Contributions of the Social Teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on Migration

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Source: Exchange, Volume 44, Issue 4, pages 403 – 427; Publication Year: 2015
DOI: 10.1163/1572543X-12341373; ISSN: 0166-2740 E-ISSN: 1572-543X
Keywords: borders policy; migration; immigration; social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church; Pope Francis; Pastoral Constitution Exsul familia nazarethana

Abstract
This article searches for contributions provided by the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church to avoid suffering and death under migrants, that, following Pope Francis, are provoked from a ‘culture of rejection’. From an interdisciplinary approach this article facilitates the assessment of mechanisms that generate these situations. It also focuses on the ethical and theological criteria of the Catholic social teaching to achieve a culture of encounter and acceptance of migrants and refugees.

Introduction
Migration is one of the most dramatic phenomena of contemporary history, given the diversity and breadth of geographies it entails and taking into account the contexts where emigration, traffic, immigration and re-migration occur. Within each context the interests of the respective societies need to be taken into account. In particular, migrants whose lives are at stake and who face barriers created by the states that envisage their presence as a source of conflict should be considered. The lack of legal means of access to other countries has turned the search for a better life into a criminal act. The industry of human trafficking has emerged and migrants have been forced to initiate an insecure and clandestine course. The ‘death routes’ in various continents, created by protectionist policies, are a dire arena where the agony of people is played out.¹ Tragic deaths circling the isle of Lampedusa have attracted attention to

dehumanizing situations which constitute a marked contrast to the European lifestyle and its humanist and Christian heritage.

Without any doubt, the words of Pope Francis during his visit to Lampedusa in 2013 represented the most energetic condemnation of this injustice from any world leader:

The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference.²

Shortly after his visit to Lampedusa the Pope used the message on the occasion of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees to draw attention to the reality of the suffering and death of many migrants. In this message, under the title 'Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World',³ Pope Francis inquired 'What is involved in the creation of 'a better world.?’ and he answered:

A better world will come about only if attention is first paid to individuals; If human promotion is integral, taking account of every dimension of the person, including the spiritual; If no one is neglected, including the poor, the sick, prisoners, the needy and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:31-46); if we can prove capable of leaving behind a [culture of rejection] and embracing one of encounter and acceptance.⁴

In his message the Pope clarified the meaning of a ‘culture of rejection’ by establishing a relationship between the arrival of immigrants and the fear in part of society to loss their own identity, employment and social stability or crime increasing. Under the term ‘culture’ Pope assembled experiences, realities, activities, psychosocial mechanisms and symbolic structures that lead to the rejection of migrant and refuge seekers. Consequently the ‘culture of rejection’ arises when this last is translated in ‘attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization’, and subsequently, when this generates ‘mistrust, rejection and exclusion’ reactions towards immigrants and refugees.

In addition, both in his homily in Lapedusa and in his message on the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014 the Pope called for a theological reflection regarding the mission of the church from the perspective of migration. He summoned both the church and theology, to pay attention to a situation of profound inhumanity and, from that situation, to discover what God reveals in these current times. The promotion of the human dignity of these migrants has to be carried out by means of a prophetic-liberating dialogue, which even before his election, the Pope articulated and pronounced together with the Latin American Episcopate, where ‘pastoral and theological efforts to promote universal citizenship in which there is no distinction of persons must likewise be deepened.’⁵

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⁴ Pope Francis, World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014. I follow here the Spanish text that formulates ‘cultura del rechazo’ (culture of rejection), and not the English text translated it as ‘a throwaway culture’. 
⁵ Latin American Episcopate Conference (CELAM) and Jorge Mario Bergoglio, The Aparecida Document: V General Conference of the CELAM, CreateSpace Independent Pub, 2013. For a Theology
This has been one of the objectives of the recently formulated theology of migration together with the study of issues and methodologies that take the human condition into account as well as the faith and the testimony of the migrants themselves and all the persons who are in solidarity with their cause. This area of theological reflection needs to engage in the task of searching for criteria to evaluate the mechanisms that produce situations of suffering and even death among migrants. It is also a task proper of this area, to open new spaces for the formulation of theories that make theological reflection possible from those spaces and signs, in order to make the hope for liberation from the boundaries of marginalization and death something credible.

In this article I will consider the papal appeal to reflect theologically the mission of the church from the perspective of migration, in particular I will reflect on the papal proposal to overcome a culture of rejection through a culture of encounter and acceptance of migrants and refugees. More precisely my central question will be: which criteria provide the social teaching of the Catholic Church to leaving behind a culture of rejection that engenders suffering and death under migrants?

In this article I will seek to answer these questions from an interdisciplinary approach; first and foremost from the social sciences from which I will consider the emergence of a culture of rejection. This first part consists of an introduction to the reasons that have instigated the migratory movements and the policies that deny access to the countries of destination. Then in the second part I will focus on the criteria of the catholic social teaching, as it pertains to migration, that aim to achieve a culture of encounter and acceptance of migrants and refugees.

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7 Our study focuses on migrants who are victims of a culture of rejection that results in repressive borders polices. For the study regarding the death of illegal migrants see: Andreas Feldmann and Jorge Durand, ‘Mortalidad en la frontera’, Migración y Desarrollo (Mexico) primer semestre (2008), 11-35.
1 The Emergence of a Culture of Rejection

In this first part I start with an interdisciplinary introduction to realities that incite a culture of rejection. I will pay attention to realities in the countries of origins migrants and the reaction of the countries of destination, especially through the border policy.

