaphor of drama to describe the visionary leadership. This metaphor is articulated in a model composed by three phases: repetition, representation and assistance. To some extent, we can associate this image of visionary leadership as drama to the “drama of replay” that still nowadays Christians performed during the liturgies. Actually, according to Rizzi, “the Catholic Mass is an out-and-out representation, so much so that, at a certain point, the priest speaks in persona Christi saying – everyone take and eat it, this is my body given to you – meaning that it is His body, the body of Christ”. However, the model proposed by Westley and Mintzberg (1989) can be properly applied to the Christian bloodless replay of Jesus Calvary and sacrifice, only as far as the representation phase is concerned.

What else can we say to motivate the success of the vision of Christianity? We found that some visions are more effective because they are able to lead followers towards. An ideal possible self (i.e., one’s most desired image of oneself). In other words, according to Stam et al. (2010, p. 457), the more a vision addresses and involves followers personally, the more the followers are led to their ideal possible self.

It should be noted that the possible self is the part of the self-concept that deals with the future: “possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become. They are also the selves we could become, and the selves we are afraid of becoming” (Markus & Nurius 1986, p. 954).

The latter is important to explain how vision communication mobilizes followers, “because possible selves are closely related to motivational and self-regulatory processes, such as identity development, long term self-regulation, and social comparison processes” (Stam et al. 2010, p. 458).

Now we use this theoretical framework to motivate the success of the vision of Christianity. We think that Christianity had first given the faithful a model of ideal possible self to which aspire. This possible ideal self is represented by the figure of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came down to this earth to save the humanity and to defeat sin by sacrificing Himself. Such an ideal possible self is such that one, by following the example of love towards the next given by Jesus, could have granted the
salvation and the immortality of the soul. However, it is worth repeating that in the early Christianity, the humanity of Christ was not the attribute that drew believers to the Lord. It is true that “love did occupy the subconscious of minds of believers and motivated their faith” (Veyne 2010, p. 32). Nonetheless, for the faithful, “their primary occupation was morality and it was this that they needed to demonstrate [...]. Once one had been admitted to the Church, the keyword was discipline rather than love” (Veyne 2010, p. 32).

To sum up, a believer who wanted to get closer to the ideal possible self, exemplified by Christ, had to apply love in his or her everyday life, but more than that, he or she had to show obedience to the Church. In this sense, what is outstanding in the message of Christianity is that the latter not only had posed the “problem” (salvation) and the ideal holy example of Jesus, it had also given the solution (morality and love) at the same time. This holy example must be followed if one wished to reach the salvation. In this very part we see the self-regulation indirectly imposed to the believers to achieve the ideal possible self.

Concluding, in this paragraph, we have analyzed the first two factors behind the spread of Christianity in late antiquity. Especially, we have seen that divine project of Christianity can be interpreted as the concept of vision, as the latter stands in the leadership literature. Besides, we have also seen that the leadership displayed by Constantine, and especially we refer to attitudes and words in the spiritual side of his life, was such that can be labeled as visionary.

4.2.2 The Church as a hierarchical organization

As we have seen in the historical-religious part, Christianity gave itself a hierarchical structure consisting in a three-fold order with the bishop on the top, then the presbyters and the deacons. Besides, we have seen why this hierarchical structure can be considered a critical factor to the success of Christianity as well as a relevant situation in which to analyze leadership in Christian religion. Therefore, in this paragraph we will apply the aforementioned theoretical framework of hierarchical structure and leadership to the case of Christianity.

Schneeweirß (1995, p. 5) ranks leadership into three levels: strategic leadership, tactical leadership and operative leadership. In this respect, we can associate the aforementioned three-level of leadership with the leadership of the bishops within the
Christian communities in the age of Constantine. Especially, bishops seem to have exerted a strategic leadership from the community point of view. In fact, to be part of a Christian community one necessarily had to be a Christian and the bishop had the power to accept or reject new faithful. Moreover, the bishop was the one who handled and communicated the word of God to the community. For these reasons we can assume that bishops had the control of the identity of the community.

In addition, we could associate the common three tiers of the organizational design, top-middle-bottom, and the related general levels of leadership individuated by Jacobs and McGee (2001, cited in De Church et al. 2010, p. 1070) to the three-fold order devised by Ignatius of Antioch (bishop-presbyters-deacons) (Brent 2009, p. 195). But we have not found enough literature to go as far to say that the leadership of the bishops is the one that implies the setting of broad objectives. Nor we found literature in the history of Christianity that describes the presbyters at the middle level coordinating and integrating, while the deacons at the bottom hire and fire tasks.

However, the most interesting considerations come out when we combine Ogawa and Bossert’s work (1995) to the case of the Catholic Church. In effect, the study of the history of Christianity, and especially the focus on how the still existing clergy’s organization came into being, suggested us that this structure played an important role from a leadership point of view. Our assumption is that the very structure of the Church was useful to the latter to maintain its leadership throughout the centuries. Although we are not claiming that this was done on purpose by the founding fathers of the Church. In fact, as Brent (2009, p. 209) points out “such theological developments were incidental and not consciously pragmatic”.

So let us begin with saying that we assume the technical-rational perspective because it is more appropriate to analyze the case of the Church and we are going to explain why. In the first place, this perspective asserts that organizing is about goal attainment and formal structure giving. In this respect, we might say that the goal of the Church was both to proselytize, thus enlarging the base of faithful, and to control the latters. Especially, the last point resonates with the technical-rational perspective according to which organizations’ formal structure is of use to influence participants’ mind and behaviours.
Secondly, the technical-rational theory of organization states that leadership lies only in the hands of the top levels of the organizations. Undoubtedly, this is the case of the Christian Church where the bishops possessed the more prominent role within the organization. In this case, leadership was really related to the organizational role and the authority of position held by the bishops was blatant.

Last but not least, in the technical-rational theory, leadership is unidirectional, that is to say that it can flow only in a top-down way. In our understanding, this point is totally applicable to the case of the Church. True, the faithful are asked to partake in the liturgies, to contribute to the well-being of the community. But the leadership is not shared with them; it only comes from the top, that is from the bishops and then the priests and deacons, because of their unquestionable proximity to God. In other words, we argue the clergy’s structure was (and still is) a way through which the Church kept and upheld its leadership in the Christianity as a religion. As Veyne (2010, p. 36), suggests, Christianity was unique because it was more than a religion, it was also a Church, “a belief that exercised authority over all those who shared it, supported by a hierarchy, a clergy by its very nature superior to the laity”.

Therefore, it makes sense to analyze the hierarchical organization of the Church according to the technical-rational theory of organization. The leadership exerted by the clergy suits well with this theoretical framework. The question is: how was this leadership carried out within the Church? What did this “fence” consist of and who was its guardian? The answer will be provided in the next paragraph, where we will deal with the leadership of bishops.

4.2.3 The leadership of bishops in late antiquity

From our research on the figure of bishops in late antiquity, we have found that the latters displayed a certain kind of authority. In accordance with the insightful cues we got from Rizzi (see Appendix), we have divided this authority into two areas: religious power and political power. Besides, we have seen that Rapp (2005) propose a further classification into three areas: spiritual authority, ascetic authority, and pragmatic authority. Then, from the analysis of bishop’s authority, we have singled out two specific aspects that we consider relevant from a leadership point of view, which are the bishop as a role model for the community and the administration of penance.
In our opinion, these two issues are relevant to the extent that they represented two important sources of power available to bishops. On top of that, we can gain a further insight into the relationship between the bishop and the faithful, that is between leader and followers. In effect, if leadership is a process of group influence (Hogg, 2001, p. 184), by interpreting these two issues according to the theories we have found, we hope to give a better understanding on the influence of the bishop over the members of his community. In doing so, we will be able to shed some light on the leadership of bishops within Christian communities.

