

9th Pan-European Conference on International Relations**Giardini Naxos, Sicily, Italy, 23-26 September 2015.****Catholic Church and the Holy See****S55 – Transnational Religion, Conflict and Dialogue****FRANCIS' STYLE: THE HOLY SEE AND ITS NEW ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM****Anna Carletti¹**

With the end of the bipolar system there began a reordering in the the relations of forces at the international level, mainly due to the emergence of new actors, mostly from the so-called periphery of the world. After 500 years of Western supremacy, the old centers of power - among which China stands out - appear to be returning to the international scene asking not only for a qualitative but also a quantitative inclusion within the international system, such as what occurred after the decolonization processes in Asia and Africa. It concerns to an international restructuring demand that takes into account the changes in this area since the end of World War II. In this scenario we find the first non-European pope emerges, the first Latin American.

The new Head of the largest and most influential transnational religious actor seems to have opened a new stage of activity of the Catholic Church in the world, characterized by a less Eurocentric ideological shift and more favorable to the emergence of the outskirts, in line with the current demand for restructuring of the international system presented by peripheral nations. Through an international reading of Francis' early pontificate years, combined with the analysis of global and regional context - with special emphasis on the situation in Latin America - that preceded it, this paper aims to highlight the important role that the Holy See can play in this current time of global reconfiguration, not only in the religious but also in the political sphere.

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This study also seeks to contribute to the construction of new conceptual categories that can explain the transnational religious actor's role in an international system considered by most of international relations theories as a secular system and with a narrow space for the religious phenomenon.

In the first part of the article, we will analyze the impact of the religious transnational actors' presence in the context of the current international system in transition paying particular attention to the greatest actor transnational religion: the Catholic Church. In the second part, we will investigate the main changes occurred in the composition and restructuring of the Roman Curia from 2013 to 2015. Further, we will examine some speeches and documents of Pope Francis and his new Secretary of State emphasizing the key-points of Pope Francis' new diplomacy.

Through this analysis, we will try to verify the hypothesis that in these first two years of the pontificate, Pope Francis seems to be performing an ideological shift of the Holy See, approaching the central structure of the Catholic Church, traditionally linked to national and international elites, to the outskirts of political and ecclesial world.

1. The impact of religious transnational actors in the current international system: the case of the Catholic Church

Before speaking of transnational religious actors' impact in the current international system a brief premise is necessary to understand in which context such religious actors have gained relevance on the international scene and which is the reason that caused their "unexpected" resurgence after centuries of apparent silence.

Indeed, the Westphalian agreements in 1648, which marked the end of the long religious wars in Europe, enshrined the guiding principle of the new international order. The application of the principle *cuius regio eius religio* should ensure that, from now on, the States' policy would be free of any religious connotation. In fact, the policy linked to religion had become synonymous of threat to order, security and rationality. It was therefore necessary to banish it from public life. Politics and Religion "could not coexist in the practices of international relations" (Petito & HATZOPOLOUS, 2003, p. 2). Religions then lost its influence internationally. National states were considered, from then on, the only actors able to influence the dynamics of international relations. When occurred the emergence of the first theoretical aspects of international relations,

National States still occupied a place of prominence even if the importance of the performance of other possible international actors began to be recognized. However, the religious phenomenon was still ignored or even rejected by the international relations' theories that advanced from the interwar years.

In recent decades, however, we noticed a resurgence of the religious phenomenon that arose, at the same time, surprise and interest among foreign policy analysts. From the late 1980s, and especially after the events of September 11, 2001, the analysis of the religious phenomenon in the context of international policy studies has gained more space. The factor "forgotten" using the expression Petitot and Hatzopoulos (2003), seems to have returned from exile, currently being considered by some analysts (DOSDAD, 2006; FERRARA, 2014), among the key elements which could help in understanding broader and deeper analysis of world events and changing world.

As part of this re-evaluation of the importance of the religious phenomenon, along with the state and non-state actors traditionally recognized as influential agents of international dynamics, stand out also the religious transnational actors who, according to Haynes (2009) undoubtedly affect both the internal that international politics of States. Alongside the American evangelical movements, other transnational religious actors are moderate or extremist Islamic movements, Hindu nationalist groups, fundamentalist Jews, the Catholic Church, among others.

Such religious transnational actors have in common the ability to operate in international relations interacting with groups that have similar goals and exceeding the state limits seek to achieve their vital interests. This is possible only by the current reality of globalizing society where communication barriers decreased and national networks globally are no major obstacles. This situation enhances the capabilities of these transnational actors in order to push the boundaries of nation states and become significant forces that can help to shape international events (Haynes, 2009).

Among the largest transnational religious actors, the Holy See and consequently the Roman Catholic Church, counting with over 1 billion members worldwide, stands out on the international scene mainly by having

a special bond between spiritual authority and temporal authority, the combination of the organization of a religion and the structure of a state, the overlap between the sacred and the sovereign. The pope is both Somo Pontiff of the Church and the Vatican State Executive Power (TURZI, 2013, p. 30).

