THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE POLITICAL TRANSITION IN TRENTINO. 1919-1922

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the impact of the Holy See as a multi-layered actor in the political change occurred in Trentino after World War I. The region, previously controlled by Austria-Hungary, was annexed by Italy after the Treaty of Saint-Germain, together with the German speaking Sudtirol, being the new border set at the Brenner Pass. Consequently, one of the major issues faced in this period was the status of the German minority. Moreover, since the Prince-Bishopric of Trento (that was secularized in 1803), Trentino had a long history of administrative independence. For this reason, the question of autonomy from the center and, in general, the institutional structure that the “new provinces” were to assume, were of great importance in the political debate.

The Holy See had a proactive role in defining the outcome of this political change. I will argue that this action took place on three interconnected levels: the Holy See itself, the local church and the laity. The transition from Austria-Hungary to Italy caused a change in legislation that affected the relations, both diplomatic and political, between the Holy See and the State concerning the administration of the Region. At a local level the central character of this transition was the Bishop Celestino Endrici. Proclaimed Bishop in 1904, Endrici was then confined in Heiligenkreuz in 1916 due to concerns of irredentism. After his triumphal return to Trento November 13th 1918 he was elevated to champion of Italian identity. The myth surrounding his figure allowed him to play an important role, making him an unavoidable interlocutor for the Italian governors. Lastly, the role of the Church in the political change in Trentino depended on the diffusion of Catholicism in the region. It was, and for some extents still is, one of the main characters shaping the local identity: the so-called trentinismo. Furthermore, the laity was organized in mass associations, such as the Società dei Padri di Famiglia (Family men’s Society), and in a party. The Popular Party was founded in Trentino in 1904 (while in Italy it appeared only in 1919) and by the end of World War I was the major political group in the region. The interaction of these three levels, Roman hierarchy, local clergy and laity, provided a multifaceted and widespread action by the Catholic Church, that could thus be considered one of the main actors in shaping the Trentino’s political transition.

This paper presents a single case-study of a past political transition. However, it aims at providing a framework of analyses for similar cases. Particularly, the study of the role played by the local clergy, a feature often neglected in the analysis of the Holy See’s foreign politics, would be valued as pivotal.
INTRODUCTION

The Holy See is a unique actor of the international system. It is both a Church and a State and acts transnationally. (Ferrari 2006, Haynes 2012) The transnationality of the Vatican foreign policy is guaranteed by its multi-level structure. Following Mariano Barbato interpretation in his 2013 article “A State, a Church, a Diplomat”, I propose a three levels of action’s model. Differently from Barbato, I would argue that the stateness of the Vatican only serves the purpose of legitimating Papal diplomacy, without implementing relevant international policies. Instead it is the local clergy that pursue policies that affect both the international and the national level, especially when talking institution building.

Political institution building can occur in different ways. Sometimes it can involve the whole national political system, other times it can be locally defined. The following case study examines the institution building that took place in Trentino after it became part of the Reign of Italy in the aftermath of World War II. (Leonardi Pombeni 2006) The annexation of a small province that, up to that point was part of a significantly different kind of State, called for extensive political transformation and thus for the development of local institutions. (Capuzzo 1992, 1996) The case study wants to prove the necessity to evaluate the role of local clergy in studies on the influence of the Catholic Church in institution building.

Map 1. Trentino and the dismemberment of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

In the first section of the paper I propose a theoretical model that will address the multi-layered configuration of the Holy See, as divided in STATE, CLERGY and CHURCH\(^1\). The theory here exposed aims at the creation of a practical model that can be directly applied to historical case studies. A model that would help

\(^1\) I use capital letters to identify the levels and distinguish them from the actual actors.
recognize and define patterns of relations, which are undeniable when approaching a diocesan archive. Therefore in the following case study section the argument is presented on the basis of the proposed model. The case study regards the transition of Trentino from the Habsburg Empire to the Reign of Italy following World War II and the role performed by the Bishop of Trento Celestino Endrici in the definition of the new political system. The CLERGY has here a central role and is analyzed through its relation to the other levels and the influence their combined efforts were able to perform on practical issues.

