Pacem in Terris: Are Papal Visits Good News for Human Rights?

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Abstract

We analyze the effect of a state visit by the Catholic pope on the human rights performance of the host country. It illustrates how a small country like the Vatican can exert significant political influence in international politics. Human rights are at the heart of modern-day Catholic doctrine and during his international travels, the pope frequently addresses human rights violations. He uses the threat of shaming to incentivize governments of host countries to refrain from and to inhibit violations of human rights. We draw on a new dataset of papal state visits outside Italy to test the hypothesis that governments react strategically to the threat of shaming by inhibiting human rights violations. To identify causal average treatment effects, we use characteristics of the pope, Catholic Church calendars, proxies for the strategic interests of the Vatican, and conditions in the host country as exogenous predictors of papal visits in an endogenous treatment model. Our results indicate that politicians react to an anticipated papal visit by increasing human rights protection.

Keywords: Catholic Church, human rights, political economy, pope, repression, Vatican.
JEL-codes: F5, K38, P16, P26, P48, Z12.

1. Introduction

A popular assumption in international politics is that a country's political influence is roughly proportional to its size in terms of population, economy, and military. A startling exception to this rule has for a long time been the Vatican.[3] Even though the Vatican lacks the economic and military means of other nation states, it enjoys a reputation as an influential player in the global political arena. The main explanation for this exceptionalism is that the Vatican is home to the Roman Catholic Church, one of the oldest religious organizations and the largest Christian church with 1.3 billion members worldwide.

Among religious organizations, the Catholic Church is clearly unmatched in its influence on global politics. It is credited as a catalyst for break downs of repressive regimes in the Eastern Bloc and Latin America and has served as a mediator in domestic conflicts as well as international disputes, such as between Argentina and Chile in 1978 (Hansen 1987, Weigel 2003). Nevertheless, political economists and political scientists have paid little attention to the political agenda of the Vatican and its potential effects on the political and economic performance of countries around the globe. This is the first quantitative empirical study of the worldwide political influence of the Catholic Church. More precisely, we analyze whether official state visits by the pope have an effect on the level of human rights protection in destination countries.

There is, so far, a very small literature on the political role of religious authorities and specifically that of the Catholic pope. Fuchs and Klann (2013) study the effect of visits by the Dalai Lama on countries' trade relations with China and find that officially receiving the Dalai Lama at the highest political level implies a punishment via a reduction of exports to China.[4] Bassi and Rasul (2017) study a specific papal visit to Brazil in 1991 regarding its effect on both the short-run intention to use contraception and long-run fertility outcomes in the affected population. Farina and Pathania (2018) find a sizable reduction in abortions after papal visits to Italian provinces. Deiana et al. (2018) argue

[3] Some have questioned this importance. Stalin, for example, famously asked tongue-in-cheek how many divisions the Vatican's military even had. Napoleon, in contrast, suggested one should deal with the pope as if he had 200,000 men at his command.

[4] Regarding the effects of visits by political authorities, Schuler et al. (2017) find that visits by Chinese government officials to firms in China are associated with financial gains for these firms.

that the pope's visit to Lesbos in early 2016 shifted attitudes in Catholic countries and put pressure on the European Union to deal more effectively with its refugee crisis.

In the political economy literature on the Catholic Church, Barro and McCleary (2016) analyze the strategic use of saint-making to inspire more intense religiosity in targeted countries and to discourage secularization and conversion to Protestantism. Ferrero (2012) argues that the competition for sainthood within the Catholic Church serves as an incentives mechanism for the different fractions (Ferrero 2002). Padovano and Wintrobe (2013) test whether the economic model of dictatorship is descriptive of historical Vatican politics and they find empirical support for this conjecture. Serafinelli and Tabellini (2017) find that the presence of the Catholic Church discouraged the development of creative elites in historical European cities.

Our study complements research on the persuasive power of the Catholic Church and it is the first empirical study on the political effects of official state visits by the pope on host countries. Addressing the endogeneity of the pope's traveling schedule, we are also the first to provide empirical evidence on the implicit decision criteria underlying the pope's choice of destination countries. For this purpose we have collected a unique dataset of papal visits and various indicators suited to explaining the selection into this treatment. We use characteristics of the pope, Catholic Church calendars, proxies for the strategic interests of the Vatican, and conditions in the host country as predictors of pope visits.

Our estimated causal treatment effect of papal visits indicates that a visit by the pope leads to an improvement in human rights protection. However, most of the positive change in human rights occurs in anticipation of the pope's visit, which can be explained by the threat of politicians being criticized by the pope during his visit for their insufficient efforts to protect human rights. Consequently, there are no additional improvements in human rights protection after the visit of the pope. Yet, there is also no sign that human rights protection reverts to its original level. Our argument for the salience of the topic of human rights during pope visits as a transmission channel is supported by an analysis of data on global media coverage of human rights issues. In the week of a visit, significantly more than before and after, the international media pay increased attention to the human rights record of the destination country.

In the next section, we outline some theoretical arguments for why popes might be good news for human rights protection in the host country. Section 3 discusses our data and our empirical analysis. Finally, Section 4 concludes.

2. Theory

2.1 The Catholic Church and human rights

To explain the salience of the topic of human rights during papal visits, we first elaborate on the commitment of the Catholic Church to the protection of human rights and the usage of papal visits to promulgate Catholic doctrine.

The Roman Catholic Church is known as a transnational organization to advocate for human rights. Unique as being both a religious body and a sovereign state, it is a highly centralized and hierarchical organization with missionary aspirations. Its commitment to the protection of human rights was stipulated in the Second Vatican Council in 1965, which led to its incorporation into the Church's social teaching (Troy 2009) and had considerable effects on religious and social life (see, e.g., Koukal 2017). The Second Vatican Council also brought a shift in the political theology towards a more interventionist approach in international affairs, which led the Vatican to become an active promoter of human rights (Shelledy 2004).

