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## *In Varietate Concordia*

*Explaining Diverse Political Strategies of National Roman Catholic Churches*

### **1 Introduction**

The underlying factors of the formation of political preferences have been in the center of thinking about politics since the very beginning of political science. Many theorists have been emphasizing the overwhelming importance of individual, rational, interest-based choices, while others have been arguing that social position and group membership determine political views. Although individual choices certainly cannot be neglected, there are countless proofs for the strength of the linkage between certain socio-demographic factors and different political views. Whether it is class, ethnicity, gender or ex-membership in communist (state) parties, there are some particularly important characteristics that heavily influence partisanship in almost every society.

However, these factors are continuously changing and vary from country to country. Religion is one of the best examples for this variation. Although it was described many times as a factor that would lose its importance by the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, religion is still an important factor in “secular democracies”.<sup>1</sup> As churches – the most emblematic religious organizations – seem to have political interests “by default” one would assume that the membership in a certain church influences political preferences in similar directions even in different societies.

Yet, there are several examples for huge cross-national or longitudinal intra-church variation even in the case of the most hierarchically centralized churches. It is a real puzzle why some of the sub-units of the same church directly participate in politics while others not. It is equally interesting if some of them are leftist while many others lean to the right.

Not surprisingly, the issue of the relationship between religion and politics or church and state has played a central role in several political theories and models for millennia. The connection between religiosity and rightist partisan attachments is so robust in many Western countries<sup>2</sup> that regular church-goers are regarded almost automatically as conservative or Christian-democratic voters. However, as there are no socialist or conservative parties in the Bible, we would expect that the contemporary leaders, institutions and narratives of the churches are the key elements in the process of transforming religious worldview to actual political preferences. The aim of my research

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<sup>1</sup> See Campbell. 2004; and Madeley and Enyedi. 2003

<sup>2</sup> For example see Campbell. 2004, p. 206 and the data of European Value Survey and World Value Survey

project is to help understand the role that churches play in contemporary democracies, by exploring the causes of church elites' decisions on political goals to be pursued and strategies used to achieve these goals.

While there is virtually infinite variation among denominations and their relations towards state and politics, I focus only on the World's biggest church<sup>3</sup> in this project. Being not only the biggest, but doubtlessly one of the politically most active, strongest and most studied religious organizations, the Roman Catholic Church is the best of the possible subjects for this research. Though there is a significant trade-off between a detailed study focusing on one church in specific countries and a broad, multi-denominational research plan, in my opinion we may benefit more than we lose by narrowing the scope conditions to national Roman Catholic Churches<sup>4</sup>. This trade-off may be justified as the only way for controlling for denomination-specific factors, e.g. theological background, supranational traditions, and the level of institutionalization and centralization of churches. Although the Roman Catholic Church has been also the most centralized major religious organization throughout the last two thousand years, the findings of this research project shall contribute to the study of other denominations too, as I focus not on its international hierarchy but the national level sub-churches.

As the Roman Catholic Church has been an important political actor since its foundation<sup>5</sup>, one would assume that its high level of hierarchical centralization combined with the traditions of political activity going back high in the past make this organization a solid actor in the chaotic world of politics. Yet, it is striking how different political strategies the national Catholic churches follow in reality. From loudly expressed conservatism through political passivism to the liberation theology the variety of the forms of its political participation is compelling. It seems that the Church behaves in a different way in each country – and sometimes its elements play extremely diverse roles even within certain nation states, not to mention the changes throughout the passing decades.

The central question of this research project follows from this puzzle, asking: *What factors cause the differences in the political strategies of the contemporary national Roman Catholic Churches? i. e. What conditions contribute to the Church's active participation in party politics? and Which ones determine the ideological course (leftist on the base of social justice, or rightist cultural conservatism) the Church takes?*

My research focuses on churches as complex actors vis-à-vis the states and rival interests. The main novelty of this project is its complex approach towards the church of the traditional literature on

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Vatican's *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae* of 2005, the Catholic Church had 1,085,557,000 members, or 17.2 percent of the world's population. Of these, 13.2 percent of Catholics live in Africa, 49.8 percent in North and South America; 10.5 percent in Asia, 25.7 percent in Europe and 0.8 percent in Australia and Oceania.

