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Volunteering and Catholicism in Europe. The Inside Perspective. Part 1: Theoretical

Abstract

The paper analyses the social activity practices of the Catholic persons, as a set of individual and collective action emerging from the Catholic identity and structuralised under the Church-related formal non-profit initiatives. The purpose of the study is to clarify: (1) to what extent the Catholic unpaid social activities of different kinds could be classified as forms of volunteering and (2) to what extent the third sector definitions of volunteering include the specificity of Catholic activities. There are three reasons for observed tendencies to not include religion-oriented volunteering in voluntary studies. Firstly, while using tools for collecting data adequate for the secular world, researchers face methodological difficulties in order to successfully cover social activities organized in parishes and congregations. Secondly, fonist approach reflects the ideological-rooted tendency to treat religion as a matter pertaining to private life. Thirdly, some of religious-based entities tends to keep social activities of the believers inside the church-related circle. From the Catholic perspective, volunteer engagement represents an important aspect of faith-based daily activities, so called 'lived religion'. Social engagement of believers provided within the church-related entities, as well as outside them, usually fulfils all the main features of volunteering. The relation between volunteering and religion is to be referred, not only to the general position of faith-based and religious organizations

in public sphere, but also to the embeddedness of religious life in the society, as in fact, both religion and volunteering are categories social *per se*. Reflection on volunteering and Catholicism is illustrated by presenting empirical evidence from the 2018 panel expert research among representatives of 29 Catholic Bishops Conferences across Europe.

Keywords

volunteering, civil society, Catholicism.

1. Introduction

An operational definition of volunteering consists of five features.¹ Voluntary character of the activity means that: (1) activity is undertaken spontaneously by volunteers – there is no formal obligation put on individuals to take the action; (2) the activity is unpaid – volunteers receive no salary and no other materially calculable gratification for their engagement (small souvenirs or gadgets may be acceptable); (3) activity produces reasonable public benefit or added social value, that connects volunteering with the service ideal; (4) activity transgress personal relations and family obligations, which means that it is provided in the public sphere, even if such activity is not publicly recognized and (5) activity is structuralized to some extent – it is organized by and within the civil sector or (less often) public administration entities. Business entities are allowed to organize voluntary action of their own paid staff (referred to as corporate volunteering) only under separate non-profit programs.

The modern understanding of volunteering is highly influenced by Jürgen Habermas, who defined civil society as “a dynamic and responsive sphere of public dialogue between the state, the public sphere, composed of voluntary organizations, and the sphere of the market consisting of private companies and associations.”² In such a liberal reduction of the civil society, volunteering

¹ M. Rymśa, *Wolontariat w kontekście organizacji pozarządowych*, in: W. Kaczyńska (ed.), *O etyce służb społecznych*, Warszawa 2010, Uniwersytet Warszawski, pp. 30–43.

² J. Habermas, *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*, Cambridge 1996, Polity Press, p. 37.

represents the way of fulfilment of individualistic needs, economic and class competition, as well as the “system of customer needs.”³

There is a strong link between religion and volunteering.⁴ Since the beginning of Christianity as a religion, Christians have articulated ethical rules promoting personal service-based engagement as a response to social challenges.⁵ However, following the French Revolution, the Catholic Church in Europe made a long path from reactive mode towards promotion of human rights and advocating for social progress. The shift inaugurated Pope Leo XIII, who in 1891, published the first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*. This institutional shift inaugurated individual social activity by some Catholics, such as Archbishop Wilhelm von Ketteler (1811–1877) in Germany, Charles de Montalembert (1810–1870) and Albert de Mun (1841–1914) in France or Cardinal Henry Manning (1808–1892) in England. The beginning of transformation to official recognition of Catholic social activism started by denouncing the injustices experienced by factory workers in 19th century. This shift was linked with the changing attitude towards activity of laymen within Catholic Church. In the 20th century Catholic Church developed Christian teaching on social activism. Catholic activists play important role in the 20th century history of Europe. Just to mention such personalities, such as Luigi Sturzo (1871–1959) and Chiara Lubich (1920–2008) in Italy, or Franciszek Blachnicki (1921–1987) in Poland. In the times of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) new types of religious organizations emerged in Catholicism, especially in Italy, Spain and France, and were transplanted to other countries throughout Europe.⁶ The objective of that social-based movement was to activate Catholic laymen and transform parishes into inclusive communities. The Catholic Church elaborates a vision of social order which inspires and represents a reference point of Catholic activism. Among many principles of the Church’s social

³ P. Załęski, *Neoliberalizm i społeczeństwo obywatelskie*, Toruń 2012, Fundacja Nauki Polskiej.