THE HOLY SEE AS A MULTI-LAYERED ACTOR

The Holy See can be accounted as a multi-layered Religious Transnational Actor. (Haynes 2012) Its foreign policy is transnational in that it is able to impact on both international and national politics in regards to certain issues, such as religious freedom, neutrality, peace and human rights. This core issues, despite developing due to the flow of time, remained central to Vatican international politics and its relations to other states.

The ability to shape political discourse and agenda on both international and national stage vastly relays on the wade spectrum of action that the Holy See is able to perform. In particular the Catholic Church has the capability to act on different levels and most importantly to coordinate and merge this different kinds of action. (Barbato 2013) Moreover, the Holy See is most effective in promoting its policies when able to operate complementarily on more than one level.

The following argument is mainly built on the article by Mariano Barbato (2013) “A State, a Diplomat, and a Transnational Church: The Multi-Layered actorness of the Holy See”, while proposing some substantial differences. Barbato identifies three interdependent and reciprocally strengthening levels: a Church, a State and a Diplomat. Church represents the mass of believers widespread all over the world. State symbolizes the Vatican City State and the Holy See as government of the Catholic Church. Finally Diplomat stands for the charismatic figure of the Pope.

Although convincing this model, simplifying as a theorization require, seems to be limited to the ecclesiastical top hierarchy. It stressed the role of the Vatican City State, while it seems to only serve the purpose of legitimizing the International stance of the Papacy. This thesis is also supported by the historical circumstances that brought to the reassignment of some sort of sovereignty to the Pope. In 1929 when the Lateran Treaty was signed the International system essentially recognized only states as valid actors. (Duursma 1996) Moreover in this model the figure of the Pope holds an excessively pivotal role. Even though the personal mark that every Pope brought to Vatican politics cannot be denied,
the Holy See kept a rather clear approach throughout its recent history. Consequently I would argue that, when approaching specific case studies as STATE we can consider both the charismatic figure of the Papacy and its personal takes on the issue at hand and the diplomacy carried out by the Vatican hierarchies, mainly the Secretary of State.

Furthermore the model neglects the role of the local clergy. The level CHURCH includes all manifestation happening through the involvement of different actors such as lay association, confessional parties, and also, although not explicitly mentioned, the clergy. Clergymen have the opportunity and possibility to intervene in the local political matters as spokespersons for the Catholic Church, while at the same time being slightly independent from the Holy See.

The hereby proposed model consists in three concentric levels. They are interdependent in that they exist together and because of each other, the one cannot survive and, all the more so, successfully act without the other. They also are reciprocally strengthening because they are more likely to succeed the more they coordinate their actions. These levels could also be imagined as hierarchically organized.

A. STATE, that is the Holy See, as government of the Vatican City State and at the same time of the Catholic Church. The study of this level entails the analysis the Papal policies both considering the personal and charismatic characteristic of the Pope and his actions synergistically with the Secretary of state.

B. CLERGY, at the local level the government of the Catholic Church is delegated to local clergy, that complies by the Vatican policies but maintains some kind of autonomy. The study of this level includes the local clergy at all its stages: from Cardinals to Bishops to priests, whenever they have contacts with civil authorities, both local and National. At this level Bishop conferences deserve a special mention, having been created with the purpose of coordinating Bishops’ action in a given country. (Coglievina 2010, Feliciani 2014)

C. CHURCH, as worldwide faith Catholicism has millions of believers: a mass of believers. Due to its polyhedral nature this level is the most difficult to assess. A mass can take action in different forms. Some are easily recognizable like confessional parties or lay association. While other are more complex, Catholicism pervades culture and identity of a community and thus influences politics from within.
Since my doctoral project’s nature is historical, I mostly investigated the level CLERGY and its relations to the other levels.