<sup>4</sup> Although "national" and "Catholic" (universal) Church might seem contradictory, this formula mirrors the official terminology and shows the dual nature of these entities.

<sup>5</sup> Even in modern times. As Kaiser and Wohnout (Kaiser and Wohnout. 2004) assume: "Catholic parties were among the most electorally successful in Europe, and played a major role in national and local government" (p. 202) and "Catholic politics had become not merely an integral element of modern European politics but also one of its most influential architects" (p. 204)

church-state relations. Instead of using the hitherto dominant, “monolithic actor” approach, I emphasize the importance of the multifaceted individual and institutional factors and resources that form the “domestic politics” of the national Churches. This approach has relevance not only for certain policy implications, but also for understanding (anti-)secularization debates and partisan attachments towards political parties.

In the next section of this proposal, I provide a brief review of the state of the art, situate the research question in the existing literature and illustrate it with empirical examples. Then I state my initial hypotheses and describe the proposed methodological approach for addressing the research question.

## 2 Literature review and concepts

There is an astonishing literature on religion and politics, and church-state relations. These have been important topics of political theory since antiquity, especially from the birth of the institutionalized Christian church. However, there has been little systematic work on indentifying the incentives of churches for direct political participation. Up until this time most of the literature focused on the effects of religion in politics (it was an independent condition), but paid little attention for the conditions that determine whether these interests enter the political arena (this is the outcome for this research project).

The majority of post-World War II literature can be placed in four groups. The first, maybe the most numerous group of works consists of studies of the American exceptionalism. Its topics range from the description of the relations between ethnicity, religion and voter behavior<sup>6</sup> to connecting foreign policy and religious attachments.<sup>7</sup> International relations works comprise the second group. Scholars of IR often focus on the similarities between Christian and Islamic fundamentalism, or on the roles that religions play in supporting or defeating authoritarian systems.<sup>8</sup> The third group focuses mostly on specific policy implications (especially family policies: the questions of divorce, abortions, and rights of homosexuals), with limited theoretical contribution.<sup>9</sup>

The fourth strand consists of works on secularization<sup>10</sup> and de-secularization, and their political consequences on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Western societies. Variation in religious activity and votes are mostly explained by social changes that are presumed to alter the demand for religion. Most elements of the secularization approach refer either to reasons why people might be more or less religious or to circumstances that alter susceptibility to religion. However, from the 1980s an

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<sup>6</sup> For example: Smith. 1978, Azzi and Ehrenberg. 1975, Green. 2007, and Domke and Coe. 2008.

<sup>7</sup> For example: Friedman. 2005.

<sup>8</sup> For example: Haynes. 1998, 2001, and Cady and Simon. 2007.

<sup>9</sup> For example: Fraser. 1999.

<sup>10</sup> „A commonly held definition of secularization is the ‘erosion of belief in the supernatural’ or ‘a loss of faith in the existence of otherworldly forces’” (Stark and Bainbridge. 1985 p. 249)

alternative supply-side model was promoted by Stark.<sup>11</sup> He argues that the demand for religion was more or less stable and that variations in expression are explained by variation in the supply of religious offices. Several authors suggest also that – after the decline of the 1970s and '80s – religion is getting more important<sup>12</sup> again, as immigration causes new, socio-cultural tensions and new religious movements develop. As Timothy Byrnes (Byrnes 2008) argues “the reintroduction of religious diversity into European society . . . is also reintroducing religion, and religiously motivated conflicts, to European politics” In a scenario like this, pluralist democracies are becoming less neutral as they remain committed to the support of mainline churches all over the “secularized” Western World (either via positive neutrality [equal treatment] or even discrimination).<sup>13</sup>

Works about the Catholic Church follow similar lines as the general religion-politics literature, with several major strands. Post-authoritarian states (the role of the Church during and after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and right-wing authoritarian regimes in Latin American)<sup>14</sup> are in the center of the first discourse. Works from this approach often give excellent comparative descriptions of the strategies of the Church, but heretofore they have not provided any general theory on the causes of the differences in these strategies. The second, predominantly Anglo-Saxon scholarship has been made up mostly by “crisis-analytic” works since the American, British and Australian sexual abuse scandals of the Millennium.<sup>15</sup> Many of these works yield more normative than scientific contribution, as they focus usually on the future choices that the Church would have to make. The third juncture point of the literature is the role of post-Vatican II Rome in the processes of globalization and European integration.<sup>16</sup> While this strand offers important explanations for the political activity of the supranational Church, it has little to tell about the level of autonomy of the national organizations.

