Chapter 11
Nationalism and the Catholic Church: Papal Politics and 'Nationalist' Clergy in Border Regions (1918–1939)

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Abstract The Roman Catholic Church was highly ambivalent regards the emergence of modern nation states. On the one hand, several ideological and structural aspects underscored the church's universal nature, whereas nationalisms, on the other hand, also had a strong impact on its development. Rather than generally questioning transnational structures within the church, this article aims to analyse the limits of Catholic universalism in the interwar period, focusing both on Vatican politics and on conflicts between the church and nation states in border regions. The article demonstrates that the church's universal claims only partially contributed to bridging the borders of the existing nation states.

Introduction

Of all transnational institutions, the Roman Catholic Church is certainly one of the most traditional and perhaps most complex organizations. Ever since the French Revolution, the emergence of nation-states had an increasing influence on the Vatican's moral views and political decisions. Particularly after the Vatican's loss of territory in 1870, the question of how to deal with the various European nation-states became vital for its own identity. Although the Catholic Church was essentially based on transnational networks, it had to take the existence of nation-states just as much into account and to adapt its inner structure to the European state system. Seen from that perspective, Catholicism had both a national and a

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transnational dimension.[1] How then did the Catholic Church deal with this ambivalent situation? And did the Vatican establish a general way of dealing with nationalist movements?

Until now, historiography has not given sufficient answer to the question of what extent the Roman Catholic Church contributed to nationalism.[2] For a long time, historical research concerning the Church-state relationship was focused on rather narrow and specific aspects. A large number of historians, for example, have discussed the Vatican's diplomatic relations with individual nation-states,[3] whereas relatively few studies deal with the Church's relation to nationalist movements.[4] Protestantism, at least in the context of German history, is frequently regarded as one of the driving forces of nation-building,[5] whilst historical studies tend to underestimate the role played in this by Catholicism. There is a similar shortcoming in studies on transnational networks: although in recent research work on transnational networks the Roman Catholic Church has often been mentioned as an example of international institutions, a relatively small number of publications actually examine the Catholic Church as a transnational organization.[6]

The origin of the term "transnational" can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. It developed only after the emergence of modern nation-states,[7] as a reaction to the growing significance of nationalisms all over the world. In that sense, it implies the existence of nations as a precondition to transnational activities: without nation-states, "transnationalism" would lose its significance. As nationalism, in the context of the long history of the Roman Catholic Church, is a rather young phenomenon, the task of exploring its transnational effects is inevitably linked to the question of to what extent the Church itself had been affected by the emergence of modern nation-states.

Providing an answer to such a question, however, turns out to be complex. The reason for this complexity primarily lies in the inner structures of the Church, which, as a result of its development in history, can hardly be reduced to *one* structure consisting of the Vatican, dioceses, parishes etc.[8] Alongside – and within – this structure, there was a wide range of different personal networks, such as Catholic

[1] Altermatt 2007, p. 16.

[2] There are, however, various studies which have discussed particular aspects of this topic: Alix 1962; Altermatt 2005, 2009; Altgeld 2001; Birke 1996; Conzemius 1994, pp. 234–262. Analyzing the relations between nationalism and Catholicism in Germany: Richter 2000; for the Hapsburg Empire: Gottsmann 2006; id. 2007; id. 2010, pp. 28–34; for the relations between nationalism and religion, cf. for instance: Graf 2000; Haupt and Langewiesche 2004; Langewiesche 2009; Mergel 2008; O'Brian 1988.

[3] Stehlin 1983; Latour 1996b *La Papauté*.

[4] Altermatt 2007, pp. 15–33.

[5] Langewiesche 2000, pp. 145–147.

[6] Religious networks are rather briefly mentioned in Herren 2009, pp. 43 f., Lyons 1963, pp. 245–261; for the so-called "black international" see Lamberts 2002.

[7] Saunier 2009, p. 1047.

[8] Cf. Conzemius 1985, p. 12; Altermatt 2009, p. 23.

laymen associations, congresses, missionary organizations, Catholic party organizations and religious congregations.[9] These organizations could to some extent (or entirely) be regionalized or nationalized, but also spread over various nation-states and thus act in a "transnational" way transferring ideas, personnel, normative orders etc. across borders. Some institutions, such as national bishop conferences, were directly related to the existence of nation-states, while others, such as the Jesuit Order, were rather marginally affected by processes of nationalization. It may thus be more appropriate not to look upon the Roman Catholic Church as a predefined "transnational" organization, but rather to focus on the various ways in which its inner structures could, in the corresponding contexts, contribute either to nationalizing or to denationalizing processes.[10]

This article, therefore, does not primarily aim to explore the Catholic Church's inner structures, but rather asks *how* these structures (might have) worked in certain political and social circumstances. In consequence, rather than attempting to provide a theoretical framework or a global explanation of this topic, it will discuss how conditions of extreme nationalism might have influenced the relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the nation-states. Instead of making any general challenges to the "transnational" effects the Church's personal networks may be found to have had, it explores their limits in order to discuss some of the main problems of the relationship between the Church and the nation-states. After a brief sketch of some major aspects of the Vatican's political attitude towards nationalisms in the inter-war period, it will focus on the political situation of the Catholic Church in border regions. Based on examples taken from Alsace-Lorraine and South Tyrol, it will explore to what extent the Church contributed to reinforcing or bridging the existing borders. Although these conflicts cannot be taken as representative for all cases in which the Church's universal claims collided with processes of identity construction as undertaken by the nation-states, they nevertheless demonstrate the possibilities and limits of the Roman Catholic Church in the context of encouraging transnational exchange.