Respectively, the theories we have derived in the previous chapter are the following: leading by example (or role modeling) and management of unethical behaviour, the latter being useful to introduce the concept of compliance under threat of punishment. However, as we said in the literature review, the theories belonging to these two concepts are to be included into the wider framework of ethical leadership. Therefore, we begin this section by proposing our assumption, according to which leadership of bishops in late antiquity might be labeled as ethical. Then, we will first go deeper into the interpretation of the role of bishops as exemplar model of conduct for their community members. Secondly, we will relate the authority of bishops to impose penance on sinners to some study carried out in the social science field concerning the compliance under threat of punishment. Finally, we will draw a conclusion of this section by summarizing the main features of the leadership of bishops.

4.2.3.1 The bishop as ethical leader

Our first assumption is that the roles of bishops within Christian communities showed many points in common with the concept of ethical leadership. For instance, the three main features of an ethical leader pinpointed by Brown et al. (2005, p. 120) can be easily seen in the several tasks the bishops were vested in. The first feature of ethical leadership, that is leaders as models of ethical conduct, will be dealt with widely in the next paragraph. Also the feature of management of morality will be discussed in a further paragraph. Here, we can say that the second feature, which considers leaders’ behaviour as motivated by altruism, is showed by bishops in the charitable works he was responsible for in his congregation, such as the care of consecrated virgins, widows and orphans, prisoners, travelers, and the poor (Rapp 2005, p. 23).
Furthermore, as we have seen in the previous chapter, ethical leadership is related to moral identity (Mayer et al. 2012, p. 152). So, we can assume that bishops, to the extent that they displayed moral behaviours, had a strong moral identity and thus they exerted ethical leadership. In this sense, we may argue that bishops in late antiquity, through their highly moral behaviours, showed (or at least, they were expected to show) a solid *symbolization* (Mayer et al. 2012, p. 153), that is the public dimension of moral identity. Therefore, we could conclude that bishops, in leading by example, drew on the symbolization aspect of their moral identity.

What about the other dimension, that is *internalization*? According to Mayer et al. (2012, p. 153), this dimension has to do the moral traits imbedded in an individual’s self-concept. Besides, this is the dimension through which we can motivate the stimulus of the leader to punish unethical behaviour (Mayer et al. 2012, p. 153). So, bishops when managing morality by imposing penance on sinners, or just preemptively threatening followers to do so, were using their internalization aspect of their moral identity.

Concluding, in this first paragraph, we have introduced the leadership of bishops in late antiquity by motivating our assumption, that is: bishops’ leadership as ethical leadership. According to our findings, bishops were ethical leaders and thus they were endowed with a strong moral identity. In addition, we have set the next two concepts we will deal with into two different dimension of moral identity, which are *symbolization* and *internalization*. Therefore, the next two paragraphs deepen the analysis of bishops leading by example and administration of penance by applying the theories we have extracted in the previous chapter.

4.2.3.2 The bishop as a role model for the community

When we have talked about the authority of bishops, we have revealed in advance that there was an aspect concerning the role of bishops that acted as a necessary premise to

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15 It should be noted that our assumptions, as well as our considerations on bishops are meant to express how bishops were expected to be, not how they actually were. When we state, in accordance with our theoretical framework, that bishops were ethical leaders, we mean that, generally speaking, they were expected to be so. The holds true for moral identity and all other assumptions we make. The indirect source from which we take the “ideal” model of bishop is called *Didascalia*, a book written in the first half of the third century which includes ample information on the duties of bishops and the personal traits required of a bishop to fulfill his role (Rapp 2005).
their effective leadership. The latters were, in fact, required to be a model for the community they ruled. As Rapp puts it (2005, p. 41):

“common to all the text of the post-Constantinian era is the strong nexus they establish between personal virtues of a bishop, the acceptance by others— including pagans—of his position of leadership, and the effectiveness of his pastoral care. The congregation, they point out, will accept bishop’s guidance in spiritual and moral issues only if he shows himself to be outstanding moral integrity”.

This what Rapp (2005, p. 41) calls “dialectical nature of episcopal leadership”, meaning that the bishop needed to earn the recognition of his authority through his exemplary conduct. Clearly, in this case, we can easily apply the theories regarding leading by example that we have introduced in the previous chapter. We can state that bishops were the role models for their community. Besides, we can assume that bishops exerted effective leadership only to the extent that their words were follower or anticipated by their actions.

True, the words they preached during the liturgies counted, yet they did not predict their effective leadership. On the contrary, in order to maintain the respect and cooperation of his flock, the bishops had to show an exemplar Christian conduct (Rapp 2005, p. 28). Thus, behaviour mattered more than words, because leaders “are expected to represent group identity and values in their personal behavior” (Shamir et al. 1998 cited in Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 809).

As we have said earlier, “a bishop must practice what he preaches” (Rapp 2005, p. 41). Analogously, “effective leaders must practice what they preach” (Bulls 2007, p. 377). Here we find the confirmation of our assumption according to which the role modeling of bishops effective only insofar as they could model himself after Christ and through their own example invite his congregation to imitate him (Rapp 2005, p. 31).

Therefore, we can apply the three functions of role models pinpointed by Gibson (2004, p. 136) to the case of bishops in late antiquity. First of all, their pastoral and liturgical tasks provided learning to the congregation. Bishops also provided motivation and inspiration to the faithful. Last but not least, we might argue the bishop acting as role models influenced faithful self-concept and social identity.
4.2.3.3 Compliance under threat of punishment

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church […] and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16: 18-19).

We have just seen that the bishops were expected to be an exemplar model for their congregation. Then, according to the theories of role modeling, we have seen that leading by example is one of the possible ways available to leaders to influence followers’ behaviour.

Was there another way for bishops to achieve this goal? The answer is yes and refers to the administration of penance. According to Rapp (2005, p. 30) the authority to impose penance by excluding unworthy members from the community, until their sincere repentance has made them worthy of readmission, is the most prominent role ascribed to bishops.

But, let us now describe in a nutshell what this task was about. In the first place, the preconditions for bishops to effectively exercise this authority were to accept someone into the Christian community. In fact, once could be excluded if not previously included. In this respect, the official entrance into the Christian community was ratified with the initiation ritual of baptism. From a practical point of view, baptism consisted in the full-body immersion into the baptismal waters, which brought complete purification and cleansing from all sins “and signaled a new birth in the Spirit” (Rapp 2005, p. 74).

Once baptized and thus accepted into the Christian community, for the new faithful things changed radically. As Rapp notices (2005, p. 93):

“from that moment on, any sins, weighed heavier because they had been committed after the receipt of God’s grace. Not only did they alienate the individual from the community of Christians; they estranged him or her from

\[16\] It should be noted that the precondition for bishops to exercise this authority was, once again, related to way they themselves behave. To be worthy of imposing penance, a bishop had to be immune to bribery, impartial in his judgment, merciful and compassionate towards sincerely penitent, so much so that “he can be effective in his admonition only if he himself leads an impeccable life” (Rapp 2005, p. 31). Actually, this point leads us back to the concept of role modeling.
In other words, though baptism the prerequisites for the administration of penance were created. Literally, we can see in the previous quote that the acceptance of an individual into the community of Christians meant for him or her to be put under the constant threat of an incoming punishment. A punishment that, we should remember, will have finally come from God on the Day of Judgment, but, for the time being, it was executed by humans, namely bishops and priests.

Now, as we have said earlier, we are not interested in the punishment itself\(^\text{18}\). Rather, from a leadership point of view, we are more concerned with the possibility for a leader to use the threat of punishment over followers. Let us take, for instance, the most extreme form of alienation for a Christian, that is excommunication. It should be noted that this extreme sanction that the Church could provide was not physical, rather it consisted in the exclusion from the community.