The Holy See, the governing body of the Catholic Church is the only religious institution in the world that maintains diplomatic relations with states. Currently, the Holy See has diplomatic representatives in 177 countries as well as maintains permanent observer in international organizations such as the United Nations, among others.

Despite being considered a state with all the constitutive features of this political institution, the Holy See remains a state actor *sui generis*. Holy See has not economic or military interesting. Even maintaining two security bodies: the Swiss Guards and the body of Gendarmerie², the Holy See does not have the traditional Hard Power resources, which qualify the importance of a country on the international stage. So what kind of forces relations distinguishes the performance of the Holy See in the international arena?

By using the concept of Joseph Nye on the Soft Power force, defined as power of attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or reward, we can think that the Holy See used as support base in its international performance this kind of power, called *Soft power*, described also as a result of a number of difficult to measure elements, but involving different dimensions.

The Holy See makes use of this power through a capillary network of local churches as well social and educational institutions distributed across the planet. His message is heard even by those who are not part of this institution. His actions, positive or negative, have great repercussions on world media. The financial and sex scandals undermined the credibility and legitimacy of the Catholic Church, especially in the last two pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Pope Francis, from his first appearance, seems to seek to reestablish the church's credibility lost in recent decades.

2. The revolutionary attempts of the first Latin American pope

² Both bodies have the task of defending the State of Vatican City. The Swiss Guards have their origins in 1506, when they were received as standing army pontifical by Pope Julius II. The Gendarmerie Corps was created under Pope Pius VII, in 1816, abolished in 1970, resurfacing in 1991. Currently, the body of Gendarmerie, blue uniform, consists of about 100 well-trained agents, from anti-terrorist agencies and that act protecting the pope and watching the gates of the Vatican walls. During the papal trips, it is up to them the Pope's security, in accordance with the country's police authorities who gets the visit.

Since the election of Pope Francis a lot has been said and written about the possible influence of geographical origin of the new pope for the future of the Catholic Church. Not only is Pope Francis the first non-European pope, but also the first Latin American pope, born and raised in the south of the world, in the outskirts of both political and ecclesiastical power. However, this would not be enough to explain the new directions undertaken by Francis.

Indeed, one of the papal candidates during the conclave that elected Cardinal Bergoglio was also from Latin America, but belonging to the conservative side of the Catholic Church. So the fact of coming from Latin America does not completely explain this shift. Besides his Latinity, we remember that Bergoglio is a Jesuit. The Society of Jesus is one of the oldest religious orders where the community component, along with study, obedience and discernment is an important variable to be considered to understand the stance adopted by Bergoglio.

Pope Francis' choice to live in the Casa Santa Marta in contact with many people, rather than reside in the apartment reserved for the pope compared by Francis as an inverted funnel, can be explained precisely by the vital importance given by Francis to community life

The papal apartment in the Apostolic Palace is not luxurious. It is old, tastefully decorated and large, but not luxurious. But in the end it is like an inverted funnel. It is big and spacious, but the entrance is really tight. People can come only in dribs and drabs, and I cannot live without people. I need to live my life with others (POPE FRANCIS, 2013)

Another important element to be considered is his pastoral experience in front of an archdiocese as that of Buenos Aires. For this reason, we chose to look at the new pope's biography seeking to highlight elements that could lead us to a clearer understanding of the new pope's choices.

2.1. Pope Francis' Biographical Notes

Pope Francis - Jorge Maria Bergoglio - was born on December 17, 1936 in Buenos Aires. His family – the father was a railway man, and the mother, housewife - was originally from the Piedmont region (northwestern Italy). Bergoglio, after joining the

diocesan seminary, left it to become Jesuit (SPADARO, 2013). He studied theology before in Argentina, and then in Germany where he obtained his doctorate degree in theology. After his return in Argentina, he was named provincial of the Jesuits (Argentina and Paraguay), exercising this function from 1973 to 1979. In 1976, the military junta came to power through a coup, setting up a repressive regime that will last until 1983.

Bergoglio, as revealed in an interview with Jesuit Antonio Spadaro in the journal "La Civiltà Cattolica," acted as provincial without having had no previous experience of managing a community. At the aging of 36 years, he adopted an authoritarian stance that sought him criticism and accusations of ultraconservatism. However, thanks to that hard experience, when years later he was appointed Archbishop of Buenos Aires, the chosen attitude was completely different (SPADARO, 2013).

In 1992, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires and in 1998, he was named Archbishop of Buenos Aires. John Paul II nominated him cardinal in 2001. Between 2005 and 2011, he was President of the Episcopal Conference of Argentina. As mentioned, this time the government's experience was more positive than the provincial's one. At 56, Bergoglio learned that "rule was not to order but listen, build consensus, solve problems allowing you the time to evaluate them in depth" (POLITI, 2014, p. 139). As archbishop of Buenos Aires, he favored close contact with the priests of his diocese encouraging them to practice mercy. He was known for his pastoral sensitivity to social problems.