The Vatican: Motives and Intentions of the Holy See's Attitude Towards Nationalism

Examining the Vatican's view on nationalism is no easy task. This is partly down to the source material from the Vatican's Secret Archive, since documents usually refer to very specific historical contexts and only rarely contain references to 'nationalism' as a general phenomenon. Moreover, it would be oversimplifying to speak of the Vatican's politics as something homogeneous; among the cardinals of the Roman Curia and the members of the Vatican's Congregations there was a

[9] There are in fact many studies that are dedicated to similar organizations. Cf., for example, Habermas 2008, p. 658 and Altermatt 2009, pp. 209–226.

[10] Cf. Heather Ellis in this volume.

variety of opinions, which – as Thomas Brechenmacher has pointed out[11] – are only partly reflected within the archival sources. As it appears to be problematic to give a complete and conclusive overview of the relation of the Roman Curia towards nationalism in general, the following part of this article will concentrate on a few aspects of this topic, primarily discussing the Curia's ideological convictions, pragmatic considerations and personal backgrounds.

Unquestionably, the Vatican's stance on nationalism was influenced by ideological concerns, although a general guideline on this phenomenon did not exist. Universalism was an important element of its self-perception. The Church's universal claims basically resulted from its task of providing spiritual welfare to all Christians, and were justified by quotations from the Bible such as the words of Jesus to St. Peter: "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17).[12] This passage appeared to legitimize the task of the Popes (as the successors of St. Peter) in their paternal guidance of all Catholics in moral and religious concerns, without making any distinction between the Catholics of different national origins. The Great Commission of Jesus to his disciples also appeared to confirm the universal mission of the Catholic Church: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [...]" (Matthew 28:19).[13] It is no wonder that the Catholic Church referred to these and other quotations from the Bible when affirming its universal nature. In the fourth session of the First Vatican Council, the universal mission of the Church was explicitly confirmed: "To satisfy this [the Pope's] pastoral office, our predecessors strove unwearyingly that the saving teaching of Christ should be spread among all the peoples of the world."[14] Even more explicitly, the encyclical *Immortale dei* (1885) emphasized that Christian religion was unconfined both regarding time and space.[15] As an element of Catholic ideology, the universal nature of the Church led by the Holy See expressed itself in many different contexts. When, in 1917, the *Codex Iuris Canonici* was published as a codification of the existing Church laws, Papal supremacy over the Roman Catholic Church was established in the legal as well as in the moral and religious fields.[16] Whilst there is no intention here to focus on matters of the construction of Catholic religious identity – or on how much 'nationalized' elements of religious manifestations could counterbalance the

[11] Brechenmacher 2005, pp. 596 f.

[12] This passage corresponds to the Old Testament's Psalm 100:3: "Know that the LORD, he is God!/It is he who made us, and we are his;/we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

[13] In this translation, the term "nation" is used for "ἐθνος τΘ," which, in the Greek text, has a much broader sense and could also be translated as "peoples" or (in the New Testament) as "pagans"; this term could not therefore be applied to the phenomenon of modern nationalism, although modern translations provide a basis for respective (mis-)interpretations.

[14] "Concilium Vaticanum I.," 1990, p. 815.

[15] Leo XIII 1903, p. 17.

[16] CIC 1917, Can. 218; cf. Scholder 1977, p. 66.

Pope's universal claim[17] – this dimension of Papal universalism was nevertheless fundamental for the Vatican's self-perception. Many Catholic priests and laymen considered the universal mission of the Vatican as a central element of Christianity. Most prominently, Catholic ultramontanism gained an influential role in many European countries during the nineteenth century. Ultramontanists tended to promote Catholic conservatism, and emphasized the leading role of Rome within the Catholic Church. However, ultramontanism was anything but uncontested within the Church, and remained a point of issue into the twentieth century.[18]

This, of course, does not mean that the Holy See regarded nation-states as something illegitimate. On the contrary, when Pope Leo XIII supported the idea of Social Catholicism at the end of the nineteenth century, it was fundamental for the pontiff to make the theoretical separation between the Church's sphere and the sphere of the states in order to design a general concept of social welfare. Correspondingly, encyclicals such as *Immortale dei* (1885) and *Rerum novarum* (1891) explicitly referred to the modern state as an institution that formed part of an ideal world order.[19] The Papal encyclicals which were published after the pontificate of Leo XIII, however, only rarely mention the term "nation", *natio*. They often made reference to "states", *res publica* or *civitas*, or, in some cases, to "peoples", *populi* or *gentes*.[20] Pope Pius XI, on the other hand, still under the impression of World War I, made a somewhat ambiguous statement about nationalism in his first encyclical *Ubi arcano dei*:

> "Patriotism – the stimulus of so many virtues and of so many noble acts of heroism when kept within the bounds of the law of Christ – becomes merely an occasion, an added incentive to grave injustice when true love of country is debased to the condition of an extreme nationalism, when we forget that all men are our brothers and members of the same great human family, that other nations have an equal right with us both to life and to prosperity, that it is never lawful nor even wise, to dissociate morality from the affairs of practical life."[21]

[17] Although it could be argued that religious processions or church services contributed common "transnational" sets of 'Catholic' experiences and memory, one should also take into consideration that even seemingly apolitical issues such as liturgy can contain 'national' peculiarities; cf. Gottsmann 2006, pp. 441–450; Gottsmann 2010, pp. 38–46.

[18] Cf. Fleckenstein and Schmiedl 2005; Weiss 1978, pp. 821–877.