**FROM THE HABSBURG EMPIRE TO THE REIGN OF ITALY: CELESTINO ENDRICI DURING THE TRANSITION 1919-1922**

The following case study concerns a very specific period, comprises between November 3\(^{rd}\), 1918, the day the Italian army entered the city of Trento, and November 3\(^{rd}\), 1922, the day the first fascist prefect took control of the city. In those three years Trentino experienced a political transition. Once part of the Hapsburg Land of Tyrol, it became a province of the Reign of Italy. The annexation of an area that could be defined culturally Italian but had lived under a significantly different legal approaches caused the need to absorb the old and establish new political institutions. After WWI also other provinces passed from Austrian-Hungarian to Italian control: South-Tyrol and the so-called Venezia Giulia on the Adriatic coast.

Transition to the Italian control was not abrupt; right after the end of the conflict a military administration was established. At the end of WWI Trentino’s condition were uncertain until the Peace treaty in September 1919 when the new borders between Italy and the newly founded Republic of Austria were ratified. This situation was hard mainly on the German population living in South-Tyrol, which
did not recognize Italian authority. Moreover, the Italian Prime Minister Francesco Saverio Nitti sanctioned the civil administration in July 1919, well before the Peace Treaty.

On November 3rd, 1918 general Guglielmo Pecori Giraldi, in command of the 1° Armata, entered the city of Trento and became the Italian military governor of the province. During the war Trentino was a warzone thus suffered huge destruction and the damages, both material and monetary, were estimated as more than 2billions Lire. (Leonardi Pombeni 2006) The region experienced also a sort of civil war: only the few that decided to enroll in the Italian army were eligible for collective recognition, not the thousand that were enlisted in the Hapsburg force. (Corsini 1994) In a letter to Pope Benedict XV, Bishop Endrici described the situation as follows:

«La insolita questione della valuta, l’incertezza dell’avvenire economico e religioso-morale del paese, vessazioni ad un certo numero di persone, provocate da elementi nostrani poco buoni, la estrema lentezza nella restaurazione del paese, il protrarsi del governo militare, sono altrettante ragioni per le quali non ritorna ancora la calma negli spiriti.

The unresolved currency issue, the uncertainty of the economic and religious-moral future of the country, oppressions to a certain number of people, caused/excited by not-so-good local individuals, the extreme slowness in the reconstruction of the country, the prolongment of the military government, are likewise reason why our spirits are not quiet yet.»

At the time the dioceses of Trento comprises also ten German-speaking or mistlingual deaneries. Endrici’s relationship with this part of the dioceses was never easy and deteriorated after his imprisonment during WWI. In 1917 after long pressures by the sutrian government, he was forced to nominate a vicar for the german territory: Mgr Rimbl kept his place even after the end of the war, mediating between the Bishop and the recalcitrant german population. Instances for the reshaping of the diocesan borders had been presented for a long time, but were always unsuccessfull. The issue resurfaced after the annexation of the provinces to Italy: the new border devided the dioceses of Brixen between Italy and the new Republic of Austria. During August 1922 the Congregation for Bishops (Sacra Congregazione Concistoriale) decided to put the german-speaking deaneries under the control of th Dioceses of Brixen, but then retracted a few days later due to mainly fascist pressioni. The matter stayed open and was definitively solved only in 1964.

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For almost a year after the end of the war Trentino was placed under Italian control but was formally annexed to Italy only after the signing of the Peace Treaty of Saint-Germain on September 10th, 1919. Following the uncertainty on the new border configuration, Italian authorities proceeded with the utmost caution. However, the caution of the military governor Pecori Giraldi was a result of the incoherence of the Italian government facing for the first time the problem of a linguistic minority. Two trends, opposed but here concurrent, were enforced: on the one hand a regionalist approach, on the other nationalization policies. Pecori Giraldi proposed a policy of pacific penetration (penetrazione pacifica), surrounding himself with local associates. The main local parties participated to the administration of the province through a Consulta, not being able to elect representatives to the National Parliament until the formal annexation.

