

Pontifical University  
St. Patrick's College  
Maynooth  
Co. Kildare  
Ireland

**“Good Politics,” Contributive Justice, and the Common Good: How  
Catholic Social Teaching Responds to the Global Migrant Crisis.**

Yohanna Yariyok Jacob

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Supervisor: Dr. Pádraig Joseph Corkery

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|      |                                                  |
|------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ACBC | Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference          |
| APC  | All Progressive Congress                         |
| AU   | African Union                                    |
| AUDA | Africa Union Development Agency                  |
| BBC  | British Broadcasting Corporation                 |
| BC   | Before Christ                                    |
| BCE  | Before the Common Era                            |
| BH   | <i>Boko Haram</i>                                |
| CA   | <i>Centesimus Annus</i>                          |
| CAR  | Central African Republic                         |
| CBCN | Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria           |
| CST  | Catholic Social Teaching                         |
| CSDC | Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church |
| CTBI | Church Together in Britain and Ireland           |
| DCE  | <i>Deus Caritas Est</i>                          |
| DDF  | Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith          |
| DH   | <i>Dignitatis Humanae</i>                        |
| DRC  | Democratic Republic of Congo DRC                 |
| EMCC | <i>Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi</i>            |
| GDP  | Gross Domestic Product                           |
| GS   | <i>Gaudium et Spes</i>                           |
| HSE  | Health Service Executive                         |
| ICBC | Irish Catholic Bishops Conference                |
| INEC | Independent National Electoral Commission        |
| ICT  | Information Communication Technology             |
| IDPs | Internally Displaced Persons                     |
| IMF  | International Monetary Fund                      |
| IOM  | International Organisation of Migrations         |
| KGP  | Kew Garden Principle                             |
| LG   | <i>Lumen Gentium</i>                             |
| LNG  | Liquefied Natural Gas                            |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organizations                   |

|         |                                                                  |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OUP     | Oxford University Press                                          |
| PCJP    | Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace                         |
| PDP     | People's Democratic Party                                        |
| SARS    | Special Anti-Robbery Squad                                       |
| SCD     | Social Doctrines of the Church                                   |
| SACBC   | South African Catholic Bishop's Conference                       |
| UNGA    | United Nations General Assembly                                  |
| UNHCR   | United Nations High Commission(er) for Refugees                  |
| UNRC    | United Nations Refugee Convention                                |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNOHCHR | United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  |
| USCCB   | United States Conference of Catholic Bishops                     |
| USD     | United States Dollar                                             |
| USDS    | United States Department of State                                |
| WHO     | World Health Organization                                        |

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This dissertation was motivated by Pope Francis' teaching about our common humanity, common home and the common good and his concern for the vulnerable and marginalised in the world.<sup>1</sup> All these resonates with me as having some political implications: Coming from Nigeria, a country that has grappled with the challenges of poverty and impoverishment, insecurity of lives and property, high rate of unemployment, corrupt politics, bad governance, environmental pollution, and a dysfunctional democratic system with an inefficient political leadership. These problems results in the mass migration of people from various walks of life seeking sanctuary in other places both locally and globally. This is where "good politics" becomes a catchphrase ethically and theologically in this dissertation. "Good politics" along with contributive Justice acknowledge and harness the contribution of every human person for the common good of the political community.

Therefore, this research examines how Catholic social teaching (CST) can act as a valuable resource in enhancing public discourse on the migrant crisis. With its deep roots in Sacred Scripture and Christian anthropology, CST is an objective interlocutor on debates about migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. This study acknowledges that there are several approaches that one could take in addressing the migrant crisis: for example, one could focus on a theology of social sin and migration or the Christian virtue of hospitality. One could also focus on human right abuses and humanitarian crisis like other scholars in different fields of humanities and social ethics. However, this research focuses instead on the ways in which global and local politics must better respond to the global migrant crisis. Particular attention, therefore, will be given to the Church's teaching on matters of socio-economic and political welfare because it is critical to the flourishing of peoples.<sup>2</sup>

Although democracy is supposed to be "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people,"<sup>3</sup> some democratically elected leaders in the Global South often turn out to be

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (Hereafter *FT*), nos. 41, 64 and 98 (Dublin: Veritas, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> This point is made after a careful consideration of Pope Francis' argument that, "I sometimes wonder why it took the Church so long to unequivocally condemn slavery and the various forms of violence [and other evil practices that has affected our common humanity, peaceful coexistence, and our common home]. Today, with our developed spirituality and theology, we have no excuses" (See *Fratelli Tutti*, 86). Moreover, we have had extraordinary spiritual leaders, like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and a host of others, in the past who stood out when the world urgently needed leadership and spiritual guidance. They all had a clear vision of the divine mandate to make the world a better place for all humanity. These people were revolutionary in their thoughts, teachings, and approach to the socio-economic challenges of their times and were able to leave a legacy that we are benefitting from today. (See, Lucinda Vardey, "Introduction" in *Mother Teresa: A Simple Path* (London: Ebury Press, 1995), 15-17. St. Francis of Assisi is the inspiration behind Pope Francis' style of leadership as reflected in his pastoral guidance and intervention in what is happening in politics and the migrant crisis. The Pope insists that "it is important that catechesis and preaching speak more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, the fraternal dimension of spirituality, our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person, and our reasons for loving and accepting all [people as] our brothers and sisters" (See *FT*, 86). This is a very important reminder of the Church's prophetic role and mission in the world today and always.

<sup>3</sup> This definition of democracy is attributed to Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), who was the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America. His definition of democracy introduced a very important concept to political leadership and governance – the people. The implication here is that, in democracy, power belongs to the

autocratic or dictatorial in nature. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Powell observes that “African countries have always had conditions common for coups because of the high rate of poverty and poor economic performance.”<sup>4</sup> This has been the case since the political independence of many of these countries. Hence, the unprecedented movement of peoples in this epoch to different parts of the world, resulting in the migrant crisis. The migration crisis has accelerated both human and drug trafficking globally. Those who are trafficked suffer ongoing exploitation; many women have been sexually abused; others are being used as prostitutes or drug peddlers in their host communities. There are also those who are stranded without the proper immigration documents that will guarantee their safety and wellbeing.

These socio-political challenges prompt the following questions: How can better living conditions in poor countries be realized? How can the Church through her social teaching respond to the drivers of the migrant crisis? How can migrants be helped to integrate into new societies, enjoying the rights and privileges of citizens? Can some of these challenges leading to the migrant crisis be avoided through “good politics?” This research seeks to explore some of these questions through the lens of the Church’s social doctrine. Specifically, this thesis concentrates on the principles of “good politics” (as found in Pope Francis’ social teaching), contributive justice and the common good. By drawing on the work of Alexander Betts, this study aims to detail the implications of Pope Francis’ teaching on the crisis more explicitly.<sup>5</sup>

This dissertation is structured into seven chapters. Chapter one gives the general background to the problem being addressed in this dissertation. It clearly states the problem, the aims and objective of the study, the scope and limitations, the motivation and the research question, the methodology and the structure of the work. This provides a scholarly context and defines the boundaries of the research leading to the literature review, where a review of existing literature is topically investigated to identify the scholarship gap or lacuna being considered and the research hypothesis. Chapter two explores the drivers of the migrant crisis. It acknowledges that migration is not a new phenomenon but has gradually become a problem because of the mass exodus of people to the Global North in search of greener

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people. Pope Francis makes this clear when he said “the concept of a ‘people’ which entails a positive view of community and cultural bonds, is usually rejected by individualistic liberal approaches, which view society as merely the sum of coexisting interests. [He argues that we cannot] speak of respect for freedom, [...] without roots in a shared narrative.” He maintains that “in certain contexts, those who defend the rights of the most vulnerable members of society tend to be criticized as populist. For him, the concept of “people” and “neighbour” is key for the sustenance of social organization, development in science [and technology] and for progress in our civic institutions” (See *FT*, 163). The global migrant crisis needs such humane guidance and intervention because of the plight of migrants.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Peter Mwai, in “Gabon Coup: The Latest in a Series of Military Takeovers on the Continent” *BBC News*, Nairobi, 30 August 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-46783600> Accessed on September 11, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Betts is a political scientist who specializes in Forced Migration and International Affairs. His research centres on the political economy of refugees' access to socio-economic rights, and he has undertaken extensive research across East Africa. His works include *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2013), *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced People Can Build Economies* (Oxford University Press, 2021), Co-Authored with Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World* (London: Oxford University Press, 2017).

pasture. It wonders why migration has become a crisis, considering that it has been a constant feature in human history and have its positive influence on humanity? The chapter argues that corrupt leadership, underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment, civil war, human right abuses and natural disaster are responsible for the migrant crisis.

Chapter three proposes the socio-political foundations of the migrant crisis through the lens of Christian anthropology, which emphasises human dignity and its protection. It is argued, in this chapter, that CST cannot adequately respond to the migrant crisis without recourse to human dignity, which is also important to international human rights movements and figures prominently in the political principles of many nations.<sup>6</sup> Many people are forced to migrate because of socio-economic and political challenges affecting their dignity and rights. Therefore, the third chapter presents the Christian understanding of human dignity and how its violation results in migration.<sup>7</sup> It also defines “good politics” used by Pope Francis and applied it to the migrant crisis, international obligations and local politics.

Chapter four provides a comprehensive socio-economic, political, ethical and theological analysis of the concept of the common good in relation to “good politics” and the migration crisis. It illustrates how the crisis stems from the failure to promote the common good across political communities. The chapter starts with the theological basis of the common good, advocating for a deeper understanding of the concept and its socio-economic and political implications to the migrant crisis. It discusses specific ways in which the principles of the common good, when implemented, can help tackle the challenges that lead to excessive migration resulting in the global crisis.

The fifth chapter introduces the concept of contributive justice to the migrant crisis. It focuses on equity and the creation of equal opportunities for citizens and non-citizen to contribute to the development of their nation or political community. Unlike “distributive justice which most people are familiar with; the concept of contributive justice is less familiar.”<sup>8</sup> This explains its novelty to this study on Catholic social teaching and the migrant crisis. Sometimes both concepts are used to describe the same reality, but they are not.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>6</sup> Martha Nussbaum, “Human Dignity and Political Entitlements” in *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, ed. Edmund D. Pellegrino, Adam Schulman, and Thomas W. Merrill (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 351.

<sup>7</sup> Anna Rowlands describes “theological anthropology as the hinterland to the principle of dignity in CST. Any understanding of the principle of dignity requires an appreciation of the deeper ideas about personhood that underlie the texts of the CST tradition.” (See Anna Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times*, (London: T&T Clark, 2022), 52.).

<sup>8</sup> See T-Kay Sangwand, “Prevention is Political: Enacting Contributive Justice and Decolonizing Transnational Archival Collaborators” *KULA: Knowledge creation, dissemination, and preservation studies* 2, no. 1 (2018): 2. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/kula.36>

<sup>9</sup> Some scholars, following St. Thomas Aquinas, equates “contributive Justice” with “general justice.” General Justice, according to Aquinas, is the virtue governing the duties of citizens to the common good of the larger community. For Aquinas, “the virtue of a good citizen is general justice, whereby a person is directed to the common good.” (See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 58, arts. 5-7 and q. 61, arts. 1 and 2, and the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, nos. 69-71. See also Joseph Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance*, trans. Richard Winston, et al. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1965), 113. This is also cited in Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 195). This thesis argues that the concept of “general justice” does not specify what

chapter highlights the significance of contributive justice in “good politics” and the migrant crisis. This leads to the theological and ethical interlocation of CST and the works of Alexander Betts in chapter six. Betts and his companion Paul Collier call for a rethinking of the various dimensions of the possible drivers and solutions to the crisis. In this chapter, we argue that we may succumb to apathy, blame game or despair, if we do not reassess our way out of the crisis through frank dialogue and openness in seeking for better solutions to the problem. The seventh Chapter brings the work to a close with the summary of our research findings, recommendations for possible areas of further research and the general conclusion.

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the duties of citizens are in relation to the common good. Contributive justice, on the other hand, seems more specific because it projects the need to do something concrete for the common good.

## CHAPTER ONE

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND METHODOLOGY

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Our world is plagued by war, terrorism, corruption, poverty, unemployment, human rights violations, civil unrest, and ecological disaster. All these problems uproot people from their homeland in search of livelihood elsewhere. Most countries in the Global South especially in Sub-Sahara Africa, would qualify for what is called “failed states” due to lack of transparent, objective, and accountable political leadership. In Nigeria, for instance, this has heightened a sense of frustration and disillusionment among many Nigerians and has led to what is commonly referred to as the “*Japa Syndrome*”<sup>1</sup> which refers to the persistent exodus of professionals, technicians, business owners, and the ordinary citizens from the country in search of better livelihoods. Many people are now in refugees’ camps, while others seek asylum across the world. How then can these challenges of the migrant crisis be addressed? Can “good politics,” contributive justice, and the common good offer any insights? These are the questions this research sets out to explore through Catholic Social Teaching (CST).

#### 1.2 Aims and Objective

The aim of this research is to advance the understanding of “good politics” through the principle of contributive justice as an important concept in addressing the migrant crisis, and how it is connected to the Christian understanding of the common good. Working from within the Catholic social tradition, this study uses the scholarship of David Hollenbach, Kristin E. Heyer, Anna Rolands, Daniel Goody, Tisha Rajendra and others alongside the work of Alexander Betts to explore the migration crisis. Betts’ work has been largely under-utilised to date within Catholic scholarship. It provides a new angle on contemporary immigration challenges in Catholic theological, ethical and social teaching. Although, much has been written about the migrant crisis, from a “social, political, economic and cultural dimension, but not so much has been done from a theological perspective, especially from the vantage point of the immigrants themselves.”<sup>2</sup> This study combines the relationality-responsibility approach with narrative and normative methods to unpack the crisis. It will be argued throughout the thesis that “good politics,” contributive justice, and the common good are crucial dimensions of the migration challenges debate. And here also we find that Bett’s work is a useful tool in identifying more clearly many aspects of what Pope Francis calls for in *Fratelli tutti*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Japa* is a Yoruba word that loosely translates as “run-away” or “escape.” It describes a swift unexpected departure, relocation or movement of people from a place, situation, or circumstance. The term has become a popular expression among Nigerians when talking about the migration crisis and the circumstances leading to it in the Nigerian context. It is often employed humorously to avoid trouble, danger, or unforeseen obstacles.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel G. Goody, “Theology in the Age of Migration: Seeing the Image of Christ in the Eyes of a Stranger,” *National Catholic Reporter*, September 18, 2009, 22.

### 1.3 Scope and Limitation of this Study

While acknowledging the various angles from which the migrant crisis has already been addressed, this study concentrates on the principles of “good politics,” contributive justice and the common good. We shall limit our study to the application of these principles, utilising the field work of Alexander Betts and other scholars as concrete examples. This research, therefore, offers a specific innovative contribution to the conversation around the migrant crisis by exploring the contribution and responsibilities of migrants, the government of their home countries, their host communities, and the international community.

### 1.4 The Research Question

The research question is: How can “good politics,” through contributive justice and the common good minimise the challenges of excessive international migration? This is the key question this research sets out to analyse and to properly respond to it, we shall be guided by the following sub-questions: What are the drivers of the migrant crisis? What are the theological and ethical implications of Pope Francis’ conception of “good politics”? How might CST theologically enhance the application of the common good in the migrant crisis? Can contributive justice address the needs and challenges of the poor and marginalised in our society? How can the works of Alexander Betts serve as interlocutor to understanding Pope Francis’ concerns about the poor, the marginalised and the migrant crisis?

### 1.5 Literature Review (*Status Quaestionis*)

This dissertation is made up of five components: “Good politics,” contributive justice, the common good, Catholic social teaching (CST), and the migrant crisis. Our review of literature shall be based on these conceptual frameworks.

#### 1.5.1 Catholic Social Teaching and the Migrant Crisis

What is known today as CST has a long tradition. It developed overtime as the Church continues to carry out its prophetic role regarding the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political welfare of humanity and the authentic development of society.<sup>3</sup> It focuses on safeguarding human dignity and respect for the basic rights of every human person “anchored in the understanding of justice found in Scriptures and the reflections of the early Church fathers.”<sup>4</sup> According to Thomas Massaro, CST “can serve as a unifying force, a banner under which believers may rally even if they disagree on certain matters regarding the internal life of the Church.”<sup>5</sup> This implies that the social doctrines of the church is about the socio-economic and political welfare of everyone in society including non-Christians.

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<sup>3</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Social Agenda: A Collection of Magisterial Texts*, ed. Rev. Robert A Sirico and Rev. Maciej Zieba, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Kim, *An Introduction to Catholic Ethics Since Vatican II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 119. See also Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis* (Washington DC.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 2-7.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Massaro, SJ., *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, Fourth Classroom Edition (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2024), 10.

The Church's social teaching in its modern form has its origin in *Rerum Novarum*, an encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 to address the conditions of labour and wages. It sought to direct Catholics and the world on how to manage the chaos around the rise of factories and industrial capitalism. Leo XIII unequivocally maintains that the rich capitalists are responsible for the care of their workers.<sup>6</sup> This novel encyclical laid the foundation for several Magisterial social teachings. It has also become a reference point for the publication of new Magisterial documents addressing contextual challenges. In other words, most publications of new encyclicals often coincide with the anniversaries of *Rerum Novarum*, even though they address emergent social, economic, cultural and political problems affecting humanity.<sup>7</sup>

However, it is important to note that “vital contributions have also been made by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), a Synod of the world's bishops in 1971, local and regional episcopal conferences, and by the permanent secretariat of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, which is responsible for the *Compendium*” and *The Social Agenda: A Collection of Magisterial Texts*.<sup>8</sup> According to Pádraig Corkery, CST engages the world with the Gospel values of Christ which demand the love of God and neighbour in every aspect of our cultural, political, economic and social lives. It demands justice, respect for the dignity of every human person, and the virtue of solidarity with the poor, the vulnerable, the marginalised and the exploited.<sup>9</sup> These are some of the problems driving the migrant crisis.

Despite its prime position since *Rerum Novarum*, the Church's social teaching remains unfamiliar to many Christians and socio-political communities. It is often described as the Church's “best kept secret.” Hence, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace provision of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church* as a comprehensive document that tackles this lack of awareness among Catholics and the wider world of the social dimension of the Church's Gospel mandate in its social context.<sup>10</sup> The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace presents the *dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity* and *solidarity* as the permanent principles at the very heart of Catholic social teaching, including *the universal destination of the earth's goods* and *the preferential option for the poor*.<sup>11</sup> It states that “these principles are of a general and fundamental character, since they concern the reality of society in its entirety: from close to immediate relationships to those mediated by politics, economics and law; from relationships among communities and groups to relations between peoples and nations.”<sup>12</sup> It also emphasises that these principles should be appreciated in their unity, interrelatedness and articulation.<sup>13</sup> Building

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<sup>6</sup> Kevin Hargaden, “Light in Our Darkening World?” *The Sacred Heart Messenger*, September 2025, 18.

<sup>7</sup> See, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Social Agenda: A Collection of Magisterial Texts*, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick Hannon, *Right or Wrong? Essays in Moral Theology* (Dublin: Veritas, 2009), 55.

<sup>9</sup> Pádraig Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, (Dublin 1, Ireland: Veritas, 2007), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), nos. 160, 171 and 182.

<sup>12</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 161.

<sup>13</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 162.

on this document, Andrew Kim divides the principles into two categories. He asserts that Human dignity, community, and the common good make up the trunk of the Church's social teaching, while participation, subsidiarity, preferential option for the poor, stewardship, and solidarity make up the branches.<sup>14</sup> All these principles are geared towards safeguarding the *imago Dei* in every human person and human flourishing.

Anna Rowlands, Charles Curran, and Kenneth R. Himes offer a systematic account of the historical and theological development of the principles of CST in dialogue with the wider scope of secular social ethics. Rowlands, for instance, placed the Church's social doctrine in the wider scope of other social teachings attempting to address the continuous peculiar social problems affecting humanity. In other words, she engages the principles of the social teachings of the church with a range of non-CST sources. For Rowlands, "each principle of the CST also includes an engagement with key thematic area that draws heavily on [the wider social] principles."<sup>15</sup> She, therefore, calls for a critical engagement with what "the Church addresses as 'the social question' and how its own social claims might be thought about."<sup>16</sup> An important aspect of Rowlands approach is how she logically presents her argument in their historical and methodological context.

This kind of approach helps in further exploration and contextualisation of these principles of the CST in different eras and situations. Pope Francis's encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, which is foundational to this study, springs from this kind of historical background. Rowlands examination of the development of the concept of human dignity in relation to social sin and human migration is worth further reflection and investigation given the persistent challenges of the migrant crisis. She highlights this point when she maintains that "whilst Pope Francis' teaching on migration has received unprecedented attention both within and beyond the church, significant ethical debates about how to respond to migration as key sign of the times remain."<sup>17</sup> This is where the potentials of the concept of "good politics" and its core pillars of contributive justice and the common good is being considered here.

Clifford Longley observes that "what is impressive about CST is its coherence and objectivity."<sup>18</sup> He argues that the official Church's social teaching "offers us a route to escape total subjectivity and discover some objective principles that can be applied to a critique of society, and to economic models within society, which are independent of the personal prejudices and opinion of the persons doing the exercise."<sup>19</sup> It has also been

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<sup>14</sup> Kim, *An Introduction to Catholic Ethics Since Vatican II*, 120.

<sup>15</sup> Anna Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times* (London: T & T Clark, 2022), 12. See also Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), and Kenneth R. Himes ed. *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* (Washington DC: Georgetown University press, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion*, 91.

<sup>18</sup> Clifford Longley, "Structures of Sin and the Free Market: John Paul II on Capitalism" in *The New Politics: Catholic Social Teaching for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Paul Valley (London: SCM Press, 1998), 97-8.

<sup>19</sup> Longley, "Structures of Sin and the Free Market," 97-8.

observed that “the basic principle underlying and informing the Christian response to social issues do not change, but the application of these principles are sufficiently flexible to changing circumstances.”<sup>20</sup> For instance, *Fratelli tutti* covers a range of issues affecting humanity: economic and social inequality, religious differences, political instability, the rise of populist groups, environmental pollution, capital punishment, the migration crisis, cultural tensions regarding identity, and the benefits and challenges of globalisation. Pope Francis, in this encyclical, examines “the great ideals and concrete ways to advance if we wish to build a more just and fraternal world centred on good relationships devoid of exploitation and inequalities.”<sup>21</sup> The Pope invites humanity to embrace “fraternal openness” that bridges the gap of location, background, cultural and socio-economic differences.<sup>22</sup> He is concerned about building a better, more just, and peaceful world.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* emphasises the crucial role of promoting human dignity, the common good, and the principles of participation, subsidiarity, and solidarity, in creating healthy, and vibrant societies. It also provides guidance on matters relating to the political community, political authority, democratic system, the international community, social justice and safeguarding the environment for the preservation of the human family.<sup>24</sup> Some scholars maintain that “CST’s views on migration takes place against a backdrop of two complex and controversial realities: globalisation and development. Both are accepted as facts and as part of ‘the signs of the times’ that cannot be ignored by commentators upon modern social conditions and issues.”<sup>25</sup> Can the concepts of “good politics” and contributive justice expand the permanent principles of CST and bring a new dimension to the Church’s responses to socio-economic and political challenges like the migrant crisis? This is what this study is considering.

### 1.5.2 The Concept of “Good Politics” and the Challenges of Migration

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis speaks about “good politics” and its role in handling the world’s socio-economic and political challenges. The Pope, in this document, mentions the word “politics” 31 times, “good politics” twice, “healthy politics” twice, and “better politics” once. This study suggests that the Holy Father recognises the significance of politics alongside a stable, transparent, and inclusive political environment for human

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<sup>20</sup> Kevin O’Higgins, “The Prophetic Social Teaching of Pope Francis” *The Sacred Heart Messenger* (February 2022):8.

<sup>21</sup> Piro, “‘*Fratelli Tutti*’: Short Summary.”

<sup>22</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, (October 3, 2020), no. 1, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20202003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20202003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html) (hereafter cited as *FT*).

<sup>23</sup> Isabella Piro, “‘*Fratelli Tutti*’: Short Summary of Pope Francis’s Social Encyclical,” <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-10/fratelli-tutti-pope-fraternity-social-friendship-short-summary.html> Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, See Chapters Four, Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten, 77-99, 154-228.

<sup>25</sup> John J. Hoeffner and Michele R. Pistone, “But the Labourers Are... Many? Catholic Social Teaching on Business, Labor, and Economic Migration,” in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), 55.

flourishing. The Roman Pontiff, in proposing “good politics,” brings a new dialogical way of collectively handling humanity’s socio-economic challenges. And one cannot properly understand the migrant crisis without also understanding the ways in which social, political, and economic injustice fuel the problem. An example of this is “the ‘migrant caravan’ of the people of Central America who intended to apply for political asylum in the United States covered by the media in the fall of 2018.”<sup>26</sup> The documentary reveals that “the violence that Salvadorans in the group fled was rooted, in part, in US economic and military interventions in the 1980s, when they supported, supplied and trained Salvadoran military for violent conflict. All these contributed to what made El Salvador one of the most dangerous countries to live.”<sup>27</sup> There are other examples of corrupt leadership crisis in many countries, where politicians weaponize poverty, ethnicity and religion to remain perpetually in the corridors of power, even when they are not showing leadership to their people.

This research applies the idea of “good politics” to the migrant crisis because of its multi-dimensional implications to the problem. It distinguishes the ideals of politics for societal flourishing from the manipulative use of the process driving the various socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and humanitarian crisis in our world today.<sup>28</sup> David Hollenbach in addressing the role of religion in politics, challenges people’s fear that public religion threatens democracy and could lead to a global clash of civilisations and new wars. He suggests how Christianity and other religious communities can attain common ground and become a positive force for peace and the protection of human rights. For Hollenbach, [good] politics must promote a commitment to confront issues like poverty, human rights abuses, and all forms of injustices through dialogue. He believes that faith groups should be vigorous advocates of human rights, democratic governance, and equitable economic development for the wellbeing of all humanity.<sup>29</sup> He admits that “the reality of forced displacement, migration, and the suffering of the displaced are not new discoveries. However, how to protect and assist those who have been forced to move away from their homes is what needs [a careful] and serious reconsideration today.”<sup>30</sup> For him “national borders have moral weight, but the grave violations of the rights of displaced persons create responsibilities that are more stringent than duties to co-citizens of one’s own country.”<sup>31</sup> In this regard, Pope Francis proposes social friendship, the culture of encounter, political dialogue, and political charity across borders. These principles focus on our common humanity.

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<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Collier, “Migration,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Tobias Winright (London: T&T Clark/Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 179.

<sup>27</sup> Collier, “Migration,” 179.

<sup>28</sup> See Benard Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, Fifth edition, (London: Continuum, 2005), 1-4, 18-87 and 113. Also see Iain Mackenzie, *Politics: Key Concepts in Philosophy*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 1-17.

<sup>29</sup> David Hollenbach, “Religion, Morality, and Politics,” *Theological Studies* 49, no.1 (March 1988): 67-89. See Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 174-191, 209-214; 218-228.

<sup>30</sup> Hollenbach, ed., *Driven from Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 1.

<sup>31</sup> Hollenbach, “Borders and Duties to the Displaced: Ethical Perspectives on the Refugee Protection System,” *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 4, no. 3 (2016): 148.

Kristin Heyer, on the other hand, asserts that “[there is need for proper formation] of Catholic politicians and voters on the appropriate role of the church in politics, and the relative significance of various political issues with moral dimensions.”<sup>32</sup> She strongly believes that “with renewed attention to quality formation, Catholic politicians’ exercise of prudential discernment and conscientious leadership would not necessarily pose a risk of scandal.”<sup>33</sup> Heyer’s observation applies to all Christians in every part of this world and not just Catholics in the US. Such an approach to politics will assist in achieving what Pope Francis is proposing in his magisterial teaching. Like his predecessors, he is concerned about the preservation of the human family and our common home through peaceful coexistence. This indicates that humanity’s desire for good leadership must begin with educating members of every political community with the vision and values of the Gospel of Christ. In this case, the social dimension of the gospel mandate cannot be ignore. This is why the principles of Catholic social teaching must be promoted not only among Catholics but around the globe.

In this regard, Heyer argues that “Catholic principles of economic and migration ethics protects not only civil and political rights but also more robust social and economic rights and responsibilities.”<sup>34</sup> She criticises immigration measures that dehumanizes and criminalises immigrants. And insist that, any political campaigns that are hinged on the promises to “deport undocumented immigrant on the basis of criminal [or ethnic] profiling should not be condoned because such manipulative narratives have fanned the flames of [narrow] nationalism and sown the seed of fear and discord in many communities.”<sup>35</sup> These kinds of narratives are the reason for xenophobic attacks on innocent people in different parts of the world. Hence, Alexander Betts connection of the migrants and refugees’ crisis with politics. He argues that the refugees’ crisis “must be understood not only as a humanitarian issue but also as pertaining to development.”<sup>36</sup> Drawing attention to some of the political inconsistencies at play in the migrant crisis, he insists that there is need for fair treatment of migrant across board. For instance, why would some people fleeing similar severe thresholds of rights deprivations with others be protected as though they were refugees; while others are “rounded up, detained, and deported.”<sup>37</sup> Such inconsistency from a normative perspective, has serious human rights and security implications in the global migrant crisis.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Kistin E. Heyer, “Catholics in the Political Arena: How Faith Should Inform Catholics Voters and Politicians.” in *Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power*, eds. Kristin E. Heyer, Mark J. Rozell, and Michael A. Genovese (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 61-72

<sup>33</sup> Heyer, “Catholics in the Political Arena,” 66.

<sup>34</sup> Heyer, “Migration, Social Responsibility, and Moral Imagination,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, eds. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer, and Raj Nadella (London: Routledge, 2022), 237.

<sup>35</sup> Heyer, “Internalized Borders: Immigration Ethics in the Age of Trump,” *Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2018): 146-7. Also See Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration: Good Fences Make Bad Neighbors,” *Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (May 2010): 410-436. Also see “Migration, Social Responsibility, and Moral Imagination,” 230-6.

<sup>36</sup> See Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced Peoples Can Build Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Also see Alexander Betts and Paul Collier. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 10.

<sup>37</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013) 8-9.

<sup>38</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration*, 9.

Furthermore, Tisha Rajendra addresses the issue of economic migration, by acknowledging its overlapping effects with political refugees. She contends that the distinction between the two categories of migrants should be maintained. Even though many scholars have “argued that economic migrants fleeing poverty are morally equivalent to political refugees fleeing state violence.”<sup>39</sup> This study supports Rajendra’s argument because economic migrants, in some cases, willingly move out of their countries in search of better job offers and livelihood. Many people, in this category, have the resources to meet up with the immigration requirements for relocation. This is not often the case with political refugees who are often left with little or no option but to seek refuge elsewhere for survival. The only connection between economic migrants and political refugees is that they are all migrants seeking refuge, acceptance, and integration in another country.

Rajendra also gives a critical analysis of the different migration theories that have been used by different scholars, organisations, and institutions in attempting to adequately address the migrant crisis. She notes the over-reliance of most ethicists on the neoclassical theories of migration, with its overemphasis on poverty and unemployment as the reason for the crisis. She also observes that the reliance on this theory has led to flawed ethical conclusions and policy recommendations.<sup>40</sup> This is a scholarship gap identified in this study too. It implies the need for a more wholistic approach. Here, a consideration of “the past, present, and future possibilities of a better relationship between citizens and migrants may yield better results.”<sup>41</sup> Daniel Groody aptly captures Rajendra’s work on the migrant crisis when he maintains that:

Rajendra helps us to untangle the complex challenges pose by migration not only by giving us a way of understanding the conceptual terrain of migration but also by addressing the cognitive, spiritual, and ethical undercurrent that shapes our moral imagination. At the heart of her reflection is the search for a more life-giving narrative that moves us from social fragmentation to right relationships. Because narratives within us continually govern our thoughts, our actions, and our policies, she helps us examine new ways of thinking about immigrants that move us beyond the politics of “otherness” and towards a vision of “oneness.”<sup>42</sup>

Rajendra’s work is “fundamentally about relationships and the ethical foundations needed for building a more just and humane society.”<sup>43</sup> This is what Pope Francis is advocating for, in his teaching on “good politics,” which this dissertation is exploring alongside the principles of contributive justice and the common good.

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<sup>39</sup> Tisha M. Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens: Justice and responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2017), 7.

<sup>40</sup> See Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 33-50. See also Rajendra, “Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Rights of Migrants,” *Political Theology* 15, no. 4 (July 2014) 290-306.

<sup>41</sup> Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel G. Groody, “Foreword” in Tisha M. Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility*, viii.

<sup>43</sup> Groody, “Foreword” in Tisha M. Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, viii.

### 1.5.3 The Concept of Common Good in the Migrant Crisis

The common good is crucial for the wellbeing of everyone and the flourishing of society, while lack of its proper application displaces and marginalises many socially, economically, culturally and politically. This principle is understood in the Church's social doctrine as "stemming from the dignity, unity and equality of all people."<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the common good guides those in authority to adequately serve the needs of humanity at every level of society.<sup>45</sup> As a result, Patrick Riordan analyses the concept of the common good from the perspective of political philosophy, economics, theology, and globalisation, offering insights on its application in these different contexts with clarity and precision.<sup>46</sup> He traces the root of the concept to Aristotle (384-322 BC[E]) before its adaptation in medieval Christianity. He argues that "the notion of the common good is originally a philosophical concept in Aristotle's *Politics*." Riordan maintains that:

Aristotle [was] aware that there are many instances of cooperation and many organisations and institutions facilitating collaboration, whether business, sporting, cultural or religious, each of which has its distinctive activities oriented to their various purposes, constituting their common goods. For him, then, common good is not only or primarily designated in the singular as *the* common good. There are as many common goods as there are forms of cooperation. For him also there remains always a valid question whether the good pursued in collaboration with some people is a genuine good, and whether it is truly for their good.<sup>47</sup>

Aristotle raises an important question especially in a culture of relativism, individualism, and narrow nationalism, where the concept of the common good is sometimes misinterpreted in politics and other socio-economic contexts. His argument is crucial to our current investigation on "good politics" as it relates to the common good and the migrant crisis. This is because "a good" that "*seems* common" may not necessarily be "a good" that "*is* common" to all parties, citizens or groups. There may also be a misunderstanding and misapplication of the concept of the common good with what may be termed "common interest" in politics. This could be the reason why there are challenges in political leadership in many countries leading to the migration crisis. This research, therefore, aligns with Riordan when he raises the crucial question: "How can we talk meaningfully about the common goods in a world which provides so much evidence of the absence of goods in common and of commitment to shared projects? Is it unrealistic to reflect on the common good where the reality of our lives is diversity, plurality, disagreement, and conflict?"<sup>48</sup> The answers to these questions are essential in resolving the socio-economic problems in many countries driving the migrant crisis.

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<sup>44</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 164.

<sup>45</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, no. 165.

<sup>46</sup> See Patrick Riordan, *Global Ethics and Global Common Goods* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015). Also See, *Grammar of the Common Good: Speaking of Globalization* (London: Continuum, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Quoted by Riordan, in "The History and principles of the Common Good," in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Rebuild Our Broken World*, ed. Virginia Moffatt (London: Darton and Todd, 2017), 12.

<sup>48</sup> Riordan, "The History and principles of the Common Good," 11.

Riordan is also concerned about the understanding of the common good within Christian theology and the common good of all humanity: “Is the Church’s common good the same as the common good of the political community, and if not, how are they related?”<sup>49</sup> It is clear from Riordan’s investigative questions that the concept of the common good have a wide spectrum of application. The common good, either from the perspective of a faith community or the political community, projects an understanding of leadership that is at the service of humanity for the betterment of all. Besides, the two communities are interconnected and mutually co-exist simultaneously at the service of humanity in preparation for our eschatology. Consequently, Riordan, in *Recovering the Common Good*, suggests how CST can successfully deploy the common good in the public sphere in relation to education, economics, democracy, or civil rights. He recommends the application of social solidarity, the use of scriptural analysis, philosophical inquiry, and Church doctrine in arguing for the creation a more equitable society for everyone.<sup>50</sup> Riordan’s work on the common good is significant to our analysis of “good politics” and the migrant crisis. He provides the foundational and scholarly gap for our argument on the correlation between “good politics,” the common good and the migrant crisis.

A contextual understanding of the common good is essential for the migrant crisis. According to Hollenbach “the late 20<sup>th</sup> century with its brave new technologies, frightful capacity for destruction, and growing web of political and economic interdependence confronts the human race with ethical choices that are genuinely new.”<sup>51</sup> For this reason, he suggests that there is a need to revisit “the meaning and practical relevance of the notion of the common good that can be traced back to Plato, Aristotle and Cicero.”<sup>52</sup> In *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, Hollenbach considers the ancient tradition of the common good in ways that addresses contemporary social divisions. He formulates his argument on social analysis, moral philosophy, and theological ethics to chart new directions in the conversation about the common good, both locally and globally. His argument shows that the division of the world into developed, developing and underdeveloped countries, and the stratification of every society into social groups, coupled with the challenges of globalisation require a new commitment to the common good. For him, humanity needs to move towards new forms of solidarity if we are to flourish as destined by the Creator.<sup>53</sup> This requires a positive vision of how a reconstructed understanding of the common good can lead to better lives for all people.

The Church’s Magisterium insist that “God destined the earth and all it contains for all men and women so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice and charity.”<sup>54</sup> It is to this effect that Cicero proposed the concept of “social unity” in the Republic. Hollenbach argues that “Cicero had concluded that without

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<sup>49</sup> Riordan, “The History and principles of the Common Good,” 14.

<sup>50</sup> Riordan, *Recovering Common Goods* (Dublin: Veritas, 2017).

<sup>51</sup> Hollenbach, “The Common Good Revisited,” *Theological Studies* 50, no 1 (March 1989): 70-94.

<sup>52</sup> Hollenbach, “The Common Good Revisited,”

<sup>53</sup> See Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

<sup>54</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, no. 171.

a common vision and commitment among the citizens, no governmental structure would be ‘sufficient to found or to preserve a commonwealth whose dominion extend far and wide.’”<sup>55</sup> We see similar challenges today where due to the lack of common vision and political will, people are moving away from their home countries to seek refuge elsewhere.

How then can we actualise a shared vision of the common good as the world is attempting to address the migrant crisis? Can we speak of *the* common good, or *a* common good in an increasingly pluralist society? Ultimately, Hollenbach and Riordan are confident that we can reach consensus, albeit that such consensus will require what they identify as “intellectual solidarity” and compromise. What are the parameters for this proposed compromised? Is it at the level of those in the corridors of power or an “intellectual solidarity” that involves all citizens? Rowlands provides some insights. She connects the concept of the common good with democracy and the political community, aligning both with the twin principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. She advocates for an engagement with the Christian understanding of the common good because it gives concrete context to the conversation and application of the concept in every community seeking a common goal “that unites rather than divides.”<sup>56</sup> Like Pope Francis, Rowlands concludes her argument with a reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan and its practical relevance to the principle of solidarity, our common humanity and the common good. Such analysis is crucial to the debate on the migrant crisis. It reminds us of our interdependence regardless of our race, gender, ethnicity, religion or nationality.

#### **1.5.4 Contributive Justice and the challenges of Immigrants**

Contributive justice spells out everyone’s contribution for the growth and development of the community or wider society. It is centred on “the principle of equality of opportunity and rooted on the creation of a fair or level playing field.”<sup>57</sup> In some ways, this concept is equivalent to the principles of subsidiarity and participation in CST, but needs to be expounded in Christian theology, CST, and the migrant crisis. It is theologically, ethically and legally more specific and persuasive regarding what is required from everyone in the political community, vice versa. The Philosopher, Paul Gomberg, characterises contributive justice within the purview of equality and fairness in opportunities and the allocation of goods and services.<sup>58</sup> Drawing from the theory of social stratification within housing, education, and work setting, Gomberg, Robertson, Scott, and Morrison highlight contributive justice as an alternative ideal for equal opportunity. This implies that the growth and sustainability of any socio-economic and political system is driven by the opportunities

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<sup>55</sup> Cicero, *De Re Publica*, v, i, 1. As cited by Hollenbach in “Recovering the common Weal,” 66.

<sup>56</sup> Rowlands, “The Language of the Common Good” in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*. Edited by Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SCM Press, 2015), 5-6.

<sup>57</sup> Bryn Williams-Jones and Michael M. Burgess, “Social Contract Theory and Just Decision Making: Lessons from Genetic Testing for BRCA Mutation,” *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 14, no. 2 (June 2004): 121.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Gomberg, “Against Competitive Equal Opportunity,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 26, no. 3, (1995): 59-73, Gomberg, “Why Distributive Justice is Impossible but Contributive Justice Would Work,” *Science and Society* 80, no. 1 (2016):31-55. Also see Gomberg, *How to Make Opportunity Equal: Race and Contributive Justice* (New York: Willey Blackwell, 2007), 55.

offered to all within the social and structural hierarchies. Here, it is reasoned that “justice is about contribution [for the common good].”<sup>59</sup> In other words, contributive justice focuses on what people are expected and capable of providing for the flourishing of their community.

Cristian Timmermann identifies the problem of extreme inequality in attaining meaningful work as hindering significant contribution to society and livelihood.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, contributive justice addresses the challenges associated with the migrant crisis in two ways: (1) From migrants being displaced, excluded or marginalised in their home countries; and (2) To migrants not being appreciated in their host communities mostly for socio-economic and cultural reasons. Interestingly, Robertson and Scott conceptualise contributive justice within organisational context as a model for exploring its meaning, operation, and import to address the problem of exclusion and inequality in the workplace.<sup>61</sup> Aligning with Mair, Wolf, and Seelos, they argue that “inequality is often manifested as unequal access to opportunities based on social positions and statuses, which establish boundaries for inclusion.”<sup>62</sup> In this case, contributive justice complements distributive justice – shifting from a way of thinking about socio-economic justice overwhelmingly concerned with *sharing* resources and opportunities.<sup>63</sup>

Applied to the migrant crisis, Tisha Rajendra highlights citizens’ responsibility towards migrants and those intending to migrate to other countries. She views the citizen-migrant relationship from the larger context of global justice through a critical analysis of both the cosmopolitan and communitarian theories of justice. According to Rajendra, both are inadequate in responding appropriately to the complex reality of the responsibility to protect the interest and dignity of migrants. She proposes “a new definition of the concept of justice that is centred on responsible relationship between citizens and migrants.”<sup>64</sup> This is essential for local and global politics, and for peaceful coexistence and human flourishing. In other words, understanding justice “as responsibility to relationships can help theologians and philosophers think about the ethical issues surrounding economic globalisation, international relations, and any relationship across borders.”<sup>65</sup> Rajendra also argues that it

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<sup>59</sup> Gomberg, *How to Make Opportunity Equal: Race and Contributive Justice*, 149. Also see Quinetta Robertson and William, “Contributive Justice: An Invisible Barrier to Workplace Inclusion,” *Journal of Management* 50, no. 3, (2024): 877-897; Andrew Morrison, “Contributive Justice: Social Class and Graduate Employment in the UK,” *Journal of Education and Work* 32, no. 4, (2019): 335-346.

<sup>60</sup> Cristian Timmermann, “Contributive Justice: An Exploration of the Wider Provision of Meaningful Work,” *Soc Just Res* 31, no. 1, (2018): 85-111.

<sup>61</sup> Robertson and William, “Contributive Justice: An Invisible Barrier to Workplace Inclusion,” 877.

<sup>62</sup> Robertson and William, “Contributive Justice: An Invisible Barrier to Workplace Inclusion,” 880. Also see Johanna Mair, Miriam Wolf and Christian Seelos, “Scaffolding: A Process of Transforming Patterns of Inequality in Small-scale Societies,” *Academic Management Journal* 59, no. 6, (2016):2021-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amj.2015.0725>

<sup>63</sup> See Andrew Sayer, “Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work,” *Res Publica* 15, no. 1, (2009): 1-16; Sayer, “Habitus, Work and Contributive Justice,” *Sociology* 45, no. 1 (2011):7-21 DOI: 10.1177/0038038510387188. Also see Mark Banks, “Cultural Work and Contributive Justice,” *Journal of Cultural Economy* 16, no. 1, (2023):47-61; Timmermann, “Contributive Justice: An Exploration of the Wider Provision of Meaningful Work,” *Soc Just Res* 31, no. 1, (2018): 85-111.

<sup>64</sup> Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 6.

<sup>65</sup> Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 8.

is crucial to carefully identify the reasons why people migrate to certain countries and not others. This, in her words, is because “migration theories suggest that migration is caused by specific kinds of pre-existing relationships between countries of emigration and immigration; relationships that are often based on what Catholic social teaching refers to as ‘social’ or ‘structural’ sin.”<sup>66</sup> Rajendra’s assertion needs further investigation considering the current challenges of the global migrant crisis. Hence our attempt at exploring the crisis through “good politics,” contributive justice and the common good in this dissertation.

Contextually, Alexander Betts and Paul Collier assert that the [migrant] crisis “is not just about indefinitely providing food, clothing, and shelter. It must also be about restoring people’s autonomy through jobs and education, particularly in the developing world countries that repeatedly host overwhelming majority of refugees.”<sup>67</sup> For Betts, “international actors must become *de facto* ‘governors’ of economies in refugee camps and settlement, where the rules that shape work, production, consumption, exchange, borrowing and lending often exist in parallel to the wider population.”<sup>68</sup> These migration scholars argue that “if this is done well everyone stands to gain and refugees can be empowered to help themselves and contribute to their societies.”<sup>69</sup> This is what contributive justice demands from all stake holders.

However, Betts acknowledges the difficulties in finding models of solutions that may be applicable to all situations considering the different context of the migrant crisis, but insist that “the key is to find models that simultaneously benefit host states and refugees, while enabling [both] to remain politically and [economically] viable.”<sup>70</sup> Betts also recognises that investing in the autonomy of refugees in neighbouring countries is not sufficient and should not be an end in itself. Refugees are supposed to be helped to either integrate into new communities or return home when the situation in their home country gets better.<sup>71</sup> However, investing on refugees’ autonomy in their haven is a steppingstone towards restoring their dignity and the rights to flourish as human beings created in the image of God. Contributive justice also requires that the international community identify the challenges driving the migrant crisis and work towards preventing them.

### **1.5.5 The Migrant Crisis: Why is it a “Global Crisis”?**

Migration is not a new phenomenon, but has become a global crisis in recent history. Scholarship around the migrant crisis reveals that the movement of people is often motivated by the need to preserve their dignity and rights to basic needs. Although migration has been affected by a lack of commitment to our common humanity, Pope Francis teaches that it will continue to play a pivotal role in our interpersonal relationship around the world.<sup>72</sup> This has

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<sup>66</sup> Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 6.

<sup>67</sup> Betts and Paul Collier. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 10.

<sup>68</sup> Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees*, 293.

<sup>69</sup> Betts and Paul Collier. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 10.

<sup>70</sup> Betts and Paul Collier. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*.

<sup>71</sup> Betts and Paul Collier. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 156-7.

<sup>72</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*. no. 40.

been consistent throughout the history of humanity and has been a driving force for socio-cultural, political and economic transformation.<sup>73</sup> It is, however, becoming one of the most critical areas of global concern in this twenty-first century, because of the large number of people migrating to different locations worldwide either legally or illegally.<sup>74</sup> Some migrate from the Global South to the Global North, while others migrate within the same region depending on the motive and circumstances. There are also those who have been internally displaced locally (IDPs).<sup>75</sup> The unprecedented movement of people is becoming a big challenge for government institutions, policy makers and even citizens of host communities. Hence, the need for a critical engagement and evaluation of the phenomenon. The question is: Why is migration becoming a global crisis, if it has been a constant feature in human history and have its positive influence on humanity?

The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines “crisis” as “a situation that is extremely difficult or dangerous, when there are many problems looming, impending or growing.”<sup>76</sup> The term ‘migrant,’ on the other hand, “describes those who have crossed international borders or those who have relocated to other places within one nation-state.”<sup>77</sup> Migrant crisis, in this research, implies a phenomenon that “describes a complex and generally large-scale migration flows, as well as the mobility patterns caused by a crisis that often lead to considerable vulnerabilities for the affected people and communities and pose serious migration management challenges in the long run.”<sup>78</sup> Understanding the root causes of the migrant crisis and how it is being managed requires insights from migration theories. For instance, Rajendra draws heavily from Agency-Dominant, Neoclassical, New Economic, Structure-Dominant and Migration-System theories in developing her argument on justice and responsibility between migrants and citizens.

She asserts that *migration-systems* theory “shows how both migrants and the structures of migration are crucial to understanding transnational migration. This theory presents how people make decisions for themselves and their families within the context of political, economic and historical structures. *Migration-systems* theory presuppose that while some structures pre-exist migration decisions, other structures are shaped by migrants’ actions.”<sup>79</sup> This is essential for scholarship on the migrant crisis. Therefore, Douglas S. Massey,

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<sup>73</sup> Vaughan Jones, “Migration and the Common Good,” in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Re-Build Our Broken World*, ed. Virginia Moffatt (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2017), 119.

<sup>74</sup> Elizabeth Collier, “Migration” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Tobias Winright (London: T&T Clark, 2022), 173.

<sup>75</sup> Jones, “Migration and the Common Good,” 119.

<sup>76</sup> Cambridge Advance Learner’s Dictionary, *dictionary.cambridge.org*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>. Accessed 12 December 2023.

<sup>77</sup> Rajendra, “Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Right of Migrants,” *Political Theology* 15, no. 4, (July 2014): 291.

<sup>78</sup> International Organisation of Migration, “What is Migration Crisis and How to Address it integrally?” <https://rosanjose.iom.int/en/blogs/what-migration-crisis-and-how-address-it-integrally>. Accessed, 10 December 2023. See also Lucas Guttenggan, “Crisis at the Border? An Update on Immigration Policy with Stanford’s Lucas Guttentag” *Stanford Law School*, April 22, 2019, <https://law.stanford.edu/2019>. Accessed, 10 December 2023.

<sup>79</sup> Rajendra, *Migrant and Citizens*, 45.

Joaquine Arango, Graeme Hugo, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor assert that *migration-systems* theory is not a separate type of migration theory. It is identified with world-system theory.<sup>80</sup> Ronald Skeldon shares in this position. He describes *migration-system* theory as “a series of generalisations that can help provide an order for analysis of the complexity of the real situation.”<sup>81</sup> This signifies that migration theories are essential for the management of the global migrant crisis.

Furthermore, researchers have identified the uncertainties involved in connecting migration to a crisis. Many migrants often realise that living in another country requires modification of the original plans because their intentions at the time of departure are only but poor predictors of the reality. For instance, Stephen Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller assert that “migration is often a collective action, arising from social, economic, and political change affecting the whole society. They argue that although it sounds logical to accept conventional postulation that migration is driven by geographical differences in income, employment and other opportunities. This understanding falls short of the real causes of migration as reflected in the simultaneous high level of movement experience in both the poorest and wealthiest countries.”<sup>82</sup> In a nutshell, the migrant crisis is a complex global reality.

According to Daniel G. Groody and Khalid Koser, migration is becoming a global crisis because of the “widespread changes precipitated by globalization.”<sup>83</sup> Groody argues that many migrants are forcibly uprooted, many undocumented and millions internally displaced in refugee camps. “These flows of people precipitate conflict and controversy; they affect not only migrants but receiving communities as well, making migration an increasingly volatile and contentious political issue.”<sup>84</sup> In other words, the migrant crisis is the extreme inconvenience or insecure situation associated with people attempting to escape from poverty and human right violations in their home country, and the challenges they sometimes encounter in their host communities.<sup>85</sup> Many people take the risk to travel across borders without considering the full implications.

In attempting to address the global migrant crisis, Kristin Heyer, David Hollenbach, Tisha Rajendra, Daniel Groody, Alexander Betts and a host of other scholars have focused much of their scholarship to date on the question of migrants and their rights. Heyer, for example, argues that “to truly understand immigration complexities we need informed and intelligent

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<sup>80</sup> Douglas S. Massey *et al.*, *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005), 61.

<sup>81</sup> Ronald Skeldon, *Migration and Development: A Global Perspective* (London: Addison-Wesley Longman Higher Education, 1997), 31.

<sup>82</sup> Stephen Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movement in the Modern World* 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 25.

<sup>83</sup> Groody, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees,” *Theological Studies* 70, no. 1, (2009): 638-67; Khalid Koser, *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University, 2007), 5.

<sup>84</sup> Groody, “Crossing the Divide,” 639.

<sup>85</sup> Lucas Guttentag, “Crisis at the Border? An Update on Immigration Policy with Stanford’s Lucas Guttentag” *Stanford Law School*, April 22, 2019, <https://law.stanford.edu/2019/04/22/>. Accessed, 10 December 2023.

debate rooted in empirical research, which can integrate theory and practice.”<sup>86</sup> This is very important because without empirical data on the migrant crisis, we may not adequately proffer solutions to the problem. The migrant crisis needs to be approached with concrete evidence for proactive action from government, policy makers and NGOs. This has also been the concern of Pope Francis. To put this into perspective, the global migrant crisis is a complex problem that results from “the clash of cultures, identities, and religions, along with debates over economics, resources, and rights. It has also polarised public discourse, regarding national security and human insecurity, sovereign rights and human rights, as well as civil law and natural law.”<sup>87</sup> These issues require theological and ethical response and guidance for the preservation of the dignity of everyone in the human family. Moreover, these polarised debates of the core issues surrounding migration are yet to resolve. This is why “good politics,” contributive justice and the common good are being examined.

Other critical challenges in the conceptual framework of the migrant crisis includes “legality and illegality, the documented and the undocumented, and the citizen and alien. These characterisation also reflect a failure to internalize the new global reality, resulting in unjustifiable attacks on migrants.”<sup>88</sup> Therefore, Heyer, in *Kinship Across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, maintains that contemporary immigration challenges require a consideration of “the Christian narrative” through the application of “biblical injunctions of hospitality and love of neighbour in a global context.”<sup>89</sup> She states that “as transnational migration increases, ongoing debates about cultural cohesion and national identity, the impact of neoliberal economic priorities, and tensions between protectionist and globalising impulses take on increasing urgency.”<sup>90</sup> Heyer’s argument is grounded on “the Church’s tradition, where immigration directives are rooted not only in biblical injunctions to welcome the stranger but also in the social teachings on universal human rights, the understanding of the political community as oriented to serving the common good, and the global rather than [overzealous] nationalistic perspective” of humanity.<sup>91</sup>

Consequently, this study furthers the migrant crisis debate from the lens of Catholic social teaching using the tools of “good politics,” contributive justice and the common good. It adopts the United Nations understanding of “migrants” as people who left their home country or political community for various reasons to reside in another country or community, irrespective of their legal status. They include people who qualify for

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<sup>86</sup> Heyer, “The Politics of Immigration and a Catholic Counternarrative: A Perspective from the United State” in *Mobilizing Public Sociology: Scholars, Activist, and Latin@ Migrants Converse on Common Ground*, eds. Victoria Carty and Rafael Luevano (Chicago IL: Haymarket Books, 2018), 51.

<sup>87</sup> Groody, “Crossing the Divide,” 639.

<sup>88</sup> Groody, “Crossing the Divide,” 639.

<sup>89</sup> Heyer, *Kinship Across Border: A Christian Ethic of Immigration* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 3. Also See Heyer, “Migration, Social Responsibility, and Moral Imagination,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, eds. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer, and Raj Nadella (London: Routledge, 2022), 236-8.

<sup>90</sup> Heyer, *Kinship Across Border*, 3. Also See Heyer “Strangers in Our Midst: Day Labourers and Just Immigration Reform,” *Political Theology: The Journal of Christian Socialism* 9, no 4 (November 2008): 425-453.

<sup>91</sup> See Heyer, *Kinship Across Border*, 4. And “Migration, Social Responsibility, and Moral Imagination,” 237.

international protection as refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>92</sup> This definition is essential because of the complex nature of the global migrant crisis as recognised by international immigration law, and the Church's social Magisterium on the dignity and fundamental rights of every human person, the common good and the universal destination of the earth's resources.

### 1. 6 The Lacuna Being Considered in this Study

The literature review shows that the migrant crisis has been addressed from different perspectives. It also reveals that there has been an over reliance on the neoclassical theory of migration in Catholic social ethics. Many documents on CST concentrates on poverty and unemployment as the drivers of the migrant crisis. While others demonstrate the prevalence of war, civil unrest, ecological disaster, and humanitarian or human right abuses as the drivers of the crisis. This understanding of the global migrant crisis has led to overemphasis on the virtues of solidarity, benevolence, and hospitality to migrants without considering their capabilities, and socio-economic and socio-cultural contribution in their host communities.<sup>93</sup> This scholarship gap is explored in this study using contributive justice – a novel concept in both to the migrant crisis scholarship and Catholic social teaching.

Secondly, this study identifies a methodological gap. The combination of an interdisciplinary approach of the relationality-responsibility approach, and the narrative<sup>94</sup> and normative methods (with emphasis on Casuistry and virtue ethics) has not been applied to the migrant crisis. It offers a new perspective to the debate considering the different sides of the story – migrants, their home countries and their host communities. The relationality-responsibility and the narrative methods consider our common humanity, our common home and the common good. While the normative methods emphasise learning from both the positive and negative impacts of other cases to avoid future loopholes. The review of literature depicts that the responsibility of the migrants' home countries (especially the government) is de-emphasised and need a critical engagement through "good politics."

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<sup>92</sup> See The UN Migration Agency: International Organisation for Migration (Here after IOM), "Migrant – United Nations," <https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerablegroups/migrants> Also see IOM, "Fundamentals of Migration: An Introduction to Some Key Terms, Definitions and Concepts Related to Migration and Displacement," <https://www.iom.int/fundamentals-migration>. Accessed 19 March 2025. This conceptual clarification takes cognisance of the semantic difference often ignored in scholarship regarding the migrant crisis. The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference acknowledged this challenge and made the following clarification: "'Immigrant' often means someone who has made a permanent home in a new country. 'Migrant' refers to someone who is only based in the new country for a period. 'Asylum Seeker' denotes those who are claiming protection outside their country, which is different from 'refugees,' which refers to those whose claim has been confirmed." (See The Irish Catholic Bishop Conference, *Pastoral Letter, A Hundred Thousand Welcomes? Exploring What Hospitality for Migrant People Means*, 2).

<sup>93</sup> See Rejandra, "Justice Not Benevolence," 291.

<sup>94</sup> The narrative method is a relatively new approach in Christian Ethics and Moral Theology. Adopted as contemporary form of hermeneutics and literary style into biblical studies, philosophy and theology in the mid-to-late twentieth century. (See Victor Anderson, "The Narrative Turn in Christian Ethics: A Critical Appraisal," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 19, no 3, (September 1998):293-312. Also see Dallas Gingles, "Narrative" in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Tobias Winright (London: T&T Lark, 2022), 103-110.

Finally, to the best of our knowledge, we discovered that the concept of “good politics” has not been contextually defined. Therefore, this dissertation attempts a definition of “good politics” integrating it with the principles of contributive justice and the common good to make it more concrete and applicable to the migrant crisis. It uses this definition to address the lacuna of political leadership in the crisis and highlights the dialogical responsibility of international organisations like the United Nations and similar organisations to prevent some of the socio-political challenges driving the migrant crisis. Apparently, the dependent variable in this research is the migrant crisis, and the independent variable is “good politics” enriched by contributive justice and the common good. Contributive Justice highlights the novelty of this study and its benefits to existing body of literatures on migration and its challenges.

### 1.7 Research Hypothesis

This thesis argues that there are valuable insights in CST that might enhance our understanding of politics and the migrant crisis debate. It recommends the principles of “good politics,” contributive justice, and the common good as practical ways of addressing the global migrant crisis. These concepts are theologically and ethically interconnected in this study on the migrant crisis. On the one hand, this study argues that people would prefer to live where they are appreciated and assisted to develop their potentials, where they can contribute towards nation building and human flourishing (good politics and contributive justice). On the other, it maintains that CST encourages a commitment towards the common good for the growth and development of every political community. Accordingly, people are forced to migrate when they feel marginalised, oppressed, persecuted and their fundamental rights and dignity threatened. In other words, many people migrate because their talents and potentials are not appreciated and harnessed for the common good.

### 1.8 Methodology

Considering the interdisciplinary nature of “good politics” and the migrant crisis, this study adopts the relationality-responsibility method as its primary model. This approach will constitute the basis upon which the ethical challenges associated with the migrant crisis is discussed. The choice of this model is influenced by our understanding of Christian anthropology, and moral theology which projects our relationality to God, neighbour, the world, and self.<sup>95</sup> This method is heavily oriented toward virtues and principles that lead to peaceful coexistence and human flourishing. This dissertation aligns with H. R. Niebuhr<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> See Charles E. Curran, “Method in Moral Theology: An Overview from An American Perspective” in *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Ronald P. Hamel and Kenneth R. Himes, (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 96-7.

<sup>96</sup> Niebuhr recommends accountability and social solidarity as part of our responsibility to every member of the human family in every given society. See H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy*. Library of Theological Ethics Edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 73. See also Charles E. Curran, “Method in Moral Theology: An Overview from An American Perspective,” 97. Curran cited the first edition of Richard Niebuhr’s book published in 1963 in his article.

and D. C. Maguire's<sup>97</sup> understanding of the relationality-responsibility approach. Niebuhr essentially understands responsibility "as involving four elements, namely: Response, interpretation, accountability, and social solidarity. This gives more significance to the ontological grounding of relationality and the creative role of [every agent in making the world a better place]." <sup>98</sup> On the other hand, Maguire assesses moral reality and responsibility through a set of questions, such as: What? Why? How? Who? When? Where? Foreseeable effects? Viable alternative? For him, the evaluation of moral reality involves several factors including, creative imagination, reason and analysis, principles, affectivity, individual experience, group experience, authority, comedy, and tragedy.<sup>99</sup> This approach is theologically grounded in the Trinitarian relationship and functionality of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We shall also apply the narrative and normative methods which are concerned with the criteria for determining what is morally right or wrong. The narrative method is relatively new in Christian ethics and moral theology. It was introduced by Stanley Hauerwas in the early 1980s. This method "guide the task of making moral questions, claims, and judgments intelligible. Without narrative structure within which they can be located, individuals and communal moral claims run the risk of, or succumbing to, meaninglessness."<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, the normative methods indicates that there are many ways of analysing moral issues. This study shall apply casuistry and virtue ethics without ignoring other methods like deontology, teleology, and feminist ethics of care.

Casuistry is important to this research because it is a case-based method of reasoning. It tries to resolve new moral problems by comparing it to cases that already enjoy successful resolutions. In this method, the successfully resolved case(s) becomes the paradigm in which the new case(s) are measured.<sup>101</sup> Casuistry typically uses general principles in reasoning analogically from clear-cut-cases to particular ones with similar characteristics. This is because it is difficult to formulate universal rules for particular cases, where the probability

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<sup>97</sup> Maguire defines ethics in terms of the method of discerning moral values. He argues that "there are two general obstacles to effective ethical discernment: One is at the level of personality development, and the other comes from a lack of theoretical clarity regarding the nature of ethical inquiry." This research is adopting his position that "the obstacle to ethical discernment that concerns us here is the general lack of clarity about how we should go about judging and discerning moral values," given the diverse nature of the migration crisis and people's understanding of politics and its role in the well-being of humanity in every society. See Daniel C. Maguire, *The Moral Choice*, (New York: Winston Press, 1978), 113-16; 128-88. See also Curran, "Method in Moral Theology: An Overview from An American Perspective," 97.

<sup>98</sup> Curran, "Method in Moral Theology," 97.

<sup>99</sup> Maguire, *The Moral Choice*, 113-16; 128-88; Also See Curran, "Method in Moral Theology," 97.

<sup>100</sup> See Victor Anderson, "The Narrative Turn in Christian Ethics: A Critical Appraisal," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 19, no. 3 (September 1998): 293-312. See also Dallas Gingles, "Narrative" in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Tobias Winright (London: T&T Clark, 2022), 103-10. (See Gingles, "Narrative" in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, 104-5. The narrative method gives us the context within which our arguments are concretised in this study.

<sup>101</sup> Richard M. Gula, "Normative Methods in Ethics: Surveying the Landscape of Ethical Pluralism," in *Method and Catholic Moral Theology: The Ongoing Reconstruction*, ed. Todd A. Salzman (Omaha, Nebraska: Creighton University Press, 1999), 3-20. The article cited here was first published in *Studia Moralia* 18 (1980): 107-128.

of disagreements, mistakes, and self-serving exception is higher.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, casuistry is adopted in this research for analysing the drivers of the migrant crisis, the conflict in norms and values regarding the place of migrants in their host communities and the role of politics in the global migrant crisis. Casuistry logically leads us into the realm of virtue ethics because when comparing cases and outcomes of peoples' actions, our character limits what we discern and internalize. Moreover, what might be a moral dilemma for one person is not for another because of differences in character formation.