Although the Church has been often seen as a totally centralized (or, at best, deconcentrated) organization which provides the resources for *the* political Catholicism, it yields many characteristics of actual decentralization that cannot be negated. There are some typical political consequences of being a member of the Catholic Church, of course, but there is no natural law that would prescribe supporting the political Right in most countries and the Left in some others. I address this gap in the literature by accepting that Catholic denominations are neither the far-reaching arms of Rome, nor fully independent national actors. In the following sections I will outline the current trends of the literature on the relations between the Catholic Church and secularized states, and then attempt to synthesize new strands to produce a complex model.

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<sup>11</sup> „It seems clear that the secularization thesis has been falsified - that the evolutionary future of religion is not extinction. The empirical evidence is that the vitality of religious firms can fluctuate greatly over time, rising as well as falling, although subjective religiousness seems to vary far less. (Stark and Iannaccone. 1994 p. 249)

<sup>12</sup> For example Zeidan. 2003. As Habermas put it: „The ideological neutrality of state ... is incompatible with the political generalization of a secularistic worldview.” (in Vries and Sullivan. 2006. p. 260.)

<sup>13</sup> See Thomas. 1988, Kissane: The Illusion of State Neutrality in a Secularizing Ireland in Madeley and Enyedi. 2003

<sup>14</sup> For example: Kramer. 1980, Froese. 2001, Ramet. 1990, Schanda. 2003, and Seleny. 1999.

<sup>15</sup> For example: Morris. 1997, Steiner. 2003.

<sup>16</sup> For example: Hanson. 1987, Byrnes and Katzenstein. 2006, and Robbers. 1996.

On the one hand, there has been a strong trend both among scholars of International relations and political science, and lay intellectuals to understand the branches of the Church as monolithic national agents of the Vatican. (As Francis X. Murphy and Carl Schmitt observed: "few contemporary institutions have been more intimately - and none more continuously - involved in the political order"<sup>17</sup> than the Catholic Church, while "[n]ot only fanatic sectarians, but whole generations of pious Protestants and Greek-Orthodox Christians have seen in Rome the Antichrist or the Babylonian whore of the apocalypse."<sup>18</sup>) These strands are especially strong in the literature and debates about family policy.<sup>19</sup> For the "progressives" not the national bishops are the main "enemy", but rather the papacy. This is true even though the varying patterns of policy outputs make it clear that the leverage of the Church strongly depends on the strategy chosen by the national elite (e.g. whether they consider the Church to be a public institution or an interest group<sup>20</sup>).

On the other hand, national churches are often studied without paying attention to their supranational relations. Works about state support (e.g. confessional education and health care institutions) or the crises of the American and Australian Churches treat them simply as national actors. This latter part of the literature is especially interesting, if we consider that the scandals and the decline of present-day church attendance does not alter the fact that the American Catholic Church became the strongest denomination of the United States from a 0.1% sect, in less than two centuries.

There are many gaps in this massive literature, but J. B. Hehir<sup>21</sup> offers us a good starting point for creating a complex approach towards the analysis of international, hierarchical religious organizations. He divides the Church into three analytical levels. The first one is the systemic level, which contains both transnational actors (such as the 'global' Catholic Church or Vatican) and states as principal actors. For the purpose of my research, I define this level as the collection of those supranational, Vatican based institutions that play direct role in the relations between the Church and the different nation states: the diplomatic corps and bilateral committees of the Holy See, its normative policy statements and the headquarters of some highly centralized religious orders. The second (national) and third (local) levels are analogous to the state institutions, but with two parallel chains-of-command through the Episcopal polities and the religious orders. (See **Table 1**)

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<sup>17</sup> Murphy. 1974, pp. 542

<sup>18</sup> Schmitt. 1996, pp. 1

<sup>19</sup> For example: Fink. 2008., Keely. 1994., McQuillan. 2004., and Tamney, Johnson and Burton. 1992

<sup>20</sup> See Micharl Minkenber. The Policy Impact of Cuch-State Relations: Family Policy and Abortion in Britain, France, and Germany. In Madeley and Enyedi. 2003.

