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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

RELATORE:

CH.MO PROF. Martina Gianecchini

LAUREANDA: Valeria Lollo

MATRICOLA N. 1154898

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ABSTRACT

The existing literature supports the idea that religious belief has an effective impact on work values and career development path, anyways, few studies have explored the relationship. Considering the sustained centrality individuals attribute to their religions and the growing diversity of most societies, it is fundamental to understand religious behaviour effects within the work environment. This dissertation analyses a sample of 13055 individuals adherent to the world's four major religions, namely Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. The main objectives this study intends to reach are to understand which are the work values the different religions mainly sustain and, thereafter, to make a comparison that highlights the points of commonality and of diversity. The results obtained provide practical directions to follow both from a socio-economic and from an organizational point of view.

KEYWORDS: work values, career development, religions

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INTRODUCTION

The shift in the cultural scenario, mainly due to the overwhelming globalization process, is supporting a change in the religious landscape, thus demonstrating a reemergence in the study of such subject matter. The state of that discipline today can be considered as sufficiently developed but, in many cases, still overlooked. This neglect in the exploration of this theme in all its facets is even more surprising given the centrality and the pervasive nature of religious belief, practice, and behaviours among the members of the society. The Istat report (2015) provides a clear representation of the current situation in Italy. Religious pluralism is a growing phenomenon related to the increasing number of people coming from foreign countries. Specifically, the study reports a high level of multiculturalism within the Italian society where the major spread religions respect the world's statistics with Christianity at the first place, followed by Islamism, and Buddhism. According to the investigation, foreign people attribute a fundamental importance to the religious belief. Among Italian people, the most followed religion is still the Christianity, 60,1% of Italians¹. The tendency that mainly distinguishes the Italian population from the foreigner one is the presence of a more individual morality and religiosity. The difference observed between Italians and foreigners is not in the importance and centrality attributed to religion as a community characteristic but, rather, in the conception of religion as an individual "tailor-made" inclination. Despite the various vision people may have about religion, what really matters today is the importance actors confers to this aspect of their personhood. The issue covers an increasing relevance from two principal points of view. The first, the socioeconomic one, is related to the coexistence of multiple religions in the same society. Countries, the UK in particular, are investing huge funds in order to ensure and promote freedom of religion or belief around the world. So, from a socioeconomic perspective, it is a primary necessity to encourage respect and the value of religious diversity and tolerance. The other side to consider in this pluralistic religious framework is from the organizational point of view. The trend characterising this fast moving world entails for firms and organizations the necessity to develop some tools to support the diversity and to exploit the different values related to the religions within the work environment. Indeed, according to many researchers, people practicing different religions tend to present different values and norms that influence the way they are managed in the workplace (Parboteeah, Paik, and Cullen, 2009). Despite the

¹ Source: Community Media Research, in collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo for La Stampa (2017).

numerous studies that deal with religion and work-related issues, nowadays, it is important to going further the general exploration and develop this topic considering the different religions' point of view. Indeed, conducting a separate analysis on religions allows reaching a more comprehensive knowledge which seems to be fundamental for the practical implications that may derive. According to Pew Research Center, around 84%² of the entire population is connected to some form of religious belief, with the rest being atheists or non-religious. Therefore, applying these percentages to a multinational work environment, it can be considered critical understanding the role and the implications of religion in such contexts. It is not just a matter of freedom of belief and support of the diversity. Rather, it is the exploration and comprehension of new ways to tailor the organization's programs respecting people's views of work. Religion, indeed, influence actors' work and personal values, behaviours, and career choices, thus affecting the organizational life accordingly.

This study is divided into four main chapters. The analysis starts with the introduction of the institutional theory intended as a fundamental framework to understand religion's dynamics. The second Chapter, instead, examines the literature which explores the relationship between religion and work-related issues, according to multiple perspectives. In addition, it is provided an analysis of the four major religions of the world, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism, and their relationship with religious and work values. Here, it is also presented the research question, namely understanding how the four world's major religions relate to career development and which are the work values they favour according to their precepts and teachings. Thereafter, Chapter 3 introduces the quantitative analysis based on a sample composed of 13055 people affiliated to these four religions, including the presentation and the discussion of the results obtained. Finally, the fourth and last Chapter completes the study with a qualitative analysis conceived to test the result obtained in the empirical exploration and to highlight further insights on the relationship between religion and career-related issues. This research aims at providing a more complete comprehension of this overlooked topic and at contributing with practical and theoretical directions to the literature on religion and work.

² Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections (2015).

CHAPTER 1

WHAT ARE INSTITUTIONS?

1.1 INSTITUTIONAL THEORY – INTRODUCTION

Institutional theory is a pillar branch of organizational theories studying the more resilient aspects and the deeper characteristics of the social structure. It is employed to examine the various processes by which structures, such as schemas, rules, norms, and routines, first become established in the society and then implemented as guidelines for social behaviour (Scott, 2004). And, within this realm, it considers, over space and time, the dynamics by which these elements are originated, spread, adopted, adapted and how they are dismissed. Organizations operate in a transactional environment by which they are directly influenced thus producing evident effects on the way they act and on their structures. The transactional environment is composed of three main elements distinguished for their different nature. Markets are the part which refers to the economic environment. They are expressed in terms of economic growth rates, interests trends, unemployment rate and the determination of the levels of demand and supply for the productive factors (Costa, Gubitta, Pittino, 2014). Introducing markets in the study of organizational theory makes the approach used to assume an economic connotation, different from a more general one. Indeed, organizations find their legitimation and their resources also through exchange activities. Technology, on its part, define the scientific and technological environment. It relates to all the activities and the directions followed in order to produce and spread knowledge and innovation. They are then translated into the methods and procedures used through the production processes and in the diffusion of the know-how. The adoption of different technologies produces its effects on organizations' choices and structure, often entailing disruptive changes. Institutions determine the socio-cultural environment as a result of values, internalized norms, and ideologies that exert an influence over individuals actions and behaviours. They operate in an enduring way, independent from single individuals' identity, regulating social relations, reciprocal behaviours among social groups, and social activities in their entirety. They consist also of the legal and political environment which relates to the distribution of the power among the members of the society, the norms that discipline enterprises functioning and the interactions between the

political and the economic spheres (Costa, Gubitta, Pittino, 2014). Institutions can be considered as the most influential factors that mould the interaction and the relationships among individuals within society. Indeed, actors are favourably disposed towards renouncing to a part of their own freedom in order to support an organized structure in their relationships. Among the limitations people decided to auto-impose in their private and public life, in the economic sphere and in the everyday life, a major role is fulfilled by moral codes, norms of conduct and conventions. The impact institutions are able to produce over the choices and the actions of individuals is crucial and is particularly influenced by the actors' culture. Actors are, indeed, defined in terms of their individuality, autonomy, and role; they are also attributed to general categories defined by objectives, behaviours, and culture they share with other individuals. Within this realm, religion is conceived as an institutional domain composed by a set of values, doctrines, and principles that are able to infuse to the actors an ethical and a moral framework for understanding their reality, find motivation in their choices, structure behaviour, and interaction. Religious precepts frequently impose standards of conduct on individuals. According to the degree they are considered binding in shaping the social behaviour, they produce an effective lowering of transaction costs in the individual choices (North, 1991).

1.2 INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Through history, institutions have been implemented to create order and reduce uncertainty in economic and social interactions. They consist of both formal and informal constraints. Among the formal constraints it is due to mention constitutions, laws and property rights; whilst, examples of the informal ones are sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct. The effectiveness of institutions stays in their ability to adapt and therefore is represented in their incremental evolution by connecting the past with the present and the future (North, 1991). Generally, institutions durability is associated with the creation of stable expectations from the others. Such social structures, indeed, homogenize actions, expectations, and thoughts by disciplining the form and the consistency of human activities (Hodgson, 1988). Therefore, in some ways, institutions both constrain and enable behaviours. Individuals adhere to shared views of reality by repeating actions and by giving similar meaning by oneself and others. Rule is the term used to define socially transmitted injunctions and dispositions. They do not depend on instincts or inherited genes, but rather they are the result of contingent social structures and are transmitted through social culture and the use of language (Hodgson, 1988). Such rules are potentially codifiable so much that members of communities share tacit or explicit knowledge of the rules. The parameter to structure and codify these rules is particularly

important for two different reasons. The former is that it helps to define which is the community that shares the rules involved. The latter is that it is a clear way to identify the infringement of the rule. Through the adoption of the rules, institutions acquire social legitimacy. Institutional developments and technological advancements can drive to an enlargement of the set of possible rules.

Consistent with that vision, several institutional systems have been developed over space and time providing a wide variety of guidelines for social behaviour by shaping both the goals and the means of the actors (Scott, 2005). Some of them can emerge spontaneously to fill a need of coordination and equilibria and so are reproduced principally because agents find it convenient to conform to them. The result is the development of a self-enforcing coordination equilibrium in which no player has the incentive to deviate and wishes that the others players preserve their strategy as well (Schotter, 1981). People observe coordination rules primarily for their convenience: the stability and the self-enforcing characteristics of the equilibrium are maintained even if they could not be optimal for everyone involved. However, conceiving institutions as mere behaviours would limit the vision and would improperly presume that institutions would cease to exist if their associated behaviours were interrupted (Hodgson, 2006). Nevertheless, the only way available to observe institutions is by inspecting the manifest behaviours.

Repeated behaviours are fundamental in order to establish a habit. A habit is defined as “a disposition to engage in previously adopted or acquired behaviours or thought, triggered by an appropriate stimulus or context” (Hodgson, 2006) and, as behaviours do, are acquired in a social context. However, habits and behaviours cannot be contemplated as the same concept. Still, habit is a central conservative agent in the society, it acts as the psychological mechanism that lays the foundation for rule-following behaviour. Habits become rules once they have acquired some inherent normative content, are codifiable and are common among a group (Hodgson, 2006). So, habits considered as shared and persistent are the base of customs. The rule structure, as said before, provides, at the same time, incentives and constraints for individuals action thus helping the development and the reproduction of new habits and preferences that are then spread among the population. Fundamentally, habits are the constitutive elements of institutions since they enable the durability, the power, and the normative authority. Institutions, in turn, create the basis for homogenization and conformism by reproducing shared habits of thoughts.

Going further, thanks to their aptitude of enabling, structuring and constraining individuals actions, institutions have the power to change aspirations of people by acting on individual habits of thoughts and behaviours. Institutions are the mean through which people adopt regularities in their behaviours, leading them to concordant habits. The result is that the population develop congruent purposes and beliefs and, in turn, the institutional structure is sustained to a greater extent. In this sense, institutions have a bilateral relationship with humans activities: at the same time, they depend upon them but are also able to shape and constrain them. Through this two-way feedback, institutions develop their self-reinforcing and self-perpetuating characteristics (Hodgson, 2006). The existence of institutions is clearly connected to individuals, their interactions and to a particular pattern of shared beliefs and behaviours. Nevertheless, any person belongs to a pre-existing institutional environment which put him or her in relation to its rules and norms, also involving structured interactions, material artefacts, and instruments. Behavioural habits and institutional structures are, therefore, mutually bound and mutually reinforcing. Institutional theory highlights that interests are institutionally defined and shaped, and, in that direction, the institutional framework serves to define which are the means through which these interests are determined and pursued (Scott, 1987).

The advancements in technologies, investments and new skills gradually alter the basic institutional framework. Path dependence entails an incremental process in the institutional evolution in which an interdependent network of institutions is characterized by massive increasing returns (North, 1991). Actually, some classes of institutions exist in the sense that they depend on and are supported by other institutions in order to apply successfully their rules. The incentive structure provided by the basic institutional framework creates opportunities for the following organizations to evolve (North, 1991). In order to produce their effects, institutions need to seek the external legitimacy intended as a normative pressure they need to attain. There might be different sources of authorization and institutions might need to modify their structure or activities to acquire and maintain the external support from the actors.

1.3 THE MANY FACES OF INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Institutional theory and its related concepts have been formulated through several visions according to the diverse approaches scholars decided to implement. In this sense, it is useful to look at institutional theory being aware of the multiple variants that coexist.

Richard Scott (1987), besides his great contribution to institution and institutionalization concepts, worked on an examination of these leading theories with the purpose of highlighting

common and contrast points among them. He reviewed four different sociological formulations all contemplating an institutional focus. The analysis proceeds from the earlier one to the more recent conceptions.

The work associated with Philip Selznick is considered one of the most influential versions of institutional theory applied to organizations. Selznick's (1957) approach looks at institutions as adaptive vehicles moulded as an answer to participants' commitment and characteristics as well as the pressures applied by the environment. The primary emphasis of Selznick vision is to conceive institutions as means to infuse values by enriching a structure or an organization that, before the institutionalization process, only had instrumental utility. By transmitting values, the institutionalization process is able to support the stability and the persistence of the structure over time (Scott, 1987). According to that vision, institutionalization is a process that occurs to organizations over time and that converts them into valued structures concerned with their own natural self-maintenance. The natural dimension of institutions is the result of interaction among the members and their ability to adapt; they transform into the container of the community idealism (Selznick, 1957).

The second theory about institutions analysed by Scott is the one introduced by Peter Berger and Luckmann. The argument on which the work is based on is related to the "social order" defined as the product of human activity (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Individuals take actions, interpret them and, then, share these interpretations with others. The interpretations, also referred as "typifications", are the efforts people commit to classify behaviours into categories that help them to act in analogous fashion for a given context or situation. Accordingly, institutionalization is the process by which actions become repeated over time and are assigned similar meanings by self and others: "Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of the habitualized actions by types of actors" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 54). The authors identify three different phases in the institutionalization process. Externalization entails the moment in which individuals take action; then, in the objectivation phase, they interpret together the action as having an external impact different from their personal reality; in the last moment, internalization, the objectivated reality is internalized by actors determining the subjective structures for consciousness and behaviours accordingly. Others authors, such as Zucker and Meyer and Rowan, embrace this vision of the institutionalization process in their work. Zucker (1977) looks at institutionalization as a process through which individuals transmit what is socially defined as real giving to it the meaning of taken-for-granted prescription in the society. Meyer and Rowan (1977), from their

part, assert that institutionalization is the process through which, thanks to individual actions, social processes, obligations or behaviours acquire a rule-like recognition in the society. Institutionalization is intended here as a process involving the creation of reality (Scott, 1987). The common point among these authors is that institutionalization process drive actors to accept and share a common vision of this social reality, different from their own view, thus adhering to a taken for granted conception of everyday life aspects. The result is that individuals' behaviour becomes stable and conforms to the requirements imposed by other actors (Zucker, 1977). This form of taken-for-granted aptitude is a fundamental basis for the persistence of the institution over time.

Another version of the institutional theory comes from Meyer and Rowan's (1977) contribution that recognizes the presence of several "rationalized and impersonal prescriptions that identify various social purposes" and "specify in a rule-like way the appropriate means" to pursue them. (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). According to this new formulation, the emphasis is put on cultural elements, such as symbols, cognitive systems, and normative systems, that can determine the existence, the development and the elaboration of the institution. Further, the authors give less attention to the institutionalization process intended as the inclination to follow beliefs and prescriptions because they constitute reality or are taken for granted. Rather, beliefs and prescriptions are adopted so that to increase legitimacy, resources and survival capabilities. This version of institutional theory shifts the attention on a symbolic conception of the environment and its sources.

A fourth interpretation of institutional theory connects the traditional definition of institution to the concept of multiple sources of beliefs systems. Hughes (1939), according to his point of view, conceives institutions as social and symbolic systems that outlast generations and are able to deal with intense social changes that might have driven them to a decline phase. He highlights the tendency of human beings to transmit the subsequent generations a huge number of acquired behaviours thus sustaining the stability of institutions as a mechanism for social continuity (Hertzler, 1961). Another point of his formulation is related to the view of the institution as a source of values independent from its instrumental utility. In this sense, institutions develop different belief systems that fulfil the survival requirements thus producing several social structures. Friedland and Alford (1987), in relation to this concept of several institutional spheres with different contents, suggest that might not be harmony and coherence among the institutional facets. Indeed, within a given society, there might be different meanings attributed to activities and behaviours and so might arise some conflicts and contradictory definitions of beliefs and the institutional logic. Thus, according to this version of the

institutional theory, institutions are composed by several differentiated and specialized cognitive and normative systems that tend to persist by shaping human activities.