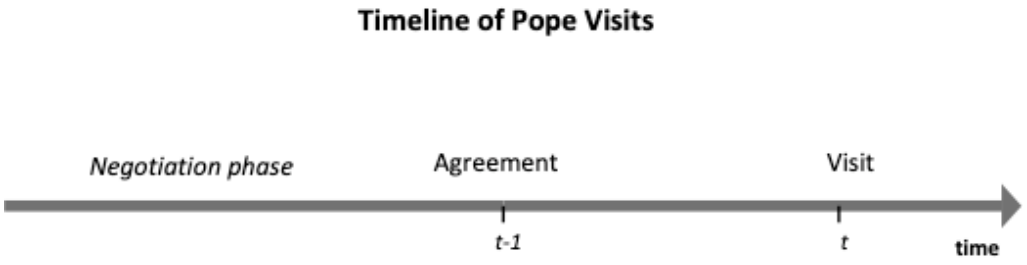
However, it was already in the papal encyclical Pacem in Terris, which was issued by Pope John XXIII in 1963, that the Vatican emphasized the importance of respecting human rights. Accordingly, "*Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life (…) He has a right to freedom in investigating the truth, (…) to freedom of speech and publication, and (…) to be accurately informed about public events*" (par. 11). The encyclical further outlines man's political rights and rights of association, in all of which it was clearly influence by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Most importantly, it is argued that "*any government which refused to recognize human rights or acted in violation of them, would not only fail in its duty; its decrees would be wholly lacking in binding force*" (par. 61).[5]

[5] Human rights were as well in the focus in the Declaration of Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*) in Vatican II. It demands all states to protect the rights of Catholics as well as of other minorities regardless of their religious observance and was interpreted as a religious call for promoting human rights (Weigel 1992).

The Second Vatican Council came unexpected and the institutionalized changes in religious doctrine led to a sharp reorientation of the Catholic Church towards the promotion of human rights. Popes, since the Second Vatican Council, see themselves as a voice for human dignity (Shelledy 2004). Their focus on human rights is reflected in the consistency of the human rights discourse across popes (Troy 2017). This may have had important consequences, as the authority of the pope extends to the external relations of the Vatican and official visits to other countries constitute one major instrument which the pope uses to address human rights issues.

The pope represents both a religious entity and a sovereign state. Therefore, any pope visit must be initiated by formal invitations from both the national conference of Catholic Bishops and the national government of the host country. The government and the pope then *negotiate* the terms of a visit. After a general agreement has been reached (see t-1 in Figure 1), the planning of the travel itinerary is initiated (which is concluded before the visit in t). Once the parties have agreed on a date and the negotiations are closed, the Vatican publishes an official announcement. There tends to be a considerable time span between the invitation and the formal announcement of a visit. The pilgrimage of John Paul II to Cuba in 1998, for example, was preceded by a long-standing invitation by the Cuban bishops and a formal invitation by Cuban President Castro in 1996. After intense negotiations, the planning for the visit started (Weigel 2003, pp. 806).

Figure 1: Timeline of Pope Visits



The travel itinerary reflects the political and pastoral nature of pope visits and entails consultations with the government, public sermons to his followers, and the serving of ecclesiastical matters. The sermons serve the purpose of promulgating Catholic Church values and often draw huge crowds. He mostly avoids direct confrontations but expresses criticism subtly via rhetoric and topics included in his speech or the design of his travel itinerary, for example when he meets opposition groups or nongovernmental organizations critical of the government.

Both outcomes were observable during the pope's visit to South America in 1987. In Chile, the dismal human rights performance of the government led the pope to label the government "dictatorial", call for democracy and human rights, and meet with opposition groups.[6] Argentina showed a far more positive development, and the pope praised the country for the "full re establishment of democratic institutions" and gave his endorsement to the government. Comparable remarks on the human rights record of governments can be found for many papal visits.

During the pope's travels, the Catholic Church uses the connecting flights to hold press conferences, uses its own media outlets, and promotes global media coverage of papal visits to transmit Catholic moral teachings to an international audience (Hansen 1987:5ff., Weigel 2003, pp. 491).

2.2 Mechanisms linking papal visits to human rights

Many have attributed the influence of papal visits primarily to the use of persuasive messages (see, e.g., Bassi and Rasul 2017 or Farina and Pathania 2018) and political mediation by the pope. Of course, interactions with the pope during his visit can have an effect on religiosity and values – and the pope can also act as a mediator in conflict-prone societies. While such arguments require assumptions about information provision or changes in preferences caused by the pope, we focus here on a more parsimonious explanation that does not necessitate assumptions about the pope having a unique ability to deescalate conflict in society.

The pope can serve as a propagating agent for a state authority by visiting a country and conferring legitimacy to its political leaders. [7] The incentives of both parties can be depicted in a simple framework.

The objective of the government is to maintain its political power. It can use two instruments to propagate its rule: coercion and legitimacy.

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[6] During the visit, Pope John Paul II. expressed his support for democracy as a means for strengthening human rights. ''Yes, yes, I am not the evangelizer of democracy, I am the evangelizer of the Gospel. To the Gospel message, of course, belongs all the problems of human rights, and if democracy means human rights it also belongs to the message of the church.''

[7] Legitimacy is comprised of a shared belief of a society in an authority or in its actions. Religious authorities have often served as legitimizing agents for political elites, such as in pre-reformation times when the Catholic Church was able to charge high prices for its support due to its dominant position (Cantoni et al. 2017, Greif and Rubin 2015).

The relationship between the inputs of "coercion" C and "legitimacy" L and the output "political power" π can be represented by

$$\pi = \pi(C, L)$$

We assume that the marginal product of the input factors is positive, π_C, $\pi_L > 0$. The propagation of rule is more secure if the government increases the level of repression or if it exhibits a higher level of legitimacy.

The government faces a trade-off between coercion and legitimacy. If it wants to convince the Pope to visit and gain in legitimacy, it has to cater to the interest of the Church and constrain its use of coercion.

The interest of the Catholic Church is to maximize its moral authority by promoting human rights. Following the literature in the economics of religion, we assume that churches are producers who supply consumers with religious goods (Iannaccone 1998). A religious firm is successful in competing against other religions when it has a strong moral authority. Moral authority makes others obey its rules of behavior and creates trust in its spiritual goods.

Moral authority is achieved by a consistency in the promulgation of its religious doctrine. Since the unexpected turn in the Second Vatican Council, human rights have become a major component in the teachings of the Catholic Church. By advocating for the use of less coercion, the Catholic Church can use Pope visits to strengthen its moral authority.[8]

With these objectives, the government and the Catholic Church bargain about a pope visit. The Pope offers a transfer of legitimacy but the government has to pay a price by committing to less human rights violations.[9] The promise of protecting human rights constrains the government's use of coercive methods, and it is only willing to invite the pope, as long as the benefit from an increase in legitimacy are larger than the costs of using less repression.

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[8] Another incentive for the Catholic Church to demand improvements in human rights is its reliance on religious liberty. Preserving the right of exercising religion for all, it secures that its own adherents can practice their religious service free of suppression.