[19] Leo XIII 1963, pp. 18–22, § 26–30; Leo XIII 1903, pp. 7–15. *Immortale dei* explicitly referred to Matthew 22: 21: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's", thus transferring a concept originally applied to the ancient Roman Empire to modern nation-states; Leo XIII 1903, p. 23.

[20] However, some of the translations of the encyclicals did not match the Latin original literally; the German translation of the encyclical "Divini illius magistri" (1930), for example, translated "societas civilis" with "Volksgemeinschaft", a term which was employed by most of the political movements in the Republic of Weimar, but also belonged to the key vocabulary of National Socialism; Pius XI 1930, pp. 26–27. Cf. Wildt 2009.

[21] Pius XI 1923, p. 26, translation according to: Pius XI 1922, paragraph 25; "patriotism", here, is used as a translation of "caritas patriae", whereas "nationalism" is a rather free translation of "immoderatum [. . .] nationis amorem".

According to this statement – which was to be confirmed by semi-official publications from the Vatican some years later[22] – there was a good and an evil kind of nationalism: the former was moderate and inspired by Christian values, whilst the latter was exaggerated and ignorant of both religious principles and the moral authority of the Catholic Church. Any kind of conflict between nation-states could as a result be attributed to a lack of moderation and Christian spirit, whilst, on the contrary, the Catholic doctrine was seen as a basis for the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of nations. This utopian approach, of course, ignored much of the belligerent nature of nationalism.[23]

Nevertheless, the impact of 'universalist' ideology on the Vatican's politics should not be overestimated. For practical politics the concept of 'good' and 'evil' nationalism provided no information on where to draw the line between the two. For the Vatican's policy, this vagueness turned out to be of some advantage, as political pragmatism was vital for putting forward the Church's interests on many occasions.[24] The Holy See's pragmatism, in fact, owed much to history, and especially to its experiences during the nineteenth century. Secularization had become one of the Papacy's major fears ever since the French Revolution, and in various contexts modern nation-states turned out to actively support the Church's loss of influence. Most visibly, the Vatican was challenged by the emerging Italian national movement; during the revolutionary years of 1848/1849, an insurrection in the Papal State forced Pope Pius IX into exile for several months, and after the process of Italian unification (1859–1871) the Holy See lost all of its territory to the Italian state. The idea of being "prisoners" of the Italian state remained a central element of Papal self-perception in the following decades, and only the concordat settled with Mussolini in 1929 solved the highly symbolic "roman question".[25] Alongside this very specific dimension of the Vatican's experiences with nation-states, the "culture wars" of the late nineteenth century impressively demonstrated to the Holy See that it was extremely important to come to agreement with national governments over controversial topics such as education policy, civil marriage, the rights of religious congregations and the financing of the Church.[26]

Concordats were one of the answers to this challenge, although those concordats concluded in the nineteenth century had already demonstrated that any agreement with national governments would force the Vatican into taking up positions with respect to conflicts between nationalities. The concordat of the Vatican with Montenegro (18/08/1886), for instance, contained a paragraph which introduced Slavic liturgy into Church services. The Vatican, as a consequence of the concordat,

[22] Anonymous 1924.

[23] Cf. Langewiesche 2000, pp. 45–54.

[24] For the following sketch of the motives of Papal politics, cf. Brechenmacher 2005, pp. 597–604.

[25] Moos 2007, pp. 242–250.

[26] For an overview of the European dimension of the conflicts between Churches and nation-states, see Rémond 2000, pp. 125–168, 189–205; for the 'culture wars' in a European perspective, see Clark 2002, pp. 7–37.

had to face some severe criticism from the royal court at Vienna, which regarded the paragraph as a concession to Slavic nationalist movements within the Empire.[27] Although the Vatican generally considered the Hapsburg Monarchy as an ally for defending the Catholic faith in Central and Eastern Europe, several examples demonstrate that the Vatican's diplomacy was partly guided by pragmatism.[28] The concordats, many of which were concluded in the 1920s,[29] frequently contained compromises between the Church and the nation-states, which could be interpreted as a concession on the part of the Holy See to national governments at the expense of other nationalities.[30] As the Holy See regarded the concordats primarily as a measure for guaranteeing a maximum of 'liberty' to the Church, the compromising nature of the Vatican's foreign policy was a necessary precondition for this purpose.[31]

By concluding concordats, the Holy See aimed to avoid conflicts with modern nation-states. As a consequence, it could concentrate its efforts primarily on religious tasks.[32] This motivation was in fact equally important for the Vatican's willingness to extend its diplomatic network. Between 1914 and 1922, the number of nunciatures increased from 6 to 18, and particularly in the 3 years following the peace treaties of Paris, the Holy See notably extended its presence in the world. Nunciatures were consequently established in Paraguay and Poland (1919), Germany, Hungary, Romania, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (1920), and in Salvador (1922).[33] Under the pontificate of Pius XI, the Vatican continued to expand its diplomatic network[34] and in the 1920s, even states such as France and Italy, which were known for their rejection of the Roman Catholic Church, exchanged ambassadors with the Holy See.[35]

There were, of course, several additional motives for the pragmatic attitude of the Vatican. Since, under the pontificate of Benedict XV, the Vatican's diplomacy increasingly saw its mission as mediating between the states involved in the war, this function of Papal foreign policy implied the idea of the strict neutrality of the Holy See. Although the peace initiative launched by the Papal secretariat of state in 1917 was unsuccessful,[36] the Vatican's claim of being impartial continued to be an

[27] Gottsmann 2007, pp. 457–466.