An Approach to Human Mobility from the Perspective of the Most Vulnerable

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides statistics that shed light on the multiple facets of human mobility across all continents. Many geographic regions play a double role in the migration dynamics because they create emigration regions which, at the same time, are also immigration regions. Consequently it could be avowed that migration as a movement from south to north or from poor countries to rich countries represents a 40% of all migrations; the north-north migrations represent a 33%; the south-south migration represents 33%; the north-south migration represents 5%. These numbers require a correction of the generalized perception of a migration as a mobilization from south to north. Migration is a global issue and, therefore, the south is also a space for immigration mainly because of the urgency with which the dramatic search for safe havens is played out in countries with borders that lie within areas of conflict. This being so, we observe that in 2011 Pakistan received 1.7 million refugees, Iran received 886,000 and Kenya 566,000. At the beginning of 2014, countries that border Syria received more than 2 million refugees. Due to the space available for this article, I will limit my study to international migrations.

I would roughly describe the immigration of the most vulnerable as a state of suffering provoked by multiple causes such as poverty, persecution, insecurity and dependence. Their vulnerability stems from conflict situations that give rise either to a choice or an imposition that obliges them to abandon their country of origin which is further compromised by restrictive policies at the country’s borders. In other words, different types of political, ethnic, social, cultural, economic, religious situations, as well as environmental degradation, and oppression caused by sexual orientation or gender, situations of urban violence, among other events, are some of the causes that give rise to emigration. The intensity of these conflicts varies in such a way that for some, emigration is a choice whereas for others, it is an obligation. It is a choice when the decision to abandon their own territory ensues from circumstances that hinder a good life. In this case emigration becomes a voluntary search for new horizons in order to solve specific problems and needs. Emigration is an obligatory act when persons or groups are forced to leave their territories, due to governmental coercion (or required by military forces that operate within the territory), or due to serious threats to life.

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8 This distinction is based on a gross national income per capita of us $12,276 in rich countries, for the year 2010. Cf. IOM, Migraciones en el Mundo 2013: El bienestar de los migrantes y el Desarrollo. Ginebra: IOM 2013, 185-187.
Why Do They Emigrate?

Human mobility analysts use different signifiers to distinguish between voluntary emigration and forced emigration without being able to arrive at a clear and acceptable definition. Van Hear’s opinion is that it is not possible to draw a distinctive line because ‘few migrants are wholly voluntary or wholly involuntary. Almost all migration involves some kind of compulsion; at the same time almost all migration involves choices.’

Aside from these classifications, investigators use the term ‘mixed movements’ to signal that migration flows are shaped by persons or groups of persons with three points in common:

- a tragic or conflicting situation that causes them to leave,
- the acceptance of migration as a solution,
- the use of migratory routes that offer better possibilities of access to the country of destination.

Migratory flows are conformed by persons or groups with a range of motivations, economic reasons being the main one.

In academic ‘Migration Studies’, two types of factors are mentioned as the underlying causes for emigration. On the one hand there are the push factors, created by problems in the countries of origin, which may be, for example, lack of job opportunities, demographic pressures or ethnic or religious conflicts. On the other hand there are the attractors or pull factors, in countries that offer the possibilities of answering to the demands that are in fact linked to the push factors. The attraction aspects are made up of values and symbols that arouse a mythical imagery regarding opportunities for access to material goods and security. These aspects are instilled by neoliberal prosperity discourses through films, internet, school books and such that globalize the myth of happiness and identity brought about by the consumption of material goods. This distinction has been criticized by the transnational studies on migration because it reduces its causes to the economic realm and this is not simply an issue of supply and demand. The material and symbolic communication links and bonds as well as the reunification of family, lead to the creation of new communities, new families and new transactional networks in addition to other aspects of motivation that are gathered in the reasons for leaving from, and where to leave towards. The type of migration for educational purposes, the financial possibilities to pay for the higher costs of an irregular immigration, the dangers that the traffic routes entail or the existence of an ‘emigration culture’ in the communities of origin, are also important aspects to take into account, in order to understand why they leave family, friends or their own territory behind. Where do they emigrate to? And, why do they arrive there?

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Migration: An Interconnection of Multiple Realities Separated by Borders

For the IOM, ‘migration’ has a descriptive sense with regards to:

The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.\(^\text{12}\)

The IOM extends this definition to new situations that are unleashed by human mobility, such as internal displacements and ‘brain drain’. At the international level it triggers irregular refugees, labour migration, naturalization, xenophobia, the transfer of funds, or ‘brain gain’. It is keen to observe that the IOM encompasses its meaning of migration from the emigrating countries as well as to the immigrating countries in such a way that it defines emigration as: ‘The act of departing or exiting from one State with a view of settling in another’, and immigration as ‘a process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement.’\(^\text{13}\)

We need to bear in mind that the borders or frontiers between states play a fundamental role in the definition of ‘migration’ of the IOM. Portes and Borocz have contested this definition, because in a period of globalization and intensification of communications and diverse means of transportation, migration cannot be defined only according to the borders of two states. This is a static vision that implies a dislocation of the realities linked to migration in such a way that the states only consider the part that occurs within their borders.\(^\text{14}\) For example, a destination or host state can issue special visas in order to promote ‘brain gain’ (physicians, engineers, among others), without taking into account their responsibility for the ‘brain drain’ in the countries of origin of the migration, which are normally called ‘developing countries’. A state can also prohibit access and not feel any responsibility for the deadly risks of their policies.