Often, by bus rather than by car, Bergoglio visited the *villas* (the poorest districts in Greater Buenos Aires), attending the meetings of the priests who worked with the poor. He stopped to talk to the *cartoneros*, people who collected garbage in the city of Buenos Aires. Bergoglio experienced at first hand the great problems of a metropolis with its cultural pluralism and its contradictions. Portraying the origins of the new pope, Politi shows the big difference Pope Francis regarding the popes who preceded him:

Francisco is the first pope, born and raised in a contemporary metropolis. The Argentine pontiff, even coming from a remote area of Europe, is the only one that nurtured the tumultuous experience, dramatic and variegated of a gigantic city, around which gravitate thirteen million inhabitants. Ratzinger, Roncalli, Luciani and Wojtyla are all born in provincial towns and even during their careers ignored the pace of the metropolis (POLITI, 2014, p. 140).

The daily contact with the Argentine people - he preferred to live in a studio apartment rather than in the Episcopal residence - encouraged his commitment, as archbishop, to combat social inequalities, openly denouncing those he considered responsible for the suffering of the people, among them the Argentina's president Nestor Kirchner. Such a stance, on one hand increased its popularity among the people but on the other hand caused him enough problems with the political authorities. Indeed, since the end of 2010, Cardinal Bergoglio was publicly named as "collaborationist". The reports broadcast, especially Buenos Aires newspapers aligned to the Kirchner government - showed that Bergoglio in 1976 when he was provincial of the Jesuits, would have betrayed two priests of his order, and Jalics Yorio, who were arrested and tortured during the military dictatorship.

Once released, the two priests took refuge in Rome, welcomed by the Jesuit Superior General Pedro Arrupe, and remained in silence for many years leaving this question about the attitude of Bergoglio hanging in the air until his election. Only then, the silence of one of the two priests was broken. Father Jalics currently lives in Germany, and after Bergoglio's election said they were not betrayed by the then provincial. According to his information, he never denounced them. They had believed it until the late 90s when they understood what the truth was.

The visit of President Cristina Kirchner on March 18, 2013, shortly after his election was interpreted as a sign of truce between Bergoglio and the Argentine government.

2.2 The first steps of the reform of the Roman Curia, the Papacy and the Catholic Church

During the pre-conclave meetings of the general congregations occurred from March, 4 to 11 2013, three proposals have won the approval of the cardinals: reform the curia, making it easier and more efficient, cleaning the Vatican bank and promote collegiality, establishing frequent consultations between the Pope, the College of Cardinals and the national Episcopal conferences (POLITI, 2014).

In an interview with Antonio Spadaro, referring to the reform of the Curia and to the Congregations' tasks, Pope Francis said they "are at the service of the pope and the bishops. They must help both the the particular Churches and the bishops' conferences

[...]In some cases, however, when they are not functioning well, they run the risk of becoming institutions of censorship. The Roman congregations are mediators; they are not middlemen or managers" (SPADARO, 2013). According to Politi (2014), this would represent a revolution, because what was considered until now only an instrument entirely of the Pope's service should become a support and link's mechanism between the papacy and the dioceses of the world.

Another issue mentioned in the interview was the greater autonomy that Pope Francis wants to grant to the Episcopal conferences. Mentioned the number of complaints of lack of orthodoxy who come to Rome, Pope Francis said that "the cases should be investigated by the local bishops' conferences, which can get valuable assistance from Rome. These cases, in fact, are much better dealt with locally" (SPADARO, 2013).

This decision, if implemented, would constitute a rupture in the posture adopted by Benedict XVI. Indeed, for Ratzinger National conference would not be part of the church structure, playing only a practical role (Ratzinger, 2000). From this point of view, Benedict XVI seems to defend the maintenance of an imperial type of vertical Church where Rome dictated law to national headquarters, while the Pope Francis is working to transform the Church in a participatory institution whose role is horizontal through effective collaboration between the central government in Rome and national churches.

On April 13, 2013, exactly one month after his election, Pope Francis took the first step toward the long-awaited reform of the Roman Curia: the creation of a group of eight Cardinals plus another Secretary in order to advise the Pope the government of the Catholic Church and to work at the revision project of the Apostolic Constitution "Pastor Bonus" of 1988, which regulates the functioning and structure of the Roman Curia.

The members of this Council are Cardinals that come from all continents and, with the exception of the Vatican City's Governor, Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, none of them belong to the Roman Curia. Because of the Secretary of State Pietro Parolin's steady participation, the Council of Cardinals is now referred to as the "C9".