To what extent the threat to be expelled from the community might have influenced the behaviour of the faithful? Obviously, we cannot know exactly the response of people in late antiquity, but we can reasonably assume that the ever-present threat of excommunication was an effective deterrent against sinful behaviours. In accordance with Mann (1986, p. 381), from the moment in which Christianity took over on, the principle *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (no salvation outside the Church), was accepted almost universally, so much so that “even the worst bandit was wary of excommunication”.

What we have presented here is maybe the most important source of power in the hands of bishops. A kind of power that descended directly from the bible (see the quote above), which reports the words of Jesus to Peter, and thus indirectly to the bishops as legitimate successors of Peter. It is labeled as the power to bind and loose faithful and it “was later to become the most potent weapons of the episcopate in exerting authority

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\(^{18}\) To be thorough, when a Christian committed sin, the process of atoning it took place in stages: confession by the sinner either to an individual or to the community; pronouncement by the priest or bishop of the required penance; performance of whatever penance had been imposed; and finally readmission into the community in a solemn ritual that symbolized both the reintegration into the community and the readmission into communion with God, made evident in the ritual laying on of hands by the bishop on the successful penitent (Rapp 2005, p. 93).
over their flock, theological and political adversaries, secular rulers, especially in the form of excommunication” (Rapp 2005, p. 93).

Therefore, we can assume that bishops exerted a moral authority over faithful, and that this moral authority actually represented a solid source of power. As Hall (1997, p. 594) suggests, “moral authority acquires utility as a power resource when it becomes socially embedded in a system of actors whose social identities and interests impel them to recognize it as a power resource”. We might say that this is exactly what happened in late antiquity when the majority of the population became Christian. The moral authority of the bishops became embedded in the social fabric of the Roman Empire and over the centuries it got recognized as source of power.

Back to the threat of punishment exerted by bishops, we can interpret this issue according to the five conditions we have singled out in the previous chapter, under which the target will comply with the source given a threat of punishment. It is worth remembering that source and target are the two end of the coercion. In this case, the source if coercion is the bishop, and the target are the faithful.

- More compliance is given to threats issued by a high-status source than to those from a low-status source (Foley & Tedeschi 1971, p. 197).

In effect, the moral authority of bishops was the highest possible within a community, thereby we can confirm that this first condition might have been the case in Christian communities.

- The greater the credibility of threatened punishment, the higher the chance that the threat caused compliance (Horai & Tedeschi 1969, p. 168).

In this case, we should make a point. If by punishment we mean those imposed directly by bishops, like excommunication, then we can easily state that the threat was credible. The same hold true for all other “physical” punishments. But, if we mean the more general and otherworldly threat of eternal damnation, then, whether it was credible or not, it did not really matter, as people believed in it.

- The greater the severity of the threatened punishment, the higher the chance that the threat caused compliance (Horai & Tedeschi 1969, p. 168).

19 Other lighter forms of penance were commensurate in intensity and duration with the severity of the sin. They included prayer, fasting, almsgiving, lamentations and wearing ashes and sackcloth (Rapp 2005, p. 93).
In the same way, we can assume that people of that time sought to abstain from committing those sins that could have led to more severe punishments. Therefore, we might say that depending on the severity of the attached punishment, people kept away from certain behaviours.

- There is a positive relation between source’s capacity to inflict punishment and target’s compliance (Tedeschi 1970; Luckenbill 1982).

- The lesser the target’s capacity to oppose the source, the higher the chance that the threat caused compliance (Tedeschi, Bonoma & Novinson, 1970; Luckenbill 1982).

In this case, we can argue that the bishops’ capacity to inflict the punishment was unmatched, at least within their own communities. Analogously, we might assume that faithful’s capacity to oppose the clergy in the way of penance and sins was inexistent, given the impossibility to disconfirm bishops’ words.

To sum up this paragraph, we report the words of Wellman and Tokuno (2004, p. 294) on religions’ moral authority:

“Religions throughout history and across cultures have formed themselves around a power or force that is experienced as within, outside, and above the sources of “normal” forms of moral authority in human societies. Religions call on sources of moral and spiritual authority that cannot be empirically disconfirmed by means of ordinary verification, whether socially, culturally, politically, or scientifically. In this way, the power and force of religion is beyond question, analysis, or inspection. This gives to religion and to leaders within religious communities enormous social and moral leverage to mobilize groups toward whatever metaphysical or political goals they experience or create.”

4.2.3.4 Final consideration

In this section we have analyzed the leadership of bishops as related to two specific aspects: leading by example and moral authority. Both aspects relate to the concept of influence on followers’ behaviour. Especially, we have argued that leading by example and moral authority are two possible ways available to leaders to impact on followers’ behaviour. And we can see how bishops in late antiquity made use of them.
Regarding bishops’ role modeling we can draw the following conclusion. If leadership is very much a process of group influence (Hogg 2001, p. 184), then we might say that a formal leader is really a leader only to those who are willing to follow (Yaffe & Kark 2011, p. 821). And to buy followers into this process of leadership, or in other words “to get followers to do something they otherwise would not do” (Gächter et al. 2012, p. 953), one can lead by example. In this regard, it is worth reminding that having moral identity is not enough, rather, one needs to show it. For ethical leaders “walk the talk” by engaging in ethical leadership behaviours is pivotal to bear on followers’ behaviour (Mayer et al. 2012, p. 154). And, leading by example, is what bishops in late antiquity were expected to do.

As for moral authority, we have seen that the latter revealed itself in the administration of penance, which was exclusive domain of bishops. We have showed the significance of this task in influencing and coercing faithful’s behaviours, and we have seen in this a major source of power. As Rapp (2005, p. 99) puts it, “the exercise of his penitential prerogative allows the bishop to place himself in a long and unbroken chain of tradition and enables him to remind his congregation of who is really in charge”.

4.2.4 The social identity theory in Christianity

From the previous paragraphs, it is clear that our research on the historical-religious side has led us towards different findings regarding leadership. However, there is a theoretical framework that we can use to motivate both the spread of Christianity and Buddhism. This common theoretical framework is the social identity theory developed by Tajfel (1972).

4.2.4.1 Social identity and Christianity

It has been estimated that from Constantine’s conversion to Christianity in 312 B.C. to the end of the century, the percentage of Christians in the Roman Empire increased from 5-10% to almost 100% (Veyne 2010, pp. 2-3). Why did more and more people become Christian? From a general point of view, we assume that social identity can give a reasonable motivation about the success of Christianity

Let us first explain the importance of social identity and group membership for individuals. As Haslam et al. (2009, p. 2) puts it, “humans are social beings. The most important expression of this sociality is that we live, and have evolved to live, in social
groups”. By being member of groups, individuals enhance their self-conceptualization (Tajfel 1972 cited in Hogg 2001 p. 186) and self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner 1979, p. 40), thus providing a sense of social identity. In the same way, group membership, by giving a sense of place, purpose, and belonging, infuse people’s lives with meaning (Haslam et al. pp. 2-3).

Therefore, we argue that, in late antiquity, we could have seen a social identity process in which citizens of the Roman Empire (for reasons that will be discussed later) felt the need for being part of a certain group, namely the Christian communities.

4.2.4.2 Christianity: a compelling worldview

What was the reason behind so many conversions? Let us say that, generally speaking, individuals wish to enter groups because they can enrich our lives in various ways: personal security, social companionship, emotional bonding, intellectual stimulation, and collaborative learning. (Haslam et al. pp. 2-3).