The critical contributions made by Portes and Borocz correspond to a new perspective in migration studies coined as ‘Transnational Studies’ by the anthropologists Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc. They define transnationalism from the experiences of relationships and identification of the ‘transmigrants’. In other words these ‘are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationships to more than one nation-state.’\(^\text{15}\)

The contributions made by transnational studies are valuable in order to understand migration as an experience that interconnects a range of realities that are separated by the limits created


\(^{13}\) IOM, Key Migration Terms.


by borders. This separation requires a careful analysis to allow the understanding of the role that borders play with regard to the vulnerability of migrants and, from that understanding begs that we ask ourselves, why and for what reason are the border walls legitimate? What goals can be more important than taking into account the deadly risks that these borders cause?

**Frontiers (or Borders) and Vulnerability**

A true understanding of sad and revolting events, such as boats sinking or shipwrecks and deaths of migrants, across the death routes mentioned before, symbolized today by the events at Lampedusa, cannot be limited to a description of the causes that provoke these movements in the countries of origin. If we understand migration as a process of a transnational nature that involves the contexts of emigration as well as the contexts of traffic and immigration, we then need to analyse the crucial role that international borders or frontiers play in these phenomena.

Etymologically ‘frontier’ comes from the Latin ‘frons, frontis’ that alludes to an object which is ‘in front’. Frontier can be applied therefore to a territorial barrier that, given its limits, can occupy an opposite position (in-front). For Zapata Barrero the concept of frontier emerges from the military culture; frontier is ‘the military forefront of the Roman soldiers, linked to the fort so as to confront the enemy.’

This etymological origin of ‘frontier’ suggests two meanings; on the one hand, a fragmentation of territorial spaces and, on the other, a hostile perception of the other, separated and positioned behind the limits (limes). This image of hostility comes from the fear of being attacked and to lose what has been conquered, as well as a possible attack by the other.

Taking into account the problems that we witness created by frontiers, we are struck by the etymological origin of frontier being linked to military defences and also to the naturalization of geographic accidents (mountains, rivers, seas) to legitimize political or cultural creations. The frontier, which today is increasingly militarized, is a means by which a state ensures a space for control and exercise of its sovereignty. Within this space types of links or bonds are created among all types of institutions and associations organized by the inhabitants (citizens).

According to Douglas it is necessary to distinguish between frontiers (or borders) and limits. Limit suggests a linear meaning, which is a strip that separates two states. Frontier on the other hand is the zone situated at either side of the limit. Each country has its ‘side’ of the limit, which is called a ‘frontier’. The frontier then is defined as a territorial zone between two states that exercise their sovereignty through their right to regulate the conditions of access to their territory. To be allowed or denied entrance to the frontier becomes the control mechanism from the state’s political decisions and, as Zapata-Barrero explains, this develops from three concerns which I will develop below, together with other approaches to the impact caused by frontier policies.

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19 Cf. Zapata-Barrero, 53-54.
The first is ‘security’ in the face of the dangers coming from outside. In order to protect itself a state increases the security at its frontiers or borders and restricts or bans the access of non-nationals. Consequently, the security and internal liberty of the state is defended based on the creation of situations of vulnerability and loss of liberty for non-nationals.

The second concern is related to ‘wellbeing’. According to the social geographers Van Houtum and Pijpers there is a fear of losing financial and social wellbeing. In the same manner as tariff barriers are constructed for the protection of national production, policies are formulated to exclude foreigners under the well-known adage ‘our country is first’, as illustrated by recent developments within the European Union. Both authors state that in our current world where all sorts of global interchanges occur and where interdependencies are emerging, a total lockout policy concerning the frontiers or borders is impossible. Therefore, the metaphor of a ‘Fortress Europe’ is questioned because there is a dissonance between ‘the fear of losing comfort’ and the strategic interests to increase it. The implications of this are that it is impossible to do without the work force or the capabilities of immigrants. The frontier policies put in place by the European Union cannot be explained with the metaphor ‘Fort’, but it can surely be explained as a ‘Gated Community’. A closed community entails the formation of an enclave of wealthy persons, who exclude themselves from the rest of society for fear of the social and economic problems provoked by structural injustice. Diverse mechanisms are put in place for this type of enclave. Towards the outside the result is segregation, within, it is indifference. The closed community is an oasis for security and wellbeing and the country’s problems are envisaged as abstract issues, the perception of which lack the urgency that creates anguish to the rest of the population. In a broader perspective, the metaphor of a closed community helps to identify the current function of the European Union’s frontiers: ‘As with the policies of the European Union, within a closed community a capitalist lifestyle of comfort is protected at the expense of the great social and material costs placed upon those who remain outside the doors.’ The metaphor of the European Union as a closed community helps to understand the policies for an increasing inequality between human beings that lead to the production of new types of segregation, including the foreseeable death of those that are excluded.

