



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN ECONOMIC MIGRATION POLICY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, migration is one of the most concerning issues in the international arena. According to UN International Migration Report, there were an estimated 258 million international migrants in 2017. This matter has recently triggered crisis in certain areas of the world, including the European Union with the 2016 Deal with Turkey as a close example.

In order to address this situation, many organisations have reacted to implement measures in this regard. The Catholic Church has not been indifferent to this effort, and has worked in order to influence the process of protecting migrants under the guidance of its inspirational values.

The lenses with which we will address this reality are the Catholic Church's ones: the *aim of this project* is to explore the influence of the Church in the economic migration policy. As we can see, our thesis hinges on two basic pillars: religion and international relations.

On the one hand, the *reason why we have chosen* the Catholic Church is because it is one of the few organisations that have presence in a multi-level structure. The Church is capable of influencing an international treaty (as we are going to analyse) at the same time that it develops networks at the very local level. It is a centralised institution with one head on the Earth –the Pope- and a hierarchical structure, which is an aspect that provides efficiency. Moreover, migrants are a core preoccupation in its principles, as sheltering the homeless is one of the seven corporal works of mercy (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2447). Finally, we believe it is an adequate perspective from where to look into the issue of migration because the Church upholds certain moral values such as human dignity, fraternity and tolerance, which are of vital importance in the process of welcoming citizens from third countries.

On the other hand, *the reason why we have chosen migration* as a topic within the scope of international relations is because of its importance in our times. Migration is one of the most concerning challenges we are going to deal with in the near future.

Globalisation, global warming and the rise of inequalities are causing people to emigrate from their home place. However, many western societies are struggling in managing this reality, frequently relying on the closing of borders or removing the problem by sending migrants to third countries. The situation is getting increasingly worse if we take into account the rise of political parties with an anti-migration discourse, which is too frequently based on racial or identity arguments. The ones that really suffer this state of affairs are the migrants themselves, who see how they are risking their lives in many cases to try to improve their live conditions in unpredictable countries that usually turn their backs.

In relation to the *state of the question*, we must underline that there is not much literature written in relation to this topic. One of the reasons of it is because it is the first time migration has been multilaterally addressed in a treaty as a global issue, with the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration” and the “Global Compact on Refugees” as a result of the two-year negotiations, which started on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) following the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, which took place on the 19 September 2016.

Equally recent are the other two documents called “20 Points of Action for the Global Compact” and “20 Pastoral Action Points”, which have been prepared by the Vatican Section for Migrants and Refugees, a body which belongs to the Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development but is at the moment under the direct command of the Pope. The first is addressed to the international community in relation to the drafting of the “Global Compact” and the second is aimed at the parishes to implement the guiding principles at a local level –which again gives us an idea of the importance of the local layer to achieve the proposed objectives.

Not only is everything recent in the international area but also in the European one, where even if it is well known that the Church has some kind of presence in the European Union, there are not many research projects on it. There is a lack of documents who particularly address the influence of the Church with all its uniqueness, taking into account the specialities that a religion-based organisation face when it comes to advocating activities. Moreover, there is an absence of texts that explain how does

the characteristic feature of universality make the Church a crucial player in tackling the process of migration flows.

In regard to the *theoretical framework*, we are going to focus on what we call “economic migration” in order to differentiate it from refugees. We know that there is not a correct term to refer to migrants who are not refugees, and that the adjective “voluntary” or “economic” may not faithfully reflect their reality, as the people who are in a desperate need of a prosperous future cannot be called voluntary or economic. However, we have to coin a term and we believe that, with this explanation, the reader will understand our purpose.

The reason behind our preoccupation for this kind of migrants is, first, due to the limited extension of our project. Secondly, because we believe refugees have already been target of pondered reflexion by international institutions and organisms. As a matter of fact, they are already internationally protected by the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the Additional New York Protocol of 1967. Subsequently, states do not have a legal obligation to welcome economic migrants, in opposition to refugees. Consequently, economic migrants are the bigger in number and the most vulnerable in terms of legal assistance. All of these reasons drive us to consider voluntary migrants as our centre of attention.

Moreover, and even though we are convinced that the real solution to an integrated response to migration has to be performed at the local level, where the real welcoming, protection, integration and promotion and achieved, due to the fact that we cannot forget the international essence of this project, as well as the limited extension, we are not going to address this specific layer.

The *objective of the project* is to investigate to figure out if the Church intends to influence; to work out how the different international institutions shape the activity of the Church; to assess the efficiency of the Church in its requests; to examine the means used by the Church in its advocacy strategy; to discover the role of religion in international politics and to discover the relation between politics, immigration and religion.

The text aims to answer the following *questions*: does the Church make an impact on economic migration policy? What are the priorities of the Church when advocating for migrants? Do international institutions take into account the Church's proposals? Can a religious actor lobby in a secular organisation? If so, how does it do it? What are the preferred channels of influence for the Church? Does Catholicism have something to say in relation to economic migration?

In terms of *methodology*, we are going to focus on the Church influence on two layers of advocacy: first, we will look into the impact of the Church in the international community; second, we will analyse its influence on the European level, as it is the geographical area in which we are located.

In the international sphere, we are going to compare and contrast both documents – “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration” and “20 Points for Global Compact” - to find their similarities, as well as assessing the intention of the Church in influencing the treaty and the final impact of it.

In relation to the European level, the main distinction we can find in comparison to the international level is that there is a system of institutions that effectively drive the European policy. Moreover, we cannot forget that the Church is not a usual organisation like any other, but it has the peculiarity of being based in a specific faith, Catholicism. As a consequence, in this section we are first going to investigate what is the place left for religion within this institutions.

Once we find out, we are going to analyse how to religious organisations advocate for their principles taking into consideration this particular framework, and particularly in relation to migration. Finally, and once we will have known how does the Church as a religious organisation operate in this field, we will explore some particular examples that prove this way of functioning.

To sum up, this project aims to explain the relationship between Catholicism, politics and migration in a moment where migration, even though it is not a new phenomenon, seems to challenge stable governments. The text also explains how does the Church influence, with a description of the means and content of its advocating activity.

II. INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

In this area we are going to analyse the “20 points of Action for the Global Compact” on different topics. This document serves as a reference of the Church influence to the treaty because, according to Father Michael Czerny, S.J., who serves as the under-secretary of Vatican Section of Migrants and refugees, this document was intended to “express the interest of the Catholic Church in the process leading to their adoption and to contribute to the negotiations.” (6 August 2018).