Since its creation, the Council meets every two months in the pope's residence, Casa Santa Marta. The meetings last for three days with the constant participation of the pope. After the first meeting, the Council came to the conclusion that it will not be

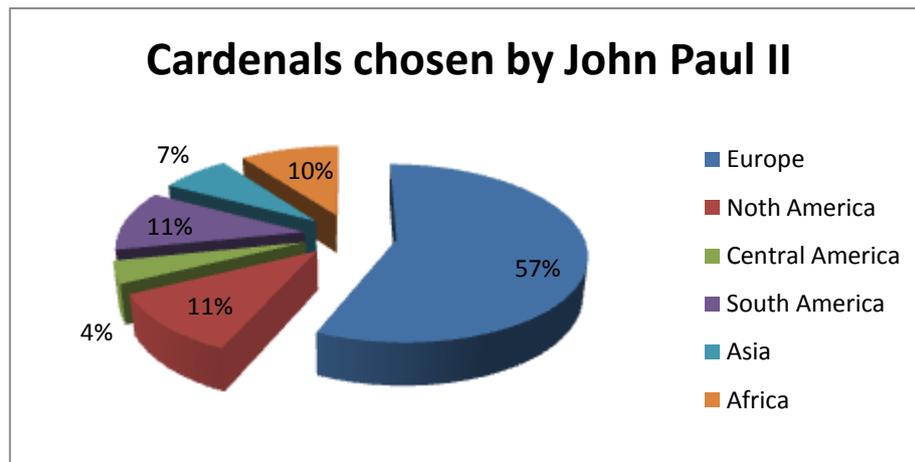
enough to reform the Constitution "Pastor Bonus" of John Paul II. It will be necessary to start from scratch to a Roman Curia *ex-novo* after centuries of ultra-centralized power." (POLITI, 2014, p. 149).

2.2.1. Renewal of the College of Cardinals

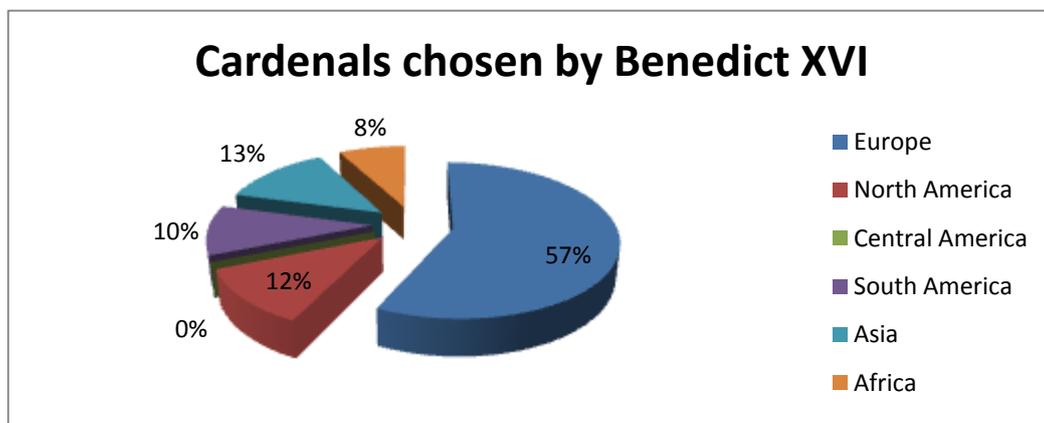
In the two years of his pontificate, Pope Francis nominated 31 new cardinal electors in order to renew the College of Cardinals of the Catholic Church. According to Canon 349 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, it is up to the College of Cardinals to provide for the election of the Roman Pontiff, and assist the pope "either collegially, when they are convoked to deal with questions of major importance, or individually, when they help the Roman Pontiff through the various offices they perform, especially in the daily care of the universal Church"³.

The College of Cardinals was established in 1150. The number of cardinal members has grown over the centuries. Paul VI decided on the maximum number, established in 120, and on the maximum age of voters stating that at the compliance of the 80th year, the Cardinals lost the right to enter the Conclave. But what caught more attention in the analysis of the creation of cardinal electors during the last pontificates is the geographical origin of these cardinals. During the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the most cardinal electors came from Europe, mostly from nearby nations to the region of origin of the pontiffs, and members of the Roman Curia. Also in this case, Pope Francis chose a different way. The cardinals chosen by Pope Bergoglio come from every continent, with evident decrease in the percentage of Europeans in relation to the pontificates that preceded him as we can observe in the following charts.