Regarding religions, we have already seen that identification with religious groups provides ontological security and reduces existential anxiety (Kinnvall 2004, pp. 746-749). In particular, we have stated the importance for individuals to believe in a religion that claims the truth. This point can also be applied to Christianity. In fact, we know from Veyne (2010, p. 34) that Christianity set itself apart from paganism to the extent that the former “was a religion that professes its faith”. According to Christians, God is the Truth bearer, all other gods were inventions and falsehoods. In other words, Christianity was a belief, whereas paganism was just a religion Veyne (2010, p. 36). In late antiquity, this might have given people a more stable source of ontological security than paganism was, namely a religion which was undoubtedly the correct one to follow.

However, in the previous chapter, we have argued that what makes religious groups really distinctive is that the fact that it provides faithful with a compelling and conforming worldview. Koltko-Rivera (2004, p. 4) defines worldview as a way to describe the universe, including also what goals can be sought and should be pursued in life. In the same way, we can argue that a worldview is exactly what Christianity had provided to converts. Although in a previous section we have expressed the worldview in terms of vision, the meaning is the same. We said that, in Christianity, God had a divine project for all humanity, and this gave a general sense of direction as well as a new meaning to human lives (Veyne 2010, p. 19). Here, we can find the most appealing characteristics
of Christianity as a group: it was actually able to provide gives the prospect of an eternal group membership.

4.2.4.3 Leadership and religious groups

A further characteristic that set religious groups apart from other social groups is the leadership structure. In this regard, Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman (2010, p. 67) single out two general layers of religious leadership. The first layer is represented by individual or entity that holds the primary authority over group members within each religious tradition (e.g., Buddha, Christ, Mohammed). It should be noted that, as these entities are not tangibly living on earth, “no personal identity exists to cloud the pure archetype of the social identity itself” (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005 cited in Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, p. 67). In this sense, we might argue that these central characters, for their religions, are the ideal prototypical leaders par excellence (Hogg 2001, p. 188).

The second layer of religious leadership is composed by human beings that actively promote the faith and traditions of the group. The leaders in this layer “operate within the relevant sociopolitical context and embed the activities that define the group within dominant physical landmarks (e.g., temples, churches, mosques) across community landscapes” (Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, p. 67). In other words, these earthly leaders act as go-between by linking divine world and human world.

In this structure we can see the basic structure of the Christian theology. At the first level, there is God, who represents the single first principle, in Greek μοναρχία.20 Subordinate to God, but always on the highest level, resides the Logos, that is Christ (Brent 2009, p. 219). On the second level of Christian theology there are the human leaders, such as the bishops, who represented the Logos at the microcosmic level.21

Clearly, this structure of religious leadership is such that binds the prototypical stability of the “divine leaders” (first layer) with contextual flexibility of human leaders (second layer), “to promote the group’s collective cause with contemporary relevance”. (Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, p. 67).

20 From mónos (μόνος), that is “one” or “single”, and árchi (ἀρχή), that is “beginning” or “origin”, but also “rule” or “empire”. Hence, the concept of monarchy (Brent 2009, p. 218).
21 While the emperor represented the Logos, that is Christ, at the cosmic level (see Appendix).
4.2.4.4 Participation in liturgies

It is worth remembering that in order to be a Christian one had to participate in periodical Divine Liturgy. Only in this way one could be accepted in the Christian community. This further practical aspect of group membership is said to have some influence on individuals’ social identity.

In this regard, Greenfield and Marks (2007, p. 247) suggest that individuals participated in liturgies to enhance their social identity: “social identity theory would suggest that formal participation within a given social group would enhance individuals’ social identities in terms of that group, and vice versa”.

Moreover, Lim and Putnam (2009 cited in Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, p. 64) found that the importance of religion to one’s self-concept enhanced life satisfaction only when reinforced by their religious community. In other words, “praying together is better than bowling together, and better than praying alone” (Lim & Putnam 2009, cited in Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman 2010, p. 64).

Therefore, we might say that the participation in liturgies, together with other members of the community, contributed to the enhancement of faithful social identity. Besides, we might argue that this periodical gathering of people could have been a further aspect that made Christianity so appealing in the eyes of non-believers.

4.2.4.5 Final consideration

The social identity perspective seems to us an effective tool to explain why religiosity is often held in high regard, and especially how a religion can thrive. Basically, what we have argued in this section is that Christianity, in the form of Christian communities, represented a worth joining group. People of that time might have been attracted by the worldview provided by God to humans and preached by bishops and priests, by the truth claims and also by the regular and joint participation in celebrations.

Concluding with a quote from Wellman and Tokuno (2004, p. 292):

“the symbolic boundaries of religion provide a powerful engine for individual and group identity formation. Religion has always functioned to shape individual and social identities and inspire group formation. The powerful affective events and experiences of religion, embodied in ritual action and
mystical practice, formulated through systems of belief and story, have motivated human beings across time and culture.”
5. LEADERSHIP IN BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY AND FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP

Following our process of research, in the first phases we have unearthed what for us were the main aspects of leadership, embedded in the history of Buddhism and Christianity, for the timespan we took into consideration. Then, from them we have derived a significant number of theories, which later we have applied to the same historical-religious aspects. By taking on this approach, we have gained a better understanding of the historical-religious aspects from a leadership point of view.

This is, in a few words, what we have done so far. Yet, this was not an end to itself; on the contrary, all we have done is in view of the last and final phase, with which we will give an answer to the research question: what can we say about leadership by studying the history of these two religions? What relevance had the two moments for the understanding of leadership? In effect, it is true that what we have done up to the previous chapter allowed us to understand better the historical-religious findings from a leadership point of view. Yet, simultaneously and indirectly, it is also true that all this process gave us the chance to deepen our reflection on the concept of leadership in general, as it stands today.

So, now time has come to conclude this work by accomplishing the last step. We will do that in the next three paragraphs. The first one includes the summary of the findings of the previous chapter for both the religions. The second paragraph contains our reflections on the leadership of the two religions. In the third paragraph, we propose our final consideration of leadership as a result of our thesis.

5.1 Summary of the findings

5.1.1 Chinese Buddhism

In the values’ chapter, we have three findings in regards of theoretical framework and religious history, based on our interpretation. First of all, Chinese traditional values and Buddhist values are compatible on the basis of Ros at el.’s (1999) theory. In addition, when analyzing how the Buddhist values blended in with other Chinese traditional values, we discover that Buddhist values can maintain and enhance its influence on organization by building trust among Buddhist followers and masters. In the last place, values have both explicit and implicit influence on follower’s behaviours. The latter
influence takes effect through the cognitive process in which Buddhist values provided the basis for forming social identity.

In the chapter of social identity, we find that each Buddhist group was formed on the basis of emotional or value significance which serves the premise for social identity. Furthermore, we discuss the bilateral influence of prototypical leader on follower’s behaviours and followers on leader, based on social identity theory. Especially, the gentry Buddhist followers and hybrid Buddhist followers have stronger influence on their leaders and the construction of leadership.

In the followership chapter, the focus is to examine the Buddhist followers’ type and their behaviours accordingly based on the result from former analysis on their cognitive activities. We find that Buddhist followers are active or proactive in the role of leadership. In the construction of leadership, Buddhist followers played a crucial role.

In the analysis of anti-clericalism activities, we have several findings that combine the separated chapter in a progressive order. The causes of anti-clericalism activities are the incompatibleness of the Buddhist values and traditional Chinese values and the hostility emerged from different group identities. Meanwhile, the apologetical activities shall be viewed as the successful function of followership. In particular, the gentry Buddhist followers and hybrid Buddhist followers played an important role under the influence of prototypical leader.

To conclude, after careful analysis and discussion, the history (210 B.C.-589 A.D.) of Buddhism matches the model of subordinates’ internal self-regulatory structure by Lord & Brown (2001). It embodies the followership in Buddhism.