The methodology we are going to use in this section is the following. First, we are going to examine what does the “20 Points of Action for the Global Compact” say about the different issues related to migration –we will write under the title “The Church”- and, after, we are going to determine what does the Compact state in relation to that particular aspect –we will name it “The Treaty”, to explore that influence.

The reasons why we explore the aforementioned influence are because there has been actions that drive us to think that the Church wanted to have a say in the Compact. As a matter of fact, according to the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, “Catholics in England and Wales and in countries around the world have campaigned for governments to agree the global compacts as part of the “Share the Journey Campaign” launched by Pope Francis in 2017” (14 December 2018).

Another evidence of this will by the Church to influence the Compact was the article written by Cardinal Luis Antonio Gokim Tagle of Manila, Philippines, in American Magazine stating sentences such as, for example, “I hope the words of Pope Francis will echo through the corridors of governments when deciding on this vital Global Compact” or “to the governments who have withdrawn from the compact on migration, I appeal that they reconsider their decision.” (4 December 2018).

In terms of the Pope speeches, there are many that could drive us to think that the Church was willing to influence the Global Compact. In his address to the Latin American Parliament, speaking on the realities and commitments towards the Global Compacts, Pope Francis stated: “local governments and the international community

should be provided with all the elements needed to draw up the best agreements for the good of many, especially those suffering in the most vulnerable areas of our planet.” (9 June 2017). Furthermore, the Holy Father encouraged Catholic Universities to engage in the processes towards the Global Compacts (4 November 2017). Finally, on 14 June 2018, the Holy Father, referring directly to the Global Compacts, encouraged the “efforts to ground responsibility for the shared global management of international migration in the values of justice, solidarity and compassion”.

We are going to divide this section of our project them in two big groups: the first, called “approach to migration”, in which we will include the topics that relate to the strategy towards migrants, and the second, named “rights of the migrants”, in which we will incorporate the various prerogatives granted to migrants.

A. Approach to migrants

In this section we are going to tackle the issues of general approach to migration, environmental migrants, migrants with special needs, and inclusion of migrants.

1. General approach to migration

The Church

The relevance of establishing a strategy to draw a general approach to migrants is in the line of two points that the Church has always proposed: on the one hand, the importance of an integrated approach. As it is stated in the introduction for the second part –to protect- of the document “20 Action Points for the Global Compact”, “the Church insists on the importance of taking a holistic and integrated approach, with a focus on the centrality of the human person” (2017, p.28). On the other hand, the Church wants to stress the idea that integration must be done at the local level. This is why, additionally to the aforementioned document, the Church has prepared a document with similar content –“20 Pastoral Action Points”- aimed and the parishes. Moreover, point 6 b) of the document calls for “adopting programs engaging local communities in hosting small groups of asylum seekers in addition to larger reception and identification centres” (2017, p. 31). The Church believes that all actors are needed in order to tackle migration, and this is the reason why it proposes local integration through a multi

stakeholder approach, involving communities, organisations and private sponsorships (point 2 d)).

The Treaty

This influence can be perceived in the treaty when it calls for the redaction of “disaster preparedness strategies” with the objective of “harmonising and developing (...) mechanisms at the sub regional and regional levels”. Furthermore, the model of implementation of this treaty consists in what they call “enhanced international cooperation” in a revitalised global partnership

2. Environmental migrants

The Church

The Catholic Church has countered the idea behind the distinction of people who leave their original country on the basis of a well-founded fear of persecution (considered refugees by the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the New York Protocol of 1967) and the ones that leave it “voluntarily”. In the document from the Pontifical Council Cor Unum named “Refugees: a challenge to solidarity”, it is stated in reference to the Conventions that we have cited before that “these juridical instruments do not protect many others whose human rights are equally disregarded (...) such as the victims of armed conflicts, erroneous economic policy or natural disasters.” (1992, p. 2). This is the reason why the Pontifical Council proposes the creation of the figure of “de facto” refugees, “given the involuntary nature of their migration” (1992, p. 2). The Church has considered that natural disasters migrants must have particular protection.

Moreover, in the encyclical “Laudato si”, Pope Francis remarks that “there has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever” (2015).

The Treaty

Within the objective 2 of the Treaty, who is named “Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin”, there is a part

dedicated to “natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation”. In relation to this particular topic there is in the final draft a special attention to migrants whose cause of displacement has derived from climate conditions. A particular focus on the specific nature of this phenomenon can be found in this area, which constitutes an innovative factor in migration studies.

3. Migrants with special needs

The Church

In the last 60 years, the Church has advocated for a decent human treatment in consideration to human dignity, with special regard if they have difficulties. As it is stated in “*Dignitatis Humanae*”, “Revelation does, however, disclose the dignity of the human person in its full dimensions “(point 9). This is why point 15 of the 20 Action Points is dedicated to people with special needs or vulnerabilities, who must be treated as other disabled citizens. This is particularly aimed at unaccompanied minors, who receive more attention from the document. This is why they are dedicated more points, in particular points 7 and 8, which encourage states to “comply with their obligations under the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)”.

Moreover, the Church has in the past centuries paid special attention to language. Contrary to other religions, and due to its universal message and diffusion, the adaptation of its content to multiple languages is a necessity in the Church message¹. It is therefore very important that all the communications with migrants are in a language they understand, in relation to freedom of movement within a territory (point 13) and public announcements (point 19 c)). As a consequence, this effort may sometimes require language classes (point 13).

The Treaty

The Treaty has in mind these specific needs and refers to them in many parts of its text. Some examples can be the establishment of accessible information (both general and

¹ As a matter of fact, the Holy See website (<http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/es.html>) is translated into 7 different languages. Furthermore, Constitutions like *Dei Verbum* are translated into 13 languages, including Swahili, Hungarian or Czech.

legal) with gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach. This concern is also developed in relation to labour mobility agreements, national labour laws (objective 6 letter k), unaccompanied migrants (objective 7 f), gender-responsive and child-sensitive referral mechanisms in relation to individual assessment at the border (objective 12 c)), special care for disabled or unaccompanied minors in terms of health and education (point 15 b)), gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach to readmission to their home countries (point 20). However, the objective which specifically focuses on vulnerabilities is objective 7, with a particular approach on migrants with specific needs. We see how this preoccupation for the most vulnerable is influenced by the Catholic Church.