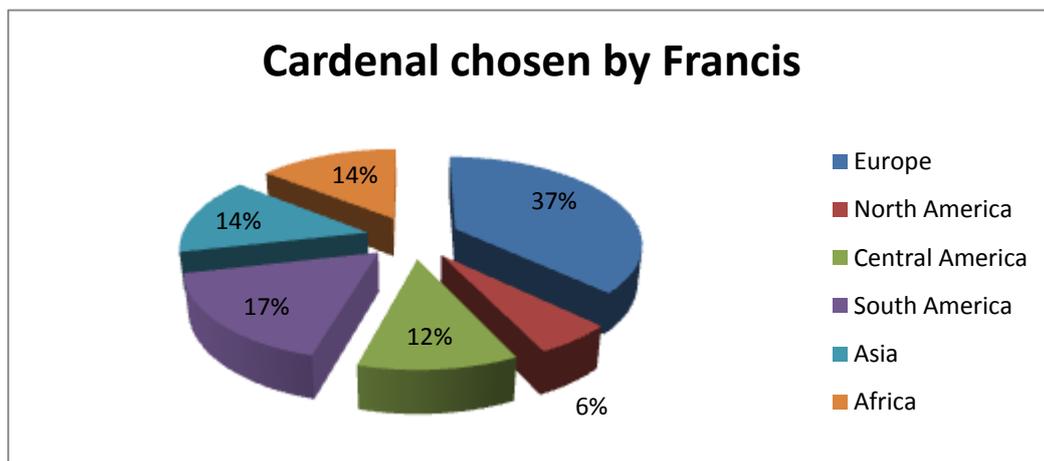
³ Code of Canon Law. Accessed May, 27, 2014: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P19.HTM



Source: www.vatican.va

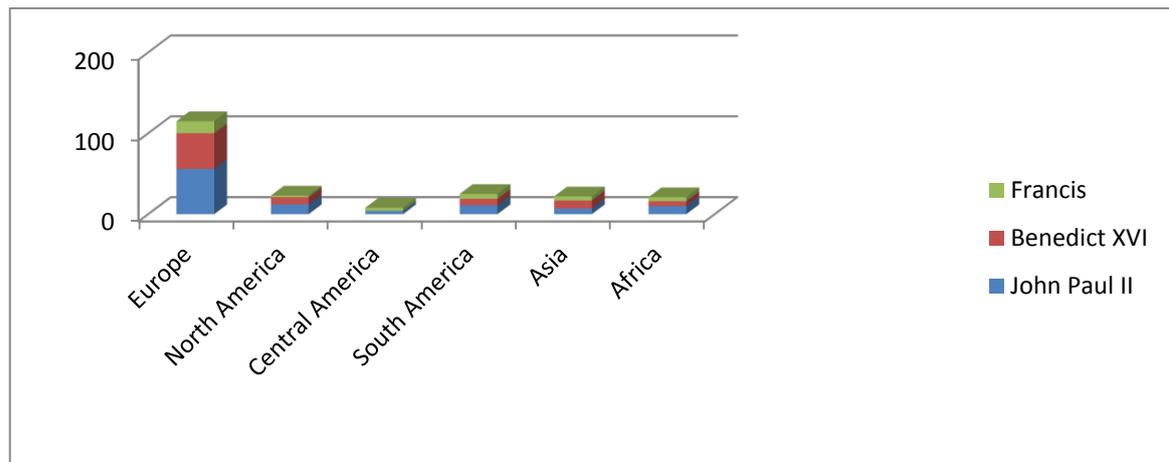


Source: www.vatican.va



Source: www.vatican.va

The following chart shows the geographical distribution of the cardinals who currently compose the College of Cardinals.



Source: www.vatican.va

There is still a gap between Europe and the other continents. This disparity is the result of the choice made under the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. However, it is estimated that in a few years the Pope Francis will have renewed more than half of the electorate of the next pope, resulting in a College of Cardinals which is more representative of every continent and where the weight of Europe and, above all, the traditional dominance of Italians, should decrease considerably. According to Politi "the future of Catholicism is no longer the old continent, but among the peoples of the Third World. The Pontiff particularly reinforced Latin America members, where live nearly half of Catholics of the whole planet "(POLITI, 2014, p. 238).

2.2.2. Revolutionary change in the papacy and the Catholic Church

Since the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has shown that he would choose a changing path, beginning with the name that had never been chosen before by any pope. In addition, Bergoglio refused to be called Francis I, probably because this number after the name can remember more an imperial dynasty than the title of a religious leader. Finally, he explains that the name Francis had no reference to the Jesuit Spanish missionary Francis Xavier that "conquered" Asia, but referred to Francis of Assisi, the saint who challenged the rich and corrupt Medieval Church.

References to poverty as an indispensable characteristic of the Catholic Church and its representatives are constant elements in the official documents of Pope Francisco

since 2013, the year of his election. The reform of the IOR (Institute for Religious Works), more popularly known as Vatican bank, is considered one of the first steps taken by the new Pope towards the reform of Vatican. Such reform - already started in the first year of his pontificate - is being characterized by the search for cleanup in the financial movements of the Vatican, by increasing the transparency and change of directors who have been involved in scandals.

Also in late 2013, Pope Francis established a Council for Economy created to oversee the economic management and the administrative and financial activity of all structures of the Holy See. Eight bishops and seven lay professionals compose the Council. Its president is the Cardinal of Munich, Reinhard Marx, also C9 member that assists the Pope in governing the Catholic Church.