⁴ R. Graf Strachwitz (ed.), *Religious Communities and Civil Society in Europe*, Berlin 2020, De Gruyter.

⁵ S. Nepstad, *Catholic Social Activism. Progressive Movements in the United States*, New York 2019, New York University Press.

⁶ H. R. Ebaugh, *The Revitalization Movement in the Catholic Church: The Institutional Dilemma of Power*, “Sociological Analysis” (1991), No 52, pp. 1–12.

doctrine, the most important are: human dignity, the common good, solidarity, reconciliation, peace.⁷

As a result, currently, some volunteering social activities are undertaken in parishes spontaneously by lay people on responsibility and accountability of the parishes as legal entities. Other are run within the church-affiliated or faith-based non-profit organizations. Researchers distinguish different types of such entities. Ronald Sider and Heidi Unruh describes five types of “social service and education entities with a connection to religion”⁸: faith-permeated organizations, faith-centred organizations, faith-affiliated organizations, faith-background organizations, faith-secular partnership. In case of Catholic volunteering, engagement of such structuralized activities are located within the Catholic Church infrastructure, some outside it.⁹ In some, religious elements are openly integrated with social services; in some they are separated in principle.¹⁰ Such an embeddedness and profiling of Christian religion-inspired volunteering activities, which are not obvious, call for special reflection.

2. The Role of Religion in Volunteering

In a modern cultural context, volunteering contributes to social welfare and social services; it participates in democratic system and composes social bonds. Robert Wuthnow claims that “religious groups have been in the forefront of efforts to address questions about civil society.”¹¹ Religious communities contribute to volunteering as a system of norms, especially in that they promote pro-social

⁷ *Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Vatican 2004, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

⁸ R.J. Sider, H.R. Unruh, *Typology of Religious Characteristics of Social Service and Educational Organizations and Programs*, “Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly” (2004), No 1, p. 110. The typology is completed by the six type of organization – fully *secular* entity.

⁹ T. Kamiński, *Kościelny trzeci sektor i jego specyfika*, “Trzeci Sektor” (2015), No 34, pp. 27–35.

¹⁰ S. Monsma, *Working faith. How religious organizations provide welfare-to-work services*, Philadelphia 2002, University of Pennsylvania.

¹¹ R. Wuthnow, *Christianity and Civil Society. The Contemporary Debate*, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 1996, Trinity Press International, p. 1.

values such as compassion, kindness and altruism.¹² Religious congregations deliver social services and cooperate with the network of social and public institutions and may be seen as 'special case' voluntary associations.¹³

Religion provides 'social space' for a volunteering organizational framework, social capital and network for volunteering.¹⁴ We may say that religious activities shape the institutional context of volunteering, as volunteers are also believers and believers do volunteering.¹⁵ Religious activity and volunteering are two overlapping forms of social action and have many common characteristics. Both share some value-loaded motivations; both are non-profit by nature and both may be conducted individually or collectively.

In a theoretical perspective of rational choice theory, religion is understood in terms of commitment. "Organizationally and theologically, the heart of religion is commitment."¹⁶ In such 'evaluative' perspective¹⁷, religious commitment emerges from a specific social and psychological context and affects human beings and social life. Rodney Stark and Charles Glock distinguish five principal dimensions of religious commitment: (1) belief, (2) practice, (3) knowledge, (4) experience and (5) consequence. The first three could be identified with a theological outlook and a set of cultural ideas and emotions, and encompass ideational and subjective, rather than the practical aspect of religiosity. However religious practices and consequences refer directly to social activity. "Religious practice includes acts of worship and devotion, the things people do to carry out their religious commitment."¹⁸ The consequences dimension of religious commitment "identifies the effects of religious belief, practice, experience, and

¹² C.-H. Ji, L. Pendergraft, M. Perry, *Religiosity, altruism, and altruistic hypocrisy: Evidence from Protestant adolescents*, "Review of Religious Research" (2006), No 48, pp. 156–178.

¹³ M. Harris, *A special case of voluntary associations? Towards a theory of congregational organization*, "British Journal of Sociology" (1998), No 49, pp. 602–618.

¹⁴ J. Wilson, M. Musick, *Who cares? Toward an integrated theory of volunteer work*, "American Sociological Review" (1997), No 62, pp. 694–713.

¹⁵ R. Wuthnow, *Saving America? Faith-based services and the future of civil society*, Princeton 2004, Princeton University Press.