The Treaty also pays special attention to the matter of language, in order to make information accessible for them. This can be specifically achieved in relation to return information (objective 3 c)), labour contracts (objective 6 d)) and reasons for their detention (objective 13 e)). The Compact also includes language training for migrants (objective 18 h)).

4. Inclusion

The Church

The Church believes that integration of migrants is one of the four pillars in which an adequate response should be based. It is a “two-way process” (point 18), where both parts make a real effort in order to understand and ascertain the gains that foreign culture brings to societies. Moreover, a crucial aspect in the influence of the Church is the promotion of a positive narrative around immigration (point 19) by showing positive aspects and cases of individuals that could serve as an example.

The Treaty

Inclusion is also an important aspect in the Treaty covered in objective 16. There are many measures that contribute to this inclusion, such as the active involvement of migrants within societies and the support of multicultural activities. Public discourse is tackled in objective 17, which commits to eradicate all forms of racism and exclusion and promotes an evidence-based public narrative on migration.

B. RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS

In this section we are going to tackle the issues of information to and of migrants, pathways for regular migration, family reunification, fight against human trafficking, smuggling and migrant exploitation, respect for human rights, detention consular protection, basic services for migrants and mobility and return of migrants.

1. Information of and to migrants

The Church

The Church considers that it is of vital importance that migrants are conveniently informed. This is why point 4 of “Pastoral Action Points” states that “emigrants must be protected by their countries of origin and their authorities in these countries should offer reliable information before departure”.

The Treaty

Objective 3 is particularly destined to the topic of information. It establishes that the contracting parties “commit to strengthen their efforts to provide, make available and disseminate accurate, timely, accessible and transparent information on migration-related aspects for and between States, communities and migrants at all stages of migration”. Moreover, in this area the security that all migrants have information about why are they detained is also covered (objective 13 e)).

2. Pathways for regular migration

The Church

The Church bases its discourse about migration on its necessity to be orderly and regular. This is why the Action Points dedicate 3 points with the will of reinforcing regular channels for migrants to arrive. With the principle of non-refoulement as the cornerstone, point 2 explains the necessity of “expanding the number and range of

alternative legal pathways for safe and voluntary migration and resettlement”. The Church offers various proposals in this regard.

Labour mobility is a very interconnected aspect. In point 20 b) it is expressed that there is a necessity to “permit rapid access to labour markets for those with professional or vocational credentials” (2017, p. 40).

The Treaty

Objective 5 of the Treaty talks about “the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration”. In it, there is a clear commitment to adapt pathways for regular migration. In terms of labour, the Compact encourages states to develop labour mobility agreements.

3. Family reunification

The Church

The Church considers families as the fundamental unit of society. This is the reason why family reunification plays a fundamental role in the process of integration of migrants. Under the idea that “the integrity and well-being of the family should always be protected and promoted” (point 14, “Pastoral Action Points”), the Church advocates to include family members in amplified concept, including siblings, grandparents and grandchildren (point 14 b)). In order to achieve this objective there is a proposal to implement family reunification visas (point 2 f)).

The Treaty

The Compact reinforces family reunification processes (objective 5 i)) by the proposal to review or revise the requirements that family members need to meet. The objective under this proposal is the right to family life. In this case, the Compact does not talk about the extent of this right to family reunification.

4. Labour exploitation, smuggling and migrant trafficking

The Church

The second area of concern of the Church in the Action Points is the protection of migrants. In this part, there are many proposals in order to fight labour exploitation. The main tool proposed is through national legislation that should examine some key points. Among them, we can find the right to identity (not to be deprived from national documents), access to justice, minimum wage and possibility to open bank accounts. Moreover, the Church is also concerned in other forms of abuse, such as smuggling and human trafficking.

The Treaty

Objective 6 talks about protection of migrants through the prevention of labour exploitation. The focus is centred on the possibility of decent work and the contribution of migrants to both the origin and the destination countries. We can also find the prohibition of the confiscation of identification documents (letter h), access to justice (letter j) and the promulgation of national laws (letter k).

Furthermore, the Treaty dedicates objectives 9 and 10 to smuggling and trafficking of migrants respectively.

5. Respect for human rights

The Church

The Church believes that human rights are a guarantee for migrants that will ensure that they are conveniently welcomed, protected, integrated and promoted. One of the measures it proposes in this line is to ensure that migrants are treated well in border controls (point 3 a). The Church recommends training border officials in human rights.

The Treaty

Objective 11 c) talks about the necessity that migrants are treated in accordance to human rights. This can be identified in many measures proposed, such as the screening and assessment of migrants in accordance to a human rights approach and the possibility of alternatives to detention that could best comply with human rights. The treaty also underlines that “migration and sustainable development are multidimensional and interdependent” (objective 23).

6. Detention

The Church

The Church is of the opinion that violence should only be used in very exceptional circumstances and under particular justifications. This is why it favours alternative measures in order to cope with irregular immigration. This idea is reflected on point 3 d) and 7 a).

The Treaty

In objective 13, it is stated that detention should be a measure of last resort. Therefore, other non-custodial measures should be prioritised. Moreover, in the cases when it should be applied, it is mandatory for authorities to comply with principles of legality, necessity and proportionality.

7. Consular protection

The Church

For the Church, it is not only the state of destination the one that shares the burden of protection of immigrants. It should also be accomplished by countries of origins, through the assistance on consular protection (point 4 d)). Furthermore, the Church is of the opinion that it would be convenient to establish a department for the diaspora, so that emigrants have a place to go in case they need it (point 4 c)).

The Treaty

Objective 14 talks about the necessity of strengthening consular protection, in terms of capacities, officers and services. Moreover, in order to adopt an integrated approach the Treaty proposes regional and bilateral treaties on this matter.

8. Basic services for migrants

The Church

As for the vast majority of social actors, for the Church, health and education are basic pillars of every person, including migrants. On the one hand, it recommends governments to enact legislation that ensures the right to health of migrants, including primary assistance, no matter their legal status and their time of stay in the country (point 10 a)). On the other, the Church encourages governments to provide immigrants with equal access to education –including primary, secondary and tertiary- (point 9 and 12 a)) not only in the countries of destination but also in hosting areas (point 16 a)).

The Treaty

The compact advocates for including in healthcare government plans the needs of migrants (objective 15e)). Furthermore, the treaty proposes education for migrant children as well (objective 15 f)).