In addition to the reform of finance, the driving style of the Catholic Church and its representatives seem to be under indictment in the new pontificate.

In his first international visit to Brazil, the Pope Francis addressing the responsible bishops of the Episcopal Council of Latin America (CELAM), called attention to the danger of clericalism highlighting the features that bishops should present

Bishops must be pastors, close to the people, fathers and brothers, and gentle, patient and merciful. Men who love poverty, both interior poverty as freedom before the Lord, exterior poverty as simplicity and austerity of life. Men who do not think and behave like "princes." (FRANCIS POPE, 2013).

In late 2014, the Pope's speech to the Cardinals and Bishops of the Roman Curia, gained prominence in the international media. The pope met with cardinals and bishops of the Roman Curia on the occasion of Christmas, and present them with a list of fifteen diseases that were affecting the Roman Curia. Among them, the Pope highlighted the disease to feel immortal, the excessive solicitude, the mental and spiritual hardening, excessive planning, disease spiritual Alzheimer's, the rivalry and vainglory, spiritual schizophrenia, gossip, indifference and the accumulation of worldly circles, the mundane profit and exhibitionism among others (POPE FRANCIS, 2014). After the speech, he met with Vatican officials and their families to whom presented his apology: "I do not want to end these words of best wishes without asking you for forgiveness for the shortcomings, mine and those of my colleagues, and also for any scandals, which cause so much harm. Forgive me"(POPE FRANCIS, 2014).

The diagnosis of the Roman Curia, traced so clearly by Pope Francis at the time, drew him criticism not only on Vatican territory, but also in the more conservative groups of Italian and international Catholicism.

His rebellion to embrace the lifestyle of his predecessors was considered an attack on tradition that held the papacy throughout its history. The most conservatives interpreted Francis' stance as a criticism of the popes who preceded him, a criticism of the traditional model of Church understood as untouchable central power structure of the Catholic Church. It is feared that Francisco, with its simplicity, may diminish the sacredness of papal staff (POLITI, 2014).

Always according to Politi (2014, p. 232) "reshape and simplify the curia could mean loss of power, and also career influence or loss of money in a bureaucratic ecclesiastical class, which is perpetuated for centuries."

The criticisms that cardinals and bishops belonging to this group cannot speak out are transmitted through numerous websites and Italian or foreign newspapers.

Despite the continuous attacks of the media, Pope Francisco seems to be moving forward with determination and firmness, even being aware that the years of his pontificate - that his opponents want to be brief - will not be sufficient to complete the necessary reforms to change the course of a church until now guided by monarchical principles.

One of the strategies that Pope Francis seem to be using is to seek the assistance of competent and professional people in their area in order to make these changes effective and raise the level of preparation and performance of the representatives of the Catholic Church. For example, the constitution of the C9, and the change of its coadjutors in a area that is considered one of the most important field of activity of the Holy See: the international dimension of the papacy.

This dimension is acquiring more visibility by the ideological displacement of Pope Francis, whose attention is focused more toward the outskirts of the planet to the traditional centers of power.

2.3. The new diplomacy of Pope Francis

The choice of the geographical origin of the new cardinals seems to highlight a special attention to ensure a better balance between center and outskirts. Even though the number of cardinals from Europe is still high, the trend, along the time, seems to be that of strengthening the contribution of the "peripheries" offsetting the burden hitherto had the Roman Curia and the European Church. By strengthening Local Churches a greater decentralization of power relations in the Catholic Church itself should be guaranteed, a demand dating back to the Second Vatican Council, but that until now had appeared only on paper.

This hypothesis seems to be reinforced analyzing the aims of the trips made by the Pope in these two and a half years of pontificate. Listing the international places already visited, Brazil, Turkey, Albania, South Korea, the Holy Land, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay and the next visit to Cuba, we can see that the preference of Pope Francis in relation to the peripheries of the world was not only rhetorical. The countries he has visited are countries that are either on the periphery of Europe, or in the region called South of the world, characterized by a past or a present history conflicts or exclusion or marginalization of the political or economic world center.

The places he has visited in Italy were mostly little cities or outlying towns. If we observe carefully Pope's Francis way of acting we can note that from the beginning he chose a clear method of governing: few assistants, but with a good experience that help him to understand the international arena where the Catholic Church is inserted in order to take the elements necessary to take the final decision. Among these assistants, the choice of the Secretary of State of a pope is considered one of the most strategic choices for a successful pontificate. The Vatican Secretary of State corresponds to the Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs of other states.

During the pontificate of Benedict XVI, for example, the figure of his Secretary of State, Tarcisio Bertone suffered enough wear and did not help the already complex pontificate of Benedict XVI.

The new State Secretary is not a canon lawyer as Tarcisio Bertone, but an experienced diplomat. Perhaps, it was not by accident that Pope Francis fetched him in his region of origin, South America.