¹⁶ R. Stark, Ch. Glock, *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment*, vol. I, Berkeley 1970, University of California Press, p. VII.

¹⁷ W. Sadlon, *Religijny kapitał społeczny*, Saabrucken 2014, Bezkręś wiedzy.

¹⁸ R. Stark, Ch. Glock, *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment*, vol. I, Berkeley 1970, University of California Press, p. 15.

knowledge in persons' day-to-day lives."¹⁹ Within religious, Stark and Glock distinguish formal and public worship, organizational participation, financial support as well as ritual commitment and private rituals. Within this dimension, implicit volunteering may be placed.²⁰

Most often, religious activity is defined from the perspective of motivations. In statistical inquiries, religiosity is defined as an independent variable which determines formal or informal volunteering. It means that religiosity is regarded as the subjective character of individuals oriented towards social action. According to Pew Research Centre, highly committed Christians are more likely to volunteer within community groups, than non-religious persons.²¹ On the other hand, non-religious persons are more engaged in sports clubs. From a psychological perspective, religion provides specific reinforcements promoting cultural altruism.²² Many studies demonstrate that religiousness has an impact on pro-social behaviour.²³ Some highlight the link between religion and specific forms of volunteering.²⁴ However, the way religion affects pro-social behaviour is not clear. Some religious people perceive themselves as pro-social in spite of the fact that this may not shape their real behaviour. Some studies confirm that religious persons are "not willing to act prosocially and help targets perceived as representing outgroups; they are even rather discriminative towards them."²⁵ From such a perspective, religious people would rather be 'moral hypocrites' than altruists.

¹⁹ R. Stark, Ch. Glock, *American Piety*, p. 16.

²⁰ W. Piwowarski, *Teoretyczne i metodologiczne założenia badań nad religijnością*, in: W. Piwowarski, W. Zdaniewicz (eds.), *Z badań nad religijnością polską. Studia i materiały*, Poznań–Warszawa 1986, Pallottinum, pp. 57–72.

²¹ *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe* (2017), Washington D.C. 2017, Pew Research Center; *Being Christian in Western Europe*, Washington D.C. 2018, Pew Research Center.

²² C.D. Batson, *Sociobiology and the role of religion in promoting prosocial behaviour*, "Journal of Personality and Social Psychology" (1983), No 45, pp. 1380–1385.

²³ V. Saroglou, I. Pichon, L. Trompette, M. Verschueren, R. Dernelle, *Prosocial behavior and religion: New evidence based on projective measures and peer ratings*, "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" (2005), No 44, 323–348.

²⁴ M. van Tienen, P. Scheepers, J. Reitsma, H. Schilderman, *The Role of Religiosity for Formal and Informal Volunteering in the Netherlands*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2011), No 22, pp. 365–389.

²⁵ V. Saroglou, I. Pichon, L. Trompette, M. Verschueren, R. Dernelle, *Prosocial behavior and religion: New evidence based on projective measures and peer ratings*, "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" (2005), No 44, p. 324.

In Europe, religious persons are more eager to engage in charities and community activities. Churches are perceived by Europeans as important charitable institutions and social capital 'generators.' However, there is a significant gap between the level of volunteering and civil engagement practices in Western and Eastern part of Europe. In 'old democracies' organized volunteering is more developed. In 'new democracies' informal volunteering is dominating.²⁶

Church attendance is associated with increased volunteering.²⁷ Great amounts of statistical studies on how religion affects volunteering, varies in the way religiosity is defined and measured. Some studies differ more subjective religious factors such as 'religious mind' and treat them as subjective personal religious disposition.²⁸ The question remains open as to what extent increased volunteering refers to intrinsic church volunteering or whether religious commitment is linked with no-religious volunteering.²⁹ Volunteering represents an extension of religious practice.³⁰ Intrinsic religion is a powerful predictor of nonspontaneous helping.³¹ Religious commitment matters more in motivating volunteering than subjective aspects of religiosity. Studies also demonstrate a significant difference in philanthropic engagement between members of various religious groups and confessions. For instance, Conservative Protestants are more philanthropically engaged than Catholics and liberal-oriented Christians from other denominations.³²

²⁶ *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe*, Washington D.C. 2017, Pew Research Center; *Being Christian in Western Europe*, Washington D.C. 2018, Pew Research Center.

²⁷ R. Wuthnow, *Acts of compassion*, Princeton University Press 1991, Princeton.