[28] Gottsmann 2006, pp. 409–418.

[29] Brechenmacher 2009, p. 181.

[30] For instance, the Polish Concordat concluded in February 1925 was also valid for the Free City of Danzig (Article III), which was the subject of claims made by the German nation-state; Concordato con la Polonia, 1954, in: Mercati 1954, p. 31; Stehlin 1983, p. 416. Likewise too the Concordat concluded with Prussia in April 1929 was challenged by Polish nationalists because of the enhancement of the Diocese of Wroclaw; Concordato con la Prussia (14.4.1929), in: Mercati 1954, p. 135; cf. Stehlin 1983, p. 423.

[31] For the concordats, cf. Feldkamp 2000, pp. 54–61.

[32] Brechenmacher 2005, pp. 600 f.

[33] Latour 1996b, Papauté, p. 301.

[34] Chiron 2004, p. 152.

[35] Cholvy and Hilaire 1986, pp. 273–276; Moos 2007, pp. 246–250.

[36] Cf. Chenaux 2003, pp. 85–121.

important motive in Papal foreign policy. The way in which this policy was implemented, however, depended a lot on the prevailing political situation and could differ considerably from one situation to another according to who was involved in the different conflicts.[37] Nevertheless, the claim of impartiality was still to play an important role during World War II.[38] Of course, neutrality was more a self-imposed ideal than a reality, and the Holy See in its diplomatic actions often had to defend itself against accusations of taking sides. In reality, aims to be "neutral" and of exerting influence on international politics were hardly compatible. "Impartiality", as a consequence, remained a rather unspecific way of affirming the Holy See's moral superiority over the various nation-states.

Alongside such ideological and strategic considerations, personal issues concerning the Vatican's congregations also affected the Holy See's relationships with single nation-states. This was by no means a novelty, as many examples from early modern history demonstrate that the political sympathies of Popes and cardinals of the Roman Curia could play an important role in their politics.[39] Whilst loyalties like these cannot be understood in terms of modern nationalism, the matter of emotional ties with states and their sovereigns or representatives remained important up until the twentieth century. Within the Vatican's inner circles, the national affiliation of high Church officials towards single nation-states was anything but balanced. Still more than half of the Curia cardinals, in 1926, were born in Italy.[40] As the relationship between Italy and the Holy See was particularly complicated until the Lateran treaties of 1929, this cannot be taken as an indication of any general sympathy towards the Italian nation-state.[41] However, at least in terms of language and culture, Italian identity was widespread within the Roman Curia. Moreover, some members of the Curia, and, above all, of the Roman Congregations, were known for their sympathies towards particular nation-states. In December 1916, the Pope appointed three French cardinals, and although he was anxious to affirm that the appointments were meant as a personal recognition and not as a gesture towards France as a nation,[42] German diplomacy was keen to obtain similar titles for German and Austrian Church representatives.[43] In 1929, the German foreign ministry even planned to provide stipends for young German clergymen in order to enable them to start a career in one of the Roman Congregations by establishing a special training programme for priests. The foreign ministry had developed this project after having consulted Mgr. Giuseppe Pizzardo, who was a member of the Papal Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical

[37] Ibid., p. 121.

[38] Brechenmacher 2009, pp. 184–190.

[39] For example, the Barberini Pope Urban VIII (1623–1644) was widely known for his sympathies towards the French state; cf. Seppelt and Schwaiger 1964, p. 328.

[40] *Annuario Pontificio* 1926, pp. 31–57, 457–485.

[41] Moos 2007, pp. 241–250.

[42] Latour 1996a, "De la spécificité", p. 353.

[43] Stehlin 1983, p. 7.

Affairs and was known to be sympathetic to the wishes of the German government.[44] Although the ministry only partly managed to put its plans into effect, it was evident that the German government considered the cardinals and members of Roman Congregations as representatives of their respective nation-states. When the last remaining German cardinal of the Curia, Franz Ehrle, died in 1934, the German ambassador to the Holy See, Diego von Bergen, wrote:

> It is extremely important to have an appropriate representation in the highest senate of the Roman Catholic Church by a cardinal residing in Rome. His position offers him the possibility of promoting the interests of his country by using his personal influence on the prefects of the congregations and on the Pope himself, to whom he has access at any time. This is of a particular importance in cases in which it would be unreasonable for the Embassy to intervene directly.[45]

Of course, this point of view was unlikely to be shared by Vatican officials. And yet, at least in Bergen's view, the "international network" of the Roman Catholic Church was woven with national threads. Since Vatican diplomacy had to interact with single nation-states, it can hardly be any surprise that the concept of nationalization did not leave Rome unaffected.

So far it has been shown that the Vatican's stance on nationalism has been more complex than it might have appeared at first glance. To a certain extent, trans- or internationality derived from Catholic ideology, but they only partly found their way into the Holy See's decisions, structures and internal processes. Although the Church disposed of transnational networks, significant parts of it had been nationalized. In order to discuss similar developments on a local level, the following part of this article will examine to what extent the challenge of nationalism has affected the Catholic Church in border regions, emphasizing in particular the example of educational politics.

Border Regions: Educational Politics, Faith and National Identities

Examining the regional implications of the Church's stance on nationalism is by no means less complex than analyzing the Vatican's perspective on it. Border regions with large national minorities provide a striking example of how conflicts between ethnic groups could affect the inner structures of the Catholic Church.