[9] The Catholic Church can bargain for concessions such as tax exemptions, the introduction of policies consistent with its religious precepts or the suppression of competitor religions (Cantoni et al. 2017). We argue that the importance it assigns to its moral authority puts human rights at the forefront. Additionally, moral authority is more beneficial to the Church as is not limited to the destination country, but has effects on adherents on a global scale.

One assumption is that a papal visit draws much attention, particularly of the international media, to itself, but also to the host country. The attention allows the pope to credibly threaten critique of human rights abuses in the host country during an upcoming visit. Moreover, other organizations, especially human rights NGOs, will also use the increased media attention associated with a papal visit to denounce the condition of human rights in the host country and blame the government to the extent that it is responsible.

The spotlight a country is in due to a papal visit can have external repercussions for a government as well. Observing the level of repression, foreign actors can update their knowledge about the state of affairs in the country and a bad human rights performance will be detrimental to foreign direct investment and tourism (see Blanton and Blanton 2007 for empirical evidence). On the political side, information about human rights violations can hamper the inflow of foreign aid (Lebkovic and Voeten 2009).

In summary, political leaders face strong incentives to improve the protection of human rights prior to a papal visit. This effect plays a role from the point in time when the two parties have agreed on a visit, as the government is able to credibly commit to improvements in the human rights performance. If it were to renege on its promise, the pope could criticize the human rights abuses during the visit or even cancel his visit. Such a punishment can have grave consequences for a government and lead to an overall negative effect on legitimacy. This commitment ends after the papal visit is over. The pope can criticize the government from afar ex post, but the attention and the effect on the legitimacy will be much less strong than during his visit. The human rights agreement in Myanmar in 2017, the lifting of repressive martial law in the Philippines in 1981, and the releases of prisoners in Cuba, each right before a pope visit, provide striking examples for the efforts made by governments to provide necessary conditions for the pope's approval.

It is less clear what happens after the papal visit is over and the commitment of a regime loses credibility. Human rights protection could revert to its original level. Improvements in human rights protection could, however, also have lasting consequences, if, for example, investments are made in permanent infrastructure, institutions are reformed to change incentives in the public sector or government officers are retrained.

Of course, as we have pointed out above, it is still possible that the pope has a direct effect on politicians and citizens of the host country and thereby improves the protection of human rights even subsequent to his visit. On the other hand, it is also possible that a visit by the pope inflames tensions, for example, if he points out blatant social injustice or if he facilitates the solution of collective action problems in potentially violent social groups.

3. Empirical Analysis

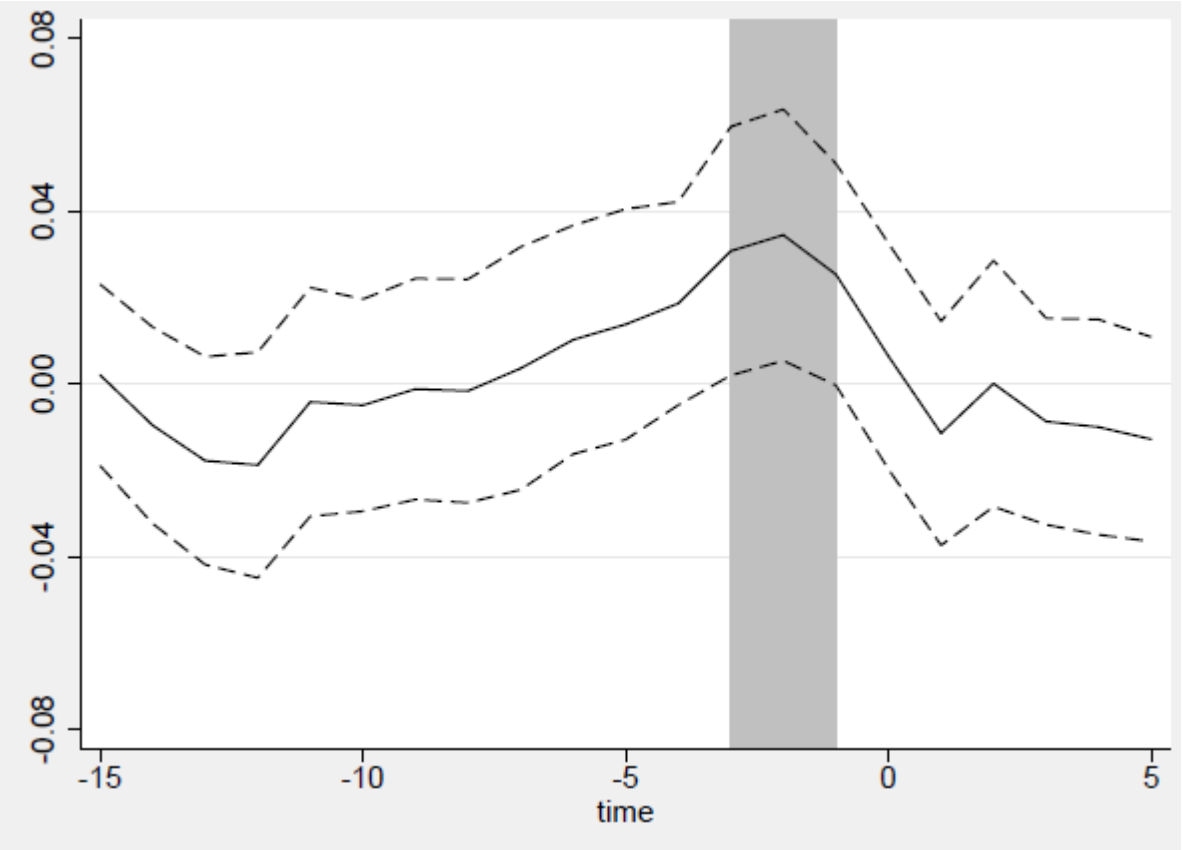
3.1 Where does the pope travel?

<<< Here data description on where does the pope travel. Map, developed/developing, democratic/semi-autocratic/autocratic, majority catholic/ other confessions >>>

3.2 Timing the effect of papal visits on human rights

In a first step, we demonstrate the evolution of human rights around a typical visit by the pope. For this purpose, we estimate a linear regression model where the dependent variable is the first difference of a continuous latent human rights indicator by Fariss (2014). We include as independent variables the level of human rights protection in the previous year and fifteen dummy variables identifying the year of a visit as well as the seven years before and after. Figure 1 illustrates the point estimates of these fifteen dummy variables as well as the 95%-confidence interval based on panel robust standard errors.

Figure 1: Changes in Human Rights Before, During, and After Papal Visits



Note: The dependent variable is the first difference of a continuous indicator for the level of human rights protection by Fariss (2014). Coefficient estimates without (/with) country fixed effects and corresponding 95%-confidence intervals in dark (/light) grey.