9. Mobility

The Church

The Church finds that the removal of obstacles to mobility is vital to the well being of migrants and to their satisfying inclusion. This is why it proposes the transfer of formal skills between countries (point 12), the validation of formal and vocational education (point 12 c)), the recognition of freedom of movement (point 13 a)) and the recognition of educational and other credentials for migrants that return home (point 20). The final important issue is the portability of social security rights (point 10 b)).

The Treaty

In its objective 18 it is stated the effort to recognise education, competences and skills of migrants in different countries. Some tools provided include transparency and mutual standards for recognition of certificates, bilateral and multilateral agreements and the use of digitalisation and technology. It also recognises the portability of social security earned benefits (objective 22).

10. The return of migrants

The Church

Not only does the Church want to protect migrants on departure and transit, but also on return to their home country. The cornerstone is the prohibition of the principle of non-refoulement, that is to say, to return people to a country where their lives are at risk. It proposes several measures, including travel documents to allow the return (point 6 a)) and transfer and validation of their capacities and formation in order to achieve a rapid integration in the country.

The Treaty

Contracting countries are compromised in ensuring a “dignified and safe” return for immigrants. They also refer to the prohibition of collective expulsions and the breach of the principle of non-refoulement, the necessity to sign bilateral and multilateral treaties on readmission affairs and the expedition of valid travel permits.

C. Conclusions

After exploring the “Global Compact for Refugees and Migrants” in relation to the “20 Points of Action for the Global Compact”, we have highlighted the similarities between both documents and classified them in broad big groups: approach to migrants and rights of migrants. In this regard, we have proved how there are many common points between them, which leads us to affirm that the influence of the Church in this international treaty is clear, wide and deep.

Therefore, we have confirmed how the signs that indicated the Church had the intention to influence the Compact were true and have been translated into real actions. As a proof of this, we can state that not only can this influence be perceived in the already analysed parallelisms between both documents but also in many other evidences that underline the influence of the Church in this decision-making. In this regard, as Graham Gordon, head of Policy of the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development has stated, “the Global Compact and its sister document on refugees have been a testament to the leadership shown by the Pope and the Church during negotiations” (14 December 2018). Furthermore, the Catholic Church in England and Wales has remarked that “the “20 points of Action for the Global Compact” became an essential part of the Holy

See's overall official contribution to the consultations in 2017 and the negotiations in 2018" (12 December 2018).

More proofs of this intention by the Church materialised in real influence are testimonies like this of Christopher White, who affirmed that "the Compact's finalization is also a victory in which, according to multiple parties involved, the Holy See deserves considerable credit for serving as a mediating force" (6 August 2018). Furthermore, multiple delegates and participants praised the "20 Action Points" - which were approved by Pope Francis - for serving as a constant touchstone for negotiations, in which the Church adopted a middle point. According to a participant in the negotiations, "during the negotiations, the Church was not positioned in a particular bloc - it wasn't a matter of north versus south, or developed world versus the developing world. They were right in the middle" (6 August 2018).

Another important piece of information that we extract from this comparison between both text is that the Church takes a person-centred approach, which places specific importance on the respect of migrant rights. As a matter of fact, the journal *Crux* has interviewed many activist and participant country delegates who have chronicled "a diverse, and, at times, unwieldy coalition of nations held together by the moral authority of the Catholic Church, insisting that migrants are individuals with human dignity and deserving of protection regardless of their legal status" (6 August 2018).

Furthermore, according to Kevin Appleby, who participated in the process through the Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN), "the Holy See was consistent in upholding the rights of migrants and reminding member states of their obligation for the protection of human life and dignity (6 August 2018)". Additionally, he highlighted that "the Holy See can be credited for defending the right of immigrant families and ensuring that language was included that protected them".

Besides, the way the Church lobbies for this idea is through the absolute conviction, always remaining strong in the defence of those rights. As Appleby reminds, "they didn't shy away from that, and they didn't blink in their advocacy of migrants, so it helped balance out other voices" (6 August 2018). This moral authority of the Church can be also seen in the testimony of Monsignor Robert Vitillo, Secretary General of the

Geneva-based International Catholic Migration Commission, who told Crux that when the Holy See would address the body, all participating countries would stop to listen.

Moreover, this importance that the aforementioned right have for the Church can be seen in the reinforced presence of the Church in the cases where negotiations were either drawn by the rising xenophobia or placed in danger. In relation to the US withdrawal from the Treaty, participants in the process told Crux that “the Holy See served as a stabilising presence that sought to build bridges, emphasizing not only areas of agreement amid a background of contention, but also reminding countries of their pre-existing commitments under international law” (6 August 2018).

Finally, the Church also played an important role in working towards the acceptance of Faith-based Organisations in the process, something which is not always a given in U.N. Moreover, the Church insisted that “irregular migrants”, migrants without legal status, are still entitled to basic life-saving services.

To sum up, Appleby reminded that “without the voice of the Church, there certainly could have been a more restrictive compact” (6 august 2018).

III. EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

In this section, we are going to look into the work that the Church displays in European politics. To introduce this topic, we must not forget that the Catholic Church is not a usual organisation like any other, but it has the peculiarity of being based in a specific faith, Catholicism. This makes it a unique and unusual organisation, whose advocating activity is necessarily conditioned by its religious nature.

This means that in order to analyse its influence in the European Union, we must first explore how this particularity conditions its influence in two aspects: on the one hand, we must investigate what is the role of religion in European policy, with a particular insight in the relationships between religion and identity, immigration and secularism. Once we will have known the place that the European system reserves to religion, and on the other hand, we must look into how is the activity of those faith-based organisations developed taking into account the aforementioned framework. Then, we will analyse this activity particularly focused on our main topic: immigration.

The reason why we address this issues is because we consider that the aforementioned content is necessary to understand the influence of the Church, and even though we will refer to faith-based organisations in general –where the Church is also included- we will occasionally refer to the Catholic Church. Finally, once we will have situated the Church in the context required, we will particularly analyse examples of the Catholic action to influence European politics.

A. The place of religion in European migration policy-making

1. Introduction

Even though religion has declined as an electoral cleavage in national and European politics (Minkberg, 2010), it has resisted and even resurged as an aspect likely to be politicised in nations with religious diversity and significant Muslim communities (van der Brug et al, 2009). Moreover, governments have also aimed to establish relations with religious group as a tool to the migratory issue (Mourã o Permoser et al. 2010).