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[44] Anger 2007; Klee to Bergen (11.4.1930), in: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (Berlin), Bestand Rom-Vatikan 1067: Deutsche in Kongregationen und Päpstlichen Behörden (1928–1938); Bergen to Grünau (21.2.1933), Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (Berlin), Bestand Rom-Vatikan 1067: Deutsche in Kongregationen und Päpstlichen Behörden (1928–1938).

[45] Bergen to AA (6.4.1934), in: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (Berlin), Bestand Rom-Vatikan 440, p. 2.

When, after the end of the First World War, the borders of central Europe were redrawn, both Alsace-Lorraine and South Tyrol came under the rule of victorious nation-states. As a former part of the Hapsburg Empire, the southern part of Tyrol was put under Italian rule after the peace treaty of St. Germain. The political rights of the German minority group were in the main respected up until Mussolini's "March on Rome" in 1922. When the Fascist government succeeded in installing a dictatorship in Italy during a process that ended in 1929,[46] the civil rights of the German-speaking minority group in South Tyrol were conspicuously threatened and increasingly diminished by national and local government institutions.[47] Whereas political and civil liberties in South Tyrol were profoundly affected by the Mussolini Regime, Alsace-Lorraine was governed by a parliamentary democracy. The two provinces, which had formerly been part of the French state, since 1871 had been directly governed from Berlin as a "Reichsland" before passing back to France after the end of the Great War. Alsace, however, maintained its strong regional identity, which was strongly influenced by Catholic culture, the German-Alsatian dialect and an anti-centralistic spirit that had developed under German rule.[48]

In South Tyrol, the reshaping of borders had its consequences for the inner structures of the Church. When, after the First World War, the newly established boundaries between Austria and Italy cut the prince-bishopric of Brixen into two parts, many observers expected the territory of the diocese to be adapted to the boundaries of the nation-states. In fact, there were many examples of this kind of nationalization of Church boundaries; in Ticino, for example, the Holy See had created a bishopric in 1888 according to the state borders between Switzerland and Italy,[49] and the bull *Vixdum poloniae unitas* (1925) established a whole system of dioceses which, to a great extent, corresponded to the borders of the Polish nation state.[50] For the diocese of Brixen, however, the Vatican refused to make a similar decision. Although an apostolic administrator was nominated for the larger Austrian part of the prince-bishopric, and the diocese was thus divided into two administrative entities, a definitive confirmation of the separation of the Church territory was not made until 1964. The Vatican's decision to formally oppose the creation of a new Austrian diocese was at least partially motivated by its reluctant attitude towards the peace treaty of St. Germain, which had confirmed the break-up of the Catholic Hapsburg monarchy.[51] Undoubtedly, this decision encouraged transnational activities, as the diocese of Brixen had to share institutions (such as seminaries for priests) with the apostolic administration of Innsbruck-Feldkirch,

[46] Cf. Lyttelton 1973.

[47] Cf. Lill 2002, pp. 69–118.

[48] For Alsatian regional identity cf. Fisch 2002; Dreyfus 1969; Dreyfus 1979; Harvey 2001. For Catholicism in Alsace-Lorraine cf. Baechler 1982; Schulze 2010.

[49] Cf. Altermatt 2009, p. 85.

[50] Marschall 1980, p. 158.

[51] Gelmi 1984; Dörrer 1955, p. 68.

thereby intensifying personal ties between the South Tyrolean and the Austrian clergy.[52] Only gradually did the apostolic administration manage to establish its own diocesan institutions, thereby reinforcing the separation from Brixen.[53]

Just as they applied at the level of international Vatican diplomacy, personal issues were far from being of marginal importance for the dioceses. Some bishops did not support any nationalist tendencies while others were themselves convinced nationalists. All bishops were dependent on the Roman hierarchy and – in the event that diplomatic relations had been established – on their nuncio. They were appointed through different procedures according to concordats of the nation-states with the Vatican, or – if no concordat had been concluded – by canon law. If the appointment required consent between Church and government institutions, this could result in conflicting loyalties for bishops. Charles Ruch, for example, was nominated in 1919 according to the Napoleonic concordat of 1801, which was still valid in Alsace-Lorraine. As a consequence, he was appointed by the French head of government and confirmed by the Papal secretariat of state. It is therefore no wonder that Ruch became known for his close ties to the French state, said nationalistic prayers for French soldiers at commemorative church services and was one of the major Alsatian promoters of the worship of Joan of Arc.[54] The Prince Bishop of Brixen (South Tyrol), Johannes Raffl had on the contrary been appointed in April 1921 according to canon law after a 3-year vacancy of the bishopric. Although the Holy See's relations with the Italian nation-state were seldom uncomplicated, the Italian government, for pragmatic reasons, did not oppose his candidacy. Nevertheless, the case demonstrates that, even if nominated according to canon law, a bishop might well have explicit sympathies for a particular nation-state. Raffl, who was born in Austria, strongly identified with German culture, though he was anxious not to upset the Italian inhabitants of his diocese.[55] One can conclude from these and other[56] examples that, at least under the conditions of extreme nationalism within border regions, bishops could hardly be regarded as 'neutral' in their national affiliation.

In many cases, therefore, the nomination of bishops had significant implications for the way conflicts between nationalities developed within border regions. Generally, personal issues were an important factor within conflicts between the

[52] Memorandum of the Vatican's Secretariat of State (24.1.1921), Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Austria, 3. Per., Pos. 1408, fasc. 566, 28r–32r.

[53] For instance, the Tyrolean boys' boarding school in Schwaz was founded in 1927 as an equivalent of the diocesan institution "Vincentinum" at Brixen (South Tyrol); Apostolische Administratur Innsbruck-Feldkirch to Sibilia (13.7.1926), in: Diözesanarchiv Brixen, Bestand Hamherr, no. 1.