5.1.2 Christianity

In our work, leadership in the history of early Christianity has been associated with several concepts. In the first place, we have seen that Christianity embedded a vision of the future, or a worldview (Koltko-Rivera 2004), in the form of the divine project that God had in store for humanity. Besides, we have underscored the importance of Constantine as a visionary leader who prepared the ground for the rise of Christianity as the official religion of the empire.

Secondly, we have seen that Christianity, over the first three centuries A.D., gave itself a hierarchical structure, which was base in three-fold pyramidal order, composed by
bishop on top, the priests at the intermediate level, and the deacons at the bottom, that was replicated in every big city of the Roman Empire. In this regard, we have argued that the clergy order represented one of the ways through which the Church kept and upheld its leadership. This is because it portrayed a hierarchical structure in which the Church, which came between God and faithful, acted as the mandatory intercession between the latter and the former.

Related to this second issue, we have seen that the leadership in this hierarchical structure was personified by the bishops. In this case we have analyzed two aspects of bishops’ leadership: leading by example and moral authority. Especially, we have argued that leading by example and moral authority, through the administration of penance, are two possible ways available to leaders to impact on followers’ behaviour.

Lastly, we have seen that the amazing spread of Christianity might be explained in terms of social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner 1979) and group membership. Essentially, we have argue that Christianity, in the form of Christian communities, represented a worth joining group. People of that time might have been attracted by the worldview provided by God to humans and preached by bishops and priests, by the truth claims and also by the regular and joint participation in celebrations.

5.2 Leadership in Chinese Buddhism and Christianity

5.2.1 Leadership in Chinese Buddhism

The initial stage of development in Buddhism can be viewed as the construction of followership, which was derived from cognitive process.

In the Chinese Buddhist’s followership, value is regarded as an irreplaceable mediation. The value of goodness guided people to behave correspondingly. People started to show love to everything and be willing to give in charity. Besides, it influenced people to do things on behalf of Buddhism groups, which were beyond the meaning of values, thus affecting social identity. The social identity built on the shared value and emotion drove followers to defend Buddhist groups and Buddhist values. That is to say, Buddhist followers’ active and voluntary behaviours embodied followership, which is also leadership from follower-centric perspective.
According to our findings, the pivotal point that about ancient Chinese Buddhism is that leadership was mainly constructed by followers. As a consequence, leaders’ role in the construction of leadership was complementary and moderate. Two reasons can explain the leadership characteristics in Buddhism. On the one hand, traditional Chinese values constrained the development of Buddhism as frame of reference. Buddhism, as dependent culture, had difficulty to take initiatives and strike the local profound and long-lasting values. Therefore, limited efforts can be put in through explicit practical measures to lead people. On the other hand, the implicit role of Buddhist leaders is doomed due to the hierarchic social structure. Providing the centralized kaiserism, all religious organizations in medieval China were bound to the government and became the spiritual tool for political use. Since Buddhism sought for protection regarding its exotic background, it needed to rely more on the bigwigs. The cost of this relation between Buddhism and the bigwigs is part of autonomy. Thus, the leader’s role is inevitable implicit.

Therefore, in accordance with our findings and our reflections on this issue, we draw the following consideration:

“Leadership in Chinese Buddhism was a follower-centred phenomenon, in which followers represented the active part, whereas leaders played a more passive role”.
5.2.2 Leadership in Christianity

In order to give a better understanding of leadership in Christianity, we propose the following representation:

**Figure 5 The ecclesiastical leadership**

In this design, on top of the pyramid, we find Christianity’s vision, that is God’s project for humanity (Veyne 2010, p. 29). For humans this divine project meant a set of things, such as following the Word of God and the example of Christ, and thus to apply morality and love in the everyday life. As salvation of the soul is to be achieved on earth, if one wanted to be part of God’s project, he or she had to behave accordingly. Here we can see the first role of the Church in interpreting and communicating the word of God in these terms.

How to behave in full compliance with the Word of God was not at faithful’s discretion. On the contrary, there was an institution that was in charge of telling people how to conduct their lives in accordance with the message of God; this institution was the Church. As the designs shows, the Church placed itself in-between God and people. In so doing, it acted as the mandatory intercession with God. In fact, there was no other
possible way to be in contact with God\textsuperscript{22} for faithful; the clergy was the inevitable intermediate. Regarding how the Church achieved this task, we have already seen that it exerted ethical leadership together with moral authority. Besides, It should be noted the historical, central role of Constantine in allowing Christianity first to be freely worshipped within the Empire and then to prepare the ground for its rise as state religion (e.g. Firth 1905; Smith 1971; Grant 1994; Veyne 2010).

Then, what was leadership in early Christianity? Let us begin with presenting the parts involved in the representation. In the case of Christianity, we can easily identity the leader with the institution of the Church\textsuperscript{23}, and the followers with the faithful. Then, to unfold the core of the leadership, we need to delve into the relationship between them, as the latter is what actually leadership is about (Shamir & Eilam 2005, p. 400).

We can see that leadership is unidirectional, that is to say that it can flow only in a top-down way. True, the faithful were asked to partake in the liturgies, to contribute to the well-being of the community, but the leadership was no shared with them. As we have already said, the Church was the only subject that could intercede with God, for the main task of the Church was (and still is) that of leading the souls of faithful towards God. It is the Church that took the lead in the way to God, and the faithful could just follow. Regarding the way the Church led, we might say that it basically did so by exerting social influence on the behaviour of the followers, and we have already seen how in details.

Therefore, we might argue that Christianity, in its temporal conceptualization, that is the Church, embeds in itself the concept of leadership. The fact itself that the humanity is heading for a certain spiritual, mystical and eternal end, which is inspired by God, implies that there must be someone who is leading, namely the Church, while all other people are following. According to these reflections, we draw the following consideration:

\begin{quote}
"Leadership in ancient Christianity was a leader-centred phenomenon, with the leader's role played by the Church".
\end{quote}

The Church became and still is the leader of a huge number of people. Yet, we should make a point about what the Church has been leading specifically. It has not been

\textsuperscript{22} To be precise, this was the only possible way for normal faithful, that is the great majority of the population. In effect, there existed another path to reach God which was outside the common influence of the Church, that is way of the holy man (see Rapp, 2005).

\textsuperscript{23} Brown (1978, p. 12) talks about the Church as an impresario of a wider change.
leading human beings in their entirety; rather, it has been leading the spiritual and eternal part of human beings, that is the soul. Then, we could discuss at length about the spillovers of ecclesiastical leadership on the societies. In this sense, we have talked about the influence on believers’ behaviour exerted by bishops by means of the administration of penance and role modeling. So, we might conclude that the Church primarily leads souls, and secondly and inevitably, this affects people’s behaviour, and thus the society in general.

For what we have studied in Christianity, leading souls asks faithful for a certain attitude or approach. According to us, this approach can be considered as “passive participation”. The ecclesiastical leadership, when leading souls, elicits faithful participation only insofar as the latter fully embrace the Word of God. There is no discussion going on between ecclesiastical leadership and simple faithful about the Word of God, because the latter is the Truth, and as such it is undisputable. True, the faithful are asked to partake in the liturgies, to contribute to the well-being of the community and to actively behave in accordance with the Word of God. But still, all they do is following without discussing. In other words, in the relationship between the Church and the faithful, the creation of shared meaning as Bennis and Thomas conceive it (2007, p. 137), was not contemplated. The Church made sense for the faithful, who, in turn, could not do anything else but adhere.

In this sense, in the leadership process between the Church and the faithful, we could see both sensemaking and sensegiving, as Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991, p. 442) conceive them. The sensemaking of the faithful as meaning construction and reconstruction, and sensegiving of the Church as “the process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and construction of meaning of others” (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991, p. 442). Yet, instead of occurring in a sequential and reciprocal way, it just flows from top down; the sensemaking of faithful does not flow back to influence clergy sensegiving.