Pietro Parolin, born in 1955, is Italian. When Pope Francis was elected, he was in Venezuela where, since 2009, was acting as Apostolic Nuncio. Before arriving in

Venezuela, he had enough international experience. In addition to experience in Nigeria and Mexico, Parolin spent 10 years in the Secretary of State during which deepened his knowledge of the main geopolitical issues of the Asian continent: the Palestinian/Israel conflict and the delicate relations with Vietnam. Pope Francis named him Cardinal in 2014. Since then, he regularly participates in meetings of the Council of Cardinals (C9). To understand the key points of the diplomatic thought of Pope Francisco, we chose three documents: the two *Lectio Magistralis*, made on behalf of the Pope by Cardinal Parolin, respectively in March 2015, at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and in April 2015, at Trivento Theological Faculty, plus the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, written by Pope Francis in 2013, almost a manifesto of intent about the future of his pontificate.

In *Lectio Magistralis* issued in March, addressing the objectives of the diplomatic activity of the Holy See, the Secretary of State first emphasizes the proactive stance of diplomacy of the Holy See when he says that "it can not only play the critical voice role, being called to act to facilitate coexistence among nations "(PAROLIN, 2015).

For this purpose, Pope Francis recommended that could be reestablished - in the space of the State Department - an Office for the papal mediation, acting as a link for the regular diplomacy activities that Holy See already plays in different countries, and at the International Institutions. In the 80s, John Paul II created this Office within the Council for Public Affairs, now known as Section for Relations with States of the Secretary of State. The task of this Office was to develop legal and political questions that could help in resolving the territorial dispute between Argentina and Chile over the Beagle Channel in the extreme south of the American continent.

The arbitration and mediation's role can be considered one of the traditional performances throughout the history of the Holy See and its relations with the countries. Parolin noted that these intermediations are deeply linked to the ecclesial dimension, because it was for the presence and for the role of the Church in the countries directly concerned that the diplomatic intervention of the Holy See was considered essential (PAROLIN, 2015).

In April, Parolin made a new *Lectio Magistralis* this time addressed to the academic community of the Triveneto Theological Faculty, during which he highlighted the vision of the Pope about the current global. Many of the elements of this conference

coincide with the topics covered by the Pope in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.

According to Parolin, Pope Francis has a different geopolitical vision of the world.

This Pope coming from afar, from the end of the world, as he said on the day of his election, looks to Europe and to the world with a different look, off-center and far from that vision behind the traditional theological reading. He belongs neither to the East nor the West, but also not from the heart of the international system; so his teaching staggers our usual perspective and somehow rolls our way of seeing the world and the Church. As a good Jesuit, he exercises his judgment and put it in the search for God's will to scrutinize it and so prepare to take decisions on the earth: what's geopolitical and theological at the same time? (PAROLIN, 2015)

The fact to be the first non-European pope, and the first Latin American pope, certainly influences the vision and approach given by Bergoglio to his pontificate.

He does not have the moral debt that Europeans assimilated voluntarily or involuntarily toward the United States as a result of the horrors of the two World conflicts. Unlike he lived in his own skin the hard impact of security policy enacted by the US superpower in Central America and South America during the Cold War. Such experiences allow a different look to Francis' pontificate, not from the center to the outskirts as the traditional look of the popes who preceded him, but from the peripheries to the world. Rather than an alliance with an hegemonic country in order to take forward the objectives of the Catholic Church, as happened in different papacy Pope Francis seems to prefer a multipolar world where the differences rather than divide can add and enhance the peripheral nations' demand for a more equitable world.

According to Parolin, in the new pontificate of Francis

the peripheries should be a central concern of the countries that, by social, political, economic, territorial condition, are the protagonists of the international system, as well as for the international institutions called to schedule and manage cooperation and their actions. Only encompassing the outskirts, it is possible to activate programs and activities inspired by solidarity and not finalized only to care (PAROLIN, 2015).

And to reach the excluded, the outskirts, the diplomacy of the Holy See is considered a privileged instrument.

If governments realize that what is called the "state reason" exercising an Hard Power through the economic and financial power or weapons, the Holy See must carry out a "reason of the Church" through a Soft Power made of convictions and exemplary behavior. It must work, also through diplomatic action, to create more justice, the first condition for peace (PAROLIN, 2015).

2.4. Pope Francis and the attacks on capitalism

The social justice's issue is another recurring argument in Francis' papal documents. The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* - and the encyclical on Environmental issues, *Laudato Sí*, published a few weeks ago, show strong criticism of the current economic system whose contradictions are pointed out by Pope Francis as the root causes of today's societal problems. Pope Francis does not hesitate to state that "the social and economic system is unfair at its root" (POPE FRANCIS, 2013, p. 50).

As in Buenos Aires, Bergoglio criticized the corruption of the Argentine government, he criticizes global system based solely on market lines.