A final concern in the face of the policy of closing frontiers emerges from the construction and consolidation of ‘identity’ and the fear of losing it. In this sense the frontier is considered a bastion for the defence of one’s own identity, creating static images of the others. ‘These frontiers’, Brenna states,

‘end up being a space of tension: identity illusions shared with those inside, conflicting categories of differentiation from those outside. It speaks of the space where, rather than taking on the differences, we underline them, we measure them out and use them;


Van Houtum and Pijpers, 116.

Idem.
we need to categorize the unknown in order to ensure that the unknown does not bring us unrest or threatens us; we need categories; we cannot live without them.\textsuperscript{23}

The frontier (or border) constitutes a frame of reference to build an identity through the homogenization of internal differences that the philosopher Karskens attributes to a nationalist ideology.\textsuperscript{24} Therefore, strategies are developed for the production of images, and their accompanying discourses, of inhabitants that share common traits (language — not dialects, religion, all types of epic narratives, race and so forth) that distinguish them as a people. These distinctions presuppose distorted images of foreign people in order to highlight the insider’s singularity. The definition of common characteristics becomes a list of criteria for even polarizing those differences, a phenomenon that social psychology calls the mechanism of ingroup and out-group.\textsuperscript{25} The breach grows between ‘us’ and ‘them’. A breach that believes that an ‘other’ negatively impacts society when he/she trespasses the border line. It is understood that whoever comes from outside not only comes in, but invades and introduces foreign values. In order to avoid these risks a border policy is designed with a rigorous control (military) in order to reject and to keep ‘others’ out, and protect ‘us insiders’ from the ‘outsiders’.\textsuperscript{26} Inevitably, the frontier or border is not static and in spite of the exclusion policies those who are outside influence the identity of those inside.

A dual logic lies beneath in the process of legitimizing frontiers for the defence of identity: the internal is included and it is given a characteristic of affinity; the outside or external is excluded and the attribution is an ‘otherness’ that poses a potential danger. It seems paradoxical that the protection of one’s own identity through a stereotyping of the others does not exclusively restrict a rejection strategy at the border. This constitutes one of the main breeding grounds where new invisible frontiers within the societies of destination for migrants have sown present day multicultural conflicts. The stereotyping of outsiders resonates in a negative valuing of immigrants, because it presupposes that their culture, religion and values are not compatible with the rest of the destination society. In other words, their rejection, marginalization or discrimination within the destination societies is deeply interconnected with the imagined and disseminated stereotypes by the discourses that are favourable to border restrictions. For the ‘other’, these labels lead to a meaning that upon entering the destination or host society, an asymmetrical process of social, economic or cultural insertion begins, because of the lack of power and because of the deep disregard of the immigrants in terms of their image, their knowledge and their experiences.

From our interdisciplinary approach, we are able to conclude that the border policies are a reaction to a negative perception of whatever is not national. The fear of losing security, wellbeing, and identity, lead to a definition of the ‘other’ as a danger that needs to be avoided. The frontiers or borders are instrumentalized in order to keep undesirables outside and in so doing, those inside can turn their backs at one of the greatest urgencies of our world. This defensive interpretation of frontier, adds new conflicts to the needs that motivate emigration.

\textsuperscript{25} See the pioneering article by Henry Tajfel, ‘Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour’, Social Science Information 13/2 (1974), 65-93.
Finally, from a transnational view to migration, we can conclude that both the situation that encouraged people to emigrate or to flee abroad, and their negative perception by the destination countries support the formation and the symbolic and material expression of a culture of rejection. Repressive border policies and the mortal victims that this provoke are the most evident manifestations of this rejection.

2 Contributions from the Catholic Social Teaching to Generate a Culture of Encounter and Acceptance of Migrants and Refugees

Supported by studies from various investigations and from data provided by the IOM, we have explored some basic notions in order to understand the emergence of defensive attitudes against the migrant, characterized as culture of rejection by Pope Francis. There are underlying reasons that people may have to emigrate and consequently the countries of destination design growingly strict border policies. In this second part the next step leads us to study different ecclesial documents searching for ethical, theological, and practical criteria to achieve a culture of encounter and acceptance of migrants and refugees.

Human mobility represents a particular concern for the Catholic Church. During colonial times, emigration of European Catholics to the conquered territories was accompanied by a mission theology known as the *plantatio ecclesiae*. The church arrived at territories to evangelize the autochthonous peoples, characterized as tabula rasa, and to assist the colonizers. In the 19th century the migratory flow from Europe to countries in the Southern Cone of South America, United States and Canada, shifted the original situation. Catholic Christians arrived in these territories, divided by the borders of the new independent states, with their own territorial structures (dioceses). The new arrivals constituted ethnic minorities that needed a particular type of pastoral accompaniment according to their language, their culture and their community expressions of faith (rites, hymns, processions, sacraments). The need for pastoral accompaniment for German and Italian immigrants in particular, called the attention of the ecclesiastical magisterium towards migration. However, which are those aspects of migration that have received attention from the Catholic Church? How does the Catholic Church respond to the problems related to rejections of migrants and border policies?

I will present the results of my analysis with an outline of the social teaching of the Catholic Church as it pertains to migration according to the topics linked to the conflicts generated by border policies and for which I will point out four periods examined below. Before beginning of this analysis I wish to clarify that I interpret the social teaching of the Catholic Church from the guidelines for evangelization offered by the Latin American Conference of Bishops (CELAM) which establishes a relationship between human promotion, liberation and the social teaching of the Catholic Church. In fact, CELAM defines the social teaching of the Catholic Church as a set of Christian orientations and action criteria inspired by the Bible, patristic studies, theology and the ecclesiastical magisterium. The contents of the social teaching of the Church concerns the whole people of God, insofar as it teaches human dignity as an image of God and defends its inalienable rights.