1.4 SCOTT'S INSTITUTIONAL THEORY - NORMATIVE, REGULATIVE AND COGNITIVE PILLARS (NEO-INSTITUTIONAL THEORY)

A common theme in the study of the institutional theory is that social behaviours and the associated elements and resources are strongly bound to the rule system and the cultural schema. Although all institutions are composed by several common elements such as mechanisms and logics, rationales for establishing legitimacy, diverse empirical indicators, they vary among themselves over space and time in the way they combine these components and in which are the dominant ones. Scott developed an objectivistic perspective of the institutional theory according to which these elements can differ in their nature to be regulative, normative or cognitive (Scott, 2001). Regulative, normative, and cognitive elements are considered as the fundamental building blocks of the institutional context. Regulative view of institutions emphasises the importance of rules, laws and the correlated sanctions. Society, according to this pillar, expects that institutions live thanks to the rules. Rule systems are viewed as important resources for the social interaction and the structure of the social life. The regulative processes, indeed, entail the society's ability to provide the norms people need to conform to, the means of control for the respect of those rules and, moreover, a system of incentives and punishments able to constraint actors' behaviours. Rules enforcement can be implemented by formal or informal processes. The former is managed by highly formalised entities such as courts or police forces. The latter is operated by habits, social expected and recognised behaviours, public isolation. According to the normative pillar, norms and values permeate institutions and give them their ethics, their individuality, and their personality. Norms are intended as the right behaviours to adopt for the given situation and which are the most suitable means to use in order to attain determined purposes. Values, from their part, refer to the conception of what is meant as preferable or advantageous, they are mainly used to build evaluation and comparison criteria for structures and behaviours. Expectations on the proper way to act and behave within the society are maintained through educational systems and professional systems. The cognitive pillar mainly operates thought mental schemas or cognitive maps. They are used to attribute meanings to the rules that constitute individuals reality; they refer to the "taken-for-granted" attitudes in carrying out things and tasks. In this sense, individuals' behaviours and actions are firmly connected and, at the same time, influenced by

their own internal representation, with a symbolic connotation, of the institutional environment. The three pillars are combined and assume a complementary role, in varying ways, shaping the characteristics of the different institutions. They provide a basis for legitimacy by powering coherence with laws, rules, normative support and cultural prescriptions. So, the institutional framework, made up of the broader normative, regulative and cultural-cognitive aspects, shape rational behaviours, define which are the efficient operations and performances by specifying the right approaches to adopt. Nevertheless, regulative, normative and cognitive elements within an institution may not be aligned and, in some ways, one may undermine the effects of the other (Scott, 2005). This is a consequence of the fact that the institution boundaries may be vague or weak, thus allowing different logics and consequently recognizing divergent models of social behaviour. Actors have the room to reconstruct the rules, norms, and beliefs that guide their actions initiating a bottom-up model of influence in the institutional process (Scott, 1995; 2001). Institutions are therefore assorted in the way they operate as well as in the effects they produce.

1.5 INSTITUTIONS: THE RELATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT, THE SURVIVAL, AND THE DECLINE

Institutions, today, are intensively opened and affected by non-local influences, ideas, and events. These are the effects of the fast-moving dynamics fuelled by changes in technologies, the limitless mobility of capital, labour, ideologies, beliefs, consumer preferences and practices (Scott, 2005). Institutions are permeated by a variety of messages that spring from multiple carriers such as immigrants, mass media, internet (see: Appadurai 1996; Sahlin-Andersson and Engwall, 2002). The environment in which institutions are meant to operate consists of multiple and varied facets, it is variable over time and defines and delimits social reality. It incorporates technical features, resources, relational and political interdependencies as well as symbolic and cultural features. Institutions, as well as other systems, are therefore subjected to endogenous and exogenous forces and need continuing input of energy and resources to prevent erosion and decline (Zucker, 1988). Social behaviour is influenced, constrained and shaped by the context in which it occurs. It works in a combination with different actors, beliefs, and practices becoming, in some occasions, subjected to several and possibly conflicting levels of regulative, normative and cultural directions. Institutions are thus able to produce structural changes that make them more similar but not necessarily more efficient (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) in order to conform to the pressures from the institutional setting. The uncertainties of unpredictable technical contingencies and need of

adaptation to environmental change cannot be resolved on the basis of efficiency. In some ways, institutions tend to identify the elements of complexity in the environment and, then, to integrate them into their own structures. According to some theorists, such as March and Olsen (1984), everything that happens to institutions and their structure is not necessarily intended, better said, every outcome is not the result of a conscious process enacted by the institution. Here emerges the inner ability to adapt proper to institutions that allows social support and ensures the organization survival. They range from a series of adaptive mechanisms, such as co-optation of representatives of relevant environmental elements, change, and evolution of the institution's boundaries, deal with strategic contingencies and, over a period of time, they incorporate the environmental structure. This type of institutional process meets Selznick's point of view according to which institution structure evolves over time through an adaptive and, most of the times unplanned, historically dependent process. On the other hand, according to authors such as Meyer and Rowan (1977), and Weick (1995), the greater the extent institutions are tightly bound with their environment, the greater the potential of resistance to change. Part of the institutional context is represented by the rationalized myths to which institutions need to adapt in order to maintain their social legitimacy. Myths cannot be tested directly but are classified as rational directions in that people consider them true and because they respect accepted conventions. Many of the prescriptions, policies, programs, and procedures that the society follows nowadays are strengthened by the law, by the public opinion, by the knowledge acquired through the educational system, by social prestige and so on (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Such formal elements are the expression of institutions' rules which act as rationalized myths that bind social behaviours. These rationalized myths have two key properties. The first is that they are impersonal prescriptions used to establish multiple social purposes and the related means to pursue them rationally (see: Ellul, 1964). The second one, instead, reflects the characteristic to be over the discretion of any individual. Therefore, they must be taken for granted as legitimate prescriptions, apart from personal evaluations, preferences, and interests. They produce a considerable impact since the activities are subjected to a codification process thus driving individuals to behave according to prescribed lines (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Many myths also obtain official legitimacy on the basis of legal mandates. Indeed, some societies, over time, have developed rational-legal order systems which sustain institutions' legal authority. The stronger the rational-legal order in the society, the greater the extent to which rationalized rules, procedures, and personnel become institutional requirements. Myths create the impulse, the need and the opportunity to act in an organized way as a response to external pressures and to manage relational networks (Meyer and Rowan,

1977). As a consequence, institutions have the opportunity to prosper and develop by integrating these rules into their structural elements. Institutions need the acceptance of the society in which they operate to survive; the wider social system as the function of source of meaning, legitimacy, and of a higher level of support that make the realization of institutional purposes possible.

Another aspect to take into consideration while analysing the relationship between the institution and the environment in which they produce their effects is the isomorphism concept. Institutions develop a tendency to match with their environment through a technical exchange of interdependencies: they often need to adapt to their contexts, but, at the same time, they often assume the role of leading actors in shaping those context as well. These concepts can be found in the works of Aiken and Hage (1968), Hawley (1968) and Thompson (1967) according to whom the environment drives institutions to face boundary-spanning exigencies thus putting them in front of the need to integrate those structural elements isophormic with the environment in order to manage such interdependencies. The efforts and the energies institutions spend to shape the institutional environment follow two different dimensions. The first one is that the more powerful institutions exert their power to influence their immediate relational networks to adapt to their structures and relations. Then, the second directions they follow is the attempt to build their new institutional goals through a direct implementation of rules in the society.

The consequences isomorphism produces over environmental institutions relate to the incorporations of elements that are externally legitimated, even if sometimes they are not recognised as properly efficient; the employment of external or ceremonial assessment criteria in order to define the value of structural elements; the reduction of turbulence and the maintenance of the stability as a consequence of this process. Therefore, as said before, isomorphism sustains the survival and success of institutions over time. Isomorphism also yields its results over the actors that are related to the institution: it increases the commitment of internal participants. By adhering to the prescriptions the environment requires and by shaping their structure accordingly, institutions demonstrate to the actors that are acting in order to reach collectively valued purposes (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). The institution, in this way, strengthens its legitimation both within the environment and among the individuals thus promoting and securing its survival (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Another important aspect to consider in the relation between isomorphism and environmental institutions is the evolution of the language used. Vocabularies of the structure, which are a result of institutional and isophormic rules, procure rational, prudent and legitimate values and relations. On the other hand, those institutions that fail to integrate into their structure the legitimated elements

suggested by the environment or stick to their status quo, miss the opportunity to develop and are considered to be more vulnerable to the assertion that they are unnecessary, negligent, or irrational (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The flow of support is jeopardized and threatened by the opinion of internal dissidents.

Throughout the isophormic process may need to face two general problems. First, the possibility to create inconsistencies and conflicts among the technical activities implemented to reach efficiency to conform to the ceremonial rules. Second, the ceremonial rules are spread by myths that arise from different parts of the environment and, thus, those rules may result in conflict with one another. The consequence is represented by difficulties in reaching efficiency, coordination and control problems. An example is represented by organizations that face the trade-off between sustaining the activities celebrating institutional rules, thus counting them as virtuous ceremonial expenditures or, from an efficiency perspective, as mere costs. One more reason of conflict between institutional rules and efficiency is related to the institutional environment as a pluralistic system (Udy, 1970) and societies that often spread inconsistent myths. As a consequence, institutions that search for external support and stability tend to integrate into their structure all sorts of elements, even if they can be incompatible (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

1.6 INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR LINK WITH ACTIONS

After giving an overview about the multiple perspectives and the main characteristics of the institutional theory, it seems to be necessary, according to the purposes of this dissertation, to analyse in depth the relationship between institutions and actions. As exposed before, institutional theory highlights cultural influences on the actors' decision-making process and on the formal structures. These cultural elements provide a definition about how the way the world should be (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). Institutions, therefore, represent the constraints on the options that actors and collectives are likely to exercise. In this sense, cultural influences do not completely determine human action (DiMaggio, 1988). They, instead, restrict the possible alternatives individuals perceive thus increasing certain types of behaviours. Nevertheless, a completely bounded rationality is rare to be performed, the result is that, through choice and action, individuals and organizations can deliberately decide to modify, and even eliminate, institutions. Examining the relationship between institutions and individuals' actions requires a more appropriate definition of the institution. According to Barley and

Tolbert's (1997, p. 96) perspective institutions can be defined as "shared rules and typifications that identify categories of social actors and their appropriate activities or relationships". As Tolbert and Zucker (1999) argue, practices and behavioural patterns are not equally institutionalized, rather they can vary depending on how long an institution has been in place and on how widely and deeply it is accepted by members of a collective. Institutions that have a short history are less likely to influence action. Social actions can be viewed as social stipulations that require to conform to taken-for-granted activities and interactions in order to be interpretable and shared among a class of actors.

Giddens' (1976, 1979, 1984) analysis considers institutions as both a product and a constraint on human actions and tries to identify the points of contact between actions and institutions. He starts defining the institutional realm as an existing framework of rules and typifications originated by a cumulative history of action and interaction. In contrast, the realm of action refers to arrangements of people, objects, and events in the flow of social life's unfolding (Ranson et al. 1980). When institutions are encoded in actors' action, in the form of schemes, resources, and norms, they influence how people communicate, enact power, and determine which are the behaviours to be sanctioned and which ones to be rewarded. Barley (1986) suggests considering institutions as being enacted through scripts, here intended as behavioural regularities rather than as mental model or plans. Scripts can be empirically identified regardless of the type of actor or the level of analysis. In addition, according to his and Tolbert point of view, in order to obtain a full understanding of the process through which institutions and actions are reciprocally related is necessary a diachronic examination. They make use of a conceptual framework elaborated by Giddens and Berger and Luckmann which specifies the relations between interactional episodes and institutional principles (Figure 1). Through this model, it is possible to understand that institutionalization is a continuous process that can only be observed over time. The model is clearly able to express the interrelationship of what Giddens defined as the institutional realm and the realm of action. Indeed, vertical arrows represent the institutional constraints on action, while, diagonal arrows represent maintenance or modification of the institution through action. The result is that social behaviours constitute institutions diachronically and, in contrast, institutions constraint actions synchronically (Barley and Tolbert, 1997). The first moment of the process is represented by the encoding (*arrow a*) of institutional principles in the scripts used in specific settings. The second step (*arrow b*) requires actors to enact scripts that encode institutional principles. This can be both a conscious or unconscious choice of the alternatives, indeed, in many cases, individuals simply behave according to their perception of the way things are. *Arrow c*, the third moment, considers the degree to which behaviours revise or replicate the scripts that

informed the action. Sources of changes can be related to advancements in technologies, cross-cultural contacts, economic downturns, and similar events. In these circumstances, actors realize that they can, sometimes must, modify an institution (Burns, 1961). In the absence of contextual change, actors are more likely to replicate scripted behaviour, and it is this propensity that makes institutions so persistent (Hughes, 1939; p. 180). The final moment, the fourth one (*arrow d*) include the objectification and the externalization of the patterned behaviours and the interactions occurred during the period in question. According to that model, it is possible to identify whether a change in an interaction has or has not occurred by comparing the scripts uncovered at the first moment to the following moments.

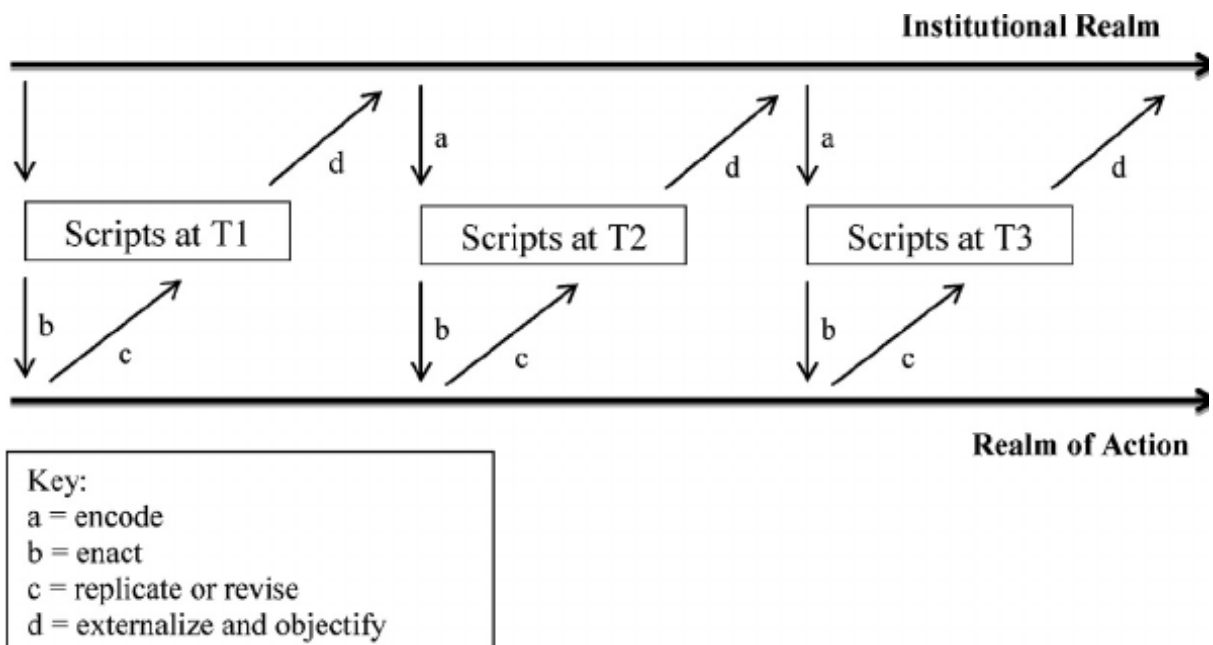


Figure 1. A Sequential Model of Institutionalization (Giddens and Berger and Luckmann)

1.7 CONCLUSIONS ON INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

A review of both the most influential institutional theories and the neo-institutional theory point of view reveals a huge diversity and prosperity in the arguments that shape the wider and more general institutional theory. Different definitions are employed by the authors; nevertheless, it is fundamental to consider the different perspectives they offer in order to build a complete and exhaustive framework of the institutional theory. Theories stressing the importance of the environment and its relevance remind that institutions are intrinsically influenced by the context in which they are placed, but, at the same time, they have the ability to exert their power over the context as well. Theories related to “social order” and “typification” process focus more on individuals and their tendency to organize actions and

behaviours in order to spread common meanings and develop a shared vision of the reality. According to the authors following this interpretation of the institution theory, the “typification” and the repeated behaviour process are the main pillars for the creation and the conservation of institutions. Another important aspect is covered by the formulation that gives importance to cultural elements and to a more symbolic conception of the environment. In addition, it is due to consider also the inner characteristic of institutions that are able to outlast generations and to persist over time thanks to the transmission of a series of repeated behaviours to subsequent generations. All these concepts put together contribute to build a multiple perspective of institution theory that well can be implemented in relation to the important changes occurring at national, transnational and global levels (Scott, 2005). Indeed, a growing variety of institutions will continue to play a central role in social life by shaping behaviours and by furnishing an increasingly competitive and rich environment for individuals. Consequently, the institutional theory has the function to make sense and to better guide the course of the changes occurring in the society and in the reality by helping actors to maintain legitimated behaviours and to make coherent choices.

In this direction, it acquires more interest in exploring how the micro-level cultures dynamics influence and are influenced by the institutional context, in return. In relation to the analysis of culture, a major role is covered by religion. Religion can be considered as an important institution in that, for those affiliated to a particular belief, it is able to shape individuals’ behaviours, influence over their choices, play a role in the social environment. A growing base of literature is suggesting that there is a strong spiritual reality to people’s lives, so much that some authors argue that religious faith and spirituality are the foundation for ethical decision making. Religion can exert influence on the manifestation of morality, have a role in revealing the inner self and produce an impact on professional and private lives. A solid starting point to connect religions and institutional theory is provided by Giddens and Berger and Luckmann model which is able to explain the relationship between institution as a stable structure and its influence on actor’s action. So, taking into consideration the institutional framework, the main goal of this work is to explore which is the impact of religion on the workplace. In particular, the analysis will converge on the influence different religions (Catholicism, Buddhism, Islamism, Hinduism) may produce over workers and which are the different precepts they use as a stimulus to generate some effects in career development and in workplace decision making.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH QUESTION

2.1 DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Both religion and spirituality are considered complex phenomena, characterised by a multidimensional nature, and, probably, a single definition would reflect just a limited perspective or interest. Anyways, the word “religion” derives from the Latin root *religio* which refers to a bond between humanity and some greater-than-human powers. Historically, it is possible to identify three main designations of the term, namely: 1) a supernatural power to which individuals are motivated or committed; 2) a sensation or a perception present in the actor who considers such a power; and 3) the ritual acts carried out in respect of that power (Wulff, 1997). The word “spirituality”, from its part, comes from the Latin root *spiritus* meaning breath or life; traditionally, it has been referred to a religious context and it is still both experienced and expressed by many through a conventional religious understanding (Bibby, 1995).