Although the coefficients displayed in Figure 1 only describe the evolution of human rights before and after a papal visit and not a causal effect of that visit, we gain information on the potential timing of the effect on human rights. Accordingly, human rights start improving about four years before the pope's visit and there is no more improvement (but also no reversal) in the seven years after the pope's visit. One possible concern with this observation is that the pope may simply visit countries that are already on an upward trajectory regarding their protection of human rights. This is not visible in Figure 1, as there are no significant improvements in human rights in the time period that is clearly before the planning horizon of a papal visit. Nevertheless, we conduct two tests to address this possible concern. First, we include country fixed effects in our OLS regression underlying Figure 1 (results displayed in light grey). Since our dependent variable is measured in first differences, this is equivalent to allowing for country specific time trends in human rights protection due to unobservable factors. Taking into account such

trends does not affect our estimates.[10] Our second test focuses on potential short-run trends in human rights protection in those countries visited by the pope. We estimate probit models with country-clustered standard errors to predict visits by the pope. In the spirit of a Granger causality test, we include different lagged first differences of the human rights indicator. In other words, we test whether previous improvements in human rights protection can predict a visit by the pope. We include individually as well as simultaneously a five-, six-, and seven-year lag of the first difference in human rights protection. Moreover, we include the average change in human rights protection over the period seven to five years before the visit of the pope and alternatively an indicator based on the period ten to five years before the visit of the pope. In none of these models are previous changes in the level of human rights protection (i.e., lagged first differences) able to predict a visit by the pope. Although these *ad hoc*-tests provide us with some indication that upcoming papal visits cause an improvement in human rights protection, we test this conjecture more rigorously in the next subsection using endogenous treatment models and a number of treatment instruments.

3.3 Estimating the causal effect of papal visits on human rights

Before we estimate our endogenous treatment models, we produce a set of OLS estimates as a benchmark. For all models in this subsection, we modify our dependent variable such that the year of a papal visit is collapsed together with the four years before the visit by taking the mean value over the 5-year period. This leaves us with one observation per visit by the pope and the estimated coefficient on our treatment dummy δ measures the mean annual effect of a papal visit over a 5-year period. All years without a visit by the pope and outside the 4-year window before a papal visit remain annual observations. Overall, our analysis is based on 256 visits by the pope (239 once we include control variables).

Our goal is to estimate the following equation (the *outcome model*):

$$(1)\ \Delta y_{it} = x'_{it}\beta + \delta d_{it} + u_{it}$$

[10] Both models (with and without country fixed effects) are estimated jointly using seemingly unrelated estimation and statistical tests rule out that the inclusion of country fixed effects has a significant effect on the coefficient estimates.

where Δy is the outcome of interest (i.e., the first difference of the level of human rights protection), x is a vector of exogenous covariates that potentially explain the outcome, and d is a binary indicator that takes the value 1 if a country is treated (i.e., it is visited by the pope). δ denotes our parameter of interest (i.e., the ATT). The vector x in the outcome model comprises the lagged level of human rights protection and six standard explanatory variables for changes in human rights (see, e.g., Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Poe and Tate 1994; Poe et al. 1999). From the Penn World Table 9.0 we include as socio-economic characteristics the growth rates of a country's population and of its income per capita (Feenstra et al. 2015). We further include magnitude scores for both civil and international warfare from the Polity IV project (Marshall 2016) and another conflict indicator from the Varieties of Democracy Dataset. Finally, we control for the number of coups in a year based on data collected by Bjørnskov and Rode (2018). Note that in line with the choice of our dependent variable, we consider only factors that could explain changes in the level of human rights protection within a country and not differences in the level of human rights protection across countries. Thus, we do not control for indicators such as income per capita or the absolute size of the population. Since our treated observations represent a 5-year window, the control variables are averaged over the same time period, but only for these (treated) observations. However, the lagged level of human rights protection refers in the case of treated observations to the level five years before the papal visit rather than to the level in the previous year, which is supposed to ensure the exogeneity of this indicator. This approach is analogous to that in Gutmann et al. (2017).

The results in Table 1 show that papal visits are associated with a significant improvement in human rights. Our baseline model includes 172 countries observed between 1964 and 2016 in 6,782 observations. Once we include our vector of control variables x in regression model (2), the sample size falls to 142 countries and 5,536 observations. Models (3) and (4) include a linear time trend and year fixed effects, respectively. The OLS estimated effect of a papal visit remains very stable and statistically significant over these models. The estimated effects for our control variables are also highly plausible and consistent with the literature. Economic growth is linked to improvements in human rights, conflict and coups lead to deteriorations in human rights. The negative coefficient on the lagged level of human rights protection in models (2) to (4) indicates conditional beta convergence in the level of human rights.

<< Table 1 about here >>

To account for the endogeneity of the treatment in evaluating the causal influence of papal visits on the target states' respect for human rights, we employ an endogenous treatment model (ETM). ETMs allow for the identification of causal effects, even if the selection into treatment is based on unobservable factors that also affect the outcome of interest. Identification presupposes the availability of one or more variables that affect treatment assignment without being directly related to the outcome of interest.[11]

To account for the endogeneity of treatment assignment, the outcome model estimated above using OLS is now complemented by a binary choice model that explains selection into treatment (the *selection model*):

(2) $d_{it}^{*} = z_{it}'\gamma + v_{it}$

where d_{it}^{*} is a latent variable, which is assumed to be standard normally distributed and if this latent variable is above a threshold, the respective country-year is treated. z is, thus, a vector of exogenous covariates that affect the likelihood of being selected into treatment. The vector z in the selection model does not have to overlap with the vector of covariates x employed in the outcome model. However, estimating the ATT requires at least one variable in vector z that is not also included in vector x. This variable (or variables) need(s) to be (jointly) significantly correlated with the likelihood of being treated, but uncorrelated with the error term of the outcome model. We refer to such a variable as a *treatment instrument*. All parameters that have to be identified to compute the ATT can be estimated simultaneously by maximum likelihood. In contrast to the OLS estimator used above, these ETM estimates are not based on the assumption that treatment assignment can be considered random.

In our vector z, we include all variables from vector x in the outcome model plus additional variables that are supposed to predict the probability of a country-year being treated. In other words, these indicate the probability that a country is visited by the pope in a given year. We argue that these variables are not directly related to changes in the level of human rights protection in a country. We also test for potential violations of this exclusion restriction. The following variables are our treatment instruments and unlike

[11] The ETM employed here was first introduced by Heckman (1976; 1978) and is closely related to the Heckman selection model. See Cameron and Trivedi (2005) for a thorough discussion and Gutmann et al. (2017) for an application to the human rights consequences of US sanctions.

the variables in *x* they are measured in the year of the papal visit (i.e., without taking the mean value).