Virtue ethics, therefore, contends that virtues give us a cognitive advantage to know what is right and an emotional predisposition to do it. Virtues influence how we assess what is going on and help us to take precautionary measures to act rightly. Theologically, virtuous people will want to do what is right and avoid what is wrong because virtues make us affectively committed to values. Hence, virtue ethics helps us to look at the bigger moral picture at hand, which often includes attitudes, motives, feelings, and ideals. It reminds us that we do not only expect people to act in certain ways, but that we also expect them to have certain feelings, attitudes, and ideals to inform and guide their action.<sup>103</sup> This makes it an important ethical approach in global challenges like the migrant crisis. It also fits into our analysis of "good politics," political leadership and the migrant crises.

## 1.9 Conclusion

This chapter provides the problem being addressed in this dissertation. It clearly states the problem, the aims and objective of the study, the scope and limitations, the motivation and research question. This provides a scholarship context and defines the boundaries leading to the literature review, where the scholarship gap or lacunae is identified and explored in this research. It also highlights the research hypothesis and methodology being used in this study. In a nutshell, Catholic social teaching begins with the claim that "every human being has intrinsic, equal, and inalienable dignity or worth, deserving uncompromising reverence and respect."<sup>104</sup> Political leadership which is supposed to safeguard the dignity of every human person has, in most cases, fallen short of this responsibility especially in the Global South. This is reflected in the high rate of unemployment, poverty, mismanagement of funds, corruption, political instability, ethnic and religious crisis, intimidation, persecution, insecurities, and a host of other problems. These are some of the challenges identified as the drivers of the migrant crisis addressed in the next chapter.

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<sup>102</sup> Robin W. Lovin, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 157.

<sup>103</sup> Gula, "Normative Methods in Ethics: Surveying the Landscape of Ethical Pluralism," 14-15

<sup>104</sup> The Catholic Bishops' Joint Bioethics Committee, "Catholic Social Teaching and the Allocation of Health Care," in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics* 3rd edition, ed. M Therese Lysaught *et al*, 130-139 (Grand Rapid, Michigan/ Cambridge, UK: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 131-2.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE DRIVERS OF THE MIGRANT CRISIS

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the drivers of the crisis, showing that corrupt leadership, underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment, civil war, human right abuses and natural disaster, to mention just a few, are responsible. The complexity of migration in the twenty first century has become a critical issue that cannot be ignored. It has become a humanitarian crisis due the large number of people on the move, the risk involved, the deception, and their vulnerable conditions in some situations. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), in 1993, acknowledged these challenges. As a result, in 1995, it proposed protection for “people on the move,” which encompasses all those who have left their home country seeking refuge elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The chapter tries to answer the question: What are the drivers of the migrant crisis? In other words, what are the things pushing people to relocate and what are the things attracting them to places other than their home countries?

#### 2.1 Migrants and the Migrant Crisis: Some Foundational Clarifications

After interrogating why migration is associated with crisis in Chapter One, it is crucial, at this juncture, to investigate the drivers of the migrant crisis in more details. Conceptually, the term “migrants,” has been associated with the different categories of people who are living away from their ancestral home for various reasons. To be more specific, it is mostly used to describe people who have moved away from their homeland and are living somewhere else: It could be those “who have crossed international borders or those who have relocated to other places within one nation-state.”<sup>2</sup> Although, “migrant,” is sometimes used interchangeably with “undocumented, illegal, or irregular immigrant,”<sup>3</sup> “refugee,”<sup>4</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> See UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees: The Challenge of Protection* (Oxford University Press, 1993), Chap. 5; and *The State of the world's Refugees: In Search of Solutions* (Oxford University Press, 1995) Chap. 5. Also See Alexander Betts, “Towards a ‘Soft Law’ Framework for the Protection of Vulnerable Irregular Migrants,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 22, no. 2 (July 2010): 209-236 at 209-10 (Footnote 1).

<sup>2</sup> Rajendra, “Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Right of Migrants,” *Political Theology* 15, no. 4, (July 2014): 291.

<sup>3</sup> The International Organisation of Migration's (IOM), *World Migrant Report 2005* defines “undocumented” or “irregular” or “illegal” immigrants as “workers or members of their families not authorized to enter, to stay, or engage in employment in a State. See, <http://www.iom.int/jahia/cache/offonce/pid/1674?entryId=932>.

<sup>4</sup> The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines “refugee” as one who, owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country.” Adapted here from Daniel G. Groody, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees,” (Footnote 16), in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), 22.

“internally displaced persons;”<sup>5</sup> these concepts carry different nuances and may not mean the same thing. Many scholars agree that these categorizations are also unclear and need clarification. For example, People could be fleeing from either religious or political persecution in their home country, which ordinarily qualifies them for the category of forced migrants or refugees. However, they may also have been motivated by the economic challenges in their country, which also qualifies them for economic migrants as well.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, it is important to note that understanding the motive for trans-border migration is a key element in unravelling the migrant crisis. According to Alexander Betts, “the motive for irregular trans-boundary movement are frequently complex and mixed, and the people moving in irregular ways often do not fit neatly into the category of either ‘refugee’ or ‘voluntary economic migrant’ due to a range of interrelated factors:”<sup>7</sup> conflict, persecution, unfavourable political and economic policies, natural disaster or environmental degradation. Irregular migrants are the most vulnerable and would need to be supported to find shelter and livelihood. Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, classified “irregular migrants” with all the “people on the move” and advocates that these category of migrants receive the protection they need.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the United Nations (UN) generalised description of “migrants” as all those “living outside their homeland for more than one year regardless of their reason or legal status,” captures the conceptual ambiguities often ignored in attempting to address the migrant crisis.<sup>9</sup> This description includes international businessmen and women, diplomats, technicians and professionals who are “on the move” but not economically disadvantaged. This indicates that migrants are not necessarily only those who are economically disadvantaged and are out in search of greener pasture. Whatever the case maybe, migration is often motivated by either the “push” or “pull” factors or both.<sup>10</sup>

If migration is not motivated by a single factor, then care must be taken in analysing the situation. Raphael Israeli is against analytically lumping the migrant crisis together because migration is motivated by different reasons as well as aiming at different purposes and

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<sup>5</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in the document *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, defines “internally displaced persons” as those “who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave the homes or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effect of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disaster, and who have not crossed internationally recognized State border.” See Daniel G. Groody, “Crossing the Divide,” 22.

<sup>6</sup> See Groody, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees,” (Footnote 16), in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), 22.

<sup>7</sup> Betts, “Towards a ‘Soft Law’ Framework for the Protection of Vulnerable Irregular Migrants,” 209-10.

<sup>8</sup> Opening Statement by Mr. Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges, Theme: Refugee Protection, Durable Solutions and International Migration, Geneva, 11-12 Dec. 2007, <http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/47fe0e532.pdf> Adapted from Betts’ citation, “Towards a ‘Soft Law’ Framework for the Protection of Vulnerable Irregular Migrants,” 210.

<sup>9</sup> Cited by Groody, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugee,” 22.

<sup>10</sup> Groody, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees,” 22. See also Patrick Johnstone and Dean Merrill, *Serving God in a Migrant Crisis: Ministry to People on the Move* (London: Malcom Dawn Publishing, 2016), 31-39.

target. Migrants also “end up with different results and consequences and cause different degrees of concern and intervention on the international scene.”<sup>11</sup> He suggests that we should analyse and address the drivers of the migrant crisis according to “their typology, and in accordance with their local and regional context to facilitate their conception as part of a permanent, recurrent, and cyclical event in world history.”<sup>12</sup> For him, the drivers of the migrant crisis falls into two major categories: voluntary and forced migration.<sup>13</sup> In other words, it is either people are volunteering to move for certain positive or negative reasons or they are forced to move because that is the best option for their survival.

We could concretise this argument with cases like the Rwandan genocide, the massacre in Bosnia, the tsunami in Southeast Asia, the killing fields of Cambodia, as well as the bloody conflict in South Sudan, Syria, and Afghanistan. The war in Ukraine and the Middles East also leaves many people with little or no choice of survival within their home countries. These are typical cases of the drivers of forced migration.<sup>14</sup> The *Boko Haram* (BH) movement that has metamorphosed into banditry and kidnapping activities in Nigeria and some parts of West Africa falls into this category. One would expect these violent crises to have been prevented considering the advantages of our advancement in information and communication technology (ICT), the use of drones, and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Such inhuman activities keep happening in a world so interconnected with better technologies. Something needs to be done to safeguard our common humanity and preserve the earth, our common home.

Unravelling the socio-economic and political causes of these tragedies that keep pushing people away from their homes is a key moral issue for policymakers, influencers, legal practitioners, international agencies, and faith communities. Concerted effort must be made by all humanity, who have the capacity, in finding lasting solutions to the challenges of forced migration. A. E. Orabator has distinguished three partly interconnected and partly different perception of this kind of migration and its effect to the human family: Forced

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<sup>11</sup> Raphael Israeli, *Ethnic Cleansing: Migration and Population Transfer and the Jewish Paradigm of Survival Amidst Displacement* (Singapore: Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co., 2019), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Israeli, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Voluntary migration is undertaken when the individual, the clan, or the ideological circle in which the migrants have evolved, wish to improve their lot, their standard of living, or to feel religious, linguistic, or socio-cultural affiliation in other countries than their own. Such migration is made in full freedom [and collaboration with] both the country of origin and the target country of immigration [who] accept wholeheartedly the migrant’s freedom of movement. This most convenient mode of migration is, however, dependent on the target country’s law of immigration which can severely constrain the strong will of the migrant to move there. For example, many people wish to live in the US, UK, Canada, or Australia, but their immigration and naturalisation laws and regulations put a severe limitation on the annual quotas, the types and origins of immigration candidates, their skills, their economic situation, and whether the applicants are deserving political asylum or not. Forced migration, on the other hand, takes place when people are forced either by natural disaster, war, political uprising, or ethnic/religious conflict to relocate for safety and the preservation of their ethnic/religious identity. This kind of migration may be local or international depending on the region, the gravity of the situation and the circumstances that led to the migration. (See Raphael Israeli, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 2-9).

<sup>14</sup> See Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 1-5.

migration as a political problem; forced migration as human rights problem; and forced migration as a problem of charity.<sup>15</sup> He argues that:

An approach that prioritizes political solution has ethical implications for the policies and practices of humanitarian NGOs. First, one cannot ignore issues of protection and human right violations in the context of forced migration. Second, the practice of charity, if delinked from other structural and institutional concerns is essentially ineffectual. And, third, it is a disservice to uprooted people not to see beyond charity in attempting to address their needs and concerns.<sup>16</sup>

Orabator hinged the solution to the migrant crisis on politics, policies, human right protection, benevolence and social justice. This is typical of CST. Thus, Pope Francis' advocacy for "good politics" and the common good.

There are growing concerns around the globe about the status of migrants in their host communities and the need to strategically handle their challenges to avoid some unforeseen disruptive effect in the long run. Some charitable organisations in various countries are facing threats for their role in the migrant crisis. Some have complained about threat to burn down their workplaces and racist abuse by citizens not satisfied with the way the crisis is being handled by their government.<sup>17</sup> This is happening because migration is mostly "seen as a 'problem' to be solved or kept in check."<sup>18</sup> And migrants are mostly treated as people in need of charity without properly assessing their capabilities and the motive behind their movement to their host communities. This reveals that "Injustice causes many more wounds than charity alone can heal."<sup>19</sup> Discussions around the migrant crisis, as D. Sriskandarajah observes, disappointedly wavers "between instrumentalism and obligation" towards the migrants. People often wonder: "what can migrants do for society and what should society do for migrants."<sup>20</sup> How can we decipher all these without the culture of encounter which entails reaching out to those in need and listening to them with an open mind to know where and how to step into their situation to assist them in concrete ways. We must first "understand immigration complexities for an informed and intelligent debate that is rooted in empirical research, which can integrate theory and practice" as Kristin Heyer suggests.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orabator SJ., "Key Ethical Issues in the Practices and Policies of Refugee-Serving NGOs and Churches," in *Refugee Rights: Ethics, Advocacy, and Africa*, ed. David Hollenbach SJ (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 226-229.

<sup>16</sup> Orabator SJ, "Key Ethical Issues in the Practices," 226.

<sup>17</sup> Chai Brady and Theo McDonald, "Charity Staff Face Threat and Abuse," *The Irish Catholic*, Thursday, May 16, 2024, 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Dhananjyan Sriskandarajah, "Migration Madness: Five Policy Dilemmas," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 19 (2006): at 36. Also see Kristin E. Heyer, "Reframing Displacement and Membership: Ethics of Migration" *Theological Studies* 73 (2012): 188-206 at 190.

<sup>19</sup> Alberto Hurtado (1901-1952), A Jesuit Chilean Saint twentieth century Saint who worked with the poorest people of his country. Quoted by Thomas Massaro, SJ, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, Fourth Classroom Edition, (London: Rowman and Little Field, 2024), 15.

<sup>20</sup> Sriskandarajah, "Migration Madness: Five Policy Dilemmas," 36. Also See Heyer, "Reframing Displacement and Membership: Ethics of Migration," 190.

<sup>21</sup> Heyer, "The Politics of Immigration and a Catholic Counternarrative: A Perspective from the United State" in *Mobilizing Public Sociology: Scholars, Activist, and Latin@ Migrants Converse on Common Ground*, eds. Victoria Carty and Rafael Luevano (Chicago IL: Haymarket Books, 2018), 51.

The migrant crisis needs to be approached with concrete evidence for proactive action by all who have the capacity. This has also been the concern of Pope Francis. Therefore, Heyer, in *Kinship Across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, proposes a consideration of contemporary immigration challenges in the light of the Christian narrative; applying the biblical injunction of the virtue of love, solidarity and hospitality.<sup>22</sup> She maintains that “as transnational migration increases, ongoing debates about cultural cohesion and national identity, the impact of neoliberal economic priorities, and tensions between protectionist and globalising impulses take on increasing urgency.”<sup>23</sup> Heyer’s argument is grounded on the social tradition of the Church, which is deeply rooted in Scriptures, Christian anthropology and the universal declaration of human rights. It also reveals an understanding of the political community as oriented towards selfless service to one another for the betterment of all.<sup>24</sup> In this case, CST insist on the preferential option for the poor and the common good.

Apart from forced migration, people could also migrate from their home countries for other reasons. Many passages in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament show the people of Israel either on the move or in exile. The story of Abraham being asked to migrate to an unknown land promised to him by God is different from the story of Jacob and his family, who migrated to Egypt in search of greener pasture due to famine in their land. Moses fleeing from Pharaoh after identifying with the Israelites instead of the Egyptians also have a different context (See Exodus 2:11-22). Jesus’s infancy narrative also shows that his parents had to migrate to different places at different times for their safety and to preserve his life from the then authorities who felt threatened by the infant king and the kingdom he came to establish on earth.<sup>25</sup> Similar factors are contributing to the migrant crisis in this twenty-first century.

The UN research on the migrant crisis reveals that the movement of peoples from different parts of the world is in the increase. And the overriding concern of this study is the support and protection of migrants stemming from our relationality and responsibility to one another as members of the human family created in the image and likeness of God. This image and dignity of the human person is prominent in the earliest pages of the biblical narrative, showing that the dignity of every human person is much more than the *label* we give them because of their condition. They bear the image and likeness of God. Therefore, “if all ‘those on the move’ are only seen as *migrants, temporary workers*, or worse still, as *lawbreakers, aliens* or *criminals*, then their suffering makes no moral claim” on their host communities, who are often contented with the mental dividing wall that separates migrants from

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<sup>22</sup> Heyer, *Kinship Across Border: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, 3. Also See Heyer, “Migration, Social Responsibility, and Moral Imagination,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, eds. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer, and Raj Nadella (London: Routledge, 2022), 236-8.

<sup>23</sup> Heyer, *Kinship Across Border*, 3. Also See Heyer “Strangers in Our Midst: Day Labourers and Just Immigration Reform,” *Political Theology: The Journal of Christian Socialism* 9, no 4 (November 2008): 425-453.

<sup>24</sup> See Heyer, *Kinship Across Border*, 4. And “Migration, Social Responsibility, and Moral Imagination,” 237.

<sup>25</sup> It is not the task of this study to go into the details of Biblical immigration narrative. We just want to give a little biblical background to help our contextualization of the divers of the migrant crisis in this era.

citizens.<sup>26</sup> This kind of mindset is based on the assumption that “migrants are potential burden to society, threats to cultural identity, and dangers to national security.”<sup>27</sup> It is also an attempt to evade any responsibility towards them.

The theological foundation for how CST responds to the migrant crisis is hinged on the love of God for humanity manifested in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who migrated from heaven to earth to reconcile us to God through his passion, death and resurrection (John 1:1-18, 3:16; Philippians 2:6-11). This is in view of the eschatology where we shall face the justice of God and be reunited with the heavenly hosts to enjoy renewed friendship across borders.<sup>28</sup> This theological foundation draws attention to the principle of stewardship, transparency, accountability, and responsibility. Meaning that we are all stewards that are supposed to be transparent with the goods and services entrusted to our care by the Creator. We are equally responsible for the wellbeing of one another and will be accountable to the Creator for our actions and inactions, regardless of the privileges we enjoy in this world. In other words, we are supposed to be our brothers and sisters’ keepers in this world as we prepare for the next (Genesis 4:9, Matthew 25:14-30; 31-46).

Interpreting the migrant crisis from the perspective of Catholic social tradition involves perceiving God crossing boundaries through Jesus Christ to break the various barriers affecting our relationship with him and with one another in our common home.<sup>29</sup> It calls for a more humane approach in dealing with migrants whether forced or voluntary because of their vulnerability. Pope Francis says they should be treated in a “humane, just, and fraternal way” to be able to navigate through the challenges of life wherever they may be.<sup>30</sup> Research reveals that either voluntary or forced migration has become a global challenge that is not going away any soon. In 2015, the UN organisation observed “that an average of 42,000 persons were forcibly displaced on daily basis and compelled to seek protection elsewhere due to conflict.”<sup>31</sup> A 2019 report “indicates that one percent of the world’s population is now forcibly displaced.”<sup>32</sup> Certainly, much has happened since 2019: the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, the Russia-Ukrainian war, the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, the various internal conflicts in Asia, Arab, and sub-Saharan Africa, the experience of flood, drought and cyclone in different parts of the world, the unexpected military coup and counter coups in some parts of Africa, the anti-immigrant laws and xenophobic attacks in some parts

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<sup>26</sup> Goody, “Theology in the Age of Migration: Seeing the Image of Christ in the Eyes of a Stranger,” *National Catholic Reporter*, September 18, 2009, 22.

<sup>27</sup> Gemma Tulud Cruz, “When the Poor Knock on Our Door: A Theological Response to Unwanted Migration,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 196.

<sup>28</sup> Goody, “Theology in the Age of Migration,” 22.

<sup>29</sup> Goody, “Theology in the Age of Migration,” 22.

<sup>30</sup> “Pope Francis urges Congress to treat immigrants in ‘humane, and just’ way,” *The Guardian*, [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/24/pope-francis-congress-speech-immigration-climate-change-abortion](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/24/pope-francis-congress-speech-immigration-climate-change-abortion)

<sup>31</sup> United Nations, *The millennium Development Goal Report 2015* (New York: United Nations, 2015), 7. See also Gemma Tulud Cruz, “When the Poor Knock on our Door: A Theological Response to Unwanted Migration,” 195.

<sup>32</sup> UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019* (New York: United Nations, 2019), 8.

of the world, and the consistent conflict in the Middle East. The list could go on. Consequently, many people have either been expelled, hurled into camps, or forced to leave their homes due to some of the above-mentioned challenges.

However, some people have voluntarily relocated to preserve their fundamental rights to life and for economic reasons, seeking alternative means of livelihood to compensate for their losses from natural disasters, and unfavourable government policies and to embrace better opportunities in other countries.<sup>33</sup> Researchers have projected that the “current global crisis that contribute to the migration flows will increase in the coming years, due to the continuous challenges of political instability, climate change, aging population, and the globalisation of businesses.”<sup>34</sup> Therefore, there is need for improvement on the conditions that drive migration. In this context, priority must be given to the dignity of every human person by creating opportunities for people to contribute to the growth and development of both local and global economy for the betterment of humanity. Tisha Rajendra raises critical concerns regarding the drivers of the migrant crisis by observing that: “While theologians and ethicists have listened to the voices and experiences of migrants, they have not thoroughly and systematically paid attention to the phenomenon of migration itself: What drives migration? What leads migrants to relocate to one country rather than another?”<sup>35</sup> These are the genuine concerns being considered and explored in this chapter as we itemise and analyse some of the drivers of the migrant crisis.

## **2.2 Corrupt Leadership and Underdevelopment**

The Church’s social doctrines affirm that political corruption is one of the most serious deformities of every democratic system, “because it betrays at one and the same time both moral principles and the norms of social justice.”<sup>36</sup> Simply put, corruption is the use of a position of trust for dishonest gain. It could also mean the misuse or abuse of public office for personal aggrandisement. Corruption is one of the persistent and disturbing features of political leadership that promotes a culture of individualism instead of the common good. Stories of alleged corrupt behaviour on the part of public and private figures entrusted with the responsibility of leadership in many countries are commonplace. This has raised academic interest on the role of corruption in the underdevelopment and dysfunctional structures entrenched in most poor countries.<sup>37</sup> It is against this backdrop that we are considering corrupt leadership and underdevelopment as drivers of the migrant crisis.

It is pertinent, therefore, to pay close attention to the relationship between the workings of society and the existence of corruption because of the negative impact of this dysfunctional behaviour in many countries leading to the migrant crisis.<sup>38</sup> Due to corrupt practices, many

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<sup>33</sup> Israeli, *Ethnic Cleansing: Migration and Population Transfer*, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Collier, “Migration,” 173.

<sup>35</sup> Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration*, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 411.

<sup>37</sup> Gerald E Caiden and Naomi J. Caiden, “Administrative Corruption,” in *Classics of Administrative Ethics*, ed. Willa Bruce (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 177.

<sup>38</sup> Caiden, “Administrative Corruption,” 177.

people have been pushed to the margins in their country, with little or no role to play. They have been denied a permanent place in the economy of their countries because of corrupt leadership crisis affecting their economic growth and development. Hence, the unprecedented movement of people from their home countries searching for greener pastures in other countries. The Catholic Bishops of South Africa succinctly states that:

There are [people in the society] whose economic decisions have a much greater impact [on all] – bankers, financiers, politicians, chief executives, economists and so on. They are like the lintels, the reinforcing, the beams of a building - even a small change in their behaviour can make a major effect on the whole edifice. Thus, such people have a much greater influence on the economy, and the consequences of their economic choices are more profoundly felt.<sup>39</sup>

Scholars in administrative ethics have classified corruption according to public interest, public duty, and market influence. Corruption, according to the public interest theorists, arises “whenever a public office holder or government functionary is induced to take an illegal action which favours whoever provides him/her with some monetary/material incentives.”<sup>40</sup> A good example of such corrupt practices is contained in a corruption allegation story which involved a lucrative oil and gas project well documented by the *Financial Times* and other international newspapers. It happened between 1994/1995:

Sometime in 1994, the TSKJ consortium (comprising France’s Technip, Italy’s Snamprogetti, the Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown & Root, and Japan’s JGC) made a bid to provide services to a US\$12 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Nigeria partly owned by the Nigerian government and Royal Dutch Shell group. This initial bid was not accepted. Subsequently, the TSKJ group obtained the services of Tristar Investments, a separate company, which was to provide “consultancy” services to enable the company to win the contract in the LNG project. In December 1995, TSKJ was awarded a US\$2 billion contract for the Nigerian LNG project. Years later, evidence was produced that the TSKJ group had internally discussed making payment of about US\$180 million to the various foreign accounts of Nigerian officials to help TSKJ obtain its lucrative contract. Nigerians collectively paid the price of such bribery through inflated contract and undermining of the country’s institutions.<sup>41</sup>

Such corrupt behaviours are detrimental to the proper functioning of the society and its development. It is one of the common phenomena eroding trust in the structures and institutions of democracy and governance in many countries. It has made the countries where these practices are prevalent to remain underdeveloped. Hence, Catholic Bishops of

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<sup>39</sup> South African Catholic Bishop’s Conference (SACBC), “Economic Structure” in *Economic Justice in South Africa, A Pastoral Statement*, (Pretoria, SA: SACBC, 1999), 9.

<sup>40</sup> See C. J. Friedrich, “Political Pathology,” *Political Quarterly*, Vol. 37 (1966), reproduced in A. J. Heidenheimer, *Political Corruption: Readings in Comparative Analysis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), cited by Caiden, in “Administrative Corruption,” 178-9.

<sup>41</sup> See *Financial Times*, “Nigeria Gas Consortium ‘Evasive’, Says Probe Chief,” <http://www.ft.com>, August 23, 2004. Cited by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 86.

the United States argue that “moral principles should shape all economic life; economic choices and institutions must be judged by how they protect or undermine the life and dignity of the human person, support the family and serve the common good.”<sup>42</sup>

Corruption is also associated with ‘public duty,’ exemplified in a “behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private interest, and pecuniary or status gains; it violates rules against the exercise of certain types of power and influence.”<sup>43</sup> Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, like many scholars, has argued that it is the action of a small percentage of every country’s population that is often associated with public corruption which is giving these countries bad image in the international community. For instance, the corrupt practices of General Sani Abacha, Nigeria’s military ruler from 1993-1998 “illustrates on a grander scale how corruption can undermine growth and poverty reduction in a nation’s economy.”<sup>44</sup> Abacha is known for the huge amount of Nigeria’s wealth he illegally saved for himself and his family in Switzerland. It took a legal battle of five years to prove to Switzerland’s government that “an Abacha-run criminal organisation” engaged in looting and laundering Nigerians public funds existed. “The Swiss government eventually agreed to repatriate about 505 million US dollars of frozen Abacha funds back to Nigeria in 2005 and 2006.”<sup>45</sup>

During the five years of Abacha’s rule, an estimated 3 to 5 billion US dollars of Nigeria’s public assets were looted and sent abroad. These sums amounted to a substantial part of Nigeria’s public assets meant for the common good. It is alleged that the amount embezzled by Abacha, in that singular instance, was larger than the 2006 education and health federal budget combined. According to cost estimates provided by World Bank, that amount of money could provide anti-retroviral therapy for more than 3 million people infected with HIV/AIDS over ten-year period, or 200 million insecticides-treated bed nets that could help in the prevention of the dreaded malaria diseases in the country. Needless to mention the number of people the sum, if properly invested for the common good, would have lifted out of poverty. Most of this money was laundered through a network of companies, and banks operated by the Abacha family and their cronies.<sup>46</sup> This is a practical case of corruption under ‘public duty’ and its negative effect in a nation’s economic growth and development.

Finally, ‘market influence’ is the third category of corruption, according to the administrative ethicists’ classification. This type of corruption is centred on “maximising profit” for personal or organisational benefit. It is a stock-in-trade type of corrupt practice, where public officials maximise monetary gains according to the demand and supply of

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<sup>42</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States of America, *A Catholic Framework for Economic Life*, 1996, no. 2.

<sup>43</sup> See J. S. Nye, “Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 61 (June 1967), cited by Caiden, in “Administrative Corruption,” 179.

<sup>44</sup> Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 84.

<sup>45</sup> See Swiss Federal Court Decision of February 7, 2005, Public Law Court 1, Presiding Judge Feraud. Cited by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria*, 84.

<sup>46</sup> Okonjo-Iweala, *Reforming the Unreformable*, 84-5.

goods and services that exist in the marketplace of their official domains.<sup>47</sup> This kind of practice is found in public officials trading appointment, awarding contract or hoarding goods that are meant for the common good and selling to higher bidders for personal gains. This kind of corruption involves a shift from mandatory pricing model to a free-market model, or it could be a situation where corruption is an extra-legal institution used by individuals or groups to gain influence over the actions of the bureaucracy. In other words, market influence corruption provides an alternative means of allocation of goods and services or of access to decision making as against the “centralised allocative mechanism,” which is “the stipulated institutionalised decision-making process.”<sup>48</sup>

The Abacha and associates contract inflation is another classic example of this type of corruption. One odious case involved a Nigeria Family Support Program contract for *Pasteur Merieux* vaccines – a program that was designated to benefit poor families, especially poor women, and children. The 111 million US dollars (USD) contract was awarded to Morgan Procurement Ltd., a company belonging to the Abacha family. The true value of the vaccines was 22.5 million USD. Essentially, 88.5 million USD was skimmed off as profit for the family and transferred to their various accounts. This subversion of the country’s vaccines procurement introduced corruption into a crucial health program. It became virtually systemic and greatly undermined the country’s immunization and vaccination program, which in turn harmed Nigerian children.<sup>49</sup> Such corrupt practices revolve around “loyalty, morality and the usurpation of the public good.”<sup>50</sup> It assumes loyalty to personal interest as against loyalty to public good. It also fails to consider the moral obligation to differentiate between the welfare of the state and the personal gain of an individual and his cronies.

Essentially, foreign companies have been involved in some of the worst cases of corruption in the Global South. Nigeria, for instance, is replete with accounts of such corrupt and corrupting behaviour by foreign companies. The admission by the global engineering giant Siemens of engaging in alleged corrupt payment of some Nigerian public officials and elsewhere illustrates just how difficult and how pervasive this problem is.<sup>51</sup> Siemens, to its credit, admitted paying 10 million euros to Nigerian government officials between 2001-2004 to facilitate their procurement of a contract that was awarded. The company cooperated in providing information when asked and has revamped its approach to doing business in Nigeria and its corporate culture.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the damage has been done to the economy

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<sup>47</sup> Simcha B. Werner, “New Direction in the Study of Administrative Corruption,” in *Classics of Administrative Ethics*, ed. Willa Bruce (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 193.

<sup>48</sup> See R. D. Tilman, “Emergence of Black-Market Bureaucracy: Administration, Development and Corruption in New States,” *Public Administration Review* 28, no. 5, (September/October 1968): 432-444; N. Leff, “Economic Development through Bureaucratic Corruption,” *American Behavioural Scientist* 8, (November 1964):8-14. Adapted in this study from Caiden, “Administrative Corruption,” 180.

<sup>49</sup> Okonjo-Iweala, *Reforming the Unreformable*, 85

<sup>50</sup> J. P. Dobel, “The Corruption of the State,” *American Political Science Review* 72, no. 3, (September 1978): 960. Also see Werner, “New Direction in the Study of Administrative Corruption,” 194.

<sup>51</sup> Okonjo-Iweala, *Reforming the Unreformable*, 85

<sup>52</sup> BBC News, “Nigeria Probes Siemens Bribe Case,” <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, November 21, 2007. See also Okonjo-Iweala, *Reforming the Unreformable*, 85-6.

of the country, and the effect is still being felt in Nigeria today. Nigeria is supposed to be a wealthy nation because of its oil export, fertile land for agriculture and other natural and human resources. The country is considered the eighth largest oil producers in the world. Yet, because of corruption the so-called ‘Giant of Africa’ with all its economic potentials is still struggling to care for its citizens. Many people are discouraged when “they watch tax revenues and sometimes foreign aid intended to build roads, provide clean water, improve health care services and keep them safe disappear into the pockets of powerful government officials.”<sup>53</sup>

These are some of the reasons for the current wave of migration. Sadly, many talented citizens, professionals, technicians, and business owners of the Global South riddled with corruption and underdevelopment would rather migrate to other developed countries than remain in their home countries. Pope Francis calls on every society “to ensure that values are passed on; otherwise, what is handed down are selfishness, violence, corruption in its various forms, indifference and, ultimately, a life closed to transcendence and entrenched in individual interest.”<sup>54</sup> Corrupt leadership is an obstacle towards socio-economic growth and development. It contradicts the common good in many nations and renders it unproductive and underdeveloped to the point of being unable to provide basic goods and services for its citizens.

## 2.3 Poverty and unemployment

Poverty and unemployment are existential realities in many countries; they drive migration. When people are not given the opportunity to work and provide for their needs in any community, they tend to look for alternative ways of survival. One of such alternatives is migration. According to Lawler and Salzman, “Poverty is neither a new reality in history, nor is the scandalous inequality between the rich and the poor in the world.”<sup>55</sup> The problem is not that most economies cannot provide for the need of the people. There are many countries in the Global North and South that are blessed with natural and human resources that could provide for their inhabitants, but it is either they are poorly managed or deliberately structured in such a way that they fail to do so. As a result, “even in rich countries, so many people are still struggling to survive on daily basis, and thousands die every year from lack of food, basic healthcare and shelter.”<sup>56</sup> Pope Leo XIV associates poverty with “lacking the material means of subsistence, those who are socially marginalised and lack the means to give voice to their dignity and abilities, [...] those who find themselves in a condition of personal and social weakness or fragility, and those who

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<sup>53</sup> Patrick Johnstone and Dean Merrill, *Serving God in a Migrant Crisis: Ministry to People on the Move* (London: Malcom Dawn Publishing, 2016), 31.

<sup>54</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, (October 3, 2020), no. 113, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20202003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20202003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html) (hereafter cited as *FT*).

<sup>55</sup> Michael G. Lawler and Todd A Salzman, “You Always Have the Poor with You,” *The Furrow* 69, no. 10 (October 2018): 528.

<sup>56</sup> South African Catholic Bishop’s Conference (SACBC), “Discerning Economic Justice” in *Economic Justice in South Africa, A Pastoral Statement* (Pretoria, SA: SACBC, 1999), 6.

have no rights, no space, no freedom.”<sup>57</sup> The Holy Father highlights humanity’s failure to objectively tackle the problem of poverty for the good of all.

It is often taken for granted that poverty is the fate of some people in this world even when it is the consequences of human conduct. Poverty, according to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, “is the inability for people to realise their God-given potential.”<sup>58</sup> In other words, poverty is the lack of goods and services that most people need to experience a reasonable measure of security from hunger, cold, storms, and sickness. Pope John Paul II draws attention to the causes of poverty and its challenges when he said, “the opposite of a just and right situation is the lack of work for those who are capable of it. It can be a question of general unemployment or of unemployment in certain sectors of work... which in all cases is an evil, and which, when it reaches a certain level, can become a real social disaster.”<sup>59</sup> The Holy Father insist that “It is particularly painful when it especially affects young people, who after appropriate cultural, technical, and professional preparation fail to find work, and see their sincere wish to work and their readiness to take on their own responsibility for the economic and social development of the community sadly frustrated.”<sup>60</sup> In cases like this, the poor are mostly victims of the injustice of the structures or institutions that are supposed to provide employment opportunities for the people, and by so doing liberate them from the shackles of poverty and exploitation. Gustavo Gutierrez lamented this reality in the history of humanity. The poor person, he argues,

Does not exist as an inescapable fact of destiny. His or her existence is not politically neutral, and it is not ethically innocent. The poor are a by-product of the system in which we live and for which we are responsible. They are marginalised by our social and cultural world. They are oppressed, exploited proletariat, robbed of the fruit of their labour and despoiled of their humanity. Hence, the poverty of the poor is not a call to generous relief action, but a demand that we go and build a different social order.<sup>61</sup>

Migration, for most poor people, is an attempt at building a new social order for themselves and their family. They see better options and possibilities in foreign lands. One of the reasons why many poor people take the risk of traveling across transnational borders with fake or without proper documentation is because of the perceived injustice of impoverishment and exploitation they are experiencing in their home countries. Unfortunately, many people lose their lives in the process, and some end up in bigger crisis than they ever imagined.

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<sup>57</sup> Pope Leo XIV, Apostolic Exhortation, *Delixi Te* (hereafter, *DT*), (9 October 2025), no. 9. [https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html)

<sup>58</sup> Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, “Formation of Conscience,” *Priest and People* 18, no. 5, May 2004, 173.

<sup>59</sup> John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, (September 14, 1981), no. 18. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091981\\_laborem-exercens.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html) (hereafter *LE*).

<sup>60</sup> John Paul II, *LE*, no. 18.

<sup>61</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1983); Quoted by Paul Farmer, “Health, Healing, and Social Justice: Insights from Liberation Theology,” in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, ed. M. Theresa Lysaught *et al.*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 139.

Poverty and unemployment prevent people from catering for their basic needs for food and shelter in many parts of the world. This often leads to lack of hope for the future which is one of the push factors for the migrant crisis.<sup>62</sup> Studies have shown that “more than 19 percent of the world live on less than \$1 a day, more than 48 percent live on less than \$2 a day, and more than 75 percent live on less than \$10 a day, while 95 percent live on less than \$50 a day. The richest 1 percent of the world have as much as the poorest 57 percent taken together. And three wealthiest individuals have as much as the poorest 48 nations combined.”<sup>63</sup> For instance,

Nigeria is [considered] Africa’s largest economy, with an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) of \$400 billion as at 2017.<sup>64</sup> South Africa, the continent’s next largest economy, has a GDP of \$317 billion. Nigeria constitutes 71 percent of West Africa’s GDP<sup>65</sup> and 27 percent of the continent’s GDP. GDP per capita is \$2,123, compared to \$5,588 in South Africa. So, although Nigeria is classified a lower-middle-income country by World Bank, poverty remains a problem, as it does for many nations in this category. An estimated 36.1 percent of the population live below the absolute poverty line of [less than] \$1.90 per day.<sup>66</sup>

This analysis reveals that many people in Sub-Saharan Africa and many countries in the Global South are indeed suffering from poverty and in their struggle to survive may consider migration. We must, however, admit that “Poverty is neither an inevitable nor a necessary part of human life. It is ultimately a product of human decisions and actions and can therefore be eradicated through human decisions and actions,” as argued by the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference.<sup>67</sup> The question is, how can the eradication of poverty be achieved? If it cannot be eradicated, can it not be minimised? As one of the drivers of the migrant crisis, poverty needs to be handled creatively, through the creation of job opportunities as a stable means of livelihood for those affected.

This is where the leadership of every country should be held accountable for their decisions and actions which marginalise people and deprive them of their basic needs. For example, at the time Muhammadu Buhari began the first of his two tenures as Nigeria’s president in 2015, \$1 was sold for 250 naira in the black market. The rate in January 2022 was 740 naira to the US dollar. It is currently (2026) fluctuating between 1,300 – 1, 500 naira to one dollar.

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<sup>62</sup> Johnstone and Dean Merrill, *Serving God in a Migrant Crisis*, 31.

<sup>63</sup> Groody, “Theology in the Age of Migration,” 22.

<sup>64</sup> All GDP, GDP growth, and GDP per capita figures in this paragraph are from International Monetary Fund, “5 Report for Selected Countries Subject,” *World Economic Outlook Database*, April 2017, <https://www.imf.org/external/pub/ft/weo/2017/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?sy=2015&ey=2022&scsm=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&pr1.x=33&pr1.y=9&s=NGDPDP&grp=0&a=> Cited by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous: Stories behind the Headlines* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), xvi-vii.

<sup>65</sup> According to Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, this is calculated by dividing Nigeria’s GDP into the sum of the GDPs of all West African countries, using data from the IMF database.

<sup>66</sup> The poverty headcount ratio (under \$1.90 a day) is available from World Bank, “Nigeria General Household Survey,” *Living standard Measurement Study*, 2013. See, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous: Stories behind the Headlines* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018), xvi-xvii.

<sup>67</sup> Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *A New Beginning: Eradicating Poverty in Our World*, (1996), no. 7.

The Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration's singular act of devaluing the naira has caused hardship for many people. Food items have become unaffordable.<sup>68</sup> The cost of every food item has increased beyond the means of the ordinary people, many of whom are managing with a minimum wage that is less than \$100 per month. In other words, many people are living below \$5 per day. Many people are deprived of the basic resources needed for human survival due to lack of leadership. This is why many people are ready to risk crossing the Mediterranean Sea or Sahara Desert to get to Europe and North America.<sup>69</sup>

Every human person is created with dignity and should be able to enjoy basic things that preserve, dignify, and sustain life: good food, potable water, descent shelter and access to reliable healthcare. John Paul II reminded political leaders of "their obligation to provide unemployment benefits or grants for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families, [insisting that it] is a duty springing from the fundamental principle of the moral order... [we are created for] the common use of goods, and the right to life and subsistence."<sup>70</sup> This statement challenges world leaders to ensure that they cater for the basic needs of their citizens. CST's principle of 'preferential option for the poor' challenges poverty and unemployment and calls for an adequate response to the structural injustices that contributes to the sufferings of the masses through unfavourable policies. It is specifically a response to the unjust ordering of society at the national and global level.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, it probes how certain societal structures are impoverishing the majority in the world.

We live in a stratified society "where certain economic, political, cultural, and religious structures maintain and promote dominance of the rich and powerful over the mass of ordinary people."<sup>72</sup> Migration, therefore, becomes one of the strategies employed by poor families with increasingly difficult conditions of livelihoods. Some sell their assets to raise money for one or two member(s) of the family to move to another country or community in search of greener pasture. This kind of migration is called "temporary labour-seeking migration" which is a form of migration aimed at seeking employment elsewhere temporarily by heads of families who want to support and provide for their families. This approach to the challenges of poverty and unemployment has various positive and negative implications for women and children who are often left behind.<sup>73</sup> Positively, it brings about remittances that provide food and shelter for the family and allow them to eventually move to the host country where the family's breadwinner is or wait for his/her return after saving some money for their wellbeing. This strategy is meant to "change the composition and location of their household, increase its income earning potential or change the ratio between

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<sup>68</sup> Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, "Nigerian Politics: Waiting for a Messiah" *The Tablet*, February 4, 2023, 4.

<sup>69</sup> Johnstone and Dean Merrill, *Serving God in a Migrant Crisis*, 36.

<sup>70</sup> John Paul II, *LE*, no. 18.

<sup>71</sup> Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1984), 3.

<sup>72</sup> Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, 3.

<sup>73</sup> Giovanni Andrea Cornia, "Adjustment at the Household Level: Potentials and Limitations of Survival Strategies" in *Adjustment with Human Face: Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Growth*, Vol I, ed. Giovanni Andrea Cornia, Richard Jolly, Francis Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 101.

its needs and resources.”<sup>74</sup> Such migration is motivated by the desire to preserve the family’s dignity, a primary duty given to all humanity.

Negatively, many temporary labour-seeking migrants have equally been deceived and misled because of their desperation, leaving them to suffer the consequences of travelling to their host countries without documents or with fake documents. Some of them end up in prison, others deported, and there are those living in fear, rendering cheap labour just to survive – some surrender to pressure, seeking asylum to achieving their goal of residing in their host communities. A survey shows that such movements are often facilitated by some middlemen and women who make huge profits from such illegal business. Some of these facilitators are “called ‘coyotes’ (Central America and Mexico), ‘snakeheads’ (China) or simply ‘smugglers’ (Libya, Turkey). These exploiters charge between 700-1000 Euros per person at the beginning of the journey.”<sup>75</sup> It is often not part of the bargain whether you get to your destination safely or not. Research reveals that smugglers are patronised by both economic migrants and refugees seeking asylum but are being prevented due to restrictive immigration rules of their potential host countries.<sup>76</sup> The UN High Commission for Human Rights confirms the activities of this group through Ann Gallagher, who maintains that “Smuggled migrants are moved illegally for profit.”<sup>77</sup> She describes them as unequal partners in a commercial transaction. They are equally contrasted with “the movement of trafficked persons, [whose movement] is based on deception and coercion for the purpose of exploitation.” She says, “It is impossible to accurately measure the number of people affected by trafficking and smuggling.”<sup>78</sup>

Migrants without legal status suffer a litany of abuse. Information abounds in the public domain on the extreme conditions under which many desperate migrants travel or are transported by smugglers, including intimidation, mutilation, suffocation in overcrowded boats and dangerous cargos, drowning, death from exposure or dehydration and hunger in the desert or at border crossing. There are also “high rates of physical and sexual violence on transit, and detention under terrible conditions.”<sup>79</sup> All these migratory challenges occur where there is little recourse to adequate protection, legal representation, or favourable

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<sup>74</sup> Cornia, “Adjustment at the Household Level,” 100.

<sup>75</sup> Johnstone and Dean Merrill, *Serving God in a Migrant Crisis*, 36. Researchers in this area of migration have revealed that “As a gateway to European Union, an average of 200,000 irregular migrants are alleged to have pass through Turkey every year between 1997-2003 at an estimated cost of \$1,600 per person paid to smugglers, amounting to \$300 million annual business. A quarter of migrants were known to have used the services of smugglers to enter Turkey and to cross over to Europe. About 400,000 migrants were apprehended while crossing Turkey between 1997 and 2003. (See A. Icduygu and D. Yukseker, “Transborder Crime Between Turkey and Greece: Human Smuggling and its Regional Consequences,” *Southeast European and Black Seas Studies* 4, no. 2 (2004): 294-311.) Smuggling activities has not stopped, and the charges for such services have increased exorbitantly due to high demands and desperation.

<sup>76</sup> Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 236-7.

<sup>77</sup> Ann Gallagher, quoted by Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 236.

<sup>78</sup> Gallagher, quoted by Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 236.

<sup>79</sup> Mary M. DeLorey, “Economic and Environmental Displacement: Implications for Durable Solutions,” in *Driven from Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, ed. David Hollenbach (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 232.

immigration services for people in this category. Many women and children experience further hardship due to the sometimes insufficient and unstable remittances they receive resulting from lack of a stable job by their migrant breadwinner. The situation is often compounded in places where women are deprived access to assets, credit, and land for no justifiable reason other than cultural gender bias. Recognising the multifarious ways in which women and children are systematically sidelined or marginalised is important in addressing the crisis. This is why the problem of inequality in whatever form must be nipped in the bud for the betterment of humanity.

Theologians, Ethicists and human right activists must rise to the challenge of addressing dehumanising cultural norms prevalent in certain cultural settings making life difficult for many people. They must embark on the sacred mission of uplifting the marginalised and foster a paradigm shift that would “echo through the corridors of culture, society, and politics.”<sup>80</sup> Therefore, there is need to pay attention to the inalienable rights of each person and the recognition of each person’s unique capacities. As human beings, we were created to be interdependent on each other for survival. It goes without saying that “those who consider themselves to be independent, and invulnerable are literally shortsighted.”<sup>81</sup> Therefore, policy developers must help identify and enhance the rights of everybody in society, flowing from the principle of human dignity.<sup>82</sup> This process will assist in minimizing the level of exploitation going on because of poverty and unemployment, partly responsible for the migrant crisis.

The root causes of the migrant crisis must be properly conceptualised for the problem to be adequately addressed. There can be no effectively proffered solution without getting to the root cause of any problem. Groody argues that “Migration must be understood not as a problem, but as a symptom of deeper issues rooted in widespread inequalities.”<sup>83</sup> He maintains that “Because the density of global capital resides in certain parts of the Global North, migration flows tend to move towards that direction, not so much because people want to become rich but because many are seeking just to survive and live beyond the minimal exigencies of daily needs.”<sup>84</sup> Most people living in poverty show immense creativity and ingenuity in their struggle to place their talents at the service of the society for the betterment of their families and the world.<sup>85</sup> They need to be treated with respect and helped to actualise their dream of catering for their families through favourable immigration policies. Hence, “the lack of internationally recognized rights to minimum standards of

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<sup>80</sup> Cornia, “Adjustment at the Household Level,” 101. Also, see Maureen Ahyuwa OLF., “The Ethics of Liberation of Rosemary Nkoyo Edet and Peggy Mulamba-Kabonde,” in *African Women’s Liberating Philosophies, Theologies, and Ethics*, ed. Beatrice Okyere-Manu and Leocadie Lushombo (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 97-116 at 98. E-book.

<sup>81</sup> Marsha Foster Boyd and Carolyn Bohler, “Womanist-Feminist Alliances Meeting on the Bridge” in *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 191; Also see, Ahyuwa OLF., “The Ethics of Liberation of Rosemary Nkoyo Edet and Peggy Mulamba-Kabonde,” 106.

<sup>82</sup> Martin, “Formation of Conscience,” 173.

<sup>83</sup> Groody, “Theology in the Age of Migration,” 22.

<sup>84</sup> Groody, “Theology in the Age of Migration,” 22.

<sup>85</sup> Martin, “Formation of Conscience,” 174.

development or of a right to basic protection in migratory processes creates an environment in which exploitation and abuse flourish before, during and after migration.”<sup>86</sup> The poor are globally harmed, when there is collaboration in imposing or sustaining unjust social institutions upon them that continue to exploit and violate their rights and dignity. The evolution of policies aimed at citizens’ welfare is necessary in addressing the migrant crisis.

## 2.4 Civil War, Human Right Abuses, and Violence

Any kind of war is a human tragedy that afflicts, destroys, and displaces so many people. It often causes irreparable damage to our common home, common humanity and common good. War is one of the causes of underdevelopment and economic hardship that leaves many people struggling to survive. The devastating effects of the war in Ukraine and the Middle East in recent times are classic examples of the terrors of war. The same thing applies to civil war, which is an “internal conflict with at least 1,000 combat-related deaths per year.”<sup>87</sup> Scholarship around war and conflict reveals that civil war is more common than international and often proves highly persistent and devastating. The wars in Southern-Sudan, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda, to mention but a few, are typical examples of the persistent nature of civil wars that often requires the intervention of international peacemakers. Humanity, in general, has a vital role to play in stopping the evils of war and the continued struggle for power through violence.<sup>88</sup> Pope Francis, following the tradition of his predecessors, has remained resolute in his condemnation of war. The Holy Father insists that, “We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits.” For him, “Never again war!”<sup>89</sup> The consequences of the recent wars in Ukraine and the Middle East resulting in human right abuses and the displacement of millions of people confirms Pope Francis’ fears. It calls for concerted efforts to stop the evils of war through relational dialogue.

The Vatican II council had warned about the dangers of the proliferation of arms and ammunitions: “The arm race is an utterly treacherous trap for humanity and one which injures the poor to an intolerable degree. It must be feared that if this race persists, it will spawn all the lethal ruin whose path it is now making ready.”<sup>90</sup> The Church has always condemned any form of violent conflict and the use of dangerous weapons to settle differences. It has never relented in calling for dialogue among conflicting parties. Pope Francis laments that “the use of violence never leads to peace. War begets war; violence begets violence.”<sup>91</sup> This kind of advocacy for dialogue and peaceful coexistence has remained a constant feature in CST. For instance, John Paul II, having experienced the totalitarian oppression of both Nazism and Communism, warned: “No, never again war,

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<sup>86</sup> DeLorey, “Economic and Environmental Displacement: Implications for Durable Solutions,” 232.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Collier, *Conflict, Political Accountability and Aid* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), xii.

<sup>88</sup> Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (London: Vintage Books, 2010), 2-3.

<sup>89</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 258.

<sup>90</sup> Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 80-1.

<sup>91</sup> Pope Francis’ General Audience in St. Peter’s Square, May 16, 2018, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2018/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180516\\_udienza-generale.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180516_udienza-generale.html). Accessed 27 March 2024.

which destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill, throws into upheaval even the lives of those who do the killing and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred, thus making it all the more difficult to find a just solution to the very problems which provoked the war.”<sup>92</sup> Dialogue and humane negotiation are the only path to mutual understanding, peaceful coexistence, social friendship and economic development. Any form of support by third parties with arms and ammunitions in a situation of war and conflict only compounds the problem. Humanity should have learnt some of these lessons from consequences of World War I and II, as well as other local violent conflicts around the globe that has destabilised many nations.

The United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of [togetherness].”<sup>93</sup> In the preamble, the idea of human dignity forms the basis of peace and unity among people. It also suggests that human dignity and violence are incommensurable. In the context of a post-war or violent conflict, the dignity of the human person should be a criterion for judging and condemning “violent behaviours as unjust, wrong and immoral.”<sup>94</sup> However, we are still seeing the dangers of the proliferation of arms and ammunitions in wars and violent terrorist activities around the world, which is also contributing to the migrant crisis. All these must be concretely addressed because they are among the push factors for the unprecedented movement of peoples around the globe.

People cannot live or remain in war zones or areas ravaged by terrorist activities. Scholarship around terrorism reveals that:

From 2006-2016, the number of terrorist incidents ranged from 10,000 to over 14,000 annually, with a dip in the year 2012 to 6,771. The average annual death toll [ranges] from 20,000 to 32,763 deaths. No country is immune from the possibility of a terrorist strike, yet most of the recent carnage is concentrated in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and central Africa. The countries that saw the most terrorism in 2016 by far was Iraq (2,956 attacks), followed by Afghanistan (1,340), India (927), Pakistan (734), the Philippines (482), and Nigeria (466).<sup>95</sup>

Terrorism is an atrocious act that is tearing our common humanity apart and making the world brutish, and nasty. It should not be tolerated in any society because it is devoid of empathy, compassion, and human sympathy. It also creates tension, anxiety and unnecessary

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<sup>92</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus (CA)*, no. 52, (London: Catholic truth Society in collaboration with Veritas Publications 1991). Also see David O’Brien and Thomas Shannon, eds. *Catholic Social Thought: Encyclicals and Documents from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Francis*, 3rd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016) 521-13.

<sup>93</sup> See Article 1, United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), 10 December 1948 (New York: United Nations General Assembly Official Record, 1948), available online at [www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html).

<sup>94</sup> See David G. Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Teneo Press, 2013), 66.

<sup>95</sup> See Brian Stiltner, “Terrorism and the Responsibility to Protect,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Tobias Winright, (London: T&T Clark/Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 208.

suspicion among those facing such challenges, thereby making the society psychologically and physically unsafe for people. Bruce Hoffman, an expert in terrorism, defines it as “the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change which is ineluctably political in aims and motives and perpetuated by subnational group or nonstate entity.”<sup>96</sup> In this regard, Collier supports the Church’s magisterium when he argues that “No rebel guns, no rebellion, and so no nasty, brutish, and long civil war, [or terrorism].”<sup>97</sup> It is evident that the availability and easy access to firearms in some part of the globe increase the risk of violence and makes a society more dangerous. This, however, does not mean that violence and civil unrest cannot take place without guns and other ammunitions. For instance, The Rwandan genocide is said to have been carried out without guns. It is reported that the then Hutu government and their allies managed to generate a mass killing of more than five hundred people, using machetes.<sup>98</sup> Such inhumanity to fellow human beings would have been prevented before it escalated to such level of the destruction of lives and property if only our common humanity were invoked to guide the actions of those that perpetuated the act.

There can never be any justification for war, violence and terrorism because of its consequences on innocent people and the environment. However, it must be noted that the “reasons for war,” as Pope Francis asserts, “can often be couched in humanitarian arguments or justified through the manipulation of information. And given the highly globalized nature of our world, the broader impact of even localised conflict is often too evident.”<sup>99</sup> Unfortunately, most government trade in guns under the pretext of preventing their territory from external aggression and criminal activities like terrorism and violent rebellion. Collier captures some of the excuses for the arm race: “A government without guns cannot defend its citizens against a neighbour with guns.”<sup>100</sup> Politicians also use national security and national public good to sustain their position on the proliferation of arms and ammunitions that is clearly dangerous to our common humanity and common home. Once again, Collier makes a fundamental argument when he states:

The predominant route to power in most impoverished countries at the bottom of the world economy has been violence. Political violence is both a curse and an obstacle to accountable and legitimate government. It is a curse because the process of violent struggle is hugely destructive. It is an obstacle because where power rests on violence, it invites an arrogant assumption that government is there to rule rather than serve.”<sup>101</sup>

Leadership founded on violence accounts for the underdevelopment of many poor countries in the world today with high rates of poverty, civil unrest, and political instability. This situation inevitably threatens the dignity of the members of these communities, who may

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<sup>96</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 43-4.

<sup>97</sup> Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 103.

<sup>98</sup> Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 103.

<sup>99</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 258, and Suzanne Mulligan, “Fratelli Tutti and A Consistent Ethics of life,” *The Furrow* 72, no. 2, (February 2021): 74-81 at 75.

<sup>100</sup> Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 103.

<sup>101</sup> Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 1-2.

migrate to other countries in search of solutions. The migrant crisis is largely the result of governmental breach of trust that violates human dignity and rights. This perception, accounts for Pope John Paul II's insistence on a paradigm shift that focuses on human dignity. He warned, "What is at stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defence and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and to whom the men and women at every moment of history are strictly and responsibly in debt."<sup>102</sup> The availability of dangerous weapons makes the defence of human dignity a difficult task because it has increased criminal activities and violence in many communities. This is also a push factor in the migrant crisis. Nobody will want to live in an environment where their rights to life and other privileges are not guaranteed.

Any threat to human dignity and right often results in people fleeing for safety. Pope Francis laments that "With increased globalisation, what might appear as an immediate or practical solution for one part of the world initiates a chain of violent and often latent effect that end up harming the entire planet and opening the way to new and worse wars in the future."<sup>103</sup> This point is evident in religious and political fundamentalism which has displaced so many people from their homes. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan is a typical case of how violent conflict and coercive use of authority fuels the migrant crisis. The same is true of the insecurity and kidnapping activities in Nigeria: Teachers, students, doctors, traders, farmers, parents, children, priests and religious have been targeted by kidnappers, with many losing their lives in the process. These activities make living in such environment unappealing. For example, it is reported that between 2014-2025 more than 1,680 school children were abducted, more than 180 were killed. In addition to more than 60 school staff members with about 14 losing their lives.<sup>104</sup> Another report estimated about 1,436 school children and 17 teachers being abducted from Nigerian schools between December 2020 and October 2021.<sup>105</sup> How can people comfortably live in such unsafe and traumatising environment?

Kidnapping for ransom is just one of the many security challenges in Nigeria, contributing to the persistent exodus of its citizens to other countries. There are also cases of assassinations, violent conflicts between farmers and herders over land, ethnic insurrections, and armed banditry. Every region in the country has been affected, and every demographic: rich, poor, male, female, elderly, young.<sup>106</sup> Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah in his 2021 Christmas message graphically described the situation thus:

The nation has become a massive killing field, as both government and the governed look on helplessly. A thick and suffocating cloud of desperation, despondency, desolation, gloom, and misery hangs in the air. We have no message and have no idea how long it would last... Does the President of

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<sup>102</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 47.

<sup>103</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 259.

<sup>104</sup> Ewelina U Ochab, "Hundreds of Children Abducted from a School in Nigeria, (November 22, 2025), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2025/11/22/hundreds-of-school-children-abducted-from-a-school-in-nigeria/> Accessed February 12, 2026.

<sup>105</sup> Nwaubani, "Nigerian Politics: Waiting for a Messiah," 4.

<sup>106</sup> Nwaubani, "Nigerian Politics: Waiting for a Messiah," 4.

Nigeria not owe us an explanation and answers as to when the abductions, kidnappings, brutal, senseless, and endless massacres of our citizens will end? When will our refugees from Cameroon, Chad or Niger return home? We need urgent answers to these questions.<sup>107</sup>

The outspoken Nigerian Catholic Bishop aligns with Pope Francis who believes that “War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil.”<sup>108</sup> Attentiveness to the causes of war and violent conflict could help in preventing such evil and its consequences from destroying the human family and our common home.

It is for such dehumanising acts that the doctrine of human of dignity and its unique and unreplacable value is enshrined and reaffirmed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, issued by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948.<sup>109</sup> Human right abuses manifested in violent crisis, religious or political fundamentalism and insecurities are contributing to the migrant crisis. We have the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Syrian civil war, the Hindu-Muslim tensions in India contributing to the hostilities between the nuclear-armed powers of India and Pakistan; the Buddhist control of government in Sri Lanka leading to the resistance of the minority Hindu community that degenerated into a bloody civil war. Is it the Buddhist effort to exclude Muslim Rohingya people from Myanmar that displaced thousands of Rohingya to Bangladesh?<sup>110</sup> Do we need to also mention the communal hostilities between Orthodox, Muslim, and Catholics that contributed to the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia into Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatia?<sup>111</sup> What about the dictatorial regimes in Eritrea, Iraq, and Afghanistan, where people’s freedom of speech, association, religion, politics and freedom of the press is being stifled?<sup>112</sup>

Needless to mention, the millions of Ukrainians who the war in their home country has displaced. The conflict in Ukraine, according to Worldvision.org and USA for UNHCR, has displaced over 3.7 million people within the country and forced approximately 6.3 million others to seek refuge abroad as of January 2024. And approximately 14.6 million Ukrainians need humanitarian assistance.<sup>113</sup> These are few examples of how civil war, human right abuses and violent crisis contribute to the global migrant crisis. This explains why Pope Francis recommends establishing a global fund for the support of the victims of such atrocities and the development of poorer nations. “With the money spent on weapons and

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<sup>107</sup> Matthew Hassan Kukah, “A Nation in Search of Truth and Vindication,” 2021 Christmas Message, December 25, 2021.

<sup>108</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 261.

<sup>109</sup> See United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948. This declaration contains thirty articles, and the word “dignity” appears there five times: First in the Preamble and in the first sentence of Article One. This dignity is declared to be “inherent in all members of the human family and all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (Article 1). (Also see, *Dignitatis Infinita*, no. 3 and Footnote 3.)

<sup>110</sup> Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 50.

<sup>111</sup> Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 50-1.

<sup>112</sup> Johnstone and Dean Merrill, *Serving God in a Migrant Crisis*, 33.

<sup>113</sup> See, “Ukraine Crisis: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help,” <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories>. See also USA for UNHCR, “Ukraine Refugee Crisis: Aid, Statistics and News” <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/ukraine>.

other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in most impoverished countries, so that their citizens will not resort to violent or illusory solutions, or have to leave their countries in order to seek a more dignified life.”<sup>114</sup> This fund, properly utilised, will address the migrant crisis.

Groody, in talking about the complex nature of the migrant crisis, avers that, “migration underscores not only conflict at geographical borders, but also between national security and human insecurity, sovereign rights and human rights, civil law and natural law and citizenship and discipleship.”<sup>115</sup> Consequently, the migrant crisis, in the position of contemporary human rights movements, is connected to the challenges of protecting human dignity and rights in all ramifications. Hollenbach corroborates this argument: “Showing every human person due respect means securing their rights to the basic requirements of human dignity.”<sup>116</sup> This also explains why the United Nations’ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* links recognition of the “inherent dignity” of all persons with protection of “the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.”<sup>117</sup> The violation of these rights is one of the reasons why people migrate to places where their dignity and rights will be appreciated and protected. The disregard for the fundamental human rights of citizens is the recipe for migration. A United Nations 2019 research attest to this reality. It posits that “the most prevalent root of migration is the underlying disparity in access to safety and livelihood opportunities.”<sup>118</sup> Many people are out of their home countries out of desperation for both safety and livelihood. Many are forcibly displaced due to conflict, natural disaster or harsh socio-economic factors. Some risk their lives in the Mediterranean Sea and other routes for the purpose of changing their family fortune or to simply survive the harsh realities in their home countries.

There are so many cases of human right abuses in different parts of the globe contributing to the migrant crisis.<sup>119</sup> This is reflected in the persistent ‘push factor’ for migration. The 2015 Millennium Development Goal Report, “indicates that 836 million people live in extreme poverty, big gaps exist between the poorest and richest households, water scarcity affects 40 percent of people in the world, and the most worrying of all, conflict remains the

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<sup>114</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 262, and Suzanne Mulligan, “Fratelli Tutti and A Consistent Ethics of life,” *The Furrow* 72, no. 2, (February 2021): 74-81 at 76.

<sup>115</sup> Groody, “Theology in the Age of Migration,” 21-22.

<sup>116</sup> Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 16.

<sup>117</sup> United Nations, “Preamble” *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948. The American Anthropological Association’s executive board had raised concerns about the applicability of the proposed universal declaration of human right to all humanity. They had wondered if it was not a statement of rights conceived only in terms of the values prevalent in the countries of Western Europe and North America. They were concerned that “the values of other peoples had been consistently misunderstood, and that standards and values are relative to the culture from which they derive.” (See 1947 American Anthropological Association’s “Statement on Human Rights,” *American Anthropologist* 49, no. 4 (1947): 539-43. See also Ethna Regan, *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights* (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 48, Endnotes 8.

<sup>118</sup> See UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019* (New York: United Nations, 2019), 8. Also see, Gemma Tulud Cruz, “When the Poor Knock on our Door,” 195.

<sup>119</sup> Ethna Regan maintains that “Discourse on human right provides guidelines for the exercise of responsibility with or on behalf of those who suffer as a result of violation.” She argues that “The importance of human right discourse consists in the fact that it includes ‘everyone’ within the potentiality of human flourishing.” (See Regan, *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights*, 13).

biggest threat to human development.”<sup>120</sup> Some scholars have identified colonialism and its associated exploitation as one of the explanations for the imbalance between the rich and poorest nations. There has never been a compensation for the evils of colonialism which created the unparalleled relationship between the Global North and the Global South regarding global resources.<sup>121</sup> Therefore, migration has remained the best option for most people suffering from calamities caused by natural disasters, and/or violations of their human right and dignity by their fellow human beings. This has political implications and calls for national and international dialogue.

The attendant interconnectedness of globalisation is transforming human right advocacy today.<sup>122</sup> It is providing the foundation for solidarity and intensifies the awareness of the effects of our actions on others. Additionally, it contributes to the emergence of global social bonds and the creation of awareness concerning the widespread changes contributing to growth and development in some parts of the world and the various social crises we are experiencing today.<sup>123</sup> It is estimated that in the last 25-35 years or more, there has been an increasing number of people on the move. One out of 35 people around the world are now living away from their homelands and many of these people are undocumented.<sup>124</sup> This situation exacerbates the migration crisis. Although, the flow of migrant is often treated as an emergency that need to be swiftly stopped, it is more complicated. There are usually historical, political, environmental, and economic elements influencing the movement of peoples that should be considered to better address the situation.<sup>125</sup> Hence, the need for “good politics” across borders.