[54] Lorson 1948, pp. 135–156; Schulze 2010, p. 174; prayer read by Mons. Charles Ruch (24.11.1928), in: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (Berlin), R 30201a: Elsass-Lothringen A: Die Stellung Elsass-Lothringens im französ. Staat sowie die elsass-lothring. Autonomiefrage, Bd. 2: März 1928–März 1934, p. 77.

[55] Cf. Gelmi 1984, p. 262.

[56] For the case of the Upper Silesian plebiscite of 1921, cf. Besier and Piombo 2004, pp. 72–78.

Catholic Church and the nation-states over topics such as the regional structure of religious congregations, the language of Church sermons or the Catholic local press. Primary schooling was one of the major points at issue, as nation-states often tended to standardize education programmes on a national level, while the Church aimed to guarantee religious instruction in the mother tongue of the pupils in order to better explain its teachings. In border regions, the Catholic Church thus advocated school-teaching in the language of the national minorities.[57] As a result, national governments often accused the Catholic Church of being biased in favour of the national minorities.

In South Tyrol, the Mussolini government published a series of decrees after 1923 in which all primary schools were obliged to use the Italian language. The Prince Bishop of Brixen resolutely opposed these measures, arguing that it was essential for the children to understand the contents of Catholic doctrine and that consequently children had to receive religious instruction in their mother tongue.[58] Even the Prince Bishop of Trent, Celestino Endrici, who was a native Italian and had advocated the cultural rights of the Italian minority under the Hapsburg Empire,[59] actively supported the principle of religious instruction in the mother tongue, though he was more reluctant in doing so than the Bishop of Brixen. In one of his reports to the Vatican's secretariat of state, he wrote:

> What, however, directly affects the Church is the fact that it has been made impossible for children of the first year to follow [the subject of] religious instruction. In reality, they do not know a single word of Italian. How to teach them the catechism in Italian? For this reason, the whole region is aroused, and the clergy does not know what to do.[60]

Endrici certainly kept his distance from the German-speaking minority in South Tyrol, but he nonetheless promoted the Church's interests in the field of religious instruction, since he considered the comprehension of Catholic doctrine as something fundamental which could not be subjected to the interests of a nation-state. In doing so, he subordinated his sympathies towards the Italian nation to the Vatican's point of view. Inadvertently, therefore, his way of arguing favoured the German minority, although many of its members were considerably less than enthusiastic about the bishop and his Italian roots.[61]

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[57] During World War I, the Roman Catholic Church showed a similar attitude concerning linguistic conflicts in Quebec: Epistola Benedikt XV to Card. Bégin (8.9.1916), in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis (AAS)* 8 (1916), pp. 389–442; Epistola Benedikt XV to Kard. Bégin (7.6.1918), in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis (AAS)* 10 (1918), pp. 439–442.

[58] Raffl to secretariat of state (25.11.1923), Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Italia, 4. Per., Pos. 542, Fasc. 5, 7r-8v.

[59] Undated letter of the South Tyrolean clergy to the Pope, Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Italia, 4. Per., Pos. 644, Fasc. 72, 30r-31r, at 30r.

[60] Endrici to Gasparri (28.11.1923), Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Italia, 4. Per., Pos. 542, Fasc. 5, 21r-22v, at 22v.

[61] In some of the existing historiographical studies about this subject, Endrici is regarded as an opponent of the claims of the German minority. Cf. Marzari 1974, p. 55.

Although the Vatican generally tended to avoid conflicts with the Italian government over South Tyrol, it insisted that religious instruction should be given in the mother tongue of the children. When the Fascist state, in 1928, tried to introduce Italian as obligatory for religious teaching, the dioceses of Brixen and Trent, with the Vatican's permission, withdrew all teachers from public schools and organized their own teaching programmes within the parishes.[62] Despite this arrangement, conflict between state institutions and the South Tyrolean dioceses continued into the 1930s, and both the Italian government and local authorities made several attempts to establish religious education in primary schools as a subject organized and taught by state employees.

Originally, the demand for school-teaching in the mother language of the children came from below – parish priests and local church officials signed several petitions which were sent directly to the Papal secretariat of state. In contrast to the Vatican, they did not hesitate to express their national solidarity alongside religious convictions. In 1932, for example, one of these petitions claimed that Germans had a historical right to call South Tyrol their *Heimat*. "With the permission of God", the petition stated, "a foreign people came and took away our *Heimat*, her wealth and all her characteristics. The foreign people took away our laws and rights; they even took away the names of the deceased."[63] Southern Tyrolean parish priests also tried to indirectly influence the Vatican's politics by asking the Austrian episcopate to direct a petition to the Pope. In their petition, which explicitly criticized plans by the Italian government to send Italian-speaking school-teachers to South Tyrol, the Austrian bishops asked the Holy Father to ban Italian priests from teaching in South Tyrolean primary schools:

> By these measures a holy natural right is being violated; unquestionably, every people, every family has the inviolable right of religious education and religious instruction being given in the mother tongue of the children – as it was clearly and plainly articulated many times by the Holy See as the defender of all rights. [. . .] The Austrian bishops as the closest neighbours observe this new major religious distress and danger for the worthy and honest people of former South Tyrol. We know, however, that in this matter we cannot do anything on our own. Therefore, we appeal in even greater faith to the paternal benevolence of Your Holiness presenting the invocation that Your Holiness may provide help and consolation to the beleaguered in all the ways the enlightened insight of Your Holiness considers as appropriate.[64]

The Austrian episcopate thus did not openly refer to any political implications of the parish priests' claims, concentrating the argument primarily on religious principles. Nevertheless, with its reference to the "worthy and honest people of

[62] Lill 2002, p. 113.