The EU has become a key player in migration policy worldwide. Articles 79 and 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU state the competence of the EU in developing a common policy on migration. This process of supranationalisation of migration policy culminated in the Treaty of Lisbon, which grants competences of asylum, regular and irregular migration to the EU. Furthermore, in those areas that are not under the domain of European institutions, such as immigrant integration, there is a high level of intergovernmental activity in Brussels, with a significant amount of policy initiatives, guidelines and modules being produced.

As Foret and Permoser underline, religion must be treated as a multidimensional factor. First of all, as a policy issue to be dealt with; second, as a share of both citizens and civil organisations; third, as an ethical reference that may guide political action; and finally, as a justification to political claims, in the sense that it can be used as a symbolic aspect to mobilise citizens (2015, p. 1090). From now on, we are going to use the term Faith Based Organisations (FBO) to refer, according to established definitions in literature, to non-state organisations that perform as either direct political actors or contributors to public good (education, healthcare, culture, etc.). These corporations must be clearly linked to a faith community either by purpose or by organisation.

It is also important to understand that if FBOs want to succeed in the EU policy environment they have to adapt to the processes and strategies followed by non-religious based organisations. Moreover, it is their reliance on technical expertise that legitimises their action in the eyes of secular actors, partially “neutralising their religion identity” (Foret and Permoser, 2015, p. 1091).

a. Religion and political identity

Religion plays an important role when it comes to the definition of political identities. The normal standard of belonging is based on the conformity to the main identity of the state. However, the existence of groups of people with a different background may encourage political communities to revise their idea of collective identity by rethinking certain elements that they assume as natural.

We could say that there are two basic models of building communities. On the one side, there are some communities constructed on the idea of cultural homogeneity. On the other, there are others based more on a civic loyalty. In the European case, as Cerutti and Lucarelli remark, “European identity is pluralist, flexible, rationalist and claims to universality”. We must also find the foundation of it on the diversity within European countries and the subsequent process of integration aimed at enlarging the Union. This is why the construction of the European identity aspires, on the one side, to be autonomous from its member states and rejects, on the other, any attempt to a search for roots, which can be exemplified in the failure to include the reference to the Christian heritage of Europe in both the preamble of the European constitution and of the Lisbon Treaty (Schlesinger and Foret 2006). However, we are of the opinion that there is a shared history and common values behind the European states, and this can be partially explained in its common Christian heritage, so we do not share the exclusion of this reference, mainly because it is correct.

In reference to Catholicism, its scope is also diverse, as its message is aimed to every nation. In this sense, we can perceive one of its peculiarities, which is that even though there are nations whose history cannot be understood without the Catholic Church, the dimension of the Catholic message exceeds the confines of the nation, with the intent of reaching every human being. Figuratively, we could say that the faces of the Catholics in its various nations do not look at their own state capital but to Rome. This characteristic is not shared with other religions such as Anglicanism in England, Orthodox Church in Greece or Russia or the Lutheran Church in Sweden, whose national character is far more noticeable.

c. Religion and immigration

Religious and immigration topics are sometimes used to hide one another. On the one hand, tackling immigration issues sometimes implies speaking of religion in disguise. Therefore, instead of rejecting others on the base of cultural otherness, debates are drawn on economic or social arguments, such as the adhesion of Turkey to the EU. Conversely, religious aspects sometimes hide immigration issues. This is the angle from

which the regulation of Muslim veils is normally considered (Rosenberger and Sauer 2012).

However, it is also interesting to analyse how both Europe and the Muslim are sometimes seen in national politics as factors which pose a menace to national identities. This porosity between both is well illustrated in the discourse of far-right parties, which use Europe and the Muslim as symbols to blame the problems of society (Schori 2007). This interrelation between immigration, religion and European identity is intensified in non-European points of view, which conceive European secularisation, lack of toughness on migration and political feebleness of the EU as different facets of a same coin.

In relation to the Catholic Church, its aforementioned feature of transnationalism makes it a particularly adequate actor in terms of migration issues. The fact that there can be Catholics found in almost every country of the world makes the Church a qualified player in order to cope with migratory policies, because its presence on the ground helps to understand the reality from different perspectives and gives migrants a shared identity which can be of great help when it comes to integration. This is why we can find organisations within the Church that unite the different perspectives coming from various countries, such as the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union in Brussels. This does not happen in other religions. In the end, not only do Catholic communities see Catholic migrants as foreigners, but also as part of the same group with a common aspect that unites them all: the Catholic religion.

d. European Law and secularism

To understand how is the influence of religion –in particular the Catholic faith– organised within the EU we have to take into account three important factors: political and legal structure of the EU; pattern of religious interest representation in Brussels; and requirements that religious actors have to meet, including technical expertise, tradition and representation.

Religious actors must therefore act within this general framework, trying to organise their claim as a defence of fundamental rights. This is why De Vlieger has coined the term “imperfect pluralism” to refer to how FBOs lobby and advocate, in the sense that there coexist multiple actors that try to address multiple issues, but with inequalities between them and their respective channels for influence, all of them in a scenario of unequal relevance of religions on different issues (2012).

Within this reality, the EU is not an active actor in terms of religious affairs. According to the treaties, the EU respects national legislation in regard to the relationships between religion and politics. However, according to McCrea, this does not mean that European law has either a direct or indirect effect on religion (2010). As a consequence, the EU plays a double role: on the one hand, the EU takes a conservative approach confirming national arrangements and, on the other, its institutions offer resources to challenge a national norm through transnational comparisons and the reference to fundamental human rights.

It is also interesting to perceive, according to McCrea, how religion is an aspect which is more and more considered as culture. However, this fact benefits traditional and rooted religions, acting as a detriment to minority faiths, which are sometimes seen as an identity threat and a menace to secularism, as they are not part of the established culture (2010, 12-13).

The framework that we have already described obliges FBOs to build relevant coalitions that outpace national, ethnic or denominational differences. Therefore, lines of actions must be both pluralistic and relativistic in order to achieve agreements. This system impedes FBOs discourse to rely excessively on strong core beliefs (such as dogmas). Consequently, there is a limitation of cultural arguments.

The reality of the European way of functioning drives FBOs to rely, in a first insight, on expertise, both in the social and technical domain. Expertise can additionally fall on values, not with an authoritarian approach but with the know-how in fundamental moral choices. Therefore, what makes them credible partners for both the EU and other secular organisations is their professionalism and their accreditation as social and political actor, in particular through the provision of services. In a second attempt,

religious actors make also use of traditional legitimacy, as protectors and interpreters of fundamental values, which constitute the heart of national and European heritage. Finally, the last legitimising factor is representation, as some political actors constitute themselves as the speakers of certain social or religious groups. It is a generalised practise that FBOs employ all three resources to shape their discourse.