The first group of variables describes *characteristics of the pope* in office. As our sample covers the tenure of the last four popes, we include three "pope dummies" for John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis. These are intended to capture differences in their general propensity to travel due to unobserved and time-invariant characteristics of the popes. To account for the possibly changing propensity of popes to travel during the time of their tenure, we also control for the age of the pope currently in office and we include a dummy variable that indicates whether the pope was hospitalized in a given year. Finally, we control for a dummy variable that indicates the birth country of a pope, as a pope might be more likely to visit his home country.

We also include indicators to describe *country characteristics* that might favor a visit by the pope. We use a binary indicator that reflects whether a country has diplomatic relations with the Vatican, expecting a higher propensity to visit such countries. Another group of country characteristics refers to the spatial, genetic, and religious distance between a country and Italy. We measure this, first, in terms of the log-geographic distance of a country's capital from Rome. Since travel expenses are not an important constraint for the Catholic Church, it can be argued that the pope is more likely to visit distant countries to support the global diffusion of Catholicism in areas far away from the Vatican. At the same time, the pope might be less likely to visit countries with a larger genetic or religious distance from Italy, which reflects relatively larger differences in preferences and higher barriers to interaction and communication between these populations and traditional members of the Catholic Church. How relevant these barriers still are is reflected in the frequently voiced criticism that the Vatican's leadership structure is Eurocentric and underrepresents developing nations in the Southern Hemisphere relative to their share of church members. Pope Francis, for example, was the first non-European pope since the eighth century.

The next group of indicators describes country characteristics that might be relevant for or descriptive of the *strategic interests of the Catholic Church*. These include the population shares of Catholics, other Christians, and Muslims (as the major competing monotheistic religion for Christianity). We also control for the degree of religious pluralism (or competition) in a country, as measured by a Herfindahl index of adherence

shares. These factors might be important for the decision of the Catholic Church to invest resources into competing for members in the respective country.

We also rely on a set of indicators derived from data collected by Barro and McCleary (2016). Two of these indicators count the (log) number of individuals from a country that have become saints during the history of this country as well as the corresponding number for the last ten years. These indicators are supposed to capture an expressed interest of the Catholic Church to compete for members in these countries. We also control for the number of new saints in a geographic region during the last ten years.

Finally, we include binary indicators to control for whether a pope has visited the respective country during the last five years or during the five years before that, as well as two indicators for how often a pope has visited the respective region during these time intervals. We expect that previous visits to the country itself lower the probability that a pope visits the same country only shortly after. In contrast, previous visits to the geographic region might be reflective of the Church's strategic interest in terms of competition for adherents. They should, thus, be linked to a higher probability of visiting further countries in that region.

Our last category is concerned with major *events* of the Catholic Church. It comprises indicators on congresses, synods, and jubilees of the Catholic Church that increase the likelihood that the pope will visit a specific country or a specific region of the world for these events. International congresses such as the International Eucharistic Congress serve as a meeting point for the Catholic Church and bishops from a region regularly assemble at Episcopal Conferences.[12] These dates in the Church's calendar offer the pope an opportunity to coordinate and redirect the Catholic Church and to address a large crowd of followers. Similarly, the Holy Sea itself periodically hosts synods of bishops within its vicinity. They run over months and often require the presence of the pope, which can limit his available time for travelling.

If synods at the Holy Sea are dedicated to a country or a region, they can increase the probability of papal travels to that country or region. Such a theme indicates how

[12] We include the most important assemblies which are the International Eucharistic Congress and the Regional Episcopal Conferences (Latin American Episcopal Conference, African, Asian, European and the Bishop Conferences of Oceania). We disregard Congresses whose destination is either chosen by the pope or where a pope visit is mandatory (World Meeting of Families and World Youth Days).

important the Vatican considers a country or region to be at that time. Visits of the pope can be used to present the Synod's resolutions on site. We account for the focus on a country around special synods in terms of a time period of 5 years around the commencement. Jubilees of Christianity are a reason for celebration in the Church and provide opportunities to amass its followers. National churches use the occasion of jubilees of the evangelization of a country to celebrate their existence, which provides an opportunity for the pope to visit the country. Based on the year of evangelization of a country, we control for 50-year, 100-year and 500-year anniversaries of national churches.

3.4 Endogenous treatment model results

Table 2 shows the results for the selection model and the outcome model, which are estimated simultaneously by maximum likelihood estimation. Analogous to the outcome models estimated above using OLS, we gradually add the control variables (model 2), then a linear time trend (model 3) and finally year fixed effects instead of the time trend (model 4). In the selection model, we find that, ceteris paribus, Paul VI who was in office from 1963 to 1978 had a lighter traveling schedule than the popes that followed him, at least in terms of the number of countries visited. Not surprisingly, we find that sickness and increasing age significantly lower the probability of the pope visiting a country, whereas the pope's home country has an increased likelihood of being the destination of an official state visit. Also diplomatic ties with the Vatican favor papal visits.

Regarding the different measures of distance from the Vatican, we only find one significant effect. The pope is less likely to travel to countries if they are genetically more dissimilar from Italy. For congresses and (major) jubilees, we can confirm that these increase the likelihood of a visit by the pope, whereas synods seem to be less relevant. Countries where more saints were created in the past ten years are more likely visited by the pope. However, the total number of saints of the country and the number of saints made in the region over the past ten years are not helpful as predictors.

Finally, we can confirm our expectation that previous visits by the pope to a country lower the probability of that country being visited again in the following ten years, whereas regional visits in the last five years predict a higher likelihood for the pope to visit a country in that region again. The shares of Muslims, Catholics, and other Christians

in the population are not directly associated with papal visits. However, more competition between different religious denominations in a country is associated with a higher probability for a papal visit. Finally, we find that the pope is more likely to visit a country if human rights are not well protected (as of five years before the visit) and coups and violent conflict are absent.

<< Table 2 about here >>

When we study the results of the outcome model after the endogeneity of the treatment is taken into account, we find a positive and significant effect of pope visits. This effect is two to three times as large as in the OLS models, suggesting that simple regression analysis underestimates the positive effect of papal visits on human rights, because the pope chooses travel destinations where human rights are not doing well. Again, we find conditional convergence in the level of human rights protection and a positive effect of economic growth and the absence of coups and conflict. Likelihood-ratio tests indicate for models (1) to (3) that there is a significant correlation between the treatment assignment errors and the outcome errors. The estimated negative correlation between the treatment-assignment errors and the outcome errors (of about -0.2) suggests that unobservables that improve human rights protection tend to occur with unobservables that lower the probability of a papal visit. When we do not take into account the endogeneity of treatment assignment, we estimate an effect of papal visits on human rights that is only one third of the size estimated in the ETM.