## 2.5 Climate Change, Environmental Pollution and Natural Disaster

Many sciences and humanities scholars have argued that climate change is one of the most serious concerns of our age contributing to the migrant crisis. It is manifested in the frequent extreme and unpredictable flooding and drought endangering people’s lives in different

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<sup>120</sup> See United Nations, *The millennium Development Goal Report 2015*, (New York: United Nations, 2015), 7.

<sup>121</sup> Riordan, *Global Ethics and Global Common Goods* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 165.

<sup>122</sup> Globalization, for some scholars, is a concept that is hard to define, but impossible to deny because of its radical influence in the world: Our ability to communicate with people from far and near, and our ability to access information from every part of the world easily and cheaply. These developments have had noticeable effect on the interpersonal as well as larger scale human relationship: such as an increased intertwining of financial systems, technological advancements, cultural values, and changes in political landscape. It has also produced a marked increase in international trade and relations. These changes have affected the relevance of traditional borders and have tended to reinforce each other and encourage further action along the same lines... (see John J. Hoeffer and Michele R. Pistone. “But Laborers Are ... Many? Catholic Social Teaching on Business, Labour, and Economic Migration.” In *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), 56).

<sup>123</sup> Frank J. Garcia, “Globalization, Inequality & International Economic Law,” in *Growing Apart: Religious Reflection on the Rise of economic Inequalities*, ed. Kate Ward and Kenneth Himes (Basel: MDPI AG, 2019), 79.

<sup>124</sup> Groody, “Theology in the Age of Migration: Seeing the Image of Christ in the Eyes of a Stranger,” *National Catholic Reporter*, September 18, 2009, 21.

<sup>125</sup> Elizabeth Collier, “Migration,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Tobias Winright, (London: T&T Clark/Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 179.

parts of the world.<sup>126</sup> Some years before the election of Pope Francis and his release of *Laudato si*, the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of science had produced *Fate of Mountain Glaciers in the Anthropocene*.<sup>127</sup> The word "'Anthropocene' is a somewhat controversial name for '[hu]man-made' geologic era in which we are now living. This Vatican document indicates that we are now experiencing a period in which human activity is the dominant influence on earth's climate and environment."<sup>128</sup> Some scientists are also predicting that in a worst-case scenario, where sea levels could rise by 2.5 metres in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The United States, United Kingdom, and different Parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa are already experiencing this situation.<sup>129</sup> For instance, in 2004, there were news footage of massive tsunami generated by a magnitude 9.1 earthquake in the Indian ocean that claimed more than 230,000 lives across the region within hours. This was among the deadliest natural disasters in human history - 14 countries bordering the Indian Ocean were affected. Another instance is Hurricane Katrina, which moved across the Gulf of Mexico in 2005, hitting New Orleans as a category three, flooding the city, destroying infrastructures, killing nearly 2,000 people, and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. We also have reports of what is left after a magnitude seven earthquake strikes Haiti in 2010. Over 200,000 were killed and almost a million Haitian were left homeless. Again, in 2017, Hurricane Maria occurred in Puerto Rico, killing many people and leaving the Island without power and food.<sup>130</sup> The effects of climate change are evident and cannot be easily dismissed.

We have additional predictions. Hamilton Institute and ICARUS Climate Research Centre in Maynooth University produced dataset which shows that "the sea level in Cork and Dublin is now happening at twice the global rate. The study which covers the period from 1938-2016, also shows that in Cork sea levels have risen by 40cm."<sup>131</sup> This may explain the increasing life-threatening unexpected flooding in Cork and other coastal counties in Ireland. This is also the case in Nigeria, especially in the riverine regions where floods have destroyed some communities and their means of livelihoods. There were also cases of how

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<sup>126</sup> See Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, (May 24, 2015), nos. 23, 25 and 26; (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2015); See also His Apostolic Exhortation, *Laudato Deum*, (October 4, 2023), nos. 6-10, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apsot-exhortation/documents/20231004-laudato-deum.html>, (hereafter *LD*). See also Ellen Teague, "The Threat of the Anthropocene," in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Re-Build Our Broken World*, ed. Virginia Moffatt (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2017), 145-157.

<sup>127</sup> The Vatican Pontifical Academy of Science, *The Fate of Mountain Glaciers in the Anthropocene*, (Vatican City: June 2011).

<sup>128</sup> In 2011, the Vatican convened a group of scientists with relevant expertise to work with the Pontifical Academy regarding the effect of climate change on the planet. These experts were the ones who helped in producing the strongly worded document on global climate change and its effects on humanity. They were emphatic about its impact on glaciers and urged humanity to act decisively to avert the coming crisis." (See Teague, "The Threat of the Anthropocene," in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Rebuild Our Broken World*, 145.); See also Sean McDonagh, "How will Humans Cope with a Serious Rise in Sea-levels this Century?" *The Furrow* 73, nos. 7-8 (July/August 2022): 423-26.

<sup>129</sup> McDonagh, "How will Humans Cope with a Serious Rise in Sea-levels this Century?" 423-24.

<sup>130</sup> Donal O'Mathuna, "Humanitarian Ethics: From Dignity and solidarity to Response Research," in *Catholic Bioethics and Social Justice: The Praxis of US Health Care in a Globalized world*, ed. M Therese Lysaught and Michael McCarthy (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2018), 343.

<sup>131</sup> Keven O'Sullivan, "Dublin Bay Sea-level Rising Twice Global Rate, 80-year Study Shows," *The Irish Times*, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 4.

severe weather caused wildfire, drought, and floods around the world in 2020 and 2021 with many people losing their homes, means of livelihood and even their lives.<sup>132</sup> What would people in this unfavourable situation do other than to move to other safe locations in order to preserve their lives? The International Displacement Monitoring Centre has estimated that “over 140 million people have been forced to migrate in recent years because of climate change disasters: droughts, [cyclone, flood], harvest failure and devastating storms.”<sup>133</sup> In Malawi, for example, these natural disasters have rendered an estimated 2.3 million to have limited access to food and more than 3.8 million (20% of the population) face critical food security.<sup>134</sup> Kiribati and Tuvalu islands are other examples where the people face a high disaster risk because the coastal region in which they have lived and called home for so many years is exposed to a range of hazards possibly due to climate change.<sup>135</sup> It is argued that the rising sea level in this coastal region leaves most of the people of Kiribati and Tuvalu with little or no option other than migration. These islands are among the least developed regions in the world. They also have among the lowest carbon emissions rate in the world.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, our collective responsibility is to ensure that those affected by any natural disaster caused by climate change are helped to find a home and means of livelihood.

It is important to note that other environmental threats exist besides climate change. Other human activities like mining and gas exploration are equally responsible. There are evidence of the destructive effects of these activities “in many countries rich in natural resources, particularly on local environments and communities and on the climate. Cities across Asia, for example, regularly experience toxic smog.”<sup>137</sup> This is a mixture of smoke and fog causing air pollution as a result of industrial activities. Some scholars have pointed out, “Since industrialization, the mainstream media has documented growing human-induced environmental threats. Some of the technologies which have emerged are also doing enormous damage to the planet. They are changing the chemical composition of the atmosphere, and polluting the water in our rivers and oceans...”<sup>138</sup> This is happening because “our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not

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<sup>132</sup> McDonagh, “How will Humans Cope with a Serious Rise in Sea-levels this Century?” 423-24.

<sup>133</sup> International Displacement Monitoring Centre, “Global Estimates 2012,” <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2013/2012-global-estimates-corporate-en.pdf>. The reference cited here is gotten from Teague, “The Threat of the Anthropocene,” in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Rebuild Our Broken World*, 146. However, this study discovered that the number of internally displaced persons from 110 countries and territories in the world, as reported by this source as of 2023, is in the increase.

<sup>134</sup> Jason Osborne, “Climate Change Takes Centre Stage as Trocaire Kicks Off Lenten Campaign,” *The Irish Catholic*, February 22, 2024, 2.

<sup>135</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and Norwegian Refugee Council, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2016*, 19. See also, David Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 147.

<sup>136</sup> Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 147.

<sup>137</sup> Pope Francis made this point clear when he maintains that “Exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a broad spectrum of health hazards, especially for the poor, and causes millions of premature deaths. People take sick, for example from breathing high levels of smoke from fuels used in cooking or heating. There is also pollution that affects everyone, caused by transport, industrial fumes, substances which contribute to the acidification of soil and water, fertilisers, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and agrotoxins, in general.” (See *Laudato Si (LS)* no. 20) See also Teague, “The Threat of the Anthropocene,” 146-7.

<sup>138</sup> Teague, “The Threat of the Anthropocene,” 146.

developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources...”<sup>139</sup> There is an urgency regarding environmental pollution or degradation and “throwaway culture” that is gradually affecting our common humanity and common home. It is contributing to the migrant crisis.

Research has also shown that “Gas flares in Nigeria, Russia, the Middle East, Kazakhstan and other areas of oil extraction burn constantly, emitting thousands of tonnes of toxic emissions. This results in high levels atmospheric pollution, which damages crops, and causes severe health problems. Oil and gas pipeline construction damages the environment and exhausts scarce resources, such as land, fishing, grounds or forest, which are critical for livelihood of local population.”<sup>140</sup> People in these challenging situations of climate change, environmental pollution or degradation and natural disaster are vulnerable; they are in need of support and encouragement to survive. Some have migrated and are integrating well in communities where they are well received, while others might need to move to places where they can integrate into new communities to start life afresh.

We are largely responsible for climate change through unhealthy human activities: Environmental pollution, deforestation, mining, and bombings during war. Therefore, we must together work for a “sustainable world, where people and the planet flourish and climate action is rooted in the principle of justice, human rights, gender equality, equity, the common good, well defined responsibilities and respective capacities.”<sup>141</sup> Pope Francis, in responding to the challenges of climate change says, “Humanity is called to recognise and embrace changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.”<sup>142</sup> Changes in lifestyle are a necessary condition for the preservation of the human race in our common home. Leaving the situation unattended will aggravate the migrant crisis.

## 2.6 Conclusion

It is evident from the argument in this chapter that migration is not a new phenomenon in human history. People have always moved from one place to another for various reasons identified with different names: immigrants, illegal aliens, strangers, asylum-seekers,

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<sup>139</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 22.

<sup>140</sup> W. Corbett Dabbs, “Oil Production and Environmental Damage,” Research Paper no. 15, 1996, <http://www.1.america.edu/ted/projects/todcross/xoilpr15.htm> Cited by Teague, “The Threat of the Anthropocene,” 147.

<sup>141</sup> Osborne, “Climate Change Takes Centre Stage as Trocaire Kicks Off Lenten Campaign,” 2.

<sup>142</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 23.

displaced persons, economic migrants, lawful permanent residents, refugees, or temporary workers.<sup>143</sup> Many equally migrate in search of work and a better life due to the poor living conditions and unfavourable government policies in their home countries. People are forced to migrate when they discover that there is no hope for the future in their home countries because of war, corruption in government, lack of economic opportunities, increasing insecurity and criminal activities and unpredictable natural disasters. These are the reasons why many people around the world are being forced to migrate from the only place they have known as their homes in search of safety, and a better life.

Many people in the world today are risking everything to preserve their lives and sustain themselves.<sup>144</sup> These are the concerns addressed in this chapter as the drivers of the migrant crisis. These are also some of the reasons why Pope Francis is calling for a renewed interest and appreciation of politics and its role in the challenges humanity is experiencing in this era.<sup>145</sup> This study argues that without “good politics” humanity cannot successfully address the challenges pushing people into migrating to other places with or without proper documentation. The research draws insights from Pope Francis’s call on humanity to embrace politics as a vocation that should promote the common good and address all forms of contemporary ideologies and activities that threaten human dignity.<sup>146</sup> In the next chapter, we shall explore the socio-political foundations of the migrant crisis, presenting “good politics” as a viable tool for addressing the global migrant crisis.

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<sup>143</sup> Gasper Lo Biono and Richard Ryscavage, “Introduction” in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), ix.

<sup>144</sup> Oxfam International, “Refugee and Migrant Crisis,” <https://www.oxfam.org/en/what-we-do/issues/refugee-and-migrant-crisis>. Accessed 10 December 2023.

<sup>145</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, 180.

<sup>146</sup> See Pope Francis *Gaudate et Exsultate* (March 19, 2018), no 78, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_ehortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20180319\\_gaudate-et-exsultate.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_ehortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudate-et-exsultate.html). See also Ludvic Lado SJ, “Toward A Spirituality of Politics,” *Theological Studies* 84, no. 2 (2023): 198-211 at 211.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SOCIO-POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS: POPE FRANCIS AND “GOOD POLITICS”

#### 3.0 Introduction

Chapter Two highlighted some of the drivers of the migrant crisis as resulting from the consequences of human actions and natural disasters. This chapter proposes the socio-political foundation of the crisis through the lenses of Christian anthropology, which emphasises human dignity and its protection. CST cannot adequately respond to the migrant crisis without recourse to human dignity. The concept of human dignity is also important to international human rights movements and figures prominently in the political principles of many nations. It also helps in shaping the theories of justice and human entitlement.<sup>1</sup> Many people are forced to migrate because of socio-economic and political challenges affecting their dignity and rights. Hence, the unprecedented high level of global migration in this twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup> This chapter presents the Christian understanding of human dignity and how its violation results in migration.<sup>3</sup> It also analyses the concept of “good politics” used by Pope Francis in addressing the migrant crisis regarding international obligations and local politics. We shall attempt to answer these questions: How does Christian anthropological understanding of human dignity relate to the migrant crisis? What does “good politics” mean when Pope Francis uses it? And how might “good politics” reduce the impact of the migrant crisis?

#### 3.1 Christian Anthropology, Human Dignity and the Migrant Crisis

The human person is projected as the climax of creation in the biblical narrative and possesses an inherent dignity, which has consequences when violated. According to this account, humanity was created in the image of God with all the dignity, rights and privileges that come with it. This understanding indicates that the human person's dignity is to be preserved and respected by all and in all circumstances. Any threat to human dignity or its violation through natural disasters or human activities results in disastrous situations, including people migrating for safety. This chapter takes cognisance of the Christian

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<sup>1</sup> Nussbaum, “Human Dignity and Political Entitlements” in *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, 351.

<sup>2</sup> See Raphael Israeli, *Ethnic Cleansing: Migration and Population Transfer and the Jewish Paradigm of Survival Amidst Displacement* (USA/Singapore: Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co., 2019), 1. See also Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movement in the Modern World*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and Gemma Tulud Cruz, “When the Poor Knock on our Door: A Theological Response to Unwanted Migration” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 195.

<sup>3</sup> Anna Rowlands describes “theological anthropology as the hinterland to the principle of dignity in CST. Any understanding of the principle of dignity requires an appreciation of the deeper ideas about personhood that underlie the texts of the CST tradition.” (Anna Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times*, (London: T&T Clark, 2022), 52.).

anthropological understanding of the migrant crisis, considering the vulnerability of the human person in most instances. It presents the Christian anthropological conviction of our shared humanity and the dignity of every human person on the face of the earth – our common home. It calls for recognizing the inalienable and equal dignity of everyone affected by the migrant crisis.<sup>4</sup> Rooted in the church’s anthropological tradition, CST prioritises experience and practice as a starting point, and it aims at our collective social responsibility in liberating and transforming the human family across borders.<sup>5</sup> In order words, CST, in responding to the migrant crisis, considers present realities and future possibilities in the economy of God’s overall plan for humanity.<sup>6</sup>

The migrant crisis, whether from the perspective of the “push” or “pull” factors, has some elements of the failure of humanity to meet its primary responsibility of providing for the needy and protecting the dignity and rights of every human person either through constituted civil authority or all those who have the capacity to help but failed to do so. Eleanor Roosevelt once argued that the right to human dignity must begin at home: “In small places, close to home - the neighbourhood, the school, the factory, the farm, or the office. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child[ren] seek equal justice, equal opportunity, and equal dignity without discrimination.”<sup>7</sup> Roosevelt captured the basic human needs of all time. When people are deprived of these basic human needs, they are forced to look elsewhere for succour and the possibility of a better life. The deprivation of these basic human needs in the Global South is the driving force behind the unprecedented migrant crisis.

Obviously, many governments have neglected their responsibility to ensure that their citizens have access to the fundamental conditions of human dignity: safety, shelter, food, healthcare, and social amenities that enhance their well-being and relationship with one another. They have failed to provide these basic needs to their people either through malevolence, incompetence, or lack of capacity.<sup>8</sup> And the dignity of every human person is supposed to be upheld and defended by respecting both the human person’s basic physical needs and the transcendence needs of every person because the human person is not created to live on bread alone (Matthew 4:1-4). People are forced to seek alternative means of survival where their transcendent and physical needs are unmet. This is partly why the migrant crisis is attributed to socio-economic deprivation, political instability, natural

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<sup>4</sup> See Clemens Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Tradition: The Deep Practice of Human Dignity*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2022), 1; Elaine Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in the Age of Uncertainty* (New York: Mowbray, 1996), 7; Steven Bevens, *Models in Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (New York: Orbis, 2004), 70. Also see, Gemma Tulud Cruz, “When the Poor Knock on Our Door: A Theological Response to Unwanted Migration,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 197.

<sup>5</sup> Elaine Graham, et al., *Theological reflections: Methods* (London: SCM, 2005), 170. Also see Cruz, “When the Poor Knock on Our Door,” 197.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Bevens, *Models in Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (New York: Orbis, 2004), 70.

<sup>7</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, quoted in M. Ignatieff, “Human Rights, Global Ethics, and the Ordinary Virtues,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 31, no. 1 (2017): 1-16, at 1; See also Clemens Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching: The Deep Practice of Human Dignity*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2022), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*, 1.

disasters, religious intolerance or persecution, among other factors. The movement of people in the twenty-first century is mostly motivated by a threat to people's dignity and rights. And these are intrinsic basic needs of every human person that should be guaranteed to people by the leadership of every political community.

Deciphering the concrete aspect of human dignity has remained contentious among scholars. To be more specific, scholars differ regarding definition and meaning, justification and sources, and practice and policies. There are also disagreements concerning other human goods and moral values, such as freedom, justice, punishment and the determination of public policy regarding our common humanity, our common home and the common good.<sup>9</sup> Leszek Kolakowski maintains that the concept of human dignity is difficult to define because "it is not an organ to be discovered in the body, and it is not an empirical notion; but without it, we would be unable to answer the simple question: what is wrong with slavery, [human trafficking, exploitation, discrimination or defiling innocent people]?"<sup>10</sup> His argument highlights the intrinsic nature of human dignity. Without it, how do we explain people's inhumanity to their fellow human beings? How do we respect the human person in a stress-filled situation or in a situation of conflict and war? What would it mean to violate human dignity since we believe in the inviolability of dignity?

Such intellectual debates on this treasured theological concept (human dignity), rooted in the *imago Dei*, point to its fragile nature and the reason for numerous cases of its violation. For instance, humiliating, objectifying, degrading, and dehumanizing are concrete expressions of violating people's dignity.<sup>11</sup> Clemens Sedmak validates this point with some practical examples when he argues that:

We do not need to offer extreme cases like Warsaw ghetto; humiliations happen in all societies, every day. People are humiliated when they are 'invisible,' when they are not invited to occupy public spaces. The shaming and shame endured by homeless [and jobless] persons in their experience of not being welcome points to humiliation; persons are humiliated when they have reasons to feel out of place. Persons in low paid jobs, like street sweepers and office cleaning personnel, complain about being ignored. [Other] ways of not showing a person respect, [include] acting as if the person is not there (present), [seeing the person as] an object, or not a full person.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the seeming application of a hermeneutic of suspicion to the concept of "human dignity," it has become an interesting and unavoidable concept that is widely used to define the essence of the human person. The institutionalization of the concept in the *International Declarations of Human Rights* and national constitutions, also give credence to the significance of the concept in anthropological, philosophical, ethical and legal conversations. (See David G. Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Teneo Press, 2013), 47. Also see Leon R. Kass, "Defending Human Dignity" in *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, ed. Edmund D. Pellegrino, Adam Schulman, and Thomas W. Merrill (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 297; and Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching: The Deep Practice of Human Dignity*, 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Leszek Kolakowski, "What is left of Socialism," *First Things* 126 (October 2002): 42-46; Also see Kass, "Defending Human Dignity," 297.

<sup>11</sup> Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching*, 4.

These examples are merely a fraction of the frustrations that result from a lack of recognition and disrespect many people endure, which contributes to the migrant crisis. Human dignity is a core concept highlighting “what is distinctively human, commanding special moral attention. Our dignity figures in our personal identity, where dignity is inalienable and common to all of us.”<sup>13</sup> Our dignity defines us theologically and ethically. Justice Kate O’Regan of the South African Constitutional Court referred to these core principles of our being in a landmark case that outlawed the death penalty in South Africa in 1995. She argued that the death penalty was an offence against human dignity, categorically stating that “dignity is very specifically about affirming the value of all human beings as human beings. It is not simply about being alive but being able to live in a way worthy of a human being.”<sup>14</sup> This is a concrete example of the legal use of the concept against violence, killing, maltreatment and dehumanisation. This argument is particularly important coming from the South African context, where Apartheid ravaged and dehumanised many people, denying them their inherent human dignity.<sup>15</sup> We are experiencing a repetition of such inhuman activities in different parts of the world today. They fuel the migrant crisis.

The *imago Dei* approach to the dignity of the human person, theologically and ethically adopted, offers something unique to the scholarly debate about the meaning of human dignity. It offers an understanding of equality “that we hold in creation and the connection to the three basic rights: the right to life, the rights to welfare, and the rights not to be subjected to degrading treatment.”<sup>16</sup> It is universally recognized and accepted that “people who cannot access basic human rights in their own country are entitled to run for their lives.”<sup>17</sup> Meaning that international principles allow people to migrate to other places for their safety and livelihood. These principles give the impression of an international community ready to welcome all those whose lives are threatened. It draws attention to an international obligation to safeguard and provide welfare for all in danger in a civilised and legitimate manner. Is this the reality on the ground? In principle, yes, but in practice, we still need to re-evaluate the immigration policies of many nations in the Global North.

Pope Francis, in Lampedusa, mourned the many migrants who drowned in their attempt to flee from the challenges that threatened their basic rights and dignity in their home countries.<sup>18</sup> He challenged some of the policies impeding all those affected by the migrant

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<sup>13</sup> Holmes Rotston III, “Human Uniqueness and Human Dignity: Person in Nature and the Nature of Persons,” in *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, ed. Edmund D. Pellegrino, Adam Schulman, and Thomas W. Merrill (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 129.

<sup>14</sup> See Constitutional Court of South Africa, *State versus Makwanyane and Another* 1995 (6) BCLR 665 (cc), par 328. Adapted here as cited by Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity in Contemporary Ethics*, 64-5.

<sup>15</sup> See Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity in Contemporary Ethics*, 65.

<sup>16</sup> See J. Waldron, “The Image of God: Rights, Reason, and Order,” in J. Witte Jr. and F. Alexander, eds., *Christianity and Human Rights: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 216-35. See also Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration*, 1. Also see Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 65; Rowlands, “The State Made Flesh: Catholic Social Teaching and the Challenge of UK Asylum Seeking,” *New Blackfriars* (2012): 175-192 at 178.

<sup>18</sup> See Pope Francis, “Pope on Lampedusa: ‘the Globalization of Indifference,’” Homily (July 8, 2013), <http://www.new.va/>. Also see, William O’Neill, SJ., “The Place of Displacement: The Ethics of Migration in

crisis and called for a humane response to their plight. Such challenges have also been acknowledged by the United Nations and other NGOs, and human right activists. For example, Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997-2002, lamented the lack of implementation of the principles that protect human dignity and rights at the Tubingen lecture in 2002. She unequivocally said: “I am struck by the fact that we have no need for new pledges and commitments. They are all there in solemn language. We need something more prosaic: implementation, implementation, implementation!”<sup>19</sup> What is the need for policies if they are not implemented for the good of humanity? CST recognises that the wellbeing of every human person is attached to both a particular political community and the recognition of a fraternal cosmopolitan citizenship founded on the principles of our common humanity, common home and the common good.<sup>20</sup>

The migrant crisis in both the rich and poor countries of the world is creating an unprecedented degree of ethical and political challenges affecting our shared humanity and the universal common good. The media portrays the inadequacies of some countries’ policies and their contribution to the crisis by disregarding human dignity and rights to better livelihood.<sup>21</sup> People are attracted to environments that promote dignity, where they are welcomed and helped to integrate. Many people are on the move today for safety and better opportunities of livelihood. The Church has always condemned any attitude that degrades human dignity. Pope Francis reiterates this in *Laudato Si*, where he maintains that:

At times we see an obsession with denying any pre-eminence to the human person; more zeal is shown in protecting other species than in defending the dignity which all human beings share in equal measure. Certainly, we should be concerned lest other living beings be treated irresponsibly. But we should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some considering themselves more worthy than others. [...] In practice, we continue to tolerate that some consider themselves more human than others, as if they had been born with greater rights. [...] Christian thought sees human beings as possessing a particular dignity above other creatures; it thus inculcates esteem for each person and respect for others.<sup>22</sup>

The need to protect and preserve the dignity of migrants is evident in this encyclical. The encyclical reveals that human dignity encompasses all human beings, including those different from us through nationality or social status. It also points out how we should relate to every human being. This teaching is crucial because there are several cases of “anti-immigrant narrative that fuels fear and anxiety among people” in this twenty-first century.

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the United States,” in *Living With(out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migration of Peoples*, ed. Brazal, Agnes, and Maria Teresa Davila, 67-78. (New York: Orbis, 2016), 67-78 at 67.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Robinson, *Ethics, Human Rights and Globalization, Second Global Lecture, The Global Ethic Foundation* (Tubingen: Global Ethic Foundation, 2002), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Rowlands, “The State Made Flesh,” 178.

<sup>21</sup> Betts, “The Global Compact on Refugees: Towards a Theory of Change? *International Journal of Refugee Law* 30, no. 4, (2018): 623. Doi:10.1093/ijrl/eev056.

<sup>22</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, nos 90 and 119.

This is supported by strict regulations of the mainstream and other media outlets to prevent the presentation of a counter-narrative.<sup>23</sup>

Some migration ethicists suggest that the migrant crisis has nothing to do with the number of migrants seeking protection but “the failure of the system and structures established to respond in a humane, efficient and orderly way to the plight of those in need. It is the failure of the government to carry out their legal obligations towards the vulnerable.”<sup>24</sup> These calls for a sober reflection and critical engagement with government institutions responsible for the protection of lives and property. Many scholars, NGOs’ and human right activists including Oxfam International argue that “migration is not a threat to be stopped but a complex phenomenon to be managed.”<sup>25</sup> Many consider migration the best survival strategy for migrants who face prolonged political instability, economic crises, and other violent conflicts in their region, among other possible challenges.<sup>26</sup> These critical situations create anxiety and desperation that result in the contemporary movement of people that is becoming difficult to manage.

The Church teaches that every human person is a citizen of both the material and immaterial world. This theologically means that human dignity is the immaterial dimension of human beings that cannot be fully explained using sociological, political or economic language that sometimes “describes the human person as a ‘utility maximiser’” - a conceptualisation of the human person from an economic or purely materialistic view.<sup>27</sup> The biblical narrative teaches that each human person has a unique dignity because of the *imago Dei*, that gives everybody “an incalculable and incommensurable value.”<sup>28</sup> This is another way of saying that we cannot compare the ultimate value of one human life with another based on certain socio-economic privileges or race, gender and nationality. We are individually “unique masterpieces of God’s creation (Psalm 8:5)” meant to complement and support one another in this world as we prepare for the next.<sup>29</sup> This is why the principle of human dignity and

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<sup>23</sup> Suzanne Mulligan, “Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis: Reflections on Hospitality, Vulnerability, and Accompaniment,” *The Furrow* 74, no. 11 (November 2023): 580.

<sup>24</sup> Lucas Guttentag, “Crisis at the Border? An Update on Immigration Policy with Stanford’s Lucas Guttentag” *Stanford Law School*, April 22, 2019, <https://law.stanford.edu/2019/04/22/>. Accessed, 10 December 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Oxfam International, “Refugee and Migrant Crisis,” <https://www.oxfam.org/en/what-we-do/issues/refugee-and-migrant-crisis>. Accessed 10 December 2023.

<sup>26</sup> See, International Organisation of Migration, “What is Migration Crisis and How to Address it integrally?” <https://rosanjose.iom.int/en/blogs/what-migration-crisis-and-how-address-it-integrally>. Accessed, 10 December 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Sedmak criticises the reduction of the dignity of the human person to an economic model of utility. He argues that “Utility is a concept that is not helpful to understand quality of life issues: It cannot cope with issues of ‘trust’ and ‘love’ and ‘personality.’ For him, [...] ‘maximising utility’ is different from ‘maximising good’ which requires a reflection on life quality or basic goods. Maximizing and measuring utility is a challenging idea when confronted with the depth and thickness of culture especially when it has to do with the human person. [...] What really matters in human life cannot be properly expressed in econometric models.” (See Sedmak, “Utility and Identity: A Catholic Social Teaching Perspective on the Economics of Good and Evil,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 28, no. 4, (November 2015): 461-477 at 464; and Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching*, 6.)

<sup>28</sup> John W. Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death: Human Dilemmas in the Light of the Christian Faith* (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009), 60.

<sup>29</sup> Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death: Human Dilemmas in the Light of the Christian Faith*, 60.

the commitment to honour the dignity of each human person is central to CST. The failure to realise this principle is responsible for the migrant crisis in many parts of the globe.<sup>30</sup>

The rule of law is fundamental to the security of human dignity, and a failure to uphold it results in disregard for people's dignity. This is the reason for some of the socio-political upheavals in some regions that has degenerated into the migrant crisis. Human relationships in every society are guided by principles laid down in written and unwritten laws, norms, and values. These guiding principles are meant for human flourishing, and there are negative consequences when these guiding principles are not followed. Unfortunately, those entrusted with the powers to govern the state or nation sometimes violate these principles. It is to such breach of trust in political leadership that the Catholic Bishops of America addressed all Catholics in the United States and, by extension, all persons who are privileged to serve in a public leadership position "to place their faith at the heart of their public service, particularly on issues regarding the sanctity and dignity of human life."<sup>31</sup> Human dignity does not depend on a person's functionality but on what is deposited in each person at creation – that makes us Godlike beings. This perspective is the biblical anthropological and ethical conception of human dignity sustained in a lawful environment. The Christian ethicist, Peter Bristow asserts that "the moral convictions of people tend to be strongly influenced by their understanding of the meaning of human life and this in turn has a good deal with their conception of the human person."<sup>32</sup> There have always been two contrasting and conflicting ethical arguments regarding Bristow's point: the Christian and secular perspectives.

A Christian anthropological understanding of the human person is paramount to this study because of the theological and ethical implications of the violations of human dignity and rights leading to the migrant crisis. The crisis is being explored from the theological foundation of our common origin, common humanity or identity, common home and common good. Pope John Paul II teaches that humanity received the meaning of the human person from divine revelation. Building on Pope Paul VI's teaching that "In order to know the [human person], in his [/her authenticity and] fullness, one must know God."<sup>33</sup> This study aligns with scholars who argue that for any meaningful theology and ethics of migration, we must know the complex and multifaceted reality of migration in its totality.<sup>34</sup> And we cannot achieve this without considering the dignity and rights of the people at the

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<sup>30</sup> Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching*, 1.

<sup>31</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998), no. 31. See also Task Force on Catholic Bishops and Catholic Politicians United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Readings on Catholics in Political Life* (Washington DC: USCCB, 2006), 165.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Bristow, *Christian Ethics, and the Human Person: Truth and Relativism in Contemporary Moral Theology* (Leominster, UK: Gracewing, 2013), 74.

<sup>33</sup> Pope Paul VI, Homily at the Final Public Session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (December 7, 1965): *AAS* 58 (1966), 58; and John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 55, (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1991).

<sup>34</sup> See Gioacchino Campese, "Beyond Ethnic and national Imagination," in *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants* ed. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 180. See also Tisha Rajendra, "Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory," 290.

centre of this crisis. This is because human beings are unique in the vast array of creation since every human being is made in God's image. The point is that, as "God-like beings, we reflect God's reality back to himself in worship and communion, and we reflect God's reality to the rest of creation in stewardship."<sup>35</sup> We are all stewards to all creation and one another and will someday give an account of our stewardship to the Creator.

Scholars like Gregory Feldman contend that "it is becoming increasingly fashionable to seek political and moral capital by expressing a shared identity with collectivized groups in less fortunate circumstances."<sup>36</sup> He raises concerns about the specific content of the identity described as "human" or "humanity." Asserting that:

These proclamations of togetherness may succeed in shipping a few resources from the affluent to the needy. But here is the rub. Whoever proclaims such a universal identity is, in effect, speaking *for* others rather than *with* another. The speaker is not engaging the other in dialogue of equals, because the other is not empowered to switch the sentence's subject (the speaker) and its direct object (the one spoken for, the "other"). Subjects may speak; but objects cannot. The social structure and the grammatical structure work together.<sup>37</sup>

In the above argument, Feldman projects the position of CST in opposing any attempt to treat people in whatever situation as objects. It goes without saying that all human beings anywhere in the world are equal subjects with different potentials and should be accorded that respect and dignity.<sup>38</sup> The creation of every human being in God's image implies a radical dependence on God and one another and a radical equality. "Each of us bears the family likeness, yet each of us is a unique masterpiece."<sup>39</sup> We are all equal in our uniqueness because we all bear a common origin. Our equality at creation ignites the need for justice, equality, and fairness in human society.<sup>40</sup> Internalising and adhering to the Christian anthropological understanding of the human person will help minimise some of the challenges associated with the migrant crisis that manifests in the unequal treatment of persons in the labour market and social structures. This is also reflected in the "complex relationships between migrants and citizens, between nation-states, and between the past and the present."<sup>41</sup> Hence, it is morally and ethically objectionable to humiliate, objectify, degrade, and dehumanise any human being. It is also a violation of the basic principles of Christian faith, human rights and our common identity, and it should be seen as a sacrilege.<sup>42</sup> Such attitudes should not exist among people, given that all human beings are bearers of the image of God; we are supposed to project God's goodness to all creation.

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<sup>35</sup> John W. Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death*, 54.

<sup>36</sup> Gregory Feldman, *We are All Migrants: Political Action and the Ubiquitous Condition of Migrant-hood*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Feldman, *We are All Migrants*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, "Formation of Conscience," *Priest and People* 18, no. 5, May 2004, 173.

<sup>39</sup> Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death*, 61.

<sup>40</sup> Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death*, 61.

<sup>41</sup> Rajendra, "Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, 291.

<sup>42</sup> David Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees*. (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 34. See also Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching*, 4-5.

### 3.1.1 Human Dignity, Hierarchism and Egalitarianism

The hierarchical perception of human society distorts humanity's place in creation because of people's contrasting attitudes in their relationships with others. Some people may consider others as equals deserving of a place in their personal, social, political or cooperative-competitive space because they can reciprocate their gestures. In contrast, some may consider and treat others according to their social status based on a hierarchical understanding that divides people as superiors and inferiors and as deserving of respect or domination. This kind of attitude contradicts the ethical principle of our common humanity and creates unnecessary tension, division, and conflict in society.<sup>43</sup> Our social status in the society does not increase or decrease our humanity and dignity. Therefore, hierarchism is not supposed to create unhealthy division and tension in society but to guide the allocation of responsibilities in an orderly manner for the good of all. The parable of talent in Matthew 25:14-30 shows that we all have different capacities and potentials that could be developed for the good of the human family.

Hierarchism also reveals that we need a servant-leadership model in society, not the autocratic one that often leads to domination and humiliation. Jesus referred to this reality in Matthew 20:20-28 when the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to ask Jesus to consider her two sons, (James and John), to sit at his right and left hand in his kingdom. Jesus used the occasion to teach his disciples, especially the other ten apostles who were "indignant at the two brothers," that leadership is not for "lording" it over others but a call to serve selflessly (see Matt. 20:25-28). Therefore, understanding human society from the hierarchical perspective should guide our veneration and devotion towards superiors because of the office they exercise, and the responsibility entrusted to them. What they symbolise is not meant to distort their vision of others as less human or deserving of unequal treatment but as equals with different capacities and responsibilities. Hence, "A veritable hierarchy presupposes a consciousness on the part of the superiors of their symbolic function and a realisation of their roles that forms the only legitimate object of devotion among their subordinates. The effect of true hierarchism is to bring each person to fit morally into the place they occupy" in terms of their respective roles in society.<sup>44</sup> Regrettably, the concept of hierarchism has been "frequently abused and distorted to imply that some human beings have the right to dominate and misuse" others as they wish.<sup>45</sup> People are being used and discarded by leaders, institutions, and factory owners because of their poor social status. Many undocumented migrants have suffered this kind of treatment.

Whereas some secular scholars' view of human society tends toward hierarchy, the Christian view of humanity is egalitarian. This is reflected in the social doctrines of the Church. For example, Both John Paul II and Benedict XVI advocate that discussions concerning socio-economic and political problems such as migration, civil unrest, war, food security and the rise of global inequality be guided by the principles of solidarity and

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<sup>43</sup> See James M. Buchanan, "Equality, Hierarchy, and Global Justice," in *Justice and Global Politics*, ed. Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr and Jeffrey Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 255.

<sup>44</sup> Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*, trans. Arthur Wills (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 19.

<sup>45</sup> Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death*, 55.

subsidiarity. They insist on better response to the root causes of displacement in local and international governance.<sup>46</sup> So much emphasis on the hierarchical understanding of human society often leads to the violations of human dignity and rights: racism, nationalism, superiority complex, genderism, classism, and fanaticism are examples of such violations. In this regard, the need for a more just and equitable social order cannot be overemphasized. Being citizens of this world and citizens of the kingdom of heaven places a socio-political responsibility on all human beings to work for the common good.<sup>47</sup> We were created to flourish in this world as we prepare for the next. There is, therefore, no need to treat others as if they are less human because of their condition.

Sadly, the hierarchical view of human society always tends to reduce the conception of the human person to a materialistic and biological understanding, “resulting in the treatment of some human beings as “lesser beings,” “non-persons,” “higher animals,” “vegetables” or mere “rational machines.”<sup>48</sup> Consequently, in some parts of the world, nationalist regimes dehumanise, exploit and violate the dignity and rights of migrants. Heyer and other social ethicists expressed concerns about the involvement of some US citizens in perpetuating the human rights abuses of immigrants. This is becoming a common trend in the migrant crisis. Once again, Feldman draws attention to the frustration people face when they are not empowered to speak for themselves in challenging situations about their well-being and are not given equal opportunities to flourish.<sup>49</sup> He says the “invocation of a common humanity sometimes functions as a device to silence particular voices, which might question the world order, rather than an invitation to negotiate its order.”<sup>50</sup> How can our common humanity be preserved when some people are reduced to mere objects, passive observers, or just receivers of charity because of their vulnerable condition and unfavourable socio-economic situation? Such situations thrive when there is a misconception of hierarchism and human dignity.

Hierarchism needs to be guided by the principle of human dignity and fundamental human rights. According to Rowlands, “dignity is both something we become and something we are called to help others realise. It is also something we might be required to hold in trust for others through specific practices of care, [mentorship and administration].”<sup>51</sup> We do this for children, students, patients, citizens and faith communities, through parents, teachers, medical personnel, civil leaders and religious leaders. This is also applicable to migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, people who are not capable of taking care of themselves because of health challenges or old age and those with certain human vulnerabilities like dementia. Entrustment is a divine mandate for all humanity that is fundamental to CST and human flourishing. We are all entrusted with caring for one another and our common home.

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<sup>46</sup> See Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 38-40; Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 62. Also see citation in Rowlands, “The State Made Flesh,” 180.

<sup>47</sup> Rowlands, “The State Become Flesh,” 178-181.

<sup>48</sup> Bristow, *The Moral Dignity of Man*, 28; 61.

<sup>49</sup> Feldman, *We are All Migrants*, 2-3.

<sup>50</sup> Feldman, *We are All Migrants*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times*, 54. Emphasis added.

Consequently, we need to emphasise the egalitarian view of society for human flourishing. Pope Francis attends to this perspective when discussing our common identity: “God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters.”<sup>52</sup> This assertion follows the Vatican II document’s teaching that “human beings are not mistaken when they regard themselves as superior to merely bodily creatures and as more than mere particles of nature or nameless units in human society. For by their power to know themselves in the depths of their being they rise above the entire universe of mere objects.”<sup>53</sup> CST and modern scholarship in social ethics promotes the egalitarian understanding of human society and advocates for the protection of human dignity from extremist ideologies and the devastation of war and violent conflict contributing to the migrant crisis. Such advocacy springs from an understanding that protecting human dignity is a task that calls for an active social principle. This requires every community to collaborate and actively participate in espousing the doctrine of human dignity as a structural practice and part of its conscious memory. Rowlands recommends the Church as the ideal community for propagating the appropriate theological and ethical principles of human dignity.<sup>54</sup>

A clear conception of the human person is needed to cultivate an egalitarian society. In his moral doctrine on the family, Pope John Paul II defines the human person “as an incarnate spirit, that is, a soul that expresses itself in a body informed by an immortal spirit.”<sup>55</sup> This definition theologically projects three things: “(i) that each person exists in and by him/herself and not in another, that means, she/he is an individual subsistent being; (ii) that a person is a unity of body and soul; this means that human beings are both physical and spiritual beings whose ultimate destiny is union with God at the end of time, (iii) that a person is distinguished from animals, things and objects by rationality and freedom.”<sup>56</sup> This means that human beings were not created to live in isolation but in communion, exploring and developing their potential. Hence, human beings are called to love in their unified totality.<sup>57</sup> The creation account states that God created them “male and female” for the purpose of companionship and fruitfulness. This biblical background of human origin and relationship constitutes the first form of communion and partnership between people because “by their innermost nature men and women are social beings; and if they do not establish relationships with others, they can neither live nor develop their potentials” (Gen. 1:26-28).<sup>58</sup> Pope John Paul II elaborates on the uniqueness and dignity of every human being in *Veritatis Splendour*, where he teaches that:

The [human] person, by the light of reason and support of virtue, discovers in the body the anticipatory signs, the expression and promise of the gift of self,

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<sup>52</sup> Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 5. See also, Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019): *L’Osservatore Romano*, (9 May 2019): 9.

<sup>53</sup> See Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 14.

<sup>54</sup> Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion*, 47, 56-7.

<sup>55</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 11. Also see, *Veritatis Splendor*, no 48.

<sup>56</sup> Bristow, *Christian Ethics, and the Human Person*, 75.

<sup>57</sup> See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 11

<sup>58</sup> Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 12.

in conformity with the wise plan of the Creator. It is in the light of the dignity of the human person – a dignity which must be affirmed for its own sake – that reason grasps the specific moral value of certain goods towards which the person is naturally inclined.<sup>59</sup>

Affirming every person's dignity in the light of God's plan for humanity, in general, is important for our coexistence and flourishing in this world as we prepare for eternity. This is because human dignity requires the active participation of all humanity in social life. Hence, Pope Benedict XVI would maintain that "the human person must always be the focal point in the vast field of international migration."<sup>60</sup> The establishment of beneficial and sustainable relationships across borders to fulfil the divine mandate to "be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28) is a *sine quo non*.

Advancements in science and technology are also encroaching on the domain of life in a way that undermines human dignity. The invention of artificial intelligence (AI), robots, and other human-like scientific elements are all threats to human dignity that need to be addressed theologically and ethically.<sup>61</sup> Robots and AI are gradually replacing critical thinking. They are also affecting human relationships and rendering many people redundant by taking over their jobs, thereby contributing to the migrant crisis. There is no doubt that the domain of science and technology has many positive values in human society. However, it contradicts what is revealed in the biblical narrative, where we see "God's rule as one that is ordering, life-generating, life-preserving, servanthood, and as an extension of his kingdom here on earth."<sup>62</sup> While it is good to appreciate the benefits of these technological advancements to humanity, we also need to be conscious of the dangers that they pose to the human race. These human-like robots, like AI, cannot think or reason and do not have a conscience. There is a danger where these two essential components of the human person are missing.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, the conception of human dignity that is not theologically and ethically grounded will make its application to socio-economic and political discourse concerning the migrant crisis slippery. Upholding the dignity of every human person is against "the herding of people as if they were a mass without a soul."<sup>64</sup> It is also against depriving the human person of the dignity of labour where they provide for their livelihood. Understanding the human

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<sup>59</sup> See John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 48.

<sup>60</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Message on World Day of Migrants, and refugees* 2007. Cited by Donald Kerwin, Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty in Service of the Human Person" in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), 93.

<sup>61</sup> See Daniel C. Dennett, "How to Protect Human Dignity from Science," in *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, ed. Edmund D. Pellegrino, Adam Schulman, and Thomas W. Merrill (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 39. See also Leon R. Kass, "Defending Human Dignity" in *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, ed. Edmund D. Pellegrino, Adam Schulman, and Thomas W. Merrill, 297-331.

<sup>62</sup> Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death*, 55.

<sup>63</sup> See Elise Ann Allen, "The Church Cautioning Against the Dangers of Artificial Intelligence," *The Irish Catholic*, May 16, 2024, 23.

<sup>64</sup> Pius XII, "Christmas Message, 1942," in *The Major Addresses of Pope Pius XII, Vol. 1: Selected Addresses and Christmas Messages*, ed. Vincent Arthur Yzermans (St. Paul: The North Central Publishing Company, 1961), 60.

being as a substantial unity within the duality of body and soul enables us to appreciate the restricted nature of our dominion over others that often leads to the abuse of power by those in authority because of the privileged position they occupy in this world.<sup>65</sup> Rowlands reminds us that we may seriously debase the concept of dignity in ourselves or in others, but we cannot lose or alienate it completely from who we are as human beings. She argues that dignity is something we all possess as a gift given through the divine initiative, and it needs to be guarded and guaranteed because it is fragile and capable of being violated.<sup>66</sup> This is already the case with the way many migrants are being treated in different parts of the globe because of their vulnerable conditions.

### 3.1.2 Human Dignity, Vulnerability and Migrants' Status

Conceptually, vulnerability is viewed by many as the state of being exposed to harm; it is a state of being susceptible to injury or attack for lack of the capacity to defend oneself. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, people are vulnerable if they may be wounded, either literally or figuratively, because they are incapacitated and cannot fully protect themselves. This description of vulnerability highlights the fragile nature of the dignity of every human person. Building on the work of other scholars, the American theologian and ethicist James Keenan SJ, draws attention to the misconception and misapplication of humanity's vulnerability. He argues that it is not restricted to being incapacitated, wounded, weak, or having an underlying health condition. It could also be misapplied to those at the border seeking asylum, those at sea trying to cross to the other side to seek refuge, those in cargo, and tents or in any human condition that raises alarm and concern.<sup>67</sup> These are peculiar cases of vulnerability due to unfavourable circumstances of life that should be recognised and treated as such.

However, Keenan maintains that vulnerability is more about being responsive, exposed, opened or being able to be wounded; in this sense, vulnerability is the human condition that allows us to hear, encounter, receive, or recognise one another in our fragile nature and the possibility of our dignity being harmed by others. He argues that being human is synonymous with being vulnerable. This kind of understanding of vulnerability "allows us to be aware of others and their dignity, [and] to take the risks in meeting and recognising [them]."<sup>68</sup> Keenan's argument reveals that it is in recognising our vulnerability as a collectivised human condition that we can respond morally to those in critical situations

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<sup>65</sup> Bristow, *The Moral Dignity of Man*, Second edition, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 28.

<sup>66</sup> Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion*, 54.

<sup>67</sup> James F. Keenan SJ, "Vulnerability" in *The Moral Life: Eight Lectures* (Washington. DC: Georgetown University Press, 2023), 24. Also see Keenan SJ, "Linking Human Dignity, Vulnerability and Virtue Ethics," *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society*, Vol. 6 (2020):59.

<sup>68</sup> Keenan SJ, "Vulnerability" in *The Moral Life: Eight Lectures* (Washington. DC: Georgetown University Press, 2023), 24. Also see Keenan SJ, "Linking Human Dignity, Vulnerability and Virtue Ethics," *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society*, Vol. 6 (2020):59; Judith Butler, "Precious life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26 no. 2 (20120): 134-51; Erin C. Gilson, *The Ethics of Vulnerability: A Feminist Analysis of Social Life and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 35; And, Enda McDonagh, *Vulnerable to the Holy Spirit: In Faith, Morality and Art* (Dublin: Colombia Press, 2005), 12-20.

with empathy and compassion. Protecting the vulnerable, therefore, is a collective responsibility entrusted to humanity because of our common origin and identity. The Catholic moral theologian and social ethicist, Suzanne Mulligan substantiates this argument, suggesting that “a deeper awareness of our vulnerability, coupled with an awareness of our interdependence, might contribute to a redefinition of our social values and foster greater receptiveness towards the stranger.”<sup>69</sup> An awareness of our collective vulnerable human condition might help shape host communities’ view of the migrants in their midst.

The *imago Dei* in every human being makes every human person unique, with the intrinsic dignity embedded in all human beings. Hence, migrants are not different from citizens in dignity. Their dignity must be respected and protected from physical, social, spiritual or psychological harm. Protecting the vulnerable, in the context of the migrant crisis, is primarily a matter of preventing every harm to the dignity of other people because of our common identity. It could also require just helping them handle the consequences of the vulnerability of their status as migrants who are not different in dignity from members of their host communities. We cannot adequately do this without a proper conceptualisation of our vulnerability to one another. Admissibly, Erinn C. Gilson contends that:

The meaning of vulnerability is commonly taken for granted and it is assumed that vulnerability is almost exclusively negative, equated with weakness, dependency, powerlessness, deficiency and passivity. This reductively negative view leads to problematic implications, imperilling ethical responsiveness to vulnerability, and so prevents the concept from possessing the normative value many theorists wish to have. When vulnerability is regarded as weakness and concomitantly, invulnerability is prized, attentiveness to one’s own vulnerability and ethical response to vulnerable others remain out of reach goals.<sup>70</sup>

As human beings, we are all vulnerable either to human-made threats or to natural ones, and vulnerability to certain harm could also result from the negligence or negative actions of those entrusted with the power to prevent such from happening. This is where political leaders, religious institutions, civil society, human rights activists, professional groups and faith communities become critical stakeholders in dealing with the challenges of vulnerability. This is because vulnerability is the common denominator that binds us together as human beings –the human condition constantly needs redemption.

Therefore, an ethic of vulnerability might help facilitate a better relationship between migrants and citizens, between migrants and the government of their host communities and between migrants and their home countries. Butler sees vulnerability as fundamental and foundational to such relationships. She maintains, "Ethical obligation not only depends upon our vulnerability to the claims of others but establishes us as creatures who are

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<sup>69</sup> Mulligan, “Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis: Reflections on Hospitality, Vulnerability, and Accompaniment,” *The Furrow*, 74, no. 11 (November 2023): 583.

<sup>70</sup> Erin C. Gilson, *The Ethics of Vulnerability: A Feminist Analysis of Social Life and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2014), i.

fundamentally defined by ethical relations.”<sup>71</sup> Our vulnerability precedes everything else about us from conception to death. We depend on God, our Creator, and on one another to actualise our potential at different stages of our lives. This means that “vulnerability is what defines and establishes us as capable of being moral among one another.”<sup>72</sup> As such, we are responsible for the well-being of one another in our different capacities. Most people are displaced today because of the negligence of their leaders or the negative actions of others. And many have been wounded because those entrusted with the responsibility to care for their well-being failed in their professional conduct and stewardship.

The doctrine of human dignity, therefore, enjoins people not to act in such a way that cause harm to others, but to help them appreciate their God given dignity.<sup>73</sup> This has been a consistent magisterial teaching of the Church. Pope Francis, in *Fratelli Tutti* follows the pattern of *Rerum Novarum* (1891) of Pope Leo XIII, *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963) of Pope John XXIII, *Populorum Progressio* (1967) of Pope Paul VI, *Laborem Exercens* (1981) and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) of Pope John Paul II, and *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) of Pope Benedict XVI, to mention just a few. These social encyclicals are addressed to all humanity because of the universal scope of their contents and their concerns for the growth and development of all peoples.<sup>74</sup> Pope Francis, like his predecessors, sets out a clear vision relevant to humanity. This is because vulnerability, fraternity and peaceful coexistence are issues that concern everybody in the human family.

Apparently, the theological foundation of *Fratelli Tutti* about human dignity and vulnerability is the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), “which undermines ‘exclusivist’ and ‘nationalist’ theologies.”<sup>75</sup> This isolationist attitude was embedded in the lawyer’s tone, whose first intention was to “put Jesus to the test” (Luke 10:25). After getting a seemingly unsatisfactory answer, he wanted “to justify himself” by asking Jesus: “And who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29). Oliver O’Donovan helps us unpack this situation. He argues that there are three ways in which Jesus’ answer defeats the hidden motive in the lawyer’s question. Firstly, Jesus’ answer clearly implied a ‘universalist’ doctrine of neighbourhood, whereas the lawyer supposedly had in mind some racial and nationalist restrictions. Secondly, Jesus’ story shows that we identify our neighbour through active engagement and empathetically caring for those in need. This is mostly our responsibility towards the vulnerable – concretely identifying, engaging and showing concern. The good Samaritan’s action changed the *status quo* of the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans. Before his humane action, it would have been difficult to conceive that Jews

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<sup>71</sup> Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2015), 110; See also *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005),

<sup>72</sup> Keenan SJ., “Vulnerability,” 26.

<sup>73</sup> Robert E. Goodin, *Protecting the Vulnerable: A Reanalysis of Our Social Responsibilities* (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1985), 110.

<sup>74</sup> Efeturi A. Ojakaminor OMV, “Fratelli Tutti: Path to Building Human Fraternity and Sustainable Peace in Nigeria.” Being A Paper Presented to the Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria during its First Plenary Assembly in 2022 at the Catholic Resource Centre, Durumi, Abuja on March 7, 2022, 1-2. See also David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought: Encyclicals and Documents from Popes Leo XIII to Pope Francis*, Third Revised Edition (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2022), 1-8.

<sup>75</sup> Ojakaminor OMV, “Fratelli Tutti: Path to Building Human Fraternity,” 3.

and Samaritans could be neighbours in the sense of reaching out to each other for help. Jesus' encounter with the woman at Jacob's well in John 4:5-30 projects this reality. The Samaritan woman, in verse nine, said to Jesus after he asked her for a drink: "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" She responded in this manner because "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4:9). The lesson from the parable of the good Samaritan reveals that "the truth of neighbourhood is known in engagement" and benevolence.<sup>76</sup>

This brings us to the third point in the parable: that neighbourhood is not defined by tribal, ethnic, racial, religious sect or national affiliation but by caring and rendering selfless service to those in need. The vulnerable Jew would have learnt the difficult lesson, realising that his own people abandoned him and only the preconceived traditional enemy cared to save his life. According to O'Donovan, "this is the most scandalous part of Jesus' story: that a Jew could need a Samaritan as a neighbour" to save his life, and that the perceived relation of superior and inferior could be reversed.<sup>77</sup> The parable shows the paradox of a supposed enemy caring for someone whose so-called brothers from the same nationality or ethnic group disregarded. The Good Samaritan came from a community that was deeply at odds with the wounded Jewish victim. However, he did not allow national boundaries and prejudices to stand in the way of our common humanity. All he saw was a vulnerable human being, like him, in dire need of help to survive. Support and solidarity were required instead of judging and rationalising the victim's nationality.

The story of the Good Samaritan clearly underscores Jesus' prioritising human relationships. Pope Francis employed it to point at a particular direction – solidarity in making the world better for all humanity. The parable points at our common humanity and invites us to look beyond our differences: family, ethnic group, race, colour, gender, nationality or religion. To drive this point home, the Holy Father notes that "there are only two kinds of people: those who care for someone vulnerable and hurting and those who pass by; those who bend down to help and those who look the other way and hurry off. Here, all our distinctions, labels and masks fall away."<sup>78</sup> This means that human dignity and vulnerability are interconnected, and an encounter with the vulnerable in the face of danger, marginalisation, and deprivation must change our perception of the human person from a narrow nationalistic to a broader universal perspective, forcing us to act.

The migrant crisis is an avenue to propagate this kind of understanding of our neighbours. Migrants are mostly vulnerable people, especially those who are forced to leave their home countries because of hardship or violent crisis. Many are also victims of drug trafficking, prostitution, and other crimes they are often labelled with. The parable of the good Samaritan is meant to change our perception of those involved in some of these activities,

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<sup>76</sup> Oliver O'Donovan, "Again: Who Is a Person?" in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspective in Medical Ethics*, ed. M. Therese Lysaught *et al*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 367.

<sup>77</sup> O'Donovan, "Again: Who Is a Person?" 367.

<sup>78</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 70.

from perpetrators to victims.<sup>79</sup> The broken realities and frailties of human lives in certain environments, the complexity of poverty, and the structural causes of these vulnerabilities are fundamental to the migrant crisis. Hence, the vulnerable poor migrants do not only need charity; they also need justice to address the crisis.

### 3.1.3 Human Dignity, Recognition and Undocumented Immigrants

Recognition is a natural need in every human person. It is the desire of every human person to be given due respect and consideration as human beings regardless of their background or socio-economic condition. The United Nations General Assembly in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* avers that “Recognition of the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.”<sup>80</sup> This entails a need for sustained public discourse among diverse populations that would, in the long run, foster mutual recognition of the inherent human dignity in people across borders. Such discourse “could provide a platform of commonality from which we can address crises such as migration and forced displacement.”<sup>81</sup> The African concept of *ubuntu* captures the communal aspect of humanity. It emphasises that we are human beings in and through our relationships with other human beings. *Ubuntu* is an African anthropological philosophy asserting that “to be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on that basis establish humane respectful relations with them.”<sup>82</sup> This kind of understanding of our interconnectedness exposes the problem of dehumanization.

Groody narrates the demeaning experiences of some migrants in their attempt to relocate to other countries. He asserts that the most difficult experience for them is not the pain and suffering of the physical journey, as horrendous as it may be when crossing deserts or oceans and being stowed away in trains and cargo containers. Their problem is not even the extortion and exploitation of smugglers, but the dehumanising treatment they are subjected to. A man from Mexico who shared his disappointing experience said: “What hurts the most are the indignities, when people treat you like you are a dog, like a piece of dirt, like you are worth nothing as a human being.”<sup>83</sup> Another man from India recounts his experience, saying: “Many animals live better than we do. It is as if we die in the ocean, it won’t matter.”<sup>84</sup> Additionally, a migrant from Honduras lamented: “Some call us *cucarachas*, but we are not insects; we are people who have feelings and families, who hope for a better future.”<sup>85</sup> The experience of these migrants reveals the indignities many migrants endure simply because they are struggling to survive. This unkind treatment results from the failure

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<sup>79</sup> Vallely, “How Bergoglio Changed,” 128-131.

<sup>80</sup> United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), 10 December 1948 (New York: United Nations General Assembly Official Record, 1948), available online at [www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html).

<sup>81</sup> Mulligan, “Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis,” 583.

<sup>82</sup> Mogobe Ramose, “Globalization and Ubuntu,” in *Philosophy from Africa: A Text with Readings*, ed. Pieter Coetzee and Abraham Roux, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 626-59 at 644.

<sup>83</sup> Groody, “Theology in the age of Migration: Seeing the Image of Christ in the Eyes of a Stranger,” *National Catholic Reporter*, September 18, 2009, 22.

<sup>84</sup> Groody, “Theology in the age of Migration,” 22.

<sup>85</sup> Groody, “Theology in the age of Migration,” 22.

to recognise the humanity of these migrants, who are possibly fleeing from danger or struggling for a better life for themselves and their families. Sedmak describes these dehumanising situations as “agency insecurity based on ‘ontological insecurity’ which is, the insecurity resulting from the loss of one’s identity and place in the world.”<sup>86</sup> People should not be treated as “insects,” “animals,” or “no one” simply because they are immigrants whether documented or not. No one would want to be reduced to a nobody or some insect because of their condition.

Research has also revealed that migrants are sometimes labelled and treated as “undesirable aliens,” “intruders,” or “criminal elements.” They are seen as “potential burdens on society, threats to cultural identity, and a danger to national security. They are then forced to take clandestine and dangerous journeys, either on their own or with the assistance of unscrupulous human smugglers, [ exploiters and traffickers].”<sup>87</sup> The challenge worsens when the country of destination or host countries ignore their vulnerability, which is a key element in every human person that ignites empathy, recognition and compassion. Migrants also face numerous dehumanising problems in transit. Many migrants have testified that they were subjected to various indignities that raise questions about what it means to be human in the world today.

Our focus in this chapter is our shared humanity, our relationality and our interdependence on one another; and how we should intentionally highlight these qualities in our everyday conversations, especially in local and international politics. It draws insights from the Christian understanding of the inalienable and equal dignity of all human beings due to the *imago Dei* we possess. This reality has implanted the desire for recognition in every one of us. Keenan links our desires for recognition with our vulnerability as human beings. He joins other scholars in affirming that “vulnerability is pre-personal, constituting us as human and in God’s image.”<sup>88</sup> He argues further that we must remember that the early theologies of the images of God were not Christological but Trinitarian. “The Trinity as three persons in one God accentuates the “person” not as autonomous but as constituted by others. Like the Triune God, we are humans by our being connected to other persons. Our personhood derives from our vulnerable humanity.”<sup>89</sup> We, therefore, ought to recognise and respect every human being as such because vulnerability helps in establishing “the givenness of our connectivity.”<sup>90</sup> This is what the concept of *ubuntu* teaches.

Although *ubuntu* is not explicitly proclaimed in all African traditions, this notion is an intrinsic part of African customs and traditions, emphasising our interrelationship with others, and our interdependence. In African traditional custom, “a person is defined through

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<sup>86</sup> Sedmak, *Enacting Catholic Social Teaching*, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Gemma Tulud Cruz, “When the Poor Knock on Our Door: A Theological Response to Unwanted Migration,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 196.

<sup>88</sup> Keenan SJ., “Recognition” in *The Moral Life*, 38.

<sup>89</sup> Keenan SJ., “Recognition” in *The Moral Life*, 38.

<sup>90</sup> Keenan SJ., “Recognition” in *The Moral Life*, 38.

his or her relationship with other persons, not through an isolated quality of life.”<sup>91</sup> Like Christian anthropology, *ubuntu* begins with the person as a relational being and stresses interaction with others in the community and the natural environment as crucial for growth and development. Hence, Barbara Paterson’s assertion that “in African thought, the community [grows stronger and better] through the desire to help and support others, [it is through these] attitudes that the individual grows; personhood is developed, and personal freedom comes to being.”<sup>92</sup> Keenan expressed the same thought using theological anthropology. He maintains that we must consider the fact that our social bonds with others is ontological to our being; “therefore, the act of recognition will always somehow refract to this underlying prior state of us as connected.”<sup>93</sup> Our connectedness is the essence of *Ubuntu* philosophy: “I am because we are.” This statement shows that our interrelatedness is not limited to our family, ethnic group, race, geographical location, religious identity or political affiliation but extends to those different from us in all these distinctive features that tend to divide us.

We are connected not only to our ancestors and those in our immediate geographical locations but to all we will encounter in life’s journey.<sup>94</sup> Hence, Paddy McQueen’s definition of recognition as an awakening that leads to the identification of others and finally acknowledging them as human beings like us. “The philosophical and political notion of recognition,” he argues, “predominantly refers to the act of acknowledging and respecting another being, such as when we recognize their status, achievements, or rights... Recognition is not only an important means of valuing or respecting another person; it is also fundamental to understanding ourselves.”<sup>95</sup> When we recognize that the undocumented immigrants’ lives matter, we are not only giving them respect and compassion, but we are also dismantling the mindset and social structures that puts them in the precarious situation of being on the move. These negative social structures are masked by ethnicity, caste system, racism, nationalism and fundamentalism. Critical realists like Daniel Finn, Daniel Daly, Conor Kelly, and other ethicists remind us that we must not take the agency of such social structures for granted because they influence us positively or negatively. We need to recover our moral freedom and responsibility from the social impact of the negative mindsets in our world today by cultivating “the virtue of vigilance that prompts us to recognize more often, more clearly and more universally” our human condition in its vulnerability.<sup>96</sup> It is in

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<sup>91</sup> Barbara Paterson, “We Cannot Eat Data: The Need for Computer Ethics to Address the Cultural and Ecological Impacts of Computing,” in *Information Technology Ethics: Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Soraj Hongladarom and Charles Ess (Hershey, PA: Idea Reference, 2007), 153-68 at 157.

<sup>92</sup> Paterson, “We Cannot Eat Data,” 157-8.

<sup>93</sup> Keenan SJ., “Recognition” in *The Moral Life*, 38.

<sup>94</sup> Keenan SJ., “Recognition” in *The Moral Life*, 38.

<sup>95</sup> Paddy McQueen, “Social and Political Recognition,” in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, [https://www.iep.utm.edu/recog\\_sp/#SH3a](https://www.iep.utm.edu/recog_sp/#SH3a). Also see Keenan SJ., “Recognition” in *The Moral Life*, 41.