On July 20th 1919 the Prime minister Nitti appointed Luigi Credaro as civil governor. This appointment caused great unrest in the Catholic circles, as explained in a telegram to Endrici by the Secretary of State Mgr Gasparri:

"Monsignore, apprendo in questo momento che l'on. Credaro è stato nominato Governatore del Trentino. Egli è stato Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione noto radicale e (a quanto si afferma) pezzo grosso nella
massoneria. È necessario dunque tutto il zelo e tutta la energia di V.S. per l’opera di lui non sia di pregiudizio agli interessi cattolici nel Trentino.

Monsignor, I just learned that MP Credaro was appointed Governor for Trentino. He was Minister for Public education, known radical and (as they say) big shot of the Mansonry. All the zeal and energy of Y. M. are necessary so that his activity won’t compromise catholic interests in Trentino.»

This message discloses the importance ascribed to the relation between local clergy and civil authority by the Vatican and the intent to make use of a Bishop as an effective instrument of lobbying. The same interest is also shared by the Italian government, the Minister for the freed lands Cesare Nava reassured Endrici on Credaro: «quelle dichiarazioni (date a Credaro da Nitti) sono tali da rassicurare che si avrà il massimo rispetto fra i sentimenti più delicati e più alti dei nostri fratelli trentini» (Those statements (that the PM Nitti expressed to Credaro) reassure that there will be the utmost respect for the most delicate and high sentiments of out trentini brothers).

Despite the premises were barely comforting, the relationship between Endrici and Credaro, the Bishop and the Governor, was cordial and fruitful. The two exchanged a vast correspondence until the beginning of 1921. This decline is mainly caused by two reasons. First, Endrici’s health started to worsen in that period, he was checked into a hospital in Meran for two months in the summer of 1921. Second and most important reason, the first election to the National Parliament were held on May 15th, 1921 and a Giunta provinciale was established in September 1921, thus reducing the importance of the Governor role in mediating with Rome. The end of the Governor institution coincides with the seizure of power by Fascism: on October 5th, 1922 a fascist squad seized the offices of the Giunta provinciale and Credaro was forced to flee to Rome. The first fascist Prefect for the Venezia Tridentina Giuseppe Guadagnini took office on November 3rd. Fascism would then solve the unresolved issues by italianization and the constitution of a sole province (Provincia unica). (Leonardi Pombeni 2006)

In this crucial moment in the history of Trentino, the Catholic Church mainly through the local clergy and the lay association had a fundamental impact in the definition of the new legal and political system. In this paper I will assess the extent of the actions pursued by the Prince Bishop of Trento Celestino Endrici, analyzing them as part of a complex net: between the mass of believers, lay association, among which the Popular party, between other Bishops, between the Secretary of State and the Vatican hierarchy and between the civil authority

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3 AEE 596/19, 7/21/1919.
4 AEE 600/19, 7/26/1919.
both local and national. Aiming at demonstrating the need to include the analysis of the local clergy in assessing the foreign policy of the Catholic Church.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CLERGY

Celestino Endrici was born on March 14th 1866 in Don, a small village in the Alta Anaunia near Trento. He studied philosophy and theology in Rome, while residing at the germanic-hungaric College, where he was ordained in 1891. (Rogger 1993) The time Endrici spent in Rome was crucial for his formation, he was extensively influenced by the Leonine ideas that culminated with the publication of the Encyclical Rerum Novarum. Back in Trentino in 1892 Endrici was a cooperator in Cles, near his hometown, then in Trento. In 1896 he started teaching moral and social theology at the Seminar in Trento. In this period his activities pertained also to the social and cooperative circles of Trentino: in 1898 he promoted, among others, the Diocesan Committee for Catholic Action. Moreover, he encouraged the creation of a catholic association that could achieve political and electoral significance. Therefore the Popular Party of Trentino was founded in 1904 also thanks to his contribution.