<sup>21</sup> The old church and the new Europe: Charting the Changes in Byrnes and Katzenstein. 2006. pp. 96-97.

**Table 1: Two Dimensions of the Catholic Church**

		<b>Vertical Stratification</b>		
		Systemic level	National level	Local level
<b>Horizontal Segmentation</b>	Episcopal Polities	Papacy, Collage of Cardinals, Holy See diplomatic corps	Conference of Bishops, Church Media	Parishes, Schools, Hospitals, Laic organizations,
	Religious Orders	Superior General, General Curia	Provinces	Monasteries, Schools, Hospitals

A monolithic approach cannot effectively handle cases where different organizations of the Catholic Church followed very different political strategies. However, by dividing the Church organizations like this, we can account for many events that would otherwise be seen as mysterious anomalies. There have been numerous such cases, e. g. the disagreement between the French and German Churches and the American one over the anti-nuclear movement during the final stage of the Cold War; or the discrepancy of the views on globalization in the Southern and Western Churches. There were also several instances of differences between the local and higher levels. The disagreements on the theology of liberation in some Latin American regions are the best examples for this.

Considering that at the systemic level the Catholic Church has elaborated ideas about the desired form of society, and politics is the social system through which it can realize them, its national level leaders cannot evade making political plans and decisions. Of course, there is no “Grand Strategy” that would lead the actions of the organizations and members of the Church anywhere, anytime, as “[o]nly the layman sees in the course of a campaign a consistent execution of a preconceived and highly detailed original concept pursued consistently to the end.” However, “the commander in chief will keep his great objective continuously in mind, undisturbed by the vicissitudes of events. But the path on which he hopes to reach it can never be firmly established in advance. Throughout the campaign he must make a series of decisions on the basis of situations that cannot be foreseen.”<sup>22</sup> Accepting von Moltke’s truth, I will use hereafter the term ‘Political Strategy’ as the resultant of the continuous decision-making process, which determines whether the Church participates directly in party politics or rather it acts as a lobby group.

The Church has complex social interests that have to be prioritized before choosing the main political objective. The priority may be on the cultural or economic dimension of domestic politics, on foreign policy, or on self-preservation. Although parties are by far not the sole instruments for achieving political aims, I consider them the most important channels, and so party politics as the main field for acquiring allies and enemies. Even if acting as an interest group may be very effective in corporatist systems – and occasionally even in pluralist systems! – I consider direct participation (by trading legitimation for certain groups of the political elite for legislative and material support) in party politics a necessity for the church if it wants to use state resources on a large scale. While in some cases the Church has “natural” enemies (e. g. the communist party-state or anti-catholic movements) and allies (e. g. other churches), the chosen political preferences determine the possible opponents

<sup>22</sup> Helmuth von Moltke. Quoted by Ghyczy, Oetinger and Bassford. 2001. pp. 55

(e. g. supporters of secularization or a rising rival “cult”) and friends (political parties, interest groups etc.) in a typical democracy.

In my theoretical model, national level actors are predominant in shaping the political strategies of the Catholic Church (“business as usual”). The international and local levels are of secondary importance in this process, unless the national level has no resources (e. g. in Central European socialist states during the Cold War, or in countries with much stronger rival religions), inadequate organizational power (e. g. in some severely divided Latin American states) or no intention (e. g. in the US during the time of the sexual abuse scandals) to intervene in national politics. (See **Table 2**)

<b>Table 2: Possible Strategies</b>				
<b>Church Strategy</b>				
		Active		Passive
		Own Resources	Involving the State	
Secularism	Strong	Strict Separation of Church and State (United States)	Kulturkampf (Post-Communist Hungary)	Fight for Survival (Stalinist CEE)
	Weak	Outsider (South Korea)	Quasi-established Religion (Ireland)	Fight for Equality (pre-Kennedy US)

The intra-church dispersion of power has great importance, because only the national level may be able to follow active or reactive strategies effectively (e. g. in Poland, during the constitutional debates). If the systemic and local levels have to act because of the adverse context, they will have to go into defense (“dig in”), because the initiative will have been already lost (e. g. in Central European socialist states during the Cold War).<sup>23</sup> The Church is limited to use only its own, often extremely scarce resources when being in defense, which makes this a clearly unfavorable situation for all three levels. The net outcome is similar in the case when the Church is so deeply divided in a country that its local units actively support different political forces. (See **Table 3** for possible scenarios)