<sup>96</sup> See David J. Cloutier, “Cavanaugh and Grimes on Structural Evils of Violence and Race: Overcoming Conflicts in Contemporary Social Ethics,” *Journal of Society and Christian Ethics* 37, no. 2 (fall/Winter):59-78 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44987551>; Also see Daniel Daly, *The Structure of Virtue and Vice* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2021), 63-97, 92-93; See also Daniel Finn, ed., *Moral Agency within Social Structures and Culture: A Primer on Critical Realism for Christian Ethics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020); Finn What is Sinful Social Structure?” *Theological Studies* 77, no. 1 (2016):136-64; Conor Kelly, “Everyday Solidarity: A Framework for Integrating Theological Ethics and

recognising our vulnerability that we learn to give due recognition to those who need our assistance and to conscientiously respond to them with love and compassion.

### 3.2 Pope Francis on Human Dignity and “Good Politics”

The Church’s magisterial teaching on human dignity emphasises its essential and transcendent value.<sup>97</sup> Human dignity goes beyond the physical appearance of the human person and the circumstances of his or her life. It is an integral part of being human regardless of people’s background or social status. In *Dignitas Infinita*, the Church’s Dicastery for the Doctrines of Faith (DDF) teaches that: “Every human person possesses an infinite dignity, inalienably grounded in his or her very being, which prevails in and beyond every circumstance, state, or situation the person may ever encounter.”<sup>98</sup> It cautions against ambiguities that may contradict the Christian understanding and recognition of the equal dignity of all human beings. The Magisterium insists that the dignity of all persons should be “truly recognised, respected, protected and promoted in every situation.”<sup>99</sup> This is because human dignity, as David G. Kirchhoffer argues, is an inviolable, universal moral good – meaning that the goodness of human dignity is an end in itself. Kirchhoffer builds his argument on Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative, insisting that “a human person should always be treated as an end and never as a means.”<sup>100</sup> This is one of the challenges of the migrant crisis.

Research has revealed that many migrants are not seen and treated as ends in themselves. They are treated as “disposable elements” or “unwanted aliens” in some cases.<sup>101</sup> The activities of the smugglers at the borders, drug and human traffickers, transporters of cargo ships, trains, and other means of smuggling undocumented immigrants and the humiliation they endure all attest to this assertion. There are also those running some form of “modern slave trade” where young women are deceived into prostitution in foreign countries. These are concrete examples of the sad reality of maltreatment and violation of people’s dignity in the context of migration. People’s vulnerability resulting from poverty and lack of job opportunities in their home countries is being used against them, hence, the unprecedented migration crisis.

The humiliating experience of some immigrants indicates that more needs to be done regarding the recognition, respect, preservation and promotion of people’s dignity in all circumstances. There is an urgent need to combat all activities that threaten, dehumanise or violate the dignity of migrants and their fundamental human rights. Hence, the need for

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Ordinary Life,” *Theological Studies* 81, no. 2. (2020):414-37; Also see Keenan SJ., “Recognition” in *The Moral Life*, 51-2.

<sup>97</sup> Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (Hereafter DDF), *Dignitas Infinita*, (April 2, 2024), no. 7. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_ddf\\_doc\\_20240402\\_dignitas-infinita\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_ddf_doc_20240402_dignitas-infinita_en.html)

<sup>98</sup> DDF, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 1.

<sup>99</sup> DDF, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 7.

<sup>100</sup> Kirchhoffer, *Human Dignity in Contemporary Ethics*, 67.

<sup>101</sup> See Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 19 and 20.

better politics because “politicians,” according to Pope Francis, “are called to tend to the needs of individuals and peoples; and it takes strength and tenderness, effort and generosity” to help those seeking asylum, refugees, forced migrants or temporary migrants to live dignified lives. It becomes more difficult “in the midst of a functionalistic and privatised mindset that inexorably leads to a ‘throwaway culture.’”<sup>102</sup> Helping those disadvantaged because of their poor economic background “involves taking responsibility for the present [moment] with its situations of utter marginalisation and anguish, and being capable of bestowing dignity upon it.”<sup>103</sup> Where there is leadership and good governance, people are given the dignity and respect they deserve to flourish. Unfortunately, a major factor contributing to the migrant crisis is failed leadership and bad governance in most countries of the Global South. To correct this, we need the right conception of human dignity and the role of politics in protecting every human person from all forms of harm. This has been the concern of CST, explored in this research through the principle of “good politics” and its twin pillars of contributive justice and the common good.

In explaining why human dignity is an end in itself, *Dignitas Infinita* distinguishes four categories of dignity: ontological, moral, social, and existential. The document maintains that ontological dignity is the most important because it “belongs to the person as such, simply because he or she exists and is willed, created and loved by God. Ontological dignity is indelible and remains valid beyond any circumstances in which the person may find themselves.”<sup>104</sup> According to this magisterial teaching, “moral dignity refers to how people exercise their freedom. While people are endowed with conscience, they can always act against it. However, were they to do so, they would behave in a way that is ‘not dignified’ concerning their nature as creatures who are loved by God and called to love others.”<sup>105</sup> It is important to note that human freedom has been misused in the history of humanity to commit dehumanising acts against others. It is being abused today in the migrant crisis and “those who act this way,” according to *Dignitas Infinita*, “seem to have lost any trace of humanity and dignity. This is where the present distinction can help us discern between the moral dignity that *de facto* can be ‘lost’ and the ontological dignity that can never be annulled. And it is precisely because of the latter point that we must work with all our might so that all those who have done evil may repent and convert.”<sup>106</sup> We all need conversion to make the world a better place. This is the reason for the incarnation – God the Son taking our human nature. He came to reconcile us to God the Father and to one another. He took our human nature to transform and redeem humanity and the world.

The other two categories of human dignity are social and existential dignity. *Dignitas Infinita* teaches that social dignity refers to the quality of a people’s living conditions – what gives them an advantage or disadvantage over others. Cases of extreme poverty, where

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<sup>102</sup> See Pope Francis, *Address to the European Parliament*, Strasbourg (25 November 2014) AAS 106 (2014), 999 and *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 188.

<sup>103</sup> See Pope Francis, *Address to the European Parliament*, 999; and *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 188.

<sup>104</sup> DDF, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 7.

<sup>105</sup> DDF, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 7.

<sup>106</sup> DDF, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 7.

people cannot have the necessities to live according to their ontological dignity, would be good examples of social indignity. The privileges some people enjoy often make them look down on the less privileged. Indeed, there are many people in the world today who are living in an ‘undignified’ manner because of poverty and lack of employment. The circumstances of their lives and their living conditions make them more vulnerable to harm that contradicts their inalienable dignity.<sup>107</sup> This is one of the push factors of the migrant crisis explored in Chapter Two. To nip the crisis in the bud, the problem of poverty and unemployment must be tackled adequately. There is a need for a collective attitude that promotes greater equality and justice for all people. And this is inevitably connected to politics and leadership. Our political or civil leaders are supposed to create job opportunities for their citizens and provide grants for those without jobs to cushion the effects of poverty. Pope Francis maintains that we cannot claim “economic freedom while real conditions bar many people from actual access to it, and while possibilities for employment continue to shrink.”<sup>108</sup> Many people are on the move because they are looking for better opportunities for human flourishing, economically and otherwise.

This brings us to existential dignity, distinguishing between a ‘dignified’ life and one short of such description because of circumstances. The Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith concretises this distinction: “while some people may appear to lack nothing essential for life, for various reasons, they may still struggle to live with peace, joy, and hope. In other situations, the presence of serious illnesses, violent family environments, pathological addictions, and other hardships may drive people to experience their life conditions as ‘undignified’ vis-à-vis their perception of ontological dignity that can never be obscured.”<sup>109</sup> The point here is that ontologically, human dignity has an inalienable value that is rooted in the very being of the human person in all circumstances because of the *imago Dei*. This should not be mistaken for the moral, social and existential dimension of dignity, which circumstances may obscure. We cannot adequately address the migrant crisis without protecting and promoting the equal dignity of every human person. This involves politics, leadership, good governance, and international relations. Hence, the Holy Father’s call for “good politics” as enshrined in political love and social friendship.

### 3.2.1 What is “Good Politics”?

“Good politics” combines two Anglo-Saxon words to form a unit. The *Oxford English Dictionary online* defines “good” as the most general adjective of commendation. That is to say, “good,” as a concept, is an adjective that conveys a range of meanings: it could mean having the normally expected amount of what is needed or deserving of esteem and respect. It could also mean having desirable or positive qualities suitable for a specific thing, office or job. In other words, “good” could mean morally admirable qualities or moral excellence which promotes or enhances well-being. It is “that which is beneficial, advantageous,

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<sup>107</sup> DDF, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 7.

<sup>108</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, 129 and *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 110.

<sup>109</sup> DDF, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 8.

favourable, just, upright, or righteous.”<sup>110</sup> The attempt to define “good” in the above analysis reveals that the concept is better understood in terms of functionality. It conveys a verdict that something is desirable and worthy of approval. The Austrian Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein is quoted as arguing: “Don’t ask for the meaning of the word – ‘good’ but ask for the use.”<sup>111</sup> Understanding the word “good” in “good politics” is crucial to how CST responds to the migrant crisis through its principles.

Theologically, it was in all the above understanding of “good” as a concept that Genesis 1:31 states, “And God saw everything that He made, and behold, it was *very good*.” Some Scripture scholars have maintained that this text of Genesis portrays that “this world was only *good* until human beings were created and giving dominion over all that was placed upon it, then it became *very good*. This verdict, too, had respect for humanity as special species with serious responsibilities attendant upon the bestowal of the freewill” to make choices concerning God, other human beings, all creation and themselves.<sup>112</sup> This implies that, at creation, God made everything good and intends that the goodness in all that He has created is preserved for human flourishing in this world as we prepare for eternal life at the Parousia.

The concept of eternal life also implies that “there is *a good* greater than all goods or that there is *a good* which is the essence of all goods. Some interpreters equate ‘the *good* that is greater than all goods’ with Plato’s idea of God.”<sup>113</sup> And the idea of acknowledging God as the *highest good* is reflected in Jesus’ conversation with the young rich man, who wanted to know what it takes to inherit eternal life (Matthew 19:16-22). The young man approached Jesus and said: “Teacher, what *good deed* must I do, to have eternal life?” Jesus’ response points at God as the *highest good*: “Why do you ask me about what is *good*?” He said to the young rich man; “One there is who is *good*.” This signifies that every good thing in this life reflects the goodness of God that is supposed to be projected and promoted by all human beings because we are created in his image and likeness. God, in his perfection, created a very good and flawless world in beauty, function, purpose, and potential until after the fall

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<sup>110</sup> See *Wordweb*, <https://wordweb.info>. Accessed, April 4, 2024.

<sup>111</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, quoted by Helen Oppenheimer, “Good” in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1983), 242-3.

<sup>112</sup> See “Expository” in *Ellicott’s Bible Commentary for English Readers and “Exegetical (Original Languages)”* in *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Bible Hub, <https://biblehub.com>commentary>genesis>1-31> Accessed April 16, 2024. The exegetical commentary in *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* elucidates what Genesis 1:31 is saying, thus: “The work of the six days’ Creation having been completed, God, as it were, contemplates the universe both in its details and in its entirety. That which He saw to be “good,” on each separate day, was but a fragment; that which He sees to be “very good,” on the sixth day, is the vast ordered whole, in which the separate parts are combined. The Divine approval of the material universe constitutes one of the most instructive traits of the Hebrew cosmogony. According to it, matter is not something hostile to God, independent of Him, or inherently evil, but made by Him, ordered by Him, good in itself, and good in its relation to the purpose and plan of the Creator. The adjective “good” should not therefore be limited in meaning to the sense of “suitable,” or “fitting.” There is nothing “evil” in the Divinely created universe: it is “very good” (LXX *καλὰ λίαν*: Latin: *valde bona*)” (See “Exegetical [Original Languages]” in *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*).

<sup>113</sup> Bernard L. Ramm, *The Christian in A World of Distorted Values: The Right, The Good, and the Happy* (Waco, Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1971), 52.

of humanity.<sup>114</sup> There are many consequences of the fall of humanity. The struggle between good and evil choices is theologically attributed to the primordial fall of humanity. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that we do not need to analyse “good” as merely the expression of liking or approval but as a concept that guides choices.<sup>115</sup> Bernard. L. Ramm draws attention to this theological conjecture when he asserts that:

In the Middle Ages the *summum bonum*, [which means] ‘highest good,’ stood for people’s vision of God. It (*Summum bonum*) has since then become a handier term to indicate what the final or supreme good is in [philosophical and theological] ethics. Whatever is the best or the highest or the noblest in moral philosophy [or Christian anthropology/morality] is its *summum bonum*. Hence, if a philosopher thinks that the essence of ethics is duty, doing one’s duty is the *summum bonum*. If love is the supreme Christian virtue, then love is the Christian *summum bonum*.<sup>116</sup>

This theological and ethical understanding of “good” is important because of the temporality of our earthly existence. It also helps guide people’s choices regarding the role assigned to each person by the Creator for our collective temporary well-being.

As an adjectival modifier of a noun, “good” is attributive. It gives room for each decision or choice to get a verdict as either good or bad, right or wrong, and productive or destructive.<sup>117</sup> In this sense, “good” is not only what is morally good but also whatever can be understood to be truly perfective of human persons, while evil or bad constitutes whatever deprives human persons of their perfection or fullness of being. This brings us to one of the traditional tasks of ethics, which is the relationship of our choices or decisions to our end. Therefore, the starting point of ethical reasoning is that “good” is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided. This means that every intelligent, creative and purposeful human activity is ethically aimed at human flourishing.<sup>118</sup> Due to the multiplicity of its function, “good” as an adjective of modifier, is ethically used to make a distinction between various relationships of serviceability or utility, satisfaction of needs and what is intrinsically valuable to humanity.<sup>119</sup>

More objectively, “good” could denote the ultimate end at which we must aim our actions: an intrinsically valuable state, philosophically identified with *eudaemonia*, which means a contented state of being happy, healthy and prosperous. It draws attention to why the relationship between purely private good and social good is determined by all those living

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<sup>114</sup> See BibleRef.com, <https://bibleref.com>Genesis>Genesis-1-31> Accessed April 16, 2024.

<sup>115</sup> Helen Oppenheimer, “Good” in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 243.

<sup>116</sup> Ramm, *The Christian in A World of Distorted Values*, 52.

<sup>117</sup> Simon Blackburn, “Good,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Second Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016 [Current Online Version]). DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199541430.001.001. See also <https://www.oxfordreference.com>display>authority....> Accessed, April 23, 2024.

<sup>118</sup> Germain Grisez, *Christian Moral Principles* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 179. Also see, William E. May, “The Natural Law and Moral Life” in *An Introduction to Moral Theology*, Second Edition, (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitors, 2003), 71-140; and Robert Hofmann, “Good,” in *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics* ed. Bernhard Stoeckle (London: Burns & Oates, 1979), 115-18.

<sup>119</sup> Hofmann, “Good,” in *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 115.

together in various communities.<sup>120</sup> The Scriptural passage of Genesis sheds light on this point when, at creation, God is quoted to have said, “it is not good that the man should live alone; I will make him a helper fit for him” (Gen. 2:18). We were created as relational beings, and we were not meant to live in isolation. Living together and fulfilling the purpose of our creation requires good choices and decisions. This understanding of “good” will guide our definition of “good politics.” It will also help draw some ethical implications of what “good politics” means for the migrant crisis. Let us now look at the concept of “politics” since we have extensively established the concept of “good” theologically and ethically.

Politics is a concept that originated from the Ancient Greek word *Politika*, which means affairs of the cities. It is derived from its Greek root *polis*, which means “city.” Politics was associated with the affairs of the Greek city-state, which was small enough to permit face-to-face discussions among all its citizens. It eventually became a public forum and a decision-making process regarding the distribution of resources and status in the state.<sup>121</sup> *Polis*, in this context, highlights “the community of those sharing goals, interests, experience, and a worldview.”<sup>122</sup> This means that “politics have a temporal dimension in the field of action, and these actions occur in time and have temporal extension that are temporarily ordered. In other words, politics has a historical dimension in that the actions that define it are temporarily unique events that are datable, perceivable, and can be described and analysed as part of a single narrative.”<sup>123</sup> This implies that politics contributes to the social, cultural, and economic welfare of every member of the political community. Could this explain why Otto Von Bismarch (1815-1898) sees “politics as the capacity of always choosing at each instant, in constantly changing situations?”<sup>124</sup> Could it be the reason for his suggestion that people should concentrate on “the least harmful, and the most useful option” in their choices during electioneering politics?

The historical and cultural dynamism of politics is the reason why political scientists would say that politics is grounded in the nature of the society in which it takes place. Thus, the nature of politics in any society is largely determined by the values which govern behaviour in the public realm.<sup>125</sup> This means that running for office(s) is only an aspect of politics that

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<sup>120</sup> Simon Blackburn, “Good,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*.

<sup>121</sup> Richard P. McBrien, “The Church and Politics” in *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008), 257. Also see Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (London: Continuum, 2005).

<sup>122</sup> Anthony J. Godzieba, “Who is the ‘Polis’ Addressed by Political Theology? Notes on a Conundrum,” *Theological Studies* 80, no. 4 (2019): 879-96 at 880.

<sup>123</sup> Hans Sluga, “The Historization of Politics,” in *Politics and the Search for the Common Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 67.

<sup>124</sup> Otto Von Bismarch, Reichstag Speech by Bismarch, January 29, 1886, Quoted by Wilhelm Schubler ed., in *Bismarch: The Collected Works*, Friedrichsruher edition, vol.13, (Berlin: Friedrichsruher 1930), 177.

<sup>125</sup> Alasdair Macintyre opines that “Political theory is among the most demanding of the humanistic discipline because the habits of political thought vary from one nationality to another.” Therefore, we need to be conscious of the differences in political cultures regarding what is taken for granted and what is not for a contextual application of political theories to issues affecting humanity globally. (See “Forward” in Emile Perreau-Saussine, *Catholicism and democracy: An Essay in History of Political Thought* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), vii.) See also J. O. Toluhi, *Basic Questions and Answers in IJMB/ ‘A’ Level Government Vol. 1*. (Ilorin: Victory Publication, 1998) 1.

leads to the formation of a government in different countries and regions. An understanding of politics that is limited to vying for office, voting, election, and the emergence of political leadership could mislead many people into thinking that politics is a dirty game that should be avoided by decent people. It becomes more difficult to view politics positively when elected political leaders become corrupt, dishonest, and are negligent of the common good in the discharge of their duties. The failures of most political leaders to deliver the dividends of good leadership has created the impression that “politics is the art of governing humanity by deceiving them.”<sup>126</sup> Hence, the dissatisfaction of many people with the concept of politics in the context of political leadership and governance. Bill Clinton, the 42<sup>nd</sup> president of the United States of America, argues that politics, in the sense of running for offices, “is a getting business. You must get support, contributions, and votes, repeatedly, which places a responsibility on you to serve the people well for a fair trade.”<sup>127</sup> Clinton is rightly saying that politics, even in the context of vying for leadership position, is not supposed to be deceptive or manipulative, but an opportunity for selfless service to humanity.

Harold Lasswell (1902-1978) and David Easton (1917-2014) provide a critical contextual insight into the concept of politics. They link the concept to its root meaning and relate it to a decision-making process in distributing goods, services, and status in society.<sup>128</sup> For instance, Lasswell defines politics as “Who gets what, when and how?” His definition has been commended by many scholars for its attempt to see politics even in social settings and its emphasis on the allocation of values and status within a defined political community. His definition also carries the concept of decision-making and an element of struggle concerning the specific objectives desired by the state and its citizens - a key issue regarding the distribution of scarce resources in society.<sup>129</sup> Easton, on his part, is said to have defined politics as “The authoritative allocation of values in the society.”<sup>130</sup> A view that links politics with the production and distribution of values and resources. Many take this aspect of politics for granted when they refuse to participate in the political process that forms the government whose decisions will eventually affect them. Viewing politics through the lens of Lasswell and Easton helps people participate actively in the decision-making process, determining their well-being and that of future generations. In other words, lack of active participation in politics means we are literally allowing other people to decide what happens to us and how we live our lives going forward.

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<sup>126</sup> Isaac D’Israeli, quoted by Bernard Crick, in *In Defence of Politics* (London: Continuum, 2005), 2.

<sup>127</sup> Bill Clinton, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), ix.

<sup>128</sup> See J. O. Toluhi., *Basic Questions and Answers in IJMB/ ‘A’ Level Government Vol. 1*. (Ilorin: Victory Publication, 1998) 1. The definitions of Politics by David Easton, and Harold Lasswell, and the brief analysis of each definition are adapted from Toluhi’s work with little modification by me to drive home my argument and definition of “good politics.”

<sup>129</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1936), Cited by Amy E Black, “Christian Witness in the Public Square” in *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Amy E. Black (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2015), 218.

<sup>130</sup> See David Easton, *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), OCLC 781301164.

From our analysis of the concept of “politics” so far, we have identified its indispensability and interconnectedness with terms such as interest, consent, state, authority, power, leadership, struggle, regulation, negotiation, acquiring, allocation, distribution, dialogue and decision-making.<sup>131</sup> All these concepts are given relevance in the realm of politics by the people to whom power belongs when it comes to dialogue and negotiations on decisions to be taken about the way forward in their community, state, or nation. This is what the idea of universal participation in the distribution of power and responsibility in society is emphasising, especially with the growing influence of democracy and democratization.<sup>132</sup> This means that politics is not limited to the political activities and decisions of the professional politician(s); “it covers every form of self-determination and co-determination in the community, so that ultimately every sort of socially relevant activity, even in a restricted circle, can be labelled ‘political.’”<sup>133</sup> In other words, political action involves active participation by the people when considerations are made about political leadership, moral values, the welfare of the people, and the possibilities of structural and institutional growth and development in any political community.<sup>134</sup> This makes politics a crucial business for every political community, without which some may be marginalised; their voices silenced, and their needs ignored.

For politics to be good, it must create avenues for active participation in the negotiating process through which leadership emerges, and welfare packages and statuses are allocated for the good of the community. This makes politics indispensable in handling the migrant crisis. Without active participation in the political dialogue engendering the crisis by all those affected, it may be difficult to find a reasonable solution. Political participation, according to Meghan J. Clark, is a right and a duty that is morally complex because political decisions are bounded choices that are not very simple or ethically perfect.<sup>135</sup> This explains why this study is specifically interested in “good politics” as both a theological and ethical response to the migrant crisis from the Catholic social tradition.

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<sup>131</sup> Douglas Sturm and some political scientists argue that “It is impossible to give a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of the term “politics” which would then yield an unambiguous and uncontroversial definition. This is so for two interconnected reasons: The first is that the term is complex, there are a wide range of criteria which go to make up this complexity, and not all these criteria have to be satisfied to justify the identification of a particular action or event as political. Secondly, the judgement about which criteria are relevant and the relative importance of all criteria and their ordering in relation to one another is not independent of political and ideological preferences. To emphasize one criterion as against another will yield a different conception of politics, its scope and place in human life. That is to say, the selection and ordering of the criteria which then define a particular sphere as political is itself a politically salient action in that the criteria are selected and ordered in relation to the more general social, metaphysical, religious, and political beliefs of the other actors.” This being the case, our attempt at defining politics in this research acknowledges the difficulties in finding a single universally acceptable definition. We are working with a few conceptions to help contextualize our definition of “good politics” which emphasises one as opposed to other scope and nature of politics. (For some elaborate definition of the concept of Politics, See Douglas Sturm, “Politics” in *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. John Macquarrie and James Childress (London: SMC Press, 1986), 483-5).

<sup>132</sup> Dietmar Mieth, “Politics” in *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. Bernhard Stoeckle (London: Burns and Oates, 1979), 200.

<sup>133</sup> Mieth, “Politics” in *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 200.

<sup>134</sup> Mieth, “Politics” in *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 201.

<sup>135</sup> Meghan J. Clark, “Good Politics,” *U.S. Catholic*, October 2022, 41.

What, then, is “good politics”? The adjective “good” is attached to “politics” to stress productive and morally admirable politics. It is the kind of politics that promotes and enhances the well-being of the people. The kind of beneficial, advantageous, favourable, just, upright, or righteous politics required for human flourishing. Good politics is guided by a theological understanding of “good” and an ethical attitude or character that makes politics inventive, flexible, open-minded, resourceful, and productive for the well-being of the state and its inhabitants. It covers a wide range of important issues and human agencies – “elected officials, government bureaucrats, representatives of business, labour, and special interest groups who are competing in the political arena, raising their concerns as they make collective decisions” regarding the state of the nation.<sup>136</sup> It creates a sense of community where legislation is governed by the people's will and needs.

Good politics avoids the slavery of nationalistic ideologies and creates an avenue where members of the political community contribute to proffering solutions to the challenges affecting them. It concentrates on enhancing the welfare of the state's inhabitants and tries to prevent the cruelties and deceptions of ideological and tyrannical rule.<sup>137</sup> This requires active participation, courage, and persistence from all members of the political community consisting of people from different backgrounds, interests, opinions, genders, beliefs, races, ethnicities, and ages. Good politics is centred on actively participating in the political process of deciding what values we uphold. It empowers the people to take responsibility for their decisions and actions as a human family, either collectively or through their representatives. For politics to be good, there must be equal opportunities for all members of the community to contribute to the decisions that will affect their lives directly or indirectly.<sup>138</sup>

Good politics brings transparency and accountability in leadership for the benefit of all members of the political community. It focuses on helping those on the margins of society, those caught up in what Pope Francis calls the “throwaway culture.”<sup>139</sup> It can transform the world when it is guided by the virtues of selfless service, charity, justice, compassion, empathy, benevolence, humility, and prudence. Pope Francis says, “good politics combines love with hope and confidence” in the service of humanity.<sup>140</sup> According to the Holy Father, good politics is “built upon respect for law and frank dialogue that is constantly renewed whenever there is a realization that every woman and man, and every new generation, brings the promise of new rational, intellectual, cultural and spiritual energies.”<sup>141</sup> This means that good politics helps investigate, pacify, reconcile, and influence the diverse range of interests

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<sup>136</sup> Amy E. Black, “Christian Witness in Public Square,” in *Five Views on the Church and Politics*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Amy E. Black (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2015), 218.

<sup>137</sup> Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (London: Continuum, 2005), 114.

<sup>138</sup> Hajer Sharief, “How to Use Family Dinner to Teach Politics,” Filmed 2019 at TEDSummit 2019, <http://www.ted.com/talks/hajer-sharief-how-to-use-family-dinner-to-teach-politics?language=> Accessed May 17, 2024.

<sup>139</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 188; and Clark, “Good Politics,” 41

<sup>140</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 196.

<sup>141</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 196. See also the Pope's 2019 Message for the World Day of Peace (8 December 2018), 5: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 19 December 2018, 8.

within a community, state, or nation for the common good. It is also a good approach to resolving the migrant crisis.

The root meaning of “politics” and the definitions highlighted above reveal that good politics is a dialogue, conversation, negotiation, and discernment among citizens regarding their city, state, or nation. Such dialogue or conversation is inevitably supposed to be centred on the well-being of the inhabitants of the city, state, or nation, and they are also crucial for the growth and development of both the citizens and their city, state, or nation. This view is historically associated with Aristotle and Cicero. It is defended by Bernard Crick, whose scholarship is on the significance of politics to the human family. He wrote *In Defence of Politics*, attempting to restore confidence in politics, which he refers to as a virtue.<sup>142</sup> Crick observes that:

Politics is rarely praised as something with a life and character of its own. Politics is not religion, ethics, law, science, history, or economics; it neither solves everything, nor is present everywhere; and it is not any political doctrine, such as conservatism, liberalism, socialism, communism, or nationalism, though it contains elements of most of these things. Politics is politics, to be valued as itself, not because it is ‘like’ or ‘really is’ something else more respectable or peculiar.<sup>143</sup>

Crick is attempting to disabuse people’s minds from the strict and narrow association of the concept of politics with some ideologies, corrupt practices, flawed legalism, exploitative economic principles, or any form of religion. He is also trying to avoid the overambitious hope people attribute to politics without considering humanity's role in making it work for the common good.

Additionally, Crick’s argument about the concept of “politics” aligns with Pope Francis’s use of “good politics,” which indicates that it is our collective responsibility to make politics serve the needs of humanity. The Pope teaches that “our world cannot function without politics and there can be no effective process of growth towards universal fraternity and social peace without a sound political life.”<sup>144</sup> Therefore, we need “good politics” for a better relationship across borders. “Good politics” re-echoes the call of the Prophet Isaiah: “Come let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18). The prophet, who is the mouthpiece of God, invites the people for a dialogue that may help discover the source of their problems in need of corrections. “Good politics” initiates a political process in resolving the migrant crisis, which creates space for all relevant stakeholders “to reason together.” It should aim to improve the lives of people in every political community.

Theologically, politics, like everything in our fallen world, is broken and incomplete without the grace of God. Therefore, it needs to be hallowed or purified through the active

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<sup>142</sup> Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, 1. Some social ethicists also see politics as a noble vocation. See Clark, “Good Politics,” 41).

<sup>143</sup> Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, 1-2.

<sup>144</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 176.

participation of those empowered by the grace of God to work for the welfare of humanity. This dimension of the theology of grace in politics is based on the presupposition that “no sphere of human action should be viewed as off the limits of grace.”<sup>145</sup> This is what the incarnation and earthly ministry of Jesus Christ reveals in the Sacred Scriptures: His encounter with Levi (Matthew) and Zacchaeus, the tax collectors (Luke 5:27-32; 19:1-10), indicates that all spheres of human existence, need the grace of God for transformation and proper functionality. Hence, all those with a rich heritage of Christian political thought, good characters, genuine desires for the common good, and responsible leadership qualities should contribute to shaping public policy that could resolve the migrant crisis. Pope Francis’ qualification of the concept of politics with the adjective “good” is a recommendation for people to embrace the kind of politics that is good for all humanity. The Holy Father is concerned about the role of politics in “recalibrating and reorienting globalization in order to avoid its disruptive effect,” already manifest in the global migrant crisis.<sup>146</sup> “Good politics” is considered a viable option for addressing the root causes of the migrant crisis because it brings all relevant stakeholders into negotiation about the drivers and challenges of the crisis. It also creates an avenue for negotiating the way forward.

Furthermore, the concept of “good politics” indicates that not all politics are good. Unsurprisingly, many people already associate politics with deception, corruption, manipulation, and some ideological struggles. Such negative impressions about politics worsen when there is a breach of trust and misuse or abuse of constitutional power by those in authority. MacIntyre and Riordan have expressed dissatisfaction with modern politics and the contemporary nation-state due to the “inherent inhospitality of modern politics towards virtue and the virtuous life.”<sup>147</sup> This inhospitality is one of the reasons for the migrant crisis in this twenty-first century. Any politics that weaponizes poverty and does not work for the common good elicits ethical questions about its credibility. Politics must consider the plight of the masses and work towards empowering the people for a better and healthier life.

Lack of empowerment and provision of the means for better livelihood is one of the reasons for the excess migration of people in this contemporary era to the Global North. The problem is attributed to the lack of good governance in the Global South. This, according to Pope Francis, has made “Politics [a] ...distasteful word due to the mistakes, corruption, and inefficiency of some politicians...”<sup>148</sup> This experience led Crick to disassociate the concept of politics from any form of ideology and insist that politics should be seen as politics and not as any form of government or ideological struggle. The misconception many people have about politics results from the mismanagement of resources by elected government officials. Many political leaders forget that they are stewards entrusted with managing the

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<sup>145</sup> Peter Hassan Kamai, *The Christian in Public Square* (Jos, Nigeria: Fab Anieh Printing Press, 2017), xii.

<sup>146</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 182.

<sup>147</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Third Edition, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 255-6. See Riordan, *A Politics of the Common Good* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1996), 66.

<sup>148</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 176. See also Social Commission of the Bishops of France, *Declaration Rehabilitier la Politique* (17 February 1999).

community or state or nation's resources for the common good. This is why corruption has become a big issue in politics and governance today. This shows that politics is what we make of it - we can either make it good or bad. Hence, the call for "good politics" in addressing the migrant crisis. Riordan supports this submission, suggesting that we must preserve a role for the common good in the political life of modern states to restore confidence in a politics that is good.<sup>149</sup> Any politics that does not promote the common good fails to achieve its purpose.

Adopting Pope John Paul II's idea of authentic democracy, this study argues that "good politics" is possible when the rule of law is upheld for the good of all in the society and where there is "a correct conception of the human person."<sup>150</sup> This conception requires the development of the capacity of every individual person through education and formation in the true ideals of the common good, as well as the creation of efficient structures of participation and shared responsibility in every political community. "Good politics" can help recalibrate the adverse effect of bad governance that has led to the migrant crisis.

### **3.3 What "Good Politics" Means for the Migrant Crisis**

Political thinkers like Cicero believed that the practice of politics could be improved by good theory. He also believed that bad politics could be saved by good theory.<sup>151</sup> The theoretical position of this research, therefore, is the ambitious hope that "good politics" would be embraced by humanity to boost political dialogue through which the challenges of the global migration crisis could be resolved or minimised. "Good politics" facilitates dialogue that leads to discernment on how to address critical issues; it also encourages collaboration among people in formulating, promoting and implementing favourable policies that will benefit members of every political community. This means that, in responding to the migrant crisis, "good politics" will create avenues for dialogue and negotiation between migrants, their home countries and their host communities. It will also help identify the root causes of the crisis and lead to better ways of addressing them. This is not an easy task because of the very dynamic nature of politics in different socio-cultural milieu. This research suggests four important ethical consequences of "good politics" to the migrant crisis: (1) Upholding and safeguarding the dignity of every migrant; (2) Ensuring that the basic rights of every migrant in the society are respected and protected by the rule of law; (3) Advancing the virtue of social justice, through accountability and transparency in political leadership, and the provision of job opportunities and good governance in every political community; and (4) Applying the virtues of charity and prudence in electing our representatives into leadership positions and in handling the migrant crisis.

With "good politics, migrants could be seen an asset in founding new communities or cities with a decline in population and labour force due to birth control and an aging population.

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<sup>149</sup> Riordan, *A Politics of the Common Good*, 66.

<sup>150</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 46.

<sup>151</sup> See Moryam VanOpstal, *An Ancient Guide to Good Politics: A Literary and Ethical Reading of Cicero's De Republica* (London: Lexington Books, 2023), 2.

Alternatively, they could also be empowered and helped to return to their home countries better than how they came to their host communities, especially when it is safe to do so. This is because “good politics” is people-oriented and is centred on human flourishing. Thus, it would advocate respect for the dignity of every human person, which is crucial for the actualisation of love and social friendship across borders. This is why the Church’s social tradition supports democratic systems of government, where power should ordinarily belong to the people and not their representatives in government. In *De Republica*, Cicero explores human and political life that draws together virtue and wisdom, politics and philosophy in navigating existential challenges like the migrant crisis. He insightfully argues that there is constantly the need to establish new cities or preserve existing ones.<sup>152</sup> This postulation sets us on the path to concretising what “good politics” means to the migrant crisis regarding settlement and empowerment. “Good politics” facilitates the establishment of new communities that could adequately accommodate migrants and allow them to contribute to the economy of their host community, or country or preserve the ones already founded and help migrants to integrate properly. Rajendra substantiates this point by maintaining that migration is rooted in geopolitics of interdependence, and the underlying anthropology of migration is that the human person is profoundly a social being capable of agency. She advocates for justice and not benevolence for all migrants, especially the less privileged.<sup>153</sup>

There are established migrant and refugee communities in some parts of the globe that could serve as the paradigms of what “good politics” means for the migrant crisis. The cases of Kukuma on the Kenyan border with Sudan and Ethiopia, Dollo Ado on the Ethiopian border with Somalia, Nakivale in the Ugandan border with Tanzania and the numerous migrants who have established themselves in the UK, US, Europe and different parts of the world are good examples of the consequences of “good politics” to the migrant crisis. These examples show that migrants are engaged in different economic activities, social works, leadership roles, healthcare services, pastoral ministry, military intelligence and managerial positions due to the political will, infrastructure, comparative advantage, socio-cultural applicability and external support they are receiving from the region, their host communities, and international organisations.<sup>154</sup> By contrast, there are also casualties of unjust immigration policies and practices resulting in considerable border deaths and a web of smuggling activities, prolonged family separation, harmful raids, and the creation of underprivileged groups. Commitment to being hospitable to the vulnerable and fostering solidarity would be the response of CST. This is already manifest in pastoral care, social services for immigrant populations, and advocacy for humane immigration reform in the US and other countries.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> See Cicero, *De Republica*, 1.12 As quoted by Moryam VanOpstal, *An Ancient Guide to Good Politics*, 4.

<sup>153</sup> Tisha Rajendra, “Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Rights of Migrants,” *Political Theology*, 15 no. 4 (July 2014): 290-306 at 292-3. DOI 10.1179/1462317X13Z.000000007

<sup>154</sup> See Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, ix; See also Alexander Betts, “Building Borderland Economies,” in *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced People Can Build Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 293-320.

<sup>155</sup> Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration: Good Fences Make Bad Neighbours,” *Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (May 2010): 410-36 at 410.

“Good politics” is a key factor in strengthening hospitality and solidarity with migrants and appreciating their socio-economic contribution in any part of the globe. The following reasons support this assertion: Firstly, politics shapes the regulatory environment where migrants contribute economically. Migrants must have the right to work, mobility, and property rights to settle and function well in their host communities. Then, they can transform their host communities with their cultural values, technical skills, entrepreneurship and professionalism.<sup>156</sup>

Secondly, politics also influence investments and businesses. This means that government commitment to the socio-economic integration of migrants is a *sine qua non* for investment opportunities where migrants are predominant. It helps the private sector to perceive investment risk differently and encourages people to establish businesses in such locations. In other words, the government's role in creating a conducive atmosphere for accepting migrants is important because of the high risk of investment in remote areas or newfound communities. Security challenges, limited infrastructure, and the absence of government agencies and institutions exist in such areas.<sup>157</sup>

Thirdly, politics also coordinates the provision of public goods and services. This means that “good politics” is required for the equitable distribution of goods and services in the political community. The absence of some of these goods and services is the reason for migration and the migrant crisis. Without “good politics,” delivering even externally funded projects will be difficult.<sup>158</sup> Therefore, “good politics” is key to delivering quality education, reliable healthcare services, internal security, infrastructural development and macroeconomic management. All these could help in mitigating the migrant crisis.

“Good politics” also subscribes to the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, which are important in delivering public goods and services to the nooks and crannies of every community. This situation calls for a better working relationship between the national, state and local governments, considering the dynamics of these three tiers of government and their roles in attending to the needs of the people. It could be argued that in cities, empowering migrants would mean ensuring their inclusion within existing socio-economic structures and building viable socio-economic structures in remote border regions in rural areas.<sup>159</sup> Betts and other scholars have suggested that host communities would gain so much economically when migrants are included within their socio-economic development strategies. Migrants bring greater international attention, additional labour force, and expanded markets to their host communities. “Good politics” is needed to coordinate and concretise what they bring on board. This implies a moral obligation on established privileged political communities to accommodate, assist and protect migrants from any threat to their dignity. They are to help them integrate and flourish in these communities.

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<sup>156</sup> Betts, “Building Borderland Economies,” 304.

<sup>157</sup> Betts, “Building Borderland Economies,” 304.

<sup>158</sup> Betts, “Building Borderland Economies,” 304.

<sup>159</sup> Betts, “Building Borderland Economies,” 304.

The historian John Higham credited the success of the US to the integration of immigrants, who desired to share in the nation's life, in the nineteenth century and the willingness of Americans not to demand too much from them. Instead, the US "trusted in the ordinary processes of a free society to meld many people into one."<sup>160</sup> For instance, Latino and Asian American communities in Denver are booming, and their businesses are thriving. Merchants and workers in some neighbourhoods find it increasingly necessary to use three languages – English, Spanish and any Asian language. There are immigrants from South Korea, Mexico, and other countries who own big plazas and chains of businesses that contribute to the economy of the US. This is replicated in other parts of the US, like Colorado, North Carolina, and Oklahoma, to name just a few.<sup>161</sup>

Sadly, immigration policies are not favourable for immigrant's integration today, even in the US. There are increasing cases of misunderstanding and resentment between migrants and native-born Americans because both groups know little about each other and are unable to mingle well. Many migrants have expressed concern about the way they are being treated by their employees and coworkers. For example, a Latino once expressed concern about the dislike displayed towards her by her white coworkers: "They view me badly, they don't want me; they hate me."<sup>162</sup> This is an awful feeling that people should not experience, regardless of their status in any country. They violate the principle of human dignity and our common identity.

Migrants still contribute to the socio-economic growth and development of their host communities and should be appreciated. According to Betts, Kalobeyei in Kenya and Dollo Ado in Ethiopia are some of the most striking examples of migrants' contributions to the economy of their host communities. "Kalobeyei was designed as an integrated, market-based settlement for both migrants and refugees and their hosts; while Dollo Ado benefitted from the largest private-sector investment ever received by a migrant and refugee camp, and the rollout of a new model of cooperatives to enable migrants and their hosts to work alongside one another."<sup>163</sup> These models could be replicated in different places affected by the migrant crisis across the globe. All that is required is the political will to protect and promote the dignity of every human person, whether they are migrants or citizens in all circumstances. The starting point is welcoming and accepting the migrants for who they are and looking at positive ways of helping them to overcome their challenges. Also dialoguing with them about their experience, capabilities and their potential contribution to the economy could help instead of just dismissing, exploiting or treating them with contempt.

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<sup>160</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 234-35. See also Donald M. Kerwin, "Immigrant Integration and Disintegration in an Era of Exclusionary Nationalism," in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 105.

<sup>161</sup> Louis Aguilar, "Language of Business Binds Cultures; Latino, Asian Markets Thrive," *Denver Post*, May 29, 2001, at C1. See also, Bill Ong Hing, *Deporting Our Souls: Values, Morality, and Immigration Policy*, New Edition – with a New Epilogue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 170-2.

<sup>162</sup> See Barbara Ellen Smith, *Across Races and Nations: Towards Worker Justice in the U.S South* (Centre for Research on Women, University of Memphis, 2003) cited by Hing, *Deporting Our Souls*, 172-3.

<sup>163</sup> Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced People Can Build Economies*, 16-17; 305.

Let us now return to the other consequences of what good politics means to the global migrant crisis highlighted at the beginning of this sub-section. The principles of human dignity and ensuring that the fundamental rights of every migrant are respected are interconnected. They could imply physical security, the right to subsistence, and the right to basic liberties and necessities. This is another way of saying that basic needs, core freedoms, and essential relationships are needed to concretise the more general concept of the dignity of immigrants, whether they fall under the category of forced migrants, voluntary migrants, refugees, asylum seekers or undocumented migrants.<sup>164</sup>

The migrant crisis is a consequence of people's inability to take care of their basic needs in their home countries and the challenges they face in their host communities due to the failure of the socio-political structures that are supposed to help them take care of themselves. Rowlands identified five aspects of a socio-political culture that builds the dignity of its people and thus enables deep and sustained social renewal in Pope Pius XII's 1944 Christmas Message. They include: "a formal espousal or recognition of dignity, a movement beyond liberal individualism towards a commitment to the defence of society as an intrinsic social unity, action to guarantee the dignity of labour, a restoration of judicial order and recognition of the Christian conception of the purpose of the state."<sup>165</sup> These are important dimensions of the Church's social thought that could ameliorate the migrant crisis. They specify the steps needed in addressing the crisis.

Human rights make manifest the specifications of what human dignity entails and the obligations to respect and protect the same from any form of threat. The first ethical implication of "good politics," concerning the dignity and basic rights of migrants, therefore, is for political leaders to ensure that people's dignity is not undermined through religious, ethnic or political persecution, violence, deprivation, discrimination, or isolation. They are also responsible for protecting members of their political community from every severe threat that undermines human dignity.<sup>166</sup> Betts, Hollenbach and other scholars see this duty "as an ethical requirement that should govern response to humanitarian crises. This is because a basic right is a right without which no other right can be enjoyed."<sup>167</sup> Henry Shue, for instance, argues that "basic rights are those that specify the threshold below which people should not be allowed to fall, even in desperate circumstances."<sup>168</sup> It is important to note that basic rights are required for people to enjoy all other privileges that lead to living with dignity; migrants are no exception to these rights. Hence, there is a need for just institutions that ensure that migrants' basic rights are secured.<sup>169</sup> "Good politics" could facilitate the advancement of social justice in a society where the problem of inequalities in the labour market contributing to the migrant crisis might be addressed.

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<sup>164</sup> Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 88.

<sup>165</sup> Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion*, 48.

<sup>166</sup> Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 88.

<sup>167</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration*, 23. See also Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 88; and Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and the U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 5.

<sup>168</sup> Shue, *Basic Rights*, 18.

<sup>169</sup> Chandran Kukathas, "The Mirage of Global Justice," in *Justice and Global Politics*, ed. Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr., and Jeffrey Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

Advancing the virtue of social justice through accountability, transparency and good governance in every political community cannot be overemphasized when attempting to address the migrant crisis. Alasdair MacIntyre helps us contextualize this point in his distinction between the community in the Aristotelian sense in which virtue is exercised and the modern nation-states, where political, religious and ethnic conflict of interest abound. The community in which virtue can be exercised is presumed to be based upon a shared view of the good, where there is a consensus regarding the meaning and purpose of life.<sup>170</sup> MacIntyre argues that “When Aristotle praised justice as the first virtue of political life, he did so to suggest that a community which lacks practical agreement on a conception of justice would also lack the necessary basis for a political community.”<sup>171</sup> This means that the virtue of justice is the backbone of every political community. For the ancient political philosopher, “the point of politics and of the political community is a moral one - meant to achieve the good life, which involves the formation of citizens in virtue, so that they will live noble lives, distinguished by acts of justice and virtue.”<sup>172</sup> Unfortunately, most modern political communities fall short of this vision because the logic of technicalities and the influence of those in the corridors of power relativise the virtue of social justice.<sup>173</sup> Hence, the marginalisation of many people in the Global South and their determination to find a better life elsewhere.

“Good politics” could help determine what changes are required to improve the situation pushing people away from their home countries to other countries. It could also help facilitate a productive relationship between migrants and citizens in their host communities. In this regard, Clinton leaves us with some important ethical options to ponder. He maintains that “the modern world, for all its blessings, is unequal, unstable, and unsustainable. And so, [our] great mission in this twenty-first century is to move our neighbourhoods, [...] and the world towards integrated communities of shared opportunities, shared responsibilities, and a shared sense of genuine belonging, based on the essence of every successful community: that our common humanity is more important than our interesting differences.”<sup>174</sup>

Drawing from Glasman, this study argues that the theological and ethical task of “good politics” is to “organise estranged interest, in which capital and labour play an important role around politics of the common good, which upholds virtue, vocation and value as economic categories; subsidiarity, status and solidarity as political categories; and places relationships, reciprocity and responsibility at the heart of both public and private sector.”<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 119. See also See Riordan, *A Politics of the Common Good*, 66.

<sup>171</sup> MacIntyre, “Justice as a virtue: Changing Conception” in *After Virtue*, Third Edition, 244-5.

<sup>172</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk I c. 2; BK III cc 6, 9; BK VII c. 13. Adapted from Riordan, *A Politics of the Common Good*, 66-7, where he gives a lucid synthesis of Aristotle’s political thought and modern politics.

<sup>173</sup> Riordan, *A Politics of the Common Good*, 67

<sup>174</sup> Clinton, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World*, 4.

<sup>175</sup> Maurice Glasman, “Politics, Employment Policies and the Young Generation,” in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SCM Press, 2015), 175.

This kind of approach to the migrant crisis will help in building viable communities at every level of social life to avoid the disruptive effects of globalisation.<sup>176</sup> Achieving this will require a continuous dialogue among all those affected by both the drivers and challenges of migration for true discernment of better ways of handling the crisis.

We need local and global relational dialogue and cooperation to proffer lasting solutions to the migrant crisis. “Good politics” encourages such engagements. Dialogue is engaging in a discussion, conversation, or negotiation with all relevant stakeholders on matters affecting our existence as a community, nation, or state. It is a process of encounter aimed at listening and learning from all parties involved to arrive at some compromise for the betterment of all. Dialogue is an open and honest engagement that involves listening and respecting the views of others without being judgemental and the commitment to accept and respect the fact that the ‘other’ has the right and freedom to be different.<sup>177</sup> Relational dialogue is the essence of good politics, making it a workable approach to the migrant crisis.

### **3.4 International Obligations, Local Politics and the Migrant Crisis**

We cannot adequately talk about international obligations and the role of local politics in the migrant crisis without exploring the concept of the international community. Every community have its politics, which play a significant role in the growth and development of its members. This is because the concept of “community” denotes the idea of “common ownership” or “common interest.” *Wordweb*, defines “community” as “a group of people living in a particular local area or a group of people having a [common] religion, ethnicity, profession, identity, or other particular characteristic in common.”<sup>178</sup> This definition reveals that something in “common” is distinctive about a community. The common identity of any community obligates community members to look out for one another. This understanding of what a community should be is projected in Acts of the Apostles 4:32; 34-37. The biblical text states, “the whole group of believers were united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he/she had, as everything they owned was held in common.” This text reveals that the early Christians lived in peace and harmony and shared their wealth and possessions. No one was stranded. This quality is what CST identifies as solidarity and what defines an ideal community.

Social friendship is also embedded in the community life because people identify and associate with other members, sharing in their joys and sorrows. In this sense, those who are willing to support and generously share with those in need. Everyone in the early Christian community wanted to contribute to the common fund to care for everybody, especially the less privileged. Here, we see a beautiful model of a community life where selfishness gives way to selflessness, individualism to communalism, division to unity, discrimination to

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<sup>176</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no 182; Meghan J. Clark, “Good Politics,” *U.S. Catholic*, October 2022, 41.

<sup>177</sup> Thaddeus B. Umaru, “The Correlational Dialogue of Scholarly Endeavours is Fundamentally Critical for Sustainable Peace and Socio-economic Development in a Post Covid 19 Diverse Society,” *Nigerian Journal of Religion and Society*, (*Nigerian JORAS*) 12, (2023): 88-100, at 90.

<sup>178</sup> See *Wordweb*, <https://wordweb.info>. Accessed, April 2, 2024.

solidarity and personal interest to common interest and common good. This indicates that the concept of “community” gives a sense of belonging and support for the well-being of all members.

The above understanding of community could serve as a prototype for the international community and its obligation towards the universal human family, especially in moments of crisis. Applying it to the migrant crisis means that all migrants, regardless of their status, are entitled to the same human dignity and international human rights protection as everyone else. States and host communities have an obligation to respect, protect, and assist migrants to enjoy their fundamental human rights to life, freedom and dignified livelihood.<sup>179</sup> This perspective inspired Linda Hogan to assert that mutual dependence and shared vulnerabilities are important elements of human experience that should guide international obligation and local politics. However, they rarely feature in ways in which international and local “politics are constructed.”<sup>180</sup> She contends that “shared vulnerability and mutual dependence may be precisely the qualities that have a resonance with the individuals and communities worldwide who are struggling to find the grounds for the hope of a shared future in a divided world.”<sup>181</sup> This shows that recognising our vulnerabilities and mutual dependence on one another would help us see the migrant crisis as our collective responsibility.

Our common identity as human beings also places an obligation on all those who can proffer solutions to the problem, locally and internationally. This position has three implications for the migrant crisis. Firstly, it implies respecting the dignity and rights of migrants by refraining from human rights violations, which include arbitrary detention, torture, or collective expulsion. Secondly, the obligation to protect or prevent migrants from inhuman treatment by recruitment agencies, abusive employers, violent and abusive smugglers, and citizens with xenophobia and unfounded hatred and discrimination. Thirdly, taking positive measures to ensure that irregular migrants are given an alternative to detention and that regular migrants are guaranteed access to employment, healthcare, education, housing and other social services.<sup>182</sup> These conditions would guarantee the culture of encounter and social friendship between migrants and citizens in the long run. It will also assist them to integrate into the community quickly and without fear.

The idea of international obligation raises concerns about global justice, which points to two critical questions concerning the migrant crisis: “First, what would a just distribution of benefits and burden across the world look like? Second, what sort of institutions would be required to secure such a just distribution of benefits and burdens” when talking about the

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<sup>179</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), “International Standard Governing Migration Policy,” <https://www.ohchr.org>migration>international-standards-governing-migration-policy#> Accessed July 9, 2024.

<sup>180</sup> Linda Hogan, “Vulnerability: An Ethic for a Divided World,” in *Building Bridges in Sarajevo: The Plenary Papers from CTEWC 2018*, ed. Kistin E. Heyer, James F. Keenan, Andrea Vicini, (New York: Orbis Books, 2019), 219.

<sup>181</sup> Hogan, “Vulnerability: An Ethic for a Divided World,” 219.

<sup>182</sup> UN, OHCHR, “International Standard Governing Migration Policy,”

plights of immigrants?<sup>183</sup> Many other related questions inevitably arise in this regard. One of the most notable is how to establish global institutions of justice “given the diversity of sovereign nations and the fact of global inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power.”<sup>184</sup> These global considerations place international obligations at two levels: Natural duties we owe to human beings as such and voluntary obligations we incur by consent. Michael Sandel expounds this: “Natural duties are universal. We owe them to all human beings as rational beings. They include duties to treat people with respect, to do justice, to avoid cruelty, and so on. On the other hand, voluntary obligations are not universal. They arise from consent.”<sup>185</sup> This means that voluntary obligations are based on the level of commitment made to others. In other words, “we owe what we agree to owe.”<sup>186</sup> In the context of the distribution of benefit and burden, there is, on the one hand, an international obligation to naturally identify with forced, displaced, survival or even undocumented migrants because they are human beings in need. And on the other hand, there is a need for voluntary services through international organisations and agencies to help these vulnerable people successfully navigate these challenges of migration.

Consequently, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) recommends the incorporation of certain fundamental principles in immigration policies across the globe: (1) *Equality and non-discrimination*: This principle prohibits distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on a list of non-exhaustive grounds such as race, colour, descent, ethnic origin, sex, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or belief, nationality, migration or residence or other status. The UNOHCHR recommends that States have an obligation to address direct and indirect discrimination against and/or unequal treatment of people in laws, policies and practices, including paying particular attention to the needs of migrants in vulnerable situations. (2) *Participation and inclusion*: The office of the UN commissioner maintains that everyone is entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in decisions that affect the enjoyment of their rights. All people have the right to access information in a language and format that is accessible to them regarding the decision-making process that affects their lives and well-being. This means that migrants should be consulted and included in developing relevant public policy. (3) *Accountability and rule of law*: According to the UNOHCHR, everyone is entitled to claim and exercise their rights. States should ensure transparency in the design and implementation of their policies and ensure that right-holders have access to redress mechanisms and enjoy effective remedies when human rights breaches occur. The system governing migration should allow migrants full access to justice, including redress and remedies if they experience human rights violations.<sup>187</sup> These are practical recommendations that could help in mitigating the migrant crisis, but how well have they been received by sovereign state actors?

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<sup>183</sup> Kukathas, “The Mirage of Global Justice,” in *Justice and Global Politics*, 1.

<sup>184</sup> Kukathas, “The Mirage of Global Justice,” 1.

<sup>185</sup> Michael Sandel, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 223-24.

<sup>186</sup> Sandel, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* 224.

<sup>187</sup> UNOHCHR, “International Standard Governing Migration Policy,”

We are witnessing the rise of practices that assault the dignity of migrants and attempts to institutionalise discrimination against migrants in some parts of the world. There are also cases of disregard for the values of equality, solidarity, and compassion in dealing with undocumented or irregular immigrants. Research has revealed that there are migrants whose lives are constantly under threat in the US and other parts of the world. In some cases, their possibility of enjoying the norms of civic life is not guaranteed. Hogan, Betts and other scholars contend, "The politics of identity has returned with force, enacting a destructive and contagious dynamic in the international scene characterised by ethno-nationalist tribalism and racism."<sup>188</sup> Betts laments such discriminative attitudes against migrants and the inconsistency in how states respond to different migration challenges. He argues that "in some context, people fleeing similar severe thresholds of rights deprivations may be protected as though they were refugees; in others, they are rounded up, detained, and deported. This inconsistency, as well as being arbitrary from a normative perspective, has serious human rights and security implications" regarding international obligations towards migrants.<sup>189</sup> These are genuine concerns that need adequate response because we live in a world where millions are desperately trying to escape from poverty, while a few enjoy great wealth resulting from unjust global institutions.<sup>190</sup>

This study substantiates Chris Brown's position that "the international community is a term sometimes employed by publicists, diplomats, and [some] academics when they wish to express approval of some collective international action, or perhaps, to criticize the failure to act."<sup>191</sup> What does it even mean when the term "international community" is sometimes invoked by citizens of the Global South or some weaker groups in moments of crisis or persecution? We have become accustomed to hearing people say, "we call on the 'international community' to come to our aid," as though the international community was that powerful community situated somewhere in the world that can be easily accessed through the media for some immediate response or solution to socio-political challenges.

Undoubtedly, we need such an ideal community with effective structures and institutions to depend on, but where would that be located, and to what extent can such a community intervene in challenges like the migrant crisis? Brown rightly argues that "In fact, the term [international community] is pretty much misleading – in so far as it translates into anything nowadays: it generally stands for something like 'the US and its allies.'"<sup>192</sup> It is meaningless or misleading because the positive connotations of the term 'community' are almost entirely "associated with particularism."<sup>193</sup> This point highlights the equal opportunities and ability that community members should have to dialogue on the way out of any challenging situation.

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<sup>188</sup> Hogan, "Vulnerability: An Ethic for a Divided World," 216.

<sup>189</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*, 8-9.

<sup>190</sup> Kukathas, "The Mirage of Global Justice," 1.

<sup>191</sup> Chris Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice: International Political Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 224.

<sup>192</sup> Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice*, 224.

<sup>193</sup> Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice*, 224.

“Good politics” will help bridge the gap between sovereign nations and their interdependence on one another for survival resulting from our common identity. The constant call on the ‘international community’ by some communities demonstrates that some communities are not an integral part of the so-called international community due to the problem of inequality. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church* (CSDC) states that “the centrality of the human person and the natural inclination of persons and peoples to establish relationship among themselves are the fundamental elements for building a true international community, the ordering which must aim at guaranteeing the effective universal common good.”<sup>194</sup> The *Compendium* also acknowledges that the problem of inequality has remained an obstacle to achieving the aspiration of an authentic international community.

Brown clarifies the issue by maintaining that “a community is generally thought of as bounded, tied to a particular place and a group of people who in some sense form a whole. The idea of international community implies that the kind of positive qualities associated with such a bounded group could exist between states, or even more ambitiously, on a global scale encompassing all people.”<sup>195</sup> Brown’s description is obviously what many people would imagine the ‘international community’ to be – an ideal community that is bounded together in solidarity - but whether this is what it is remains a subject for further investigation and critical assessment.

The *Compendium* draws attention to the fact that the desired authentic international community that is centred on the unity of the human family is yet to be realized due “to obstacles originating in materialistic and nationalistic ideologies that contradict the values of the [human] person integrally considered in all their various dimensions.”<sup>196</sup> The Church’s social magisterium kicks against any form of racism or discrimination as morally unacceptable. It calls for cultivating communitarian values and identities that promote empathy and shared power.<sup>197</sup> It is important to acknowledge that communitarian thinkers have never denied the existence of ties that cross national boundaries; this is why we have people with various nationalities and the naturalization process.<sup>198</sup> This, in turn, is due to the complexity of our socio-political and economic system at the local, national, and international levels that determines people’s eligibility to belong to a particular community. Local politics plays a key role in this context, ensuring that the basic needs of members of any local political community are properly taken into consideration.

Any community where relationality and the well-being of every member of the human family matters to all will be able to overcome the challenges of human misery, pushing

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<sup>194</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), no. 433 (204). See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1911.

<sup>195</sup> Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice*, 224.

<sup>196</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, No. 433, (204).

<sup>197</sup> Mary E. Hobgood, “Mentoring Moral Courage: Resources in Liberation Ethics, Community Service, and the Social Commitment of the Academy,” *Horizons* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 85-104 at 85.

<sup>198</sup> Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame, NI: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 200. See also C. Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice*, 224.

people to migrate for better livelihood elsewhere. The *Compendium* highlights the functions of international and local politics as “the pursuit of the common good in the spirit of service, the development of justice with particular attention to situations of poverty and suffering, respect for the autonomy of earthly realities, the principle of subsidiarity, and the promotion of dialogue and peace in the context of solidarity.”<sup>199</sup> When these principles guide international obligations and local politics, the movement of people for survival and the goal of satisfying their basic needs in other countries will be minimised. It will also assist in curbing some of the risks many people are willing to take due to harsh socio-economic realities and other factors detrimental to their livelihood in their home countries.

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter reveals that the migrant crisis requires a theological, ethical, political, legal and socio-economic intervention because it affects our common humanity and, in a special way, the dignity and rights of those forced to embark on migration as the best solution to their suffering. It also raises concerns about the need for “good politics” and the existence of a functioning local and international community possessing the political will to adequately address the challenges leading to migration and the problems migrants face in their voyage and eventually in their host communities. It draws attention to a Christian anthropological understanding of the human person that helps us appreciate the dignity of all people irrespective of their condition, background or circumstances. This perspective is enriched by Pope Francis’s theological insights on the Parable of the Good Samaritan, which “shows how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbours, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good.”<sup>200</sup> This approach is needed for the migrant crisis.

Drawing from the strength of the parable of the Good Samaritan and the interpretation by the Holy Father, we posit that in practicing “good politics,” we can do away with the culture of individualism, ethnicity, racism and nationalism that creates unnecessary division in the human family. “Good Politics” can also help us to communally work against the injustices perpetuated by unjust structures leading to the migrant crisis because it allows all members of the society to contribute towards the growth and development of their community and the collective welfare. It also leads us to appreciate the concept of the common good. In the next chapter, we shall explicate the concept of the common good, its theological foundation and how promoting it in every political community will help address the challenges of excessive migration and the migrant crisis. CST has always emphasised that politics must lead to good governance and the common good because that is the only way a state can advance the well-being of its citizens and all the inhabitants of the political community.

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<sup>199</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, No. 565.

<sup>200</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 65.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE COMMON GOOD IN “GOOD POLITICS” AND THE MIGRANT CRISIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

Building on the socio-political foundation of the migrant crisis, and the implications of “good politics” in chapter three, this chapter examines the first pillar of “good politics,” which is the common good. It provides a comprehensive socio-economic, political, ethical and theological analysis of the concept, illustrating how the migration crisis stems from the failure to promote it across various political communities. The chapter starts with the theological basis of the common good, advocating for a deeper understanding of the concept and its socio-economic and political implications to the migrant crisis. This study builds on existing scholarship that connects the common good with the promotion of the dignity and rights of every human person.<sup>1</sup> This chapter, therefore, discusses specific ways in which the principles of the common good, when implemented, can help tackle the challenges that lead to excessive migration, contributing to the global migrant crisis.

We emphasise the consideration of everyone’s welfare in the society as the central guiding principle of the common good. Hollenbach aptly states that “the good of each member increases or decreases as the common good grows or declines, for the wellbeing of each is linked with that of others through their reciprocal relationship.”<sup>2</sup> We propose that our relationality and communitarian vision of society are intrinsic sources of strength in facing all forms of existential challenges. Thus, our analysis of the common good with respect to the migrant crisis serves as a steppingstone to the principle of contributive justice, which is the focus of the next chapter. Meanwhile, the following questions will guide this chapter: What is the theological foundation of the common good, and what are its socio-economic and political implications for the migrant crisis?