Generally, religion is defined as a set of values, doctrines, and principles that are able to provide an ethical and moral framework for understanding, motivation, and behaviour. Actually, it is identified with formally structured religious institutions. Religiousness refers to an actor’s personal relationship with a certain religion, church, or faith community. Spirituality, in contrast, can be related to multiple concepts, such as an individual’s relationship with higher power or powers, a type of energy or guiding force, or a belief system in a common good (Hill and Pargament, 2003; Miller and Thoresen, 2003). Actually, not all the current definitions of spirituality are connected to a religious context. Spilka (1993) highlights some relationships with a world-oriented perspective focusing on actors’ interest for ecology and nature, and a people-oriented perspective (humanistic) stressing human achievement or potential. Spirituality should, therefore, be conceived as a multidimensional mechanism. So, the concept of “spirituality” has assumed a distinct meaning from religiousness and it has been adopted by identifiable groups of believers. In a study conducted by Zinnbaur et al. (2002), a group of interviewed who identify themselves as “spiritual but not religious” have been compared to a group of respondents who, in contrast, identify themselves as “spiritual and religious”. The

main difference that comes to light is that the “spiritual but not religious” group relates to religiousness in a less positive way, is less compatible with a traditional form of worship, and, conversely demonstrates a tendency to be independent from others, to engage in group experiences related to the spiritual growth and to mystic sensations, and to be more inclined to differentiate religiousness and spirituality as different and non-overlapping concepts. Anyways, many individuals approach the sacred through the personal, subjective, and experiential path of spirituality, which often includes organizational or institutional beliefs and practices as well. Thus, it emerges that many actors perceive little differences between the two concepts, so, commonly, there is a strong possibility that the two constructs overlap. Indeed, a central common characteristic of the two constructs is the sense of the sacred. According to Durkheim (1992), the sacred is shaped by cultural and social forces. It can be considered, therefore, as a socially influenced perception of some sense of ultimate reality or truth or some divine being/object (Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson and Zinnbauer, 2000). The sacred entails a search process within the religion, it is not automatically known nor it imposes itself on the individual. This process consists of four different steps, namely identify what is sacred and worthy of devotion and commitment; articulate what is recognised as sacred; maintain the sacred within the religious experience; and, finally the transformation of the sacred to the search process itself. The search process can be expressed in multiple personal ways. Accordingly, the content and the expression of the actor’s belief provide a perspective through which the reality is translated, understood, and experienced. Individuals, indeed, in their everyday lives, behave on the basis of personal beliefs or on the basis of theories they have developed over time about themselves, about others, about the world of situations they encounter, and their relations to it. This set of beliefs and theories form a meaning system that supports actors in attributing a sense to the world around them and to their experiences, as well as in setting goals, planning activities, and ordering their behaviours. According to Geertz (1973, p. 131), “the force of religion in supporting social values rests, then, on the ability of its symbols to formulate a world in which those values, as well as the forces opposing their realization, are fundamental ingredients”. Meaning systems are considered to cover a particular importance in predicting general patterns and individual differences in coping with adversity (Silberman, 2005). The religious meaning systems of individuals function as a lens through which reality is perceived and then interpreted accordingly (McIntosh, 1995). Typically, religion is expressed in groups or is, at least, influenced by a reference group; for this reason, it is considered as a social-psychological phenomenon. The religious perspective that an individual decides to embrace is prescribed and supported by these identifiable groups of people that cover the function of legitimate the search for the sacred (Berger, 1967). The religious

group actually furnishes a socially established explanation that is able to justify a course of action; at the same time, the legitimation supports and encourages the religious group to interpret the meaning of its existence and to attribute a sense of its social order (McGuire, 1981). Perceptions of what is considered sacred can evoke in the actor feelings of reverence, respect, and devotion and produce a kind of personal commitment to the life which appears coherent to the precepts and principles of what is considered sacred. Religion can, therefore, influence the formation of goals for self-regulation by connecting the motivation with sacred, affect emotions, influence behaviours by prescribing what is considered to be appropriate and inappropriate, and ultimately support career development choices. What differs religion from the other meaning systems is that it centres on what is conceived as sacred, intended as concepts of higher powers, such as the divine, God, or as the transcendent which refers to what is considered holy and set apart from the ordinary. They are perceived as worthy of veneration and respect thus becoming a unique source of significance in people's lives. Religions, indeed, embodies a series of values that build the foundations for what is considered right or wrong. Religion, as an institution does, produces both formal and informal norms and provides to the adhering actors with a freedom/constraint binomial by prescribing behaviours and actions within some acceptable parameters. Through a daily exposure to norms, customs, scripts, laws and practices religions transmit to the members of a group a collection of values and provide to the society some reciprocal expectations of predictability. These norms, values, and beliefs are often codified into religious codes such as the Bible or the Koran. These institutional mechanisms, such as ecclesiastical authorities, sacred writings, and traditions, serve as sources of knowledge that work together in order to provide adherents with an image of what reality is and to inspire some lifestyles that actors should pursue to respond appropriately to this reality. Similarly, spirituality acts in the same direction by providing purpose and meaning to life and by being a primary influence on the development of values, which in turn guide behaviours in the workplace. Religion, among the other meaning system, is one of the few that is able to offer a meaning to every aspect of human life, to specific situations and can influence the appraisal and causal attribution that compose the interpretations given by the actors to any event.

Religions are composed of multiple dimensions that relate to the cognitive (knowing), affective (feelings), and behavioural (doing) components (Parboteeah, Hoegl, Cullen, 2008). Cognitive dimension pertains to the knowledge component of religion: it is generally expressed through personal or private religious beliefs and reflects the most ideological aspect and the expectations related to the religion. Religious belief can also be conceptualized in the form of

schemas, similar to other schemas but activated only within religious believers (McIntosh, 1995). The affective component, from its part, “encompasses feelings toward religious beings, objects, or institutions” (Cornwall et al., 1986, p. 227) and relates to the degree to which actors are committed to their religion. As a matter of fact, the classic description that is provided about religious experience focuses on its affective aspects. From the private point of view, the affective dimension consists of the subjective relation the individual builds with the religion. From the institutional form, instead, the affective dimension is proved by actors’ commitment toward their religious organization; it is considered as an important mechanism for the conservation of the religious institution. Finally, the behavioural dimension is connected to the “doing” manifestation of being religious. Religious practice and material contribution is the typical indicator used to measure the value individuals place on religion. The more people value religion, the more they are likely to “consume” religion (Myers, 2000). Some studies have given proof of the role religions can cover in helping aged people by providing them a meaning to death and hope at the end of the life cycle (Glick, Weiss, and Parkers, 1974). Also, religions are effective in coping with disability, illness, and negative life events (Pargament et al., 1998). Prayers are actually considered a concrete coping mechanism (Poloma and Pendleton, 1989).

So, being able to provide an understanding about how religions are connected to work values is fundamental in order to foresee how actors’ religion and spirituality exert an influence over their career development and choices, both in counselling and in managerial and organizational fields. There can be found three different perspectives that introduce how religion supports organizational performance. The first one is that religion enhances employee well-being and quality of life. The second refers to the fact that religion provides employees a sense of meaning and purpose at work. Finally, religion transmits employees a sense of interconnectedness and community. So, religion can be described as a unique form of motivation, a unique source of significance, coping and distress, and a unique contributor to morality and health (Silberman, 2005).

2.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND THE WORKPLACE

It has been affirmed that religion, as well as spirituality, are inextricably connected to human activities and they have the potential to influence work-related events, behaviours, choices and life outcomes. Pargament (1999, p. 12) affirms that “a job is likely to be approached differently when it becomes vocation”. This perspective highlights important and measurable

consequences in the tendency of sanctifying or spiritualising objects, roles, and responsibilities. However, an actor's spirituality is conceived as very unique and non-traditional. In this sense, the nature of spirituality as a support or coping mechanism remains an issue for debate and in need of extensive studies (Duffy, 2006). Religions, whose definition as the sets of beliefs, activities, and institutions based on faith in supernatural forces (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985) remains much more stable, continues to play an important role in actors' lives in most societies. In those societies where one or few religions are dominant, the tendency is to reply the core values of those religions in the secular values of the society, which then regulate everyday activity and social behaviours. Indeed, many of the moral conventions and norms of any culture are developed and spread respecting a religious perspective that provides acceptable ranges of alternatives for normative behaviours (Stark, 1984; Stark and Bainbridge, 1985). Deviant behaviours, as well, can be strongly related to religious norms (Johnson, 1971; Pfeiffer, 1992). Past and current researches from the various social science fields place an intense attention on the relationship between religion and the economic attitudes of individuals. The underlying results of most of this studies state that religion constitutes a foundation in society in all aspects of life. Harpaz (1998, p. 143) asserts that "work and religion and their interrelationship are part of the foundations of human society". The relationship between the religion and workplace has been considered as a major point of attention over the years. Examples come from the works of Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) by considering the duo religion and organizational commitment, McClelland (1961) through the connection with motivation, Vecchio (1980) focusing more on job satisfaction, and Weber (1930). Specifically, Weber (1930) introduced the idea that the main reason behind the success of many Protestant countries was related to the Protestant work ethic. The main argument proposed was that Protestantism encouraged its affiliates to promote and enhance their social and economic value, particularly by emphasizing the value of work in their daily lives and "the disciplined and austere pursuit of gain, and the attitude appropriate to the growth of capitalism" (Preston, 1987, p. 119). The research was performed at a country level, nevertheless, it provided a first point of view about the role religion has in individuals' life and, in that case in particular, its role in encouraging hard work and an environment conducive to capitalism and economic prosperity (Weber, 1930). Within this realm, researchers elaborated several points of view to study the influence religion can exert over an individual's work-life. Niles (1999) studied the relationship between religion and work ethic; Harpaz (1998) linked religion to variables such as societal norms regarding work, work outcomes and the importance of work goals, also within a cross-national setting; Chusmir and Koberg (1988) examined the connection that can be established among religious affiliation and conviction and

the various work attitudes. Nevertheless, it is due to mention an opposed trend that finds it difficult to examine religion institutionally and its positive implications in terms of organizational motivation, performance, and decision making. Business psychologists Blake E. Ashforth and Michael G. Pratt, affirm that institutionalized spirituality and religion are an oxymoron. They assert that “just as spirituality cannot be completely institutionalized without compromising its locus focus, so institutions cannot completely “spiritualized” without sacrificing their collective and corporeal form (Pratt, and Ashforth, 2003, p. 102). They provide the image of an eclipse arguing that religion and institutions cannot totally overlap without one eclipsing the other. In this sense, religion and its relation with the workplace cannot be studied through the orthodoxy of the past, but rather through the freedom of the present.

Religions are structured over a series of principle that provides guidelines by which to live to the adherents. These principles and the coherent behaviours that derive from them are then replied by the actors within the work setting. Some researches give proof that the majority of business people are convinced that their religious values can play an important role in their business decisions and career values (Childs, 1995; D.E. Lewis, 2001; M.M. Lewis and Hardin, 2002). Religions provide actors with the means to meet societal expectations and act as a support when making difficult work decision. It is hypothesized that the majority of the positive outcomes connected to religious belief are due to the material and emotional support that actors receive from their social networks of fellows members and leaders of their religious communities. These social networks have been demonstrated to impact positively as emotional supports in both calm and stressful times (see: Nooney and Woodrum, 2002; Stone, Cross, and Purvis, 2003). Through a strong and supportive religious value system, an actor appears better equipped to cope with life and work-related challenges as well as to attain a more positive life outlook (Hill and Pargament, 2003).

Career-related matters play a role in the individual’s well-being they can be particularly influenced by religiousness. According to some authors, workplace religiousness involves multiple positive behaviours such as sharing, valuing, caring, respecting, acknowledging, and connecting in order to pursue common-goal directions by enabling them to belong, to be creative, and personally fulfilled (Adams and Csiernik, 2002). Certain dimensions of religion in the workplace, such as meaning making, meditation and sense of a mission, relate positively to job satisfaction, job involvement, and productivity. Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003), in their study on the interrelationship between workplace spirituality and organizational behaviours and attitudes, find that greater experiences of meaningful work are connected to higher levels of organizational commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement, and

organization-based-self-esteem. These positive outcomes can benefit both the companies and their employees.

The connection between religion and work-related issues have been explored also in relation to researches focusing on undergraduate students. These studies are interested in the influence that cultural aspects, religion in particular, have on the career development of college students. Indeed, religiousness and an actor's career process are considered connected in terms of the personal development they can produce; in addition, they can play a critical and combined role in shaping an individual's decision making process and general growth (Richmond, 1997). In late adolescence and early adulthood, actors present a need to acquire a better knowledge of themselves, to explore the world of work, and to begin committing to career choices. Developmental theories argue that an individual's growth is influenced by a combination of internal and external contextual forces; so, an actor is affected by his or her surrounding environment as well as by his or her inner characteristics. Duffy and Blustein (2005) affirm that, according to their perspective, students that benefit from the support of their religious belief are better able to pursue their vocational developmental task and are more confident in structure their career path. They reported that religious affiliation and the frequency of spiritual practice are positively related to students' adjustments to college and that these greater levels of adjustments then contribute to greater academic success. As an example, Walker and Dixon (2002) refer to a research about the role of religion in relation to the academic performance of college students. They report that students who indicate higher levels of religious beliefs and have a spiritual behaviour obtain higher grade point averages, more academic honours, and fewer academic suspensions and probations. In addition, religious and spiritual elements are used by students in the context of dealing with various life stressors and adversities (Constantine et al., 2002; Ellison, 1993), as well as in order to recognize their life purpose or destiny (Mattis, 2002). Another study conducted by Duffy and Blustein (2005) surveys a sample of college students with the purpose of investigating how religiousness relate to career choice commitment and career decision self-efficacy. Such findings highlight that religious beliefs, values and practices serve as a concrete foundation for understanding thoughts, feelings, experiences, behaviours and the related career development both in students and in workers.

Other studies have focused more on those individuals who perceive their career as a vocation or calling. Nowadays, there are no universally agreed-upon definitions of vocation and calling, anyways, these terms generally refer to kinds of careers that are not based on

extrinsic values and financially motivated, but, rather, that are experienced as contributing to the good of higher power or of society. External career-related variables refer to variables and aspects of the work that are considered to be outside the actor and that play a significant role in decision making, often are the source of primary motivators. Individuals that view their career as a calling, or a career chosen for them by God, present a higher tendency to espouse social justice beliefs and report greater job security and job satisfaction. In addition, the results indicate that actors who believe their career are a form of calling are more interested in settings that emphasise social interaction (Davidson and Caddell, 1994).

Organizations, accordingly, have been increasing their interest in strategies of empowerment in order to enable and support employee involvement and participation. These are new ways of operating that aim to build a working environment which is mind-enriching, heart-fulfilling, spirit-growing for employees, and still be financially rewarding meantime for the organizations. Indeed, several researches confirm that the encouragement and the support of religiousness in the workplace involve benefits in terms of creativity, honesty and trust, personal fulfilment, and commitment which entail an increase in organizational performance (Krishnakumar and Neck, 2002). Intuition and creativity are workers' skills that acquire a centrality in problem solving. Religious encouragement entails better insights and better mental growth and development thus implying an increase in problem solving capabilities. Trust, instead, is particularly appreciated within organizations and many spiritually based organizations consider honesty as their primary focus (Wagner-Marsh and Conley, 1999). Religiousness has been associated with the higher needs in the Maslow's pyramid, such as "belonging and also some sense of achievement" (Burack, 1999, p. 284). According to that vision, religion helps actors to feel complete when they come to work. Consequently, this effect produces some results in terms of increase in organizational performance and in greater financial success (Turner, 1999). Finally, through an encouragement of religiousness, it is possible to support a greater level of organizational commitment defined as "a concept that seeks to capture the nature of attachments formed by individuals, to their employing organizations" (Ketchand and Strawser, 2001, p. 1) (Figure 2).