The comparative advantage of the Church to present its advocating activity separated from its religious dimension in international organisations rests on its universal scope. Undoubtedly, other religions with a more national-centred approach may find more difficulties in managing its presence in European Institutions, as they are more linked to national than to international politics.

2. Faith-base organisation influence in European framework

Now that we have analysed what is the structure of European institutions towards the advocating activity of religious groups, and what is the place left for religion in this system, in this section we will investigate how do these characteristics shape and condition the activity of FBOs.

a. Venues of interaction

Most international scholarship recognise three main venues where participation of FBOs is materialised, with different level of formality and, therefore, transparency: institutionalised dialogue, forums of consultation and lobbying.

The first space for interaction responds to the legal mandate found in art. 17(3) TFEU, which states that the EU must ‘maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue’ with churches, religious associations or communities, as well as philosophical and non-confessional organizations. However, this venue is not the preferred one for FBOs as migration has not been an issue tackled within the scope of the aforementioned article. The action of religious organisations in regard to art. 17 has to be understood as part of a comprehensive exchange of ideas, which may occasionally touch topics related to migration such as anti-discrimination, freedom of religion and fundamental rights and

liberties. In conclusion, we can see how the influence of FBOs is not performed through a process driven by the EU.

European institutions, however, see religious organisations as experts worth consulting, along with other NGOs. According to Foret, this action can be done through consultative forums in the field of migration as well as working on integration in line with the recent European tendency of enhancing democratic conditions through a determined engagement of civil society (2015, p. 1097). This is the case of FRONTEX Consultative Forum, creation in which FBOs played an important role, reported by many of them in regard to the amendment of the EU Regulation No 1168/2011, the one that addresses FRONTEX. FBOs felt the necessity of a strong inspection and participation of civil society to prevent human rights violations. Therefore, the influence of FBOs in terms of consultation forum can be assessed, on the one hand, on the important expertise role and, on the other, on the creation of the forum itself.

In regard to the reliance of FBOs on expertise and its appreciation by the EU institutions, we must underline that the participation of civil society is not limited to religious organisations, but also in cooperation with other secular actors. Therefore, when FBOs perform in these consultation forums their religious dimension is mainly dampened and their expertise side is strengthened, in order to justify their activity in equal terms to secular organisations (Foret and Permoser, 2015, p. 1097).

The third possible venue refers to lobbies, which can take place through various manners, including contact with Members of European Parliament, cooperating with other NGOs, contacting national governments, publications, etc. This aspect requires resources, expertise and, above all, a very good network.

In conclusion, we have analysed how, even though FBOs have the possibility of addressing European institutions, the preferred channel is lobbying and consultation forums. This aspect allows religious organisations to participate in many fields on various topics, although their reliance on expertise as the strategy of influence may cause the banalisation of its religious principles. Finally, the possibility of channels outside European institutions constitutes another proof of the imperfect pluralism we

already talked about, which is incremented thanks to the different resources available for the different FBOs.

b. The religious dimension of FBOs in their advocacy strategy

Even if it is true that FBOs rely on expertise as an important influence tool, there must not be disregarded that religion is the founding base and the inspirational principle for these organisations. This particular faith drives them to become active participants in democratic societies that moves them to advocate for immigrants. As Peschke states, “churches are faith communities and, as such, see themselves as responsible for participating in civil society. It is not sufficient for churches to live in a ‘spiritual ghetto’ (Peschke, 2009). This responsibility within the state makes them active players, as far as social cohesion is concerned. This form of work takes two directions: the advocacy work on migration and asylum policy and legislation, and the solidarity programmes to support individuals (2009, p. 75).

The cornerstone of FBOs participation is human dignity (also the one of the Church, as we have seen in *Dignitatis Humanae*). Consequently, they see the defence of human rights and the lobby for a more liberal immigration policy as the mechanism to achieve their final objective, the protection of the dignity of the person. In regard to our topic, this objective is expressed in the defence of migrant rights over state interests or even public opinion, as well as a decent care for migrants, treating them as equals. This is why FBOs take the stance of a liberal, right-based and pro-migrant agenda.

Even if this is the content of its message, the method to transmit it lies on discourses free of references to religion, through a secular language, relying again on expertise rather than morality. As we have seen, this aspect enables them to work with other NGOs, state actors and think tanks. Therefore, in many cases it is difficult to appreciate the difference between the activities of FBOs and other organisations that defend human rights. This can be very clearly appreciated in the case of the Jesuit Migrant Service, where the reports and documents they prepare are free from any religious consideration, solely relying on its expertise and presence on the ground, close to the affected people.

However, religion is a topic that has recently become very delicate, due to negative attitudes towards Islam, such as the doubts around integration of Muslim, fear of Islamisation of Europe and the belief that they do not share liberal values such as gender equality. These aspects, along with the politisation of Islam, have brought as a direct consequence the consideration of religion as a sensitive topic to be dealt within European institutions. It is important to highlight this reality, as it has also an effect on the approach to the rest of religions.

c. Immigration, religion and politics

Not only is immigration related to religion, but it also reveals relation between religion and politics going to be in the future. Nowadays, we can appreciate how religion has gained importance in the political contest. This fact can be explained, according to Casanova, as the consequence of immigration and the coming of less secularised population on the one side and the maintenance of religion as an important social factor (2006).

The main consequence of this *risorgimento* and the involvement of religious actors in the European political framework is the socialisation of religion into the norms and patterns commonly accepted in the political system (2009). The reality ends up having religion as an important source of inspiration but acting within the system with contents very similar to other NGOs and not treating religion as an issue in the migratory scope, as a strategy to gain access, as well as partially as a direct result the necessity to interact with various types of policy participants.

However, religion can cause division. It has been used as a political cleavage to distinguish parties (in areas such as abortion and homosexual marriage) and identify countries (such as *laïcité* in France or British pluralism). Immigration has not been an exception to this point, and FBOs have positioned themselves not holding a unique position even within their own faith. In some cases, there are certain topics that political parties know can have an enormous political cost, leading to an absence of position in those topics and leaving the space for NGOs, which constitute themselves as religious

authorities (Banchoff, 2005). According to Foret, maybe because of all these causes Members of European Parliament tend to leave a European religion policy to the nation-state and not to give excessive importance in policy-making, only related to specific fields such as fundamental rights, social policy and religion (2014). To sum up, we could say that religion does not produce in itself a political cleavage, as it complies with the system rules, but it can be used in migratory discourses as an inspiration and as a factor of legitimisation for traditional political actors.