<b>Table 3: Possible Scenarios</b>			
<b>Internal Political Cohesion</b>			
		Low	High
Political Participation	High	politics infiltrate the Church, which cannot defend itself and can only yield diverse reactions on the local level	the Church becomes an important political actor that can provide high level support for its allies
	Low	confusion and passivity, the Church becomes powerless	the Church acts as a strong lobby group, but keeps similar distance from all sides in party politics

<sup>23</sup> For example, Wittenberg (Wittenberg. 2006) finds that Church resistance occurred not from above, but from below (i. e. on the local level) in Hungary during the decades of socialism.

Although the ways in which the national Catholic Churches seek to achieve their political goals vary on a wide range, the causal factors of this variation have been understudied. The possible explanations<sup>24</sup> include historical legacy, type of the religious market, system of interest representation, church and state relations, relevant political cleavages. My theoretical model focuses on a three dimensional conjunctural causation where the possible determinants are:

- social-historical context (historical legacy [esp. post WWII], number of believers and clergy, the course of changes [i.e. relative rise or decline] and type of the “religious market”),<sup>25</sup>
- state and political system (freedom of religion, established churches, strictness of the separation of church and state, strength of the religious-secular cleavage, type of the party system [e.g. number of parties or the presence of a “natural ally”], system of interest representation),<sup>26</sup>
- and the heretofore understudied internal condition of the church itself (perceived threat, organizational characteristics, the relation of the church elite to political elites).

The complex environment in which the leaders of the Church define their strategies is the resultant of all these internal and external idiosyncratic factors (independent variables) that determine the aims, strategies and opportunities of the Church in a given country. (See **Table 4** for the hypothesized effects of some important conditions)

**Table 4: Three dimensions of the external and internal environment**

	<b>Social/historical Context</b>	<b>State and Political System</b>	<b>Internal Conditions</b>
<b>Contributes to direct participation</b>	Relatively high penetration of the society; Ample personal and material resources; Strong traditions of church authority; Threat of decline	Loose separation of church and state; Positive neutrality; Extensive religious legislation Significant religious-secular cleavage, Lack of a dominant, overriding cleavage	National level church has strong domestic positions vis-à-vis the local level; and Autonomy and support from the systemic level; Recruitment patterns of the church elite strongly differ from the political elite
<b>Deters direct political participation</b>	Marginal penetration of the society; Scarce resources; Lack of rivals; Threatened existence	Strict separation of church and state; or Presence of a rival established church; Weak religious-secular cleavage; Presence of a dominant, overriding cleavage	Systemic or local organizations are predominant vis-à-vis the national level; Integrated church and political elites

<sup>24</sup> Kalyvas (Kalyvas. 1996. p. 7) by studying the formation of Christian Democratic parties, describes the literature on the conditions effecting the Church’s political role as “underdeveloped”. He finds that the explanations usually offered range from exogenous events to the sheer will of the Church.

<sup>25</sup> Gill (Gill. 1998) for example, emphasizes the number of believers and clergy, the course of changes.

<sup>26</sup> Enyedi (Madely and Enyedi. 2003) shows how flawed separation of church and state effects the political activity of churches. Religion is also a classical element of cleavage theories (see Lipset and Rokkan: Party systems and voter alignments. 1967)

### 3 Initial hypotheses

Building on the above described theoretical model I propose the following tentative causal links as the basis for this research project (see **Table 5** for the possible outcomes and examples):

#### A) Social-historical context

**Hypothesis 1:** The stronger the social support (based on the social-historical factors) of the Church, the more likely it will participate in party politics.

**Hypothesis 2:** The stronger the threat which the Church perceives, the more likely it will participate in party politics – but only as long as its very existence is not endangered.

#### B) State and political system

**Hypothesis 3:** Flawed separation (“positive neutrality”, extensive legislation in religious matters) of church and state contributes to direct political participation. Both perfect separation and the fusion of the two entities contribute to the non-occurrence of direct participation.

**Hypothesis 4:** The presence of a minimal institutionalized religious-secular cleavage contributes to direct political participation, while multiparty system, “natural allies” and corporative interest group structure are contributory for the direct political participation of the Church.