We can no longer trust in the unseen forces and the invisible hand of the market. Growth in justice requires more than economic growth, while presupposing such growth: it requires decisions, programs, mechanisms and processes specifically geared to a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality. I am far from proposing an irresponsible populism, but the economy can no longer turn to remedies that are a new poison, such as attempting to increase profits by reducing the work force and thereby adding to the ranks of the excluded (Ibid, p. 168)

Solidarity is mentioned by Francis as a key element that must be present in global relations, and as an antidote to the current economic system that generates exclusion, poverty and a "throw away" culture by the majority of the world population.

While the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. This imbalance is the result of ideologies which defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation. Consequently, they reject the right of states, charged with vigilance for the common good, to exercise any form of control. A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules (Ibid, p. 50).

In the Encyclical *Laudato Sí*, after listing most serious problems related to the environment, Pope Francis shows the deep connection between the environment and the conditions of poverty and social injustice that still affect the majority of the world population, resulting in a situation of planetary inequality. Indeed, according to Pope Francis, there would be not only inequality between individuals but also between countries, which would require thinking an ethics of international relations to reflect on the ecological debt that exists between the North and the South.

The foreign debt of poor countries has become a way of controlling them, yet this is not the case where ecological debt is concerned. In different ways, developing countries, where the most important reserves of the biosphere are found, continue to fuel the development of richer countries at the cost of their own present and future. The land of the southern poor is rich and mostly unpolluted, yet access to ownership of goods and resources for meeting vital needs is inhibited by a system of commercial relations and ownership which is structurally perverse (Pope Francis, 2015, n. 52-52).

In an interview of January 2014, Pope Francis defends his criticism of the neoliberal system highlighting the urgent need to operate structural changes.

We cannot more wait to solve the structural causes of poverty, to heal our societies from a disease that can only lead to new crises. Markets and financial speculation cannot enjoy an absolute autonomy. Without a solution to the problems of the poor will not solve the world's problems. Programs are needed, mechanisms and processes aimed at a better distribution of resources, at job's creation, at the integral promotion of those who are excluded. (FRANCIS cited Torielli, 2015)

For these fierce criticisms of the current economic system, conservatives accused Pope Francis of being a communist close to Liberation Theology. Asked if such accusations troubled him, Pope Bergoglio said that the preferential option for the poor is contained from the beginning in the Gospel message.

If I would repeat some excerpts from sermons of the early Church Fathers, the second or third century, about how to treat the poor, there would be some who would accuse that my homily is Marxist. "It is not from your good that you donate to the poor; you just devolve what belongs to him. Because you clings to what is given in common for the use of all. The earth is given to all, not only to the rich". They are words of St. Ambrose, which served to Pope Paul VI affirm in *Populorum Progressio*, that private property is not for some unconditional and absolute right, and no one is allowed to reserve for your exclusive use what overcomes your need, when others lack necessities. St. John Chrysostom said: "Do not share the goods with the poor means to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." (FRANCIS cited Torielli, 2015)

The stance adopted by Pope Francis, in this sense, appears revolutionary in relation to the traditional attitude of the Catholic Church and the papacy. It is also true that in previous documents of Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI can be found criticism of the neoliberal economic system. Even the Pope Francis puts in evidence both in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* as the Encyclical *Laudato Sí*. However, such criticisms can be considered isolated references within pontificates that

did not stand out major changes and opposed to the current economic system. Pope Francis does not lose occasion to draw attention to the structural causes that generate poverty, violence and global inequality. The appeal to change can be found in all papers and speeches pronounced from the beginning of his pontificate.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this article, we try to verify the hypothesis that in these first two and a half years of pontificate, Pope Francis would be conducting an ideological shift of the Holy See, approaching the central structure of the Catholic Church, traditionally linked to national and international elites, to the outskirts of political and ecclesial world.

The steps taken by Pope Francis during this period of two and a half years appear to contribute to the decentralization of power hitherto restricted to the Roman Curia. In addition, many important decisions made by Pope Bergoglio showed an attempt to change of course by Pope Francis. We quote for example: the creation of the World Meetings of Popular Movements and the encouragement given by Pope Francis to this sector of society's fight; the beatification of Archbishop Oscar Romero, after years of silence on the part of the Holy See that he considered too close to the left party of El Salvador; the priest Miguel d'Escoto rehabilitation, who became, in the 1970s, foreign minister of the Sandinista government and therefore was suspended from his priestly functions for 29 years; the papal mediation between Cuba and the United States, the formal recognition of the State of Palestine, between international events of major importance.

According to Cardini, Pope Francis

as Peronist has a very advanced social vision, almost socialist. For him, the social order is social justice, solidarity, love and redemption of the latter. It is no coincidence that Francis always condemns the economy, never directly political. He wishes that the society could return to a pure Christianity model, as the friar of Assisi who stripped himself of everything. Only in the Middle Ages the context was entirely Christian. Bergoglio wants unlike overthrow the established order, reverse the direction of the turbo-capitalism socioeconomic progress. Here's his revolution, the apocalypse (CARDINI cited CIOLLI, 2014).

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