In the same year Endrici was nominated Bishop, succeeding Mgr Carlo Eugenio Valussi, who died in 1901. According to the Austrian legislation Bishops were nominated by the Emperor, who had to choose among three names. The Pope only had to validate the nomination. Despite his young age, he was only 38, Celestino Endrici was appointed as new Bishop of Trento: «un altro, che riunisca tutte le doti e le qualità del prof. Endrici non si trova» (Another, that reunites all the talents and qualities of professor Endrici cannot be found). (Benvenuti 1988) At the time the situation of dioceses of Trento was highly complex, as it included german speaking decanates. Thus the choice of the Bishop had to guarantee both a pastor able to lead his people and an ally to the Habsburg crown. During the process of nomination as Bishop Endrici was seen as a loyal australian despite being italian. (Corsini 1992)

The creation of the german association Tiroler Volksbund, founded in 1905, caused Endrici’s reaction. The Bishop tried to defend Trentino by the germanization promoted by the Volksbund. The German association was created to defend the German language and culture, and tried to start German schools in Italian speaking villages. In a telegram sent on September 17th 1911 to the XIV Congress of Catholic Universitarians in Levico Endrici made public his opposition to the german association, arousing numerous protests especially by the Tirolean press. (Leonardi Pombeni 2006)

«Educare giovani fieri tradizioni cristian tradition italianità insidiata da ingiuste straniere invadenze Volksbund perturbanti pace religiosa nazionale.
To educate proud young people to christian tradition, threatened italianità by unjust foreign intrusiveness Volksbund upsetting religious national peace.» (Benvenuti 1981)

This strong opposition to the Volksbund started mistrust by the Austrian authorities towards Endrici. With the beginning of WWI the position of the Bishop became even more complicated, so much that he was detained in his residence in S. Nicolò, nearby Trento. Endrici tried to appeal his situation by going to Wien and directly speaking to the government. However, the stay in Wien was fruitless and resulted in the reclusion of Endrici and his secretary at the abbey of Heiligenkreuz. (Zanolini 1919, Leonardi Pombeni 2006, Corsini 1992)

Endrici’s secretary Augusto Guadagnini kept a journal since March 1st, 1916 recording the everyday life of their imprisonment, probably at the request of Endrici. According to my interpretation of the material found in the Diocesan Archive in Trento, the records of that period were then presumably used by Mgr Vigilio Zanolini (1919) in order to write an apology of Endrici’s action during the war. With the direct economic support by Endrici, he published in 1919 a book entitiled “Il vescovo di Trento e il governo austriaco durante la guerra europea” (The Bishop of Trento and the austrian government during the European war).

The publication served the purpose to portray Endrici as a national hero, that sacrificed himself for his italianità. Endrici used this topos aiming at guaranteeing a center stage role in the definition of the new political and institutional asset of Trentino. In a memorandum, containg his ideas on the situation in Trentino, for the Italian Ministry of Cults in May 1919 Endrici writes:

«Il regio governo vorrà valutare i sacrifici fatti dal Clero specialmente negli ultimi anni per difendere l’italianità del Trentino nella lotta contro le potenti società germanizzatrici, con un lavoro assiduo, fattivo, e ciò in condizioni politicamente difficili e penose, sempre sotto l’occhio vigile della polizia austriaca.

The royal government would want to take into consideration the sacrifices made by the Clergy especially in the last years to defend the Italian character of Trentino in the struggle with strong German societies, with a tireless, effective work and in particularly difficult and distressing situations, always under the watchful eye of the Austrian police.» (Scottà 1994)

BETWEEN STATE AND CLERGY

First and foremost a Bishop is subject to the Pope. The relationship between Endrici and the Vatican were marked by the dispute occurred during WWI with the Habsburg monarchy. The Austrian government tried since 1916 to force the Bishop to resign, but failed also thanks to the Papal stance on the matter.
However at the same time Endrici’s obstinacy caused friction with the Roman Secretary of State that had to mediate the affair.