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28 CELAM, Puebla, 474-475. We recommend using the periods introduced by the Brazilian theologians Marileda Baggio and Luiz Carlos Susin for exploring the social teaching of the Catholic Church from the
Concern for the Faith and Human Condition of the Migrant

In the 19th century new processes of human mobility were inaugurated starting from the European Empires through to the new states. Poverty and new types of exploitation motivated by the industrial revolution were the triggering aspects. In this context Pope Leo XIII’s Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) condemns the exploitation of workers, and pleads for respect of their human condition and for fair salaries. This papal concern must be understood in the context of the initiatives by religious congregations and bishops who were preoccupied by the situation of the emigrants and their pastoral care, such as the Patronage of Saint Raphael (Rafaelsverein) established in Germany in 1872 and the congregation of Priestly Fraternity of Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo, founded by Monsignor Giovanni Battista Scalabrini in 1887.

Towards the end of the 19th century the Catholic Church faced the challenge of migration regarding both the destination territories and the originating territories. In the destination territories, the church cared for Catholic persons in the context of a Protestant majority and worked for the pastoral wellbeing and the improvement of the livelihood of immigrants. By the same token, in the emigration territories, the church authorities assigned the creation of ecclesiastical structures of parishes and dioceses to offer guidance regarding the difficult situations that emigration generate and even to discourage it.

In later periods other initiatives emerged to increase the ecclesial response to the challenges of emigration. In 1914, Pope Pius X, proposed the foundation of a specialized seminary for the formation of priests to be assigned to Italian immigrants. The Sacred Consistorial Congregation published a decree in 1914 stating that missionaries for migrants had to complete studies in ethnography in order to be prepared for the ad quam church that tended to these persons in their particular situation of migration. The seminary began its operations in 1920 after World War I, under the name of Pontifical College for Italian Emigration.

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Emigration as a Natural Right

Subsequently the impoverished regions in Europe after World War II, the Franco dictatorship in Spain and the socialist governments in Europe set off new migratory movements in the post-world war period. All this influenced the perception of human mobility as a constant phenomenon shaped by new immigrants and the already established immigrants. In his Apostolic Constitution *Exsul familia nazarethana* (On spiritual care to migrants) issued in 1950 Pope Pius XII presented a historical summary of the contributions of the Catholic Church towards migration.\(^{33}\) It follows then, that the Catholic Church paid attention to the phenomenon of migration in different continents and made a distinction of its various facets: the refugees, those displaced from their countries, those living in Diaspora, the boat people, foreigners, outlaws, pilgrims, emigrants and so forth. *Exsul familia* represented a great advance in the social teaching of the Catholic Church because it regarded emigration as a natural right; a right that shows up clearly in Chapter 2 of Matthew’s gospel narration of the exile of the Sacred Family.

The Catholic Church’s preoccupation with migrants is sustained by theological and ethical arguments finding their origins in this Biblical reference. In fact, in the introduction the document presents the first theological reflections regarding migration from the experience of the Nazarene Family that emigrated in search of refuge from King Herod’s persecution (therefore the name *Exsul Familia Nazarethana*). This experience makes them a comforting model for all of those who, ‘whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, are forced to leave their native land, their beloved parents and relatives, their close friends, to seek a foreign soil.’\(^{34}\) The narration of the flight to Egypt presents (political) persecution as one of the reasons to emigrate, at the same time it implicitly shows the crossing of frontiers as a solution that constitutes a right, in order to ensure a life being threatened.

A second theological reflection showed, *avant la lettre*, a brief Christological explanation of migration that established a relationship between the emigration of Jesus and the Creator’s plan for salvation in such a way that the Son ‘be in this type too of hardship and grief, the firstborn among many brethren, and precede them in it’ (p. 2). Jesus is presented as the one who shares the pain of those who are obliged to leave their own territory and as who approaches all those who are in the midst of a migratory journey.

The third theological reflection has as a backdrop, the theology of creation exulted as a gift from God for the well-being of all, and therefore, as goods to which all, searching for a vital space, are entitled to.\(^{35}\)

The Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia Nazarethana* formulated emigration as a natural right on these theological foundations. Without discussing the philosophical meanings that are involved in this formulation, I will highlight the exhortations for a new political view regarding the role of frontiers or borders.

First of all the document underlined the favourable aspects of migration for persons or groups and places involved, supported by the destination states that foster a welcoming policy. An

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\(^{33}\) Published in Rome, 1 August 1952.

\(^{34}\) Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution ‘*Exsul familia nazarethana*’, 1950, No. 1.

\(^{35}\) Pius XII, No. 62 and 63.
ecclesial proposal follows that urged overcoming the hostile meaning of frontiers or borders, so a state can value the positive effects of migration and becomes aware that goods can be shared.