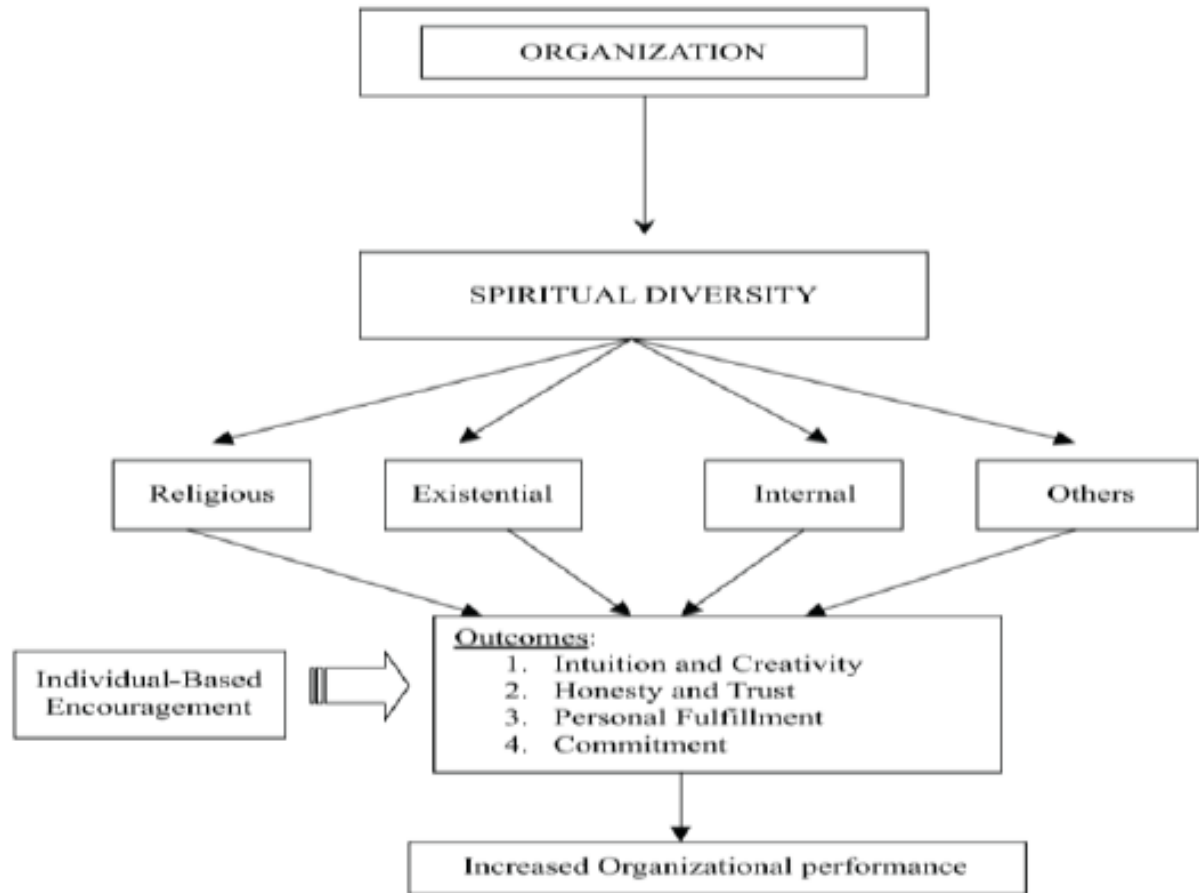


Figure 2. Individual based “spiritual freedom” model (Sukumarakurup Krishnakumar, 2002)

It is thus imperative to understand the noticeable role of religion as it is able to influence both the organizational and the business life. Religiousness is recognised to be as one of the crucial dimensions of actors’ personality. Consequently, if an organization is able to support and encourage religiousness, then is actually boosting individuals to bring their whole self to work (Neck and Milliman, 1994). The result is an actor’s personal development in terms of fulfilment and satisfaction and a greater commitment to the work and to the organization as well.

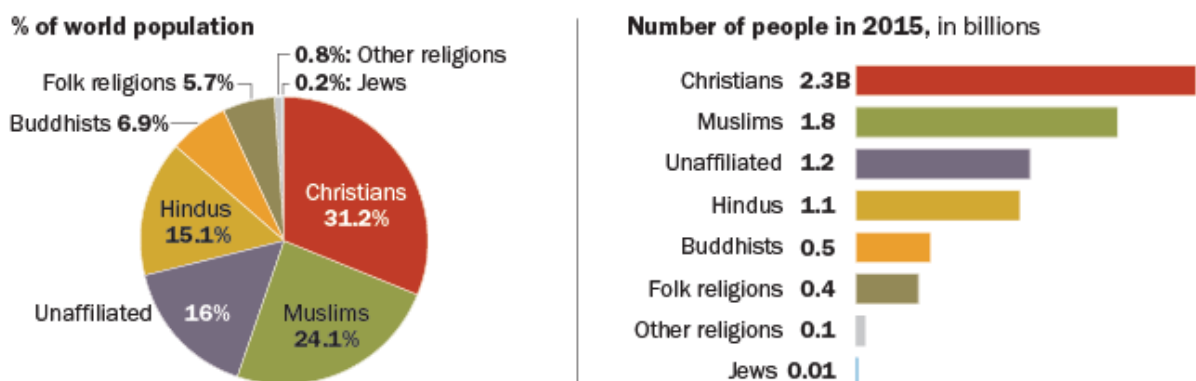
2.3 COMPARISON ON THE DIFFERENT RELIGIONS ANALYSED

Understanding the connection between religion and work dynamics is a challenge fuelled by the fast-running world and its actual characteristics for different reasons. First, direct effects coming from globalization are immigration and the connected growth in religious diversity and backgrounds that are now interacting in companies. According to Cash and Gray (2000), companies are facing an increase in legal and societal pressures in order to

accommodate religious beliefs and preferences. Second, companies going beyond their domestic boundaries are encountering the need to improve their understanding of workers' religious orientation in order to manage them more effectively. Third, workplace changes in terms of downsizing, the predominant use of technology at work, job insecurity, loss of meaning in jobs drive people to look at religion as a mean to deal with these workplace challenges.

In a research conduct by Pew Research Center (2015) emerges that around 84% of the world population believes in some form of religion or is connected to a spiritual tradition, with the remaining 16% pronouncing atheists or non-religious. Applying these percentages to multinational companies reveals the importance of understanding the religion's role in such contexts. Indeed, although there can be counted a relatively large number of religions, actually the great majority of the population is affiliated to Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism. Christianity and Islam are considered the two major ones and embrace 2.3 billion (31.2% of world population) and 1.8 billion (24.1% of world population) of adherents respectively. The other two remaining religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, boast around 1.1 billion (15.1% of world population) and 0.5 billion (6.9% of world population). Adherents of folk religions, Jews and members of other religions contribute to smaller shares of the world population. So, by taking into consideration the four most widespread religions it is possible to analyse and give a potential understanding of approximately more than 77% of the world's population (Figure 3).

Christians are the largest religious group in 2015

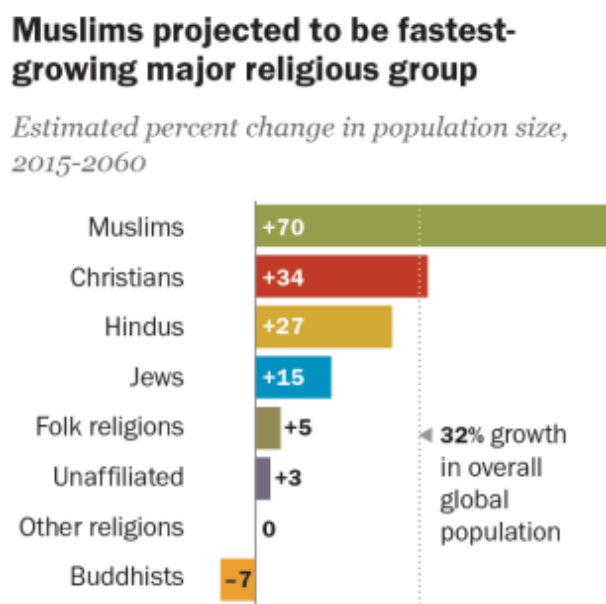


Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections. See Methodology for details.
 "The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 3. Religious groups in 2015 (Pew Research Center)

Nevertheless, it is also fundamental to consider the trends that these religions are facing. The demographic analysis performed by Pew Research Center (2015) reveals that Christianity is suffering a huge natural decline due to Europe’s aging Christian population that results unique compared with Christians in other parts of the world and other religious groups. As an example, Muslims and the unaffiliated both experienced natural increases in their population. Especially Muslims experienced the greatest natural increase among all religious group, Christians included, with the projections confirming them to be the fastest-growing religious group.



Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections. See Methodology for details.
 "The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

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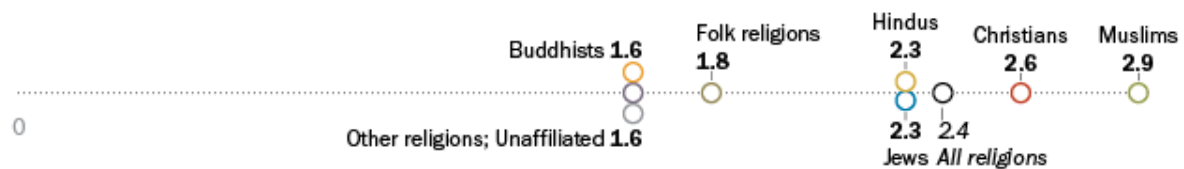
Figure 4. Estimated percent change in population size, 2015-2060 (Pew Research Center)

This tendency is related to two major demographic factors. The first one is that, globally, Muslims boast the highest fertility rate of any other religion with an average of 2.9 children per woman, strongly above the 2.1 replacement level which is the minimum level required in order to maintain a stable population. Christians present the second highest fertility rate (2.6 children per woman); Hindu fertility (2.3 children per woman) is just below the global average of 2.4 children per woman. All other major religious groups, by contrast, reveal fertility levels too low to sustain their population. The second one is related to age differences which influence the future growth. Muslims actually rely on the youngest median age, 24 years old, of all religious

groups. Hindus, with a median age of 27, are also younger than the world’s overall median age of 30 years old. Christians match the global median, while all other religious groups are older than the global median, which is part of the reason why they are expected to fall behind the pace of global population growth.

Muslims, Christians have more children per woman than any other religious group

Total fertility rate, by religion, 2015-2020



Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections. See Methodology for details. "The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 5. Fertility rate by religion, 2015-2020 (Pew Research Center)

Muslims and Hindus are the youngest religious populations

Median age by religion, 2015



Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections. See Methodology for details. "The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 6. Median age by religion, 2015 (Pew Research Center)

This work examines and compares the connections existing between religions representing the majority of people around the world – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam – and the work values they support according to their principles and teachings. Indeed, people practicing different religions tend to have different values and norms that exert an influence over the way they are managed in the workplace. Hence, the religious view of the workplace assumes different meanings according to the belief that is taken into consideration. Precisely, the religious groups are first compared on the basis of extrinsic and intrinsic work values, which are considered as two of the most important identified by researchers (Ros et al., 1999). A possible definition of values refers to “desirable states, objects, goals or behaviours,

transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and choose among alternative modes of behaviour” (Sagie and Elizur, 1996, p. 573). Extrinsic work values generally are represented by external outcomes pertaining to the job and include work benefits, work security, and success at work (Van Vianen et al., 2007, p. 190). They express an actor’s preference for income, job security, and less demanding work (Parboteeah et al., 2009). Intrinsic work values, in contrast, are more connected to appropriate work behaviours aimed at “broadening one’s horizons, contributing to society, and having a meaningful work” (Van Vianen et al., 2007, p. 190). As such intrinsic values reflect the search for autonomy, growth, creativity, and the use of initiative at work. Here is provided a brief overview of the relationship between religiousness and work of the religions that are analysed in this dissertation. Christians believe that spirituality is the “call for work”. Naylor (1996, p. 38) affirms, “to be sure, our work participation in the creativity of God is a great blessing, a divine summons, a vocation”. Islam view of the workplace is reported in the term “Islamic Work Ethic (ISE)”. Islam’s teachings invite the followers to be committed towards the organization, to embrace cooperation and consulting in order to alleviate mistakes. Islamic work ethic also affirms that values such as justice and generosity should be unavoidable in the workplace (Yousef, 2001). Buddhist’s perspective, from its part, considers hard work and devotion as the tools to exploit in order to modify an actor’s life. They are also referred to be as an institution as a whole which results in total enrichment of life and work (Jacobson, 1982). Finally, Hindus believe that their religion and their spirituality are expressed in doing the work with maximum effort and devotion. One of the main principles followed by Hindus is considering the effort towards the goal as the most important, and that the results are supposed to be provided by God (Menon, 1997). These different multiple definitions of religion and work values highlight the importance not to concentrate on a single conception of those terms but, rather, to support the different perspectives and encourage individuals to practice their own sense of religion in the workplace. As a matter of facts, considering the work environment, work values tend to identify with the different work outcomes people expect to be obtainable in that setting (Van Vianen et al., 2007).

2.3.1 BUDDHISM

Buddhism is intended as “the wide and multifaceted religious tradition that focuses primarily on the reality of world suffering and on the ways one can be freed from such suffering” (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008, p. 115). In this sense, the fundamental premise of Buddhism is recognizing in craving and desires the major

causes of suffering, unhappiness emerges from attempts to satisfy the ego's desires. In the business, as well, the greed is seen as a trait that can jeopardize a firm's activity and success. In order to remove suffering, Lord Buddha introduced some practices, the eightfold path or principles, that provide to Buddhists some guidelines to operate within the society. Researches by Gould (1995) and Nanayakkara (1992) highlighted some links between Buddhism's prescription and the individuals' career. Lord Buddha see in poverty the main decline of ethical behaviour in society and the laziness as a strong negative trait that must be discouraged. Therefore, Buddhism proposes a work ethic that encourages actors to do their best efforts by taking initiatives, striving and persisting. Buddhists pursuit through their career life intrinsic recognition by choosing works contribute to the society as well as to each other. As a result, a business person seeking material gains, wealth and power goes against the principles and the essential teachings expressed by Buddha. A Buddhist approach to work-life support the idea that career and a moral and spiritual life are neither separate nor mutually exclusive. Buddhism model operates in a way that is spiritually rich, socially beneficial, environmentally friendly and able to help co-workers.

2.3.2 CHRISTIANITY

The term Christianity refers to the totality of the churches, communities, sects, groups, and conceptions that recall the preaching and the teachings of its founder Jesus of Nazareth. Christianity, despite consist of many divisions, is one of the most practiced religions around the world today. Christian religions find their legitimation in the Ten Commandments that prescribe a code of conduct and a series of ethical rules that believing Christians need to follow in order to attain what they believe in (e.g. salvation). From a more economic point of view, evidence suggests that all forms of Christianity tend to conceive the work values and the career in the same way. Generally, Christian religions and their prescriptions favour a positive relationship between the belief practice and the individual's career and business, where there can be established an equilibrium among economic success, hard work, and biblical values. According to that vision, Christians support the private property and the freedom to accumulate wealth (Ludwig, 2001). Weber affirmed that the Protestant work ethic leads to the spirit of capitalism and the pursuit of profit is considered virtuous. Thus, for a Christian, being profitable and working toward the glory of God in one's own work career is a mean to determine the salvation. On the other end, Christian values require to satisfy their

spiritual aspirations through work and to fulfil their responsibility in contributing to the society. Christians, therefore, express through their work choices and behaviours both intrinsic and extrinsic preferences.

2.3.3 HINDUISM

Hinduism concerns a wide set of religious beliefs that find their foundations in the “Vedic scriptures and the social class structure with its special respect for Brahmins” (Ludwig, 2001, p. 64). Hinduism focuses its attention on Brahman, representative of the ultimate reality and truth, and on the multiple gods and goddesses which are considered as models of the deep, eternal religious truth. Beyond the central figure of Brahman, Hinduism’s moral philosophy is regulated by karma and dharma principles. These precepts encourage Hindus to be responsible for the actions and the behaviour they perform, as their conduct is conceived to have an impact on the actor’s destiny and rebirth. Hinduist vision permeates all the aspects of the life sanctifying them through the rituals and the norms of purity. According to the Hinduist morality, both extrinsic values and intrinsic values of work are supported. Those affiliated to Hinduism traditionally view living the good life as the accomplishment of four aims, namely *dharma* intended as the fulfilling of the actor’s duties; *kama* meant as the satisfaction of the pleasure and the inner state of mind; *moksa* the achievement of liberation; and *artha* which represents the material prosperity. So, according to the *artha* principle, the effort to reach a material prosperity plays a central role in Hindu good life. The result is that extrinsic values are pursued coherently to the value of wealth accumulation as one of life’s stages, thus driving Hindus to achieve business excellence. Sinha (1998) affirms that Hindu principles emphasize that salvation is ultimately an individual process and that the achievement of material prosperity covers an important role in life’s stages. On the other hand, Hinduism supports intrinsic values as well. This aspect of the religion is strongly connected to the caste system, the hierarchical ordering of Indian society based on the occupational groups (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008). Generally, the caste system is intended with a negative sense, nonetheless, it transmits to individuals a strong sense of legitimation, identity, and belonging. In addition, even if caste system has been subjected to strong regulatory measures banning them in 1950, empirical research demonstrates that they are still an influent force shaping the Indian workplace environment, allocation of power and goods transfer (Pick and Dayaram, 2006).

According to the caste system dynamics, each individual perfectly knows to which occupation he or she belongs and which are the connected responsibilities. Hindus, therefore, conceive their work as a way to demonstrate their responsibility to the caste and, ultimately, to the collective interest. Finally, *Bhagawad-Gita*, one of the Hinduism's sacred text, glorify work as a duty to accomplish in order to be connected with the divinities.