[63] Letter of the catholic priests and laymen to the Pope (undated copy), Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Italia, 4. Per., Pos. 644a, Fasc. 83, 80r-85r, at 80r-81r; the last sentence refers to a decree of the South Tyrolean local authorities (1927) to Italianize the German names carved on tombstones; Lill 2002, p. 112.

[64] Riederer to Pius XI (31.10.1932), Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Italia, 4. Per., Pos. 644, Fasc. 76, 89r-92r, at 91rv.

former South Tyrol", the letter alluded to the fact that the diocese of Brixen had been affiliated to the Austrian Archdiocese of Salzburg before the end of World War I. Since the intervention of the Austrian episcopate could easily be interpreted as a threat to the existing borders and could therefore provoke the Italian government, the petition of the Austrian bishops was a political affair and was criticized by members of the Papal secretariat of state for exactly that reason.[65] However, a large part of Brixen's clergy apparently were inclined instead to identify with the Austrian rather than with the Italian Church hierarchy and had no difficulty in demonstrating this. When, in 1934, the Bishop of Acqui, encouraged by Fascist officials, decided to send a delegation of three Italian priests to South Tyrol for the purpose of school-teaching, the Bishop of Brixen did not hesitate to let the priests know that they were *not* welcome.[66]

In Alsace-Lorraine, the question of which language should be used for religious instruction was less controversial than in South Tyrol. After the First World War, the French government had guaranteed the rights of Alsace-Lorraine to maintain the traditional denominational school system, which had been established in France in 1850 and abolished in the 1880s when Alsace-Lorraine was under German rule.[67] In municipalities with a German-speaking majority, religious instruction was usually given in German,[68] whilst school-teaching generally was converted into French. This, of course, did not resolve all the conflicts about which language was used in primary schools, but a different type of conflict concerning primary schools played a much more prominent role during the 1920s. Whilst the Catholic Church in Alsace-Lorraine, in contrast to the rest of France, had retained particular legal privileges,[69] with primary schools continuing to be denominational, this regional peculiarity was called into question by Socialist governments.

In 1924/1925, the Socialist government of Edouard Herriot attempted to introduce French law standards into Alsace-Lorraine, giving permission to local administrations to change denominational schools into interdenominational institutions. Apart from other measures taken by Herriot, this decision caused major discontent amongst the Alsatian population. The Bishop of Strasbourg, Charles Ruch, who was known for his sympathies towards French culture, supported the protest movement right from the beginning in order both to prevent the government from abolishing regional privileges and to secure the leadership of

[65] Letter of the secretariat of state to Ignaz Rieder, Archbishop of Salzburg (undated draft), Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Italia, 4. Per., Pos. 644, Fasc. 76, 88rv.

[66] Geissler to secretariat of state (3.12.1934), Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Italia, 4. Per., Pos. 644, Fasc. 79, 19r-20r, at 19r; Mutschlechner to unknown addressee (2.12.1934), Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Rome), Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Italia, 4. Per., Pos. 644, Fasc. 79, 23r-27r, at 25r-27r.

[67] Schulze 2010, p. 176; for French primary instruction cf. Klaus Dittrich in this volume.

[68] Various authors 1930, p. 281.

[69] Alsace and Lorraine were in fact the only provinces of France in which the Napoleonic concordat of 1801 was still valid; Schulze 2010, p. 170.

the protest movement.[70] In July 1924, Ruch published a proclamation which appealed to all Catholics in the region to 'defend' their religious convictions as a part of Alsatian regional identity.[71]

Under the direction of the diocese of Strasbourg, public protest demonstrations were organized; after Herriot's first government statement concerning the religious question in Alsace-Loraine, large protest demonstrations took place in Strasbourg, Colmar and Mulhouse. When the government's plans to create an interdenominational school system became more definite, the Diocese of Strasbourg organized a school strike. On March 15th, 1925, more than half of the Alsatian families kept their children from going to school to express their disapproval of the government's plans.[72] All these demonstrations were supported by the local clergy, which was largely influenced by German culture and its historical ties to the Zentrumspartei. Looking back at a demonstration in Strasbourg, one of the region's German-speaking Catholics described the following scene:

> At the end the crowd gathered at the Kleberplatz, where Hon. Michel Walther laid a wreath at the Kleber statue, saying: "Let us adopt the saying of this great son of Alsace, which is carved in these stones, and let us say to the sectarians: 'To such an insolence, one can only respond with a victory!'" Finally [the crowd sang] the Marseillaise, which, however, was unfamiliar to many of the participants, and the tremendous "Great God, we praise you!", which was powerfully refracted by the fronts of the terraces.[73]

Clearly, those taking part in the demonstration were predominantly German-speaking Catholics, who nevertheless had no objection to honouring a general of Napoleon's army and to singing the French national anthem. As both the German-speaking clergy and the French bishop of Strasbourg supported the protest movement, the dispute over primary schools in Alsace acquired a regionalist rather than a nationalistic character. Regionalism and Catholicism were both traditionally strong in Alsace,[74] and thus provided a basis for weakening nationalist attitudes. One of the German-language local Catholic newspapers noted in one of its articles: "If the Herriot government desires to intervene against Bishop Ruch, it may do so: however, in that case it would not only have to face the bishop's resistance, but the resistance of the whole Catholic people of Alsace."[75] Although the protests were supported by a large majority of German- and French-speaking Alsatian Catholics, they only succeeded in reversing the government's plans to create more interdenominational schools, and left the existing institutions unaffected. As the Catholics in Alsace tended to interpret the existence of denominational schools as part of their regional identity, the question of which language should be used for religious instruction never became part of the discussions. In this respect, the

[70] Cf. Baechler 1985, p. 297.