Secondly, the challenge to share goods does not mean that the Catholic Church ignores the sovereignty of the states. On the contrary, the church fully recognizes the power of the states; however it advises that they exercise their authority in such a way to strike a balance between the satisfaction of their own needs and the needs of the foreigners, so access is not denied to impoverished persons born in other places.36

**Frontier Policies Seeking the Wellbeing of Immigrants**

During the decade of the 1960s the decolonization processes in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean region began. Together with the employment policies to attract cheap labour, these events generate new migratory movements, not necessarily from the North to the South, but rather from South to North. From the Pontificate of Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) a new period of ecclesial attention to human mobility emerged. The Second Vatican Council introduced a new understanding that unifies the church as the People of God and leads the way to a service to the People of God.37

After the Council, Pope Paul VI promulgated the Apostolic Letter in the form of *Motu Proprio, Pastoralis Migratorum Cura*, and shortly after the Sacred Congregation of Bishops, published the Instruction *De Pastorali Migratorum Cura*.38 Within the spirit of aggiornamento many documents of this period represent an updating and deepening of the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia Nazarethana*, taking into account the new context of human mobility and the theology of the council.

According to the Instruction, the attention paid by the Catholic Church to foreign migrants follows through from her own condition of being a foreigner with all types of deficiencies and with people needing pastoral care. This condition is fundamental and has to be placed before any other distinction or classification based on the length of the migratory stage. In addition, the instruction affirms the right to emigrate, ‘to select a new home in foreign lands, and to seek conditions of life worthy of man’39 in situations that deny access to material and spiritual goods.

Both individual persons and their families have the right to emigrate, however, at the same time they are advised of their responsibilities once they arrive at the destination societies: ‘Anyone who is going to encounter another people should have a great esteem for their patrimony and their language and their customs.’40

The document also recommends a voluntary accommodation and to learn the language as soon as possible, because this facilitates participation in activities with other persons in the

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36 Pius XII, No. 62.
39 Congregation for Bishops, No. 7.
40 Congregation for Bishops, No. 10.
destination society. This does not mean that one has to resign to one’s own ways of expression of ideas, culture and spirituality.\footnote{Congregation for Bishops, No. 11.}

Regarding border policies the instruction warns authorities that they cannot violate the right to emigration or immigration except where grave requirements legitimized by the common good demand this. In other words border policies cannot be designed and implemented based solely on the criteria of the immigrants.

**The Defence of the Rights to Immigrate and to not Need to Emigrate**

In the last part of the 1980s, migrations for political reasons increased. Military dictatorships, civil wars and problems within the young African democracies provoked displacements to neighbouring countries and South-North migrations. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the globalization effects and neoliberal economic policies, as well as the Middle East wars before and after the 2001 terrorists attacks to New York, contributed to a multidirectional character of migration. Specifically the so-called globalization of terrorism legitimated a new doctrine of state security that increases the restrictions on borders.

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Laborem Exsercens* (1981) distinguished the migration issue as something that deals with security and work policies within the states (No. 23).\footnote{John Paul II, *Laborem Exsercens*, Castengandolfo, 14 September 1981, especially No. 23.} In this document the pope defends the value of work for the human being and the validity of labour rights in conditions of equality without the distinction of nationality. This was a characteristic of his pontificate that led him to include the issue of migrants in a universal perspective of human rights and dignity.

John Paul II used his annual messages on occasion of the World Day of Migrants, which was instituted in 1914, as a pulpit from where to denounce the effects of restrictive policies, defend the rights of emigrants and encourage the formation of societies that share their rights and responsibilities with migrants. These messages offer a broad spectrum of theological, Biblical and ethical approaches to the issue of human mobility. A fitting example is his message from the year 2000, where he considered the vulnerability of migrants:

> The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted from their own land, of families forcefully separated, of those who, in the rapid changes of our day, are unable to find a stable home anywhere. She senses the anguish of those without rights, without any security, at the mercy of every kind of exploitation, and she supports them in their unhappiness.\footnote{John Paul II, World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2000, Vatican City, 21 November 1999, No. 6.}

> The cry of the migrant comes from the suffering that includes them in ‘the migration of the desperate’.\footnote{John Paul II, World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2000, No. 4.} The Pope regrets that in countries with great economic resources they, tend to tighten their borders under pressure from a public opinion disturbed by the inconveniences that accompany the phenomenon of immigration. Society finds itself having to
deal with the ‘clandestine’ men and women in illegal situations, without any rights in a country that refuses to welcome them, victims of organized crime or of unscrupulous entrepreneurs.\textsuperscript{45}

John Paul II proposed in his message a solution from a reflection that we could interpret as a theology of hospitality, ‘In Jesus, God came seeking human hospitality’\textsuperscript{46} and, in the Good News message of Jesus (Luke 4:18) to encourage a ecclesial mission destined to work for the unity of the human family by rejecting all forms of discrimination. Based on this theological view, the pope highlighted the responsibility of the states so migrants have no need to emigrate and to implement immigration policies ‘based on the recognition of fundamental human rights.’\textsuperscript{47} At a different occasion Pope John Paul II, stated the following idea on a formula that summarizes the main points of the social teaching of the church on the issue of migration: the right to not need to emigrate. This right deals with the responsibility of the state to create the necessary conditions for people to achieve a life of dignity, whereas the right to immigrate concerns the responsibility of the destination states.\textsuperscript{48}

Under the Pontificate of John Paul II the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People published an Instruction called \textit{Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi} (The love of Christ towards migrants) in 2004.\textsuperscript{49} This began with a description of the current situation of persons, groups and the new situations related to human mobility such as the increase in human trafficking and the feminization of migration.