2.3.4 ISLAMISM

Islam actually is considered the second most widespread religion in the world. It is related to the concept of *Qur'an*, namely the submission to the will of *Allah* (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008). Islam is considered, in the meantime, a religious tradition, a civilization, and, as intended by Muslims, a complete life-system. In that sense, it prescribes determined rituals as well as a comprehensive organization of the society in relation to family-life, civil and penal institutions, business, behaviours and etiquette, nutrition, suitable clothing, and personal hygiene. According to Islam's point of view, very few are the aspects of the public and private life that are not governed by the religious expression. Islam is therefore conceived as a complex and comprehensive civilization where people, societies, and governments should mirror God's wills. The main difference that emerges with Christianity is in the role of Jesus. Indeed, the origins of Islam are identified with the figure of the Prophet Muhammad, conceived as the "final agent of the God's revelation" (Ludwig, 2001, p. 428). Prophet Muhammad is seen by Islam as the messenger, whilst, according to the Christian conception of religion, Jesus transmits God's message and is worshipped as God as well. Islamic work ethic and vision of work career support the engagement in economic activities as an obligation. Work is therefore formulated as to be the source of independence and the mean to achieve a fulfilled life. *Qur'an* encourages free trade and the consequent legitimate profits as long as they are considered consistent with the Islamic moral and do not exploit other actors. Thus, Islam views engagement and the search for economic activities as a religious obligation (Yousef, 2000). Islamic law also known as Shari'a, requires particular prescriptions for women that want to work. It builds a moral and supportive business environment characterised by the principles of patriarchal responsibility (*qiwama*) and of male assistance to women by permitting entrée to their networks (*wasta*) (Ahmed, 1998). Within Islam, men and women are considered to be equal, but not the same. Still, they are conceived to be complementary covering

important roles on the basis of their perceived strengths and weaknesses (Hashim, 1999). Conservative Islamic cultures demonstrate the tendency to place restrictions on female mobility and on a woman's ability to interact with individuals outside the home. A study conducted on a sample of female entrepreneurs from Bahraini, a conservative Muslim country, highlights the influence Islamic precepts exert on women's work life. Specifically, the research proves that female entrepreneurs who demonstrate a commitment to Islam are more likely to gain access to business networks and those who wear the hijab, which is considered a requirement for doing business, enjoy better access to bank supports as well (McIntosh and Islam, 2010). Islamic ethics, indeed, imposes to build a prosperity through an appropriate use of the resources provided by God. The resources are intended fundamental in order to ensure basic survival, satisfy physical needs and support wealth accumulation. Individuals believing in Islam pursue throughout their life extrinsic work values as for "Muslims, economic life is thus seen as a means to a spiritual end, where prosperity means the living of a virtuous life" (Kriger and Seng, 2005, p. 777). Islamic adherents also allocate a central role to intrinsic values of work such as having an interesting job, or a job that is evaluated as useful for the society, as "work is considered to be a source of independence and a mean of fostering personal growth, self-respect, satisfaction, and self-fulfilment (Yousef, 2000: 515).

2.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

In an age where religions seem to be playing an ever-important role in people's lives worldwide, it acquires a pervasive importance examining which is the critical role religions play in actors' career choices and how they are defined in terms of their connections with work values. Although many studies have given proof of the influence religious beliefs have on work values, few of them have examined the relationship. Traditionally, religions have been conceived as a source of conflicts and obstacles that made it harder the effective management of people belonging to different cultures (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008). Nevertheless, paying attention to the multiple characteristics that each religion presents and by finding a kind of equilibrium among these principles, it is possible for multinational companies to acquire strong legitimation and achieve business advantages in their economic environments. Companies are therefore finding an increasing need to understand religion in the work environment. In particular, this research aims at examining the impact of the world's four major religions,

Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism on career development. Also, will be studied if and how people who adhere to different religious beliefs present different values and norms in the workplace. The main indispensable premise is that religious teachings, principles, and prescriptions will exert an influence on individuals regardless of where they live.

Starting from this general framework in which have been described the main values religions favour in relation to the work environment, this research will try to explore how these religious principles are able to build a valuable relationship with individuals' career development. Specifically, the intention is to understand if adhering to a religious belief impacts differently on actors' career choices in terms of career advancements, extrinsic compensation, and intrinsic compensation. The analysis will be based on research project entailing 30 nations and 19.000 questionnaires about how people set career priorities and how their backgrounds and experiences influence those priorities and then will be conducted a segmentation on the results according to the religion, the age, and the gender. Finally, the last part of the discussion will involve an interview distributed to a heterogeneous group of control, composed by individuals adhering to the four religious beliefs, with the intention to verify if the results obtained by the empirical analysis can be considered coherent and reliable.

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Previous chapters are thought to identify and build a general scenario and to provide an overview of the theoretical framework in which religion and its relationship with the work-related issue develops. Now, the elaboration of this dissertation proceeds with an empirical analysis of the point taken into consideration. The main objectives of this section are, firstly, to test whether the theories beforehand presented and the studies which already explored the connection of the different religions with career development are confirmed by this empirical investigation. In addition, another aim is to contribute with the empirical and theoretical insights to a deeper knowledge of this exploratory topic. Because work and religion are fundamental elements of the majority of actors' life, a more comprehensive examination of the extent and of the nature of the relationships between these variables is crucial. The direct effect of a more complete analysis is to uncover evidence that helps to better conceptualize the career development process and people's ability to cope with the world of work. The validity of the hypothesis supporting the model is going to be verified through the use of world-wide data collected by the 5C Group, namely Collaboration for the Cross-Cultural Study of Contemporary Careers, which is composed of an international network of researchers particularly interested in career-related studies.

3.1 THE CONTRIBUTION AND THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Current researches in the field of religion and career development are primarily oriented in understanding the relationship and the processes through which religiousness affects the way actors conceive career-related elements. Nevertheless, there have been conducted a limited number of empirical studies that have explored this relationship and that have addressed the related issues. Among these, Duffy and Blustein (2005) investigated how religiousness is connected to career choice commitment and career decision self-efficacy on a group of college students. They found that religion serves as a positive predictor of career decision self-efficacy. Multiple studies on career development demonstrate that variables that act as supports, such as positive relationships with friends and family, help the actor to perform career development

tasks (Blustein, Walbridge, Friedlander, and Palladino, 1991; O'Brien, 1996; Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, and Glasscock, 2002). Another study conducted by Robert, Young, and Kelly (2006) reports that workers who present higher levels of religious well-being know higher levels of job satisfaction accordingly. Some qualitative analysis has been conducted on undergraduate students who assert to often use religion as a way to cope with academic and career challenges and that God has a career plan for them (Constantine, Miville, Warren, Gainor, and Lewis-Coles, 2006). Still, other studies investigate the connection and the related effects that religion realizes with diverse dimensions such as ethics (Parboteeah et al., 2007), cultural dimensions (McIntosh and Islam, 2010), motivation, unemployment issues (McKee-Ryan, Song, and Wamberg, 2005). Generally, there is a push within the management literature to delve deeper the role of religion in the workplace and in the entire career development process.

As a matter of facts, quantitative and qualitative studies generally highlight an effective but at the same time complex relationship between religiousness and career development. Nevertheless, researches in this area of interest seem to be still limited, both due to the restricted number of studies developed and to the composition and the size of the samples. Scholars, as a consequence, call for further explorations regarding the relationship between religion and career development aiming at obtaining more accurate practical implication that may derive from the analysis. Duffy, (2006, p. 59) argues that it is important for career counselling experts to understand the relevance that the religious dimension may play in actors' career development. He continues affirming that religion can be considered by people as a driving force in the career decision-making process and as a stable support especially during periods of career instability. In addition, Duffy and Blustein (2005) provide preliminary evidence suggesting that religiousness is an indication of career decision self-efficacy but that researches need to include multiple career-related variables and populations at different stages in their professional course. They suggest some directions that future researches in this field may decide to follow, such as how religious individuals respond to career challenges as unemployment or limited job opportunities or how the education level and the economic status fit into the relationship between religiousness and career development.

The contribution this work seeks to provide is related to the multiple foci adopted. Previous researches, indeed, examine religion in general terms or embrace only one or two points of view when comparing different religious beliefs. Conversely, this study explores all four major religions considering a quite large sample from a large number of countries. Through this multiple centre of attention, it is possible to build an integrated framework and provide

additional information about each religious group and their relationship with work values and career development. From a practical point of view, this study may provide some implications in terms of cross-cultural management. Companies, every day more, face multinational groups that require to develop in a working environment that considers and respects the religious differences. Indeed, globalization trends push companies to face a multicultural work environment: thanks to the advancement in social media, information and communication access people become increasingly aware of the opportunities in other parts of the world, as a consequence, international immigration continues at an unprecedented scale. The population is knowing a significant growth in terms of diversity through the immigration process; this phenomenon means that more people presenting different religious backgrounds interact in the same work environment. Another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration within this realm is that globalization effects have moulded workforce of employees seeking value, support, and meaning in their lives that finds expression not only in the private sphere but also on the job. This tendency highlights a point of departure from the more traditional business mentality thus supporting a greater religious accommodation in the workplace (Cash and Gray, 2000).

The evolution of the relationship between religion and career development and behaviours matters require, therefore, a deeper study supported by an empirical analysis. This study will be able to address both the need to understand the strength of this relationship and the influence it may produce on career-related choice, and the need to develop a comparison among the most spread religious group around the world. As a matter of fact, after having tested the relationship between the variables, will follow a second part of the analysis which aims at understanding the differences and the points of commonalities when considering how Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism approach the work environment. Among all the matters, it will be quite interesting to explore whether these different religions favour some similar values to be implemented within the workplace. This could present some practical implications for companies, counsellor, and workers. Indeed, discovering similar points of view in the conception of the work would help the management and the enhancement of diversity in this more and more multicultural context.

3.2 RESEARCH ANALYSIS: DATA AND METHODS

The construct validity, as introduced in the first part of this chapter, is tested starting from the use of a quite wide set of data collected by the 5C group. The Cross-Cultural Collaboration on Contemporary Careers is a non-profit consortium composed of university teams belonging to diverse cultural regions around the world. The 5C group develops in 2004 when a small group of scholars of the field realizes the limited presence of studies exploring and comparing issues around careers in different countries. Gradually, taking into account Schwartz's seven culture cluster, the group expands in order to include academic experts from 11 countries, namely Austria, China, Costa Rica, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Serbia/Montenegro, South Africa, Spain, USA. The first step of this global exploratory work is founded on a qualitative analysis using semi-structured interviews to respect local languages and the transnational regions identified by Schwartz. The second and in process step, instead, involve a quantitative survey of more than 15,000 individuals from approximately 30 countries (Mayrhofer et al., 2016). The leading purposes of the 5C group are, therefore, to build a more comprehensive knowledge of career success and career management considering multiple factors such as cultural differences, generations, ethnicity, familial background, religions and to assess the impact and the variation these variables are able to produce in different national and institutional contexts. They, thus, examine systematically the perception of career success and transition in order to evaluate the different outcomes they produce. In addition, the team seeks to provide new understandings of modern careers to contribute to scholarship, enhance differences, and identify advancing solutions for career issues management.

This work follows the 5C group's vision of investigating career development, behaviours, and choices with a special attention to individuals' attitudes, actions, personal situation, and the religious and cultural contexts. The main themes that can be faced when analysing career development issues consider: material concerns intended as the more financial aspects of an actor's work, learning and development, social relations both meant as positive relationship within the workplace, as positive impact of the work, and as the development of a work-life balance, and the ability to pursue one's own projects. Here, the objective to be pursued is to understand which are the relationship between religion and these different class of interest. Specifically, the focus is to explore if the four major religions of the world, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism, present some commonalities in terms conceiving work values and the related influences they may produce on career development and career conception. From an empirical point of view, the data analysis aims at examining

the relationship between a given religion and the career variables and successively compare that relationship with the ones produced by the other religions considered.

RQ1: Which are the work values that an individual belonging to a specific religion favours?

The first Research Question drives the analysis to the understanding of the work values that a specific religion taken into consideration gives more importance at. The aim of this first part of the analysis is, therefore, to explore, among the seven meaning of career success developed by the 5C group, which are those that Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism consider more important in career development according to the values and teachings the religions are based on.

The consequential step of the empirical analysis thus entails a comparison among the four different religions. The Research Question number two is actually structured as follows:

RQ2: Which are the points of commonality and the breakpoints among the world's four major religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism – when comparing the work values?

Here, the purpose of the analysis focus, from one side, on the values and precepts the religions share, and, from the other side, on those points of view that make the four religions different from each other. This part covers a quite interesting role in terms of practical implications. It highlights the levers that management, counsellors, and workers may exploit within the work environment and, at the same time, it distinguishes the crucial aspects to pay more attention to.

3.2.1 SAMPLE

The database employed to conduct the empirical analysis of this work has been built, over the years, by the Cross-Cultural Collaboration on Contemporary Careers group. The questionnaire from which the data are extracted has been first developed using the English language and, thereafter, translated into the local languages of the different countries involved in this research project. Subsequently, a back-translation step from the local languages to the English has been needed in order to validate the tool used in the study. The sample to which the questionnaire has been distributed can be considered as a convenience sample, which has been segmented on the basis of professional groups, namely managers, professional, clerical and service workers, and skilled workers, and on the basis of gender, age, and education. According to the finalities of this study, though, the number of responses used to conduct the

empirical analysis has been reduced to 13055 cases, due to the exigence of analysing only the responses related to Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims participants. In addition to the segmentation into the four major religion explored, other aspects that are considered to be influent for the empirical analysis are the health conditions, the marital status, and whether the respondents are active practitioners of their religion. Data collected by the 5C group come from approximatively 30 countries around the world. In relation to the objective of this study, however, it seems not to be useful implementing a segmentation in relation to the country of origin. Only a comparison between people still living in their country of birth and those who live in a different country have been applied. Indeed, what distinguishes this work is the fact to consider religions' characteristics and their relation with career-related matters regardless the provenience of the individuals that are part of the sample. This aspect allows considering the religions in general terms both from an empirical point of view and from the practical implications that may derive from the study.

The main characteristics of the sample taken into consideration are reported in Table 1.

Table 1 – Demographic composition of the sample (N=13055).

	ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY		ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY
GENDER			AGE		
Male	6482	49,7%	<30	2787	21,3%
Female	6547	50,1%	30-50	7184	55%
			51-60	2606	20%
			>60	478	3,2%
RELIGION			ACTIVE PRACTITIONER		
Christian	10942	83,8%	Yes (1)	5300	40,60%
Buddhist	637	4,9%	No (2)	6963	53,30%
Hindu	321	2,5%			
Muslim	1155	8,8%			
COUNTRY			MARITAL STATUS		
Same (0)	9347	71,6%	Married	7283	55,8%
Other (1)	3509	26,9%	Other	5743	44,0%
HEALTH			OCCUPATION		
Poor	213	1,6%	Managers	3380	25,9%
Fair	1188	9,1%	Professionals	4346	33,3%
Good	3992	30,6%	Clerical and Service Workers	2681	20,5%
Very good	5049	38,7%	Skilled Labor	2045	15,7%
Excellent	2580	19,8%	Other/Manual Labor	576	4,4%

3.2.2 MEASURES AND EXPECTATIONS

In this section of the analysis are introduced the specific measures implemented in order to define the variables involved in the empirical model. In addition, at this point, it is due to present some expectations that the empirical analysis may highlight in relation to the results and the hypothesis beforehand introduced.

Other researches in that field, such as Parboteeah and Cullen (2009), measure work values with category items asking the respondents to rate the importance of the various job aspects. Specifically, in this study has been used the seven major meanings of career success identified by the 5C research team. Each category items is composed of multiple questions to which the respondents have been asked to answer according to the importance they attribute to the specific work aspect, in a scale from 1 to 5. According to previous studies, it is possible to measure extrinsic work values by using items reflecting the security and the more material aspects of the work such starting from the supply of the material necessities for survival to the provision of the level of comfort, affluence, and status. The extrinsic work values are, therefore, represented by the financial security and the financial achievement categories. On the other hand, intrinsic work values are identified as those that reflect a preference for values connected to self-actualization aspects of work. The intrinsic work values are associated with the categories of learning and development, work-life balance, positive relationships, positive impact, and entrepreneurship. In addition to the seven meanings of career success, there have been used two additional categories to study the relationship between religion, work values, and career success, namely work engagement and life satisfaction.

The variables used to build the model and then answer to the Research Questions have been tested for the reliability and the internal consistency of the selected scale through the Cronbach's alpha test. This test is considered as a measure of internal consistency, specifically, how closely related a set of items are as a group. High levels of alpha values suggest that the subjects taken into consideration present a consistent and reliable attitude in relation to each item belonging to the dimension evaluated. Generally, the reliability coefficient of .6 - .7 or higher is considered acceptable in most of the social science researches and in the studies investigating attitudes as well. All the variables tested present Cronbach' alpha coefficients higher than the margin of .6, including some categories such as work engagement and life satisfaction presenting values of .926 and .889. These results support the hypothesis that items have relatively high internal consistency, and thus the scale can be considered appropriated to measure the seven meanings of career success, work engagement, and life satisfaction.

A summary of the results obtained in the test related to the seven meanings of career success is reported in Table 2.

Table 2 - Consistency analysis of the subjective career success scale

SCALE		ITEMS
LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT Importance	Cronbach's Alpha .745	Having the opportunity to be innovative in one's work activities Experiencing challenges in one's work Continuously learning throughout one's career Doing work that gives the opportunity to learn
WORK-LIFE BALANCE Importance	Cronbach's Alpha .653	Achieving a satisfying balance between work and family life Having time for non-work interests Achieving balance between work and non-work activities
POSITIVE IMPACT Importance	Cronbach's Alpha .707	Contributing to the development of others Helping others Leaving people and places better as a result of one's career
ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS Importance	Cronbach's Alpha .762	Being self-employed Owning one's own company
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS Importance	Cronbach's Alpha .712	Experiencing positive relationships with peers and colleagues Experiencing positive relationships with superiors Getting positive feedback from supervisors Getting positive feedback from colleagues
FINANCIAL SECURITY Importance	Cronbach's Alpha .607	Being able to provide the basic necessities Being able to provide for one's family financially Having financial security
FINANCIAL ACHIEVEMENT Importance	Cronbach's Alpha .691	Achieving wealth Receiving incentives, perks or bonuses Steadily making more money

Table 3 summarizes the Cronbach’s alpha results for the work engagement category, while, Table 4 reports the consistency test for life satisfaction scale.