#### 4.1 The Common Good, Civil Leadership and Migration

Biblical and social anthropologies reveal that human beings were not created to live in isolation. Human beings are relational or social creatures. Therefore, no single individual

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<sup>1</sup> See Hollenbach, S.J., “The Common Good Revisited,” *Theological Studies* 50, no. 1, (March 1989): 70-94; Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015); Peter McGrail and Nicholas Sagovsky eds., “Introduction” in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SCM Press, 2015), xxiv-xxx. See also Patrick Riordan S.J., “The History and Principle of the Common Good,” in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Rebuild Our Broken World* ed. Virginia Moffatt (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2017), 11-26; *A Politics of the Common Good* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1996); *A Grammar of the Common Good* (London: Continuum, 2008); *Global Ethics and Global Common Goods* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); *Reclaiming the Common Goods* (Dublin: Veritas, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Hollenbach, S.J., *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 188.

can survive and fulfil their potential alone. Thus, there is a need for support, coordination and co-operation among community members to foster growth, realise their full potential and reap the benefits of a shared vision. In this context, the principle of the common good becomes indispensable for human flourishing and a dignified life for everyone in any political community. While the concept of the common good is originally a philosophical concept attributed to Aristotle (384-322 BC[E]), who, in his work, on *Politics* viewed human action as always directed toward some good, it is also informed by certain theological insights.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of the common good could be traced to the mandate given to humanity at creation. According to the Biblical account of Genesis chapter one, after the creation of humanity, God gave them the mandate to “be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28). God then saw all that He created as *very good* (Genesis 1:31). This indicates that God wanted humanity to participate in making the world a common home and better place for all; and this cannot be achieved without cooperation, participation, noble actions and virtuous living. Pope Francis argues that “the human person, with his or her inalienable rights, is by nature open to relationship. Implanted deep within us is the call to transcend ourselves through an encounter with others.”<sup>4</sup> This explains why the greatest commandment given to humanity in the biblical narrative is “to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves” (Leviticus 19:18, Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Matthew 22:37-39). This commandment does not only demand commitment to the common good, but it also demands respect for the transcendent dignity of every human person as a precondition for attaining the earthly and political good that recognises its limitations.<sup>5</sup>

CST has always cautioned about the dangers of a restrictive understanding of societal development that focuses on materialism, capitalism, communism and social stratification. For instance, in *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI called for an integral understanding of development that respect people’s spiritual, religious, cultural and social hopes and desires.<sup>6</sup> This implies that every development should be guided by the principle of the common good, including our spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. Hence, a restrictive vision of the common good to external commodities, and socio-economic status fails to capture the need of every human person and the importance of our relationships with others.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the principle of the common good indicates that we all need the support, encouragement and cooperation of one another to fulfil the divine purpose for which we

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<sup>3</sup> See Riordan, “The History and Principle of the Common Good,” in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Rebuild Our Broken World* ed. Virginia Moffatt (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2017), 11-26 at 11. Also see Donald Morrison, “The Common Good” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle’s Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 176-198.

<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 111.

<sup>5</sup> Hollenbach, S.J., “Common Good” in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith Dwyer (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 192-197 at 193-4.

<sup>6</sup> See Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, (March 26, 1967), Part I, “For Man’s Complete Development.” This section covers articles 6 - 42. Article 24 says the common good should consider those factors that impede general prosperity and should sometimes demand their expropriation.

<sup>7</sup> Mulligan, “Capabilities and the Common Good” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (2010): 388-406 at 392.

were created, irrespective of our ethnic, religious or national affinities. In other words, the common good is centred on the overall wellbeing of all members of every political community through the actions and policies that govern the community. Magisterial definition of the common good captures the essence of the concepts and its overall vision for human flourishing in this world.

The Vatican II Church Fathers defined the common good as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily.”<sup>8</sup> This definition encompasses the communitarian and individual contributions that lead to the achievement of humanity’s wellbeing as well as their appointed destiny in every community. It also reveals the fact that people have the task to place themselves at the service of the community as part of God’s plan for human flourishing in this world.<sup>9</sup> The Second Vatican Council draw attention to this understanding of the common good in *Dignitatis Humanae*, thus: “The common good of society consists in the sum total of those conditions of social life which enable people to achieve a fuller measure of perfection with great ease. It consists especially in safeguarding the rights and duties of the human person.”<sup>10</sup> Both definitions from *Gaudium et Spes* (GS) and *Dignitatis Humanae* (DH) emphasise the complete, overall, or entire conditions for achieving humanity’s fulfilment or perfection in this world. DH stressed the need to *safeguard the rights and duties of human persons*. Both descriptions place the human person’s fulfilment at the core of the common good principle; implying that the principle is beyond the socio-economic, political, physical construction, growth and development of the human family. It is all of these and intrinsically more.<sup>11</sup> Theologically, it is geared towards a more holistic vision of human interaction, flourishing and fulfilment regarding both material and spiritual satisfaction. The absence of this understanding of the common good in concrete reality, in many political communities, is responsible for excessive migration, leading to the global migrant crisis.

The notion of the common good describes the distinctive social relationship that binds people together and directs them to care for their collective wellbeing through institutionalised structures.<sup>12</sup> The German novelist, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) is quoted as aptly saying that “Even the greatest genius would not get very far if he/[she] had to rely solely on what he/she had in him/[her]self.”<sup>13</sup> This is another way of saying that there is a limit to what someone can achieve alone compared to when it is a collective effort. Scriptures states that “Two are better than one, because they have a good

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<sup>8</sup> Vatican II, GS, no. 26.

<sup>9</sup> Karl H. Peschke, “Moral Responsibility in Community Life” in *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II, Vol. II*, Newly Revised Edition, (Bangalore: Theological Publication, 2009), 557.

<sup>10</sup> Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Mulligan, “Capabilities and the Common Good,” 389-90.

<sup>12</sup> See Rowlands, “The Common Good: A Long Tradition in Context,” in *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times* (London: T&T Clark, 2022), 111. See also Hussain Waheed, “The Common Good,” *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/common-good/> Accessed July 23, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Peschke, “Moral Responsibility in Community Life” in *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II, Vol. II*, Newly Revised Edition, (Bangalore: Theological Publication, 2009), 555.

return for their labour. For if either of them falls, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). Is this not the reason why God is quoted in the scriptures saying, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him” (Genesis 2:18)? The creation of humanity as male and female with the mandate to be fruitful and multiply, as recorded in Genesis 1:26-28, is an indication that God wanted us to blossom through working together for the common good. Hence, the principle of the common good emphasises the necessary conditions for human cooperation and flourishing that might lead to the achievement of shared objectives as a decisive normative element in the social situation of every community, which individualism is both unable to account for in theory and likely to neglect in practice.<sup>14</sup>

A commitment to the common good contradicts every form of individualistic presuppositions that is rooted in the notion of human autonomy, which is devoid of responsibility towards others.<sup>15</sup> Human autonomy is not absolute and must always be expressed within the boundaries of personal rights in the economy of human relationality, lest it infringes on the rights and dignity of others. Many capitalists are uncomfortable with the language of the common good because it opposes self-aggrandisement, exploitation for personal gain, and control of the economic system by a few wealthy people. People with this mindset are more comfortable with conversations about their financial growth, innovations and efficiency in their businesses and about the maximisation of profit. It is evident that the concept of the common good does not appeal to the capitalists because their primary focus is on their economic advancement, accumulation of wealth, maximisation of profit and expansion of their influence and territories. The above-mentioned interests are contributing to the marginalisation of many people and pushing them to look for other alternative means of survival.<sup>16</sup> The increasing gap between the rich and the poor in the world today is one of the major push factors of local and global migration.

The self-absorbed approach to businesses and civil leadership in contemporary times is the reasons for some of the socio-economic and political challenges resulting in the migrant crisis. We must take precautionary measures regarding the misunderstanding and misuse of power stemming from this individualistic approach to economic prosperity. The Church’s magisterium is critical of the tendency to claim ever broader individualistic rights in this epoch. It sees this attitude as “a conception of the human person as detached from all social and anthropological contexts.”<sup>17</sup> As a remedy to such challenges, Pope Francis suggests that “what we need are states and civil institutions that are present and active, that look beyond the free and efficient working of certain economic, political or ideological systems,

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<sup>14</sup> John Langan, S.J., “Common Good” in *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. John Macquarrie, and James Childress (London: SCM Press, 1986), 102.

<sup>15</sup> Hollenbach, S.J., “Common Good” in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith Dwyer (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 192-197 at 193.

<sup>16</sup> Dirk Philipsen, review of *The Common Good Approach to Development*, ed. by Mathias Nebel, Oscar Garza-Vazquez, and Clemens Sedmak, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 24, no. 4 (2023): 594-595 at 594, DOI 10.1080/19452829.2023.2255015.

<sup>17</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 111.

and are primarily concerned with individuals and the common good.”<sup>18</sup> The Holy Father recommends an inclusive approach that considers the wellbeing of every human person and the entire political community or state.

Sadly, the individualistic approach to leadership and businesses has pushed many people to the margins of the society with little or nothing to sustain themselves. Most people migrate for socio-economic and political emancipation. This explains why most people are focusing on migrating to the Global North, where life is relatively better, and people can access certain socio-economic services. Unsurprisingly, Hollenbach, Riordan, Rowlands and many social ethicists are calling for a renewed interest in the common good as an intellectual resource for addressing some of these socio-economic and political challenges.<sup>19</sup> This interest informs why this chapter is dedicated to examining the relationship between the common good and the migrant crisis.

A common good approach offers an alternative assessment of our social realities and the contemporary challenges of poverty, marginalisation, unemployment and human suffering. It stresses the reality of our interdependence for survival and flourishing. This study advocates for reinterpreting the common good tradition using CST, contributing to a non-individualistic, non-tribalistic, non-nationalistic, non-racial and non-communist or socialist understanding of human relationality, dignity and rights considering the migrant crisis. In other words, we propose the common good as a framework for a more inclusive, welcoming and accommodating society. A common good principle that appreciates our unity in diversity, enabling every community member to contribute and enjoy the benefits of the community.

This study proposes the notion of the common good that is socially and theologically hinged on our shared identity as human beings created in the *imago Dei*; our common home (the world) which is entrusted to us by the Creator for our flourishing, as well as our eternal destiny, which is, union with God at the end of time. In essence, the purpose of the common good is to assist humanity realise their individual and collective tasks and existential contributions to improve the world. We are adopting Hollenbach’s argument that “the common good is both a moral and a descriptive concept that is concerned about the moral quality of people’s pattern of interaction in the community which inevitably influences whether their lives can be described as good from a pragmatic standpoint or not.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the essence of the principle of the common good in every political community is to protect the dignity of every human person and to complement the communal dimension

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<sup>18</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 108.

<sup>19</sup> See Hollenbach, S.J., “The Common Good Revisited,” *Theological Studies* 50, no 1, (1989): 70-94; The Common Good and Christian Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Patrick Riordan, S.J., *Global Ethics and Global Common Goods* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); *Recovering the Common Goods* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2017), Anna Rowlands, “The Language of the Common Good,” in *Together for the Common good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SMC Press, 2015), 3-15; “The Common Good: Long Tradition in Context” in *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Ethics in Dark Times* (London: T&T Clark, 2022), 111-175.

<sup>20</sup> See Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 188.

of our lives. This means that the common good is at the service of the human person and of God's creative and salvific design. It implies that the human person is not merely a means towards the actualisation of the common good and the growth and development of the society but that the common good, as well as the society, is also at the service of the human person who is directly accountable to God.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, the principle of the common good requires not just the cooperation of members of the community but also the protection of the dignity and rights of every human person.<sup>22</sup> Without this the common good will fall short of its theological and ethical conception. This study advances theological and ethical ways of understanding right relationship with diverse groups of people from the perspective of our common humanity, common home and the common good. We are building our argument on Pope Francis, Hollenbach, Rajendra, Heyer, Betts and other scholars who advocate for a renewed focus on our responsibilities towards *others*,<sup>23</sup> and how the concepts of *hospitality*,<sup>24</sup> *kinship*,<sup>25</sup> or *neighbour*<sup>26</sup> can help in addressing the migrant crisis. These concepts are embedded in the notion of the common good and what it entails in human relationality. Consequently, the crucial element in pursuing the common good, is translating these concepts (others, hospitality, kinship, neighbour) into resources for socio-economic growth and development in political communities.<sup>27</sup>

People in different political communities might comfortably recite chapters and verses of the Bible, the Qur'an and other religious texts, where these concepts are clearly explained, but still fail to comprehend our relationality and responsibility towards one another. Many people still see *differences* as a threat. They fail to see our common humanity that transcends tribal, racial, and religious differences. In some parts of the globe, ethnic and religious

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<sup>21</sup> Karl H. Peschke, "Moral Responsibility in Community Life" in *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II, Vol. II*, Newly Revised Edition, (Bangalore: Theological Publication, 2009), 558.

<sup>22</sup> John XXIII declared that "it is agreed that in our time the common good is chiefly guaranteed when personal rights and duties are maintained." The emphasis here is on how every human person in the community benefits from the enhancement of the common good. The duty to promote the common good, therefore, entails the duty to protect the dignity and right of all members of the community. See *Pacem in Terris*, (April 11, 1963), no. 60, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j\\_xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963-pacem.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j_xxiii_enc_11041963-pacem.html).

<sup>23</sup> See Rajendra, *Immigration and Citizens: Justice and responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2017); See also Hollenbach, S.J., *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2019).

<sup>24</sup> See Alain Thomasset, S.J., "The Virtue of Hospitality According to the Bible and the Challenge of Migration," in *The Bible and Catholic Theological Ethics*, ed. Yiu Sing Lucas Chan, James F. Keenan, and Ronaldo Zacharias (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2017). See also Mona Siddiqui, "Divine Welcome: The Ethics of Hospitality in Islam and Christianity," Available at <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/mona-siddiqui-hospitality-as-welcoming-in-gods-name/12503800>; and Mulligan, "Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis: Reflections on Hospitality, Vulnerability and Accompaniment," *The Furrow* 74, no 11, (November 2023):579-86.

<sup>25</sup> See Heyer, *Kinship Across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> See Heyer, "Social Sin and Immigration: Good Fences Make Bad Neighbors," *Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (May 2010): 410-36.

<sup>27</sup> Collier, "Migration" in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Tobias Winright (London: T&T Clark, 2022), 175.

sentiments influence access to political or civil leadership position, employment opportunities, and allocation of goods and services. On this note, this study considers the notion of the common good, guided by “good politics,” and contributive justice, and provides a better methodology for local, national and international discourse.

In attempting a definition of the common good and its relevance to the migrant crisis, this research is enquiring whether political or civil leadership is exercised for the good of all, or of the political or civil leaders, their families and their cronies? Aristotle gives us an insight in evaluating political leadership and the common good. He distinguishes the common good from corrupt institutions, or forms of government. For him, it does not matter whether it is one person, a few people, or many people who govern, provided it is for the common good.<sup>28</sup> He conceptually distinguished good government by one person, several people and by many people as “kingship,” “aristocracy,” and “polity.” He contrasted them with three corrupt forms of government, namely, “tyranny,” “oligarchy,” and “democracy.”<sup>29</sup> Aristotle started with a philosophical analysis of monarchy, oligarchy and tyranny, which opposed the common good. He also objected to democracy because he interprets the term as a government by many in their “own interest, and not in the interests of all.”<sup>30</sup> His interpretation of democracy seems to capture what many countries are experiencing in the Global South, where corruption and embezzlement of public funds are a common practice among public servants and political leadership. This is one of the factors fuelling the migrant crisis, as highlighted in Chapter Two, and it needs to be addressed adequately. Corrupt leadership is a form of exploitation that is impoverishing many people and depriving them of the rights to a dignified life.

Aristotle’s argument must be carefully considered in attempting to recover the ideals of the common good as a viable tool for addressing the migrant crisis. Riordan helps us in our attempt to unpack Aristotle’s hypothesis of the inadequacies of different kinds of civil leaders and systems of governance. He argues that the concept of the common good could be used as a normative standard for evaluating different kinds of regimes, based on Aristotle’s distinctions of civil leaders and their leadership style in the political community. He states:

If the purpose of the political community, is to be a *common* good, then it could only be such if it does not systematically exclude any individual or any group of persons from a fair share of the good for the sake of which they cooperate. This is the first criterion, modelled by Aristotle’s concern that rule be for the good of all, and not merely for the good of the rulers, whether one, few, or many. And if the *telos* (ultimate purpose of the political community)

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<sup>28</sup> See Aristotle, *Politics* 1279a28-29, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 76. Adapted in this study as cited by Maximilian Jaede, “Working Paper: The Concept of the Common Good,” 3. <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk> Accessed, July 24, 2024.

<sup>29</sup> See Aristotle, *Politics* 1279b32-1280a5, 78-9. As cited by Jaede in “Working Paper: The Concept of the Common Good,” 3.

<sup>30</sup> See Riordan, “The History and Principle of the Common Good,” 13.

is to be a common *good*, then it could only be such if it does not systematically exclude or denigrate any genuine dimension of the human good.<sup>31</sup>

Riordan argues further that:

The second criterion is modelled on Aristotle's evaluation of different constitutions in terms of their conceptions of human good, whether expansive or constricted. He relied on the phrase translated as 'always more than' to identify the conception of the human good which will be satisfactory and comprehensive without being able to say exactly what it is. It is something striven for in political life; it would be more than a mutual guarantee of rights, or a set of non-aggression pact, or treaties to exchange goods and services. The common good [and] the good life in Aristotle's sense, names something which is already known, but only vaguely. It names something to be fully discovered, but the two criteria help in the process of discovery, since the common good will have to satisfy these conditions.<sup>32</sup>

From Riordan's explication of Aristotle's argument, it is clear that the common good is not supposed to be static but dynamic, in the sense that, it keeps evolving according to the needs of the political community. Implying that the theoretical framework of the common good is open to adjustment and contextualisation. For instance, what may be identified as "a common good" for community A in terms of socio-economic growth and development may not be the same for community B due to the peculiarities of both communities. And what was identified as a common good in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century (the Industrial Revolutions with all its consequences, for instance) may not be the same for the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to the dynamics of historical location and needs. The migrant crisis is another good example. Although migration shaped many countries in the Global North, today the same nations are overwhelmed with migrants, and migration has become a humanitarian crisis. Ester D. Reed further clarifies the dynamic nature of the common good. She avers that:

It is important to be clear that [the] common good is not an idea or thing whose substance may be defined but a set of responsibilities pertaining to a shared project of which all are part. Contrary to what some neoliberals have claimed, the common good neither has nor requires clearly defined substantive content that may be specified a priori because common good is more like an activity, a set of responsibilities or a common project, which is inconceivable when individuals are thought about as isolated from one another.<sup>33</sup>

Reed's argument points to the communal dimension of the common good and the need for dialogue and collaboration is concretising what is best for all in any political community. This means that the key ideas in the common good, "are the heuristic nature of the concept, pointing to what is only partly known and still in the process of being discovered, and the two criteria of non-exclusion of persons and the non-exclusion of dimensions (needs) of the

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<sup>31</sup> Riordan, "The History and Principle of the Common Good," 13.

<sup>32</sup> Riordan, "The History and Principle of the Common Good," 13-14.

<sup>33</sup> Esther D. Reed, "Wealth and the Common Good," in *Together for the Common good*, 58.

human good.”<sup>34</sup> This is important to our understanding of the common good because experience has shown that citizenship is easily damaged by social, religious, economic, ethnic, racial, regional and political exclusion in the scheme of community, national or international affairs.<sup>35</sup> And governments are responsible for keeping these opposing forces in check for the good of every political community.

We must not lose sight of the common good’s potential in our collective existence, especially in crises, even though politicians have distorted the understanding of the concept with nepotism, ethnicity, sectionalism and nationalism. Jacques Maritain observes that “the common good is not only a system of advantage and utilities but also a rectitude of life, an end, good in itself. For, on the one hand, to assure the existence of the multitude is something morally good in itself; on the other hand, the existence, thus assured, must be the just and morally good existence of the community.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, to avoid the feeling of injustice, and not being appreciated as part of the community, the common good should be for the good of all and not some particular group or persons.

CST affirms that “politics is for the common good, in which it finds its full justification and significance and source of its inherent legitimacy. As such political authority has to be exercised within the limits of moral order and directed towards the common good.”<sup>37</sup> The Bishop’s Conference of Nigeria argues that it is for this reason that the Catholic Church does not publicly identify with any political party, but is also “not indifferent or neutral to the formation and activities of the political community.”<sup>38</sup> The Church plays the role of a mother and a teacher, as Pope John XXIII teaches in his encyclical.<sup>39</sup> Partisanship in politics takes away the prophetic role of the Church and the moral authority to correct all politicians, especially the ruling party when their policies disregard the wellbeing and flourishing of all in the political community.

The role of good governance is inevitably connected to the common good in Catholic social tradition. The civil authority exist to guarantee peoples’ freedom, dignity, rights and duties. When a government fails to provide these basic needs for its citizens, they are forced to look

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<sup>34</sup> Riordan, “The History and Principle of the Common Good,” 14.

<sup>35</sup> Michael Edwards, *Future Positive: International Co-operation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2000), 15.

<sup>36</sup> Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 53.

<sup>37</sup> Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (Hereafter CBCN), “The Threshold of New Dawn,” An unpublished Communiqué issued at the end of the Second Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria at the Sacred Heart Pastoral/Retreat Centre, Orlu, Imo State, Nigeria, 8-16 September 2022), no 2; Also see Vatican II, *GS*, no 74. See Wordpress.com, <https://southernvoiceng.wordpress.com/2022/09/16/the-threshold-of-a-new-dawn-in-nigeria-the-church-teaches-that-politics-is-for-the-common-good-in-which-it-finds-its-full-justification-and-significance-and-the-source-of-its-inherent-legitimacy-cf/>

<sup>38</sup> See CBCN, “The Threshold of New Dawn,” no. 2.

<sup>39</sup> See Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, (May 15, 1961) no. 180, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_15051961\\_mater.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html) (hereafter cited as *MM*).

elsewhere. Such concerns must have motivated CST to advocate for the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity in the socio-economic agenda of every political community. The principle of subsidiarity states that the larger forms of community such as political society should not replace or absorb those that are smaller but rather should provide help to them especially when they are unable to contribute to the good of the community. In this regard, the government is to provide leadership by directing, restraining and regulating the activities of these communities where necessary.<sup>40</sup> The government is also responsible for ensuring good local and international relationship because of our interdependence. This is what guarantees the right to migration and integration. Hence, a need to re-evaluate and restructure international relations between the Global North and South to address the challenges driving the migrant crisis. This study builds on Riordan and other scholars in advocating for a global common good – a concept which globally considers the good of all in our common home.

The connection between government and the common good is theoretically linked to Aristotle, who conceived the city-state as a form of community established for some good. For Aristotle, the good of the city-state is the most authoritative good, which encompasses all other goods. He also argued that the purpose of political communities is to secure not merely the conditions of living but those of living well.<sup>41</sup> This implies that Aristotle was concerned about the environment and its inhabitants. These are interconnected condition for human flourishing. People cannot survive in a polluted environment and if people do not intentionally take care of their environment, it will become contaminated and uninhabitable. Aristotle used Greek phrases like *koinon agathon* (common good), and *koinei sumpheron* (mutual advantage) to describe the good of the city-state. He was concerned about the happiness of the city-state's citizens, which he attributed to the "noble action" of its government.<sup>42</sup> This means that cultivating virtue, rather than accumulating wealth, is required of our leaders for socio-economic growth and development.<sup>43</sup>

The spirit of service is equally Pope Francis' conception of "good politics." Unfortunately, the understanding of political leadership has been distorted to focus more on the accumulation of wealth, power and personal security; rather than on selfless service to humanity for the common good. It is essential, therefore, to promote the virtue of selfless service as a common good to be valued by all. This involves identifying and demonstrating how integrity, competence, dedication and fairness should guide our choices of leaders and

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<sup>40</sup> See Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (May 15, 1931), no 80, [https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515-quadragesimo-anno.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515-quadragesimo-anno.html) (hereafter cited as *QA*)

<sup>41</sup> See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252a1-3 (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 1-2. As cited by Jaede, "Working Paper: The Concept of the Common Good, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1280b39-1281a4, 81. As cited by Jaede, in "Working Paper: The Concept of the Common Good," 2.

<sup>43</sup> Donald Morrison, "The Common Good," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, ed. Marguerite Deslauriers and Pierre Destree (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 190. Also see Jaede, "Working Paper: The Concept of the Common Good," 3.

their actions.<sup>44</sup> Embedding such values in the fabric of our society will pave the way for good leadership with better socio-economic policies that focus on the welfare of the people in political communities.<sup>45</sup>

Pope Francis laments the paradigm shift in virtues and values in contemporary politics and governance. “Political life,” he argues, “no longer has to do with healthy debates about long-term plans to improve people’s lives and to advance the common good, but only with slick marketing techniques primarily aimed at discrediting others.”<sup>46</sup> More alarming is the rising public interest in autocratic figures who are ready to test the limits of democratic norms in different parts of the world. For example, Michael Sandel opines that “the election of Donald Trump in 2016 was an angry verdict on decades of rising inequality and a version of globalisation that benefits those at the top but leaves ordinary citizens feeling disempowered. It was also a rebuke for a technocratic approach to politics.”<sup>47</sup> This trend necessitates critically re-evaluating our priorities in choosing political leaders if we must address some of the challenges contributing to the migrant crisis.

The migrant crisis requires human cooperation at every level working for the common good. It also requires the creation of a conducive atmosphere for collaboration so that all the parties affected will ameliorate the situation. This study builds on Pope Francis’ teaching that “when the dignity of the human person is respected, and his or her rights recognized and guaranteed, creativity and interdependence thrive, and the creativity of the human personality is released through actions that further the common good.”<sup>48</sup> Recognising and respecting people’s dignity and rights gives them a sense of belonging and obliges them to contribute to the flourishing of their community.

Therefore, political communities need to go beyond just encouraging participation in public life and the minimal cooperation required to keep the society materially functioning. They must encourage a richer form of governance with wise and prudent economic policies guided by truth, justice and fairness. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that “The common good is always oriented towards the progress of persons, founded on truth, built up in justice, and animated by love.”<sup>49</sup> This is why the common good is placed at the centre of what constitute a just, inclusive and egalitarian society.<sup>50</sup> Lisa Sowle Cahill

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<sup>44</sup> Riordan, *Global Ethics and Global Common Goods* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 17.

<sup>45</sup> See Pete Alcock, “The Importance of Collective Action,” in *Why We Need Welfare: A Collective Action for the Common Good* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2016), 1-12.

<sup>46</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 15.

<sup>47</sup> Michael J. Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What’s Become of the Common Good?* (London: Penguin, 2020), 17.

<sup>48</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 22.

<sup>49</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Dublin: Veritas Publication, 1994), no 1912.

<sup>50</sup> Mulligan, “Builders of a New Social Bond”: Fratelli Tutti on Good Politics and the Challenge of Inequality,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 80, no. 4 (September 2021): 1173-1203 at 1174

suggests that the common good is the definition of social justice within the social doctrines of the Catholic Church because it is rooted in human rights and requires collegiality and equal opportunities for all to participate in the activities that leads to human flourishing.<sup>51</sup> We will conquer the challenges that drive excessive migration and make it a contemporary crisis by working together.

#### 4.2 The Common Good Versus Common Interest in Politics

The concept of the common good is sometimes used interchangeably with common interest in politics and other spheres of humanities because of its closeness to the public good and public interest. Although, these concepts are close in meaning, they do not signify the same thing. At this juncture, it is imperative to clarify *the good* common to all in a particular political community (common good), and the concept of *common interest*, as understood in this study. What is sometimes clearly a case of “common interest” is often projected as “the common good” in politics and civil leadership. The political class use these concepts loosely to their advantage. And it is contributing to the problem of marginalisation, nepotism and the weaponisation of poverty. For instance, political parties are formed based on interest brought into governance when the political party eventually wins election and forms a government. We see this in the appointment of key functionaries in many liberal democracies. And it is primarily a compensatory process rather than competence, sentimentality rather than objectivity and party interest rather than the collective wellbeing.<sup>52</sup> This situation calls for a critical engagement with the concept of the common good for proper contextualisation.

Magisterial teaching states that “the principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity, unity and equality of all people.”<sup>53</sup> This is often not the case in the politics of governance where allegiance to party interest comes before allegiance to the state, the dignity of every human person, the equality of all peoples and the unity of the political community. Hence, the constant struggle between political parties to be in government at all costs, even when their policies do not benefit the people.

In attempting to draw a distinction between “the common good” and “common interest” in politics, democracy and governance, this study aligns with Simone Weil (1909-1943) who advocated for an assessment of all political parties according to the criteria of truth, justice and the interest of the populace. Weil identifies three essential characteristics of all political

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<sup>51</sup> Lisa Sowle Cahill, “Social Justice and the Common Good: Improving the Catholic Social Teaching Framework,” in *Ethical Challenges in Global Public Health*, ed. Philip J. Landrigan, and Andrea Vicini, CTEWC Book Series 1, 106-117 at 107, <https://jmt.scholasticahq.com/article/24226-ethical-challenges-in-global-public-health>.

<sup>52</sup> See Riordan, “Aristotle and the Politics of the Common Good” in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SMC Press, 2015), 31-48 at 31-3.

<sup>53</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), no. 164.

parties: (1) As a machine to generate collective passions of members. (2) As an organisation designed to exert collective pressure upon the minds of all its individual members. (3) Its main objective is its own growth without limit - seeking to perpetually remain in power. Weil argues that these three characteristics make every political party potentially totalitarian in nature; insisting that “these three characteristics are factual truths – evident to anyone who has ever had anything to do with the everyday activities of political parties.”<sup>54</sup> It is evident that political parties sometimes intentionally create tension using the tool of religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, race, controversial ideologies or blackmail to achieve their goal. This analysis is typical of Nigerian politics, where religion and ethnicity play a major role in the choice of candidate and the possibility of being elected to certain offices. Many countries in the Global South and North have similar challenges. In some parts of the globe, there is an increasing polarisation in ideologies around gender equality, religious freedom, the rights of minority groups, freedom of association and adequate immigration policies. These have become key issues in contemporary political debates.

Weil’s call for the abolition of all political parties is understandable in this context. She argues that “the self-serving partisanship of the political class present a threat to democracies all over the world.”<sup>55</sup> Although, Weil seems to have taken an extreme position, dissecting the dynamics of power and the propaganda of political parties and their interest, reveals that most of the problems in governance are connected to party interest, which often compromise the common good. This is manifested in the increasing disregard for truth and justice in favour of opinion and sentiments, and the consequent corruption perpetuated in various sectors of the political community. Weil forcefully makes a case that authentic politics that facilitates the common good can only be found where party spirit ends.<sup>56</sup> This is another way of distinguishing common interest from the common good in democracy.

It might help to note that both phrases (common good and common interest) begin with the word “common” which implies commonality among all individuals that belong to a certain group or community. The term “good,” on the other hand, signifies moral ends which people ought to pursue, in contrast to “interest” which is often associated with material benefits or individual, or group’s preferences for their own benefit.<sup>57</sup> The “good” in common good, highlights a direct desired value for members of a given community, and its fundamental contents and effects, as a free self-determination entity.<sup>58</sup> It is a “good” that is centred on the overall wellbeing of all members of the political community and not just to a few

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<sup>54</sup> Simone Weil, *On the Abolition of All Political Parties*, Trans. Simon Leys (New York: New York Book Reviews, 2013), 11. Also see, Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What’s Become of the Common Good?* 17; where he argues that “these are dangerous times for democracy due to the rising xenophobia” of the people for the political class. He also decries the fact “that mainstream [political] parties and politicians display little understanding of the discontent that is roiling politics around the world today.”

<sup>55</sup> Weil, *On the Abolition of All Political Parties*, Trans. Simon Leys (New York: New York Book Reviews, 2013), See comment at the back of the book.

<sup>56</sup> Weil, *On the Abolition of All Political Parties*,

<sup>57</sup> Jane Mansbridge, “Common Good,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Vol. II, ed. LaFollette H. (Malden, M.A: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 914.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Hofmann, “Good,” in *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics* ed. Bernhard Stoeckle (London: Burns & Oates, 1979), 116.

privileged ones. The *Compendium* of the Church's social doctrine states that the "good" in the common good, "belonging to everyone and to each person, is and remains 'common,' because it is indivisible and because only together it is possible to attain it, increase it and safeguard its effectiveness, with regard also to the future."<sup>59</sup> Consequently, the "good" in this context, "include an element of claim or demand for the wellbeing of all, which is embodied in various practical ways, maxims or normative function. In content, the "good" can be generally distinguished by the value of individual and social life that is guided by the virtue of love, justice, truth and accountability.<sup>60</sup> Moral theologians agree that "good" is a crucial concept in morality that in the final analysis determines whether an act is morally acceptable or not. It is supposed to guide our intentions, motives, dispositions, and traits considering our relationality and the overall effects of our actions on others.<sup>61</sup> The concept is, therefore, a yardstick for assessing beneficial, estimable and/or morally admirable actions that benefit all.

It will not be out of place to say that the common good is the social and community dimension of the moral good, whereby we are sensitised about the problems of inequality which have adverse effect on members of the political community.<sup>62</sup> We see a repetition of the adverse effects of common interest in different political regimes which sometimes results in riots and change of government: The April 2022 anti-government protest in Sri Lanka that led to the resignation of the president and his cabinet; the various military *coup d'état* in Mali (August 2020), Burkina Faso (September 2022) and Niger Republic (July 2023); Senegal's landmark change of government and the radical people oriented reforms of the President Bassirou Diomaye Faye administration, are all empirical examples of the socio-political responses to the absence of the common good in certain political communities. Other examples include, the October 2020 *End Sars* protest, which highlighted the problem of police brutality in Nigeria and the impunity with which it is being perpetuated. The August 2024 *End Bad Governance* protest in Nigeria was meant to highlight the high cost of living and inconsiderate government policies. These are only a few examples of the different responses resulting from ignoring the principle of the common good in political communities. This indicates that the "good" in the common good, is to be collectively pursued and achieved by all community members.

In addition, the cooperation of those entrusted with implementing policies beneficial for the wellbeing of all is essential in the pursuit of the common good. Hence, there is a need to ensure that the shared values at stake are properly articulated to include not only the intelligibility of goods such as dignified life, health, nutrition, shelter, and security but also that the manner of the accomplishing action of these goods is ethical, transparent, and just. Consideration should, therefore, be given to the principles of justice, liberty, equality, tolerance, respect, and the dignity of every human person in the decisions and actions of

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<sup>59</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 164.

<sup>60</sup> Hofmann, "Good," in *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, 16.

<sup>61</sup> Vincent MacNamara, *The Truth in Love: Reflections on Christian Morality* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988), 122-3.

<sup>62</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 164.

policymakers.<sup>63</sup> Violating these principles threaten the dignity and rights of people who may be forced to migrate. It is important to note also that the common good cannot be restricted to external things of life because the good life is more than just the totality of goods and services. Like Hollenbach, Mulligan and other social ethicists rightly assert, “adequate housing, a good health and educational system for all, adequate income, and access to capital, no doubt contribute to our overall happiness; but understanding the common good strictly in terms of social welfare, public interest, or even public goods are flawed.”<sup>64</sup> Such understanding of the principle of the common good is highly utilitarian in nature and does not capture the essence and richness of the concept. People must realise that positive relationships are, in truth, necessary conditions for sharing of goods and services within society.<sup>65</sup> These relationships are parts of the common good we possess and are meant to be utilised for human flourishing. Hollenbach avers that “the quality of such relationships among members of a political community is itself part of the good that is or is not achieved in it. One of the key elements in the common good of a community or society, therefore, is the good of being a community or society. This shared good is imminent within the relationships that bring this community or society into being.”<sup>66</sup>

Consequently, the notion of the common good implies the existence of a “community” with shared moral values and goals for the benefit of its members, as opposed to an interest shared by a group of persons within the community, as in the case of different political parties with different ideologies, agendas and manifestos in liberal democratic settings. Common interest is a shared, mutual understanding with certain benefits between two or more people in a commercial, economic or political endeavour. It is like a shared goal; something that all members want to achieve from the partnership. A shared interest in a specific subject brings people together to form an alliance, a party or even some form of a “community.”

The existence of different political parties, institutions, unions and civil society groups also shows that the common good and common interest are not necessarily the same thing. It is common knowledge that in politics there is “no permanent friend or enemy, there is only permanent interest.” This popular maxim among the political class has always influenced political decisions among politicians during elections and the formation of government. Aristotle’s analysis of the different forms of leadership and governance, and his criticism of “tyranny,” “oligarchy,” and “democracy” as three corrupt forms of government, highlights the distinction between common good and common interest.<sup>67</sup> For him, monarchy, oligarchy and tyranny are opposed to the principles of the common good, because they are more centred on the interest of the ruling class and their associates. Interestingly, his objection to democracy as a government by many in their own interest, and not in the interests of all also

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<sup>63</sup> Riordan, *Global Ethics and Global Common Goods*, 15-6.

<sup>64</sup> See Hollenbach S.J., *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 7-8; See also Mulligan, “Capabilities and the Common Good” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (2010): 388-406 at 390.

<sup>65</sup> Mulligan, “Capabilities and the Common Good,” 390.

<sup>66</sup> Hollenbach S.J., *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 8-9.

<sup>67</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* 1279b32-1280a5, 78-9.

attest to the distinction between the common good and what might clearly be a case of common interest.<sup>68</sup>

Essentially, democracy is supposed to bring prosperity because it is supposed to be shaped by the people for their good. This understanding expresses the people's yearning for recognition, respect and equal opportunities to participate in their own governance. As a system of government, democracy should allow people to contribute to the decisions and activities that affect them and their future.<sup>69</sup> It should be guided by the logic of equality before the law, where opportunities, status and goods and services are made available to all members of the political community.<sup>70</sup> Some concrete reflections of the common good in a contemporary functional liberal democratic society, where the government is a true representative of the people, are respect for the dignity of every human person at every stage of life, better government policies that serves the needs of its citizens especially in the areas of the protection of life and property, a reliable judicial system; better road networks, environmental friendly public parks, good and affordable educational institutions; employment opportunities, job security, recreational facilities; availability of an efficient public transport system; clean air and drinking water; civil liberties, to mention but a few.<sup>71</sup> These goods that are common are often debated and improved upon through the representatives of the people in a democratic government or civil leadership. Bristow argues that:

The common good [...] is an integral part of the individual good of each one, that is, the personal good of everyone which includes a concern for the good of others, not just our own. This translates into a duty to promote justice, fairness, and equality as well as the charity which consist in wanting the good of the other person.<sup>72</sup>

The above submission highlights the dimension of collective responsibility in the actualisation of the common good in any given community. This study suggests that to nip the migrant crisis in the bud, a dialogical process that brings about consensus on the political obligations associated with the common good in every political community is necessary.

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<sup>68</sup> Aristotle's views may appear to be too moralistic and too idealistic because it relied so much on the presupposition of harmony and agreement with the ideal. Nonetheless, it hits the nail on the head regarding our experience of modern politics which is characterized by pluralism, conflict, struggle for power and an insistence on party, ethnic and individual's interests and entitlements. Riordan suggests that "Aristotle's core ideas can be reworked to apply to modern conditions, and at the same time provide an overview of the common good of politics and other forms of cooperation" for the flourishing of every political community. (See Riordan, "Aristotle and the Politics of the Common Good," 32-3. And "The History and Principle of the Common Good," 13. See also Riordan S.J., *A Politics of the Common Good* (Dublin, Ireland: Institute of Public Administration, 1996), 50-75.

<sup>69</sup> Michael J. Schuck, "Epilogue on Democracy, Culture and Catholicism," in *Democracy Culture and Catholicism: Voices from Four Continents*, ed. Michael J. Schuck and John Crowley-Buck (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 324,

<sup>70</sup> Robert Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 10.

<sup>71</sup> Hussain Waheed, "The Common Good," in *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2018 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/common-good/>

<sup>72</sup> Bristow, *Christian Ethics and Human Person: Truth and Relativism in Contemporary Moral Theology*, (Leominster: Gracewing, 2013), 179.

We suggest that “good politics” acknowledges the correlation between the migrant crisis, politics, truth-telling and the common good. And that it should be used to counteract the deception and manipulation associated with politics and the misinterpretation of the common good among the political class. Hence, we shall focus on the theological and ethical reappraisal of the relationship between the migrant crisis, politics and truth-telling from the perspective of CST.<sup>73</sup>

### **4.3 The Migrant Crisis: Politics, Truth-telling and the Common Good**

Many associate politics with deception, falsehood, manipulation, and corrupt practices. This conception makes it difficult to talk about politics and truth-telling. It also makes it difficult to convince people about the grandeur of politics as a noble vocation of service to humanity. The reasons for this kind of mindset about politics is not far-fetched. Many politicians often abandon their electioneering manifesto, which often contains beautiful ideas about the common good, the development of the state and the wellbeing of the people. Sadly, only a few elected politicians keep to their promises while in office. Many use politics as an easy means of popularity and wealth. Truth must be told; something is malfunctioning when a few people’s happiness and socio-economic growth is achieved at the expense of the masses. There is something awry if the wellbeing of the political class or elites is secured through the oppression, marginalisation, exploitation or neglect of other members of society.<sup>74</sup> CST maintains that “A society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human being at every level must have the common good as its primary goal... Because the human person cannot find fulfilment in isolation.”<sup>75</sup> This means that our relationality and individual contribution for the wellbeing of all is crucial for the flourishing of any society.

We cannot deny our interconnectedness despite the clamour for individualistic lifestyle in some parts of the globe. We came into the world through relationships and there is a deep yearning within every one of us to establish relationships with others in different ways. “This truth,” according to the Magisterium of the Church, “does not simply require that we live with others at various levels of social life, but that we seek the good of all in actual practice and not merely at the level of ideas.”<sup>76</sup> Humans thrive better when we support and

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<sup>73</sup> This study draws strength from Kristin E. Heyer and other social ethicists, who raised concerns about the increasing challenges of the migrant crisis and the need to approach it with prudence and objectivity. For instance, Heyer observes that “With the displacement of persons taking new forms worldwide, the rights and agency conferred on membership remain elusive for many, to the detriment of migrants and communities alike.” She argues that “dominant interpretive frames frequently serve to distort the motives and experiences of people on the move, and theological ethics is well poised to unmask the urgent dimensions of migrant realities.” (See Heyer, “Reframing Displacement and Membership: Ethics of Migration,” *Theological Studies* 73, no. 1, (February 2012): 188-206 at 188; and “Social Sin and Immigration: Good Fence Makes Bad Neighbors,” *Theological Studies* 71, no. 2, (May 2010): 410-436. See also Vaughan Jones, “Migration and the Common Good” in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Re-build Our Broken World, A Collection of Essays*, ed. Virginia Moffatt (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2017)119-132; and Hein de Haas, *How Migration Really Works: A Factual Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics* (London: Viking/Penguin Books, 2023).

<sup>74</sup> Mulligan, “Capabilities and the Common Good,” 390.

<sup>75</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 165.

<sup>76</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 165.

cooperate. Our strength lies in the ability to cooperate and work together for the wellbeing of all. This means that the individual without social bonds or community support “amounts to [achieving] very little. In short, the individual is inconceivable outside the social, or apart from the community.”<sup>77</sup>

Therefore, CST emphasises a vision of the common good where the good of everyone “is ultimately connected to the good of others; because our actions and inactions never occur in a vacuum, and our good is bound tightly to the wellbeing of those around us.”<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the migrant crisis is caused by the failure to focus on the common good. Our failure to be our brothers and sisters’ keeper is partly the driving force behind the movement of different categories of people to different parts of the world in search of greener pastures. And this is what “good politics” is attempting to address. Any government that disregards the common good principle neglects the needs of the people. It also violates their dignity and rights, depriving them of the opportunities to share in “the commons” essential to dignified living.

There are concrete examples of the critical evaluation of the relationship between the migrant crisis and the common good. Paul Biya of Cameroon has been president for more than 42 years (1982- till date). While in office, he championed the constitutional amendment to allow him to remain in office perpetually. This was done through a questionable consultative process. The controversial constitutional amendment passed in April 2008 abolished presidential term limits and allowed Biya to remain in office like a “monarch” in a “democratic” system of government. It has been alleged that his administration has been marked by corrupt practices, and dictatorship standing on the way to socio-economic growth and development in the country.<sup>79</sup>

Sani Abacha, Nigeria’s Military Head of State from 1993-1998, is also a case in point. He was a brutal military dictator who violated the rights of Nigerians to freedom of expression and association. He also controlled the press and banned all forms of political activities. He dehumanised and executed many Nigerians whom he accused of treason. It is alleged that he even attempted transitioning from Military Head of State to a democratically elected president of Nigeria, which was prevented by his sudden death in June 1998. After his death,

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<sup>77</sup> Philipsen, review of *A Common Good Approach to Development*, 594.

<sup>78</sup> Mulligan, “Capabilities and the Common Good,” 390. Also see Philipsen, Review of *A Common Good Approach to Development*, 594

<sup>79</sup> Biya is not alone on this, he is following the footsteps of Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea, the longest serving African leader, who has occupied the seat of power since 1979. This means that he has been in that office for the past 47 year. There are also political leaders like Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo (40 years in power as of 2024); Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda (39 years and still counting); and Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea, who has been in office for the past 31 years. All these political leaders have perpetuated themselves in the position of leadership with nothing concrete to show in terms of the common good and human flourishing. The living conditions of their people has not improved because they have not been able to deliver the dividends of good leadership to their people. This explains why many Africans are at the centre of the migrant crisis. (See Amy McKenna, “Paul Biya,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 25 August 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Biya>. Accessed August 28, 2024; also see VOA Africa, “Africa’s Current Longest-Serving Leaders,” <https://www.voaafrica.com/a/Africa-s-longest-serving-leaders-6820897.html> (6 November 2022), Accessed October 14, 2024.

it was discovered that Abacha and his family had embezzled Nigeria's wealth amounting to billions of dollars.<sup>80</sup> We cited some examples of his corrupt dealings and embezzlement in Chapter Two of this study. This self-serving leadership is prevalent across the Sub Sahara African continent and the Global South, where leaders ignore the common good, violate or manipulate the constitution to favour them; break the laws or abuse their office to benefits their families and cronies. Such abuse of power invites a critical examination of the link between the migrant crisis, politics and the pursuit of the common good.

One wonders why people would want to remain in the corridors of power, even when incapacitated by old age, health challenges, and their leadership not benefitting the people. Such attitudes defeat the vision of democracy as the path for the growth and development of any nation.<sup>81</sup> The common good principle is an alternative approach of assessing domineering leadership style responsible for the socio-economic and political problems contributing to the migrant crisis.<sup>82</sup> Although such leaders may claim to be practising democracy, their actions contradict all forms of democratic principles. Why then would ordinary people, professionals, technicians and business owners not look for alternative ways of surviving when their political leaders and political system is failing them?

In the Third Chapter of this study, we provided various definitions of politics that encompass the elements of struggle for power, allocation of status, allocation of goods and services, negotiation, dialogue and decision-making. These definitions illustrate the primary significance of politics in the actualisation of the common good within every political community. We highlighted the need for "good politics" for human flourishing and the well-being of the global community. According to Max Weber (1864-1920), a sociologist, philosopher, and political economist, defining the common good underscores the reason practical politics sometimes truncate the implementation of the principle. "Politics," according to Webber, means "striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power either among states or among groups within a state."<sup>83</sup> He argues that those who are "active in politics strive for power either as a means to serving other aims, ideal or egoistic, or as 'power for power's sake,' that is, in order to enjoy the prestige feeling that power gives."<sup>84</sup> His definition suggest that political power is sometimes motivated by some personal, ethnic, religious, or "community" interest, which may be far from what is good for the sovereign state and its people. In other words, "political power can be pursued as a

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<sup>80</sup> See The Editors of Britannica Encyclopedia, "Sani Abacha," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 16, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sani-Abacha>. Accessed 13 October 2024. Also see, "The Death of General Sani Abacha" *BBC Witness History* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3cswskz> An interview with General Abacha's personal doctor, Professor Sadiq Suleiman Wali, about his sudden on 8 June 1998. The interview was conducted in 2015, See also Okonjo-Iweala, *Reforming the Unreformable: Lessons from Nigeria* (London: MIT Press, 2012), 84-86, 97.

<sup>81</sup> Hollenbach S.J., *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 219.

<sup>82</sup> Philipsen, review of *A Common Good Approach to Development*, 594.

<sup>83</sup> Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 77-128 at 78. See also Ludvic Lado SJ, "Toward A Spirituality of Politics," *Theological Studies* 84, no. 2 (2023): 198-211 at 199.

<sup>84</sup> Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," 78

means to an end or as an end in itself.”<sup>85</sup> For example, ‘*Emil’okanism* is a familiar slang among Nigerians associated with the current (2023- 2027) president of Nigeria, Mr. Bola Ahmed Tinubu. It is a combination of the Yoruba word ‘*Emi l’okan*,’ which literally means “it is my turn” and the English suffix, “-ism,” which denotes a state, condition, belief, principle, philosophy, philosophical system, doctrine or school of thought. ‘*Emil’okanism* articulates Tinubu’s entitled belief that it is his turn to be the president of Nigeria. And he did everything humanly possible to become the president in the February 2023 general elections. Although the elections were marred with so many irregularities, Bola Ahmed Tinubu was eventually declared and sworn in as the president of Nigeria on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The Supreme Court of Nigeria affirmed this declaration on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

Sadly, since his inception of office as the president of Nigeria, things have become challenging for Nigerians, resulting in populist movements and agitation by various civil society groups - an indication that his political philosophy serves his interest rather than the common good. Invoking the spirit of ‘*emi l’okan*’ was a political strategy to gain the sympathy of his ethnic group and political allies at the detriment of the common good. Even though, the concept was introduced into Nigerian politics by President Tinubu during his presidential bid, it has been appropriated by other political stake holders within the Nigerian political landscape and beyond. For instance, Senator Ahmed Baba Kaita said that his political party, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) does not need to campaign to win in the 2023 general elections. He believed that the perceived failure of the ruling party, that is, the All Progressive Congress (APC) suffices to ensure victory in a landslide victory for the PDP. This is another way of saying that “It is their turn,” which is far from “the good” that is “common” to all Nigerians. It is a projection of some form of ‘*Emil’okanism*, which makes no attempt to articulate a vision of the socio-economic and political transformation of the country for the benefit of its people.

Dissatisfaction with the power struggle between the two dominant political parties (APC and PDP) in Nigeria, inspired the emergence of the *Obidient Movement*, - an informal socio-political group yearning for positive change in the Nigerian political system and governance. This group reshaped politicking and democratic elections in the history of Nigeria. It has remained like a pressure group for the government, mainly using social media outlets to criticise government policies. Like the Spanish *Podemos* that changed the Spanish political landscape in 2015,<sup>86</sup> the *Obidient Movement* has impacted on Nigerian politics because of the way they mobilised and influenced the general public in the 2023 general elections. Sadly, their effort was frustrated by the structures (Independent National Electoral

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<sup>85</sup> Lado SJ, “Toward A Spirituality of Politics,” 199.

<sup>86</sup> Podemos is “the people” oriented political party created by the unsatisfied millions of Spaniards who stood against the old political order from 2011 onwards. It is a product of mass political disaffection and has become one of the most intriguing political developments in Western Europe because of the unequalled impact it made in the 2015 general election in Spain within the short time it was founded. (See Íñigo Errejón and Chantal Mouffe, *Podemos: In the Name of the People* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2016), 8-13.)

Commission [INEC], the Police, and the Judiciary) that were supposed to safeguard such initiative for positive change in the country.

What is fascinating about *Podemos* and the *Obidient Movement*, is their explicit appeal to the principle of the common good, exemplified in their social unity, collective identity and common vision for a better life for all. Both had a lucid vision of a just society, where political leadership and governance is centred on the people's well-being - a key component of the principle of the common good.<sup>87</sup> According to Michael Sandel, "To achieve a just society, we must reason together about the meaning of the good life, and create a public culture hospitable to the disagreements that will inevitably arise in trying to make things work for the betterment of all."<sup>88</sup> Such constructive disagreements are the necessary ingredients that shapes our mindsets and values, leading to a better understanding and appreciation of one another. They also reveal our limitations and the need to complement one another through collective reasoning about the way forward, the kind of political discourse that is necessary for the actualisation of the common good, whose absence is a significant factor in the migration of peoples.

Many people resort to migration because they are either jobless, helpless, marginalised, exploited or ignored and unable to provide their basic needs in their homeland. They seek alternative context where their dignity, and basic needs will be guaranteed. Oliver O'Donovan and Pat Logan highlight the significance and potential of the principle of the common good in changing the nature of political conversation within democratic societies. O'Donovan is concerned about the motive for people's political action, especially when they do not reflect the wider spectrum of the political community but reflect private or sectional interest.<sup>89</sup> To this effect, Logan, maintains that "A notion of the common good gives us a language which can take us beyond the notion of politics as simple *bargaining*, where one group's rights and interests played off against another's, to mature political *argument*, where communication and a common search for good can be pursued."<sup>90</sup> The Spanish *Podemos* and the Nigerian *Obidient Movement* epitomise the pursuit for "a good" common to the people in their respective countries. Such understanding of the common good is necessary for the migrant crisis.

Consequently, a common good approach to civil or political leadership seeks to engage all sectors of society in exploring strategies for narrowing the inequality gap between the political class and the people in the interest of all. It calls for the rebuilding of public institutions that provides equitable socio-economic services for both the rich and the poor.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> See Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times*, 111.

<sup>88</sup> Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (London: Penguin, 2009), 261.

<sup>89</sup> Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desires of Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 271; See also Vallely, *Towards a New Politics*, 151.

<sup>90</sup> Pat Logan, *A World Transformed: When Hopes Collapse and Faith Collide*, (London: Church Together in Britain and Ireland [CTBI], 2007), 125.

<sup>91</sup> Andrew Bradstock, "The Unexamined Society: Public Reasoning, Social Justice and the Common Good" in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SMC Press, 2015), 16-28 at 25.

The growing gap between the rich and the poor continue to undermine the solidarity that democratic citizenship requires and needs to be addressed through a new politics of the common good. Here, the reconstruction of the infrastructure of civic life with a strong sense of community interest rather than focusing on broadening personal, ethnic, group, party or religious interest is necessary. “Hence, a politics of moral engagement is a more inspiring ideal for a just society.”<sup>92</sup> Apparently, every community’s political agenda must improve the people’s lives for the migrant crisis to be nipped in the bud.

Unfortunately, the political class have succeeded in changing the understanding of politics from being a vehicle for service to the people to a quick money-making profession. This is why vying for political position or office is increasingly becoming toxic in most parts of the world. Most politicians, who are supposed to represent the people, create this political image. The corruption in politics “often perversely undermine the political aspirations of those who believe in far-reaching social change,” articulated in “good politics.”<sup>93</sup> Those elected as representatives of the people often end up building lucrative careers in the public sector, devoid of the interest and welfare of the people they represent. Therefore, advocating for the restoration of a just society involves recognising the shared moral obligations that form the foundation of community and ensuring that the government safeguards these obligations for the benefits of all its members.<sup>94</sup> This perspective implies the common good in every political community in attempting to address the migrant crisis.

The ‘*emi l’okan*’ syndrome in politics can no longer be dismissed and reduced to a mere slogan in Nigeria and the broader global political conversation. It has cast a long shadow over the public debate on economic and social policies, which should be central in the political agenda of any party campaigning for power and political leadership.<sup>95</sup> The syndrome is reflected in the politics of many nations where most politicians put themselves up as the best candidate for the job based on some preconceived mindset. For instance, there has always been a struggle between the Democrats and the Republicans in the United States. Both political parties project their candidate as the ideal person for the job, and the candidates as well as their supporters usually use all kinds of rhetoric to garner vote for themselves. Donald Trump has consistently alleged that his mandate was stolen in the 2021 United States elections. He re-echoed his campaign strategy of 2016 in 2024: profiling of immigrants and promising to reduce their numbers. His anti-immigrant sentiment contributed to his election in 2016.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Sandel, *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* (London: Penguin, 2009), 260, 263-69. See also Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* (London: Penguin, 2009) and the Website of the Equality Trust: [www.equalitytrust.org.uk](http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk).

<sup>93</sup> Errejón and Chanteal Mouffe, *Podemos: In the Name of the People*, 11.

<sup>94</sup> Bradstock, “The Unexamined Society,” 24.

<sup>95</sup> Tayo Oke, “‘*Emi l’okan*’: Tinubu’s Turn to Do What?” *The Punch*, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022, <https://punchng.com/emi-lokan-tinubu-turn-to-do-what/> Accessed September 20, 2024; See also Tinubu, “Why I Invoked ‘Emilokan Spirit’ Ahead of the 2023 Elections” *Premium Times Nigeria*, 29 June 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines>. Accessed September 20, 2024.

<sup>96</sup> See Faye Hipsman and Doris Meissner, *Trump Executive Order and DHS Implementation Memo on Border Enforcement: A Brief Review* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, April 2017),

Trump's political campaign for the November 2024 general elections and his economic tariff plan for the global community reveals a resurgence of nationalism, ethnocentric aggression and the possibility of xenophobic attacks on innocent people. His political slogan: "Let's make America great again" is becoming clearer for immigrants and the global community?<sup>97</sup> He promised employments, lower taxes, fewer foreign wars, and stronger border control. These promises resonated with many people. However, his leadership style raises more questions for Americans and the global community. He had pledged to end the war in Ukraine as soon as he comes into office. He also promises to intervene in the Middle East war, where over 70,000 civilians were killed in Gaza between October 2023-October 2025.<sup>98</sup> His policies have shown some elements of '*emil'okanism* – it is his or their (the US) turn to influence global decisions.

At best, '*emil'okanism* is a political philosophy that is built on self-centredness, sectionalism, tribalism, ethnicism, nationalism, racism and sentimentalism. Any politics that is devoid of improving the living conditions of the people ignores the principle of the common good. It solicits the question: When is it going to be the people's turn? Unfortunately, the people are often misled and left to pay the price after the elections. Misleading and deceiving the people, negligence of the common good, and not telling the truth in politics facilitates the migrant crisis. One would, therefore, understand why Pope Francis would invoke God's intervention for more reliable and sincere politicians who have the interest of the people at heart. The Holy Father, in *Evangelium Gaudium*, petitioned God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots of every political community:

I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor! It is vital that government leaders and financial leaders take heed and broaden their horizons, working to ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare.<sup>99</sup>

It is widely recognised that the world needs politicians who are truly dedicated to enhancing the lives of the people and the improvement of society. The main function of political power is to support the common good and promote social justice.<sup>100</sup> This entails equitable

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<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/trump-executive-order-and-dhs-implementation-memo-border-enforcement-brief-review>. As cited by Kristin E. Heyer, "Internalized Borders: Immigration Ethics in the Age of Trump," *Theological Studies* 79, no 1 (2018), 146-64 at 147.

<sup>97</sup> Heyer, highlights the impact of Donald Trump's immigration policies after his first years in office during his last administration (2017-2021). She raised concerns that "The Trump administration's immigration measures and attendant dehumanizing rhetoric have fanned the flames of nationalism and sown fear in immigrant communities. Its internal enforcement strategies are bolstered by manipulative narrative that perpetuate myths and reflect facile analysis of complex dilemmas, focusing on symptoms rather than causes of migration." (See Heyer, "Internalized Borders: Immigration Ethics in the Age of Trump," *Theological Studies* 79, no 1 (2018), 146-64,

<sup>98</sup> Eamonn Coyle, "Donald Trump: A Leader You May Love or Loathe, But Cannot Ignore," *The Irish Catholic*, October 23, 2025, 10.

<sup>99</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelium Gaudium* (November 24, 2013), no 205, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html) (hereafter cited as *EG*).

<sup>100</sup> Lado SJ, "Toward A Spirituality of Politics," 199.

distribution of opportunities, goods and services. CST holds that the principle of the common good can be achieved through constructive criticism rather than unhealthy competition among politicians and their supporters.<sup>101</sup> This effort demands sincerity and accountability from those in authority to the people they govern, considering the socio-economic, political and environmental issues behind the migrant crisis. Truth-telling is a moral virtue that fosters trust among individuals. It also cultivates reliable relationships and paves the way for responsible and accountable leadership. Truth, according to the *Compendium*, is one of the foundations of society that solidifies relationships.<sup>102</sup> It is, therefore, a vital component of the common good that must not be overlooked. When political promises concerning the well-being of citizens are honoured after elections, it enhances the electorate's confidence in their leaders and the political system. However, this remains the most fluid and precarious aspect of politics and political leadership. Promises are often made to secure votes, only for the people and their needs to be disregarded afterwards.

The virtue of truth is essential in pursuing the common good because it serves as an instrument of liberation (See John 8:12; 31-32). In Christian theology, truth is identified with the person of Christ, the Liberator, Saviour and Redeemer of humanity. He is quoted in John 14:6 saying, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" and in John 8: 36, He says, "when the Son of man sets you free you shall be free indeed." This means that knowing and living by the truth leads to genuine freedom. Here, truth is meant to guide us toward the realisation of the common good. Truth-telling stands in opposition to the lies, falsehood, deception, manipulation, corruption and embezzlement of public funds associated with today's politics. These dimensions of social sins enslave humanity, leaving many to a miserable life.<sup>103</sup> Karl Menninger and Mark O'Keefe O.S.B rightly highlight these anomalies in their respectively books, by asking: Whatever Became of Sin? and What are

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<sup>101</sup> See John Moffatt S.J., "Whatever Happened to the Common Good?" in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Re-build Our Broken World, A Collection of Essays*, ed. Virginia Moffatt (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2017), 29-42; and Simon Barrow "The Uncommon Good" in *Reclaiming the Common Good*, 43-55. Also see Andrew Bradstock, "The Unexamined Society: Public Reasoning, Social Justice and the Common Good," in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SMC Press, 2015), 16-28. These scholars are calling for a renewed interest on the principle of the common good in political and national conversations. Some of these scholars gave empirical examples of how the common good guided some political leaders and government policies in the past.

<sup>102</sup> See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos., 150, 160, 163 and 165.

<sup>103</sup> The *Compendium* teaches that both personal and social sins are theological and ethical realities in our world because of the social consequences of sin; let alone institutional, collective or structural sins perpetuated by a group or several persons representing the community. Considering the fact of human solidarity, individual's sin in some way affects others. However, this must not be mistaken or understood as excusing or cancelling personal guilt and responsibility. At the bottom of every situation of sin, there is always the individual whose sin is responsible for certain socio-economic, political or environmental misery others must bear. Therefore, "Social sin includes every sin committed against the justice due every individual, the rights of the human person, starting with the right to life, including that life in the womb, and every sin against the physical integrity of the individual; every sin against the freedom of others, especially the supreme freedom to believe in God and worship him; and every sin against the dignity and honour of one's neighbour. [It includes] every sin against the common good and its demands, in the whole broad area of rights and duties of citizens." (See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 117-8).

they Saying About Social Sin? Both questions suggest that modern society is losing its sense of sin and moral responsibility, which is resulting in the several social crises we grapple with today.<sup>104</sup>

Personifying the truth in Christ means that the truth must take flesh in us, enhance our relationships, and lead us to actualise the common good in every political community. If we do not embrace the truth about the root causes of the migrant crisis and other socio-economic and political issues afflicting our world today, we will not be able to provide adequate solutions to these problems. Patrick Hannon asserts that truth-telling is just one aspect of truthfulness. We must also consider the truth in terms of doing or acting.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, the conceptualisation of “truth” in the context of the migrant crisis and the politics of the common good is in three dimensions.<sup>106</sup> I) Truth is often referred to as ‘facts.’ This relates to the way things are. In this context, truth is essentially reality. It can also signify authenticity - something that is not false, deceitful, or fake. II) Truth is also perceived as ‘morality,’ which involves the right way to behave or act. Here, actions are guided by a true standard of morality rather than individual opinion, personal comfort, self-indulgence, religious sentiments, or ideological influence. In this respect, truth also pertains to the common good in the society. III) Truth is further considered as ‘dependability.’ This relates to being trustworthy or reliable. When we describe someone as truthful or something is true, we imply that we can count on them or the information they provide as reliable.

The migrant crisis must be addressed through all three dimensions of truthfulness. Firstly, the crisis should be approached as a factual social problem. In this regard, a clear distinction must be drawn between situations requiring immediate and short-term assistance and those necessitating long-term measures for migrants whose well-being, dignity, and basic rights are perpetually at risk. Secondly, it should be regarded as a moral or ethical issues that demands proper attention. In this context, it is insufficient to merely avoid causing harm or inflicting injury on people. “In some situations, failing to act to prevent injury can be as much a moral failure as acting in ways that cause injury. Omission can become as immoral as commission.”<sup>107</sup> The parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 serves as a classic example of the sin of omission found in the Gospel narratives. Jesus employed the parable to caution against the pitfalls and dangers of a life driven by greed, insensitivity and lack of love and compassion for others.

Unfortunately, numerous instances of negligence exist in various political communities confronting the migrant crisis. The leadership of these communities does not meet their responsibilities to uphold the dignity and basic rights of their citizen, resulting in their relocation. Hence, we truthfully need to consider the duty to assist and support people facing

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<sup>104</sup> See Karl Menninger, *Whatever Become of Sin?* (New York: Hawthron, 1973). Also see Mark O’keefe O.S.B, *What are They Saying About Social Sin?* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1990), 1-25.

<sup>105</sup> Patrick, Hannon., “To Tell the Truth,” *The Furrow*, 68, March 2017, 132.

<sup>106</sup> The three ways of understanding the word “Truth” as used in this study is an adaptation from ‘Homily Pack for November 21, 2021, Solemnity of Christ the King (B)’, *ePriest.com Weekly Bulletin*, 14 November 2021.

<sup>107</sup> Hollenbach, S.J., *Humanity in Crisis*, 98.

ethnic cleansing, political threat, natural disaster, and socio-economic misery due to bad governance and failure in leadership.<sup>108</sup> Thirdly, the migrant crisis requires a reliable commitment from government institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and faith communities. This situation represents a humanitarian crisis that demands the virtues of compassion, justice, prudence, empathy, solidarity and charity.