With regard to border or frontier policies, the instruction criticized those policies that are limited to the national territory. It affirmed that a border policy needs to be coordinated between various states. It also criticized the frontier or border policies that we find in various host countries or destination states because they created new conflicting situations: ‘Even more ineffective would be purely restrictive policies, which, in turn, would generate still more negative effects, with the risk of increasing illegal entries and even favouring the activities of criminal organisations.’\textsuperscript{50}

The instruction also explained that migration constitutes a structural element of the current world situation and proposed to approach it from Biblical and theological criteria. These criteria exercised an impact in the perception of the plurality of origins of the members of the church and an understanding of ‘mission’ as the practice of hospitality.\textsuperscript{51} The document upheld that migration is part of the nature of the church and the place where it bears witness to its fidelity to the gospel. Similarly the mission of hospitality to the migrant implies a dialogue between the different cultures and religions. It is a mission that involves the cooperation between ecclesiastical authorities and pastoral agents both in the churches of origin and the destination or host churches.\textsuperscript{52}

Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical \textit{Caritas in veritate} (2009) took the main lines of \textit{Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi} and deepened the call towards an international planning of the

\textsuperscript{45} Cf. idem.
\textsuperscript{46} John Paul II, World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2000, No. 5.
\textsuperscript{47} John Paul II, World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2000, No. 6.
\textsuperscript{50} Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, No. 7.
\textsuperscript{51} Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, No. 16.
\textsuperscript{52} Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, No. 70.
migratory policies according to the needs and inalienable rights of migrants.\textsuperscript{53} He also encouraged the destination or host states to consider the various positive aspects of migration. His proposal for world leaders to find a solution is extremely important. This means that the United Nations should consider a reform in order to reach the concept of an organization as a true ‘family of nations’.\textsuperscript{54} In this sense the pope proposed to seek the common good of all nations based on the main principles of the social teaching of the Catholic Church which are subsidiarity and solidarity, introduced by Leo XIII.

Lastly, recent developments have come from the new pontifical period of Pope Francis. In the Introduction, I mentioned that the pope has made a prophetic denouncement regarding the suffering of migrants. In his first message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, the pope reiterated the teachings of Pope John Paul II regarding the responsibility of the countries of origin so that emigration does not appear as the sole possibility for reaching a life of peace, justice and security.\textsuperscript{55} In addition he issued a call to the communication media to divulge an image of the migrant disencumbered of prejudice and that does justice to the majority of migrants. Francis proposed a search for a solution from a fundamental shift, which would imply leaving behind the ‘culture of rejection’, and bringing about a ‘culture of encounter’. The pope has not approached the problems generated by the frontiers but rather he has pointed to a sensitization of the destination or host societies, under whose names the border policies have been designed.

The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and the Pontifical Council \textit{Cor Unum} published a document with the title \textit{Welcoming Christ in Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons: Pastoral Guidelines} in 2013. This document aimed to attract the attention to the current situation of the displaced, the refugees and those who seek asylum.\textsuperscript{56} The document has offered guidelines related to the variations of the situations these persons experience: stateless persons, trafficking of persons, sexual exploitation, children soldiers, and so forth. Regarding the border policies the document referred to another document entitled \textit{Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity}, issued in 1992, which urged states to respect human rights and, to assist those obliged to flee due to violent situations.\textsuperscript{57} Lastly we point out the call to the protection of refugees at the frontiers, and the recognition of their rights.\textsuperscript{58}

To end, in his first Apostolic Exhortation \textit{Evangelii Gaudium}, Pope Francis approached the situation of migrants as an integral social dimension of evangelization:

\begin{quote}
Migrants present a particular challenge for me, since I am the pastor of a Church without frontiers, a Church which considers herself mother to all. For this reason, I exhort all countries to a generous openness which, rather than fearing the loss of local identity, will prove capable of creating new forms of cultural synthesis. How beautiful
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54} Benedict XVI, No. 67.
\textsuperscript{56} Cf. Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and Pontifical Council \textit{Cor Unum}, \textit{Welcoming Christ in Refugees and Forcibly Displaced; Pastoral guidelines}, Vatican City 2013.
\textsuperscript{58} Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and Pontifical Council \textit{Cor Unum}, No. 61.
are those cities which overcome paralyzing mistrust, integrate those who are different and make this very integration a new factor of development! How attractive are those cities which, even in their architectural design, are full of spaces which connect, relate and favour the recognition of others.

According to the pope migration provides the church an opportunity to witness its identity of universality and motherhood, i.e. as a community that is not divided by international borders and cares for all peoples. This identity has a deep missionary dimension due to *Evangelii Gaudium*, the joy of the announcement of the good news, becomes an exhortation to societies in such way that they do not let that fear may lead to exclusion of migrants — as we have seen in the first part of this study, the fear is one of the roots of the culture of exclusion. In contrast these societies must address migration as something positive, taking its advantage and opening the necessary spaces of recognition to increase social relations.