After the end of the war, on November 13th 1918 Endrici was able to go back to Trento and soon after visited the Pope in Rome. Benedict XV was positively impressed by Endrici and thereafter the Secretary of State kept an intense correspondence with the Bishop concerning diverse issues, from prisoners of war to religious education. As shown in the journal of Baron Monti, the Italian unofficial envoy to the Vatican, Endrici’s pleads to the Italian government were supported by the Holy See. (Monti 1997)

As soon as 1919, Endrici tried to exercise influence in the administrative transition, petitioning the ministry responsible. In the spring 1919 he drafted two Memorandums addressed to the Ministry of Justice and Cults and to the Ministry of Public Education and then sent them to the Secretary of State Gasparri asking for counsel. Gasparri’s reply reveals how much those contribution were appreciated by the Holy See.

«Quanto, poi, al Memorandum, cui Ella accenna nella stessa sua lettera, non solo io lo ritengo opportuno, ma esorto vivamente V.S. a presentarlo e ad insistere, con tutta l’influenza di cui Ella può disporre, perché vengano accolti i relativi desiderata.

Dealing with the Memorandum, You mentioned in that same letter, I not only consider it suitable, but I also strongly encourage Your Eminence to present it and to persist, with all the weight that You have, so that those requests were to be accepted.»

At this point it is important to remember that at the time the Holy See had no official ties to the Italian government. Diplomatic relations would be reestablished only in 1929 under the Fascist regime. Nonetheless, informal confrontations were ongoing, but needed to be related to solid and dependable relationship at the local level. Therefore, Bishops were supposed to foster the Church interests among local authorities.

«Mentre lo raccomando a questo effetto alle Autorità centrali, sarei ben lieto che la S.V.Illima e Rv.ma – dove la cosa fosse possibile – spendesse in suo favore una Sua buona parola di raccomandazione presso le autorità del luogo.

While I plead it to that effect to central authorities, I would be glad that Your Eminence – when possible – put in a good word with the local authorities.»

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5 AEE 469/19, 5/12/1919.
6 AEE 437/19, 4/30/1919
As shown in the previous quotation the Vatican counted on Endrici’s involvement to promote its own agenda in the province and delegated to him the interferences with the decision process.

BETWEEN CLERGY AND OTHER CLERGY

Trentino was not the only province annexed by Italy after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, also the so-called Venezia Giulia on the Adriatic coast lived through the same experience. Despite the two provinces were deeply diverse, they faced some common issues: the management of ecclesiastical asset, the religious teaching in public schools and the general need to establish fruitful relations with the new civil authorities. (Pupo 2014) In January 1921 Endrici decided to get in touch with the three Bishops of the Venezia Giulia (Gorizia, Trieste and Pola Parenzo) and the Bishop of Brixen in order to promote a meeting among them.

«Per procedere con uniformità di criteri e di atteggiamenti pratici di fronte ad eventuali provvedimenti riguardo al clero, alle Chiese ed alle scuole, io proporrei che i rev’mi Ordinari delle nuove provincie convenissero insieme per uno scambio di idee.»

In order to proceed with uniform criterions and practical attitudes facing potential provisions concerning the clergy, the churches and the schools, I would suggest that the Most Reverend Ordinaries of the new provinces gather together to exchange ideas.»

The Conference was held in Venice on February 15th to 17th. Not having a Bishop since 1918 the spokesperson of the Dioceses of Brixen was Johann Geisler, however in a letter to Endrici he entrusted him to protect the interests of the Dioceses due to his hardship with Italian8. The memorandum drafted at the end of the Conference suggests that Endrici held a central role in the proceedings. Most importantly the Bishops chose a delegate for a royal Commission with the goal to study the implementation of Italian legislation on the New Provinces.

As spokesperson for the Catholic interests was chosen Dr Giovanni Chelodi, a priest and professor from Trento. Chelodi kept Endrici informed about his scholastic progresses throughout his years at the University of Wien. He was very close to the Bishop who trusted him with the presentation of the situation at the Venice conference and consequently in the Commission.