3.5 Shaming as a Transmission Channel

On his trips abroad, the topic of human rights is a constant companion of the pope. In order for the criticism of the pope to have an effect, media attention is a necessary condition. News coverage can affect the policy making of other countries (Eisensee and Strömberg 2007) and governments have to fear that the criticism of the pope can lead to political and economic repercussions. The Catholic Church actively promotes media coverage by offering regular press talks, for example, during flights and by using their own media channels. Mexico's human rights record, for example, came under scrutiny before Pope Francis' visit in 2015 and we find similar news for most of the other visits.

To quantify the spotlight shed by media on the issue of human rights during a papal visit, we analyze data on news coverage from the GDELT database. The GDELT database

is an open open-source repository for print and web news articles, which spans media in over 100 languages. It allows us to analyze how global news coverage regarding the human rights situation in a country evolves around the time of a papal visit. For this we create a weekly indicator that measures the frequency of news mentioning "human rights" together with that specific country. We standardize this indicator by the total number of news articles dealing with human rights in the same week. The availability of data only for the timespan from 1st of April 2013 till 1st of September 2017 allows us to measure the effect of 29 papal visits (all by Pope Francis) on media coverage concerning human rights in the destination country.

In Figure A2 we see that in the week of the visit, media reports on the human rights situation in that country are significantly more common than before or after. Compared to the week before the visit, human rights related media coverage on Cuba triples and just as in the other depicted cases this increase in attention reverts to its original level after the pope leaves. Next, we take data on all pope visits during the ascribed period and run a regression on the weekly indicator for media coverage on human rights. Using a regression model with time and country fixed effects and including the lag of media attention, the results in Table A2 show that the intensity of coverage increases significantly during the week in which the pope visits.

4. Conclusion

We have shown that papal visits have a significant effect on human rights protection. This effect appears to be due to increased media attention and the threat of being criticized by the pope for insufficient efforts to guarantee the protection of human rights for the country's citizens. Papal visits are only one channel through which the Catholic Church affects political developments in other countries. Followers of Catholic belief can react directly to promulgations of the Holy Sea (Koukal 2017), national churches can lobby for the preferred policy of the Catholic Church (Andersen and Jensen 2017), and it is thus essential in order to gain a better understanding of the political importance of the Catholic Church that more research deals with these topics.

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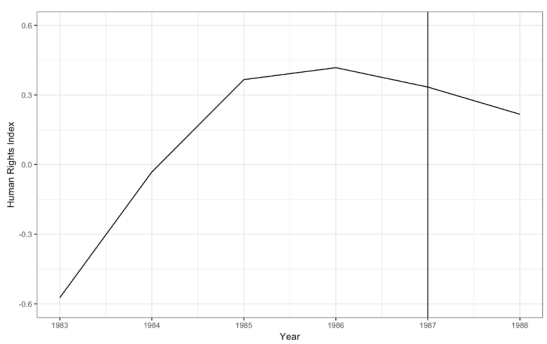
Appendix A: Description of Variables

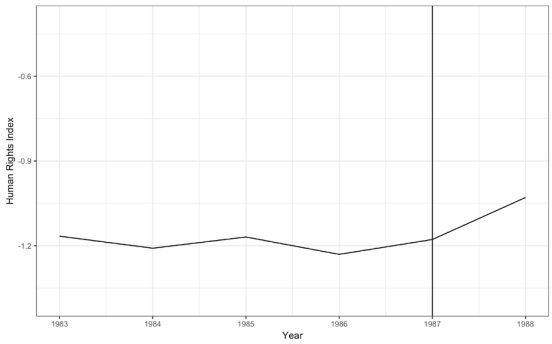
Variable	Description
Human Rights	Latent human rights protection score calculated by Fariss (2014).
Pope Visit	Binary indicator for official visits by the pope. Own coding based on information from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/index.htm
Past Visits (t-5)	Binary indicator for whether the pope has visited this country during the last 5 years. Own calculation.
Past Visits (t-10)	Binary indicator for whether the pope has visited this country during the last 10 years, but not during the last 5 years. Own calculation.
Independence (t-5)	Binary indicator on whether the country declared independence during the last 5 years
Independence (t-10)	Binary indicator on whether the country declared independence during the last 10 to 5 years
Diplomatic Ties	Binary indicator on whether the Holy Sea has diplomatic relations with another country. Own coding based on http://www.vatican.va.
Distance: Genetic	Genetic distance (FST) of a country's population from that of Italy. Source: Spolaore and Wacziarg (2009).
Distance: Geographic	Log-Distance of a country's capital from the Vatican. Source: Mayer and Zignago (2011).
Distance: Religious	Religious distance of a country's population from that of Italy. Source: Spolaore and Wacziarg (2016).
Religious Competition	One minus the Herfindahl index (sum of squares of adherence shares) among persons who adhere to some or no religion. Source: McCleary and Barro (2006).
Share Catholic	Share of Catholics in the population. Source: Maoz and Henderson (2013).
Share Muslim	Share of Muslims in the population. Source: Maoz and Henderson (2013).
Share Other Christian	Share of (Non-Catholic) Christians in the population. Source: Maoz and Henderson (2013).
Church Jubilee (100 years)	Binary indicator for whether a country is in a 100 year jubilee of evangelization (begin of organized church). Own coding based on Barrett et al. (2001) and http://www.vatican.va
Church Jubilee (50 years)	Binary indicator for whether a country is in a 50 year jubilee of evangelization. Own coding based on Barrett et al. (2001) and http://www.vatican.va
Church Jubilee (500 years)	Binary indicator for whether a country is in a 500 year jubilee of evangelization. Own coding based on Barrett et al. (2001) and http://www.vatican.va
Congress	Binary indicator for whether a country hosts an international congress of the Catholic Church. Own coding based on Kasper (2006) and http://www.vatican.va
Synod	Binary indicator for whether Holy Sea hosted a Synod of Bishops. Own coding based on http://www.vatican.va
Synod Theme	Binary indicator for 5 year interval around Special Synod of Bishops on the country or the region where the country is located in. Own calculation based on http://www.vatican.va
Pope: Benedict XVI	Binary indicator for whether Benedict XVI is the pope.
Pope: Francis	Binary indicator for whether Francis is the pope.
Pope: John Paul II	Binary indicator for whether John Paul II is the pope.
Pope: Age	Age of the pope in years.
Pope: Birth Country	Birth country of the pope.