The seniority of presence in society, the subsequent level of familiarity with decision-makers and the size of the social constituency of each denomination combine to reinforce or hamper the eligibility of religious organizations as experts. In this regard, we cannot forget that the Church has had a prolonged presence in Europe, which has been extended in the majority of its territory –in comparison to other churches more rooted in a single country, aspect that makes it a privileged actor in terms of lobbying. The connection between the Church and some of the most important political parties in European countries shows this reality.

3. The Catholic Case

Once we have analysed the general framework in which the Church displays its uniqueness, in this section we would like to expose some specific examples of how the Church develops its activity taking into account the role of religion in the European framework and the way FBOs make their voices heard.

As an introduction, we must underline that there is an institution called COMECE (which stands for Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union), which is composed of Bishops delegated by the Catholic Bishops 'Conferences of the 28 (if the UK leaves the Union, 27) member states. Its mission is to oversee the politics of the EU in all areas of interest to the Church. Its headquarters are in Brussels and its structure is made up of various Commissions and Working Groups.

In relation to the role that Catholicism plays in EU institutions though its reliance on expertise in order to legitimise intervention on migration can be seen in a statement

pronounced by the representative of Pax Christi International: “to start from the level of the people we are working with means, first of all, to listen to their stories and to learn from them. ... It is this act of humility that allows us to advocate from the perspective of victims and the poor, the only perspective that makes our work credible in the eyes of those we want to influence” (Lansu, 2010).

However, the Church makes also use of tradition as a source of legitimisation. Catholic Organisations benefit from the fact that they are linked to the ancient majority churches whose stands are taken for granted. Opposed to the case of minority religions, the Church does not need to legitimise itself due to its considerable tradition. Moreover, the Church also benefits from a comparative advantage, as other FBOs, particularly the Muslim, do not have migration as a priority political issue. This topic is not tackled as a separate link and it is often included in other wider advocations such as the movement against racism. Muslim, Judaism and Buddhism focus on the prevention of racism and the effort to improve their image and raise awareness, rather than on migration. Consequently, the Church is almost by itself as a faith in this area, aspect that in conjunction with its expertise through organisations such as the Jesuit Migrant Service, makes it a relevant actor in the field of migration.

This is why at the supranational level, the policy field is dominated by Christian faith-based organizations, who act as immigrants’ advocates rather than as immigrant representatives. Moreover, integration and immigration are seen as linked to religion, in particular to Islam. The religiosity of Christian immigrants, however, is not viewed as playing an important role for integration. Conversely, when it comes to the presence of religious actors in policy-making, it is Christianity that dominates the scene, with Christian FBOs acting as advocates of (among others) Muslim immigrants (Foret, 2015, p. 1102).

In relation to the venues used by FBOs, an example of the Church making use of the venue of forum consultation is the Jesuit Refugee Service serving as co-chair of FRONTEX consultative forum, as well as the figure of Caritas Europe and the International Catholic Migration Commission as participants in the forum. Another illustration of the relevant participation of FBOs in organised civil society can be seen

in the Migrant Integration Forum, in which Caritas Europa also serves as co-chair and representative of European-level NGOs.

In terms of other venues used by the Church, the International Catholic Migration Commission report having been successful in lobbying European decision-makers at the time of negotiations of the Decision, which established the EU Joint Resettlement Programme (EU Decision No 281/2012/EU). Based on their considerable experience with resettlement at the national level inside and outside of Europe, they drew proposals that were welcomed by European Parliamentarians and even filtered directly into the wording of the Decision.

In relation of the political stance the Church adopts towards migrants, FBOs generally seem as progressive actors in the migration policy field by their focus on human rights and liberal policy towards migrants. This is why the concept of human dignity applied to immigration leads Christian FBOs to side with left-wing parties and socially progressive NGOs. This is also the case regarding other social policies about welfare, education, etc. Conversely, on ethical issues such as abortion or stem cell research, human dignity is often a rallying word for conservative coalitions.

However, the unanimity is not total among religious actors, even within denominations, and the differences between traditionalists and progressivists are even stronger. For instance, at the national level, the Italian Catholic Church and most religious NGOs disapproved the criminalisation of prostitution promoted by conservative governments in order protect the rights of women, whereas the Spanish Church took a more neutral and self-restrained position (Schmidt et al. 2013).

At the international level, tensions have risen between the Pope and charities (especially Caritas) suspected of being too soft with or even supportive of choices incompatible with Catholic orthodoxy in their welfare activity (Berry 2012). This changing political meaning of human dignity manifests the flexibility of the religiously inspired repertoire of action. It also stresses that religion is not an organisation ordering the positions and alliances of FBOs homogeneously on every issue, but rather an ethical source producing a diversity of interpretations. Migration issues are no exception on this point.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This project has aimed to explore the influence of the Church in economic migration policy. This aspect has been tackled from two perspectives: the first, in regard to the international sphere; the second, in the field of the European Union.

In order to explore the influence of the Catholic Church in the international arena, we have used the method of analysing the “Global Compact for Orderly, Safe and Regular Migration”, as it is both related to a recent time –adopted in December 2018- and concerning a relevant issue in our days –immigration. After, we have compared it to the documents prepared by the Vatican Section for Migrants and Refugees, which are “20 Points of Action for the Global Compact” and the “20 Pastoral Action Points”. Not only have we found that there were many similarities among them, but we have also discovered that the Church did have a will to influence this important text and did finally influence it.

In relation to the similarities between both documents, we have divided them in two groups: the first one, in terms of approach to migration; the second one, in terms of rights of migrants. In the first area, we have tackled resemblances related to the general approach to migration, environmental migrants, migrants with special needs and inclusion. Here we underline the importance that both documents award to an integrated approach that has to bear in mind both migrants caused by natural disasters as well as unaccompanied minors and which has to be finally developed at the local level in a two-way process. Moreover, harmonising and developing common mechanisms at the sub regional and regional levels is also a priority, always taking into account the importance that the Church awards to treating each person individually, particularly appreciated in relation to language.

In the second group, we have addressed analogies related to information of and to migrants, pathways for regular migration, family reunification, labour exploitation, smuggling and migrant trafficking, respect for human rights, detention, consular protection, basic services for migrants, mobility and return of migrants. In this section we underline the necessity of regular pathways with reliable information for migrants,

who should be assisted in their basic necessities and protected by their inherent rights, with the objective of family reunification and the prevention of all forms of exploitation, bearing in mind the final step of returning back home.