Table 3 - Consistency analysis of work engagement

SCALE		ITEMS
WORK ENGAGEMENT	Cronbach’s Alpha ,926	At my work, I feel bursting with energy
		At my job, I feel strong and vigorous
		When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work
		I am enthusiastic about my job
		My job inspires me
		I am proud of the work I do
		I feel happy when I am working intensely
		I am immersed in my work
		I get carried away when I am working

Table 4 - Consistency analysis of life satisfaction

SCALE		ITEMS
LIFE SATISFACTION	Cronbach’s Alpha ,889	In most ways my life is close to my ideal
		The conditions of my life are excellent
		I am satisfied with my life
		So far I have gotten the important things I want in life
		If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing

According to the different religions’ characteristics presented in chapter 2, it is possible to structure some expectations about the results that are going to be produced by the empirical analysis.

A reasonable hypothesis on Buddhism supports the idea that individuals belonging to this religion demonstrate a preference for intrinsic work values instead of the extrinsic ones since they abhor secular desires and material needs. A business or a person seeking material gains, wealth, and power goes against the essential teachings of Buddha (Parboteeah et al., 2009). Generally, a Buddhist approach avoids possible conflicts with nature thus working in a way that is at the same time spiritually rich, socially beneficial, and environmentally friendly.

Christianity, from its part, supports the private property and the freedom to accumulate wealth. What all the different partitions of Christian religion share is that being profitable and working towards the glory of God is one way to determine the individual's salvation. However, the only seek for materialism is not meaningful to Christians, they actually are expected to satisfy their spiritual aspiration through work and to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to society. In this sense, it is possible to expect that Christianity favours both intrinsic and extrinsic work values.

Hinduism can be both related to extrinsic and intrinsic work values. Throughout their lives, Hinduist pursues extrinsic values as they are expected and encouraged to accumulate wealth as one of life's stages. On the other hand, they also look at intrinsic values in order to contribute and to fulfil their responsibility to the society.

Finally, Islamic teachings support individuals to pursue extrinsic values through the appropriate use of the resources given by God. Such resources are considered important in order to provide for basic survival and physical needs as well as the accumulation of wealth. Islamism also consider positively the intrinsic aspects of work by attributing relevance to values such as personal growth, self-respect, satisfaction, and self-fulfilment. It is, thus, convincing the idea that also Islamism supports both intrinsic and extrinsic work values.

3.3 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The analytical procedure used in this part is structured in order to answer to the hypothesis presented at the beginning of this chapter. All the analysis have been performed through the use of IBM SPSS software.

The first part of the procedure entails the identification and the measure of all the variables useful to explicit the relationship between religion and career-related issues. As beforehand presented in this chapter, the variables selected has been subjected to the reliability test to find out the Cronbach's alpha. Since the results of the test confirmed the coefficients'

reliability thus assuring the internal consistency of the items composing the scale, the analysis proceeds with the variables taken into consideration.

At this point, the data collected have been used to implement several tests able to highlight their characteristics and, therefore, able to provide insights on the relation that the different religions have with career-related issues.

The posteriori power analysis implemented is the One-way ANOVA test. The basic assumptions to respect when conducting the one-way analysis of variance are that the data must be obtained by a population with normal distribution; data must be obtained through the use of a sampling method, the examination must adopt a sampling method, and the variance of data in each level of the experimental process must be equal and independent. These conditions are fundamental as the estimation of the statistical value is related to the sample, the sample distribution and the population (Mahapoonyanont et. al., 2010).

3.4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ANOVA test produces a table where are basically summarised all the scores obtained from the four religions in relation to the dependent variables taken into consideration. Specifically, the test returns the mean values, the standard deviation values associated to the groups, the p-value which is the probability of committing type 1 error if we were to reject the null hypothesis, and the result of the F-test used to statistically test the equality of means. The p-value is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05 so it is possible to reject the null hypothesis and thus to conclude that there is a statistically significant variation within the group means. It is, therefore, possible to interpret these results affirming that the religious groups consider in different ways the dimensions of career success.

Table 5 reports all the results provided by the Anova test, considering the seven meanings of career success in addition to life satisfaction and work engagement dimensions for each one of the four religions.

Table 5 - One-way Anova test results

VARIABLES	BUDDHISM	CHRISTIANITY	HINDUISM	ISLAMISM	F	SIGN.
	MEAN SD	MEAN SD	MEAN SD	MEAN SD		
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	4,1173 0,6855	4,2744 0,5833	4,3977 0,5545	4,5403 0,5208	95,695	0,000
WORK-LIFE BALANCE	4,2868 0,6315	4,4565 0,5522	4,2721 0,6445	4,3368 0,827	37,259	0,000
POSITIVE IMPACT	3,8870 0,7009	4,0811 0,7095	4,1469 0,6181	4,2444 0,8744	35,436	0,000
ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS	3,0739 1,1402	2,9013 1,286	3,7031 1,026	3,3176 1,3099	75,712	0,000
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS	4,1295 0,6538	4,2898 0,58	4,3977 0,5712	4,3567 0,7163	23,564	0,000
FINANCIAL SECURITY	4,3297 0,6436	4,5667 0,5364	4,5125 0,5787	4,5426 0,5712	38,403	0,000
FINANCIAL ACHIEVEMENT	4,0267 0,7473	3,9383 0,731	4,3240 0,5963	4,3569 0,7126	139,41	0,000
LIFE SATISFACTION	4,4186 1,3425	4,8002 1,2675	4,6268 1,2152	4,1647 1,5193	96,880	0,000
WORK ENGAGEMENT	4,1945 1,1378	4,3199 0,95832	4,5169 0,9838	4,3079 0,0086	7,78	0,000

After having determined that among the means exist differences and that are statistically significant, the implementation of post hoc range test and pairwise multiple comparison determine which means differ. Range tests, indeed, identify the homogeneous subset of means that are not different from each other. In addition, Pairwise multiple comparison test the difference between each pair of means and generate a matrix where asterisks indicate significantly different group means at an alpha level of 0.05. Specifically, in this study have been used Turkey's honestly significant difference test, the Bonferroni test, and the LSD test, which all assume equal variances among the groups. Table 6 presents a comparison of the results obtained by the religious groups in a determined dimension. This result is calculated as the difference of the means scored by two religions (ex. Taking the mean for group one and subtracting the mean for group two). If the subtraction is significantly different from zero it is possible to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the means of the two groups considered is significantly different. In the table are reported only the cases in which the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6 - Multiple comparison

VARIABLES	MULTIPLE COMPARISON
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	(B,C); (B,H); (B,M); (C,H); (C,M); (H,M);
WORK-LIFE BALANCE	(B,C); (C,H); (C,M)
POSITIVE IMPACT	(B,C); (B,H); (B,M); (C,M)
ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS	(B,C); (B,H); (B,M); (C,H); (C,M); (H,M);
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS	(B,C); (B,H); (B,M); (C,H); (C,M)
FINANCIAL SECURITY	(B,C); (B,H); (B,M)
FINANCIAL ACHIEVEMENT	(B,C); (B,H); (B,M); (C,H); (C,M);
LIFE SATISFACTION	(B,C); (B,M); (C,M); (H,M)
WORK ENGAGEMENT	(B,C); (B,H); (C,H); (H,M);

HSD Turkey’s test, Bonferroni and LSD tests all return the same results except for the case of life satisfaction in which Turkey’s test imposes stricter conditions for the significance.

Finally, the last part of the empirical analysis entails the homogeneous subsets analysis in which there are reported in a more immediate way the sample size and the means obtained by the four religions according to the different dimensions considered. All the subsets are built considering an alpha level of 0.05. Here follow the tables with the discussion of the more interesting aspects.

Table 7 - Homogeneous subsets analysis: Learning and Development.

	N	1	2	3	4
BUDDHIST	637	4,12			
CHRISTIAN	10921		4,27		
HINDU	320			4,4	
MUSLIM	1154				4,54

According to the learning and development indicator is interesting to notice how all the religious groups, even if belonging to different clusters, present quite high scores in this dimension. This aspect results in accordance with the expectations that the four religions demonstrate a positive relationship with intrinsic work values.

Table 8 - Homogeneous subsets analysis: Entrepreneurial success.

	N	1	2	3
CHRISTIAN	10912	2,9		
BUDDHIST	636	3,07		
MUSLIM	1154		3,32	
HINDU	320			3,7

Overall, the entrepreneurial success indicator is the one in which all the major religions present a lower score. Nevertheless, data demonstrate a convergence of the religions' points of view also in this dimension.

Table 9 – Homogeneous subsets analysis: Work-life balance.

	N	1	2
HINDU	321	4,27	
BUDDHIST	637	4,28	
MUSLIM	1155	4,33	
CHRISTIAN	10923		4,45

The Work-life balance indicator presents for the four religions high scores. These results correspond to the majority of the researchers' opinion according to whom religious belief acts a clear support in everyday individuals' life. It is interesting to note that Christians present higher values that can be correlated to the teachings of achieving a spiritual gratification both through the work and through a positive influence on the society.

Table 10 - Homogeneous subsets analysis: Positive impact.

	N	1	2	3
BUDDHIST	637	3,89		
CHRISTIAN	10921		4,08	
HINDU	320		4,15	4,15
MUSLIM	1154			4,24

Table 8 - Homogeneous subsets analysis: Positive relationship.

	N	1	2	3
BUDDHIST	637	4,13		
CHRISTIAN	10925		4,29	
MUSLIM	1155		4,36	4,36
HINDU	320			4,4

Surprisingly, Tables 10, and 11 demonstrate that Buddhism’s adherents, compared with the other religions, score lower in two of the core indicators of intrinsic values. Anyways, considering the complete representation of Buddhist and their relationship with work values, it is possible to realize that generally, they attribute a huge importance to intrinsic indicators of work. This point of view coincides with the expectations beforehand presented. The overall picture demonstrates a quite high level of consideration of both positive impact and the positive relationship dimensions for the four religions.

Table 9 - Homogeneous subsets analysis: Financial security.

	N	1	2
BUDDHIST	636	4,33	
HINDU	320		4,51
MUSLIM	1154		4,54
CHRISTIAN	10922		4,57

Table 10 - Homogeneous subsets analysis: Financial achievement.

	N	1	2	3
MUSLIM	1153	4,16		
BUDDHIST	637		4,42	
HINDU	321			4,63
CHRISTIAN	10913			4,8

Tables 12 and 13 represent the results related to more extrinsic indicators of work values. The two tables suggest a convergence of the vision of extrinsic remuneration, anyways the lower level scored by the Buddhism in the financial security dimension confirm the expectation that this religious belief attributes more importance to other aspects of career development and work values. From its part, the high value scored by Christianity in financial achievement dimension corresponds to the vision other researchers that suggest that Christians seek economic success and hard work (Weber, 1930; Parboteeah et al., 2009).

Table 11 - Homogeneous subsets analysis: Life satisfaction.

	N	1	2	3
MUSLIM	1153	4,16		
BUDDHIST	637		4,42	
HINDU	321			4,63
CHRISTIAN	10913			4,8

Table 12 - Homogeneous subsets analysis: Work engagement.

	N	1	2
BUDDHIST	636	4,19	
MUSLIM	1155	4,31	
CHRISTIAN	10921	4,32	
HINDU	321		4,52

Finally, Tables 14 and 15 refer to life satisfaction and work engagement indicators. Once more is interesting to highlight the high scores that the religious group present in the two categories. In reference to life satisfaction, Christians demonstrate the highest scores which can be correlated to the result obtained in the work-life dimension. From the work engagement perspective, instead, it is relevant the result obtained by the Hinduism. The high score provided respect the expectation according to which Hindus are supported in the accumulation of wealth throughout their lives. In this sense, consistent with this perspective they present higher levels of work engagement.

The main objective of this section has been to represent in a visual and immediate way the data collected by the 5C's group. According to the hypothesis introduced at the beginning of the Chapter, it is possible to say that the tables beforehand presented give a clear representation of the conception that the sample considered have about the relationship between religion and career development indicators. In particular, the more salient aspects to take in consideration are the quite positive vision that the four religious group attribute to the work, thus confirming the results obtained in other studies, such as Krishnakumar and Neck, (2002), and Parboteeah, Paik, and Cullen (2009). The findings highlighted depict that the major religions demonstrate a convergence in their conception of work rather than follow diverging visions. Generally speaking, it is possible to affirm that religious beliefs encourage their adherents both to achieve intrinsic and extrinsic remuneration in their career path. Another aspect to consider is the high score level that Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism present in life satisfaction and work engagement dimensions. It is possible to connect these results also to the teachings and precepts that religious beliefs provide to their adherents.

The results obtained in the empirical analysis are generally supported by the precedent researches that have already analysed the relationship between religious belief and work values and career development. As an example, the interest that the four religions confer to the extrinsic remuneration of career development is confirmed by Sinha (1998) who argues that Hindu precepts highlight the importance of material prosperity; Yousef (2001) who, referred to Islam, affirms that the economic activity and engagement are religious obligations; Nanayakarra (1992) suggests that Buddha abhors poverty and, therefore, the adherents seek material outcomes to avoid poverty. Nevertheless, the results related to Christians and the extrinsic work values are surprising. From one hand, they respect the expectations presented at the beginning of the Chapter, according to which Christianity is positively related to extrinsic remuneration. On the other hand, they are not supported by the empirical analysis results

conducted by Parboteeah et al. (2009). The authors indeed attribute the negative relationship they found out mostly to the composition of their sample composed of Christian living in western societies. They suggest that long periods of prosperity may have led to a decline in the value of discipline and work producing a shift to self-actualization and quality of life values. Anyways, the discordant outcomes can be justified by the presence, in this dissertation, of a sample composed of people coming from 30 countries and not mostly from western societies. In relation to the intrinsic work values results, instead, also the study by Parboteeah et al. (2009) analysing Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism supports the hypothesis that the world's four major religion present a positive relationship with intrinsic indicators of career success and work values.

The representation of the four religious groups that is produced by the empirical analysis demonstrates that religions, according to their precepts and teachings, influence every aspect of the individual's life, work-life included. This study, indeed, provides strong evidence that all the major religions are related to important work outcomes. The most interesting aspect is that the four religions explored present quite equivalent conceptualizations of the work and its related values, but, they reach this same result following different ideologies, traditions, and directions. This aspect of the analysis highlights the possibility to exploit the points of commonalities between the religions; it also highlights the exigence of protecting the different visions within the work environment.

CHAPTER 4

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In this last part of the work is reported a qualitative analysis conducted in order to compare and to test whether the empirical results persist coherently. The main goal this section intends to reach is to complete the results obtained through the empirical analysis and to elaborate them in a more narrative way. Indeed, through a qualitative study of the relationship between religion and career development and behaviours, it is possible to provide a more comprehensive vision of this exploratory point and to better contribute to future researches.

The use of different methodological approaches, indeed, contribute to the provision of substantial insights into the complex relationship between religion and career development. An in-depth interview concerns a semi-structured conversation with the ultimate objective to obtain insight about the meanings individuals attribute to religion, especially in relation to their experiences, motivations, and worldviews. In particular, qualitative analysis is a useful method to study meanings of actors, to construct concepts, classifications, and typologies based on a systematic comparison of the similarities and differences among individuals; to develop an empirically grounded theory about shared meanings in religion as an institution and its relationship with career development and work values. Finally, qualitative analysis helps in attributing a more complete explanation of the results obtained by the quantitative exploration.

In order to make it possible to compare the qualitative and the quantitative analysis, the hypotheses at the base of this examination are the same. Indeed, exploring the same dimensions treated by the quantitative analysis allows to achieve a comprehensive evaluation of the research question of this study and, moreover, allows to highlight and compare the eventual differences and commonalities between the two methods' outcomes. Here are reported the Research Questions already presented in Chapter 3:

RQ1: Which are the work values that an individual belonging to a specific religion favours?

RQ2: Which are the points of commonality and the breakpoints among the world's four major religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism – when comparing the work values?

Anyways, in addition to the hypothesis presented in the third Chapter, the last part of the qualitative analysis examines whether there is a direct connection between the values that a religion favours and the career development choices an individual may take into consideration. The third Research Question is therefore formulated as follows:

RQ3: Do these values exert an influence on career development choices and aspirations?

4.1 RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND METHOD

The method used to implement the qualitative analysis is the focus group. This is a non-structured group interview technique; it is based on the principle that the interactive discussions emerging from the focus group are an essential experience in order to transmit information, knowledge, to promote a cultural growth, and to increase the awareness among the participants.

Focus group are intended to explicitly use the interactions among the members as part of the method. In that way, people are encouraged to talk one another, to confront one another, and to share experiences and different point of view. This method is considered to be particularly useful when exploring people's knowledge and experiences; it is used to examine not only what participants think but also how they think and why they think that way (Kitzinger, 1995). Through the group process, participants can explore and clarify their views in a way that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview and, in addition, are able to drive the research to new and often unexpected directions. The communication that is supported by this kind of interaction goes beyond the reasoned responses to direct questions, thus revealing the deeper people's knowledge and attitudes. In this sense, focus groups reveal dimensions of the analysis that often remains untapped by more conventional data collection techniques.

According to Kitzinger (1995), the focus group is a particularly appropriate method when analysing and exploring cultural values and group norms. It implements different types of narrative allowing to identify shared and common knowledge. By virtue of its sensitiveness, it is, therefore, often used in cross-cultural researches, in works concerning ethnic minorities and dominant cultural values, and for examining workplace cultures.