#### C) Internal conditions of the Church

**Hypothesis 5:** The Church elite’s decisions on the priority list of political goals does not simply derive from the social and political theology of the Church, but it is affected by all the three above mentioned dimensions of the internal and external environment and even the reactions of the other actors of the political arena.

**Hypothesis 6:** If the cultural dimension (e. g. pro-life) is on the top of the Church’s priority list, it will orient towards rightist political forces. However, if its main objective derives from the idea of social justice, the outcome will be the opposite. Focus on foreign policy or self-preservation does not have so clear consequences.

**Hypothesis 7:** The more the Church prefers involving the infrastructure/resources (e. g. for religious education) and authority (e. g. for anti-abortion laws) of the state while pursuing its objectives, the more it wants to participate in party politics.

**Table 5: Possible outcomes and examples**

	<b>Social/historical Context</b>	<b>State and Political System</b>	<b>Internal Conditions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>1</b>	favorable	favorable	favorable	the Church is an important political actor	Germany, Hungary
<b>2</b>	favorable	favorable	unfavorable	the Church is an important, but divided political actor	Brazil, Nicaragua
<b>3</b>	favorable	unfavorable	favorable	the Church acts as a strong lobby group, but keeps distance from all sides in party politics	United States, France
<b>4</b>	favorable	unfavorable	unfavorable	the Church is unable to use its social power for political goals	Cuba, CEE during the Cold War
<b>5</b>	unfavorable	favorable	favorable	the Church faces stronger rivals but is still able to participate effectively in politics	UK, New Zealand
<b>6</b>	unfavorable	favorable	unfavorable	the Church is in defense against its stronger rivals	Romania, Ukraine
<b>7</b>	unfavorable	unfavorable	favorable	the Church is an outsider, but it may still be an effective lobby actor	South Korea, pre-Kennedy US
<b>8</b>	unfavorable	unfavorable	unfavorable	the Church is a passive outsider	Belarus, China

#### 4 Methodology

Since my units of analysis are the national Roman Catholic Churches as complex, hierarchical organizations, by defining the universe of cases, I must exclude those ones that are too small to yield an autonomous, full-scale, institutionalized organization. Although my restrictions may seem arbitrary (and in fact in a sense they are) I presume that only a country that meets the following scope conditions may have a national Catholic Church in which the organizational relationships are significant vis-à-vis the personal links (see **Table 6**):

- The country has a Catholic population of at least one million,
- which is organized into minimum 10 dioceses

- that control at least 500 parishes.

*Table 6: Universe of cases*

Country	Catholics	Population	Percent Catholic	Cardinals	Dioceses	Priests	Parishes
Argentina	34480000	38631000	89,25%	4	69	5648	2642
Australia	5239000	18841000	27,81%	3	32	3115	1378
Austria	5755000	7982000	72,10%	1	12	4360	3058
Bolivia	8253000	9737000	84,76%	1	18	1113	583
Brazil	145446000	184227000	78,95%	8	268	16853	9222
Cameroon	4287000	17109000	25,06%	1	23	1406	740
Canada	13070000	29503000	44,30%	3	71	8441	4865
Chile	11021000	15488000	71,16%	2	27	2332	931
China	2964000	397673000	0,75%	1	117	4559	2335
Colombia	38406000	44508000	86,29%	2	75	7920	3831
Dem. Rep. of Congo	29500000	59293000	49,75%	0	47	4306	1258
Croatia	3867000	5259000	73,53%	1	15	2329	1603
Dominican Republic	8039000	9344000	86,03%	1	12	878	569
Ecuador	11749000	13112000	89,60%	0	24	1797	1208
France	44499000	58905000	75,54%	9	98	21930	18844
Germany	26297000	82727000	31,79%	7	29	18365	12488
Great Britain	4787000	56276000	8,51%	2	32	5653	3099
Hungary	6056000	10402000	58,22%	2	16	2175	2221
India	17005000	1098096000	1,55%	6	149	19946	8583
Indonesia	6439000	204229000	3,15%	1	37	3038	1130
Ireland	4161000	5467000	76,11%	3	26	4690	1312
Italy	57665000	59725000	96,55%	41	225	50148	25694
Kenya	8018000	32296000	24,83%	1	26	1897	708
South Korea	4377000	49409000	8,86%	2	18	3211	1366
Lebanon	1883000	4099000	45,94%	1	23	1603	1253
México	123393000	142364000	86,67%	4	90	14618	6101
Nigeria	17906000	124517000	14,38%	2	50	4437	2041
Peru	28160000	32079000	87,78%	1	45	2769	1421
Philippines	69630000	85930000	81,03%	3	86	7335	2909
Poland	35010000	37109000	94,34%	8	44	28457	10421
Portugal	9457000	10460000	90,41%	2	21	3936	4395
Romania	1875000	21709000	8,64%	0	12	1733	1430
South Africa	3101000	48770000	6,36%	1	27	1098	736
Spain	37165000	42335000	87,79%	10	70	25281	22680
Tanzania	10465000	39204000	26,69%	1	30	2140	847
Ukraine	4766000	64915000	7,34%	2	19	2770	4026
USA	64621000	285538000	22,63%	17	194	44906	19081
Venezuela	24815000	28256000	87,82%	1	38	2557	1256
Viêt Nam	5658000	82312000	6,87%	2	25	2668	2228