Finally, we have found out that these parallelisms are not a product of mere coincidence but a result of a sheer desire of the Church to influence the first document that guides the issue of migration within a multilateral framework. As a matter of fact, a campaign was launched in England and Wales called “Share the Journey Campaign”, as well as the existence of multiple interventions both from Cardinals and Pope Francis during the preparation period.

Furthermore, and once the Compact was already adopted, there are various statements from delegates and participants in the drafting of the document that bear witness of the role the Church played in the negotiations, specially in relation to the defence of migrants rights and more intensively when there were difficult times (the US withdrawal, for example). The conclusion these delegates have reached is that the Compact would not have been the same without the intervention of the Catholic Church.

In relation to the influence of the Church within the European Union, the project has started with the idea that it is of vital importance to underline the uniqueness of the Church as an unusual actor in the European arena due to the consideration of religion – Catholicism- in its core essence. Therefore, we have explored what are the conditions derived from this uniqueness, basically organised in the analysis of two: the place of religion in European politics and the way FBOs organise their advocating activity taking into account the aforementioned space.

In regard to the place of religion in European politics, we have looked into the relationships between religion and political identity, immigration and secularism. In this regard, we have analysed how the diverse and flexible European identity is sometimes seen threatened by immigration, and how there is an imperfect pluralism in the way different institutions perform their activity with different resources.

The main common factor between the three aforementioned aspects –identity, immigration and secularism- has been the universal scope of the Church, which aims to reach every country in the world, in comparison to other faiths with a more national-centred approach. This transnationality positions the Church as a key player in shaping political identity, the approach to migration and the relation with secularism in the search for a place in the European institutions.

In relation to the participation of FBOs, we have dissected the main three venues of interaction (institutionalised dialogue, forums of consultation and lobbying), finding that their strategy of influence is based on the reliance on expertise with the possible effect of making their religious claims blurred, or at least not a priority for their activity in this international organisation. Nevertheless, their religious aspect is usually the base in which the Church founds its base, with human dignity as the cornerstone and inspiration for their requests. This is because it is not sufficient for Churches to live in isolation from the society that surrounds them.

In terms of the relation between religion and politics, we have seen how the roots and tradition of the Church in Europe has made it an institution that can be a moral reference for many political parties, determining political issues and occasionally producing cleavages in the political contest.

Finally, and once we have situated the Church in the position that corresponds due to its unique nature –based in a particular faith, Catholicism-, we have exposed some particular examples to show its action performed in this framework. In this regard, we have tackled the COMECE as an institution that proves the capacity of the Church to organise itself beyond the borders of the nation and that performs the advocating claims within European institutions.

Moreover, Pax Christi and the Jesuit Migrant Service have been presented as a faithful example of the reliance by the Church on expertise. In regard to the use of the venue of forum consultation, Jesuit Refugee Service serving as co-chair of FRONTEX consultative forum, as well as the figure of Caritas Europe and the International Catholic Migration Commission as participants in the forum are a testimony of the Church activity, as well as International Catholic Migration Commission in terms of

lobbying. Finally, we have explained the importance of the Church as a traditional institution rooted in the European system and the presence of divisions within the organisation.

In conclusion, this project has proved how the Church influences economic migration policy. The means used in order to carry it out have been the creation of organisations that act as a representative of the Church towards international organisations. That has been the case, on the one hand, of the Vatican Section for Migrants and Refugees, framed into the Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development and under the direct command of the Pope and, on the other, of COMECE.

We have analysed how the advocating activity of those institutions relies on expertise at the same time that is guided by their religious beliefs presented under the defence of human dignity. All their requests are channelled either in international treaties (as the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”) or through lobbying, forum of consultations or institutionalised dialogue.

Finally, we have assessed what is the place of religion in international organisations and how this framework affects the way the Church appears to the public sphere. We have evidenced how secular institutions are capable to embrace the Church, with the condition that it does not appear as a proselytising organisation. As a consequence, many religious organisations have developed a deep expertise in the field that is of incalculable value for international organisations. The Church, in the end, is a necessary partner for the international community.

V. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Even though we have tried to explore the influence of the Church in two differentiated layers, we must underline that there are other lines of research in which future development may be based. Some of them have not been attempted due to the limited space and others due to the condensed spirit of projects with this nature.

In order to adopt an integrated approach, we would have liked to study the influence of the Church in a national sphere. The initial purpose of it was to focus on the Spanish case, as it is both our home country and a relevant country in terms of migration –it is the gate of Europe for an important part of migrants who come from Africa.

In this regard, we have advanced some ideas gathered in an interview with the secretary of the Migrant Commission of the Spanish Bishop's Conference, Jose Luis Pinilla Martín, SJ. In it, we have information of cases where the national Church has tried to influence some government policies and laws in order to protect the rights of migrants.

However, the layer we believe should be more studied is the local one, as integration really happens in the concrete cities and villages, in local communities. We could have written many lines about how the Church influences international, regional and national policies, but if we do not ensure real integration at the local level, we surely know that our efforts will have been in vain.

This is why the Pope drafted the document “20 Pastoral Action Points” along with the “20 Points for the Global Compact”. This document to which we have occasionally referred has the same content of the Compact one but is aimed at the local parishes. Its objective is “to be distributed and explained to their parishes and Church organizations, with the hope of fostering more effective solidarity with migrants and refugees” (2018, p. 14). This shows the preoccupation of the Pope for the local level.

The Church performs a deep activity in this regard through all the organisations that directly depend on it. As we have previously mentioned in this project, one of the advantages of the Church is its hierarchical structure and its worldwide presence, which

is an aspect that makes it a crucial level in this layer. This is the reason why many governments count on these organisations to provide basic social services. Another reason why we have not dealt with this issue is because of the international nature of this project, which drives us to focus on the international and European level more than on the local one.

Another possibility of future research is to advance in what we have already analysed. In the international arena, we think that an assessment of the future impact of the Compact would be useful to evaluate the real efficiency of the Church's influence. In a period of ten years ahead, we will be in the position to see if this Compact would have really changed the situation of economic migrants

In terms of the European layer, a interesting possibility would be to study in depth the process of negotiations of the "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration" in order to explore how was the influence on the Church specifically carried on among the rest of the participants. As well as this, a case study of a lobbying activity by COMECE could also be of great interest.

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