²⁸ M. Mitani, *Influences of Resources and Subjective Dispositions on Formal and Informal Volunteering*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2014), No 25, pp. 1022–1040.

²⁹ J. Wilson, T. Janoski, *The Contribution of Religion to Volunteer Work*, "Sociology of Religion" (1995), No 56(2), pp. 137–152.

³⁰ R. Nesbit, B. Gaylez B., *Patterns of Volunteer Activitz in Professional Associations and Societies*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2012), No 23, pp. 558–583.

³¹ P. Benson, J. Dehority, L. Garman, E. Hanson, M. Hochschwender, C. Lebold, *Intrapersonal Correlates of Nonspontaneous Helping Behavior*, "The Journal of Social Psychology" (1980), No 110, pp. 87–95.

³² I. Berger, *The Influence of Religion on Philanthropy in Canada*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2006), No 17, pp. 115–132.

3. Classifying Catholic social activities

The *UN Handbook on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work*³³, strongly influenced by the John Hopkins University methodology of non-profit comparative studies and research, distinguishes between religious congregations and faith-based service organizations. From the institutional perspective, third sector (or social economy sector) includes – among many forms and formats of the not-for-profit organizations – also “religious congregations, such as parishes, synagogues, mosques, temples and shrines, which administer religious services and rituals, and lay organizations controlled by those congregations, except for religious institutions affiliated with official State religions.”³⁴ However the International Conference of Labour Statisticians defined volunteer work as any unpaid and non-compulsory activity that is “different from the fulfilment of social responsibilities of a communal, cultural or religious nature.”³⁵ That is why unpaid work for a religious congregation or association, arranging cultural, social or religious events is classified as in the scope of the third or social economy sector, only if they are organized outside religious institutional structures.³⁶

Also, the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (INCPO), constructed by John Hopkins University, includes religious congregations and associations as the eleventh type of non-profit entities, besides ten secular (non-religious) types such as: (1) culture, (2) education, (3) human health services, (4) social services, (5) environmental protection and welfare activities, (6) community and economic development, (7) civic, advocacy, political and international activities, (8) philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion, (9) business, professional and labour organizations, (10) professional, scientific, accounting and administrative services.³⁷ These types do not consist of a methodological correct typology of NPO activities, as some spheres overlap. Providing social services is no doubt a kind of welfare activity, voluntarism promotion may be conducted by religious entities as well as education or culture activities.

³³ *Handbook on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work*, New York 2018, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

³⁴ *Handbook on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work*, p. 23.

³⁵ *Handbook on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work*, p. 29.

³⁶ *Handbook on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work*, p. 32.

³⁷ *Handbook on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work*, pp. 71–75.

Activities provided by people generally create more difficulties for every classifying attempt. But INCO may serve as an illustration of the tendency to treat religion-based activities as a kind of closed/ shut circle of human activities. Seen as such, a separate social bubble may be also omitted in typologies of organized social activities.

Studies on correlation between religion and volunteering are inconclusive, not only due to reductive character of statistical analysis. The differences between various religious groups also affect the ambiguity of the results of comparative analysis.³⁸ Jerf Yeung argues that religion is often reduced to a binary or at least one-dimensional reality, while too little attention is paid to differences among religious groups.³⁹ Dean Hoge *et al* studied volunteering as an element of commitment to religious community. In his approach, volunteering includes commitment to church social organizations (such as teaching Sunday school), engagement in church-sponsored social programs in the community, and volunteering for secular community projects (such as Scouts or Little League). According to that research, about half of church members within Assemblies of God, Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians and Catholics are active in supporting their religious organizations. "Volunteering is very closely associated with other forms of church participation."⁴⁰

Anne Yeung distinguishes between church-related volunteering and non-church volunteering.⁴¹ Yeung compared four groups of people: church volunteers, volunteers operating both within the church and outside the institution, people volunteering only outside the church, and non-volunteers. She confirmed that in Finland the religiosity is understood both as attending religious practices, and the importance of God affects the likelihood of volunteering. Such an approach enables one to consider both volunteers operating within church and those who are active within the church, but also outside the church. However,

³⁸ L.W. Galen, *Does religious belief promote prosociality? A critical examination*, "Psychological Bulletin" (2012), No 138(5), pp. 876–906.

³⁹ J.W.K. Yeung, *Religious Involvement and Participation in Volunteering: Types, Domains and Aggregate*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2017), No 28, p. 113.

⁴⁰ D.R. Hoge, Ch. Zech, P. McNamara, M. Donahue, *The Value of Volunteers as Resources for Congregations*, "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" (1998), No 37(3), p. 479.