#### **4.4 The Common Good and the Migrant Crisis: Some Socio-Political Implications**

Some people may wonder about the possibility of applying the principle of the common good to the migrant crisis, given the diversity of human relationship, and the pluralistic nature of our world, which encompasses many cultures, religious traditions, and political ideologies. This reality may prompt the question: What is the relationship between the common good and the migrant crisis and what are the socio-political implications? This study presents several socio-political implications of the common good concerning the migrant crisis stemming from the Roman Catholic social tradition. It connects the migrant crisis to other social, economic and political issues impacting our shared humanity and, to some degree, our common home. As noted in Chapter Two, it is undeniable that poverty, unemployment, ethnic and religious violence, war, bad governance, corrupt leadership and environmental pollution or degradation has displaced many people in society. These factors are some of the drivers of the migrant crisis. We contend that many people resort to migration as a survival strategy and, in Chapter Three, suggest that “good politics” could resolve or mitigate the crisis.

We draw insights from the ancient philosopher, Aristotle, who sees human beings as “political animals” due to their capacity for rational thought, enabling them to engage in dialogue or negotiation about the issues impacting their well-being. This, in our view, encapsulates what “good politics” entails. However, for “good politics” to materialise and be effective within our political systems, there is a need for the twin pillars of the common good and contributive justice. Jacques Maritain aptly notes that “There is a correlation between the [human] person as a social unit and the notion of the common good as the end of the social whole. [Meaning that] the common good is common because it is received in persons, each one of whom is a mirror of the whole.”<sup>109</sup> Consequently, there is need for effective leadership to coordinate efforts for the welfare of all. Therefore, the common good is the reason for the existence of political institutions.<sup>110</sup> In other words, political authority exist to ensure the good of all in the community.

This research contends that the state must ensure the coherence, unity, and socio-economic well-being of its citizens. It is the state’s responsibility to provide employment opportunities, security, and other socio-economic means of livelihood to its inhabitants. People need to be well integrated into a community for social cohesion to attain the fullness

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<sup>108</sup> Hollenbach, S.J., *Humanity in Crisis*, 96-9.

<sup>109</sup> Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, Trans. John J Fitzgerald (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, Reprinted 2015), 49.

<sup>110</sup> See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 168.

of life and its accomplishment. As rational beings, we require development through character training, education, social interaction, means of livelihood and the cooperation of others to flourish. Hence, the indispensable role of the political community is to protect the dignity and rights of its citizens.<sup>111</sup> An understanding of the role of the political community and its leadership prompted the concerns raised by Pope Pius XI regarding the need for a just distribution of created goods, given the vast gap between the few individuals who are exceedingly rich with a flamboyant lifestyle and the countless poor people in the world who are struggling to survive.<sup>112</sup> Our exploration of the common good in this study demonstrates that we cannot effectively address the migrant crisis without thoroughly considering the intricate challenges posed by socio-economic and political inequalities fuelling the situation.

CST hinges the principle of the common good on Jesus' commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves (Mark 12:31). This encompasses charity, hospitality, compassion, empathy, kindness, justice and what Pope Francis refers to as social friendship. Suppose these virtues guide everything we do; in that case, it will help us to act justly, speak with kindness and walk humbly with one another regardless of our background, earthly achievements or socio-economic status. With this attitude, the common good will gradually take centre stage in various political communities and eventually address some of the challenges driving people to migrate. Although everyone is responsible for achieving the common good, the state serves as the overseer and principal coordinator of the principle.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, the responsibility of the state and its citizens in pursuing the common good must be characterised by an understanding that is established on positive relationships. Embracing such an understanding will help avoid the dual extremes of totalitarianism and individualism.<sup>114</sup>

Karl H. Peschke identifies two basic functions of the common good in every political community: "First, it promotes and makes possible an integral human existence for its members. Second, it is to preclude antisocial behaviours that interfere with the rights of others and with the social order."<sup>115</sup> He argues that "This aspect of the common good is realised by the establishment and securing of peace and order in the society. And the most efficient means to it is the law of the state, which has the power of coercion behind it."<sup>116</sup> This implies that the law of every state is a common good designed to protect everyone in society, ensuring the safety of lives and property. It also fosters a sense of belonging among

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<sup>111</sup> Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 49.

<sup>112</sup> See Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (May 15, 1931), no. 197, [https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515\\_quadragesimo-anno.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html) (hereafter cited as *QA*).

<sup>113</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 168.

<sup>114</sup> Hollenbach suggests that the bonds of positive relationship in the political community should not be overlooked because it is part of the 'goods' of the common good that leads to human flourishing. He argues that "The common good, therefore, is not simply a means for attaining the private good of individuals; it is a value to be pursued for its own sake [because of its benefits to the human family]. This suggests that a key aspect of the common good can be described as the good of being a community – a good achieved in mutual relationships in and through which human beings achieve their wellbeing." (See Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 81-2).

<sup>115</sup> Peschke, "Moral Responsibility in Community Life," 558.

<sup>116</sup> Peschke, "Moral Responsibility in Community Life," 558.

individuals. In this context, the importance of the rule of law in achieving the common good cannot be overstated. It allows us to recognise the depth of the concept because everyone is meant to be equal before the law of the land.

The highly polarised arguments on the status of migrants, the often-insufficient recognition of their dignity and rights, their treatment in various countries, and the responses of some political leaders to the migrant crisis all illustrate that Jesus' commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves does not align with the world's standard. In chapter three, we discussed the harsh treatment some migrants face and how their vulnerability is sometimes exploited against them. Appeals to the common good within the politics of the migrant crisis are typically viewed through the lens of the polarisation between the affluent host countries and the intellectual capacity, professional skills, cultural ties, and the socio-economic or political status of the migrants.

Additionally, there are also instances where this polarisation is reflected in the heated debates between government and opposition parties, between migrants and citizens, and between the government of host communities and human right activists defending migrants' rights and dignity.<sup>117</sup> It is always easier for intellectuals, professionals, technicians, well-established business owners, celebrities and prominent politicians to migrate and integrate into other countries because of their wealth and potential contribution to the economic growth of these nations. This is not always true for ordinary or less privileged individuals struggling to survive. The engrossing images and videos from 2015 of numerous unauthorised immigrants travelling in unsafe boats and other dangerous means across European borders solidify the above claim regarding the unequal treatment of migrants. What did the world do to address such precarious humanitarian challenge? The world's attention was drawn to these images not because of the number of people on the move or those who died in the process. It was certainly not due to the sad stories that accompanied the survivors but because of the failure of humanity to protect the rights and dignity of fellow human beings in desperate situations.<sup>118</sup>

Research has revealed that more than 80 percent of migrants who reached Europe on boat or other illegal means in 2015 were people either fleeing ethnic or religious conflict, or some form of war. There are also those escaping poverty, human right violations, and deteriorating security situation in their home countries.<sup>119</sup> For instance, most ordinary migrants from Eritrea are said to have travelled to Europe through the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. This situation arises from the millions of people suffering in Eritrea due to severe famine. What about Burundi, where political conflict has left nearly three million people starving? Should we also address the persistent security challenges posed by insurgency,

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<sup>117</sup> Riordan, "Aristotle and the Politics of the Common Good Today," in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SCM Press, 2015), 31.

<sup>118</sup> Cruz, "When the Poor Knock on Our Door: A Theological Response to Unwanted Migration," 197.

<sup>119</sup> See "Migrant Crisis: One Million Enter Europe in 2015," *BBC News*, [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35158769](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35158769) and "Why Is EU Struggling with Migrants and Asylum," *BBC News*, [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24583286](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24583286) Accessed September 11, 2014

banditry and kidnapping for ransom across the borders of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria? The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) serves another example of enduring violent conflict, where wars among various armed groups have destabilised relationships with one another. The same violent conflict is true of the socio-economic setback in South Sudan, where armed conflict has left millions displaced and starving.<sup>120</sup> These are just few examples of how neglecting the common good harmed political communities resulting in unplanned migration.

Pope Francis highlighted several issues related to violent conflict during his visit to Central African Republic (hereafter, CAR) in November 2015. CAR is a country with thousands of forcibly displaced individuals and millions of persons are facing starvation due to decades of violent conflict. “This small country in the centre of Africa is suffering from a mixture of social fragmentation, political instability, religious fanaticism, ethnic fundamentalism, natural disasters, and extreme hunger.”<sup>121</sup> Some scholars have observed that the conflict in CAR is the most overlooked crises in the world, contributing to the migrant crisis. Luciani affirms the global dimension of every local conflict and its consequences:

Such broken local realities have global causes and repercussions; they reveal to us the scandal of the rich world’s indifference to what is happening on the peripheries. They give evidence of a world that, despite boasting about global interconnections, is becoming ever more local and nationalist in what relates to the information it produces and its involvement in the Calvary of others, especially the poor majorities who struggle every day to survive on our planet.<sup>122</sup>

This necessitates an ethical and theological assessment of our shared humanity, common home, and the collective good, while considering the issue of inequality and the concept of global common good. This study draws insight from Pope Francis’ concerns about the negative impact of globalization in local communities. The Holy Father avers that “local conflicts and disregard for the common good are exploited by global economy to impose a single cultural model. This model unifies the world but divides persons and nations.” He maintains that “as society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbours but does not make us brothers [and sisters]. We are more and more alone than ever in an increasingly massified world that promotes individual interests and weakens the communitarian dimension of life.”<sup>123</sup> Thus, the following consideration of the socio-political implications of the common good to the migrant crisis alongside other principles of CST.

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<sup>120</sup> Rafael Luciani, “Francis and the Pastoral Geopolitics of Peoples and Their Culture: A Structural Option for the Poor,” *Theological Studies* 8, no. 1 (2020): 181-202 at 194.

<sup>121</sup> Luciani, “Francis and the Pastoral Geopolitics of Peoples and Their Culture,” 194. See also, *Global Conflict Tracker*, “Conflict in the Central African Republic,” <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-central-africa-republic>. and Marion Guenard, “What’s Happening in the Central African Republic,” *Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)*, <https://www.nrc.no/perspectives/2024/whats-happening-in-the-central-africa-republic/> Accessed October 2, 2024

<sup>122</sup> Luciani, “Francis and the Pastoral Geopolitics of Peoples and Their Culture,” 194.

<sup>123</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 12.

#### 4.4.1 The Common Good and People's Well-being

The common good is *centred on the people's well-being and fulfilment* in every society. This means that socio-economic and political decisions must always consider the well-being of the people. The migrant crisis, as indicated thus far, primarily results from poor government policies and sometimes insensitive economic decisions that negatively impact the masses. Let us again use Nigeria as a case study: How can purchasing a new presidential jet and new luxurious SUVs of 160 million Naira per unit for members of the National Assembly amid the challenges of hunger, high rate of poverty, and unemployment in the country benefit the people? How does the approval and executions of the extravagant budget of 21 billion Naira for the renovation of the vice president's residence, along other similar projects, serve the interest of the Nigerian people? How can a president who claims that he inherited a dilapidated Nigeria with a comatose economy in 2023 spend public funds recklessly as if he inherited a prosperous nation?

A common-good-oriented administration would implement socio-economic policies that benefit the people. It would also strive to create structures and institutions that provide job opportunities for those who are unemployed. A common-good-oriented government would foster an environment where professionals, technicians, business leaders, and every citizen feels appreciated and needed to contribute to the growth and development of their country. It would also reduce the inequality gap between the rich and the poor. Political leaders are elected to be accountable to the people, and not for the marginalisation of others.<sup>124</sup>

Many people risk relocating to other countries because they see no better future in their homeland. Therefore, it is essential to consider the plight of the masses in every governmental, socio-economic and political decision. The prophetic voices of numerous African Bishops' conferences have highlighted this pitfall in their respective nations. They have urged the government to work toward alleviating poverty. For example, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) has observed that:

Owing to mismanagement and the failing economy with an ever-increasing debt burden, there is poverty and hunger in our land, despite our huge human and natural resources. [...] Furthermore, government have resorted to unnecessary borrowing, jeopardising the well-being of the present and future generations. This poor state of our economy has led to the mass migration of our human capital, especially professional and skilled labourers, fleeing the nation in search of greener pastures. In the light of the above, we urge government to make adequate policies and provide the enabling environment for the creation of more jobs by both government and the private sector. This would surely reduce the level of poverty, insecurity and unrest in the land.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> See John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), no. 14, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091981\\_laborem-exercens.pdf](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.pdf)

<sup>125</sup> CBCN, "The Threshold of A New Dawn in Nigeria," An unpublished Communiqué issued at the end of the Second Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria at the Sacred Heart Pastoral/Retreat Centre, Orlu, Imo State, Nigeria (8-16 September, 2022), no. 4.

The lack of job opportunities and other means of livelihood is a significant factor in the various crises troubling Nigeria. It also contributes to the migrant crisis. The South African Catholic Bishop's Conference made a similar observation in its 1992 pastoral letter that: "In working for a better society, we should always empower the poor and disabled, the aged and the youth, and women from every group, as these unfortunately, tend to be neglected in every culture, religion and nation."<sup>126</sup> People migrate due to marginalisation, and other socio-economic and political neglect in their home countries.

Essentially, the principle of the common good calls for the prioritisation of the well-being of the people over the compensation of politicians, the syphoning of public funds, the satisfaction of personal ambition, or the fulfilment of any theoretical or ideological goals of a political party.<sup>127</sup> It is to such misplaced priority that John Rawls aptly proposed a "deliberative democracy" where issues are openly and extensively discussed by all relevant stake holders for a consensus on "effective social and political structures that would sustain a 'fair' society."<sup>128</sup> The common good, in Rawls conception, refers to the general conditions that are approximately beneficial to everyone.<sup>129</sup>

Once again, the SACBC effectively underscores that the economy of every political community exists for the welfare of the people, not the other way round.<sup>130</sup> This is what the principle of the common good is meant to achieve in addressing the migrant crisis. Regrettably, as Pope Francis observes, "Political life no longer has to do with healthy debate about long-term plans to improve people's lives and the advancement of the common good, but only with slick marketing techniques primarily aimed at discrediting others."<sup>131</sup> How, then, can we build a world of social friendship where human dignity and a dignified life for all are promoted?

#### 4.4.2: The Common Good and the Preservation of Our Common Home

The common good highlights the importance of *preserving the integrity of God's creation in its entirety*. The earth is our shared home and requires collective preservation. Unfortunately, humanity has been destroying the earth through activities like mining, deforestation, burning of fossil fuels, carbon emissions, industrialisation and bombings. Pope Francis has expressed concern about how this common home of ours "is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth: Places with beautiful landscapes are now

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<sup>126</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (Hereafter, SACBC), *Pastoral Letter: A Call to Build a New South Africa* (Pretoria, South Africa: SACBC, 1992), no. 26.

<sup>127</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 15.

<sup>128</sup> See McGrail and Nicholas Sagovsky eds., "Introduction" in *Together for the Common Good*, xxvii-xxviii. See also John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised edition, (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotelian Social Democracy," in *Liberalism and the Good*, ed. Bruce Douglas et al (New York/London: Routledge, 1990), 203-52.

<sup>129</sup> See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised edition, (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 205, 213 and 217, Also quoted by Tehmina Kazi, in "Social Action that Crosses Boundaries and Overcomes Barriers: A Muslim Perspective on the Common Good" in *Together for the Common Good*, 109.

<sup>130</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 15.

<sup>131</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 15.

covered with rubbish, industrial waste and chemical products....”<sup>132</sup> He maintains that “the problem is aggravated by a model of development based on intensive use of fossil fuels, which is at the heart of the worldwide energy system. Another determining factor has been an increase in deforestation for agricultural purposes.”<sup>133</sup>

Although, there has been global advocacy to reduce the use of fossil fuel, the disposal of industrial waste and harmful chemical products into the environment, along with all activities involving toxic emission; these recommendations are yet to be implemented. It may be challenging to enforce some of these recommendations without alternative means of livelihood. For examples, while there is a need for increased afforestation, green energy and the like, subsistence farmers will require different ways to sustain themselves to halt deforestation, as they constantly need to cultivate the land for survival. Moreover, many people will lose their means of livelihood if industries are closed. Therefore, preserving our common home requires a balanced approach with adequate measures for the well-being of all. Pope Francis recommends solidarity in this regard:

Consumerism and a culture of waste have led some of us to tolerate the waste of precious resources, including food, while others are literally wasting away with hunger. I ask all of you to reflect on the grave ethical problem in the spirit of solidarity grounded in our common responsibility for the earth and for all our brothers and sisters in the human family.<sup>134</sup>

The Holy Father’s concern is rooted in his experience of the poor people of Latin America and the unfortunate stories of the many impoverished individuals around the world who are starving while others live in affluent. Without solidarity we cannot adequately handle the challenges of preserving our common home as created by God in all its beauty and wonder. CST acknowledges that the created world, in all its richness and diversity, has been given to humanity by God for the benefit of all. However, it is not meant to be destroyed through reckless activities, and it is not for us to do with as we choose because we are only stewards accountable to the Creator. We are allocated various stewardship roles in this world that must be exercised with due reverence and responsibility.<sup>135</sup>

As social and relational beings created in the *imago Dei*, we are entrusted with the responsibility to care for the earth and for one another, sharing our achievements and burdens, and cooperating for humanity’s flourishing. Hence, a theological and ethical analysis of the common good and the migrant crisis must be grounded in the integrity of creation and our shared humanity. Therefore, the ecological crisis identified in this research

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<sup>132</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 21.

<sup>133</sup> See Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 21-3.

<sup>134</sup> See “Pope at Audience: Counter a Culture of Waste with Solidarity,” Vatican Radio News Service, (5 June 2013) as Quoted and cited by Ellen Teague, “The Threat to Anthropocene” in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Re-Build Our Broken World*, 153.

<sup>135</sup> See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 451-2, 456-60, 464-65; Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 15. Also see; Pádraig Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Dublin: Veritas, 2007), 39-43.

as one of the drivers of the migrant crisis, calls for an inner conversion that leads to the transformation of our relationship with God, ourselves, our neighbours and the world. Pope Francis emphatically asserts that, “The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.”<sup>136</sup> Humanity must honour the inherent goodness, beauty and perfection of the created world in our economic activities.

Collective care must be taken in human activities resulting in ecological destruction, or those that unduly deplete natural resources because they constitute “not only an abuse of what has been given to us, but a denial of that gift to others, especially to future generations.”<sup>137</sup> The *Compendium* of the Church’s social doctrines insists that care for the environment is our collective responsibility because of the global dimension of the ecological crisis. It advocates for a collective responsibility that respects the common good of all humanity.<sup>138</sup> This is what Pope Francis seeks to address in *Laudato Si*, an encyclical that has received widespread praise and acceptance. If ecological destruction is already impacting humanity and causing the displacement of peoples and communities, it implies that the migrant crisis should be viewed beyond the present moment. It also indicates that if the migrant crisis is not properly managed, a much larger crisis threatens future generations.

CST recommends an understanding of the environment devoid of “the utilitarian reduction of nature to a mere object to be manipulated and exploited.” It also cautions against absolutizing nature “above the dignity of the human person.”<sup>139</sup> The creation account, in Genesis chapter one, reveals that God placed everything He created under the stewardship of the human family. Therefore, understanding creation as a gift from the Creator should elicit a response of gratitude both in attitude and action from humanity.<sup>140</sup> Consequently, a serious consideration of the “issue of ecological destruction,” as recommended by Pope Francis, “would be one way of counteracting the throwaway culture which is affecting the entire planet.”<sup>141</sup> We need to do more to save our shared home in our effort to address the migrant crisis.

#### **4.4.3 The Common Good, Other CST’s Principles and the Migrant Crisis**

The common good works alongside other principles of Catholic social teaching in addressing the socio-political challenges of the migrant crisis. These principles work at an equal level for the overall well-being of humanity. The *Compendium* states that these principles in their general and fundamental character focus on the reality of society in its entirety:

From close and immediate relationships to those mediated by politics, economics and law, from relationships among communities and groups to

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<sup>136</sup> See Pope Francis, *LS*, nos. 217 and 23.

<sup>137</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 15.

<sup>138</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 466-69.

<sup>139</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 163.

<sup>140</sup> Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 39-41.

<sup>141</sup> See Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 22.

relations between peoples and nations. Because of their *permanence in time* and their *universality of meaning*, the church presents them as the primary and fundamental parameters of reference for interpreting and evaluating social phenomena, which is the necessary source for working out criteria for the discernment and orientation of social interactions in every area.<sup>142</sup>

This reveals that CST's principles are interconnected in addressing social issues in every age. The Magisterium recommends that these principles "must be appreciated in their unity, interrelatedness and articulation."<sup>143</sup> Therefore, in the following sub-section, we shall unpack those other CST's principles in tandem with the common good in addressing the migrant crisis.

The first is *the universal destination of goods*. This principle stems from Christian theological understanding of God's beneficent creation, which is placed under humanity's stewardship. Essentially, it states that God intended for humanity to be guided by the virtues of justice and charity to fairly share all created things according to needs, capacities, and capabilities, as exemplified in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). These needs are meant to be met through our cooperation and support for one another's well-being. Catholic moral tradition has always affirmed the common origin of humanity from God and our capacity for knowing the truth and doing good for all people. This implies that all created things are intended for the sustenance of everyone in the human family, without exclusion or favouritism.<sup>144</sup> If "our dignity is inextricably rooted in our status as creatures made in the image of God, then, this dignity extends to all human beings."<sup>145</sup> This study explores whether this holds true at a global level, where ethnicity, classism, regionalism, nationalism and at times, systemic racism and neo-colonialism obstruct cordial human relationship with the needy.

The less privileged migrants have always been treated with contempt, unlike those who are well-placed in society. Riordan raises alarm about the acceptance of people based on their status. He views this as requiring humanity's collective action, arguing that no one can function well in any social context "without recognition or acceptance by the people in the relevant context."<sup>146</sup> Regrettably, lack of acceptance remains one of the primary factors contributing to the migrant crisis, necessitating attention both locally and globally. Many individuals are compelled by their political leaders to seek refuge elsewhere, and taking the risks associated with traveling to other countries often fail to resolve their issues because of the complexities of immigration policies.

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<sup>142</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 161.

<sup>143</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 162.

<sup>144</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 171. See also Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no 69, and Philip Booth, *International Aid and Integral Human Development: Catholic Social thought Series*, Number 16 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Action Institute, 2011), 9.

<sup>145</sup> See Andrew Kim, *An Introduction to Catholic Ethics Since Vatican II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 120.

<sup>146</sup> Riordan, *Global Ethics and Global Common Goods*, 102-3.

The universal destination of goods encourages us to adopt a community-oriented perspective on wealth and prosperity, prompting us to be charitable and fair to the less fortunate. The Church's social tradition asserts that "each person must have access to the level of wellbeing necessary for their full development. It is a natural and inherent right, inscribed in human nature and not merely a positive right connected with changing historical circumstances."<sup>147</sup> In other words, at creation, God intended for the material wealth of this world to serve all humanity, not just a selected few. This means that human beings cannot live without the material goods that meet their basic needs. These goods represent the essential conditions for their existence; they are vital for people to feed themselves, grow, communicate, associate with others, and achieve the highest purposes for which they were created.<sup>148</sup>

It is important to note that CST acknowledges private property rights as an essential aspect of human freedom. Acquiring private property is typically how individuals access the universal destination of goods. CST does not undermine property rights in any way but asserts that they should be accompanied by certain limitations and obligations, partially articulated through the concept of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor.<sup>149</sup> This suggests that private property is not an absolute right. It is subject to the overriding principle that all created goods are meant for the welfare of humanity.

Thus, the wealthy must recognise their connections to the community, and their property - land, money, technology, manufactured goods and other resources - should be utilised for the common good. There should be no abuse of these privileges, either by using them to deprive others of their rights to those goods or their benefits. Sometimes, these abuses are perpetuated "through wasteful or extravagant use of our property or through attempts by the few to amass greater wealth at the expense of the majority. Such behaviour harms the common good of the community and is a denial of God's purpose of providing us with the created world and its resources."<sup>150</sup> It also defeats our common humanity.

The doctrine of the universal destination of goods involves justice and fairness in distributing goods, status and services. Therefore, all human beings are meant to enjoy the goods of the earth. In other words, "property rights and the right of free market must be subordinated to the principle of the universal destination of good; they must not hinder it

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<sup>147</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 172.

<sup>148</sup> See Pius XII, Radio Message for the Fiftieth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*: AAS 33 (1941), 199-200. See also Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 171. See also Esther Reed, "Wealth and the Common Good," in *Together for the Common Good: Towards a National Conversation*, ed. Nicholas Sagovsky and Peter McGrail (London: SMC Press, 2015), 49-64.

<sup>149</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1991), no. 30. Also see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 177-8; Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 71.

<sup>150</sup> South African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa: A Pastoral Statement* (Pretoria, South Africa: SACBC, 1999), 14; also see Kim, *An Introduction to Catholic Ethics Since Vatican II*, 121-127. Kim highlights the relationship between community and the common good and underscores the significance of the principles of *participation, subsidiarity, the preferential option for the poor, stewardship and solidarity* in handling the created goods meant for human flourishing in this world.

but must rather expedite its application.”<sup>151</sup> The principle recommends the development of a socio-economic and political vision that upholds the original purpose for which the goods of the earth were created – human flourishing.<sup>152</sup>

This brings us to the second principle, which is *the preferential option for the poor*. This principle advocates for the welfare of the less privileged in society. In Chapter Two, we identified poverty as a major factor in the migrant crisis. Here, we want to demonstrate how the principle of the common good is intended to address the problem of poverty. Some Theologians have aptly argued that poverty is an unfortunate reality in the world, attributed more to injustice than to the lack of the bounty of nature, or even to laziness on the part of those who are poor.<sup>153</sup> A distinction between poverty and impoverishment makes this point clearer: Poverty may result from misfortune or being born into a family or environment with numerous disadvantages regarding socio-economic emancipation, growth and development; however, impoverishment implies a deliberate action to keep people in the state of poverty. Studies have revealed that the problem of poverty and underdevelopment in the Global South are primarily due to human interventions. They largely stem from unjust structures and actions by wealthier individuals and countries.<sup>154</sup> The effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism, along with the unfavourable alliance of some political leaders with multinationals and the colonialists, continue to impoverish many people in the Global South.

The “preferential option for the poor” refers to an adequate response to the structural injustice in the world that has pushed many people to the margins of their political community. The phrase “preferential option” indicates a deliberate choice, whether as a collective (such as political communities, government institutions, faith communities, the judicial system, or corporate entities) or on a personal level, to take concrete actions toward alleviating the suffering of the poor. Donal Dorr argues that the principle represents the Church’s specific response to the unjust organisation of every society on a broader scale. Its aim is to create “awareness of how society is in fact structured.”<sup>155</sup> The principle of “the preferential option for the poor” reveals that more needs to be done regarding implementing the common good. The principle of the common good is not sufficiently understood or valued, let alone implemented in many political communities. This is because the rich are often tempted to ignore the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised, and those whose interests

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<sup>151</sup> See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 172; Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 70.

<sup>152</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 172; Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 70.

<sup>153</sup> See “Final Document: International Ecumenical Congress of Theology, February 20 – March 2, 1980, Sao Paulo, Brazil,” in *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research*, July 1980, 127-33 at 128 (paragraphs 12-17); also see “Delhi Conference of Theology (Fifth Conference of the Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologians): The Irruption of the Third World: A Challenge to Theology” (mimeographed), 2-3 (Paragraphs 9-14. Adapted in this study as quoted and cited by Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), 239.

<sup>154</sup> See Leften Stavros Stavrianos, *Global Rift: The Third World Comes of Age* (New York: Morrow, 1981); also see Charles Elliot, *Patterns of Poverty in the Third World: A Study of Social and Economic Stratification* (New York: Praeger, 1975). Also see citation by Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, 239.

<sup>155</sup> Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, 3.

have been overlooked for lacking a voice. When the wealthy fail to live in solidarity with the poor in the community, a high rate of human suffering is inevitable. Therefore, all humanity must ensure that we are “not guilty of complicity in the impoverishment of vulnerable individuals, or groups or countries.”<sup>156</sup> Our relationality imposes a responsibility on us to safeguard everyone’s safety and well-being.

Consequently, the “option for the poor” calls for solidarity with those who are poor. It also focuses on reducing the gap between the rich and the poor in every political community. This entails a sacrificial commitment guided by the virtues of empathy, compassion, justice and benevolence across borders. Jesus made this point at a dinner in one of the leading Pharisee’s house in Luke 14:12-14. He admonished his host and those present at that dinner not to always invite only their rich friends who will possibly reciprocate the gesture, but to rather “invite the poor, the cripple, the lame, the blind.” This kind of attitude will theologically bridge the gap between the rich and the less privileged in society; it also elicits the reward of eternity. The Catholic Church’s hierarchy in South Africa teaches that “the preferential option for the poor in practical terms, means that our economic actions and decisions must not only avoid harming the interest of the poor but must contribute to their upliftment.”<sup>157</sup> This means that while political leaders work for economic efficiency in their political community, the effort must not come at the expense of the poor. Instead, the poor should be afforded privileged treatment to enhance their socio-economic welfare. This point reinforces our earlier statement about the importance of the human person in the pursuit of the common good. The principle is intended to promote people’s dignity and rights to a better life.

In addition, the Catholic Bishops of the United States of America fundamentally clarify this CST’s principle. It teaches that “The ‘option for the poor’ is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group against another. Rather, [the principle] states that the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community. These wounds will be healed only by greater solidarity with the poor and among the poor themselves.”<sup>158</sup> In other word, “an option for the poor” is not equivalent to “an option against the rich and powerful;” however, it rejects every exploitative and sinful structures that contributes to impoverishing those in disadvantaged positions in society.<sup>159</sup> The primary aim of the common good is to enable

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<sup>156</sup> Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, 239.

<sup>157</sup> See Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 13.

<sup>158</sup> See National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States of America, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U. S. Economy* (United States Catholic Bishops, 1986), no 88. See also Philip Booth, who argues that the preferential option for the poor reflects the longstanding solicitude of the Universal Church for the defenseless and marginalized, “stretching back to the earliest days of Christianity and to the life of Christ himself. It should, therefore, not be seen as an invitation to injustice for any preferential group deserving more dignity and protection against the other – but as a recognition of the reality that the wealthy and well-connected in the society are better able to defend their own interests and to meet their own needs than are the poor and marginalised. Thus, the Church urges its people to pay close attention to those who are too easily ignored or forgotten. (Philip Booth, *International Aid and Integral Human Development: Catholic Social thought Series*, Number 16 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Action Institute, 2011), 10).

<sup>159</sup> Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, 243.

everyone to benefit from and contribute to human flourishing within their respective political communities. However, as Pope Francis points out, our world today fails to uphold the principle of the common good because of the many impoverished people whose dignity is not recognised, respected, protected or promoted in all circumstances, as is evident in the migrant crisis.<sup>160</sup>

The “option for the poor” can be exercised not only in favour of the materially poor, but also for those who are physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally deprived - those who have been marginalised due to race, gender, disability, religion, nationality or any other reason. Such groups often tend to be materially poor because they are pushed to the margins of society. Nevertheless, it must be understood that the poor are active participants in pursuing the common good and must demand their share. They must also not relinquish their rights but exercise the same solidarity with other community members in ensuring equity and a better life for all. The rich have a part to play: “Therefore, the ‘option for the poor’ is a call for the rich to participate in the upliftment of the poor, to the benefit of the whole society.”<sup>161</sup> Identifying the plight of the poor and marginalised, and addressing it will minimise irregular migration and its consequences.

*Solidarity* is the third principle in addressing the migrant crisis. This involves a renewed awareness of the Gospel values of helping one another and recognising the seriousness of the crisis in all its dimensions. It also signifies that this humanitarian crisis urgently needs solidarity in action.<sup>162</sup> Pope John Paul II defines solidarity as “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and each individual.”<sup>163</sup> A firm determination and commitment to positively engage with the challenges of the migrant crisis are what many political communities lack, contributing to its persistence in this century.

This study indicates that many impoverished individuals pursue various forms of migration for better alternatives. In other words, they often find themselves with little or no option in their struggle to survive the hardships in their home countries. CST emphasizes the need for solidarity among people across boundaries for human flourishing. As articulated by John Paul II, solidarity is both a moral and a theological virtue. Morally, solidarity represents a habitual disposition of mind and heart through which the interdependence of human beings is acknowledged not only as an empirical fact but as a moral obligation to foster genuine mutual bonds. Theologically, “there are many forms of contact between solidarity and

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<sup>160</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 22.

<sup>161</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 14.

<sup>162</sup> See Pope Paul VI, where he highlighted the need for urgency in closing the gap between the rich and the poor, as the world makes progress in terms of development. He argued the “The development of peoples has the Church’s close attention, particularly the development of those peoples who are striving to escape from hunger, misery, endemic diseases and ignorance; of those who are looking for a wider share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are aiming purposefully at their complete fulfilment.” (Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 1).

<sup>163</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, (December 30, 1987) no. 38. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html) (hereafter cited as *SRS*)

charity, which is the distinguishing mark of Christ's disciples."<sup>164</sup> In teaching about the nature and purpose of the political community, the Vatican II Council asserts that various forms of political communities are established to foster cooperation and contribute towards achieving the common good which, "individuals, families, and the various groups that make up the civil community cannot achieve by their own unaided efforts."<sup>165</sup>

In the above document, the Church Fathers indicate that achieving the common good is a collective responsibility with two complementary dimensions: Firstly, the common good is understood in terms of service value. It encompasses social and welfare services such as schools, hospitals, energy supply, road networks, and a functional judicial system. Secondly, the common good ultimately consists of goods and values actualised in the members of every given political community. This entails a sound state of physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing of members of the community, with an adequate level of education, work opportunities for all, a supportive environment for religious, moral and cultural life, and the promotion of social justice.<sup>166</sup> "Solidarity," in this case, "highlights in a particular way the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and the common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more committed unity."<sup>167</sup> The migrant crisis fosters greater awareness of our interdependence across nations and continents. It calls for the effective implementation of policies guided by the common good.

Adopting an attitude of solidarity in any political community creates an awareness of other people's needs and a willingness by those who can help alleviate their burdens. "Solidarity is not simply a question of feeling sorry for others, a vague notion of wanting to contribute to their well-being, but a joining with others in a deep commitment to the common good. Therefore, it acts as a clear and powerful motivation, and a guideline for the way we live our lives."<sup>168</sup> This indicates that solidarity serves as both a social principle and a moral virtue that counters the structures of sin dominating our political and economic institutions, which suffocate the relationship between the people and their leaders. Such structures need to be "purified and transformed into structures of solidarity through the creation of appropriate modifications of laws, market regulations and [reliable] judicial systems."<sup>169</sup> A commitment to regional cooperation in addressing socio-economic and political challenges is an essential aspect of solidarity. This cooperation stems from proximity and the positive obligation to support one another.<sup>170</sup> The migrant crisis requires such an approach to be adequately resolved because solidarity is a virtue that requires making sacrifices for one another.

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<sup>164</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, (December 30, 1987), no. 38-39; [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987-sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987-sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html) (hereafter cited as *SRS*).

See also Holenbach, S.J., "Common Good," 193.

<sup>165</sup> Vatican II, *GS*, no. 74.

<sup>166</sup> Peschke, "Moral Responsibility in Community Life," 557-8.

<sup>167</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 192.

<sup>168</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 13.

<sup>169</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 193.

<sup>170</sup> See Hollenbach's discussion of the *Kew Garden Principle* borrowed from some scholars from Yale University regarding solidarity and rendering assistance to those in critical situation. Hollenbach and these scholars argue that there are certain conditions to be met for a positive duty to respond in crisis situation like

We must acknowledge that economic prosperity requires collaborative efforts at all levels and cannot be limited to a specific location. A critical examination of the migrant crisis connects the issue to the injustices of colonialism and its exploitative consequences on the Global South, along with the challenges of leadership. These injustices are viewed as some of the drivers of the migrant crisis. The SACBC rightly observes that “All too often prosperous economies, which largely succeed in providing for their own people, exploited their neighbours, whether by undermining the latter’s industries or by trapping them into unfavourable trade relations.”<sup>171</sup> For instance, during his administration, Bill Clinton linked the economic prosperity of US democracy to the expansion of free markets in Africa and other continents, emphasising interest in trade relations and investment in Africa. Clinton argued that “By opening markets, building businesses and creating jobs, we can help strengthen each other.”<sup>172</sup> How have the economic and trade relations between the prosperous nations like the US, UK and Europe strengthened the weaker nations regarding economic growth and development? Why are people from these weaker nations moving in their droves to the Global North if the essence of establishing trade relations is for the common good of all nations? What is the impact of international organisations like the Commonwealth of all nations in addressing the migrant crisis? These questions require critical engagement in the light of the principle of solidarity.

The principle of *solidarity* is closely linked to *the principle of subsidiarity* in CST. It is regarded here as the fourth principle that works with the common good concerning the socio-political implications of the migrant crisis. It complements the principle of solidarity in the socio-economic and community effort to address the migrant crisis. The principle of subsidiarity recognises the contributions of those at the lowest level of society in solving socio-economic problems.<sup>173</sup> This principle safeguards the rights and dignity of individuals, minority groups, associations and local communities against state, the political class, elites and the wealthy individuals. In other words, “the principle of subsidiarity protects people from abuses by higher-level social authority and calls on these same authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups to fulfil their duties. It demonstrates that every person, family and intermediate groups have something original to offer to the community.”<sup>174</sup> The concept of subsidiarity inspires a consistent emphasis on the value of people’s participation at all levels in the political process known as democratisation. It evokes “respect and

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the migrant crisis: “(1) there is a critical *need*; (2) one has *proximity* to the need; (3) one has the *capability* to respond with some effectiveness; (4) one is likely the *last resort* from whom help can be expected; and (5) help can be provided *without disproportionate harm* to the one providing the assistance.” Hollenbach admits the delicate nature of the discernment process of these criteria, nevertheless, it is worth considering for adequate response to such humanitarian crisis. (Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 97-9; also see John G. Simon, Charles W. Powers, and Jon P. Gunnemann, *The Ethical Investor: Universities and Corporate Responsibility* (New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 23-25).

<sup>171</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 13.

<sup>172</sup> William J. Clinton, “Remarks by President to the People of Ghana,” Accra, Ghana, March 23, 1998. Quoted as cited by Hollenbach S.J., in *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 219.

<sup>173</sup> See Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (June 29, 2009), no. 57-8. See also Michael Wee, “Solidarity and Subsidiarity as Principles for Public Health Ethics,” *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2022) 221-29 at 227-9.

<sup>174</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 185-7.

effective promotion of the human person and the family, the encouragement of private initiative at the service of the common good, safeguarding human rights and the rights of minorities, and bringing about bureaucratic and administrative decentralisation” for the flourishing of the political community.<sup>175</sup> Subsidiarity affirms that every individual and group contributes positively for the common good. As such “those things which can be done or decided at a lower level of society should not be taken over by a higher level.”<sup>176</sup> CST maintains that:

The denial of subsidiarity, or its limitation in the name of an alleged democratisation or equality of all members of society, limits and sometimes even destroys the spirit of freedom and initiative. The principle is opposed to certain form of centralisation, bureaucratisation, and welfare assistance and to the unjustified and excessive presence of the State in public mechanism.<sup>177</sup>

This is an essential point that recognises people’s right to contribute and benefit from the common good. It also addresses the marginalisation of certain groups and the issue of inequality arising from socio-economic and political conflict.<sup>178</sup> The attitude of displacing certain individuals or groups and neglecting their welfare in governance is one of the reasons many people are migrating today.

The migrant crisis indicates that many people are dissatisfied with the increasing concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a few. People are on the move because they seek socio-economic and political emancipation from the domineering minority within these spheres of influence. Research also reveals that the growing power of large corporations tends to deprive individuals and groups of the opportunity to contribute to the development of their community and, consequently, enjoy the benefits that come with it. Therefore, the leadership of every country has the responsibility to do justice to all the different groups within their political communities. They must reconcile and harmonise the specific needs of various groups and individuals for the common good.<sup>179</sup>

People-oriented economic policies and choices can renew the trust of those marginalised and encourage them to stay (for those intending to migrate), and for those who have migrated to return home and contribute to the growth and development of their country with all its benefits. This is what “good politics” means in this study. It implies that the government of every political community should “take steps to encourage decision-making at every level of the economy, and to empower their people to participate as fully as possible in economic life for the good of all.”<sup>180</sup> The role of the state, larger corporations, and international organisations will always be essential in supporting individuals and groups to

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<sup>175</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 187.

<sup>176</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 13.

<sup>177</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 187.

<sup>178</sup> Silvana Sciarra, “Challenges to Solidarity: Governance and Democracy in a Sustainable European Union” in *Integral Human Development: Challenges to Sustainability and Democracy*, ed. Jacquineau Azetsop, SJ (Eugen, Oregon: PICKWICK publications, 2019), 50.

<sup>179</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 169.

<sup>180</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 14.

thrive. However, this should not overshadow or diminish their contributions to the common good and their ability to earn a living.<sup>181</sup> This is where international institutions and organisations like the United Nations, faith communities, social ethicists, and human right activists play indispensable role in ensuring that the principle of subsidiarity has a place in governance and in addressing the migrant crisis.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the importance of understanding of the common good through a holistic lens, where material and immaterial values that benefit all members of any political community are upheld. This is because the human person lies at the heart of the socio-economic, political, psychological and spiritual significance tied to the principle of the common good. Numerous studies indicate that the lack of proper agency to coordinate the equitable distribution of these basic rights and privileges in the Global South drives the movement of peoples toward the Global North.

Therefore, we propose that an effective local or global politics must consider local or global common goods that benefit all citizens and, by extension, all inhabitants of political communities. This is crucial for any local and global ethics of migration, which requires that immigration policies are shaped by local and global common goods that safeguard the rights of every person within the socio-economic and political framework of each political community. As Riordan rightly observes, “the tendency to concentrate on issues of justification of norms and the consequent regulations of action in ethics means that the questions of the good as such are often neglected.”<sup>182</sup> This is where the significance of the principle of contributive justice cannot be overstated. Contributive justice revolves around each community member’s contribution to the common good. As we will see in Chapter Five, it highlights equal opportunities for all community members based on their different gifts, talents and capabilities.

The common good and contributive justice are complementary social principle that address socio-economic and political challenges, such as the global migrant crisis. One focuses on the collective good, while the other one emphasises individual contributions toward actualising the common good. Mulligan articulates this more effectively, arguing that “although, there will inevitably be times when rights clash, and when the benefits to one group may have to be suspended for the greater good of society, the rights of individuals or minorities cannot [and should not] be disregarded.”<sup>183</sup> This study emphasises everyone’s participation in advancing the common good. The concept recognises individual’s importance, value, and contributions, and it is not surprising that there is a strong focus on the dignity of every human person and human rights as a result. In a nutshell, the common good has a strong social and relational focus that helps counterbalance tendencies toward individualistic notions of rights and a totalitarian political leadership. Thus, in many

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<sup>181</sup> Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa*, 14.

<sup>182</sup> Riordan, *Global Ethics and Global Common Goods* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 9.

<sup>183</sup> Mulligan, “What Next?” *The Furrow* 60, no. 6 (June 2009): 336-41 at 339.

respects, “the idea of the common good tries to avoid the extremes of both individualism and collectivism.”<sup>184</sup> It recognises the position and socio-economic needs of everybody in the human family and invites all to participate in creating a better society.

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<sup>184</sup> Mulligan, “What Next?” 339.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN “GOOD POLITICS” AND THE MIGRANT CRISIS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights the significance of contributive justice in “good politics” and the migrant crisis. It proposes contributive justice as the second pillar that enhances the principle of the common good and clarifies our definition of “good politics.” This perspective will aid in examining Alexander Betts’s works in Chapter Six, which involves rethinking the various dimensions fuelling the migrant crisis. The concept of contributive justice is not yet widely recognized in theological studies, in contrast to the concept of distributive justice.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, while both concepts sometimes describe the same reality, they are distinct.<sup>2</sup> Distributive Justice focuses on “the equitable distribution of resource, wealth, power, rewards and respect among all societal stakeholders. It emphasises fairness in the distribution of the natural, human, and socio-economic resources available to all stakeholders.”<sup>3</sup>

Contributive justice, however, concerns fairness in the opportunities to work and contribute to the nation’s wealth while meeting the needs for a dignified life. Thus, its significance to this research is evident. It is a crucial component of “good politics” that seeks to tackle the issues of marginalisation, poverty, corruption and unemployment, all of which drive the migrant crisis. Contributive justice complements distributive justice in addressing the challenges of equality and fairness in society. It is presented here as a twin pillar to the common good, facilitating sustainable growth and development in societies facing the migrant crisis. We will attempt to answer the questions: What is the role of contributive justice in “good politics” and the migrant crisis? And how might contributive justice alleviate the crisis?

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<sup>1</sup> See T-Kay Sangwand, “Prevention is Political: Enacting Contributive Justice and Decolonizing Transnational Archival Collaborators” *KULA: Knowledge creation, dissemination, and preservation studies* 2, no. 1 (2018): 2. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/kula.36>

<sup>2</sup> Some scholars, following St. Thomas Aquinas, equates “contributive Justice” with “general justice.” General Justice, according to Aquinas, is the virtue governing the duties of citizens to the common good of the larger community. For Aquinas, “the virtue of a good citizen is general justice, whereby a person is directed to the common good.” (See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 58, arts. 5-7 and q. 61, arts. 1 and 2, and the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, nos. 69-71. See also Joseph Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance*, trans. Richard Winston, et al. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1965), 113. This is also cited in Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 195. This thesis argues that the concept of “general justice” does not specify what the duties of citizens are in relation to the common good. Contributive justice, on the other hand, seems more specific because it projects the need to do something concrete and productive for the common good.

<sup>3</sup> See Bharat Mehra, Kevin S. Rioux, and Kendra S. Albright, “Social Justice in Library and Information Science,” in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, 3rd edition, ed. Marcia J. Bates, and Mary Niles Maak (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2010), 4822.

## 5.1 An Examination of Contributive Justice

The novelty of “contributive justice” lies not in the theoretical framework, but in the concept itself. The ideas inherent in this concept are familiar within the social doctrines of the Church, as they can be found in the principles of participation, subsidiarity, stewardship, preferential option for the poor, solidarity and the Church’s teachings on the dignity of labour.<sup>4</sup> Conceptually, “contributive” is an adjective derived from the verb “to contribute” and the noun “contribution” which signifies the effort made by individuals or groups to achieve a desired result. Contribution can also refer to participation in the collaborative effort that produces specific outcomes. In other words, it signifies sharing the workload that leads to certain positive results, solutions or effects. Therefore, “contributive” means working to bring about something or being partly responsible, and it may be used interchangeably with “causative” which implies producing an effect.<sup>5</sup>

What then is justice in this context? William C. Mattison describes justice as “the virtue that inclines us to good relationships with others and avoids collisions.”<sup>6</sup> He aligns with other thinkers in equating justice with morality, as it is a virtue that gives everyone what they deserve or what is *due* to them.<sup>7</sup> This means that the virtue of justice is centred on proper, responsible, and accountable relationship in society. Like morality, justice considers what everyone in the society deserves or the right and responsible thing to do regarding the common good. This is another way of saying that justice focuses on peaceful coexistence and human flourishing. It highlights the consequences of our actions and inactions, ensuring we take responsibility for them. According to Mattison, this requires “a steady disposition to give [everybody] their *due*.”<sup>8</sup> Associating justice with giving people their *due* leaves us with some contextual loose ends.

To begin with, it raises questions about what is *due* to people and what should be *given* to them? And why does it require a *steady disposition*? Does it imply that justice will be *absent*, *denied* or *hijacked* without a steady disposition to give others their *due*? This is where context and qualification of the concept of “justice” becomes imperative to this study.

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<sup>4</sup> See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 264-300; Kim, *An Introduction to Catholic Ethics Since Vatican II*, 120; Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 69-99.

<sup>5</sup> See “Contributive” in *Vocabulary.com Dictionary*, <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/contributive> Accessed October 24, 2024, Also see <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/contributive>

<sup>6</sup> William C. Mattison III, “The Virtue of Justice and Justice in Waging War,” in *Introduction to Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2008), 135; 139. Also see Jean Porter, “The Virtue of Justice,” in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 272-86.

<sup>7</sup> Mattison argues that “though it may be challenging to define exactly what constitutes what is *due* to others in some particular cases, the basic notion of deserving something is very accessible to us, because it is deeply ingrained in us.” He sees justice as naturally constitutive of living a good life. Hence, for him, “justice is simply the habit of acting in a manner that nourishes right relations with others, and these relations are essential to our identities and thus essential to living a good life.” (See Mattison III, “The Virtue of Justice and Justice in Waging War,” 135-39). However, it is more challenging when *what is due to others* is defined according to their nature, state of life, or position in the society. Such definition by the powers that be brings layers of justice according to socio-political status, economic strength or military might. It distorts the understanding of justice in CST.

<sup>8</sup> Mattison III, “The Virtue of Justice and Justice in Waging War,” 136.

Evidently, “contributive” gives justice a particular context when applied to the migrant crisis. It clarifies what constitutes fair judgement, deservingness, rightness, and achievability for migrants. It also concretises the issue of steady disposition regarding the kind of justice needed for various categories of migrants.<sup>9</sup> This understanding of justice is crucial in addressing the migrant crisis.

Therefore, when applied to “good politics” and the migrant crisis, contributive justice signifies both individual and collective effort to sustain the flourishing of society and share the workload for the well-being of all within every political community. In other words, contributive justice concerns the production of positive effect on the socio-economic and political life of any nation. This inevitably requires equal opportunities for everyone capable of generating those positive effects. It demands responsibility, accountability and leadership. Thus, contribution mainly articulate “an ethical ideal of humanity as active, creative, and contributive to their social group.”<sup>10</sup> This is essential to our well-being and lays the foundation for a conception of justice that provides equal opportunities to everyone based on their capabilities. Martha Nussbaum connects this understanding of justice with “the availability to all citizens [...] core “capabilities” or opportunities to function.” She argues that “these are necessary conditions of life worthy of human dignity.”<sup>11</sup> This means that we all have something positive to contribute to the flourishing of whichever community we identify with. Contributive justice insists that everyone be allowed to participate in this production process and share in its benefits.

Contributive justice serves as a crucial tool for addressing the global migrant crisis. It places upon migrants, their home countries, and their host communities the responsibility to uphold the dignity, rights and well-being of all in society. Moreover, CST’s understanding of justice connects to a lived witness of its beliefs, values, and opinions regarding the socio-economic well-being of every individual in the world. Its knowledge of justice is not restricted to a proclaimed list of principles devoid of human face and the welfare of all in society.<sup>12</sup> This is important to our discourse on the migrant crisis because of the dignity and rights of those on the move for whatever justifiable reasons. Justice implies that we respect and protect the

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<sup>9</sup> This study acknowledges other forms of justice related to immigration policies and the migrant crisis. It is important to mention criminal or civil justice where the courts, police, immigration officials, defaulter and jails are involved for the safety and territorial integrity of every sovereign nation. Such justice system exists to ensure that people’s dignity and rights are not violated; and to guarantee order and peaceful coexistence. It is a crucial form of justice for every political community. Since justice concerns right relations between members of every given community or some corporate entity, civil justice at the international, national, state, or local level is an obvious arena where the virtue of justice is lived out. Without civil and/or criminal justice, the problem of undocumented/illegal immigrants, human and drug traffickers, smugglers and all those involved in illegal immigration activities will continue to compound the challenges of the migrant crisis. However, this study is focusing on contributive justice, which is concerned with migrant’s contribution to their home countries and host communities vice versa. (See Mattison III, “The Virtue of Justice and Justice in Waging War,” 141).

<sup>10</sup> Paul Gomberg, *How to Make Opportunity Equal: Race and Contributive Justice* (London: Wiley Blackwell, 2007), 149-51.

<sup>11</sup> Nussbaum, “Human Dignity and Political Entitlements,” in *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, 351.

<sup>12</sup> Donal Dorr, *The Social Justice Agenda: Justice, Ecology, Power and the Church* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991), 39.

dignity inherent in being created in God's image. Kim contends that "we are not only created by God, we are created in the right order to God, by which we are also rightly ordered to each other. This entails respect of the rights intrinsically connected to the dignity we possess as human persons made in the image of God."<sup>13</sup> Consequently, contributive justice emphasises fair opportunities and privileges for migrants, recognising their dignity and rights to dignified livelihood.

Furthermore, the Latin term *ius*, from which the English word "justice," "law" and "justify" originate, is a noun and not an adjective. "*Ius* refers to the 'proper order of things,' or 'the way things were meant to be.' It is a state of affair marked by peace, or harmony, resulting from genuine and right relations with others."<sup>14</sup> In this sense, justice is the virtue that concerns itself with peaceful, orderly, harmonious and flourishing relationships among people. It is "other-centredness, whereby we realise our nature as social beings and we see others as valuable as ourselves. Leading to an appreciation of their uniqueness and dignity" as human beings created in the *imago Dei*.<sup>15</sup> This is an understanding of justice that is enshrined in the gospel narrative, particularly in the beatitudes (Matthew 5-7), where we find what is identified today as the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" (Matthew 7:12). This highlights our interconnectedness and the need to continually look beyond ourselves for the benefit of others. It involves extending the positive things we desire for ourselves to others and transforming these aspirations into concrete actions within our relationships with others.

A flagrant disparity in the way we treat those who are *different* from us becomes theologically incoherent with the principle of our shared humanity.<sup>16</sup> Such disparities are manifest in the migrant crisis, where socio-cultural dynamics, religious affinity, race and nationality impact the relationship between migrants and citizens. For instance, Christians and Muslims, Jewish and Palestinians, and Europeans Union members (EU) and non-EU members are not treated the same way. Some individuals receive preferential treatment based on regional, ethnic or religious affiliation. These regional, cultural and socio-economic disparities create tension and fuel the global migrant crisis. It requires ethical, theological and socio-political interventions to safeguard the dignity of every human being, regardless of their background.

Studies indicate that many people are being dehumanised, socially and religiously ridiculed. There are also those who have been disempowered, marginalised, excluded, discriminated, silenced and even tortured in some part of the globe simply because they are *different*.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Kim, *An Introduction to Catholic Ethics Since Vatican II*, 120-1.

<sup>14</sup> Mattison III, "The Virtue of Justice and Justice in Waging War," 136.

<sup>15</sup> Donal Harrington, "What is Justice?" in *What is Morality: The Light through Different Windows* (Dublin: The Columban Press, 1996), 186.

<sup>16</sup> Dorr, *The Social Justice Agenda*, 39.

<sup>17</sup> Michael J. Schuck, "Epilogue on Democracy, Culture, Catholicism" in *Democracy, Culture, Catholicism: Voices from Four Continents*, ed. Michael J Schuck and John Crowley-Buck (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 323. Also see Silas W. Ward, "Border: Sites of Exclusion, Sites of Engagement," and Gemma Tulud Cruz, "When the Poor Knock on Our Door: A Theological Response to Unwanted Migration," in

Some individuals from the Global North do not acknowledge the positive contributions of ordinary categories of immigrants to their economy. Yet, without these migrants, many sectors of their economy would be moribund. For example, most carers, cleaners, construction site labourers, builders and factory worker, to mention just a few, are migrants. The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference acknowledges the contributions of migrants to the growth of the Irish economy in its 1999 pastoral letter: They attribute the economic prosperity of the Island to "the work of many hands."<sup>18</sup> The Bishops assert that:

The huge reduction in unemployment, the massive cut in involuntary emigration, the ability of many former emigrants to return, the option open to more women of taking jobs, the chances open to young people to earn part-time while studying, even the ability of the economy to provide people from other countries with the opportunity to gain worthwhile work-experience [...] constitute elements of a higher 'standard of living'.<sup>19</sup>

This approach to economic growth aligns with the principle of contributive justice, which recognises our shared humanity and leverage every available talent to foster economic growth and national prosperity. Therefore, contributive justice emphasises the role of everyone in the decision-making process that impacts them and the economic growth of their political community. The concept was revitalised in Catholic Social Teaching during the mid-1980s at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the United States, where the bishops' criticised exploitations in industries and the state of the U.S. economy. They pointed out that workers' opportunities to positively contribute to social welfare were diminished, "creating a competitiveness that destroys good social relationships."<sup>20</sup> This form of injustice raises questions regarding available opportunities, active participation, responsibility, accountable contribution, the dignity of labour, and the challenges of equity and equality in nation- building.<sup>21</sup>

## 5.2 Creating Equal Opportunities for Human Flourishing

The challenges of unequal opportunities for livelihood fuel the migrant crisis. They create barriers of social isolation and economic hardship, increasing irregular migration. Those in political leadership positions are accused of establishing unequal boundaries based on socio-economic status and political influence.<sup>22</sup> Such an unbalanced structural environment of unequal opportunities elicits dissatisfaction and a craving for alternative options. Contributive justice, on the other hand, is centred on "the principle of equality of opportunity

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*Christianity and the Law of Migration*. Edited by Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella, (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 87-103; 195-211.

<sup>18</sup> Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Prosperity with a Purpose: Christian Faith and Values in a Time of Rapid Economic Growth*, (Dublin: Veritas, 1999), nos. 33-35.

<sup>19</sup> Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Prosperity with a Purpose*, no. 34.

<sup>20</sup> United States Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997), nos 71; 1-5.

<sup>21</sup> See United States Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, no. 71.

<sup>22</sup> Quinetta Roberson, and William Scott, "Contributive Justice: An Invisible Barrier to Workplace Inclusion," *Journal of Management* 50, no. 3 (March 2024): 877-897 at 850.

rooted in the creation of a fair or level playing field.”<sup>23</sup> It enriches our understanding of justice in the context of “good politics” emphasizing that justice is achieved not only when certain benefits are received, but when there is the duty and opportunity for everyone to contribute their labour and decision-making.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, to adequately address the migrant crisis, we must first break the class barrier between the affluent and the impoverished. We must also become critical of the politics, which excludes others. Such politics are counterproductive, preventing healthy relationships and economic growth and development.

Nancy Fraser identifies the politics of exclusion with societal structural injustices that impact positive human relationships and flourishing. She refers to economic injustice as “the inequitable distribution of resources in any given society and the damaging effects of this ‘maldistribution’ to members of that society.”<sup>25</sup> She also argues that “Cultural injustice reflects in the ways various cultural groups have become ‘despised,’ on whatever grounds. This ‘misrecognition,’” she contends, “occurs when people are forced to suppress their own cultural ways of being and communicating to the norms of the dominant culture, and as such, are rendered invisible or are disrespected for belonging to a particular cultural group.”<sup>26</sup> According to Fraser, “political injustice,” on the other hand, “refers to the misrepresentation that occurs when people are denied an opportunity to make justifiable claims, when they are experiencing economic or cultural injustice or when they are unable to contribute to the decisions that have impact in their lives.”<sup>27</sup> These dimensions of structural injustices isolate and impoverish many people worldwide.

Therefore, global collaboration is crucial for identifying and addressing these issues. They reflect the systemic discriminatory histories underlying the migrant crisis. Rajendra, along with other social ethicists, contend that what migrants need is justice and not benevolence.<sup>28</sup> She advocates for a new definition of justice that addresses the relationship between citizens and migrants.<sup>29</sup> This conception of justice is rooted in our shared humanity, common home and the global common good. Hence, the invaluable significance of “contributive justice” as one of the pillars of “good politics.” This approach is also articulated by Crick who asserts that “politics is the activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are

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<sup>23</sup> Bryn Williams-Jones and Michael M. Burgess, “Social Contract Theory and Just Decision Making: Lessons from Genetic Testing for BRCA Mutation,” *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 14, no. 2 (June 2004): 121.

<sup>24</sup> See Sangwand, “Prevention is Political,” 2. Also see Gomberg, *How to Make Opportunities Equal: Race and Contributive Justice* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> See Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the ‘Postsocialist’ condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997). Adapted from Martin Mills, *et al*, “Alternative Education and Social Justice: Considering Issues of Affective and Contributive Justice,” *Critical Studies in Education* 57, no. 1, (2016): 100-15 at 101. DOI:10.1080/17508487.2016.1087413).

<sup>26</sup> See Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the ‘Postsocialist’ condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997), and *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2009) The definitions of economic, cultural and political injustices cited in this study are adapted from Martin Mills, *et al*, “Alternative Education and Social Justice: Considering Issues of Affective and Contributive Justice,” *Critical Studies in Education* 57, no. 1, (2016): 100-15 at 101. DOI:10.1080/17508487.2016.1087413).

<sup>27</sup> Fraser, *Justice Interruptus*.

<sup>28</sup> See Rejandra, “Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Right of Migrants,” *Political Theology* 15, no. 4 (July 2014): 290-306.

<sup>29</sup> Rejandra, *Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration*, 6.

conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare of and survival of the whole community.”<sup>30</sup> This implies that “good politics” arises in organized states which recognise the contribution of all stakeholders in the economic growth of their state. Moreover, political thinkers like Mackenzie and Crick maintain that politics involves conflicting ideas and disagreements because it highlights the need for the welfare and survival of everyone in the political community.<sup>31</sup>

The challenges of unequal opportunities in society require a heightened awareness of our equal ontological dignity – the essence of our shared humanity. In Christian theological anthropology and morality, ontological dignity and right are inherently a common good for all humanity. they differ from social, existential and moral dignity, which depend on circumstances and specific privileges experienced by some individuals.<sup>32</sup> The central concept in the principle of ontological dignity “...is the common worth of all human beings regardless of [location], merit or achievement. When human dignity is grounded in the worth of our common humanity, it avoids the fragmentation that results from appealing to individual interests, to community customs, and to national prerogatives.”<sup>33</sup> The theology of human dignity prioritises the well-being of the people over all institutional interests. This implies that established structures should safeguard dignity by creating equal opportunities for livelihood. Ronald Dworkin argues that human dignity is “the foundational norm for cultural diversity internationally because it brings out what life means, what morality requires and what justice demands for the good of every human being.”<sup>34</sup> Contributive justice recognises the dignity of every individual and underscores our unity in diversity. Therefore, it pertains to the migrant crisis in this study as a potential solution.

Unless political communities recognise the worth and potential of every human being, regardless of their background, issues of unequal opportunities and social isolation will persist. For instance, racial and ethnic discrimination remains a global challenge that undermines cordial relationships and socio-economic growth. The Church’s social tradition has consistently criticised injustices that affect peaceful co-existence and equal opportunities. For example, the Catholic Bishops of the United States have consistently maintained that “Economic conditions that leave large numbers of people unemployed, underemployed or employed in dehumanising conditions fail to meet the converging demands of the principles of [socio-economic justice].”<sup>35</sup> The creation of employment and equal opportunities aims to enhance human dignity, not diminish it. Scholarship in political philosophy and social ethics reveals “how black people in the United States have been

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<sup>30</sup> Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Iain Mackenzie, *Politics: Key Concepts in Philosophy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 5. Also see Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> See Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 1 and 7.

<sup>33</sup> Clifford G. Christians, “The Ethics of Human Dignity,” in *Media Ethics and Global Justice in the Digital Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 185.

<sup>34</sup> Ronald Dworkin, *Justice for Hedgehogs* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). This is a modified citation from the original as quoted by Christians, “The Ethics of Human Dignity,” in *Media Ethics and Global Justice in the Digital Age*, 185.

<sup>35</sup> United States Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, 73.

systematically denied equal opportunities to obtain the kinds of good and meaningful work disproportionately enjoyed by their white counterparts.”<sup>36</sup> This was also true in South Africa during the Apartheid regime. Migrants in various parts of the world face similar experiences of discrimination.<sup>37</sup> Recognising that equal opportunity is essential for individuals and society, such anomalies should be avoided in any civilised community. Observations indicate that an unequal distribution of labour restricts people’s ability to develop and hinders their pursuit of fulfilment, respect and self-esteem.<sup>38</sup> Contributing to the socio-economic growth of any society “is the route to personal well-being and the basis for harmonious co-existence.”<sup>39</sup> Consequently, broad advocacy for contributive justice is essential to confront the challenges of discrimination and exclusion that stifle opportunities and contribute to the migrant crisis.

Hollenbach states that two things are involved in dismantling these challenges: (1) acknowledging that we share a common good, and (2) accepting the impact of some “common bad” in our socio-political structures. These are “motivational preconditions for dismantling the walls that isolate others from the economic, political and socio-cultural achievements of wealthy nations. They could also revitalise a sense of the common good that energise social and political actions in the economic life of the larger society.”<sup>40</sup> In this regard, contributive justice provides equal opportunities and promotes the dignity of labour. It recognises that contributing to society’s well-being is beneficial, implying that individuals gain from what they give or do for society.

Thus, contribution to the flourishing of any society involves providing substantive and concrete goods that are valued.<sup>41</sup> There are two implications to such conception of

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<sup>36</sup> See Gomberg, *How to Make Opportunity Equal: Race and Contributive Justice* (London: Wiley, Blackwell, 2007). Also see Mark Banks, “Cultural Work and Contributive Justice,” *Journal of Cultural Economy* 16, no. 1 (2023): 47-61, DOI: 101080/17530350.2022.2058059.

<sup>37</sup> See Frances Webber, “The Erosion of the Law of Humanity” in *Borderline Justice: The Fight for Refugee and Migrant Rights* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 87-102; Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 1-10; Silas W. Allard, “Border: Sites of Exclusion, Sites of Engagement,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella, (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 87-103.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew Sayer, “Habitus, Work and Contributive Justice,” *Sociology* 45, no 1 (2011): 7-21 at 17. Also see Balihar Sanghera, “Contributive Injustice and Unequal Division of Labour in the Voluntary Sector,” *Sociological Research Online*, 23, no. 2 (2018) 308-327 at 308-309.