Therefore, to conclude this part, we can draw this second consideration:

“In the case of Christianity, followers were passive receivers of the leadership of the Church”.

24 There was an exact word to define those who discussed the main doctrine with deviant interpretations, that is heretical.
5.2.3 Christianity and Chinese Buddhism: two different ways to give life to leadership

What emerges from the considerations we have drawn in the previous paragraphs is that leadership takes on a different conception in the two religions. On the one hand, we have the Chinese Buddhism in which leadership was basically constructed by followers who played an active and proactive role in acquiring and displaying the values preached by masters. The latters, unlike the bishops, were only the passive prototype for faithful. In fact, it is true that these special monks, due to their higher knowledge of Buddhism values and practices, exerted a kind of power and influence on followers’ behaviour. Nonetheless, such a power is different from that of bishops. As Gini (1997, p. 324) suggests:

“all forms of leadership must make use of power. However, power need not be coercive, dictatorial or punitive to be affective. Power can also be used in a non-coercive manner to orchestrate, mobilize, direct and guide members of an institution or organization in the pursuit of a goal or series of objectives”.

On the other hand, we have the one-way institutionalized leadership of the Catholic Church, as a top-down process of influence of the leader on passive followers.

Therefore, time has come to draw the final conclusion of this work. Now that we have analyzed the leadership in ancient Christianity and Chinese Buddhism, what can we say about leadership? We have already underscored the different leadership in the history of these two religions by drawing these considerations:

“Leadership in Chinese Buddhism was a follower-centred phenomenon, in which followers represented the active part, whereas leaders played a more passive role”.

“Leadership in ancient Christianity was a leader-centred phenomenon, with the leader’s role played by the Church whereas the faithful as followers were passive receivers”.

But, why leadership was so different in Christianity and Chinese Buddhism? Why did leadership developed in such a dissimilar conceptualization? We are conscious that, by posing such a question, we are taking things a bit too far. We are aware that such a question asks for a solid and thorough argumentation that goes deeper into the historical issues. Nonetheless, we will try to give an answer and we do that by reformulating the question differently.
Assuming that Christianity and Buddhism faced a similar situation, namely that of an external religion that dealt with a vast and powerful empire, what was that marked the difference in the development of the leadership in these two religions?

We argue that Christianity and Buddhism differed in a fundamental peculiarity. Unlike Buddhism, Christianity was not just a religion, it was also a Church, that is “a belief that exercised authority over all those who shared it, supported by a hierarchy, a clergy by its very nature superior to the laity” (Veyne 2010, p. 36). On the contrary, in Chinese Buddhism, there was no religious institution whatsoever that interposed itself between Buddha and the faithful. People did not have to be led by an institution in the way to Buddha.

Exactly in this pivotal point, we can see that leadership in these two religions developed in two different ways. The Church imposed itself as the leader, in the form of the only possible intermediary with God, by claiming for itself to be a source of power. We can label this kind of leadership as “self-imposed” leadership. As for the Buddhism in ancient China, there was not such an imposition or claim by any leader whatsoever. Nonetheless, the Buddhist monks spread successfully message of Buddha all over the empire thanks to the self-regulatory behaviours of Buddhism’s followers.

Therefore, we argue that the self-imposed leader, in order to assert and utter his claim, set up a hierarchical organization in which he puts himself on the top, so as to effectively exert the leadership on the followers. When we do not have this kind of self-imposition, the act of following is pretty much a volunteer and spontaneous process.

To conclude, we can assume that leadership, when it stems from a claim of the leader, it might take the shape of a hierarchical, top-down relationship with the followers. Whereas, it seems that leadership, when it is constructed naturally and spontaneously by followers, does not need to build up a structered organization to assert itself. Regarding this follower-centred process of leadership, we can give a hint of two possible further evolutions. It could be that followers are able to lead themselves, thus displaying little need for leadership (Shamir, 2007). Or, it could be the case that this process created by followers might lead them to “gather” spontaneously around a special character to whom they ascribe the role of leader. In this last case, in religions such as Buddhism and Christianity, we have two prominent examples of this kind of
leadership in Buddha and Jesus Christ, while, in the modern times, we have witnessed this spontaneous leadership in Gandhi.

5.3 Further reflections on leadership

5.3.1 From which perspective should we study the leadership?

As we have seen, leadership in Christianity was a leader-centred phenomenon, while leadership in Chinese Buddhism seemed to be follower-centred phenomenon. Both of the two religions experienced the prosperous development in spite of the different way of approaching leadership. In Christianity, the Church was the institutionalized leader exercising a centralized power, whereas Buddhist followers were spontaneous and voluntary in historical conflicts to protect their belief and values. Here comes our question: from which perspective should we study the leadership?

Regarding the leader-centred perspective, many scholars have discussed how leader affects followers’ attitudes and behaviors. Within this perspective we can include, just to mention a few, theories like transformational leadership (Bass, 1985), authentic leadership (Shamir & Eilam, 2005), toxic leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 2005), destructive leadership (Shaw, Erickson & Harvey 2011). All these theories, to some extent, attach more importance to leaders, who are considered prominent and indispensable in the relationship due to their influence on followers.

Some researchers have an opposite opinion on the necessity of leaders. According to the leadership categorization theory (Lord, 1985; Lord & Brown, 2001) argues that leaders, as prototype, influence followers by means of their characteristics and behaviors. However, it is the followers’ cognitive process that determines the leadership relationship.

Further, Meindl (1995) has a more drastic view on researches of leaders. He argues that the intrinsic flaw of conventional leadership research is that many “attempt to impose outside, objective, third-party definitions of what is inherently subjective” (Meindl 1995, p. 339). In this sense, also the focus on the prominent figure of the leader in itself becomes something worth studying.

According to Meindl (1995), the construction of a leadership relationship is primarily dependent on the nature of the circumstances, rather than leaders’ behaviors or personalities. Based on Meindl’s point of view, Carsten et al. (2010, p. 558) focus on the
study of followers’ behaviors. They argue that “proactive followers appear more consistent with leading than with following” in their organizations. This kind of behavior is consistent to leading oneself, which is highly self-organized and self-regulated. All in all, this perspective of studying leadership shows a lesser or, at least, a different need for the existence of leaders, in comparison with the leader-centred research.

There exist also branch of the leadership research which contends a more neutral view when it comes to towards leaders. Basically, according to this perspective, both leaders and followers play crucial role in the construction of leadership relationship, and thus “there is no need to dismiss the leaders to make room for followers” (Shamir, 2007, xix). Behn (2012) notes that we have implicitly associated leadership with authority and posed leaders in a position with hierarchical superior. The outcome of this association may lead both to benefits and constrains, since what comes with authority is the power which may exists in the forms of a variety of important resources or tools. However, it is argued leadership does not have to rely on authority to function. According to Heifetz (1994), leadership is an activity which can come from anyone and anywhere in the organization. The norms in organization can be maintained without possessing the authority; rather, they can be preserved by giving anyone the chance to exercise leadership when needed. This viewpoint is in accordance with the shared, distributed, and dispersed conceptualization of leadership (Gronn, 2004). In this sense, one could argue that organizations do not need “fixed” and predetermined leaders as long as leadership is an interchangeable task that flows throughout the organizational chart.

In addition, Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) provide a further equal perspective to look upon leaders and followers through leader-member-exchange (LMX) relationship. In their model, followers, in a counterpart position in respect to leaders, are co-producers of leadership. Therefore, we might say that LMX views the construction of leadership relationship as depending on equal input from both leaders and followers.