⁴¹ A.B. Yeung, *An Intricate Triangle – Religiosity, Volunteering, and Social Capital: The European Perspective, the Case of Finland*, "Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly" (2004), No 33, pp. 416–417.

the possible impact of being a religious person or voluntary activities outside the church is omitted. Modes of religiosity and institutional character of religious communities shape the social activity of religious persons.⁴² For example, volunteering among Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals is limited to church activity.⁴³ Members of the Lutheran church are more often non-church volunteers. Yeung postulates for "the importance of further studies, including qualitative ones, for determining more precisely the nature of the relationship between religiosity, belief, values, and volunteering."⁴⁴ Other studies confirm the validity of Yeung's postulate. The 2009 American Time Use Survey confirmed positive correlation between religious activities and formal volunteering, but not with informal one.⁴⁵ Religious attendance correlates with the volunteering within religious and secular organizations among immigrants and natives in Canada.⁴⁶

Religious affiliation affects volunteering by religious attitudes, norms and reduction of social barriers.⁴⁷ Greg Smith studies the relationship between 'faith based social action' and 'voluntary action as a whole.'⁴⁸ The author is aware that there are 'organisational incompatibilities and differences in priorities'⁴⁹ between religious organizations and the 'regular' voluntary sector. But Smith highlights also the distance-building effect of professionalization of voluntary organization. The distance is built by both sides. Professionalized organizations tend to distance themselves from congregation members, whereas volunteers participating

⁴² A.B. Yeung, *An Intricate Triangle*, p. 415.

⁴³ J. Wilson, T. Janoski, *The Contribution of Religion to Volunteer Work*, "Sociology of Religion" (1995), No 56(2), pp. 137–152.

⁴⁴ A.B. Yeung, *An Intricate Triangle— Religiosity, Volunteering, and Social Capital: The European Perspective, the Case of Finland*, "Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly" (2004), No 33, p. 417.

⁴⁵ H. Taniguchi, *The Determinants of Formal and Informal Volunteering: Evidence from the American Time Use Survey*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2012), No 23(4), pp. 920–939.

⁴⁶ L. Wang, F. Handy, *Religious and Secular Voluntary Participation by Immigrants in Canada: How Trust and Social Networks Affect Decision to Participate*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2013), No 25(6), pp. 1559–1582.

⁴⁷ I. Berger, *The Influence of Religion on Philanthropy in Canada*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2006), No 17, pp. 115–132.

⁴⁸ G. Smith, *Faith in the Voluntary Sector: A common or distinctive experience of religious organisations*, London 2008, University of East London, p. 16; <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.458.4024&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (25.03.2023).

⁴⁹ G. Smith, *Faith in the Voluntary Sector*, p. 16.

in church-related activities do not see themselves as formal volunteers and their churches (parishes) as formal NPOs.⁵⁰

Jerf Yeung mentions some semantic problems regarding the definition of volunteering: relationship between being a volunteer and being a believer may be seen as vague and ambiguous.⁵¹ Heidi Unruh and Ronald Sider label the impact of religion on social ministry as 'faith factor'.⁵² They explore not only 'spiritual' meaning in faith-based social action, but also study 'mission orientation' – the relationship between social action and evangelism. In America, the term 'faith-based' has become commonly accepted expression not only in scientific literature, but also in public policy programming documents.⁵³ Margaret Harris claims that volunteering may be interpreted as a form of religious activity.⁵⁴ Yeung distinguishes between church and other voluntarism. Church-based social ministry encompasses many forms of social participation and activity at junction between religious life and social activity.

4. The European context and tradition

In many European countries, despite the strong secularization process, religious organizations provide a framework for volunteering.⁵⁵ The European welfare model, as well as the specific features of national legal and institutional configuration between the state and religion, deliver a different (than American) context for faith-based volunteering. In almost all European countries (with the exception of France), Catholic organizations and institutions have their

⁵⁰ H. Cameron, *Are members volunteers? An exploration of the concept of membership drawing upon studies of the local church*, "Voluntary Action" (1999), No. 1, pp. 53–65.

⁵¹ J.W.K. Yeung, *Religious Involvement and Participation in Volunteering: Types, Domains and Aggregate*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (2017), No 28, p. 113.

⁵² H.R. Unruh, R.J. Sider, *Saving Souls, Serving Society. Understanding the Faith Factor in Church-Based Social Ministry*, New York 2005, Oxford University Press.