On the other hand, a limit that is connected to this method is due to the fact that the articulation of group norms may silence individual voices of dissidents. Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the focus group method inhibits the discussion and the privacy among the participants. Actually, the group work is able to actively facilitate the conversation and the

debate on taboo topics by making the less inhibited members break the ice for the shyer participants. In addition, it is plausible that the participants provide mutual support in expressing feelings that are common to their group but which they consider to deviate from mainstream culture. The real positive effect of this methodology is related to the evidence that participants actually develop particular perspectives as a consequence of talking with other people that may have similar experiences or different points of view.

4.2 SAMPLE

Quantitative analyses base the composition of their sample in response to the need of building probabilistic samples that are considered to be significant from a statistical point of view. This approach requires huge samples and a great number of resources accordingly. In contrast, when considering qualitative analysis the fundamental principle to implement to build a significant sampling is the representativeness of the sample. Within a qualitative study, indeed, a sample is considered to be saturated when the people involved are enough to explore and investigate all the aspects of the matter taken into consideration. Specifically, a sample is complete when the extension of the focus group to a new member would not produce additional information but, rather, would confirm aspects already proved. In this study, the objective is to combine the quantitative analysis with the qualitative one in order to cover some issues not expressed in the questionnaire and to explain and explore 5C group's survey results.

According to the objective of this part of the work, namely the comparison of the different point of view that individuals connected to the world's four major religion favour in relation to work values and career development, participants have been selected to reflect and to represent Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism population. In addition, to maximize the exploration of these topics within the group setting, it has been paid attention to compose a group characterised by a certain level of homogeneity, in terms of age, language, and city of residence, in order to favour the discussion, but also to include individuals from different work backgrounds for the purpose of maximising the inspection of the different experiences and points of view.

The focus group is, therefore, composed of four people each one connected by one of the religions taken into consideration. The participants range in age from 24 to 51 years. They are associated with different work environments, including psychology, food service, education, information technology. One of the respondents is a woman, whilst the other three

participants are men. By educational level, the group is composed of two high-school graduate and two graduate people. By socioeconomic background, the group is composed of two people from the middle-class background and by the other two from the working-class background. The characteristics of the sample are summarised in Table 16.

Table 13 - Demographic composition of focus group participants

	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islamism
AGE	51	28	24	26
GENDER	Male	Female	Male	Male
OCCUPATION	Professor	Occupational Psychologist	Assistant Chef	Computer Technician
ACTIVE PRACTITIONER	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
MARITAL STATUS	Married	Other	Other	Other

4.3 PROCEDURE

The qualitative analysis procedure used in this study can be divided into two different segments. The first one is related to the focus group session, how it has been structured and organized, how the data has been collected, and how the discussion among the participants has been developed. The second part, instead, concerns the methodology used to elaborate the data collected and the way they have been analysed.

The focus group session has been structured on the basis of a series of open-ended questions in order to encourage research participants to explore the complex issues related to the relationship between their religion and career development.

The first part of the session has been conceived to explore the level of religiosity and the connected relationship that each participant manifest with his or her religious belief. To accomplish this objective, it has been used the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS). This is a measure of the centrality, importance, or salience of religious meanings for the individual. It has been developed by Huber and it has been widely applied in more than 100 studies related

to the sociology of religion, the psychology of religion, and religious studies in more than 25 countries (Huber and Huber, 2012).

Dimension	Items for both the basic and interreligious versions	Basic CRS versions			Additional Items for the interreligious versions only	Interreligious CRSi versions		
Intellect	01: How often do you think about religious issues?	CRS-5	CRS-10	CRS-15		CRSi-7	CRSi-14	CRSi-20
Ideology	02: To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists?							
Public practice	03: How often do you take part in religious services?							
Private practice	04: How often do you pray?							
Experience	05: How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life?							
					04b: How often do you meditate?			
Experience	05b: How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that you are in one with all?							
Intellect	06: How interested are you in learning more about religious topics?							
Ideology	07: To what extent do you believe in an afterlife—e.g. immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead or reincarnation?							
Public practice	08: How important is to take part in religious services?							
Private practice	09: How important is personal prayer for you?				09b: How important is meditation for you?			
Experience	10: How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine wants to communicate or to reveal something to you?				10b: How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that you are touched by a divine power?			
Intellect	11: How often do you keep yourself informed about religious questions through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books?							
Ideology	12: In your opinion, how probable is it that a higher power really exists							
Public practice	13: How important is it for you to be connected to a religious community?							
Private practice	14: How often do you pray spontaneously when inspired by daily situations?				14b: How often do you try to connect to the divine spontaneously when inspired by daily situations?			
Experience	15: How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine is present?							

Figure 7 - Items and versions of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)—English versions.

The scale takes inspiration from the multidimensional model of religion by Charles Glock, which defines five core dimensions of religion constituting a general frame of reference for researches, namely the intellectual, the ideological, the public practice, the private practice, and the consequential dimensions. Huber revises the scale in order to relate the personal religious construct to the five core-dimensions. The personal religious construct is activated when the individual anticipates something with a religious meaning. In this sense, the five core-dimensions are considered by the model as channels in which personal religious constructs are activated.

- The **intellectual dimension** refers to the social expectation that religious people present some kind of knowledge of religion. The frequency of thinking about religious issues is considered a good indicator of the intellectual dimension.
- The **ideology dimension** refers to the beliefs regarding the existence and the essence of a transcendent reality, and the relation between the transcendent and the human. The

general indicator considered appropriate for this dimension focus only on the plausibility of the existence of a transcendent reality.

- The **public practice dimension** refers to the fact that religious individuals belong to religious communities. This dimension is mainly represented by public participation in rituals and in communal activities. Therefore, the indicator used to measure this aspect is the frequency with which somebody takes part in religious services.
- The **private practice dimension** refers to the personal devotion that religious individuals reserve to transcendent activities and rituals in private space. The indicator used in this dimension is represented by the general intensity religious individual reserves both to prayer and meditation.
- The **religious experience dimension** refers to any kind of direct contact to the ultimate reality that religious individuals can be emotionally affected by. The indicator to be used is represented as by the patterns of religious perceptions and by the body of religious experiences and feelings (Huber and Huber, 2012).

The CRS follows a probabilistic logic according to which individuals that present higher scores on the scale have a more central religious construct system. According to the objectives of this study, the implementation of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale is considered to be useful because, here, it is supposed that people who score higher, will experience a stronger influence on their career development and work-related values by their religion.

In this case, it has been used the more reduced version of the scale, the CRS-5. The choice is justified by two main reasons. The first one is that the scale has been employed only in the first part of the focus group to allow people to concentrate on the personal importance that religion covers for them. The second one is related to the time management: the most economical version of the scale has permitted participants to really focus on meeting's theme but, at the same time, not to reduce time and space dedicated to the discussion. It has been used a translated Italian version of the scale in order to support the comprehension of the participants and, to reflect both the monotheistic concept of God and the eastern religious traditions, the concept of God has been completed by the more general expression "God or something divine".

The Italian version of the CRS-5 is reported as follows in Table 17.

Table 14 - Dimensions of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)—Italian version.

DIMENSIONE	DOMANDA
INTELLETTUALE	01: Quanto spesso pensi a questioni religiose?
IDEOLOGICA	02: Fino a che punto credi che Dio o qualcosa di divino esista?
PRATICA PUBBLICA	03: Quanto spesso prendi parte al servizio religioso?
PRATICA PRIVATA	04: Quanto spesso preghi/mediti?
ESPERIENZA RELIGIOSA	05: Quanto spesso hai la sensazione che Dio o qualcosa di divino intervengano nella tua vita?

Participants have been asked to sign a consent and a privacy form prior to the focus group. All the entire duration of the meeting has been audiotaped and lasted approximatively 105 minutes. All the participants have been recruited by word of mouth, personal contacts, and through web-based invitations.

Participants, after having completed the first step of the analysis through the questions connected to the CRS, have been invited to firstly introduce themselves, their religion, their occupation, and then, to discuss and to share their different point of view on multiple themes related to the religion, and to the religion and career development. The focus group has been developed on the basis of a semi-structured interview protocol. Specifically, the dimensions on which participants have been asked to reflect and interact pertain the influence of the family on their religious belief; which is, according to their experience, the role of religion on career development, in particular if they consider to have had a calling or if they present a vocation for their work; the difficulties they may have encountered within the work environment in relation to their religion; the aspects of their religion that mostly helped them to face difficulties or that acted as a support; which they consider, according to their religion's teachings, the determinants features of career success. The participants have been supported in freely sharing their opinions, their experiences, their points of view, and anecdotes. The interaction among the members of the group can be considered quite good: individuals have been concentrated in socializing, in allowing the others the space to speak, in listening, and in making questions. The figure of the moderator has been useful to structure the discussion and to drive the conversation through the topics that this study needs to demonstrate. Once the arguments of the meeting have been all treated, participants have shown an interest to compare their personal experiences, to

be involved in further conversations on religious topics, and to keep in touch for other eventual opportunities of comparison.

The second part of the procedure pertains the transcription of the focus group discussion. The texts are accurately reported and then codified and examined. The phases of codification and analysis are based on an inductive method inspired to the Grounded Theory, which seeks to extract from the single situations, episodes, and situations some interpretative categories and general concepts. Specifically, the procedure requires the decomposition and the partition of the discussion texts into segments that successively are attributed some codes which identify their meaning. Thereafter follows a step in which the codes used are selected, combined, and organized according to a criterion of sense uniformity in order to gradually build a definition of the more general concepts. This final step is therefore reiterated using this inductive method. Indeed, by combining and selecting the different concepts it is possible to define interpretative categories able to include them all. The Grounded Theory allows elaborating a more general interpretation of the centre of attention, which can then be implemented in wider-scale contexts.

The data are collected since the very beginning of the focus group discussion in order to appropriately incorporate all the relevant issues and to direct the subsequent questions and observations. The carrying out of procedures of data collection and analysis systematically and sequentially enables the research process to capture all potentially relevant aspects (Corbin and Strauss, 1990) of the relationship between religion and career development as soon as they are perceived. It is important to underline that, according to the Grounded Theory, the analysis works through a conceptualization of data, in which the experiences collected and identified as potential indicators of the phenomena are given conceptual labels. After that, concepts that belong to the same phenomenon are grouped together in order to form categories. The concepts and experiences are compared against the other concepts and experiences in order to highlight the similarities and the differences. The comparison among the concepts helps to achieve greater precision and consistency. The open coding technique and the use it makes of questioning and constant comparison enables the investigation to remove subjectivity and bias (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). The hypothesis emerging from the comparison of the concepts are revised during the research in order to understand whether if they hold true for all the evidence concerning the relationship between religion and career development and the related work values. The final part of the Grounded theory process entails the comparison of the results with other studies that have explored the same topics. In this sense, the results emerged by the focus group examination have been compared to other quantitative and qualitative analysis that research the relationship between religion, work values, and career development. Among the

other comparisons implemented, the main objective of this qualitative analysis is to test the results obtained in Chapter 3 through the quantitative one and thus verify the consistency between them.

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), the results obtained by the analysis should not be restricted to the conditions supporting immediately the phenomenon of central interest. Indeed, the outcomes of the exploration can be considered the starting point to consider broader circumstances affecting the central issue, such as economic conditions, cultural values, political trends, social movements.

4.4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As has it been done for the results section related to the quantitative analysis in Chapter 3, the aim of this section is to present the result obtained in the two part of the focus group, to interpret them taking into consideration the theories and the literature which focus on the relationship between religion and career-related issues.

Specifically, the structure of this part follows the same order used for the focus group organization. As a first step, indeed, are introduced the outcomes obtained through the implementation of the more reduced version of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CSR-5), with an analysis of the same as follow. Thereafter, it is presented the analysis conducted on the focus group debate through the use of the Grounded Theory. Finally, a brief comparison and merge of the results obtained in the qualitative analysis is introduced.

In order to code the frequencies of religious behaviours, the Centrality of Religiosity Scale provides for a five-level answer scale, which is summarised in Table 18.

Table 15 - Hermeneutics of the wording a five level answer scale.

	Score	Wording		Hermeneutics (presence of personal constructs in personality)
		Frequency	Importance	
Categories of a five-level answer-scale	5	very often	very much so	Clear presence
	4	often	quite a bit	
	3	occasionally	moderately	Transition area: background presence
	2	rarely	not very much	No or only marginal presence
	1	never	not at all	

In the calculation of the CSR score, the item sum score is divided through the number of scored scale items. In this way, it is possible to obtain a range of the CSR score between 1.0 to 5.0. The groups can, therefore, be categorized according to the wording of the five levels of frequency and intensity response scale. Using this scale it is possible to understand if the individual present religious constructs in the personal religious construct system and, moreover, this scale can be considered a useful tool in order to justify a relationship between religion and work values and career development choices. The first two response levels indicate that religious constructs are hardly important in an actor. The result is that these are aspects that do not seem to be determinant for the individual's life, especially from a working point of view. In contrast, the wordings of response that are related to categories four and five highlight that religious constructs are clearly present in a personal religious construct system. Therefore, it is possible to assume that for this kind of people they exert an influence both on religious experience and behaviours and also on the non-religious constructs. Here, it is plausible to expect that actors who are categorized as "highly religious" express a strong relationship between their religious values and the work-related issues. In addition, it is due to mention the intermediate response category, which represents the transitional range between the absence and the clear presence of religious constructs. At this level, responses indicate a presence of the religious constructs, but also that they are not activated very frequently and intensively. Anyways, they are considered religious so, they may present some kind of relationship between their religious belief and the career-related issues.

Table 19 shows the scores obtained by the participants according to the five categories analysed.

Table 16 - Participants' scores according to the CSR-5

	BUDDHISM	CHRISTIANITY	HINDUISM	ISLAMISM
INTELLECT - How often do you think about religious issues?	VERY OFTEN - 5	OFTEN - 4	NEVER - 1	OFTEN - 4
IDEOLOGY - To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists?	QUITE A BIT - 4	VERY OFTEN - 5	MODERATELY - 3	VERY MUCH SO - 5
PUBLIC PRACTICE - How often do you take part in religious services?	OFTEN - 4	OFTEN - 4	RARELY - 2	OFTEN - 4
PRIVATE PRACTICE - How often do you pray/meditate?	VERY OFTEN - 5	OFTEN - 4	NEVER - 1	VERY OFTEN - 5

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

EXPERIENCE -How often do you	OFTEN - 4	VERY MUCH	NOT AT ALL	VERY
experience situations in which you have the		SO - 5	- 1	MUCH SO
feeling that God or something divine				- 5
intervenes in your life/ that you are in one				
with all?				
TOTAL	4.4	4.4	1.6	4.6

Results highlight the marked intensity that almost all the members of the sample present in the five theoretical defined core dimensions of religiosity, public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology, and the intellectual dimension. Since they can be considered as representative for the total religious life (Huber and Huber, 2012), they can also be considered as a first expression of the relationship between religion and work values. It is, indeed, plausible to expect that individuals who exhibit higher scores according to the Centrality of Religiosity Scale will also attribute more importance to the religion within the work environment and, therefore, will be influenced by their religious belief in their career development choices, in work behaviours, and work values accordingly. In particular, the only member of the group that manifests a low level of religiosity according to the CSR-5 is the Hinduist representative. In contrast, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim representatives express a quite high level of religious constructs importance.

The focus group session has mainly been implemented in order to compare the results with the quantitative analysis and to explore deeper some dimensions that a questionnaire is not able to highlight. This part offers the outcomes of the focus group discussion, and contribute with descriptions and examples of the domains, categories, and subcategories identified via analysis. As presented in the procedure part, it has been used the Grounded Theory and, in particular, the Open Coding Process in order to analyse the entire debate. Here follow the categories that have been touched by the discussion.

- Contextual and family' influence on religious and spiritual beliefs:
Participants report that their families covered a determinant role in their religious beliefs, but that also the context around them, and contacts with people coming from different backgrounds influenced their choice. During the focus group, some participants reported that for the families it is difficult to accept a change in mind or an eventual conversion to a different religion.

Table 17 - Open Coding Process: Contextual and family influence

ORIGINAL QUOTE (Translation from Italian)	DETAILED CODING	SECTION CODING
B: Catholicism is my mother, Buddhism is my bride	Importance of religion, a conversion happened	
C: More than my family, my Scout association was determinant from a religious point of view	Contextual and family's influence on religious belief	Context and family exert an influence over religious belief
H: My parents, my relatives are really religious	Family's influence on religious belief	
I: For sure my family was determinant for my religious path, but also people of different religions as well	Contextual and family's influence on religious belief	

- Roles of religion and spirituality in participants' career development:
Generally, all the respondents affirm that their religion's precepts and teachings helped them in choosing a profession that can be considered accepted by their belief. In some cases, the religion provides with some precise directions to follow in order to choose a job and to structure the career development accordingly. Some respondents express some kind of difficulties in conciliating the teachings to respect according to the religion and the tasks to accomplish for their organizations. What emerges and pertains to all the participants here is that they try to find a motivation within their religious belief when they need to take a decision in the working environment.

Table 18 - Open Coding Process: Influence of religion on career

ORIGINAL QUOTE (Translation from Italian)	DETAILED CODING	SECTION CODING
B: Buddhism indicates the right means of sustenance, if you are a practicing, you should not do certain things	Consideration of religious precepts and teachings in work life	
C: In Catholicism there are the Ten Commandments to follow, but I do not follow my job according to them	Consideration of religious precepts and teachings in work life	Religion gives directions to follow to structure career development
H: I guess religion can influence on career development, but I don't know how	Doubt about religion but conscious about the influence	
I: We follow some correct ways to work, honesty is the most important aspect	Consideration of religious precepts and teachings in work life	

In relation to that part of the discussion, it is useful to provide a subcategory. Indeed, both the Muslim representative and the Buddhist one express a kind of vocation in relation to the work they have. They use different religious terminology to express that their God or Divinity had a plan for them since the very beginning, therefore, if they have a determined job it is due to the will of something superior. They, therefore, demonstrate to be proud and to have a particular attachment to their work. As Duffy and Sedlacek (p. 591, 2007) report in their work, they exactly express a “sense of purpose or meaningfulness and [...] other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation”.