Pope: Sick	Binary indicator for whether the pope was hospitalized in a given year. Including the death of a pope. Own coding based on http://www.vatican.va
Past Saints	Log-number of all past Beatifications and Canonizations of nationals of this country. Own calculation based on data by Barro and McCleary (2016).
Past Saints (t-10)	Number of Beatifications and Canonizations of nationals of this country in the last 10 years. Own calculation based on data by Barro and McCleary (2016).
Past Saints (t-10), regional	Number of Beatifications and Canonizations of nationals of countries in this region in the last 10 years. Own calculation based on data by Barro and McCleary (2016).
Past Visits (t-5), regional	Number of countries in the region that the pope has visited during the last 5 years. Own calculation.
Past Visits (t-10), regional	Number of countries in the region that the pope has visited during the last 10 years. Own calculation.
Population Growth	Growth rate of the population size. Own calculation based on data by Feenstra et al. (2015).
Economic Growth	Growth rate of expenditure-side real GDP at chained PPPs per capita. Own calculation based on data by Feenstra et al. (2015).
International War	Magnitude score of episodes of international warfare. Source: Marshall (2016).
Civil War	Magnitude score of episodes of civil warfare. Source: Marshall (2016).

Figure A1

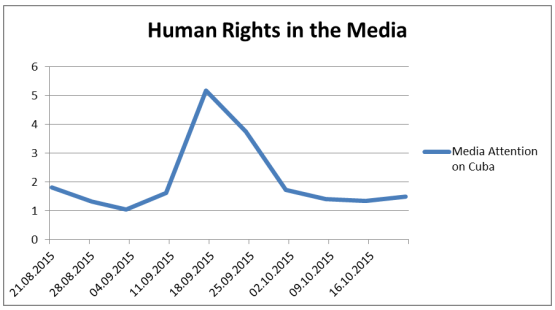


Human Rights index Argentine

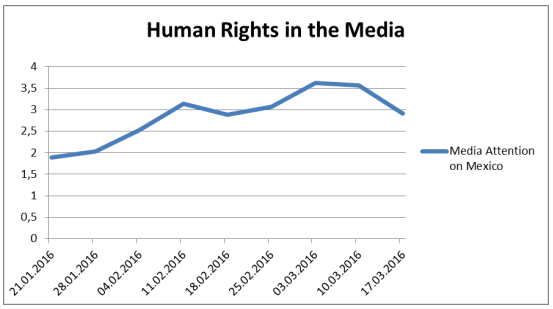


Human Rights index Chile

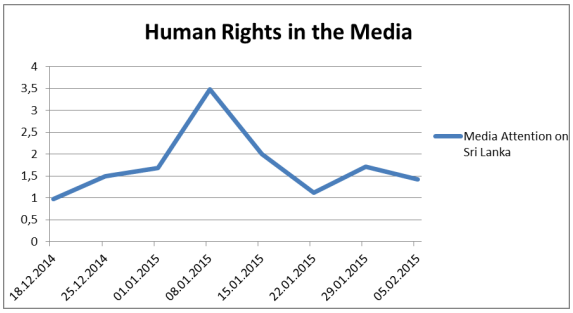
Figure A2



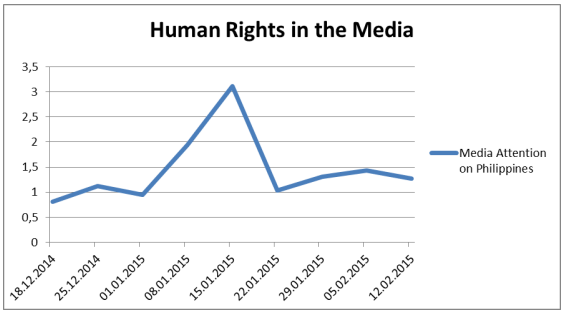
Pope Visit Cuba: 19.09.2015 – 22.09.2015



Pope Visit Mexico: 12.02.2016 – 18.02.2016



Pope Visit Sri Lanka: 13.01.2015 - 15.01.2015



Pope Visit Philippines: 15.01.2015 - 19.01.2015

Table A1

Media Attention to Human Rights

	Dependent variable:			
	articles (1)	media (2)	articles (3)	media (4)
lag(articles,1)	0.488***		0.489***	
	(0.025)		(0.025)	
lag(media,1)		0.594***		0.594***
		(0.025)		(0.025)
pope	2.105***	0.762***	2.253***	0.829***
	(0.369)	(0.124)	(0.356)	(0.132)
lead(pope,1)			-0.035	-0.034
			(0.302)	(0.114)
lead(pope,2)			0.043	0.086
			(0.248)	(0.145)
lead(pope,3)			-0.011	-0.080
			(0.271)	(0.105)
lag(pope,1)			-0.917*	-0.397
			(0.440)	(0.216)
lag(pope,2)			-0.206	-0.128
			(0.327)	(0.131)
lag(pope,3)			0.113	0.009
			(0.200)	(0.082)
Observations	50,503	50,503	50,498	50,498
R^2	0.250	0.377	0.250	0.377
Adjusted R^2	0.243	0.371	0.244	0.372
F Statistic	8,331.466*** (df = 2; 50052)	15,130.350*** (df = 2; 50052)	2,088.770*** (df = 8; 50041)	3,788.207*** (df = 8; 50041)