How do we reconcile the follower-centred perspective and the shared construction of leadership with the concept of influence? Can they coexist? After all, we should not forget that leadership only exists when an individual (sometimes a pair or a small group) has greater influence on the group or organization than that of the other members (Shamir, 2007, xviii).
According to us, each of these branches of research represent exactly a different angle from which to see leadership. We cannot say which of them is the worthiest and the most suitable, and which should be discarded. Like in a well-furnished but dark room, the more lights we switch on, the more objects we can see, the more we get the overall picture of the room. In this sense, It seems to us that a multi-perspective view on leadership is what we need to shed more light on this stimulating phenomenon.

5.3.2 Guilt and shame: organization and social network in Western and Eastern society

Although in this thesis we focus on a specific historical period within a specific geographical range, we consider our study as significant due to the horizontal impact of it; both the religions have been influencing a large crowd even beyond the geographical range. But we should also note the vertical impact, which means that both the religions still have certain cognitive influence on nowadays society. Concerning the horizontal impact and vertical impact, we argue that our study on the leadership in both religions is representative of Eastern patterns and Western patterns. Regarding the horizontal impact, in the previous chapter, we have referred to the results of leadership. Now we shift to the vertical impact, as referred to cultural and cognitive importance.

3.5.2.1 The concepts of guilt and shame

One of the most famous study that deals with the difference between the Eastern and the Western culture is the book of the anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1946), Chrysanthemum and the sword. In this book, the author marks the substantial diversity between the Japanese culture, defined as “shame culture”, and the western culture, defined as “guilt culture”.

According to the American anthropologist, the Japanese mentality in the feudal world was characterized by exteriority; it was influenced by group judgment and motivated by the sense of shame. On the contrary, Western culture during the Christian feudalism was based on the internalization of moral principle and thus on the internal sense of guilt. In this sense, independent of public judgment, a shameful action, that is an action disrespectful of the shared code of conduct, arouses in the individual who committed it a sense of regret.

The guilt arouses from the transgression of some code of conduct. It is a self-condemning feeling in respect to a specific action which should not have been done but
it was actually committed or vice versa. As Cacciotti (2008, p. 32) notices “Christianity is mainly a religion and not a set of moral conduct, [...] yet, it is undeniable that the Spirit binds us to practice the virtues that it suggests”\textsuperscript{25}. Therefore, if we assume that Christianity had played, and still plays, a central role in promoting the culture of guilt, then we can easily consider the action as the sin, the doer as the sinner and the guilt as the logical consequence of the sin\textsuperscript{26}. In this sense, Christian belief, by means of the clergy, prompts the guilt-bearer to go deeper into his or her guilt and admit it before God himself (Cacciotti 2008, p. 32). This last step in which the guilt-bearer seeks for forgiveness, and reconciliation with God and the Christian community, is symbolized by the cathartic aspect of the \textit{confession}\textsuperscript{27}.

However, arguing about the extent to which we can still describe Eastern and Western culture by using the concepts of shame and guilt is an interesting further reflection. Yet, it does not fall into the purpose of this work. Nonetheless, we can reasonably argue that shame and guilt still have a relevant role in Eastern and Western culture. Secondly, although we are referring to a study conducted on the Japanese culture, we also know that the concept of shame and face-losing have greater salience for all Eastern peoples than Western ones (Redding & Ng 1982, pp. 202-203).

\textbf{3.5.5.2 LMX relationship \& relational network}

Another aspect that reveals the difference between Eastern and Western culture is what binds people together. We argue that organizations in the Western world are based on objective factors, such as structure and system, while Eastern organizations are based on human relational network. Despite the organizational structure, \textit{guanxi}, known as relational network, plays an extremely important role in explanation of behavior in Eastern organizations.

The \textit{guanxi} relational network of China is mainly governed by family bonds and close friend bonds (Hui & Graen 1997, p. 454). That is to say, people are more concerned with themselves and their family when facing problems (Hui & Graen 1997, p. 455). However, since ancient times, Chinese communities have been hierarchically organized, “with major economic and other resources controlled by a few power figures who could arbitrarily allocate resources” (Hwang 1987, p. 968). Therefore, relational networks in

\textsuperscript{25} Translation from the italian.
\textsuperscript{26} The notions of guilt and sin do not overlap with each other. See Rosmini-Serbati (1842) for a review.
\textsuperscript{27} Carl Gustav Jung (cited in Antonello 1999) has emphasized the therapeutic value of \textit{confession}. 
oriental organization are “extremely exclusive and deterministic”, and thus based on reliability (Hui & Graen 1997, p. 462).

On the contrary, Western Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationship, involves “choice of network members based on competence” (Hui & Graen 1997, p. 462). This makes the western organizational network moral, legal, and ethical, due to its simple member constitution based on competence (Hui & Graen 1997).

Therefore, we can assume that guanxi, as one of the most important reasons that cause ineffectiveness and corruption more often in Eastern organizations than in Western ones. Despite the fact that Eastern organizations have used the managing experience of western patterns for reference. As Redding & Ng (1982, p. 217) suggest:

“the superficial appearance of an organization may be one of technologically derived efficiency and rationality along with concomitant values, but human behavior within it may indicate values of a distantly non-rational kind imported from the wider society”.

Only copying the form of western organization, while ignoring the intrinsic difference in values, the problem may remain in a more dangerous way.

Concluding, the purpose of our thesis is not to give a definition of leadership or to compare Eastern patterns with Western patterns. Our aim was that of seeing leadership from a different perspective, which is religion in historical period. Through the interpretation of texts, we have provided our understanding of impact of theological discourse on the relationship between people and the human representatives of divinity. By doing so, we got deeper insight into leadership study, which, as an input, has led us to look into the Eastern and Western patterns of leadership. We regard our work as a historical trace of the practice of leadership in modern society, which might be an effective way of studying leadership. Further research may focus on the merits and demerits of oriental and western patterns of leadership, and inputs from the history of religions to study leadership in international context.
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APPENDIX

Interview to Professor Marco Rizzi, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy (Department of Religious Studies), Università cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan).

Let us begin with the most prominent figure of that time, that is Constantine, what were the political benefits of the adoption of the Christian religion?

Basically, beyond the personal religious motivations, Constantine opted for Christianity because, though just a minority, it was quite strong and well-structured. The ecclesiastical order, which was centred on the bishops, allowed him to have representatives throughout the imperial urban structure. These representatives, that is the bishops, provided him with a more stable consensus than that of the urban administration, being the ambition of bishops way different from that by which governors were driven. One bishop for each big city. In so doing, Constantine had a representative willing to settle disputes among nobles of the cities.

When did the Church give itself a hierarchical structure?

It was a quite long and complicated process. The first hint of a hierarchy made of bishops, presbyters and deacons, appeared in Letters of Paul (although the source is uncertain). Actually, the authentic works of Paul of Tarsus, one of the most ancient Christian documents, still show a chaotic situation. Also Ignatius of Antioch who became martyr under Adrian, in the first century A.D., seems to hint at a hierarchical structure. However, according to the mainstream thought, we should place into the second century A.D. the birth of a hierarchical model.

Yet, all along the second century up to the Great persecution of Decius, the situation is much more shifting. A hierarchical structure was progressively establishing, but there were still alternative structures, especially the model of Christianity as a philosophical school. This second structure was designed on the model of the Jewish synagogue, which was the religious native environment of the early Christians. Its structure revolved around the role of the presbyters who constituted the assembly of the elders. It should be noted that this structure was to be later adopted by the Calvinism and puritanism. According to this model, the power was collegially held by all the presbyters together with the possibility to elect a primus inter pares. Further, in some cities such as Alexandria, this model persisted up to the third century A.D...
From other parts of the empire, such as Asia Minor, Christians were pushing towards a monarchical episcopate. This model dated back to the work of Ireneus of Lyon, who for the first time in 170 A.D., spoke of the apostolic succession.