⁵³ J. Bartkowski, H. Regis, *Charitable Choices: Religion, Race, and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era*, New York 2003, New York University Press.

⁵⁴ M. Harris, *The church is the people: Lay volunteers in religious congregations* [Working paper No 16], London 1996, LSE Centre for Voluntary Organisations.

⁵⁵ D. Robbins, *Voluntary organizations and the social state in the European Community*, "Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations" (1990), No 1, pp. 98–128.

‘autonomous’ legal (civil) status. From legal point of view, Catholic organizations are recognized as equal to civil non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or non-profit organizations (NPOs). Representatives of Catholic organizations are also invited to national volunteering councils and boards.

Catholic-based organizations are classified in legal order as civil organizations. In such a situation, volunteering within Catholic organizations is not distinguished from volunteering within non-religious organizations. In some countries (e.g. England, Scotland, Ireland) Catholic organizations are especially referred to so called ‘charities’. In France, Catholic organizations are registered as (1) organizations of public benefit (according to appropriate legal regulations from the 1901 act) or as (2) religious organizations (based on the 1905 legal act). In Belarus, Catholic social organizations have no special legal status.

European classification systems locate faith-based organizations inside a third sector. In the UK charity law recognises as charitable purposes, not only relief of the poor, but also advancement of education and religion, as well as other activities beneficial for the community.⁵⁶ As ‘advancing religion’ literally means promoting, maintaining or practicing religion, religious organizations may be registered as charities.⁵⁷ In England and Wales about 20% of registered charities include “religious activities” among their charitable purposes, while only 7% of these charities list only “religious activities”. Such an endeavour to link religion and charitableness is embedded also in other European countries.

First European charity foundations (e.g. hospitals, hospices) and first civil society organizations (e.g. confraternities, guilds and brotherhoods) were inspired by Christian faith in God’s mercy and founded by the Church. In the Middle Ages, monasteries, dioceses and parishes developed wide system of charitable and social activity. The modern process of nationalization and secularization of social work and other helping practices gave rise to a special configuration of governmental and public involvement into social services, which is often referred to as welfare states. Contemporary Europe is ruled by democratic values and strongly influenced by free foperatmarket economics. In such a situation, the protection and promotion of social well-being is shaped by the ‘third sector’

⁵⁶ B.R. Hopkins, C.L. Moore, *Using the lessons learned from US and English law to create a regulatory framework for charities in evolving democracies*, “*Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*” (1992), No 3, pp. 1573–7888.

⁵⁷ *The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit*, Charity Commission 2008, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/358531/advancement-of-religion-for-the-public-benefit.pdf (20.09.2019).

institutions and organizations and through less formal activities of citizens within civil society. The Catholic Church takes care of both the third sector and civil society: “Many experiences of volunteer work are examples of great value that call people to look upon civil society as a place where it is possible to rebuild a public ethic based on solidarity, concrete cooperation and fraternal dialogue”.⁵⁸ In the second half of the 20th century civil society in Europe was strongly stimulated by politics and influenced by ‘human rights’ and equality agenda.

From the institutional perspective, which is also reflected in the official Catholic Church documents,⁵⁹ Catholic volunteering in Europe is a kind of social engagement of Catholics undertaken, shaped and structuralised within four types of Church-related formal non-profit entities:

1. **Catholic institutions**, which operate formally as Catholic, according to the formal relationship between the state and Catholic Church (diocese, jurisdiction of religious order).
2. **Catholic social institutions**, which are established by religious institutions (e.g. religious order or dioceses established as religious schools or hospices).
3. **Catholic organizations** which do not obtain civil legal status, but act on the basis of the internal rules of churches (e.g. in particular, parishes small groups).
4. **Catholic-based associations and foundations**, which have been established as civil (not Catholic) but refer to some extent to the Catholic Church.

In recent years, volunteering in Europe has been dynamically increased. Such a positive trend is observed not only in ‘old democracies’ (Western Europe countries) but also in ‘Post-Communism’ sectors of the continent (CEE countries). This trend is reflected also within the four above-mentioned Catholic institutions and organizations. Empirical evidence illustrating this trend has been collected under the expert panel conducted in 2018 in collaboration with the Council of Bishops’ Conferences of Europe.

⁵⁸ *Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine* (2005), Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Vatican 2004, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, p. 420.

⁵⁹ See Benedict XVI, *Intima Ecclesiae Natura* (Motu Proprio), Vatican 2012, http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu_proprio_20121111_caritas.html (17.05.2021).

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