My hypotheses regard both the multifaceted effects of the context and the decision making processes inside the national Churches. Tough on the one hand this complexity has benefices on the theoretical level, on the other it restricts the range of available methodological tools. Dealing with such a complex model of causation (in which – for example in the case of perceived threat – I hypothesize curvilinear relationships) is against the use of quantitative techniques. For this reason I will use a nested research design based on qualitative methods.

First, I will conduct six in-depth case studies to uncover the underlying processes of the formation of the political strategies of the national Roman Catholic Churches in countries that are both interesting cases on their own and seem to represent the main types of the general trajectories that the churches move on. The preliminary selection of cases is the following:

- the United States for types 7 (pre-Kennedy) and 3 (contemporary)
- Hungary for types 4 (socialism) and 1 (contemporary)
- Brazil for type 2
- Great Britain for type 5
- Romania for type 6
- China for type 8

Although a six-country comparative study cannot be as detailed as works focusing on one state, I believe that the benefits of a broader comparison (like the potential for more plausible generalization) balance this cost. Besides the information provided by the scholarly literature and the manifest datasets of demographic and organizational variables<sup>27</sup>, I will conduct semi-structured elite interviews with representatives of both of the national and local levels to uncover intra-church processes of strategy formation. Case studies are also useful for following the changes through time.

Following the case studies, I will use fuzzy set comparative qualitative analysis (with social/historical context, state and political system, and internal conditions of the Church as composite conditions and the different types of the participation of the Church in politics as the outcome) for testing the generalizability of the results.<sup>28</sup> Though it is a relatively new and somewhat “exotic” method in the toolbox of empirical researchers, QCA has the best abilities for this project with medium number (40) of cases, and a complex model of conjunctural causation. I also consider QCA well suited for confirming the leverage of the studied factors in qualitatively so different cases. Although quantitative differences not necessary cause qualitative divergence, this research project has to deal

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<sup>27</sup> E.g.: from national Conferences of Bishops and provinces of religious orders, statistical agencies, the World Christian Database and *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae* (for the number of believers and data on the clergy, the type of the religious market, and number of institutions connected to the Church); public opinion polls, the World Value Survey and the European Value Survey (for public attitudes towards the Church’s participation of politics, and perceived importance of the cleavage); constitutions, bills regarding legislation in religious matters and financial issues of the churches, state budgets, (for the separation of church and state, and the characteristics of the political system); Church manifestos, statements of religious leaders (for the outcome).

<sup>28</sup> As the existing studies and datasets not evenly cover all the studied countries, it may be necessary to conduct expert surveys to fill in the gaps in the literature.

with various types of conditions (such as “religious markets”) rather than continuous scales. Considering the “religious market” for example, the Argentinean and Polish Catholic Churches seem to be equally strong by the sheer size (around 91-92%) but while the first one faces the rising challenge of some 100 other Christian denominations, the second has to concern about far less (31) rivals.

## 5 Contribution and relevance of the project

The political role of religion is a persistent part of the political debates all over the world. There are diverse views on and debates about the appropriate design of church and state relations. My research on the political strategies of the Catholic Church is innovative because it offers new perspectives on the determinants of church and state relations. Although my research questions focus on the Roman Catholic Church, I strongly believe that it will be helpful to understand the political actions of all hierarchically structured religious organizations.

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