**Conclusion**

The goal of this article was to search for criteria provided by the social teaching of the Catholic Church to leaving behind a culture of rejection. In the realization of this goal I considered the underlying causes for emigration and the roll border policies that produce new conflicts and forms of vulnerability. The outcomes of that exercise indicate that the frontiers or borders acquire a meaning of gradual defensiveness because they emphasizes an imaginary subject of the foreigner as a potential for conflict and danger to one’s own security, comfort and identity. This perception is made operative through policies that only allow entrance to those who are necessary to safeguard the closed community. This frontier or border policy not only creates a separation between human beings, but also dehumanizes those who are rejected and those who are included in the closed communities as well.

Ensuing from my investigation, the Catholic Church, through its social teaching, tackles various questions, challenges and dilemmas that refer to human mobility. Its approach to migrants and their situations recognizes a continuous development that shows a variety of shades. From the social teaching proposed by Pope Leo XIII we can note a growing interest for pastoral care and for the adverse situations that the immigrants encounter in their host countries.

At the end of the 19th century migration was posed as an issue for the Catholic Church in the countries of origin and the responsibility that this entails in caring for the working conditions within these countries. Later, after the experiences of economic crisis and the great movement of refugees caused by the Second World War, in the document *Exsul familia nazarethana*, known today as the magna carta for the Catholic Church’s social teaching as it pertains to migration, Pius XII, introduced ethical and theological criteria in order to recognize migrants and lend support in the difficult conditions that they suffer in the destination countries. The main preoccupation that emerges is the issue of border or frontier policies that demand regulations that take into consideration the natural right to emigrate. This was an issue that at the start of the 20th century, the church introduced gradually, together with its efforts to care for refugees without any religious distinctions. We note that the preoccupation of Pius XII for the right to emigrate begins in 1952, four years after the promulgation in 1948 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which specifies in its Articles 13 and 14, the right to circulate freely and the right to asylum, as universal rights. In addition to advocating these articles, the

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pope also urged the implementation of a border policy based on the common good and natural right.

*Exsul familia nazarethana* presented the fundamental bases that shape a common thread in the concern that the Vatican authorities lend to the topic of frontiers. These core aspects of ecclesial concern for border policies shaped the foundation of the social teaching of the Catholic Church as it pertains to migration. From the pontificates of John XXIII through to Francis, these have been further affirmed and reinterpreted in light of the new theological questions and approaches. Therefore in the social teaching of the Catholic Church we find a set of teachings as guidelines for the historical development of the border or frontier policies together with the specific attention towards the most vulnerable persons. Towards the inside of the Christian community, the social teaching of the Catholic Church presents the hospitality and welcoming of migrants as a core element in the current mission of the Catholic Church. And externally this social teaching promotes transformations that respond to the demands of justice, dignity and solidarity that emerge from the cry of the victims of border policies.

From an analytical approach it is possible to ensure that the focus of the social teaching of the Catholic Church, converge with the perspectives and conclusions of social investigators that I analysed in the first part of this article. Both social scientists and the ecclesial documents converge in their critical focus on the nefarious effects of border policies and on the need to humanize them. The anti-migration policies are creating all sorts of exclusions and for many people this brings them much closer to events that may cause their death. Pope John Paul II wisely warned in 1981 that as a greater reality shaped by those who are obliged to leave their countries, migration is ‘perhaps the greatest tragedy of all the human tragedies of our time.’

For a better understanding of the proposals of the social teaching of the Catholic Church to leaving behind a culture of rejection I summarize below the central findings of my study, avoiding unnecessary repetitions:

- The right to not emigrate: the push factors are taken into account and the emigrating countries and other countries involved are requested to take on their responsibility to solve the problems that provoke emigration.

- Attention to the multiple causes as well as the diversity of situations and victims: The social teaching takes into account the various causes from the subjects of the migratory process: refugees, displaced persons, those who seek asylum, among others, and the diversity of victims resulting from restrictive policies: uprooted persons, split families, abused persons, trafficking of persons, clandestine movements, among other types of victims.

- The right to immigration and the recognition of the fundamental rights of migrants as human persons. Based on the claims of those rights, the border policies are judged when they are applied to safeguard one’s own ‘culture of wellbeing’ — using the metaphor of the closed community as an analogy, which tends to create indifference towards the needs of others.

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The wellbeing of the migrants constitutes an unavoidable criterion from which to judge the design of the border or frontier policies. This implies an option for those who suffer most, with special considerations in terms of their obligations and responsibilities once they arrive at their destination or host societies. This implies also a welcoming policy to overcome the hostile meaning inside and outside frontiers or borders.

The previous summary helps us to establish a link between social teaching inaugurated by Leo XIII through the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and that of the current Pope Francis and which I take up in his own words as a ‘conversion of attitudes’ in order to transform a ‘culture of rejection’ to a ‘culture of encounter’. For more than one century the social doctrine has emphasized two lines:

- the legal aspects concerning the rights of migrants and the border policy, and
- Christian and ethical responsibilities of churches and countries of origin and destination of migration and the responsibilities of migrants self.

Pope Francis continues this discourse of Christian ethics from a new approach, that I qualify as intercultural relationships. He examines the causes, effects and possible solutions from interactions among countries and between migrants and host societies. That is why he proposes overcoming the asymmetries provoked by the in-group and out-group mechanisms through a profound change in the way one perceives oneself and how one perceives the ‘other’; not with hostility and exclusion — that is the culture of rejection — but rather through a truly edifying interactions and an awareness to shape a human family that can forge justice and fraternity.

### About the author

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