The presbiteral model, with its philosophical-intellectual nature, could not hide its main limitation: an agreement among all the assembly members over religious issues would have been extremely tough to achieve. On the contrary, bishops’ main power was that of controlling the monetary inflows of the community.

Therefore, we have two different conceptions of the role of leader within a community. In the presbiteral model, the leader was seen as a teacher, as Origen of Alexandria said, whereas in the episcopal model the leader is more a manager of inflows-outflows, both of people and money within the community. In this sense, it is worth noting the role of baptizer that was reserved to bishops. Moreover, he had to keep the registers of the community, as a sort of “parish general registers office”, which is what still occurs in England, for example. Also the offertory in the Mass is nothing other than a ritual to remind when bishops distributed money and food to the poor.

A third alternative model for the Christianity was that of the martyrs, which spread in the third century A.D.. Martyrs were people who asserted their faith in trials without hesitation. In this sense, the idea of the martyr as a Christian killed by Romans is incorrect. Certainly, Romans did not kill them all. Some of them were only tortured and then released, or sent to forced-labour camps. In Greek the term “martyr” means “witness”, and so martyrs were those that were in charge of leading the community in case of persecution, in case of escape of the bishop or murder of the latter.

However, over the third century Christianity underwent an ecclesiastical dispute whose result was the extinction of the philosophical model and a harsh clash between bishops and martyrs. Finally, in the second half of the century the episcopal model triumphed over the other models.

I found interesting that, from Augustus on, the emperor, as protector of the pax deorum, took on the office of “pontifex maximus”. In this sense, what is the relationship between monarchy and monotheism?

The office of “pontifex maximus” existed long before Augustus. It should be noted that, practically speaking, he had never been an emperor, as Rome was still considered a “res publica” equipped with an oligarchic government, that is the senatus. The term
“imperator” did not designate a political power, rather it referred to a military one, at least up until Augustus era. The lifelong office he wanted for himself was that of “pontifex maximus”. And it was a resounding event since it was the first time that real and religious power got fused in the same person. From then on, this office became institutionally bestowed to all the emperors. Not even Constantine turned down this office.

Fine, but then why we did not have an emperor as the head of the Church?

Constantine understood that by keeping the two forms of power, secular and temporal, separated, he was granted a more effective control over the religious system. In this sense, we should make a point about Christian cosmology. The main problem of the Christian philosophy was how to conciliate the “One” and the “many”. From the Platonism’s point of view, which held an absolute monist conception, the “One” was behind the good and the evil, whereas the “many” that characterized the world, had a negative connotation.

According to Eusebius of Caesarea, Constantine tried to unify these two aspects: on earth God is “One”, on earth the “One” is represented by the Son of God, Jesus, that is the Logos. In so doing, the principle of unity and perfection was preserved. While, the “many” was represented on earth by the multitude of churches. This platonic schema was realized by Constantine on a political level: the “One” is the monarch, the “many” are the bishops.

We make a mistake when we say that the ancients had a monotheistic conception of religion. The latter was to come only with the Enlightenment. On the contrary, the fundamental concept of the Christian theology was that of “monarchia”, which comes from the Greek mónos (μόνος), that is “one” or “single”, and árchis (ἀρχή), that is “beginning” or “origin”. God was considered the origin of everything: God, Father and creator “ex-nihilo” of the world.

Therefore, are we wrong when we state that Christianity was adopted by the Roman Empire because it looked compatible to the imperial philosophy?

Basically, the romans did not have any problem in accepting new cults. There was a mild cult of the emperor, but, fundamentally, the roman pantheon was space open to new cults. We should not forget that ancient religions were not based on the concept of “faith”, rather they were ritual practices based on sacrifices aimed at ingratiating gods
before the battles. Cults were geographically localized: people were not faithful to a determined god, rather they were faithful to a specific temple. In this sense, the only cult that caused problems to Romans was the Hebraism. Jews were bound to their one God and thus they did not want to mix their religions within the Roman pantheon with other cults.

The issue of the “truth” was born with Christianity. This point was unconceivable for ancients, who were not interested in having a belief, but they just got satisfied with making some sacrifice and ritual. Christianity introduced the issue of the content in religious matters, thus breaking the old social ties of which a religion was the expression.

*What did being Christians mean to people in late antiquity?*

The traditional Roman model was based on two kinds of relationship: one was vertical, the patronage between “cîëns”, who offered a “beneficium” and “patronus” who granted the “obsequium”. One was horizontal and it marked the friendship relationships. Friendship was actually a political concept meant to describe the relationship among peers.

Christianity was based only on horizontal relationships. In this sense, the only possible “patronus” was the bishop, as he was representative of the celestial “patronus”, that is God. This model flattened the social relationships, by creating little vertical relationships, more structured and more resistant.

*What kind of power did the bishop exert in that time?*

Constantine bestowed upon bishops a great deal of money. With this money, bishops erected buildings and granted loans. Constantine made it all in order to gain the consensus of the population, while, previously, the emperor had to grant the consensus of the elite. Yet, the latter was losing power. Basically, resources were running out and thus the form of local self-government run by the few wealthy families was not possible any longer. It should be noted that this form of government often proved quite harmful and dangerous for the emperor. Therefore, with the rise of Christianity that flattened the social relationships, the elites found themselves even more devalued. Constantine understood this evolution and leant against who could boast a functioning social network in order to grant to himself the social consensus he needed to govern, in a period when the old social relationships based on the patronage did not work. Then,
when the Western Roman Empire collapsed, the bishops, who had previously been vested with an unusual authority, were ready to take over the power by becoming the new governors of Rome.

_The bishops as leader of the community, and the faithful as his followers. What was the message that this leader could communicate to his followers?_

The bishop gave the faithful the firm belief in an afterlife hope. The power of the Christian eschatology was his special connotation of justice and compensation for the sins. The idea that one could live after death, existed long before Christianity, but never with such a connotation.

_When did the figure of the Pope step in?_

The main structure was “one bishop, one city”. Yet, some cities such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, Rome and Alexandria, gained more importance than others, and this importance was also reflected into their churches and patriarchs. The idea of a single leadership over the Church developed not until the fifth century A.D. and only in the western part of the empire for the lack of political leadership. The papacy as we know it came later on. We can say that the first real Pope endowed with supreme power was Gregory VII.

_Leadership is very much a performance art. I found in Brent (2009) an interesting parallel between the three-fold structure of the church (bishop-priest-deacon) and the Trinity when Christians celebrated the Eucharist…_

Actually, it was Eusebius of Caesarea that represented the monarchic principle as a parallel between the emperor and the bishops. The emperor represented the Logos, that is the Son, on a cosmic level, while the bishop still represented the Logos, but on microcosmic level, that is to say at a city level, and especially with reference to the church.

The liturgy as a theatrical performance of life and death of Jesus is still visible in the byzantine tradition. In the Catholic Mass is a real representation and we can see it during the Eucharist when the priest speaks “in persona Christi”, saying “everyone, take and eat it, this is my body given to you”, the body in question is His body, the body of Christ. The byzantine liturgy is a representation on earth of the celestial liturgy, with the two joining in the moment of the Elevation. In this case, the bishops is not an
“actor”, as he is in the Catholic tradition, rather, he is a go-between, a link between earth and Heaven.

All the political systems are representative of something. In the byzantine tradition, the emperor represented the Logos as sovereign and guarantor of the good functioning of society, while the bishops represented on earth the celestial liturgy. There is symphony between secular and temporal power, yet without mixture nor conflict.

_Edward Gibbon argued that the rise of Christianity marked the fall of the Roman Empire, what is your opinion about this point?_

Gibbon wrote that Christianity weakened the leadership of the Empire. It is partially true, but this stance does not stand up to the evidence. The Western Roman Empire fell down, but the Eastern survived until 1453 A.D. Gibbon did not consider the byzantine part of the Empire.
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