<sup>39</sup> See Gomberg, *How to Make Opportunity Equal*, 149. Also see Banks, “Cultural Work and Contributive Justice,” 52.

<sup>40</sup> See Hollenbach, “Poverty, Justice, and the Good of the City,” in *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 173-211. Hollenbach dedicates the entire chapter seven of this book to discuss the challenges of poverty and social justice in the American context with particular emphasis on our interconnectedness and interdependence for human flourishing. He raises concerns about the social isolation of the poor. He argues that “No one who is a citizen of a functioning community should be relegated to the sidelines of social interaction.” He also avers that “justice is a prerequisite for a good that is common.” (See Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 174-89 and 190-202).

<sup>41</sup> See Banks, “Cultural Work and Contributive Justice,” 52. Also see Sayer, “Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work,” 1-16; Sanghera, “Contributive Injustice and Unequal Division of Labour in the Voluntary Sector,” 308-327. Ferdinand Tablan, “Catholic Social Teachings: Toward a Meaningful Work,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 13, no. 2 (2015): 291-302 at 300. Also see Timmermann, “Contributive Justice: An Exploration of a Wider Provision of Meaningful Work,” 94.

contributive justice: “First, people have an obligation to contribute to society rooted in Catholic social doctrine, which stresses the importance of traditional family life, being good neighbour and contributing positively to the wellbeing of one’s community.”<sup>42</sup> Secondly, contributive justice “requires the establishment of social structures that allow people to make positive contribution to society and a social environment that incorporates such contributions into the overall system without discrimination on the basis of gender, race or other arbitrary standard.”<sup>43</sup> In other words, opportunities should be created for people to earn a livelihood and participate in the flourishing of society.

Evidently, a lack of livelihood opportunities impoverishes the people and makes them vulnerable to all forms of exploitation. There are indications that the consequences of insufficient job opportunities in the Global South stem from lack of leadership in managing human and natural resources. This drives people to the Global North, where there is effective leadership, competitive opportunities, and efficient resource management for the common good. The Church’s social tradition upholds “the obligation to earn one’s bread by the sweat of one’s brow.”<sup>44</sup> Therefore, it opposes socio-economic structures that perpetuate unequal opportunities in society. From an ethical perspective, any hinderance to the right to basic needs violates the principle of human dignity, contributive justice and the common good.

Justice also ethically demands an equitable distribution of challenging task among workers to prevent overburdening the underprivileged with low-quality jobs that make them feel inferior.<sup>45</sup> The mechanisms that perpetuate the dominance of a privileged few over others must be rejected for the common good. Therefore, in CST, the principles of participation, universal destination of the earth’s goods, the preferential option for the poor, solidarity, and subsidiarity advocate for dignified working conditions and livelihood for all. These principles reflect the theme of justice as a right. They suggest that members of every community have a role in their growth and development as enshrined in democratic principles.<sup>46</sup> The Church teaches that “authentic democracy is possible only in a state ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person.”<sup>47</sup>

Consequently, Timmermann highlights six essential demands of Contributive justice for human flourishing: “(1) Opportunity to participate (2) Opportunity to develop skills (3) Opportunity to learn to be productive (4) Fair evaluation of inputs or fair competition of

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<sup>42</sup> William E. Murnion, “The Ideology of Social Justice in economic Justice for All,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 8, no. 11 (1989): 847-854 at 848. Also see Cristian Timmermann, “Contributive Justice: An Exploration of a Wider Provision of Meaningful Work,” *Soc Just Res* 31, (2018): 85-111 at 94.

<sup>43</sup> United States Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, no. 73.

<sup>44</sup> See John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no 18; *Centesimus Annus*, no 43.

<sup>45</sup> See Timmermann, “Contributive Justice: An Exploration of a Wider Provision of Meaningful Work,” *Soc Just Res* 31, no. 1 (March 2018): 85-111 at 95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-017-0293-2>. Also see Gomberg, *How to Make Opportunity Equal*, 128-137; Sayer, “Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work,” *Res Publica* 15, no. 1, (2009): 1-16.

<sup>46</sup> Corkery and Kim expound these principles in some particular social context applicable to the migrant crisis. See Kim, “Principles of Catholic Social Teaching,” in *An Introduction to Catholic Ethics Since Vatican II*, 119-130. Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 10-14, 69-84, Also see Vatican II, *GS*, nos. 29 and 75.

<sup>47</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no 46.

ideas [and capabilities] (5) Duty to do one's share according to one's capacities (6) Meaningful work and tedious task should be distributed more evenly."<sup>48</sup> This represents another method of projecting the principles of CST as ideals for the growth and development of every society. Contributive justice signifies widespread individual and collective action for improved livelihood. It involves promoting the dignity of labour in every political community.

### 5.3 Encouraging the Dignity of Labour for Nation Building

The dignity of labour builds people's confidence, drives economic growth, and sustains distributive justice, emphasising equitable distribution of goods and services to the population. It underscores the principle of participation in the welfare of the state. This implies that economic power should not be left in the hands of a few.<sup>49</sup> In other words, it entails respect for all legitimate intellectual or physical occupations. Every honest job, dutifully performed with integrity, deserves appreciation because it contributes to nation-building. People should be encouraged to take pride in their job impacting positively to the overall prosperity of their community, nation, or state.<sup>50</sup> Although the nature of people's work sometimes determine how others perceive them, it must be noted that their contribution to the nation's economy is as significant as the resources they receive.<sup>51</sup> Resources are meant to be at the service of the human person and not the other way round.

Pope John Paul II's profound contribution to the nature and significance of work in human existence strongly de-emphasised identifying the dignity of labour with people's job. He teaches that labour has dignity because of the person doing the work. To put it differently, the human person is the subject of every work and should be valued regardless of their kind of legitimate work. Hence, work should be evaluated from the dimension of the subject and not the object. This suggests that work is not "simply a commodity or an impersonal element of the world of industry but rather 'an essential expression of the human person.'"<sup>52</sup> The ethics of work should revolve around the human person created in the *imago Dei* to subdue the earth and have dominion over it.<sup>53</sup> In other words, it is the human person that gives value to work. Pope John Paul II substantiates this point:

[The word] "dominion" spoken of in the biblical text [...] refers not only to the objective dimension of work but at the same time introduces us to an understanding of its subjective dimension. [...] This dominion, in a certain sense, refers to the subjective dimension even more than to the objective one: this dimension conditions *the very ethical nature* of work. In fact, there is no doubt that human work has an ethical value of its own, which clearly and

<sup>48</sup> Timmermann, "Contributive Justice: An Exploration of a Wider Provision of Meaningful Work," 95.

<sup>49</sup> Kim, "Principles of Catholic Social Teaching" 123. Also see Vatican II, *GS*, no. 42, 75.

<sup>50</sup> Abiodun Adekunle Ogunola, "Dignity of Labour as the Bedrock of a Productive Society: Perspective from Nigerian Experience," *Sciendo* 87, (2022): 104 – 117 at 105.

<sup>51</sup> Sayer, "Habit, Work and Contributive Justice," 9.

<sup>52</sup> See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 271. Also see Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 57.

<sup>53</sup> John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, (14 September 1981), no. 6. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091981\\_laborem-exercens.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html)

directly remain linked to the fact that the one who carries it out is a person, a conscious and free subject, that is to say a subject that decides about him[/her]self.<sup>54</sup>

The Magisterium prioritises the dignity of the individual as the yardstick for the dignity of labour, while recognising the ethical value of work in itself. It teaches that “in a real sense we ‘image God’ through participating creatively and responsibly in the ongoing task of creation. Through work, we participate ‘not only in the act of creation but also in that of redemption.’”<sup>55</sup> *Laborem Exercens* insists that “the basis for determining the value of human work is not primarily in the kind of work being done but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person. The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the subjective dimension, not in the objective one.”<sup>56</sup> This encyclical highlights the misconceptions contributing to the problem of inequality and the unfair treatment of some workers.

Additionally, the Church teaches that productivity is vital for sustaining communal well-being where basic needs are met. This means that productivity “should be measured [by] the impact of fulfilment in terms of employment level, patterns of discrimination, environmental quality, and a sense of community.”<sup>57</sup> In their research findings, Quinetta Roberson and William Scott suggest that:

Inequality is often manifest as unequal access to opportunities based on social positions or statuses, which establish boundaries for inclusion. For example, social group memberships, such as gender and race, have been shown to influence access to and participation in organisational networks. Further difference in network structures and interaction patterns has been shown to influence concentration of power within a particular social group, thereby materialising distinctions in terms of who is considered an insider and/or valued for their input into decision-making process. In effect, network differences serve to create an “opportunity context” or structural environment in which those on the periphery of organisational networks – or considered to be so given status hierarchies - are unable to fully utilise their talents to achieve organisational objectives.<sup>58</sup>

Here, the issues of structural sin, socio-cultural discrimination, and economic injustices that permeate our society are highlighted in organisational contexts. As the name implies, contributive justice emphasises what people are allowed, expected or required to do for nation-building and overall well-being. Sayer aptly argues that the dignity of labour “can be a source of meaning, development and fulfilment.”<sup>59</sup> He presents household concerns about division of labour and productivity as a model for society development.

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<sup>54</sup> Pope John Paul II, *LE*, no. 6.

<sup>55</sup> See Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 57. Also see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 263, 275, 277 and 281.

<sup>56</sup> Pope John Paul II, *LE*, no. 6.

<sup>57</sup> United States Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, no. 71.

<sup>58</sup> Quinetta Roberson and William Scott, “Contributive Justice: Invisible Barrier to Workplace Inclusion,” *Journal of Management* 50, no. 3, (March 2024): 877-897 at 880. DOI: 10.1177/01492063221116089

<sup>59</sup> Sayer, “Habitus, Work and Contributive Justice,” 9. Also see “The Injustice of Unequal Work,” *Soundings* 43, no. 43 (December 2009): 102-112.

A lack of opportunities to work results in shortage of resources for distribution and consumption. It impoverishes the people and drives the migrant crisis. People become restless when they cannot provide their basic needs in any given environment. This is reflected in arguments about fairness in many nations: Issues of equity and fairness are often concern not only the amounts of resources received by individual members but also their contributions to their households and the flourishing of their national communities.<sup>60</sup> Pope John Paul II highlighted ways in which such issues concerning the dignity of labour could be redressed:

The first and fundamental concern of one and all [is to get a dignified job]. Rulers, politicians, trade union leaders and owners of enterprises must give work to everyone. To expect the problems to be resolved as more or less automatic result of an economic order and development, of whatever kind, in which employment appears as secondary consequence, is not realistic and therefore is not admissible. Economic theory and practice should have the courage to consider employment and its modern possibilities as a central element in their aims.<sup>61</sup>

Therefore, political leaders must centralise the dignity of labour as a channel for economic growth and the protection of human dignity. Those who contribute nothing to their nation hinder their own success and negatively impact the nation.<sup>62</sup> Hence, the philosophy behind the dignity of labour involves provision of employment opportunities devoid of the complexities associated with perceiving certain jobs as inferior or superior to others.<sup>63</sup> Drawing from the biblical narrative of the creation of the world, CST depicts God “as a working God” (Gen. 1:26-28; John 5:17), revealing work as fundamental to human survival. John Paul II points out that work is “a universal calling,” leading to the transformation of nature and achieving human fulfilment. Therefore, “humanity requires work to be maintained and developed.”<sup>64</sup> He builds on Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*, which connects poverty and human suffering in many parts of the world with lack of work and exploitation of workers. This social encyclical committed the Church to the defence of workers and their right to a just wage. Hence, the Magisterium advocates creating job opportunities, accompanied by just wages.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Sayer, “The Injustice of Unequal Work,” 102.

<sup>61</sup> Pope John Paul II, Address to Workers at São Paulo, 3 July 1980, in “Collaborators of God in the Work of Creation,” *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition, 21 July 1980, 5. Cited by the Irish Episcopal Conference, *Work is the Key: Towards an Economy that Needs Everyone* (Dublin: Veritas, 1992), no. 35.

<sup>62</sup> See Sandra Huebenthal, “*Homo Oeconomicus*: An Unlikely Reader of Parables?” Research Seminar Presentation, Saint Patrick’s Pontifical University, Maynooth, 19 February 2025.

<sup>63</sup> Ogunola, “Dignity of Labour as the Bedrock of a Productive Society, 105. Also see Sayer, “The Injustice of Unequal Work,” 103; Sayer, “Dignity at Work: Broadening the Agenda,” *Organization* 14, no. 4 (2007): 565-581; Keith Breen, “Work and Emancipatory Practice: Towards a Recovery of Human Beings’ Productive Capacities,” *Res Publica* 4, no. 13 (December 2007): 381-414.

<sup>64</sup> See Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, nos. 4, 9, 16. Also see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 264-266; The Irish Episcopal Conference, *Work is the Key: Towards an Economy that Needs Everyone*, nos. 47-48.

<sup>65</sup> See Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, nos. 8, 19, 34. Also see The Irish Episcopal Conference, *Work is the Key*, 54-57; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 269-275.

In Chapter Two, unemployment and poverty were identified among the drivers of the migrant crisis. These factors are connected to political leadership's failure to safeguard the dignity of labour, either through limited employment opportunities, or because "a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to just wages and to the personal security of the [workers and their families]."<sup>66</sup> CST describes unemployment as an evil in all cases because it destroys "the self-respect and self-reliance of individuals, families, and communities" resulting in excessive migration.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, creating equal opportunities for human flourishing in every political community is the first bulwark against the migrant crisis. The Church's social doctrine reaffirms that:

God gave the earth to the whole of human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favouring anyone. This is *the foundation of the universal destination of the earth's goods*. The earth, by reason of its fruitfulness and its capacity to satisfy human needs, is God's first gift for the sustenance of human life. But the earth does not yield its fruits without a particular human response to God's gift [of] work."<sup>68</sup>

The above teaching implies that job opportunities are basic human rights, and that the unemployed are also entitled to live with dignity. It corroborates *Populorum Progressio*, which affirms that we must all contribute to the authentic development of our communities and "the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human."<sup>69</sup> Paul VI, in this teaching, resolutely encourages all humanity to participate in the socio-economic growth and development of their political communities.

Additionally, the opportunity to contribute to society through legitimate or meaningful work enhances an individual's well-being and the overall flourishing of society. In other words, what people do for the benefit of the society also enhance their well-being. Hence, contribution is a substantive and concrete good to be valued by all. Banks, Gomberg and other social scientists emphasise the centrality of contributing to our well-being and harmonious co-existence, especially when the energy of co-operation and the protection of the dignity of labour motivates it. They assert that contributive justice focuses more on realising the potential for self-development, an individual's positive socio-economic contribution to society, and the uniqueness of a collective work force for the common good.<sup>70</sup> This argument draws strength from the principle of the universal destination of the earth's goods, which "stresses the duty of all who have the capacity to create the goods, services, and other nonmaterial or spiritual values necessary for the welfare of the whole

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<sup>66</sup> John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no. 8.

<sup>67</sup> See John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no. 18. Also see The Irish Episcopal Conference, *Work is the Key: Towards an Economy that Needs Everyone* (Dublin: Veritas, 1992), no. 32.

<sup>68</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, (1 May 1991), no. 31. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html)

<sup>69</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, (26 March 1967), no. 20. [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_26031967\\_populorum.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html)

<sup>70</sup> Banks, "Cultural Work and Contributive Justice, 46-61 at 51-52. Also see Gomberg, *Opportunity to Contribute*, 149, 151. Also see Sayer, "Contributive Justice and meaningful Work," 1-16; Sanghera, "Contributive Justice and Unequal Division of Labour," 308-327; Timmerman, "Contributive Justice: An Exploration of a Wider Provision of Meaningful Work, 85-111.

community.”<sup>71</sup> It also projects the idea of cooperation in fulfilling the divine mandate to make the earth a flourishing home for all (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:1- 13). This implies rootedness and active participation in the socio-economic activities of one’s political community for a better livelihood.<sup>72</sup>

Uprootedness is one of the reasons for the migrant crisis. We earlier established that many people have been uprooted from their ancestral home either due to war, ethnic or religious violence, natural disaster, climate change or socio-economic displacement or marginalisation. We have identified these as key drivers of the migrant crisis. Consequently, the natural remedy in such situations is to integrate into a new community for sanctuary. However, such natural remedies are often shrouded in uncertainties and difficulties. Pope Francis is critical of “the emergence and growth of social groups clinging to an identity that separates them from others. People’s refusal to cultivate the attitude of fraternity and the recognition of the values of reciprocity and mutual enrichment.”<sup>73</sup> He insists that “the mere sum of individual [or particular group’s] interests is not capable of generating a better world for the whole human family, nor can it save us from the many ills that are now increasingly globalised.”<sup>74</sup> The Holy Father views the migrant crisis through the lens of our shared humanity and the need to recognise our unity in diversity. He advocates for an attitude that protects human dignity and right to livelihood.

The dignity of labour encourages socio-cultural, economic and political rootedness. It could be argued that migration has always been humanity’s natural quest for such desires. In other words, although most people migrate for socio-economic emancipation and self-fulfilment, it can also be motivated by a search for rootedness - a requirement that enables people to feel at home in certain political communities, which in turn nourishes or enhances their vitality.<sup>75</sup> Considering that immigrants are sometimes uprooted from their place of origin, families, cultural and religious values, Pope Francis recommends a movement towards various forms of integration that acknowledges our unique roots and rejoices in its rich diversity.<sup>76</sup> He acknowledges the fragmentation emigrants face, especially the separation from their loved ones. For this reason, the Magisterium “reaffirm the right to remain in one’s homeland” unless the situation is precarious.<sup>77</sup> Providing dignified employment opportunities solidifies both integration and the right not to emigrate. It helps people to be properly rooted in local communities.

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<sup>71</sup> United States Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the US Economy* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986/1997), nos. 1-5, 71.

<sup>72</sup> See Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 65, Also see Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 43.

<sup>73</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no 103.

<sup>74</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no 105.

<sup>75</sup> See *The Time Literary Supplement* comment in Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind*, trans. Arthur Wills (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>76</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 10, 38.

<sup>77</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 38; Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 93. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20190325\\_christus-vivit.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html). Also see Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the 2013 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (12 October 2012) AAS 104 (2012), 908.

The significance of rootedness in addressing the migrant crisis cannot be overemphasized. According to Weil, “to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognised need of the human being, the hardest to define. Human beings have roots by virtue of their real, active, and natural participation in the life of a community with certain treasures of the past and certain expectations of the future.”<sup>78</sup> These are some of the basic human desires pulling people to the Global North, even though migrating to these locations are often conditioned by one’s place and condition of birth, race, profession, wealth and social status.<sup>79</sup> Such conditions, in most cases, are obstacles fomented and exploited for political, racial or ethnic and religious purposes. They elicit discrimination, unnecessary fear and alarm undermining the intrinsic dignity of some categories of migrants and our shared humanity.<sup>80</sup>

Hollenbach suggests that greater consideration is necessary regarding the responsibility of states, nongovernmental organisations and individuals to protect the basic rights and dignity of immigrants.<sup>81</sup> To this effect, Rajendra argues that the principles of “human right and the option for the poor are inadequate to address such issues of transnational concerns. [In this context,] human right discourse focuses on the question of who has right, rather than who has the duty to protect the vulnerable. The option for the poor, [on the other hand] fails to provide guidance for sorting through competing responsibilities.”<sup>82</sup> She asserts that “both human rights and the option for the poor must operate within a theory of justice that proposes not only norms for distributing social goods, but also norms for allocating responsibilities.”<sup>83</sup> This makes contributive justice viable in justly allocating responsibilities to migrants, citizens, states, nongovernmental organisations, and faith communities. The migrant crisis requires a collective response.

Once again, migration highlights human needs for rootedness and the moral responsibility to protect people’s rights to acceptance and assistance.<sup>84</sup> “We are built for both settled rooted lives that exceeds cultural exploration and exchange, and for love and service to one another.”<sup>85</sup> This indicates openness to God’s commandment of love and solidarity with all those in need. This study recommends a moral and ethical framework that views migrants as interdependent moral agents seeking recognition, acceptance and support for dignified livelihood, rather than as threats, burdens and dependent victims. It also advocates for a critical reflection on “the moral purpose of borders, the principles of free movement, relations to labour and capital in markets where migrant labour is either used extensively or denied entirely, and the moral function of citizenship within nation states.”<sup>86</sup> Hence, the exploration of the principles of “contributive justice” and “the culture of encounter” as both material and moral hypothesis for the migrant crisis.

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<sup>78</sup> Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind*, 43.

<sup>79</sup> Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind*, 43.

<sup>80</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 39.

<sup>81</sup> Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 96.

<sup>82</sup> Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility in Ethics of Immigration*, 8-9.

<sup>83</sup> Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 9.

<sup>84</sup> Pope Francis *FT*, no. 40. Also see Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 96-113.

<sup>85</sup> Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 91.

<sup>86</sup> Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 91.

#### 5.4 Contributive Justice and “the Culture of Encounter”

Applied to the migrant crisis, contributive justice and “the culture of encounter” raise fundamental questions about our shared humanity, the common good, the universal destination of the earth’s goods, solidarity, participation, stewardship, and socio-political responsibility. It has been observed that corrupt forms of government pose a threat to these principles. They utilise several mechanisms to shut out, exclude, shun, and marginalise others. It is well known that politicians and the wealthy elite often isolate themselves from the challenges of the masses in their community.<sup>87</sup> Regrettably, there are recurring events in various parts of the globe where the duty not to harm others is politically violated or ignored. History has revealed the failures of political communities and their leaders to protect people’s basic rights to life and dignified livelihood.<sup>88</sup>

Who, then, has the responsibility to protect the vulnerable less privileged? Who is responsible for providing help when somebody else has caused the harm? Who is responsible for providing aid in the face of natural disaster, displacement, or ethnic cleansing? Who has the responsibility to ensure the preservation of the earth, our common home, to address the challenges of climate change? Who is responsible for assisting people suffering from impoverishment, bad governance or failed leadership?<sup>89</sup> These questions are critical to contributive justice and “the culture of encounter” in addressing the migrant crisis. They acknowledge the dignity of each human person and the need for a “universal aspiration to fraternity,” which can protect lives and ensure the global common good.<sup>90</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* exhort all regimes to recognise and respect “the basic rights of [all persons] and the requirements of the common good.”<sup>91</sup> Perhaps, the dual concepts of contributive justice and the culture of encounter provide some ideal directions.

As stated earlier, contributive justice, like the common good, is an integral part of “good politics,” focusing on what we give to society rather than what we receive or get. It brings a paradigm shift from the understanding of politics as “who gets what, when, and how.”<sup>92</sup> It complement distributive justice by focusing on what to *do* individually and collectively for the flourishing of society. In other words, contributive justice deals with what needs to be done to improve and safeguard all creation. It emphasises “doing,” “bringing,” and “contributing,” rather than “getting,” “receiving” or “taking” from the often-scarce resources. Receiving and taking from the nation’s scarce resources without a corresponding giving or doing something in return leads to a comatose economy. Many countries are facing

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<sup>87</sup> See Kim, “Principles of Catholic Social Teaching,” 123. Also see Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 31.

<sup>88</sup> Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 96.

<sup>89</sup> For an elaborate contextual discourse on our responsibilities towards migrants and refugees, see Alexander Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2013); Raphael Israeli, *Ethnic Cleansing: Migration and Population Transfer and the Jewish Paradigm of Survival Amidst Displacement* (USA/Singapore: Strategic Book Publishing and Rights 2019); David Hollenbach SJ, *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press).

<sup>90</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Vatican II, *GS*, no. 42.

<sup>92</sup> Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How?* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1936).

the consequences of such poor socio-economic decisions and corruption. Apart from war, natural disaster and human right abuses, a comatose economy is one of the reasons for mass exodus into the Global North resulting in the migrant crisis. Most migrants seek justice that allows them to pursue their dream of a better life fully. Much of their concern revolves around protecting their basic rights and the future. These are wholesome desires that should not be overlooked. This is where contributive justice should balance our conception of social and economic justice regarding the migrant crisis. It shows that migrants could contribute to the overall flourishing of any society.

How then, does “the culture of encounter,” fit into contributive justice, or how does it relate to it? What does it even mean? According to Pope Francis, “the culture of encounter” is an invitation to be “passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, and planning projects that include everyone.”<sup>93</sup> This definition recognises our socio-cultural nature and the need to solidify our interrelationship, especially in today’s globalised context with its many “conflicts, confrontations, and fragmentations.”<sup>94</sup> Moreover, culture does not only give a unique identity to a people. It is also dynamic and could shift from one generation to the next. This happens when there is a crossbreeding of cultural values.

For clarity, culture may be defined as a “set of shared attitudes, values, goals, customary beliefs, and behaviours that characterise a people, an institution or an organisation. It could also be the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.”<sup>95</sup> Consequently, “the culture of encounter” is meant to enhance relationships across border through dialogue, openness and solidarity.<sup>96</sup> Pope Francis envisions this kind of relationship for the global community due to its significance for peaceful co-existence, respect for human dignity and rights and for the actualisation of the global common good.

The migrant crisis has revealed that there are always mutual tensions between migrants and their host communities due to cultural differences. Both migrants and their hosts often find themselves in unfamiliar and uncomfortable positions.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, the host communities are always tempted to suppress the cultural values of emigrants. Challenges of this nature are addressed in the 2005 UNESCO’s (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression*. The international organisation is clear regarding cultural diversity. Their aims are:

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<sup>93</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 216.

<sup>94</sup> Gnana Patrick, Pope Francis. Culture of Encounter, the Common Good, and the Dharma: Public Theological Conversations Today,” *Theological Studies* 84, no. 2, (2023): 212-228 at 216-17.

<sup>95</sup> See Merriam Webster Dictionary Online: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture>.

<sup>96</sup> See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 239.

<sup>97</sup> see Jill Marie Gerschutz and Lois Ann Lorentzen, “Integration Yesterday and Today: New Challenges for United States and the Church,” in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009)123-148 at 131.

a) To protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions; b) to create the conditions for cultures to flourish and to freely interact in a mutually beneficial manner; c) to encourage dialogue among cultures with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world in favour of intercultural respect and a culture of peace; d) to foster interculturality in order to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples; e) to promote respect for the diversity of cultural expressions and raise awareness of its value at the local, national and international levels.<sup>98</sup>

Other objectives related to the migrant crisis include:

a) To reaffirm the importance of the link between culture and development for all countries, particularly for developing countries, and to support actions undertaken nationally and internationally to secure recognition of the true value of this link; b) to give recognition to the distinctive nature of cultural activities, goods and services as vehicles of identity, values and meaning; c) to reaffirm the sovereign rights of States to maintain, adopt and implement policies and measures that they deem appropriate for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions on their territory; d) to strengthen international cooperation and solidarity in a spirit of partnership with a view, in particular, to enhancing the capacities of developing countries in order to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions.<sup>99</sup>

These objectives clearly articulate what Pope Francis states about “the culture of encounter.” The Holy Father advocates for a way of relating with those who are different from us in a respectful and dignified manner. In other words, “the culture of encounter” goes beyond tolerance and a means of achieving mere consensus into a way of life for the human family, regardless of our cultural differences. Central to the concept are the “dialogues between cultures, religions, disciplinary sciences, moral goods, ideologies, and political systems.”<sup>100</sup> To this effect, Kwame Anthony Appiah recommends a global or cosmopolitan ethics that respect our shared humanity and acknowledges our differences, considering our kinship, citizenship, culture, or religion.<sup>101</sup> The principle of “unity in diversity” could aid in

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<sup>98</sup> UNESCO, *The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression*, Paris, 20 October 2005. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246264.page=6>. Also see UNESCO, Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2 November 2001, art 7; Rafael Luciani, “Francis and the Pastoral Geopolitics of Peoples and Their Cultures: A Structural Option for the Poor,” *Theological Studies* 81, no. 1 (2020):181-202 at 186-189. DOI: 101177/0040563920906135

<sup>99</sup> UNESCO, *The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity*.

<sup>100</sup> Patrick, Pope Francis. Culture of Encounter, 217. Also see Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, Chapter 5; *Evangelii Gaudium*, Section IV of Chapter 4, and *Fratelli Tutti* Chapter 6.

<sup>101</sup> See Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), xiv-xviii. Adapted from Hollenbach, “Religious Nationalism, a Global Ethic, and the Culture of Encounter,” *Theological Studies* 83, no. 3 (2022): 361-378 at 369. Also see Martha Nussbaum, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,” in *For Love of Country* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 2-17 at 5, where she critiques the moral relevance of nationalism to the human person. She no longer holds this position but rather argues that “People exercise their freedom and express their dignity in part by shaping the institutions of their own nation state.” (See Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 255-62. Her argument is adapted in this work from Hollenbach in the above cited article. It is important to note that the connection between nationalism and the human person revolves around *national boundary, sovereignty and unique cultural identity*. However, both theologically and ethically, it should not take away our common origin, humanity and relational responsibility in the world - our common home. See Sacks, *The Dignity of difference: How to Avoid a Clash of Civilization*, rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 2003), chap. 3).

achieving this objective of our socio-cultural and economic interdependence.<sup>102</sup> Besides, “the meaning of social justice also includes a duty to organise economic and social institutions so that people can contribute to society in ways that respect their freedom and the dignity of their labour.”<sup>103</sup> The Covid-19 pandemic reminded us of the principles of solidarity, the universal destination of the earth’s goods and the concept of a global community. It exposed our vulnerability and the need to safeguard our common home from every form of danger. It also made us realise the need to work together for the global common good.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, our collective duty is to safeguard our “unity in diversity” for the global common good.

In essence, contributive justice, and “the culture of encounter” calls for recognising the dignity of differences, the openness to encounter others, and the need to offer everyone the opportunity to establish themselves.<sup>105</sup> At creation, God made us differently and empowered us to flourish. In a global economy marked by immigration, migrants cannot be disassociated from their background, even as they struggle to navigate life’s challenges. It is incumbent on host communities to ensure that they do not exploit or deny them the right to competent job opportunities. The situation should be perceived “as a source of socio-economic development rather than an obstacle to it.”<sup>106</sup> Their uniqueness should be respected in the process of assisting them. This is essential for their integration into new communities.

The Church’s Magisterium maintains that “genuine social encounter calls for dialogue and a realistic and inclusive socio-cultural covenant that respect and acknowledges different worldviews, cultures and lifestyle.”<sup>107</sup> Thus, the “culture of encounter” is devoid of barriers that limit migrants’ opportunities. Pope Francis teaches that “No authentic, profound and enduring change is possible unless it starts from the different cultures, particularly those of the poor. A cultural covenant eschews a monolithic understanding of the identity of a

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<sup>102</sup> William O’Neill, SJ, “The Place of Displacement: The Ethic of Migration in the United States,” in *Living With (Out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migration of Peoples*, ed. Agnes M. Brazal and Maria Teresa Davila (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2016), 67.

<sup>103</sup> United States Catholic Bishop’s, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, no. 72.

<sup>104</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 31.

<sup>105</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 217. Also see Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of difference: How to Avoid a Clash of Civilization*, rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 2003), chap. 3; And Jill Marie Gerschutz and Lois Ann Lorentzen, “Integration Yesterday and Today: New Challenges for United States and the Church,” in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009)123-148.

<sup>106</sup> See Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 62-63. Also see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine*, 198; Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 216; Pope John Paul II, “Migration and the Unity of the Human Family,” Papal Message for World Migration Day (Issued 10 September 1991), *Catholic International 2*, no. 19, (November 1991): 1-14; The Irish Episcopal Conference, *Work is the Key: Towards an Economy that Needs Everyone*, no 31; Martin Mill et al, “Alternative Education and Social Justice: Considering Issues of Affective and Contributive Justice,” *Critical Studies in Education* 57, no. 1 (2016): 100-115 at 102. DOI: 10.1080/17508487.2016.1087413. David Landes avers that “Culture makes almost all the difference.” See Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington ed., *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 2-13 at 2.

<sup>107</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 219.

particular place; It entails respect for diversity and offers opportunities for advancement and social integration to all.”<sup>108</sup> Migration allows us to encounter others and their unique contribution to the broader human family.

Theologically, Christian anthropology recommends compassion towards strangers and the less fortunate. Compassion is a virtue that suspends irritation, judgement and discrimination towards others. According to Donal Harrington, the word for “compassion” as used in the gospel narratives “means to be affected by the situation and plight of another right down in our bowels and innards.”<sup>109</sup> It often moves people into positive action that reduces human suffering. In employing the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Pope Francis concretizes his vision of encouraging a “culture of encounter” in the world, where all people recognise the equal worth of each person as created in the *imago Dei*. It is an invitation for humanity to work in concrete yet straightforward ways to alleviate human suffering.<sup>110</sup>

The parable of the Good Samaritan serves as a classic example of what the “culture of encounter” means in the context of the migrant crisis. This is how CST responds to the crisis – it invites humanity to “assume responsibilities for emigrants who find themselves vulnerable to political, financial or social exploitation... it calls for the acknowledgement of their vulnerabilities and their contribution to the global common good.”<sup>111</sup> Acting justly requires considering the good of others in society, recognising their needs and contribution. In other words, justice is that virtue that gives us the rightful disposition towards other people. It makes us acknowledge and appreciate their dignity and rights. It also fills us with the determination to give them what is their *due* as human beings.<sup>112</sup> The migrant crisis requires a global approach to hospitality, political charity and social friendship because of our shared humanity.

### 5.5 Hospitality, Political Charity and Social Friendship

Hospitality, political charity and social friendship are different but interconnected aspect of human relationality and contributive justice. They also explicate some dimensions of the principle of solidarity in CST. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that “the principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of ‘friendship’ or ‘social charity’ is a direct demand of [Christianity] and humanity.”<sup>113</sup> This means that humanity is obliged to hospitality, social friendship and political charity. The interconnection between these three socio-economic and political principles is hinged on our shared humanity, common home and the common good. They are also viable ways of responding to the migrant crisis,

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<sup>108</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 220. Also see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, 198.

<sup>109</sup> Harrington, “What is Justice?” in *What is Morality*, 192.

<sup>110</sup> Pope Francis used these words in his homily on Tuesday, 13 September 2016 to describe the message contained in the liturgical readings of the Mass he celebrated at Santa Marta. The Gospel text was Luke 7:11-17, the story of the widow of Nain. (See *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, no. 38, 23 September 2016).

<sup>111</sup> See John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no 23.

<sup>112</sup> See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 58; 1,2, 12 As cited by Harrington, *What is Morality: The Light through Different Windows*, 186.

<sup>113</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Dublin: Veritas, 1994), no. 1939.

considering the “widespread disregard for the law of human solidarity and charity dictated and imposed” by some political regimes amidst crises.<sup>114</sup>

It is essential to note that several theological, ethical, social and legal immigration scholars have revolved the migration debate around the biblical injunction of being hospitable and charitable to strangers, emphasising people’s duty to be magnanimous to immigrants in their faith and political communities. This is unsurprising, considering the strategic place of the virtue of hospitality in ancient society, biblical anthropology, social ethics and the Church’s social tradition.<sup>115</sup> To be more specific, Heyer’s scholarship has eloquently explored “inhospitality to immigrants” as a social sin and “civic kinship and subversive hospitality as a hallmark of Christian immigration ethics.”<sup>116</sup> O’Neill, a Jesuit theologian and ethicist, offers scriptural reflections on Christian hospitality and solidarity with strangers.<sup>117</sup> For him, being hospitable to migrants is equivalent to solidarity. It is a recognition of our shared humanity and an identification with them that is beyond occasional glance. Hospitality to strangers or foreigners in biblical times is a habitual virtue that offers care to others because they are also made in the image and likeness of God.<sup>118</sup> Donald Senior, Peter C. Phan, Daniel G. Groody and Giacchino Campese, to mention but a few, share in this ethical and theological preposition.<sup>119</sup> They identify hospitality as a Christian virtue and moral duty towards all.

According to Mona Siddiqui, hospitality is a way of life that embraces and provides for others regardless of their background or affiliation.<sup>120</sup> This means that the virtue of hospitality goes beyond mere intermittent acts of providing accommodation and material needs to strangers; it pertains our moral character of accepting people, especially those in

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<sup>114</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1939.

<sup>115</sup> Peter C. Phan, “Always Remember Where You Came From: An Ethics of Migrant Memory,” in *Living With (Out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migration of Peoples*, 173-68 at 174.

<sup>116</sup> See Heyer, *Kinship Across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, especially chaps. 2 and 5. Also see, Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration: Good Fence Makes Bad Neighbours,” *Theological Studies* 71, no. 2, (2010):410-36; “Reframing Displacement and Membership: Ethics of Migration,” *Theological Studies* 73, no. 2 (2012): 188-206; “Internalized Borders: Immigration Ethics in the Age of Trump,” *Theological Studies* 79, no. 1, (2018):146-164. Also see Phan, “Always Remember Where You Came From: An Ethics of Migrant Memory,” 173-68 at 174.

<sup>117</sup> See O’Neill, “Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger,” in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, 149-55.

<sup>118</sup> See William O’Neill, “Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger,” 150.

<sup>119</sup> See Donald Senior, “‘Beloved Aliens and Exiles’: New Testament Perspectives on Migration,” 20-30 and Peter C. Phan, *Migration in the Patristic Era: History and Theology*,” 35-61, in *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, ed. Daniel G. Groody and Giacchino Campese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008), 20-30. These essays extensively highlight the theological connection between hospitality and solidarity. Also see Anthony Rogers, “Globalizing Solidarity through Faith Encounters in Asia,” in *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, ed. Fabio Bagio and Agnes M. Brazal (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 203-18; Timothy A. Lenchak, “Israel’s Ancestors as Gerim: A Lesson of Biblical Hospitality,” in *God’s People on the Move: Biblical and Global Perspectives on Migration and Mission*, ed. VanThan Nguyen and John M. Prior (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 18-28.

<sup>120</sup> Mona Siddiqui, “Divine Welcome: The Ethics of Hospitality in Islam and Christianity,” Available at <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/mona-siddiqui-hospitality-as-welcoming-in-gods-name/12503800>. See also Mulligan, “Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis: Reflections on Hospitality, Vulnerability and Accompaniment,” *The Furrow* 74, no 11, (November 2023):579-86 at 584.

need, and making sacrifices for their well-being. Hospitality, in the context of the migrant crisis, therefore, is that aspect of contributive justice that provides a conducive atmosphere for human flourishing. It makes migrants feel at home to be able to contribute to their host communities. This is what distinguishes biblical and Christian understanding of hospitality from the rubric of mere benevolence to the foreigners. There are various examples of such attitude in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the New Testament. For example, Abraham and Sarah encountered challenges in their travels and eventual settlement; they offered hospitality to three strangers without knowing they were angels and were rewarded accordingly (Genesis 12:10-20, 18:1-15). Hebrews 13:2 states “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Other examples include Israelites’ migration, settlement and exodus from Egypt as a prominent theme of the migrant crisis that requires further scholarship.

The command to “love your neighbour as yourself,” (Leviticus 19:18) is an indicative to offer hospitality to everyone: “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him[/her] wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him[/her] as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt...” (Lev. 19:33-34). Additionally, Deuteronomy 10:17-19 highlights the obligation to care for “the widow, the orphan, and the alien.” These passages illustrate the need to be hospitable to the marginalised, the displaced and needy.<sup>121</sup> The parable of the final judgement in Matthew 25:31-46 reveals the *imago Dei* in every human being, and in responding positively to the needy, we are hosting or giving aid to Christ, who “for [our] sake was a stranger.”<sup>122</sup> Moreover, the definition of a “neighbour” in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 11:25-37) concretises the ethical and theological understanding of hospitality in dealing with foreigners. The Samaritan’s hospitality teaches us to see other people’s basic rights to life and livelihood as our responsibility.<sup>123</sup>

Two Greek words in the New Testament are translated as “hospitality”: The first one is *philoxenia* which literally means “lover of strangers.” It points to the more profound understanding of our shared humanity with those we do not know, who need assistance and support (See Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8, 1 Peter 4:9). The second is *xenodocheo*, used in 1 Timothy 5:10. It is a combination of *xenos*, which means “foreigner,” or “stranger,” or “someone without the knowledge of,” or “without a share in,” and *dechomai*, which means “receive,” “accept,” “take with the hand,” “give ear to,” “embrace,” or even “to receive into one’s family to bring up or educate.” The verb used to describe the extending of hospitality is *xenizein* (Sirach 29:25; I Maccabees 9:6; Acts 10:23; Hebrews 12:2). This reveals that the virtue of hospitality extends to embracing into one’s family the stranger who has no share in or knowledge of one’s own identity, life and

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<sup>121</sup> Elizabeth Collier, “Migration,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Ethics*, ed. Tobias Winright (London: T&T Clark/Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 173-80 at 174.

<sup>122</sup> Gregory Nazianzen, “Oration on Holy Baptism,” NPNF2, vol. 7, 327. Cited here as quoted by O’Neill, “Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger,” 154.

<sup>123</sup> See O’Neill, “Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger,” 150.

values.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, scholarship reveals that the significance of welcoming strangers in ancient society and biblical anthropology reflects its understanding that hospitality is a cardinal social virtue that distinguishes civilised people from barbarians and “one of the pillars of morality upon which the universe stands.”<sup>125</sup> Some scholars propose the notion of a “hospitable God” as a paradigm for Christian communities.<sup>126</sup> This research identifies with this understanding and suggests that it should be applied to various political communities experiencing an influx of immigrants for the benefits of both parties.

Hospitality has radical transformative implications for the migrant crisis. It is the first step towards addressing the plights of different categories of immigrants. Therefore, it demands openness, acceptance and assistance to those who seek sanctuary for various reasons. We have identified some of the causes of the migrant crisis and the need to address these issues adequately. Here, we propose that hospitality could have a lasting positive effect on migrants, depending on their experience in their host communities. The Irish Catholic Bishops Conference recommends a hundred thousand welcome to migrants, despite the socio-economic challenges. They acknowledge that “Many immigrants bring valuable skills and talents, while others seek support for a better future.”<sup>127</sup> From the dimension of social ethics, Siddiqui avers that “hospitable spirit urges us to confront the injustices that put people at risk in the first place. It demands a transformation of the self towards goodness and grace, to how God wants us to be with one another.”<sup>128</sup> It involves what she calls the “twin moves of universalising the neighbour and personalising the stranger.”<sup>129</sup> The parable of the Good Samaritan and Pope Francis’ appeal for social friendship and political charity captures this perspective elaborately. The Holy Father advocates for “a universal love that promotes persons.”<sup>130</sup> Once again, Scripture teaches that “the love of God and love of

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<sup>124</sup> Eric Foley, “‘Prevenient Grace’: The Theological Term for Hospitality” in *Do the Word* <https://dotheword.org/2012/02/29/prevenient-grace-the-theological-term-for-hospitality/> Accessed 9 March 2025. Also see John Koenig, “Hospitality,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 3, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 299-302; William O’Neill, Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger,” in *And You Welcomed Me*, 149-155; Wroblewski, *The Limits of Hospitality*, 15; Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, “John Paul II: Migrant Pope Teaches on Unwritten Laws of Migration,” *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy* 21, no. 1, (May 2007): 205-212, as cited by Jill Marie Gerschutz and Lois Ann Lorentzen, “Integration Yesterday and Today: New Challenges for the United States and the Church,” in *And You Welcomed Me*, 127-8.

<sup>125</sup> John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 2. For more scholarship on the significance of hospitality within the cultural context of ancient Christianity, see Ladislaus Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Early Rome: Livy’s Conception of Its Humanizing Force* (Chicago: Area Publishers, 1977); Andrew Arthurbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005); Pierre-François de Bethune, *Interreligious Hospitality: The Fulfillment of Dialogue* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010). The above citations are adapted from Jessica Wroblewski, *The Limits of Hospitality* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), chaps. 1. See chapter 2 for her exposition of “The Spirit of Hospitality.”

<sup>126</sup> George Newlands and Allen Smith, *Hospitable God: The Transformative Dream* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 4. Also see Wroblewski, *The Limits of Hospitality*, 15.

<sup>127</sup> Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference, *Pastoral letter: A Hundred Thousand Welcome? Exploring What Hospitality for Migrant People Mean in Contemporary Ireland*, (Maynooth: Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 2024), 1.

<sup>128</sup> Siddiqui, “Divine Welcome,”

<sup>129</sup> Siddiqui, “Divine Welcome,”

<sup>130</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, 106-142. Also see Irish Catholic Bishops Conference, *A Hundred thousand Welcome?*

neighbour” summarises God’s plan for humanity (See Mark 12:30-31, Matthew 22:36-40, 1 John 4:16). This commandment grounds the most basic principle that sustains the society.

It is not unreasonable to argue that the English language gives us a minimal understanding of the concept of “love.” The same word – love, is used in different context to express our affection, appreciation, solidarity, compassion and interests. On the other hand, the Greek language is richer in its use of the concept. It uses four different words to contextualise the word that is translated into English as love: *eros*, *phileo*, *storge*, and *agape*. Each of these words identifies a distinct kind of love. Love as *eros* is centred on romantic feelings, while love as *storge* is familial; it describes the kind of love found in family relationship. Love as *phileo* has to do with friendship. It describes the type of love found in social friendships, where affection and support abound, as well as a sense of equality. While *agape* is centred on selfless, unconditional and sacrificial love, epitomised in the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ for the redemption of humanity. It could be described as God-like or Christ-like love.<sup>131</sup> This research argues that “political love” and “social friendship” corresponds with the last two Greek understanding of the concept of love. Pope Francis appears to allude to this understanding. For instance, the Holy Father teaches that:

Love is more than just a series of benevolent actions. Those actions have their source in a union increasingly directed towards others, considering them of value, worthy, pleasing and beautiful apart from their physical or moral appearances. Our love for others, for who they are, moves us to seek the best for their lives. Only by cultivating this way of relating to one another will we make possible a social friendship that excludes no one and a fraternity that is open to all.<sup>132</sup>

He also states:

Recognising that all people are our brothers and sister, and seeking forms of social friendship that include everyone, is not merely utopian. It demands a decisive commitment to devising effective means to this end. Any effort along these lines becomes a noble exercise of charity. For whereas individuals can help others in need, when they join together in initiating social processes of fraternity and justice for all, they enter the “field of charity at its most vast, namely political charity. This entails working for a social and political order whose soul is social charity. Once more, I appeal for a renewed appreciation of politics as a “lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good.”<sup>133</sup>

Here, the Pope makes a fundamental point about love in human relationship and politics. Both aspects of our existence require some level of sacrifice. Hence, his conception of political charity suggests that the just ordering of society is an act of love for all without discrimination. These are some of Pope Francis’s unique contribution to the Church’s social

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<sup>131</sup> See David Bohr, “The Primacy of Love” in *Catholic Moral tradition* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitors, 1990), 122; and William Barclay, *New Testament Words* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1976), 15.

<sup>132</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no 94.

<sup>133</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no 180.

tradition regarding politics, social justice and human relationships that could mitigate the migrant crisis.

It should be noted, however, that the concepts of “political love” and “social friendship” are not peculiar to Pope Francis; they are also rooted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other social encyclicals like *Deus Caritas Est*, an encyclical issued by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.<sup>134</sup> However, Pope Francis is the first Roman Pontiff to clearly retrieve and definitively situate the praxis of love in politics, considering its significance to the human family. His teaching reaffirms that “good politics” is the highest form of charity in which individuals or groups come together in “social friendship” to promote fraternity and justice for all regardless of social status.<sup>135</sup> This means that political charity is an integral part of “good politics” that leads to the creation of structures and socio-economic institutions that serve the common good. For the Holy Father, political charity is “one of the highest forms of charity because of its multiplying effects, which allow it to serve a more comprehensive purpose than the charitable activities of individuals or groups.”<sup>136</sup> He maintains that:

It is an act of charity to assist someone suffering, but it is also an act of charity, even if we do not know that person, to work to change the social conditions that caused his or her suffering. If someone helps an elderly person cross a river, that is a fine act of charity. The politician, on the other hand, builds a bridge, and that too is an act of charity. While one person can help another by providing something to eat, the politician creates a job for that other person and thus practices a lofty form of charity that ennobles his or her political activity.<sup>137</sup>

This shows the connection between political charity, social friendship, and contributive justice. It also reveals that “good politics” is at the service of the common good. Such an understanding of politics in practice will not only mitigate the high level of economic migration but also assist migrants in finding acceptance and support in other political communities. As part of “good politics,” political charity embodies an inclusive culture of dialogue that mends broken relationships, fosters tolerance, social friendship and mutual understanding.<sup>138</sup> All these are dimension of the migrant crisis that need attention.

The moralist Robert M. Cooper raises the fundamental question on human need for love, friendship and hospitality from the ethical methodological perspective. He argues that “love

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<sup>134</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no 1938; Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (December 25, 2005), [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20051225\\_deus-caritas-est.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html) (hereafter cited as *DCE*). Also see Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 94-5, 99, 106, 142, 154, 180-95, and 233.

<sup>135</sup> Pope Francis builds the concept of political charity on the teaching of Pope Pius XI who defined politics as “the highest form of charity” in an address to Italian Catholic Intellectuals in December 1927. He quotes Pius XI in an address to a delegation of the Fraternity of Chemin Neuf on Monday, May 16, 2022. Accessible at <https://www.osservatoreromano.va/en/news/2022-05/ing-020/unconditional-respect-in-politics.html>. Adapted here as cited by Ludovic Lado SJ, “Toward a Spirituality of Politics,” *Theological Studies* 84, no. 2 (2023): 198-211 at 201.

<sup>136</sup> Lado SJ, “Toward a Spirituality of Politics,” 202.

<sup>137</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 186.

<sup>138</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 190-91.

without strategy is little more than a fleeting feeling.”<sup>139</sup> Applied to the migrant crisis, CST, in the first place, discourages unnecessary migration. Still, when necessary, the Magisterium recommends: “welcoming, protecting, promoting and helping migrants to integrate” into newfound communities.<sup>140</sup> The Church’s social tradition sees it as “a duty to justice, civility and solidarity.”<sup>141</sup> Rowlands reveals that Pope Francis defines:

Welcome as the provision of safe legal programmes of reception, providing personal safety for arriving migrants and access to service. Protecting implies availability of relevant and accurate information, defending basic rights independent of legal status and a special duty of care for child migrants. Promoting is defined as ensuring the conditions for migrants to develop according to their own needs and capacities and those of native citizens. The Pope places greater emphasis than his predecessors on the duty of state and civil society to promote mutual integral development of migrants and citizens and to facilitate new forms of sustainable hospitality. Supporting integration implies providing opportunities for intercultural encounter and active citizenship.<sup>142</sup>

She concludes that understanding “what Pope Francis means here requires us to recall what solidarity stands for in CST. It does not mean a weak universal benevolence but rather a structural orientation towards ensuring the dignity and development of the human person.”<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, the Holy Father condemns every form of reductionist view of human dignity and personhood that is often brought into debates about migration. People must not be reduced to economic, legal or socio-political entities. Such reductionism is most visible in debates about legal and illegal migrants, and it is an offence against human dignity.<sup>144</sup> The Pope insists that we must reject all forms of “fundamentalist intolerance damaging relationships between individuals, groups and peoples [and] be committed to living and teaching the values of respect for others, a love that is capable of welcoming differences, and [giving] priority of the dignity of every human being.”<sup>145</sup> Political love and social friendship are twin concepts centred on practical relationality that promotes our common identity and the common good. It encapsulates immigration challenges that leads to the separation of families, the increased risk of exploitation, the closure of borders, the failure of dignified reception of migrants and the inherent trauma of forced migration as all threats to the dignity of the human person.<sup>146</sup>

Both political charity and social friendship invite all humanity to what Pope John Paul II calls “the witness of action,” which has influenced the Church’s doctrine on the “preferential option for the poor” worldwide. This teaching is not “exclusive or discriminatory towards

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<sup>139</sup> Robert M. Cooper, “Faith, Hope and Love: Three Books,” *Cross Currents* 23 (Fall 1974), 337. See citation by Daniel Maguire, *The Moral Choice*, 108.

<sup>140</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 129.

<sup>141</sup> See Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 90.

<sup>142</sup> Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 90.

<sup>143</sup> Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 90.

<sup>144</sup> Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 90.

<sup>145</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 191. Also see Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 90.

<sup>146</sup> Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 90.

other groups...”<sup>147</sup> The Church teaches that “Love for others, [especially] love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice; [which] will never be fully attained unless people see in the poor person, who is asking for help to survive, not an annoyance or a burden, but an opportunity for showing kindness and a chance for greater enrichment.”<sup>148</sup> In proposing political love and social friendship we are called to “make the civilisation of love a reality by transforming ordinary tasks of everyday life into moments of encounter with God’s life-giving love.”<sup>149</sup> High level of solidarity is needed in handling the global migrant crisis. This is one of the ethical responses recommended by the Magisterium.<sup>150</sup> It is interesting that Pope John Paul II used the term solidarity interchangeably with the concept of justice in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. In that context, he highlights our responsibility towards those experiencing personal suffering; that they need both support and justice:

When interdependence becomes recognised in [a personal] way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a virtue, is solidarity. This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or a shallow distress at the misfortunes of many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all [...], because we are all really responsible for all.”<sup>151</sup>

Pope John Paul II reiterates our interconnectedness and the need to cooperate for the common good. Contributive justice is the springboard to the common good because it creates equal opportunities for flourishing.

Undoubtedly, migrants need monetary and material resources to survive; they should, however, not be reduced to passive recipients of charity. It is imperative to recognise their capabilities to collaboratively contribute to their host communities for their well-being.<sup>152</sup> Identifying their capabilities and giving them the opportunity to earn their living have the social benefits of autonomy, personal development, empowerment and productivity.<sup>153</sup> It also facilitate the integration process into their new homeland, either temporarily or permanently. In this context, justice means a justifiable human relationship that breaks all barriers preventing people from enjoying the freedom and dignity of being created in the image of God. It addresses the issues of exclusivism and isolationism, inviting humanity to embrace an inclusivist understanding of justice that includes everyone.<sup>154</sup> Contributive justice empowers individuals to recognise and cultivate their capabilities, contribute to the

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<sup>147</sup> John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (hereafter *CA*), no. 57.

<sup>148</sup> John Paul II, *CA*, no. 58.

<sup>149</sup> Cardinal Sean Brady, “Opening Address” in *Who is My Neighbour? Deus Caritas Est: An Encyclical for Our Time?* ed. Eion G. Cassidy (Dublin: Veritas, 2009), 26.

<sup>150</sup> See Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion*, 89; Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 129.

<sup>151</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, (30 December 1987), no 38.

<sup>152</sup> T-Kay Sangwand, “Preservation is Political: Enacting Contributive Justice and Decolonising Transnational Archival Collaboration,” *KULA: Knowledge, Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies* 2, no. 1 (2018): 1-14 at 5-6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/kula.36>

<sup>153</sup> Timmermann, “Contributive Justice: An Exploration of a Wider Provision of Meaningful Work,” *Soc Just Res* 31, no. 1 (2018): 85-111 at 103. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-017-0293-2>

<sup>154</sup> Harrington, “What is Justice?” in *What is Morality*, 192.

overall good of their community, and experience both internal satisfaction and external recognition of their contribution.<sup>155</sup> This dimension of justice is essential because of its shift from what people receive regarding resources, position and status, and focus on the opportunities for contributing to the well-being of all.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter examines the relevance of the concept of contributive justice to the migrant crisis. It recommends creating equal opportunities for human flourishing in every political community and emphasises the need to promote the dignity of labour for nation building. With these principles, people will not be pushed into excessive migration, seeking for greener pasture in foreign lands. The chapter also argues that when migration becomes inevitable, immigrants should be supported to integrate into new political communities and contribute to human flourishing of their newfound safe environments. We advocate for openness to immigrants through the culture of encounter and contributive justice, while promoting the dignity of migrants. Moreover, this chapter unequivocally uphold that contributive justice is centred on “doing something meaningful,” “bringing something important,” and “contributing to the economy,” as against “getting,” “receiving” and “taking” from the often-scarce recourses of the community. Contributive justice also involves the equitable sharing of available opportunities and resource for the common good. We argue that work is “a source of meaning and fulfilment – a good in its own right” for the well-being of individuals and the development of every political community.<sup>156</sup> Consumption without production may lead to socio-economic crisis; this is already noted in chapter two as a push factor in the migrant crisis.

Many people are on the move today because of lack or shortage of employment opportunities in their home countries. In other words, most migrants are willing to do any kind of legitimate job to preserve their lives and the welfare of their families. Hence, there is a mass movement to the Global North, where migrants envision opportunities to work, contribute to the economy and live dignified lives. We acknowledge that for immigrants of whatever category to settle in other countries and enjoy contributive justice, there is a need for the virtues of hospitality, the culture of encounter, political charity and social friendship. This indicates a rethinking of the existing principles guiding the relationship between migrants, their home countries, and their host communities. We shall explicate this further in the next chapter; juxtaposing Alexander Betts’ works with Catholic social teaching to unpack the role of “good politics” and contributive justice on the migrant crisis.

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<sup>155</sup> Abdullah Bayat, “The Spatial Practices of School Administrative Clerks: Making Space for Contributive Justice,” *Perspectives in Education* 30, no. 4 (December 2012): 64-75 at 66. Also see Andrew Sayer, “Habitus, Work and Contributive Justice,” *Sociology* 45, no. 1 (2011): 7-21 and “Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work,” *Res Publica* 15, no 1 (2009): 1-16.

<sup>156</sup> Andrew Sayer, “Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work,” *Res Publica* 15, no. 1 (February 2009):1-16 at 1. DOI 10.1007/s11158-008-9077-8; Also see Hollenbach, “Modern Catholic Teachings Concerning Justice,” in *The Faith That Does Justice*, ed. John C. Haughey (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 207-231; Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame press, 1966), 43-116; Keith Breen, “Work and Emancipatory Practice: Towards a Recovery of Human Beings’ Productive Capacities,” *Res Publica* 13, no. 4 (2007): 381-414. Doi 10.1007/s11158-007-9039-6.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ALEXANDER BETTS AND CST ON “GOOD POLITICS” AND THE MIGRANT CRISIS

#### 6.0 Introduction

Thus far, we have analysed how the concepts of “good politics,” the common good, and contributive justice can enhance our understanding of how Catholic social teaching responds to the migrant crisis. This chapter explores Alexander Betts’s works, placing them in dialogue with CST to further develop our argument. It draws from his collaborative research with Paul Collier on rethinking various dimensions of the migrant crisis – such as how displaced people can build economies, how survival migration is a result of failed governance and related scholarship. This chapter aims to outline the implications of the Church’s social teaching for the migrant crisis.<sup>1</sup> Here, it is argued that we may fall into apathy, blame others or despair, if we do not re-evaluate the root causes of the crisis and its unforeseen challenges. Betts and Collier suggest rethinking ethics, havens, recovery, governance, and assistance. These recommendations have social, economic and political implications regarding the migrant crisis.<sup>2</sup> They also bring a new dimension to the debate on the migrant crisis in theological studies, social ethics and the Church’ social tradition. They exemplify how “good politics” grounded in contributive justice and the common good, could help address the migrant crisis. In other words, this chapter examines the question: How can CST effectively respond to the migrant crisis, considering Betts’ scholarship?

#### 6.1 Rethinking the Ethics of Admission and Integration (Re-Hospitality)

This section analyses the migrant crisis through the lens of the ethics of admission and integration, within the broader context of “good politics” and its two main pillars: contributive justice and the common good. This analysis is built on Betts insightful assertion that “the boundaries of what is ethical have to remain within the boundaries of what is possible under favourable circumstances.”<sup>3</sup> This statement reminds us of the limitations of every ideal situation in practice. It highlights the challenges of always trying to apply an ideal solution to real situations. Matthew Gibney and Amartya Sen explain that the ideal and reality are two different things. Therefore, “Criticality requires feasibility.”<sup>4</sup> In 2004,

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<sup>1</sup> See Alexander Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*, (Oxford: OUP, 2021). See also Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); and *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced Peoples Can Build Economies* (Oxford: OUP, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> See Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*. Also see Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced Peoples Can Build Economies*, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced Peoples Can Build Economies*, 24.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Gibney, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response of Refugees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25-6. Also see Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 58. These citations are adapted from Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced Peoples Can Build Economies*, 24.

the European Union (EU) defined integration as “a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States that creates rights and responsibilities on the part of the immigrants, including respect for the EU’s core values and access to goods and services equal to nationals’ citizens.”<sup>5</sup> This definition was reviewed and expanded in 2011 to encompass a synergy between countries of origin and host communities in facilitating integration.<sup>6</sup> With this in mind, this study argues that admission and integration into new communities have advantages and disadvantages and that both aspects require careful consideration for an appropriate ethical response to the migrant crisis.

Some of the advantages includes provision of services in some sectors of the economy where there is shortage of human resources and the technical know-how, the promotion of socio-cultural diversity, and the filling of the gap created by an aging population and lower birth rate in some parts of the globe, to mention but a few.<sup>7</sup> The Church’s social Magisterium, as well as Betts, Collier and other social ethicists, recognise the positive socio-economic impact of immigration across many civilisations. They also identify cases of socio-cultural tension in some political communities, where respect and acceptance of migrants pose a challenge. In other cases, however, there are clear signs of tolerance, empathy and support for migrants because of their human dignity, vulnerabilities and their need for recognition.<sup>8</sup> However, it is crucial to note that tolerance and empathy are good starting points for the admission and the integration of migrants, but they are often not sustainable.<sup>9</sup> Pope Francis

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<sup>5</sup> Council for European Union, “Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU,” *Press Release 14615/04*, November 19, 2004, nos. 9 and 14.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals,” *COM (2011) 455 final*, July 2011, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0455:FIN:EN:PDF>. See citation in Donal M. Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration in an Era of Exclusionary Nationalism,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella, (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 104-25.

<sup>7</sup> See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 483. Also see Hein de Haas, “We Need Immigrants to Fix the Problem of Aging Societies,” in *How Migration Really Works: A Factful Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics* (London: Viking/Penguin Books, 2023), 234-45.

<sup>8</sup> See Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, (Vatican City, 2004), nos. 2-3. Also see Pope John Paul II, *Dialogue between Cultures for a Civilization of Love*, (Message for the World Day of Peace 2001), 12: *AAS XCIII* (2001) 241; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 55: *AAS XCIII* (2001), 306. Also see Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced Peoples Can Build Economies*; Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*; Daniel Kanstroom, “Exclusion, Admission, and Deportation: Categorical Evolution and Normative Challenges,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella, (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 11-28; Donald M. Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration in an Era of Exclusionary Nationalism,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella, (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 104-25; Jill Marie Gerschutz and Lois Ann Lorentzen, “Integration Yesterday and Today: New Challenges for United States and the Church,” in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009) 123-148; Suzanne Mulligan, “Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis: Reflections on Hospitality, Vulnerability and Accompaniment,” *The Furrow* 74, no 11, (November 2023): 579-86.

<sup>9</sup> See Betts, “The Search for Sustainability” in *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced People Can Build Economies*, 21-63. Also see Kanstroom, “Exclusion, Admission, and Deportation,” 11-28; Kerwin,

understands integration as “rooted essentially in the joint recognition of the other’s cultural richness and not as assimilation or incorporation. Integration is not the superimposing of one culture over another, nor mutual isolation, with the insidious and dangerous risk of creating ghettos.”<sup>10</sup> It means more than all these for the migrant crisis.

The Holy Father invites humanity to embrace fraternal openness to all peoples regardless of geographical or socio-cultural differences. His vision reveals that “integration is more than socioeconomic advancement over generations. It offers an opportunity to build more just and inclusive societies, promote human flourishing, and unify culturally diverse persons based on their deepest values and longings.”<sup>11</sup> This invitation connotes an attitude of welcoming and hospitality toward strangers that extends beyond mere tolerance and common ties. The Irish Catholic Bishops Conference strongly encourage a relationship with migrants that “fosters authentic participation and integration for mutual enrichment, where established communities and migrants share and learn from each other.”<sup>12</sup> This Magisterial social teaching promotes synergy between migrants and their potential or actual host community for proper integration within appropriate parameters. On one hand, openness and solidarity are required from the host community; on the other hand, migrants would need to reciprocate such kind gestures with cooperation for the common good. Besides working together for the common good, it is vital to consider the sustainability of such relationship as proposed by Betts, Collier and other scholars.<sup>13</sup> Sustainable relationship is an important piece in the migrant crisis debate.

As mentioned earlier, the concept of “sustainability” is ethically crucial when addressing the migrant crisis. It promotes the principles of intelligence and prudence, fostering peaceful and productive coexistence between migrants and citizens worldwide. Therefore, the idea of a “sustainable migrant-host community relationship” serves as an ethical framework for policymakers, government institutions, host communities and charitable organisations. This proposal is adapted from Marta B. Erdal, Jørgen Carling, Cindy Horst and Catherine Talleraas’ definition of “sustainable migration” as “migration that ensures a well-balanced distribution of cost and benefit for the individuals, societies and affected states, today and in the future.”<sup>14</sup> This definition grounds “a more realistic and constructive approach to the migrant crisis. It acknowledges the cost and benefit of migration” to individuals and

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“Immigrants Integration and Disintegration in an Era of Exclusionary Nationalism” 104-25; Jill Marie Gerschutz and Lois Ann Lorentzen, “Integration Yesterday and Today,” 123-148; Mulligan, “Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis,” 579-86.