Table 19 - Open Coding Process: Motivation behind the work

ORIGINAL QUOTE (Translation from Italian)	DETAILED CODING	SECTION CODING
B: Before the precepts are important the motivations you have in doing something	Motivation is what really matters in work	Religion provide you with the motivation to do a work
I: Really important is the intentionality through which you do your job	Intentionality is what helps you in achieving the success	

- Challenges in dealing with the work environment and career-related issues:
Participants affirm that they work in a respectful environment in which the organization pays attention to the religious necessities, in which there is the possibility to share the different points of view. At the same time, respondents express the exigence not to display too much their religious belief: they are open to the dialogue but, at the same time they live their religion in the working environment as a private aspect of their personhood. Sometimes they find some little difficulties related to their religious belief because of peers making jokes. In this sense, it is possible to demonstrate that the difficulties related to religion and working environment can be multiple in nature and dynamics. There can be contrasts among different religion, between personal perception and work necessities, with the peers.

Table 20 - Open Coding Process: Challenges in dealing with work environment

ORIGINAL QUOTE (Translation from Italian)	DETAILED CODING	SECTION CODING
B: Sometimes some peers make jokes with my religion, but I did not have a lot of difficulties	Minimizing difficulties, acceptance of the situation	The relationship between religion and work environment is not always easy
C: My work environment is really respectful of my traditions, but sometimes it is difficult to conciliate what	Difficulties related to the personal and religious morality	

I would like to do and what I have to do	
H: Sometimes there are some difficulties with Muslims, sometimes people are set apart	Difficulties with other religions
I: I can freely express myself within my work environment	Freedom of religious expression

- Religious and spiritual aspects that act as a support in dealing with challenges: According to life and work challenges, all the participants demonstrate to agree with the evidence that religion acts as a stable support. They confirm that, in several situations in their lives, they rely on their religious belief in order to face the difficulties, both within the personal sphere and the working environment.

Table 21 - Open Coding Process: Religion as a support in dealing with challenges

ORIGINAL QUOTE (Translation from Italian)	DETAILED CODING	SECTION CODING
B: Surely, both in the private life and in the work environment, but especially in the private life	Strong support perceived from religion both in good and bad times	
C: Both in the private life, when in the work environment I pray when there are difficulties and I am grateful for the good things	Strong support perceived from religion both in good and bad times	Religion acts a support both in private and work life
H: People are really devoted to divinities, they go to the temples and blindly trust in them	Deep devotion to divinities when there are difficulties	
I: Religion is central in my life, both when there are difficulties or delusions and when there are achievements	Strong support perceived from religion both in good and bad times	

The debate drove the conversation to understand whether the choice for the job and the career path is somehow related and guided by an external pull. Some authors the evidence that those workers who view their career as chosen for them by God, are more likely to express greater job security, and satisfaction (Duffy and Sedlacek, 2007). Among the participants, only the Buddhist and the Muslim representatives demonstrate a clear vocation in their job, in contrast, the Christian representative tries to attribute a religion-related meaning to her work.

Table 22 - Open Coding Process: Presence of a vocation

ORIGINAL QUOTE (Translation from Italian)	DETAILED CODING	SECTION CODING
B: Probably the aptitude you have in this life derives from your previous life due to karma, in my case I think happened like this	Clear relationship between religion and career path	
C: I do not feel a vocation in my job, but I feel to have some innate ability in doing my job	Not a proper vocation, but an innate inclination	Religion may pull some individuals to pursue some career paths
H: I don't know	Does not present an idea about this issue	
I: Yes, I think it is something God gave to me, I think God created exactly as I am, God had a central role	Clear relationship between religion and career path	

- Indicators of success in career or occupation:

According to this final category, the points of view of the different religions take different directions. The Buddhist representative, in particular, intensely favours the intrinsic aspects of work remuneration. He shares his experience telling that he renounced to a higher salary to have the possibility to influence in a positive way on people around him, he, thus conceive the value of money as an accessory dimension. The other three participants, in contrast, attribute importance both to extrinsic and intrinsic aspects in considering the career success. They care about having a positive impact on people and the environment in order to harmonize to the religious precepts, but, at the same time the assign a central value to

money. In particular, the Christian representative refers to an indicator of career success the possibility to achieve a higher level of the organizational pyramid and to reach a better salary accordingly.

Table 23 - Open Coding Process: Indicators of career success

ORIGINAL QUOTE (Translation from Italian)	DETAILED CODING	SECTION CODING
B: Success is when through your job you have done something positive for the other people,	Intrinsic conception of work success	
C: Success is something that is related to the economic aspect, but at the same time is something that is rewarding for my person	Career success can be measured both from the extrinsic and intrinsic point of view	Religion may favour extrinsic remuneration rather than intrinsic remuneration of work
H: There are some people that only have in mind money, and other that think for the benefit of the others	Career success can be measured both from the extrinsic and intrinsic point of view	
I: According to Islam success is going to heaven, for me, it is equally important help the others and earn money	Career success can be measured both from the extrinsic and intrinsic point of view	

The four major world’s religions demonstrate quite homogeneous and converging visions of this relationship. In particular, the aspects that seem to be more interesting relate to the centrality that all religions attribute to precepts and teaching. When people ponder the importance of religion in their lives and in their work, they understand that they are subjected to a strong influence which is reflected in their choices and their behaviours. In addition, individuals often connect the events in their life to their belief by trying to attribute them a meaning which respects the religious directions. Another aspect that includes Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism is the support they provide to their devotee. All the participants confirm that they find in religion the necessary aid and encouragement when facing difficulties and challenges, both in the private and in the work spheres.

In contrast, what distinguishes the religion among them, especially Buddhism, is the conception of career success' indicators. What emerges from the qualitative analysis is that Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism attribute a central role extrinsic compensations, what the 5C's group refers to be as the financial achievement. The most valued aspect is the progression in financial terms obtained during the career. It is also related to other dynamics such as promotions and gaining a higher social status. Buddhist representative, in contrast, demonstrates a strong interest in intrinsic remuneration aspects. He particularly concentrates on the positive relationships and the positive impact he can have on people.

The results presented highlight multiple dimensions connected to the relationship between religion and career development variables. It is possible to group the dimensions provided by the focus group analysis in order to emphasize the more salient concept related to the relationship between religion and career issues. Specifically, what emerges from the detailed section coding is that religion establishes a connection with three main spheres of the work. The first refers to the interrelation religion builds with the contextual environment. Indeed, the religious belief depends upon the context and the background in which the actor develops, but, at the same time, is able to influence the environment in which people work. This means that religion is influenced by the more private contextual dimension of the individual, but, then, the effects condition, in turn, the work environment. The effects can be also been perceived as a constriction when the actor feels an inconsistency between the religious influences and the work environment characteristics and limitations. The second main dimension to consider is the influence religion exert on the career path. The qualitative analysis displays the tendency to follow to a different extent the teachings and precepts when considering one's career development, the indicators of career success, and the presence of a vocation when choosing a job. Finally, the third major dimension relates to link with motivation. Participants express inclination in relying on religion when they need support, and in finding their motivation in their belief, both in bad and good times. Here follows the inductive procedure used to build the three final dimensions that connect the religion to career and work spheres.

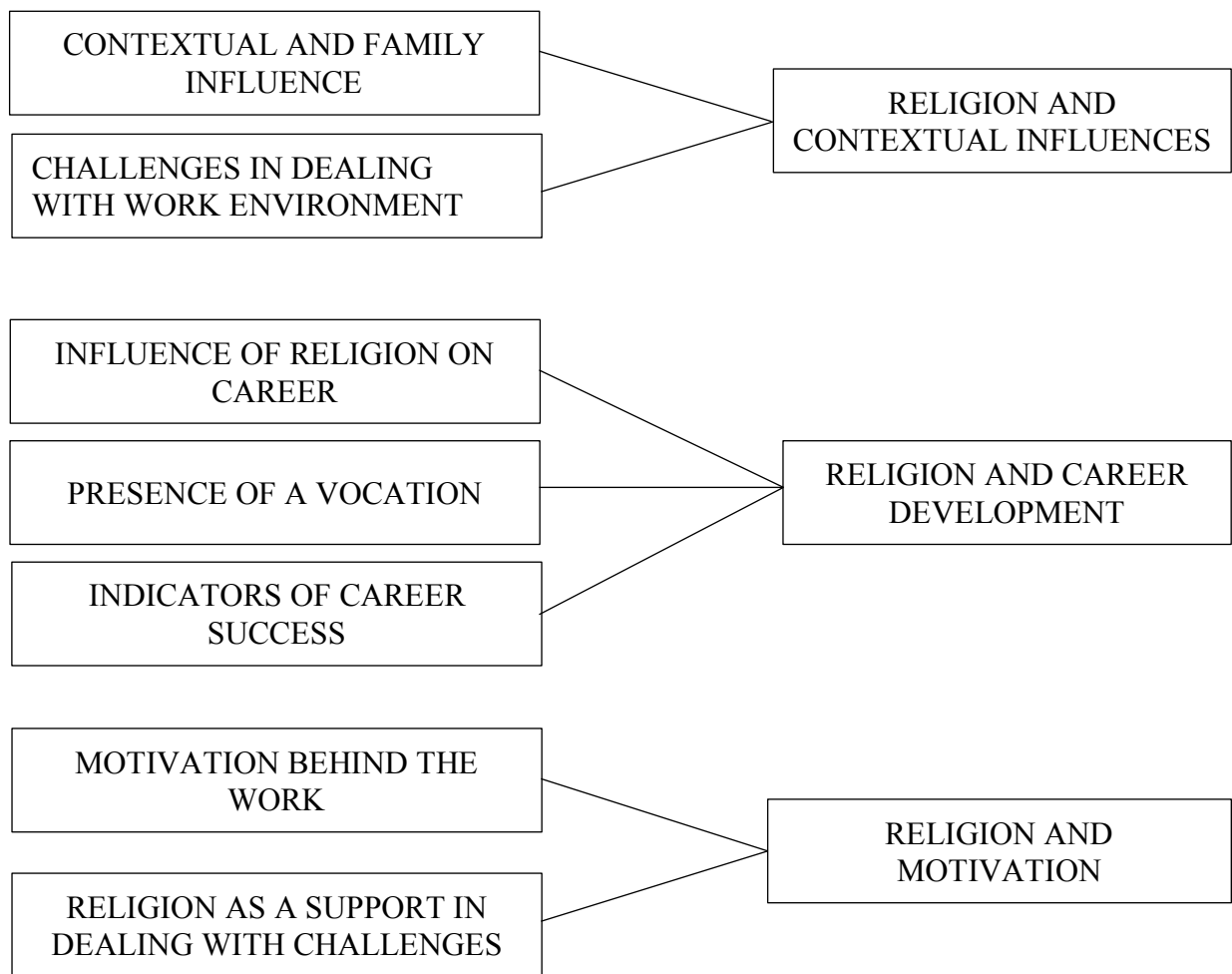


Figure 8 - Grounded Theory: Final coding

To conclude, a practical evidence that emerges from the focus group dynamics and results is that individuals need to talk more about their religion, about the importance this aspect covers for them, and about the influence this aspect can have on their working life. Focus group demonstrate that individual need to compare the different point of view on religion-related issues. Knowing about different religious teachings and precepts help colleagues to better understand the cultural background, the intrinsic motivation of individuals, and to discover that religious beliefs that seem to be directly opposed, actually, have a lot to share. This can be considered a direction to follow both from an organizational and from a counselling point of view.

The comparison between the qualitative and quantitative analyses produces some results that need to be highlighted. The first one is that, apparently, the Buddhist exploration drives to different outcomes. Indeed, looking at the quantitative study, this religious belief returns

relatively low scores in the positive impact and positive relationship dimensions, when compared to the other religions. Conversely, from the quantitative analysis, these two dimensions are those that cover the most important part in the representation of intrinsic work values. Nevertheless, considering the overall image that emerges from the empirical study it is possible to convey that the results related to Buddhism are consistent. Indeed, both intrinsic and extrinsic work values are considered to be important. Extrinsic ones cover a utilitarian role to satisfy the material needs, whilst the intrinsic ones represent self-actualization means to satisfy personhood needs. On the other hand, concentrating on the other indicators measuring career values it is possible to affirm that both the qualitative and the quantitative analyses return converging visions. Specifically, what emerges is that religions play a central role in people's lives and that they are able to influence through their precepts and teachings also the aspects related to career development and work values. Also, the results related to life satisfaction and work engagement can be considered verified by the two methodologies. These are two sensitive dimensions that can also be influenced by other dynamics additional to religious matters. Anyways, they return harmonious results in the conceptions that the adherents have about the relationship between these two dimensions and their religions. Generally, quantitative analysis is able to provide a more general idea of the importance of religion in career paths, and, concretely, which are the dimension that commonly individuals adherent to a determined religion attribute a more central role to. On the other hand, the qualitative study is able to deeper explore the personal dimension of the relationship between work values and religion. Indeed, in addition to these results, the qualitative analysis highlights some further aspects to take into consideration that seem to be common to the four religions explored. These points relate to the dimensions of vocation and support that emerges in the focus group dynamics. Indeed, through the comparison among the religious groups' members emerges the influence of religion in the innate inclination for a determined work and the connection that the individual builds between the career choices and the religious belief. Also, the qualitative analysis reveals the role of religion in supporting the actors when coping with difficulties both in the private life and in the work-life. Surely, there are some dimensions between the two methodologies used that are not comparable, but the completeness of this study stays in the ability of integrating two different typologies of analysis and four different religious foci. This approach is, indeed, able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the four major religions and career-related work values.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this work has been to explore the relationship between the four world's major religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islamism – and career development and the related behaviours about the conception of the work. These work-related issues can be considered as still exploratory in nature, anyways this dissertation provides several directions that it is possible to follow when analysing the relationship between religion and career development.

This study, indeed, proves that the points of commonality between the four major world's religions outweigh the differences, thus providing important directions for workers, organizations, and counsellors. Exploiting the values religions have in common can be a potentially powerful tool to act on organizational motivation and working environment. Nowadays organizations are the places where actors spend the majority of their time, it is, therefore, fundamental to build a context that allows people to freely express their personhood and their cultural background. In addition, enhancing diversity and supporting the cultural sharing enrich individuals and the society in general. The comprehension of the relationship between religion and career development choices and behaviours can not only provide the workers with some insights into their current approaches to the working environment but also it is a valuable tool to assist them in purposeful and conscious career decision making throughout their lives.

From a practical point of view, as Costantine et al., (2006) suggest, it could be useful to include questions about individuals' religious belief and spirituality and practices when implementing initial career assessment interviews to determine which is the potential relevance that this aspect plays in their career development path. Indeed, when realized the importance religion can play in workers' life, it is, from one side, an organizational responsibility to protect and support this personal aspect, and from the other side, it is an organizational opportunity to act on religious belief to increase the motivation and the commitment. In addition, another practical point to consider is that enhancing religiosity within the workplace provide a critical contribution to pro-environmental behaviours by positively affecting individuals' higher-order needs, thus influencing intrinsically on the motivation and organizational commitment (Afsar, Badir, and Kiani, 2016).

Despite the findings this dissertation provides, it is due to mention some potential limitations. In relation to the qualitative analysis, although the sample size is consistent with other qualitative investigations, the use of a small, non-random, and the contextual limited sample may affect the generalizability of the insights. In addition, the qualitative analysis results may be biased by the research's interpretation and perception, which in turn may have affected the data collected as well. Therefore, in future investigations may emerge additional categories and domains. In contrast, the limitations connected to the quantitative analysis are due to disequilibrium in the composition of the sample. The number of Christians in the study outweighs the number of the members affiliated to the remaining religion. The statistical program, in some cases, has solved the disequilibrium by using the harmonic mean. Another limitation is that does not have been implemented a linear regression to prove the strength of the relationship between religion and the career development path. This could be an issue to solve for future researches in that field.

Historically, the fields of counselling, psychology, and human resources have underestimated the importance and centrality that religious variables can play in individuals' life in general (Costantine et al., 2006). This study represents a potentially important contribution to the literature related to this career's matters. Thanks to the joined analysis of the four religions it has been possible to build an integrated framework whereby previous researches have not been integrated. In addition, this dissertation adds further information about how the different religious groups conceive and approach values in the workplace and the correlated influences they produce on career development paths. Furthermore, the analysis, both the quantitative and the qualitative ones, offer some evidence on the converging views of religions in the relation of various work elements.

To conclude, in an age where religions play an ever-important role both in the private and in the public sphere of individuals' lives worldwide, this work explores the complex relationship between religions and work values, career development paths, and work behaviours. The findings highlighted by this study provide an important contribution both from a theoretical and a practical point of view. At a theoretical level, the study addresses the need of multiple scholars (Parboteeah et al., 2008; Duffy, 2006) to develop further examinations on the influence of religion in the workplace. Instead, from a practical point of view, this analysis suggests that multinational companies are going to face ever-more multicultural contexts within the work environment. Multinationals are, therefore, recommended to design a work environment that enhances all religious group characteristics respecting the diversity but, at the same time, capitalising the point of commonality.

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