[71] Ruch 1924, p. 291.

[72] Defensor 1926, p. 125.

[73] Rossé et al. 1936, pp. 671 f.

[74] Cf. Harvey 2001.

[75] Ein Schulplebiszit in Colmar, in: *Elsässer Kurier* 28 (16.03.1925) no. 63, p. 2.

Catholic Church in Alsace opposed the ideal of national conformity promoted by the Socialist government without supporting German nationalism.

Even so, the spirit of agreement amongst the Alsatian Catholics turned out to be precarious. Only a few years later, the clergy split over the question of regional autonomy and Bishop Ruch, because of his sympathies towards the French state, became one of the most unpopular clerics in his own diocese. Paradoxically, the new conflict among Alsatian Catholics had its roots in the protest movement of 1924/1925, since the demonstrations against the government's educational plans implicitly affirmed that the denominational school system was an element of Alsatian regional culture. This type of anti-centralism, in fact, was to cause major unrest in the following years. As the appeal for Alsatian autonomy within the region grew significantly during the second half of the decade, the French government attempted to strengthen its rule, provoking protests against centralistic tendencies. Under these conditions, conflicts over the question of local autonomy arose as well within the Catholic regional party, the Union Populaire Républicaine (UPR), which, in December 1928, split into an autonomist mainstream and a 'pro-French' Action Populaire Nationale d'Alsace (APNA) that tolerated centralism. The division of the UPR had serious implications for the life of the diocese of Strasbourg, since a large part of the local clergy sympathized with the autonomists, whilst Bishop Ruch openly supported the newly founded pro-centralist APNA movement.[76] The quarrels about regional autonomy demonstrate that the bridge-building effect of local Catholic politics was limited to a short period of time. Although the major part of Alsatian autonomists were anything but sympathetic towards the German nation-state,[77] the Church, during the 'autonomist crises', took a significant part in reinforcing the conflicts.

Conclusion

This article has discussed certain aspects of the Catholic Church's stance towards conflicts between nationalities. With regard to the Vatican's policy, but also at the level of dioceses, much more research must be undertaken in order to explain the complex relationship between Catholicism and nationalisms in the first half of the twentieth century. Even so, it has been shown that the transnational structures within the Roman Catholic Church only partly contributed to weakening the importance of nation-states. Some examples, on the contrary, have shown that, under the conditions of an extreme nationalism, nationalist attitudes and mentalities have been spread within and through the Church.

Although the Vatican regarded itself as a universal institution, and based its religious identity as well as its task of providing spiritual welfare on its authority

[76] Cf. Schulze 2010, pp. 183–192.

[77] Epp 2004, pp. 430 f.; Harvey 2001, pp. 152–162.

over Catholics of all origins, in the era of nation-states these ideals turned out to be difficult to put into practice. As an actor on the international political stage, the Holy See had permanently to deal with nation-states of all possible kinds and was seldom able to abstain from nations' interests. Since the cardinals of the Roman Curia as well as the members of the Vatican's congregations were not only affiliated to the Church, but at the same time citizens of a single nation-state, it was hardly possible for Church officials to ignore the factor of national identities. Alongside personal loyalties and cultural concepts of identity, some of the Holy See's ideological convictions and political objectives also favoured the inner process of nationalization of the Vatican; since the pontificate of Leo XIII the Vatican increasingly regarded modern nation-states as a natural element of a God-given world order.

On a regional level, the nationalization process has seriously affected the local structures of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, some of the examples demonstrate that its actions were even interpreted as a confirmation of nationalist attitudes. The Vatican's position within the South Tyrolean conflict over the language used in primary schools for the subject of religious instruction, however, tended to favour the German national minority. The bishops and most of the clergy of the dioceses of Brixen and Trent interpreted the statements of the Holy See as a confirmation of minority rights, ignoring the fact that the Vatican argued almost exclusively in terms of religious principles. By taking up a position which conflicted with the interests of the Italian nation-state, the opinion of the Catholic Church – at least indirectly – coincided with the claims of German nationalists.

Of course, it could be argued that the existence of a strong regional and religious identity, in combination with national minorities, might reduce the power of a centralized nation-state, giving room for cultural transfers between two nationalities. This line of argument could be applied to the case of educational policy in Alsace-Lorraine, although the Catholic protest movement of 1924/1925 did not in the end lead to a long-lasting arrangement between German- and French-speaking Alsatians. In general, however, it appears to be highly questionable whether, in border regions, the diocesan networks of the Roman Catholic Church generally worked in favour of transnational exchange between conflicting groups of different nationalities. At least in the case of South Tyrol, the Church's transnational structures favoured the exchange of ideas with Austria, but by no means did they improve contacts between German- and Italian-speaking inhabitants. In that sense, the Catholic Church rather acted against the separation of Tyrol than in favour of cultural transfers.

Finally, the complexity of the question discussed in this article results from the multitude of perspectives within the Catholic Church. It was not only inside the Vatican that the cardinals and prelates differed in their attitude towards nationalism, but also on a regional and local level a wide range of opinions concerning nation-states can be observed among Church officials.

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