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Clustered Standard errors

Figure A2: Frequency of Papal Visits

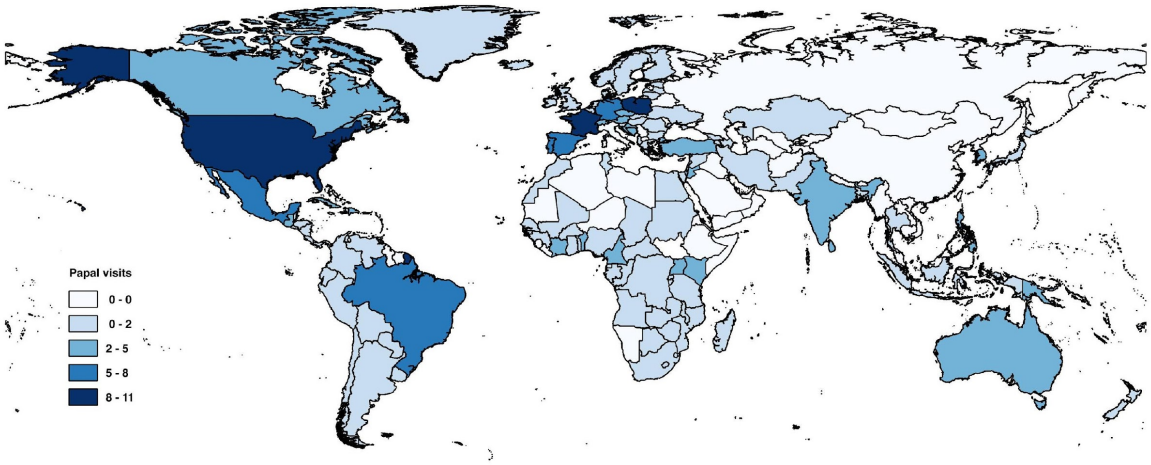


Table 1: OLS estimates– outcome model

OLS

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Human Rights (t-1)	0.002	-0.008**	-0.008***	-0.008***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Pope Visit	0.026***	0.025**	0.024**	0.023**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Population Growth		-0.284	-0.218	-0.201
		(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Economic Growth		0.093***	0.088***	0.109***
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Conflict		-0.047***	-0.042***	-0.046***
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
International War		0.001	0.001	0.001
		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Civil War		-0.002	-0.002	-0.003
		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
No of Coups		-0.044***	-0.042***	-0.043***
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	0.011***	0.024***	-1.254**	-0.006
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.38)	(0.01)
Countries	171	144	144	144
Observations	6738	5622	5622	5622

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note (on Table 1): The dependent variable is the first difference of a continuous indicator for the level of human rights protection by Fariss (2014). Coefficient estimates are shown with standard errors in parentheses clustered on the country level. Model (2) is equivalent to model (1) except that country level control variables are added to the selection and outcome model. Model (3) is equivalent to model (2) except that a linear time trend is added to the outcome model. Model (4) is equivalent to model (2) except that year fixed effects are added to the outcome model.

Table 2: ETM estimates – outcome model

Endogenous Treatment Model

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Outcome model				
Human Rights (t-1)	0.002	-0.008**	-0.008***	-0.008***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Pope Visit	0.074***	0.078***	0.071***	0.059**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Population Growth		-0.245	-0.186	-0.173
		(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Economic Growth		0.096***	0.091***	0.110***
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Conflict		-0.046***	-0.042***	-0.045***
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
International War		0.001	0.001	0.001
		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Civil War		-0.002	-0.002	-0.003
		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
No of Coups		-0.043***	-0.041***	-0.042***
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	0.009***	0.021***	-1.214**	-0.008
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.38)	(0.01)
Selection model				
Human Rights (t-1)	-0.140***	-0.178***	-0.176***	-0.174***
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Past Visits (t-1/t-5)	-0.670***	-0.731***	-0.734***	-0.737***
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Past Visits (t-6/t-10)	-0.230+	-0.265*	-0.265*	-0.266*
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Past Visits (t-1/t-5), regional	0.024**	0.027**	0.027**	0.028**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Past Visits (t-6/t-10), regional	-0.009	-0.005	-0.005	-0.006
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Diplomatic Ties	0.878***	0.788***	0.791***	0.794***
	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Past Saints	0.195*	0.188*	0.188*	0.187*
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Past Saints (t-1/t-10)	0.059**	0.064**	0.064**	0.065**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Past Saints (t-1/t-10), regional	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Congress	1.433***	1.455***	1.470***	1.493***
	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Church Jubilee (500 years)	1.092**	0.924*	0.925*	0.924*
	(0.34)	(0.37)	(0.38)	(0.38)
Church Jubilee (100 years)	0.567*	0.417	0.418	0.422
	(0.27)	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Church Jubilee (50 years)	0.524*	0.477+	0.480+	0.486+
	(0.25)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.28)
youth_days	2.427***	2.410***	2.418***	2.422***
	(0.56)	(0.54)	(0.54)	(0.55)

families_meeting	1.585**	1.477**	1.509**	1.575**
	(0.54)	(0.55)	(0.55)	(0.55)
Synod	0.076	0.073	0.074	0.079
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Synod Theme	0.221*	0.178	0.175	0.163
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Pope: Birth Country	2.011***	1.995***	2.012***	2.040***
	(0.55)	(0.54)	(0.54)	(0.55)
Pope: Age	-0.039***	-0.041***	-0.042***	-0.042***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Pope: Sick	-0.163+	-0.137	-0.139	-0.148
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Pope: John Paul II	0.779***	0.784***	0.760***	0.741***
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Pope: Benedict XVI	0.543**	0.501*	0.472*	0.482*
	(0.18)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Pope: Francis	1.469***	1.402***	1.367***	1.400***
	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Share Catholic	0.179	0.199	0.199	0.199
	(0.20)	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Share Other Christian	0.197	0.286	0.283	0.279
	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Share Muslim	-0.218+	-0.205	-0.202	-0.195
	(0.11)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Religious Competition	-0.508*	-0.456+	-0.452	-0.443
	(0.25)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Distance: Geographic	-0.081	-0.097	-0.097	-0.097
	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Distance: Religious	-0.681+	-0.649+	-0.645+	-0.642+
	(0.36)	(0.39)	(0.39)	(0.39)
Distance: Genetic	-9.731**	-10.279**	-10.234**	-10.047**
	(3.51)	(3.79)	(3.81)	(3.85)
Population Growth		-0.001	-0.151	-0.195
		(3.31)	(3.30)	(3.29)
Economic Growth		-0.218	-0.224	-0.257
		(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)
Conflict		-0.280*	-0.284*	-0.275*
		(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
International War		-0.256**	-0.258**	-0.260**
		(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Civil War		-0.001	0.000	0.001
		(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
No of Coups		-0.165	-0.165	-0.162
		(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Constant	0.929	1.271	1.363	1.348
	(0.81)	(0.85)	(0.85)	(0.85)
Countries	171	144	144	144
Observations	6738	5622	5622	5622

+ p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note (on Table 2): The dependent variable in the first stage is a binary indicator reflecting an official visit by the current pope. The dependent variable in the second stage is the first difference of a continuous indicator for the level of human rights protection by Fariss (2014). Coefficient estimates are shown with standard errors in parentheses clustered on the country level. Model (2) is equivalent to model (1) except that country level control variables are added to the selection and outcome model. Model (3) is equivalent to model (2) except that a linear time trend is added to the outcome model. Model (4) is equivalent to model (2) except that year fixed effects are added to the outcome model.