7 AEE 27-30/21, 1/7/1921.
8 AEE 157/21, 2/8/1921.
BETWEEN CLERGY AND CHURCH

To assess the interaction between the CLERGY and the CHURCH in this case study I decided to focus on a specific issue promoted by Endrici in this period: religious education in public schools. This issue is particularly important because it concerns religious freedom and the way a religion is legally treated in a country. The Italian legal system at the time allowed the teaching of religion only on explicit request by the local authorities. (Di Franco 1991) On the contrary the Habsburg legislation demanded mandatory religion classes in public schools. Endrici feared that the secular Italian legislation would be also applied to Trentino.

The first step he undertook in order to prevent this was to suggest and help the priests of Trento creating an association of Family Fathers already in July 1919. This association was eventually founded in September 1919 and could then count on up to 40,000 adherents becoming an effective pressure group. (Calì 1978) Endrici believed the contribution of what he calls the “organized people” to be crucial for the success of his own requests to the Italian government. In a letter to the Archbishop of Gorizia Sedej in December 1922 he writes:

«A me pare che avrebbe molto maggior forza e farebbe maggior impressione sul governo se padri di famiglia delle singole parrocchie facessero un plebiscito e mandassero una quantità di telegrammi al ministro presidente ed al prefetto della regione. Sarebbe un’azione parallela alla nostra. I vescovi potrebbero in caso di bisogno intervenire dopo i padri di famiglia, che sono i primi chiamati.

To me it seems that would have more strength and would be more impressive for the government if family fathers of individual parishes sent telegrams to the Prime minister and to the Regional prefect. It would be an action parallel to ours. Bishops could, in case of need, intervene after the Family fathers, that are the first concerned.»

In December 1920 the King promulgated an administrative order extending the Italian legislation to Trentino, even though the Commission concerning the New Provinces’ legislation was still in office. The pressure exercised by Endrici, who wrote to all the personalities that could be effective in pleading his case and at the same time by the Association of the Family fathers was successful in stopping this decree from entering into force.

«È manifesto che questo comma, che prevede modalità di “esecuzione” diverse da provincia a provincia, anzi da scuola a scuola, dove l’attuale stato di fatto non potrebbe essere mutato senza inconvenienti, significa sospensione dell’applicazione della Circolare

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9 AEE 601/1919, letter to the deanery 7/24/1919.
10 AEE 440/1922.
nei riguardi delle scuole medie e magistrali fino a tanto che tali modalità non sieno determinate.

It is evident that this comma, foreseeing different execution modalities from province to province, or rather from school to school, where the present state cannot be changed without setbacks, means the suspension of the application of this Decree regarding middle and teachers’ schools until those modalities won't be established.»

CONCLUSIONS

This paper proposed a three-level model to assess the influence exerted by the Catholic Church towards other States. The levels were defined as STATE, CLERGY and CHURCH. The model has then been applied on a specific case study concerning a political transition in a small Italian province, Trentino, in the aftermath of the Great War. The presentation of the case study revolved around the Bishop of Trento Celestino Endrici, his relationship with other actors within the Catholic Church and some of his enterprises.

Endrici focused mainly on practical issues such as religious education or the management of ecclesiastical assets, but at the same time he exercised ample influence in the choosing of delegates in the Commission responsible of the new political and administrative structure, as proven by the appointment of Dr. Chelodi. He was also successful in guaranteeing a favorable representation for the Popular party in the local political Assembly and in the Commissions that were to decide the political and institutional future of the region. (Leonardi Pombeni 2006)

The most efficacious actions undertaken by the Bishop of Trento in this transitional period were sustained by contribution of other actors within the Catholic Church. In the religious education question his plead was followed by individual telegrams of thousands of family men, in the appointment of Dr. Chelodi he acted together with other Bishops, in promoting the Memorandum he had Papal approval and support.

The patterns of relations that emerge from looking at Endrici’s correspondence prove the validity of a three-parted model of reinforcing and interdependent levels. Furthermore, assuming a Bishop as lead character in the narration shows how deep and diverse his contribution to the Catholic Church’s policy can be.

11 AEE 66/21, 4/1/1921.
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