<sup>10</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 1; Pope Francis, “Address to Participants in the International Forum on ‘Migration for Peace,’” *Vatican Library*, February 21, 2017, See citation in Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration,” 107.

<sup>11</sup> Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration,” 107.

<sup>12</sup> The Irish Catholic Bishop Conference, *Pastoral Letter, A Hundred Thousand Welcomes? Exploring What Hospitality for Migrant People Means*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> See Betts and Paul Collier, *Sustainable Migration Framework*, (EMN Norway Occasional Paper: University of Oxford, 2018); Marta Erdal, *et al*, *Defining Sustainable Migration*, (Oslo, Norway: PRIO Paper, 2018). Also see Kerwin, “Immigrant Integration and Disintegration, 104-25.

<sup>14</sup> Erdal, *et al*, *Defining Sustainable Migration*, 9. Also see Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees*, 21.

communities.<sup>15</sup> It also highlight the need for more nuanced strategies in addressing the migrant crisis. CST recommends a “framework of thinking of migrants not merely as threat, burden, or dependent suffering victims but as interdependent moral agents with citizens” seeking better livelihood, which needs to be negotiated in every political community for the common good.<sup>16</sup> The migrant crisis demands sustainable ethical considerations for the welfare of all humanity.

Scholarship on sustainable migration within the broader context of the socio-economic and political effects of migrants’ admission and integration into new communities is vital to the ethical debate on welfarism. Simon, Powers, Gunnemann, and Hollenbach recommend the *Kew Garden Principles* (hereafter, *KGP*) as an effective way to evaluate and ethically respond to any humanitarian crisis that result in displacement and migration. The *KGP* guidelines for admitting and integrating individuals into new political communities in a crisis situations include: (1) The crisis must be a *critical need*; (2) the responder must be in close *proximity* to the need; (3) the responder must have the *capability* to respond effectively; (4) the responder is likely the *last resort* for which help is expected (5) Help can be provided *without causing disproportional harm* to the provider.<sup>17</sup> This study acknowledges the validity and ethical concerns of the proponents of the *KGP*, but also highlights the following limitations: (1) We must consider the unique and unpredictable nature of the migrant crisis. (2) Unlike other humanitarian crises, such as war or natural disaster, the migrant crisis developed gradually without warning. (3) It is driven by multiple factors, and nobody anticipated the crisis, let alone having the luxury of logically following the recommended steps for the admission and integration of migrants into new political communities. (4) We acknowledge that the migrant crisis is an *urgent* and *critical issue* that must be addressed effectively to avoid *disproportionate harm* to migrants or their host communities.

Henceforth, the global human family has various responsibilities towards migrants based on proximity and capabilities. Betts recommends sustainable immigration policies that carefully consider migrants’ dignity, safety and the right to better livelihood free from socioeconomic, political or environmental constraints.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Erdal *et al* suggest that the migrant crisis requires a careful appraisal of the humanitarian “costs” and “benefits.” In this context, the humanitarian “cost” includes severe cases of inhumane treatment by smugglers, deception by human traffickers and drug dealers, falling victim to fraudsters, loss of life during dangerous border crossing, extreme weather conditions, separation from family and friends, losing the comfort and privileges of home, life-threatening traumatic

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<sup>15</sup> Erdal, *et al*, *Defining Sustainable Migration*, 6-9.

<sup>16</sup> See Anna Rowlands, *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in dark Times*, 91; David Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and religious Response to Refugees*, 96-113; Tisha M. Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration*, 93-141. Also see Kristin E. Heyer, *Kinship Across Border: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, 61-134.

<sup>17</sup> See John G. Simon, Charles W. Powers, and Jon P. Gunnemann, *The Ethical Inventor: Universities and Corporate Responsibility* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 22-25. Also see Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 99.

<sup>18</sup> Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees*, 21.

experiences, racial discrimination, culture shock and xenophobic attacks in some cases. Conversely, the benefits may include the opportunities to escape persecution, religious or ethnic intolerance, war or violent conflict, poverty, persistent impoverishment, corrupt or failed political leadership, employment prospects, exposure to cultural and religious diversity and the opportunity to contribute to cosmopolitanism.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that sustainable relationship between migrants and citizens is the path to the fraternal growth and development of the universal human family – the focal point of *Fratelli Tutti*, where Pope Francis reminds humanity that we are all brothers and sister from the same Triune God.

Practically, a sustainable relationship between migrants and citizens requires political charity and social friendship as outlined in the principles of “good politics” and the common good (see Chapters Three and Four). According to the Church’ social magisterium, this understanding cultivates “a social awareness that transcends every individualistic mindset and makes us effectively seek the good of all people.”<sup>20</sup> Simply put, it means upholding the dignity and rights of every human person: “Each of us is fully a person when we are part of a people; at the same time, there are no people without respect for the individuality of each person.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, a sustainable relationship with migrants would respect the dignity of every human person and their right to a dignified livelihood worldwide. It encourages us to focus on our shared humanity rather than our differences.

Betts and Collier argue that “sustainable migration is inherently political and ethical, and its policies must have the democratic support of the receiving or host community because of their ethical obligation to protect the long-term interest of migrants in their political community.”<sup>22</sup> This implies that sustainable migrant and host community relationship is both dialogical and cosmopolitan in nature - it considers the interest of all the parties involved “in a spirit of openness [and fairness] to everyone.”<sup>23</sup> This aligns with the principles of “good politics” and contributive justice, where political leaders are encouraged to work for the common good, make sacrifices, promote socio-cultural encounter and find areas of convergence through dialogue.<sup>24</sup> Sustainable migration harnesses all potentials for the good of the community.

Drawing from Michael Walzer’s assertion that *membership* in any community is a *primary good* for every human person, this study contends that accepting migrants seeking sanctuary

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<sup>19</sup> See Erdal, *et al*, *Defining Sustainable Migration*, 5-9. Also see The Irish Catholic Bishop Conference, *Pastoral Letter, A Hundred Thousand Welcomes? Exploring What Hospitality for Migrant*, 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 180-182.

<sup>21</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 180-182. Also See Rowlands, “Theological Anthropology as the Hinterland to the Principle of Dignity in CST,” in *Politics of Communion*, 52-72. Here, she advocates for a deeper theological appreciation of the idea of personhood from the Scriptural background as developed by St. Augustine and expounded by Joseph Ratzinger (who eventually became Pope Benedict XVI). For more details, See Joseph Ratzinger, “Retrieving the Tradition Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology,” Trans. Michael Waldstein, *Communio: International Catholic Review* 17 (Fall, 1990), 439-54.

<sup>22</sup> Betts and Paul Collier, *Sustainable Migration Framework*, (EMN Norway Occasional Paper: University of Oxford, 2018), 1. Also see citation in Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees*, 21.

<sup>23</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 190.

<sup>24</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 190.

is a humane, benevolent and fraternal act of human solidarity - a local and global common good.<sup>25</sup> Walzer explains that membership of any political community provides security and constitutes an ethical and political obligation that bound the inhabitants to one another. He asserts that members of the same community defend one another and work toward their common good through government institutions.<sup>26</sup> For instance, the perceived challenges faced by non-European migrants in integrating and settling in Europe, the UK, and North America could stem from viewing membership as a primary good. It is argued that many migrants in this group are disadvantaged due to discrimination, unemployment and welfare dependency. Recognising these challenges, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated at a Youth Conference in 2010 that “We are a country that brought guest workers to Germany from the early 1960s. And now they live with us. We have been kidding ourselves for a while that ‘they won’t stay. Eventually they will be gone.’ That’s not the reality. And, of course, the approach to say: ‘now let’s do Multikulti here, live side by side and be happy about each other’ – that approach has utterly failed too!”<sup>27</sup>

In the aftermath of Markel’s speech, David Cameron, Nicolas Sarkozy and other European leaders quickly declare that multiculturalism had failed. Such an integration approach reveals some reluctance to accept immigrants, offer them a home, and embrace their unique talents and contributions, without erasing their cultural heritage.<sup>28</sup> The allusion to a failure in integrating non-European or Western immigrants remains a topic of scholarly debate. Therefore, rethinking the ethics of membership is crucial for the migrant crisis.<sup>29</sup> It determines the individuals with whom we make our contributive and distributive choices, those from whom we demand loyalty and collect taxes, and those to whom we allocate goods and services.<sup>30</sup>

An open-minded approach to migrants’ integration reflects the doctrine of universal human dignity and the need for equal opportunities and rights. This aligns with CST’s global vision of treating immigrants with respect, allowing them to contribute to the common good of

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books 1983), 31; Walzer, “The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1980):209-29; Walzer, “Nations and the Universe,” *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values XI* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah 1966), 290. Also see citation in Daniel Kanstroom, “Exclusion, Admission, and Deportation: Categorical Evolution and Normative Challenges,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer and Raj Nadella, (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 11-28 at 16.

<sup>26</sup> Walzer, “The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics,” 211.

<sup>27</sup> See Angela Markel, quoted by Hein de Haas, “Immigrant Integration has Failed,” in *How Migration Really Works: A Factual Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics* (London: Viking/Penguin Books, 2023), 160.

<sup>28</sup> See Jan Willem Duyvendak, Josip Kesic, and Timothy Stacey, *The return of the Native: Can Liberalism Safeguard Us Against Nativism?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022); As quoted by Hein de Haas, “Immigrant Integration has Failed,” in *How Migration Really Works: A Factual Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics* (London: Viking/Penguin Books, 2023), 160. Also see See John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 256. Also see Kerwin, *Immigrants Integration and Disintegration*, 107. Haas, “Immigrant Integration has Failed,” 160-79.

<sup>29</sup> O’Neill, SJ, “The Place of Displacement: The Ethics of Migration in the United States,” *Living With(out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migration of Peoples*, 69. Also see Hein de Haas, “Immigrant Integration has Failed,” in *How Migration Really Works*, 160-72.

<sup>30</sup> Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*, 31.

their new community.<sup>31</sup> Such an approach has had significant impacts on several nations worldwide. For instance, John Higham attributed the success of the United State (US) to the Americanisation movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, during which immigrants were given the opportunity to actively participate in the socio-economic and political life of the country.<sup>32</sup> During that period, US settlement-house leaders believed that each immigrant group should be encouraged to contribute the best of its gifts and traditions to its new country.<sup>33</sup> Germany and other European countries adopted similar approach as an ethical and political response to the 2015-16 ‘European refugee crisis,’ but were unable to sustain it. At the height of the crisis, Chancellor Angela Merkel opened the German’s borders to Syrian refugees in August 2015. This allowed many Syrians and people from neighbouring countries to seek refuge in Germany and environs.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, the hospitable approach to the Syrian refugees triggered some unforeseen socio-economic and cultural challenges, including language proficiency, employment opportunities, political participation, occupational distribution, marriage, homeownership, and a sense of belonging.<sup>35</sup> This indicates that there are preconditions for the smooth integration of migrants into new political communities:

Pre-existing ethnic or race relations within the host population, differences in labour market and related institutions; the impact of government policies and programs, immigration policies, and policies for the regulation of social institutions; the changing nature of international boundaries, and [the influence of local, regional and global politics].<sup>36</sup>

This reveals that the migrant crisis requires more than benevolence and solidarity. It needs to be handled with wisdom to avoid anti-immigrants’ polemics and xenophobia.<sup>37</sup>

Accordingly, CST recommends the virtue of prudence – “the virtue that makes it possible to discern the true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means for achieving it. Thanks to this virtue, moral principles are applied correctly in particular cases.”<sup>38</sup> The English translation of the term “prudence” does not fully capture its meaning, leading to the virtue being misunderstood. The Latin term *prudencia* would mean “practical wisdom,” or “good sense.” This shows that prudence is the virtue that inclines us to assess the situations

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<sup>31</sup> Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration,” 107.

<sup>32</sup> See Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 234-47; Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration,” 104.

<sup>33</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 121, 252. Also see Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration,” 107.

<sup>34</sup> Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees*, 22-3; Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 122-6.

<sup>35</sup> Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration,” 107-10; Haas, “Immigrant Integration has Failed,” 160-79.

<sup>36</sup> Jeffrey G. Reitz, “Host Societies and the Reception of Immigrants: Research Themes, Emerging Theories and Methodological Issues,” *International Migration Review* 36, no. 4 (2002):1005-19. Also see citation in Kerwin, “Immigrants Integration and Disintegration,” 110.

<sup>37</sup> See O’Neill, SJ, “The Place of Displacement: The Ethics of Migration,” 68-9; Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 98, 100 and 114-124.

<sup>38</sup> See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 547. Also see Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 24.

around us carefully and to use honest judgement to guide us acting rightly. In other words, prudence enables us to thoroughly evaluate each situation before taking any definitive action.<sup>39</sup> According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, prudence is described as “right reason in action.” It is one of the four cardinal virtues alongside justice, temperance, and fortitude - virtues that guide responsible human relationships.<sup>40</sup> *Ipsa facto*, the virtue of prudence is essential in ethically rethinking our response to the migrant crisis. Its significance is grounded in the boundaries of our moral community and obligation, which goes beyond every political community because of our shared humanity.

A transnational survey conducted in 135 countries depicts that many people in sub-Saharan Africa and other poor regions of the world would prefer to permanently migrate to the Global North.<sup>41</sup> Unsurprisingly, the gap between the rich and the poor within these countries and the socio-economic divide between the Global North and South leave many people trapped in poverty. Such challenges fuel the migrant crisis. This is reflected in the Syrian and European refugees crises, which exposed the inadequacy of sharing responsibility and its repercussions for migrants and the host communities.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, Betts proposes a “public goods and burden-sharing theory” that provides socio-economic protection and emancipation for the poor and marginalised.<sup>43</sup> This study argues that the “non-excludability” and “non-rivalry” focus of this approach makes it suitable for the migrant crisis.<sup>44</sup> In other words, in a “public goods and burden-sharing” community, all members work for the common good. Such theory highlights our shared humanity, common identity and relationality responsibility.

Contrarily, Betts and Colliers suggests concrete possible obstacles to consider when developing policies on the acceptance and integration of migrants into new political communities: (1) Rigorous anti-discrimination policy against migrants; (2) employment opportunities with equitable remuneration; (3) a consideration of ethnic, cultural, and religious differences; (4) language skills and ability to learn new language and adapt to a new environment. Language and cultural values are persistent obstacles that limit acceptance and integration into certain political communities.<sup>45</sup> This has been a polarising issue in Western Europe and other parts of the world for decades, particularly in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Scandinavia, among others. Some support policies that encourage minorities to nurture their own identity and culture, while others emphasize the need and responsibility of immigrants to accept and adapt to their new environment for

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<sup>39</sup> Mattison III, *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 98 -104. Also see Herbert McCabe, OP, *God Still Matters* (London: Continuum, 2003), 152-65; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II (New York: Benziger Bros., 1948), 47-8.

<sup>40</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), nos. 1805-6.

<sup>41</sup> Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 110 and Endnote 25 in Chapter 4.

<sup>42</sup> Betts, “The Global Compact on the Refugees: Towards a Theory of Change?” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 30, no. 4. (2018): 623-26.

<sup>43</sup> Betts, “Public Goods Theory and the Provision of Refugee Protection: The Role of the Joint-Product Model in Burden Sharing Theory,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 16, no. 3, (2003): 274-96.

<sup>44</sup> Betts, “Public Goods Theory and the Provision of Refugee Protection,” 275.

<sup>45</sup> Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 122-6.

proper integration.<sup>46</sup> Some scholars view this debate as an ideological struggle focused on preserving identity rather than promoting acceptance and integration.

Migrants challenge the identity of their host communities in various ways, including their code of conduct, religious beliefs and practices, relationships, work ethics and family values, to name a few. This indicates that integration is more about genuine acceptance of ‘others’ in their unique identities than about adapting to new societies and their values. “Racist ideologies have always served to deny non-majority groups that equal status to give moral justification to that denial.”<sup>47</sup> Due to the challenges mentioned above, many countries are shifting from being historically welcoming, tolerant and hospitable to becoming anti-migrant.<sup>48</sup>

Additionally, with the high influx of migrants to the Global North, immigration restrictions are being implemented to prevent irregular, illegal, or undocumented immigrants and address some of the challenges fuelling the migrant crisis. Policy discussions on these types of immigration often focus on security and control, at the expense of dignity and rights. This means that undocumented or irregular migrants are not protected under local and international refugee laws and may be exploited, penalised or deported.<sup>49</sup> Betts suggests a ‘soft law’ framework that ensures “the protection of vulnerable irregular migrants, based on two core elements: firstly, the consolidation and application of existing international human right norms into sets of guiding principles for different groups; secondly, improved mechanisms for inter-agency collaboration to ensure implementation of these norms and principles.”<sup>50</sup> This highlights the importance for humane treatment of irregular immigrants, as they are victims of a failed socio-economic and political system.

Furthermore, Pope Francis advocates for an ethics of international relations that emphasizes global equity among nations. This indicates that the Church’s social Magisterium is concerned about the inequalities affecting individuals and countries leading to various forms of crisis, including migration.<sup>51</sup> Heyer supports this idea by proposing a Christian ethical approach to immigration that challenges the commodification and exploitation of others, addressing the structural sin expressed through harmful ideologies and systemic injustices. She also advocates for a commitment to global solidarity that extends beyond the migrant crisis.<sup>52</sup> This explains why reevaluating the ethics of admission and integration is essential for all political communities overwhelmed by the migrant crisis, which leads to the discrimination and exploitation of vulnerable migrants.

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<sup>46</sup> Hein de Haas, “Immigrant Integration has Failed,” in *How Migration Really Works: A Factual Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics* (London: Viking/Penguin Books, 2023), 172-3.

<sup>47</sup> Haas, “Immigrant Integration has Failed,” 173-4.

<sup>48</sup> Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees*, 22-3.

<sup>49</sup> Betts, “Towards a ‘Soft Law’ Framework for the Protection of Vulnerable Irregular Migrants,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 22, no. 2 (2010): 209-36.

<sup>50</sup> Betts, “Towards a ‘Soft Law’ Framework,” 209.

<sup>51</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no 51.

<sup>52</sup> See Heyer, *Kinship Across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, 4.

## 6.2 Rethinking Havens: Discrimination and Exploitation

Although the migrant crisis has received global attention, goodwill and resources, the challenges remain enormous. The Global North seem overwhelmed with the influx of immigrants from various parts of the Global South. Therefore, migrants across the Global North are often highly vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. At the same time, those in the Global South within their local communities lack basic amenities, social security, and their dignity and rights to decent livelihoods are threatened within their local communities. Moreover, discriminative immigration policies and stringent border control globally impacts the rights of people who are living under challenging circumstances to relocate.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, the U.S. Department of State (USDS), the United Nations (UN), and African Union Development Agency (AUDA) acknowledge that porous border control enhances the activities of international human and drug traffickers, smugglers, and terrorists. It accounts for terrorist activities in the Global South and the considerable number of undocumented immigrants in the Global North. These challenges demand a stronger transnational surveillance, greater accountability, transparency, and solidarity along with the training of immigration officials to ensure efficiency, integrity and humane approach to immigration regulations.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, the recommendation for rethinking havens.

Obviously, the migrant crisis has exposed the flaws of many political structures, institutions and organisations. For instance, in the Brexit referendum, sovereignty and migration were the two most significant issues that prompted many to vote for Brexit. At the same time, the economy mattered most for those who wanted the UK to remain in the EU. Scholarship on the effects of Brexit on the UK economy is being explored, and there are indications that it was not the best option. And instead of holding the leaders accountable for the woes of that decision, the blame is being shifted to the influx of migrants into the United Kingdom. Furthermore, the Pew Research Centre reveals that terrorism, immigration, and trade motivated Trump's supporters in the US presidential elections.<sup>55</sup> This is reflected in his socio-economic and immigration policies, where migrants are being profiled and threatened with deportation, supported by an executive order.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, the far-right and far-left ideological struggle in the Global North highlight the shortcomings of many political systems and the lack of accountability of politicians in every global socio-economic crisis,

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<sup>53</sup> Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World, Fifth Edition*, (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2014), 85. Also see, Betts and Collier, *Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*, 129.

<sup>54</sup> See U.S. Department of State, "Border Security/Alien Smuggling-U.S. Department of State," <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/inl/c/crime/c44640.htm>. The United Nations, "Border Security and Management/Office of Counter-Terrorism – United Nations," <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/border-security-management>; AUDA-NEPAD, "Enhancing Border Security in Africa Using Smart Border Control Technologies," (5 October 2021), <https://www.nepad.org/blog/enhancing-border-security-africa-using-smart-border-control-technologies>. Accessed 24 May 2025.

<sup>55</sup> Betts and Collier, See Endnote 8, Chapter 5: "Rethinking Haven," in *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*, 245.

<sup>56</sup> Eli Rosenberg, "'The Snake': How Trump Appropriated a Radical Black Singer's Lyrics for Immigration Fearmongering," *Washington Post*, February 24, 2018. See citation by Kerwin. "Immigrant Integration and Disintegration," 111. Also see Kanstroom, "Exclusion, Admission and Deportation," 11-28. Heyer, "Internalized Borders: Immigration Ethics in the Age of Trump," 146-64.

including the current migrant crisis.<sup>57</sup> These global structural and institutional flaws require a careful re-appraisal through “good politics.”

Immigration scholarship also reveals that while in some countries hospitality towards migrants are based on common ties; others prioritize family, wealth, status, education, or professional skills to boost their human resources and economy.<sup>58</sup> Stephen Castle, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller observe that labour or economic migrants have frequently been restricted or denied equal opportunities, conditions and rights enjoyed by other workers either because they were sponsored by individuals or organisation who are socio-economically weak, or they came to their host community illegally. These scholars maintain that “even where migration is voluntary and unregulated, institutional and informal discrimination may limit the real freedom and equality of the workers concerned.”<sup>59</sup> Betts underlines the challenges of ‘Brain drain’ affecting the Global South, the increasing erosion of migrant rights in many communities, restrictive border control in the Global North, and lack of compassion for the risk involved in irregular migration. Most migrants and Asylum seekers take the risk of dangerous journeys across the Atlantic Ocean or the Sahara Desert.<sup>60</sup> These are genuine ethical concerns in the context of immigration. They pertain to human dignity, our shared humanity and the common good - they call for compassionate, relational responsibility towards migrants, regardless of their status.

Archbishop Silvano Tomasi links the plight of irregular immigrants to the moral failure of our collective humanity and the lack of global collaboration among political leaders to prevent the circumstances propelling people to embark on such dangerous and avoidable journeys. Many people embark on such journeys to “escape poverty, failed states, internal conflict and wars.”<sup>61</sup> Consequently, the Church’s social Magisterium advocates for competent institutions and associations that adequately address migrants’ needs. It also “encourages the ratification of the international legal instruments that ensures the right of migrants.”<sup>62</sup> This aligns with Betts and Collier’s “rethinking havens,” where they recommend reaching out to everyone and the possibility of finding solutions in migrant’s home countries. These authors argue that while there is panic in the Global North, the greatest needs are in the Global South, which is riddled with various violent conflicts, political instability and socio-economic crises. Their research findings suggest that solutions to the crisis mainly need to be identified in the Global South through restoring autonomy, protection of human dignity, rebuilding human capacities, and harnessing potentials.<sup>63</sup> In

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<sup>57</sup> Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees*, 22.

<sup>58</sup> Kanstroom, “Exclusion, Admission, and Deportation: Categorical Evolution and Normative Challenges,” 16.

<sup>59</sup> Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 85.

<sup>60</sup> Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced Peoples Can Build Economies*, 21. Also see Silvano Tomasi, “Migration and Catholicism in a Global Context,” in *Migration in a Global World*, ed. Solange Lefebvre and Luiz Carlos Susin (London: SCM, 2008), 13-31; See contextual citation by Heyer, “Reframing Displacement and Membership: Ethic of Migration,” *Theological Studies* 73, (2012):188-206 at 189.

<sup>61</sup> Tomasi, “Migration and Catholicism in a Global Context,” 13-31, at 12-14. Also see Heyer, “Reframing Displacement and Membership: Ethic of Migration,” 73, (2012):188-206 at 189.

<sup>62</sup> Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, no. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Betts and Collier, *Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*, 127-55.

other words, the structures of bad governance, corrupt leadership, dilapidated socio-economic infrastructures, insecurity, political instability, unemployment and the challenges of poverty and impoverishment must be addressed.

The migrant crisis also highlights the need for greater global cooperation to develop standards that can align the various legal provisions, ensuring the needs and rights of everyone: those in their home countries, emigrants and host communities.<sup>64</sup> Drawing on the Syrian refugee crisis, Betts and Collier highlight location, culture and financial or economic strength as three essential, interconnected components of a haven that would protect migrants' well-being, rights and dignity. In this context, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon would be ideal sanctuaries for Syrian refugees because they share borders and cultural values. Furthermore, the World Bank classified these countries as "upper-middle income" countries - indicating that they are in a transitional phase towards high-income status.<sup>65</sup> Such considerations make "good politics" with its twin pillars of contributive justice and the common good an ethically and theologically sound approach to the migrant crisis. It recognises our shared humanity, advocates for an inclusive economic and political order, a more equitable distribution of the earth's resources, and the need for equal opportunities to contribute to the growth and development of one's political community.<sup>66</sup>

In rethinking haven, some scholars argue that our primary duty towards migrants is to show compassion and to rescue those who are vulnerable and in precarious situation.<sup>67</sup> This aligns with the principles of Catholic social teaching, which emphasises solidarity, preferential option for the poor, and the universal destination of the earth's resources. O'Neill, for example, suggests that compassion guides us "in the fitting application of universal, essential norms" to different circumstances of human suffering, e.g. the rights of migrants. It also gives rise to personal and collective imperatives to follow humbly in the footsteps of Christ.<sup>68</sup> O'Neill advocates compassion and solidarity with those suffering as essential aspects of Christian hospitality. These virtues emphasize the dignity and fundamental rights of migrants, regardless of their immigration status. Regrettably, irregular migrants are often denied opportunities for decent employment or exploited for cheap labour. Betts and Collier argue that discrimination and exploitation "undermines autonomy and dignity; it erodes human potentials by focusing exclusively on people's vulnerabilities rather than their capacities."<sup>69</sup> They advocate for a "generosity of spirit" towards all those fleeing their homeland because of war or violent conflict or for other compelling reasons.<sup>70</sup> These

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<sup>64</sup> Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, no. 8.

<sup>65</sup> See Betts and Collier, *Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*, 104. Also see Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis*, 99.

<sup>66</sup> Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, no. 8.

<sup>67</sup> Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 97-109. Also see O'Neill, "Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger," 149-155.

<sup>68</sup> O'Neill, "Christian Hospitality and Solidarity with the Stranger," 151.

<sup>69</sup> See, Betts and Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 97.

<sup>70</sup> Betts and Paul Collier highlight the plight of the ordinary Syrians fleeing violence in their homeland and many other cases in the past that displaced millions of people around the globe: Germans, Jews, Armenians, to mention but a few. They argue that "it is not hard to imagine ourselves in the same plight." (See, Betts and Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 97. Similarly, The Irish Catholic Bishops Conference

scholars and the Church's social Magisterium emphasize the need for a practical ethical framework to address the migrant crisis. While this study discourages irregular migration, it recognises that irregular migrants are victims of a flawed society and should be treated humanely. Admittedly, Pope Francis invites humanity to "rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organization of our societies and, above all, the meaning of our existence."<sup>71</sup> A global crisis of this scale impacts our shared humanity, common home and the common good. It calls for collaboration to find better resolutions.

### 6.3 Rethinking Recovery and Assistance of Migrants

Recovery, in this context, means recuperation, retrieval, restoration, or a return to normalcy, or improved wellbeing. It relates to restoring the dignity and basic rights of migrants, who have been displaced from their homeland due to natural disaster, violent conflict, war, marginalisation, discrimination, persecution, or economic hardship. These are the primary issues behind the migrant crisis that, in our view, could be effectively addressed through "good politics," contributive justice and the common good. We draw on the teaching of the Vatican II Fathers, who emphasized that the duty of every political community is to create opportunities for the socio-economic welfare of its citizens. They lament how few people enjoy true freedom of choice, live luxuriously, and squander resources intended for the common good at the expense of the majority. In their words, "Many are deprived of almost all the possibility of acting on their own initiative and responsibility and often subsist in living and working conditions unworthy of human beings."<sup>72</sup> Therefore, it should be recognized that the migrant crisis goes beyond temporary acts of charity, short-term hospitality, and providing temporary socio-economic security.

Providing recovery for migrants is more complex than it appears. Betts and Collier argue that, in principle, migrants often "receive initial emergency assistance and are then offered a pathway towards reintegration into normal life. In practice, however, reintegration is difficult and rarely take place."<sup>73</sup> This claim is evident in the crisis faced by those displaced by the Russia-Ukrainian war as well as other refugees and asylum seekers across Europe. Therefore, to help migrants recover their dignity and basic rights, the root cause of their displacement or relocation must be addressed. Consequently, rethinking recovery and assistance aims to protect people's lives, dignity and basic rights to the common good, and the universal destination of the earth's resources in every political community.<sup>74</sup>

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acknowledges that migration has been a central part of Irish history due to war, famine, economic collapse, and the current challenges of climate change. They estimated that nearly 2 million people left Ireland during the Great Famine of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and that many people also migrated to other countries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to seek greener pastures. They recalled how Irish migrants were treated with contempt and discrimination and condemn such inhuman and discriminative attitude towards migrants in this era of socio-economic growth and development that has made Ireland one of the destinations for migrants. (See Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Pastoral Letter: A Hundred Thousand Welcomes? Exploring Hospitality for Migrant People Means in Contemporary Ireland*, no. [paragraph] 2.

<sup>71</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no 33.

<sup>72</sup> Vatican II, *GS*, nos. 63 and 67.

<sup>73</sup> Betts and Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 156.

<sup>74</sup> See Vatican II, *GS*, no. 69, Pope John Paul II, *CA*, no. 31; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine*, 164-175; Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 69-84; Betts,

The Church's social doctrine is ethically unequivocal about government's responsibility to provide a suitable environment for gainful employment.<sup>75</sup> In this study, this is considered a viable socio-economic strategy for addressing the migrant crisis. We contend that contributive justice is essential for migrants' recovery and reintegration because it provides them with a voice and the chance to work and benefit from their labour. Adequate employment opportunities tackle some of the root causes of the crisis and foster social cohesion. Using the violent conflict that displaced millions in Syria, South Sudan and other parts of the world, Betts and Collier argue that recovery should be holistic, addressing the conflict's root causes, the resulting wounds, and other consequences of the crises.<sup>76</sup> Such approach rebuilds trust, reestablishes relationships, promotes socio-economic development and fosters political stability, peaceful coexistence, and human flourishing.

Relying indefinitely on benevolence is not a sustainable long-term response to any humanitarian crisis.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, to effectively support recovery from the issues driving the migrant crisis, innovative global, national and local socio-economic policies must be adopted. Human flourishing occurs where lives and property are secure. This involves providing equal opportunities for goods and services in every political community. The Church's social Magisterium reminds us that politics and economics should serve the needs of the human person.<sup>78</sup> It goes without saying that a healthy economy focuses on the common good. According to the Vatican II Fathers, "the social order and its development must constantly yield to the good of the person, since the order of things must be subordinate to the order of the persons and not the other way round."<sup>79</sup> Sadly, this is often clouded by the principle of "maximising profits" adopted by global economic powers multinationals.<sup>80</sup> Internationally renowned economist, Amartya Sen criticises economic principles that emphasises wealth accumulation at the expense of others. He advocates for a more inclusive and people-centred view of development, where wealth creation serves the human person rather than becoming a means of exploitation, marginalisation and humiliation.<sup>81</sup>

Accordingly, CST affirms that systemic and structural problems of marginalisation, racial discrimination, environmental pollution and economic exploitation are the root causes of "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."<sup>82</sup> They are critical aspects of recovery and aid, reflected in how richer countries exploit the natural and human resources of poorer nations

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"Migration, Mobility, and Residency," in *The wealth of Refugees: How Displaced People Can Build Economies*, 93-101; Mulligan, "Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis: Reflections on Hospitality, Vulnerability and Accompaniment," 579-86 at 580; Charles Camosy, *Resisting Throwaway Culture: How a Consistent Life Ethic Can Unite a Fractured People* (New York: New City Press, 2019), 188;

<sup>75</sup> Pope John Paul II, *CA*, no. 43. Also see South African Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Economic Justice in South Africa: A Pastoral Statement*, 20-21.

<sup>76</sup> See Betts and Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 156, 182-200.

<sup>77</sup> Rajendra, "Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Rights of Migrants," *Political Theology* 15, no. 4 (July 2014): 290-306.

<sup>78</sup> See Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 26, See Pope Francis *LS*, nos. 189

<sup>79</sup> Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26

<sup>80</sup> See Pope Francis *LS*, nos. 189; 192. Also see Mulligan, "Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis," 580.

<sup>81</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 14. Also See citation by Mulligan, "What Next?" *The Furrow* 60, no. 6, (June 2009): 336-41.

<sup>82</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 49.

without providing the necessary support for socio-economic development. Pope Francis condemns using foreign debt to control poor countries without applying the same principle to the ecological debt. He argues that “In different ways, developing countries, where the most important reserves of the biosphere are found, continue to fuel the development of richer countries at the cost of their own present and future.”<sup>83</sup> These problems require socio-economic justice, prudential judgement and a realistic approach to environmental issues impacting climate change and displacing people.

Drawing from the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, this study presents “good politics” as a way to ensure people are equally protected from serious threats to their environment, and worth as human beings everywhere, regardless of their background.<sup>84</sup> Betts and Collier specify “the politics of healing the identity cleavage of ‘us’ and ‘them,’” often overlooked in most crisis as a crucial response.<sup>85</sup> Reconsidering recovery and assistance should be guided by our shared humanity, our common home, and the common good, as well as our responsibility to safeguard the dignity and fundamental rights of all those affected by the migrant crisis. This requires a re-evaluation of politics, governance, and social welfare.

#### **6.4 Rethinking Politics, Governance and Social Welfare**

The proposal to re-evaluate politics, governance, and social welfare in this section, assumes that the migrant crisis results from failed leadership, poor governance, fragmented socio-economic pressures, housing crisis, anti-immigrant ideologies, and the need for contributive justice and the common good in political communities. This argument builds on the Church’s social doctrine concerning every human person’s basic right to a dignified livelihood.<sup>86</sup> We advocate for “good politics” and effective governance as the means through which the dysfunctional structures in society driving structural or social sin can be addressed. We presuppose that there is a correlation between corrupt politics, bad governance, and structural sin. They contribute significantly to the migrant crisis.

Consequently, “good politics,” contributive justice and the common good are valuable principles through which structural or social sin and the migrant crisis can be properly addressed for the flourishing of society. CST balances individual and societal interest for the common good.<sup>87</sup> It also offers valuable insights into realistic socio-economic growth and

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<sup>83</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, nos. 49-52; Archbishop Dermot Farrell, “The Cry of the Earth – The Cry of the Poor: Climate Catastrophe – Creations Urgent Call for Change,” *A Pastoral Letter for the Season of Creation 2021*, (Dublin, Ireland: Veritas, 2021); Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orabator, “Justice for the Displaced: The Challenge of a Christian Understanding,” in *Driven from Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, ed. David Hollenbach, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 37-53 at 37.

<sup>84</sup> See Article 2, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (10 December 1948), U.N.G.A Res. 217 A (III) As cited by Hollenbach, “Borders and Duties to the Displaced,” 150.

<sup>85</sup> Betts and Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 184.

<sup>86</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 118-9. Also see James F. Keenan, S.J., “Linking Human Dignity, Vulnerability and Virtue Ethics,” *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 6, no.1 (2020) 56-73.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Vallely, “Epilogue, Towards a New Politics: Catholic Social Teaching in a Pluralist Society,” in *The New Politics: Catholic Social Teaching for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Paul Vallely (London: SCM Press,

development focused on the well-being of the human family in every community. Specifically, it challenges the technocratic drift in development theories and practice and advocates for an inclusive socio-economic development plan that involves the poor as active participants at the international, national and local levels.<sup>88</sup> Everyone in society has a duty to contribute to the common good according to their expertise, resources, and capabilities. More importantly, government play a critical role in equitably managing of the state's resources for the well-being of its citizens.<sup>89</sup> And this is significant to the global scope of the migrant crisis, which has affected international relations and other aspects of social life. For instance:

[More than] fifty years ago, Botswana was dirt poor, landlocked and semi-arid with pitifully inadequate infrastructure. In contrast, Nigeria was fertile and had a good coastal position with several major cities. Both discovered a valuable natural resource: Botswana found diamond; Nigeria found oil. Botswana used this opportunity prudently; Nigeria did not. Today, living standards in Botswana are far higher than in Nigeria. Many people want to live there, including Nigerians. Should Nigerians and the rest of us have the right to do so? If Nigerians were free to migrate to Botswana, the Botswanans would quite probably become a minority.<sup>90</sup>

Here is a typical example of mismanagement of national resources, failed leadership, and poor governance, which impoverishes and displaces millions within their political communities. Cases like these are among the factors driving the migrant crisis that requires contextual re-assessments.

In addressing the crisis by rethinking politics, governance and social welfare, this study aligns with Betts' preconditions for "Sustainable Refugee Economies." He recommends five socio-political frameworks for building these economies, which this research finds very insightful and applicable. He proposes (1) Political Will as a prerequisite for socio-economic growth and development at local, national and regional level; (2) Infrastructure: The provision of roads, clean water, electricity and other social amenities for local communities; (3) Comparative advantage: Utilising the natural and human resources within each political community for the common good; (4) Socio-cultural applicability: A consideration of the unique cultural values of each community for their social well-being; and (5) External inputs: Attracting multinational businesses, international partnership, and benevolence or charitable organisations for aids.<sup>91</sup> Betts essentially emphasises the importance of "good politics," contributive justice, and the common good in tackling the socio-economic issues influencing the migrant crisis. Political will is crucial in socio-economic development and

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1998), 148-175. Also See Riordan S.J., *A Politics of the Common Good* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1996), Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

<sup>88</sup> Simona Bereta, "The Ideal of Development in the Thinking of the International Community: Evolution, Changes, and Challenges" in *Integral Human Development: Challenges to Sustainability and Democracy*, ed. Jacquineau Azetsop, SJ (Eugene, Oregon: PICKWICK, 2019), 9-31 at 9.

<sup>89</sup> See Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 26; Mulligan, "What Next," *The Furrow* 60, no. 6 (June 2009): 336-41 at 340; Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, 73.

<sup>90</sup> See Betts and Paul Collier. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 114-15.

<sup>91</sup> See Betts, "Building Borderline Economies," in *The Wealth of Refugees*, 302-20.

all social and humanitarian crises. It considers all possible ways to resolve the situation for the benefit of everyone. This highlights the significance of “good politics” and its core pillars of contributive justice and the common good in this study.

We have defined “good politics” as a universal human activity that involves negotiation, persuasion and decision-making related to the welfare of every political community. This suggests that “good politics” protects people’s interest in how goods and services are distributed in society. Additionally, it is the means through which governance and policies are created for the welfare of the state.<sup>92</sup> This suggests that the problem of unequal opportunities in the distribution of the commonwealth is critical to the migrant crisis. People deserve fair treatment and chances to contribute to society. Therefore, in re-evaluating politics, governance and social welfare, this study addresses the harsh realities of extreme poverty and unemployment, corruption, and the rising violent conflicts and insecurities that are driving people from their homes. These unpleasant realities illustrate the consequences of inefficient political leadership. They also bring to light upcoming challenges when the root causes of forced, undocumented, survival, and socio-economic migration are not properly addressed.<sup>93</sup> “Good politics” facilitates good policies, efficient governance and human flourishing in every political community.

Conversely, the lack of “good politics” leads to political thuggery, ethnic profiling, intimidation, marginalisation, violent crises, and other anti-social activities. It also allows bad governance, a lack of transparency, and an absence of accountability. These issues contribute to the migrant crisis. Betts aligns with Catholic social teaching by calling for good governance and sustainable economic policies that improve the lives of the vulnerable, the impoverished, and the marginalised. Both emphasise government’s responsibility towards its citizens and raise concerns about distorted democratic principles, freedom of association, economic emancipation, social justice, and human right abuses across borders.<sup>94</sup> Good governance is “an ethical concept that seeks to achieve the greater common good” in

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<sup>92</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 176-192; Pope Leo XIV *Address to Members of the International Inter-Parliamentary Union*, Saturday, 21 June 2025. Also see Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, 21; Iain MacKenzie, *Politics: Key Concept in Philosophy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 4-8.

<sup>93</sup> See Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement* (London: Ithaca University Press, 2013); 22-23; Susan F. Martin, “Rethinking the International Refugee Regime in the Light of Human Rights and the Global Common Good,” in *Driven from Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, ed. David Hollenbach, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 15-33; Hollenbach, “Borders and Duties to the Displaced: Ethical Perspectives on the Refugee Protection System,” *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 4, no. 3 (2016): 148-165; Mulligan, “Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis,” 579-86; Rowlands, “The State Made Flesh: Catholic Social Teaching and the Challenge of UK Asylum Seeking,” *New Blackfriars* (2012): 175-92, DOI:10.1111/j.174-2005.2011.01475.x; Betts, “Towards a ‘Soft Law’ Framework for the Protection of Vulnerable Irregular Migrants,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 22, no. 2 (2010): 209-36; Heyer, “Internalized Borders: Immigration Ethics in the Age of Trump,” *Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2018): 146-64).

<sup>94</sup> See Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*, Chapter 2; *The Wealth of Refugees*, 16; Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 14. George Weigel, “The Human Right revolution: Pacem in Terris (1963),” in *Building the Free Society: Democracy, Capitalism, and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. George Weigel and Robert Royal (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1993), 69-87

every political community.<sup>95</sup> According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, good governance is oriented towards transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation, and responsiveness to the people's needs.<sup>96</sup>

Ironically, the wealth of many nations, especially in the Global South, is controlled by a few, and this is among the challenges faced by the youths in that region – contributing to irregular migration. Camilla Rocca and Ines Shultes, in their research findings, elucidate how the Global South have the youngest population worldwide - an asset that should be nurtured and preserved for the future of the world.<sup>97</sup> Sadly, majority of these youth are unemployed, and many are caught up in irregular migration – a major issue in the migrant crisis. Ultimately, the problem of youth unemployment needs to be addressed alongside respect for the rule of law and competence in governance. These issues accounts for the impoverishment that forces people to relocate. Pope Francis in his pastoral visits to Kenya, Uganda, and Central Republic of Africa (2015), Egypt (2017), Mozambique, Mauritius, Madagascar, and Morocco (2019), and the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan (2023) highlighted some of these problems including migration, respect for human dignity, poverty, peace and social justice, to mention just a few.<sup>98</sup>

In addition, the challenges of environmental degradation need to be adequately addressed. Many countries in Sub-Sahara Africa suffered colonial “environmental liabilities, including the depletion of natural reserves, deforestation, the impoverishment of agriculture, open pits, riven hills, and polluted rivers.”<sup>99</sup> Mining activities are still being carried out in some countries by multinational corporations without proper compensations to the locals. Therefore, migration appears to be the most practical option for those willing to take the risk. To address these issues, this study recommends reconsidering local and global politics and governance to protect the welfare of the human family. Migration faces its own set of negative challenges. Research and News headlines frequently depict dehumanising actions and language against vulnerable immigrants, including the deportation of “profiled migrants,” rejection or relocation of asylum seekers, and strict immigration policies worldwide. Unfortunately, these issues continue to be recurring challenges in immigration.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> George Chimdi Mbara, “Corruption and Good Governance in Nigeria: Zooming the lens on Buhari Anti-Corruption Crusade,” *Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa (JGIDA)*, Special Issue (March 2019):195-219 at 199.

<sup>96</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), “What is Good Governance?” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/good-governance/about-good-governance> Accessed 15 August, 2025.

<sup>97</sup> See Camilla Roca and Ines Shultes, “Africa’s Youth: Action Needed Now to support the Continent’s Greatest Asset,” (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, August 2020), 1, <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2020-08/international-youth-day-research-brief.pdf>. Accessed 21 August 21, 2025. Also see Lado, SJ, “Toward A Spirituality of Politics,” *Theological Studies* 84, no. 2, (2023): 198-211 at 199.

<sup>98</sup> See Lado, SJ, “Toward a Spirituality of Politics,” 199.

<sup>99</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no 51.

<sup>100</sup> See Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*, Chapters: 2 (The National Politics of International Institutions), 3 (South Africa: The *Ad Hoc* Response to Zimbabwean Influx), 4 (Botswana: The Division of Zimbabweans into Refugees and Migrants), 5 (Angola: The Expulsion of the

Catholic social teaching condemns the inhospitality that hinders relational and ethical responsibility. It reminds us that our shared humanity involves political charity, social friendship, the culture of encounter, preferential option for the poor, compassion for the needy and solidarity with the vulnerable and marginalised. These principles challenge the structures of exploitation, marginalisation, and dehumanisation. They also protect people's dignity and fundamental rights to freedom of association and socio-economic welfare in our common home.<sup>101</sup> These issues require "good politics" for contextual and global resolutions. Hence, a politics of inclusiveness, equal opportunity, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism could provide guidance.

### 6.5 Rethinking Ethnicity, Culture and National Identity

Although, the world has become a global village, the migrant crisis reveals that ethnicity, cultural or religious heritage and narrow nationalism threaten our shared humanity and mutual coexistence. We are increasingly faced with ethnic, religious, cultural, national, regional and ideological discords that sometimes result in war or violent conflict.<sup>102</sup> Pope Francis describes such harmful and divisive actions as "myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive selfishness devoid of social sense..."<sup>103</sup> Such attitude manifest in "xenophobia, contempt, and mistreatment of those who are different."<sup>104</sup> They distort the Christian understanding of our shared humanity, and our common heritage of global resources. People with narrow ethnic, religious, nationalistic, regional, or ideological perception view *some immigrants* as alien usurpers with nothing good to offer their community. Otherwise, how can we explain why some migrants are given preferential treatment against others?<sup>105</sup>

Our interdependence regardless of ethnic, cultural or national background, should not be overlooked. A humanistic understanding of national identity is essential for peaceful coexistence and socio-economic progress. Such a perspective broadens national self-image

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Congolese), 6 (Tanzania: The Paradoxical Response to Congolese from South Kivu), 7 (Kenya: Humanitarian Containment and the Somalis) and 8 (Yemen: Contrasting Responses to Somalis and Ethiopians). Also see Camosy, *Resisting Throwaway Culture*, 188; Groody, "Theology in the Age of Migration: Seeing the Image of Christ in the Eyes of Strangers," *National Catholic Reporter*, September 18, 2009, 22; Heyer, "Social Sin and Inhospitality to Immigrants," in *Kinship Across Border: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, 35-60; Mulligan, "Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis," 579-86.

<sup>101</sup> See Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, (15 May 1891), no. 1; Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 95-111, 176-277, *LS*, nos. 49-49, 52. Pope Leo XIV *Address to Members of the International Inter-Parliamentary Union*, Saturday, 21 June 2025. Also see Susan F. Martin, "Rethinking the International Refugee Regime in the Light of Human Rights and the Global Common Good," 15-33; Heyer, "Social Sin and Immigration: Good Fences Make Bad Neighbours," *Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (May 2010): 410-36.

<sup>102</sup> Ethnic cleansing, violent removal and expulsion or genocide has been identified by some scholars among the reasons for the migrant crisis. The Russia and Ukraine war, the Middle East crisis and the various violent crisis in different parts of Sub-Sahara Africa attest to the necessity for a rethinking of ethnicity, culture and national identity from the perspective of "good politics," contributive justice and the common good. (See Raphael Israel, *Ethnic Cleansing: Migration and Population Transfer and the Jewish Paradigm of Survival Amidst Displacement*, (USA/Singapore: Strategic Book Publishing and Right Co.,2019).

<sup>103</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 11.

<sup>104</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 86, 141.

<sup>105</sup> See Betts, *Survival Migrants*, 8-9; Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 141; Petr Štica, "Human Right and Migration," in *Building Bridges in Sarajevo: Plenary Papers from CTEWC 2018*, ed. Kristin E. Heyer, James F. Keenan, Andrea Vicini (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 77-82

to include all legitimate inhabitants. It also motivates everyone to “cultivate the relevant virtues that facilitates the community’s self-reproduction and intergenerational continuity, foster common loyalties, and orders their moral and political life.”<sup>106</sup> However, it must be noted that every definition is selective and contextual to its purpose and perspective, which can sometimes delegitimize or marginalize others. Such definition of ‘national identity’ “runs the risk of glorifying the role of some groups and denigrating that of others. It can also become a vehicle of silencing dissident voices and moulding the entire society in a particular image with all its authoritarian and repressive implications. The danger is particularly acute in multicultural society with its inevitable diversity of values, visions of the good life and interpretation of history.”<sup>107</sup> This is already evident in the migrant crisis and needs to be addressed.

Accordingly, a Catholic social doctrine of rethinking ethnicity, culture and national identity emphasizes our shared humanity and the dignity and right of every person in society. It also identifies the dangers of a narrow view of human relationships worldwide. Culturally, the Church’s social magisterium addresses the divisive nature of the migrant crisis. It considers the migrant phenomenon both as a sociological reality and a theological event that must be handled with care to protect the dignity of everyone.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps host communities should be genuinely concerned when migrants from diverse ethnic background seek to preserve their languages, religious practices, and elements of their unique cultures. This issue should not be disregarded. For instance, should migrants from extremist Islamic groups, fundamentalist Christian background or Jewish sects uphold their radical cultural values within their host communities? In other words, should “extreme religious attitudes towards women, infidels, apostates or those who are different” be tolerated, challenged or negotiated through “good politics” for the global common good?<sup>109</sup> While respecting unique religious and cultural values, adjustments should be made when necessary for the overall well-being of the human family. The migrant crisis should serve as an opportunity for the “[re]humanization of the world.”<sup>110</sup> Therefore, a common sense of national identity is essential for social cohesion and productivity.

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<sup>106</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 230-31.

<sup>107</sup> Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, 231.

<sup>108</sup> See Rowlands, “The State Made Flesh: Catholic Social Teaching and the Challenges of UK Asylum Seeking,” *Blackfrairs* (2012): 175-92 at 176; Rowlands, “On the Temptation of Sovereignty: The Task of Catholic Social Teaching and the Challenges of UK Asylum Seeking,” *Political Theology* 12, no. 6 (2011): 843-68. Also see Orabator, “Justice for the Displaced: The Challenge of a Christian Understanding,” in *Driven From Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, 37-53 at 46; Groody, *Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees*, *Theological Studies* 70, no 1, (2009) 638-67.

<sup>109</sup> Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movement in the Modern World*, 18-9; Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 124. Also see Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 142-78.

<sup>110</sup> See Regina Polak, “Migration als Ort der Theologie,” in *Migration als Ort der Theologie*, ed. Tobias KeBler (Regensburg: Pustet, 2014) 87-114, at 99. As quoted by Štica, “Human Right and Migration,” in *Building Bridges in Sarajevo*, 79.

Regrettably, narrow nationalism contributes to numerous issues in the migrant crisis. Incidents of neglecting migrants' dignity and undervaluing their contribution to the economies of the host communities are common worldwide. The "Nigerians Must Go" campaign in Ghana, along with stalking, bullying and physical assaults of migrants in the UK, US, and the Republic Ireland, are just a few examples of challenges faced by migrants driven by narrow nationalism. Viewing others as foreigners causing shortages in housing, employment and other socio-economic benefits is harmful. It erodes the culture of dialogue, social friendship, solidarity and the common good.<sup>111</sup> Archbishop Dermot Farrell and other well-informed citizens of Ghana, UK, US and Ireland condemn such threats as 'despicable' and 'criminal.' Highlighting migrant's contribution to the Irish society, Farrell maintains that 40% of the Irish Healthcare Service providers (the HSE) are non-Irish.<sup>112</sup> The economies of many countries worldwide will collapse without migrants. CST recognises the tension caused by overzealous nationalists and calls for the creation of a more inclusive society that welcomes everyone.<sup>113</sup> Pope Francis emphasizes humane relational geopolitics rooted in the culture of encounter:

We need to pay attention to the global [to] avoid narrowness and banality. Yet we also need to look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground. Together, the two prevent us from falling into one or two extremes. In the first, people get caught up in an abstract, globalized universe, falling into step behind everyone else, admiring the glitter of other people's world, gaping and applauding at all the right times. At the other extreme, they turn into a museum of local folklore, a world apart, doomed to doing the same things [repeatedly], and incapable of being challenged by novelty or appreciating beauty which God bestows beyond their borders.<sup>114</sup>

Undoubtedly, migration provides opportunities for new socio-economic and political connections. However, it also causes socio-cultural tensions between different nationalities and host communities and fuels feelings of inequality, thereby intensifying the migration crisis.<sup>115</sup> Hence, the importance of a theological and socio-ethical reassessment of people's unique identity and the risks of unfair treatment towards any ethnic group in any political context.

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<sup>111</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 105; Kevin Hargaden, "Light in Our Darkening World," *The Sacred Heart Messenger*, September 2025, 18-19.

<sup>112</sup> Archbishop Dermot Farrell, "'Despicable' and 'Criminal' Attacks Must Be Stopped" *The Irish Catholic*, August 14, 2025, 2. Also Chai Brady and Rohith Kinattukara, "Catholic Indians Feel 'Threatened' in Ireland" *The Irish Catholic*, Thursday, July 31, 2025, 1-2. Also see Chukwudi Akasike *et al*, "'Nigerians Must Go': How Ghana's Business Rules Landlords' Action Triggers Xenophobic Fear" *The Punch Newspapers*, 2 August 2025, <https://punchng.com/nigerians-must-go-how-ghanas-business-rules-landlords-actions-trigger-xenophobic-fear/> Accessed, 1 September, 2025.

<sup>113</sup> Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, nos. 12-13. Also see Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 142-53.

<sup>114</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelium Gaudium*, no 234.

<sup>115</sup> Rafael Luciani, "Francis and the Pastoral Geopolitics of Peoples and their Cultures: A Structural Option for the Poor," *Theological Studies* 81, no. 1 (2020): 181-202 at 183. Also see S. Steward Braun, "Pope Francis and the Economic Democracy: Understanding Pope Francis's Radical (Yet) Practical Approach to Political Economy," *Theological Studies* 81, no 1 (2020): 203-24.

Petr Štica connects theological ethics with human right ethics as a “resource for reinforcement of the ethos of respect for all humanity.”<sup>116</sup> Štica noted shortcomings in the current instruments of [...] asylum, refugees and migration policies, questioning whether most of the immigration policies align with the UN Refugee Convention’s respect for the dignity and rights of all human beings.<sup>117</sup> This requires a deeper socio-ethical and theological reflection. CST, in *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* (EMCC) advocates for “closer collaboration between migrants’ countries of origin and destination, in addition to adequate norms capable of harmonising various legislative provisions.”<sup>118</sup> This expresses solidarity and shared responsibility from inter-state actors for the wellbeing of the human family. As a result, Martha Nussbaum echoes Pope Francis’ teaching on the dangers of narrow nationalism. She advocates for a cosmopolitan conception of the human family, countering the limited focus on nationality, ethnicity, or region.<sup>119</sup> This provides another perspective that strengthen the case for rethinking ethnicity, culture and national identity in the light of the migrant crisis.

Furthermore, Betts and Collier advocate for a generosity of spirit grounded in wisdom, whereby responses to migrants - particularly asylum seekers and refugees - depend on circumstances, needs, capacity and capability. They argue, for instance, that our ethical or moral duty towards those fleeing from war, violence or natural disaster would differ from those fleeing poverty, unemployment, corrupt leadership and impoverishment.<sup>120</sup> Both migration motives require an ethical response, but they do not belong to the same category in the hierarchy of needs. They are both survival-driven migration with life-threatening consequences, but the first is more immediate (war, violence, and natural disaster) than the second (poverty, unemployment, corrupt leadership and impoverishment). Failing to exercise wisdom or prudence leads to new crises. Pope Francis emphasizes the need to rethink the outdated criteria of managing global crises, insisting on justice as “the effective distribution of power (especially political, economic, defence related and technological power) among a plurality of subject, and the creation of a juridical system for regulating claims and interests.”<sup>121</sup> Here, the Holy Father is reemphasising the need for contributive justice and the rule of law in every community.

There is an inherent link between recognising people’s contribution and their right to the fair distribution of the often-scarce resources. “Good politics,” contributive justice and the common good highlight this connection in the migrant crisis. Pope Leo XIV affirms that “sound politics” promotes the equitable distribution of resources, effective service, harmony

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<sup>116</sup> Štica, “Human Right and Migration,” in *Building Bridges in Sarajevo*, 77.

<sup>117</sup> Štica, “Human Right and Migration,” in *Building Bridges in Sarajevo*, 78.

<sup>118</sup> Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, nos. 8 and 14.

<sup>119</sup> Martha Nussbaum, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,” in *For Love of Country* (Boston: Beacon Press 2022), 5. Also see Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 30, 141.

<sup>120</sup> Betts and Paul Collier. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 97-126.

<sup>121</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*. 171.

and peace both domestically and internationally.<sup>122</sup> It guarantees the freedom to enhance human potentials at every level of society, while demanding transparency and accountability from government institutions, civil leaders and policymakers.<sup>123</sup> The migrant crisis demands a response that highlights our shared humanity, rooted in the theological and ethical principles of CST.

## 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the migrant crisis using the works of Alexander Betts and the Church's social doctrines. It emphasises migrant's admission and integration over isolation, solidarity against discrimination, good governance and social welfare in contrast to corrupt politics, failed leadership and poor governance. Additionally, it advocates for compassion, cosmopolitanism, and multiculturalism as responses to ethnic bigotry, cultural cynicism and narrow nationalism. Moreover, it promotes socio-economic collaboration and mutual coexistence against the ongoing clash of civilisation.<sup>124</sup> Since *Rerum Novarum*, CST has maintained that political authority is at the service of the common good and social justice. It is also responsible for sustainable economic growth and development, strategic decision on resource control and allocation, the efficient utilization and investment of human and natural resources, and ensuring fraternity and solidarity among peoples, communities, and nations.<sup>125</sup>

Similarly, this chapter observes that the migrant crisis is an opportunity to rehumanise the world through solidarity, the common good, and socio-political dialogue. This should be accompanied with the principles of subsidiarity and participation, rather than ethnic cleansing, violent conflict, marginalization or intolerance of those who are different. In this study, CST's response to the migrant crisis through "good politics," contributive justice and the common good highlights the importance of dialogue and negotiation concerning the well-being of all, as well as providing equitable opportunities for goods and service through good governance in every political community. Consequently, rethinking the various aspects of the migrant crisis raises genuine concern for the dignity and right of every member of society to dignified livelihood. The next chapter concludes this study, presenting the research findings, recommendations and potential areas for further research or future directions.

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<sup>122</sup> Pope Leo XIV *Address to Members of the International Inter-Parliamentary Union*, Saturday, 21 June 2025.

<sup>123</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 196. Also see Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights and Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 209-214, 218-230.

<sup>124</sup> See Kevin O'Gorman SMA, "Pope's Intention for Mutual Coexistence," *The Sacred Heart Messenger*, August 2025, 5. Also see "Pope's August Prayer Intention: For Mutual Coexistence," <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-07/pope-s-august-prayer-intention-for-mutual-coexistence.html> Accessed 4 August, 2025.

<sup>125</sup> See Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, Chapter 5, especially no. 154. Also see Lado, SJ, "Toward a Spirituality of Politics," 199-200; Mbara, "Corruption and Good Governance in Nigeria," 195.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION, NEXT STEPS, AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

#### 7.0 Introduction

This research has examined the indispensable contribution of Catholic social teaching (CST) in enhancing scholarship on the migrant crisis. Its novelty is on how both global and local politics can be re-defined to respond more effectively to the global migrant crisis. In this case, contributive justice is proposed as an integral part of “good politics” that safeguards our common humanity and the global common good. This study recognises several other approaches, including the theology of social or structural sin, the Christian virtue of hospitality, togetherness, and kinship as foundations to the theology of migration, along with violations of human dignity and rights, injustice, marginalisation, and neglect of the poor. It also notes the ethics of migration, refugees’ rights, and the challenges migrants face as a humanitarian crisis.<sup>1</sup> However, in this study, special attention has been given to the significance of the Church’s teaching regarding socio-economic and political well-being, as they are vital to human flourishing.

Exploring the richness and depth of Catholic social Magisterium, this study has highlighted the scholarship of David Hollenbach, Kristin E. Heyer, Daniel Groody, Tisha Rajendra, Anna Rowlands, as well as the work of Alexander Betts, a socio-political philosopher focused on forced migration and international relations. Betts contribution has been largely overlooked within Catholic social, theological and ethical scholarship on the migrant crisis.<sup>2</sup> His work offers a new perspective in Catholic social teaching’s migration scholarship,

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<sup>1</sup> See Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration: Good Fences Make Bad Neighbours,” *Theological Studies* 71 no. 2 (May 2010): 410-36; Heyer, “Reframing Displacement and Membership: Ethics of Migration,” *Theological Studies* 73, no. 1 (2012): 188-206; Groody, Theology in the Age of Migration: Seeing the Image of Christ in the Eyes of a Stranger, *National Catholic Reporter*, September 18, 2009; Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration*; Rowlands, “On the Temptation of Sovereignty: The Task of Catholic Social Teaching and the Challenges of UK Asylum Seeking,” *Political Theology* 12, no. 6 (2011): 843-68; Mulligan, “Pope Francis and the Migrant Crisis: Reflections on Hospitality, Vulnerability and Accompaniment,” *The Furrow* 579-86, Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orabator, “Justice for the Displaced: The Challenge of a Christian Understanding,” in *Driven From Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, 37-53; Gemma Tulud Cruz, “When the Poor Knock on Our Door: A Theological Response to Unwanted Migration,” in *Christianity and the Law of Immigration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer, and Raj Nadella, 195-211.

<sup>2</sup> Hollenbach, S.J., *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees*; Hollenbach ed., *Driven From Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*; Hollenbach ed. *Refugee Rights: Ethics, Advocacy, and Africa*; Heyer, “Migration, Social Responsibility, and Moral Imagination: Resources from Christian Ethics,” in *Christianity and the Law of Immigration*, ed. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer, and Raj Nadella, 230-48; Heyer, *Kinship Across Borders: A Christian Ethics of Immigration*; Groody, “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees,” *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 638-67; Rowlands, “The State Made Flesh: Catholic Social Teaching and the Challenges of UK Asylum Seeking,” *Blackfriars* (2012): 175-92 at 176; Rajendra “Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Rights of Migrants,” *Political Theology* 15, no. 4 (July 2014): 290-306.

especially from the migrant's perspectives.<sup>3</sup> As the concluding Chapter of this study, we will summarize our findings, offer recommendations, identify areas for further research and provide a general overview.

## 7.1 Research Findings

This study found that migration is not a new phenomenon. Still, it has become a crisis due to the large-scale movement of people from various parts of the world seeking sanctuary and better opportunities. Scholarship on this crisis examines environmental factors, humanitarian issues, and the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political impact of ineffective or failed political leadership.<sup>4</sup> These factors, contributing to the migrant crisis, have led to an over reliance on the neoclassical theory of migration in Christian ethics. This theory overemphasises virtues like benevolence, hospitality and solidarity toward migrants without considering the role of government in creating the crisis. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of "good politics," contributive justice and the common good. It defined "Good politics," which has remained undefined, by integrating it with the principles of contributive justice and the common good, offering a new dimension to the discussions of the migrant crisis. It also draws from the neoclassical migration theory to develop a framework that emphasizes relational responsibility, transparency, and accountability in political communities.

The neoclassical theory is one of the many explanations for the factors driving the migrant crisis.<sup>5</sup> It is grounded in well-established economic ideas that view human beings as rational, self-interested agents focused on their own benefits. This theory emphasises socio-economic incentives as the primary reason for peoples' relocation. It argues that most migrants move

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<sup>3</sup> See Betts, *The Wealth of Refugees: How Displaced People Can Build Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Betts, "Public Goods Theory and the Provision of Refugee Protection: The Role of the Joint-Product Model in Burden Sharing Theory," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 16, no. 3, (2003): 274-96; Betts, "The Global Compact on the Refugees: Towards a Theory of Change?" *International Journal of Refugee Law* 30, no. 4. (2018): 623-26; Betts, "Towards a 'Soft Law' Framework for the Protection of Vulnerable Irregular Migrants," *International Journal of Refugee Law* 22, no. 2 (2010): 209-36. Also see Betts and Paul Collier, *Sustainable Migration Framework*, (EMN Norway Occasional Paper: University of Oxford, 2018); Betts and Paul Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*.

<sup>4</sup> See Mary DeLorey, "International Migration: Social, Economic, and Humanitarian Considerations," in *And You Made Me Welcome: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschütz (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), 31-54. Also see Hein De Haas, *How Migration Really Works: A Factful Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics*; Also see Ronald Skeldon, *Migration and Development: A Global Perspective* (London: Addison-Wesley Longman Higher Education, 1997); DeLorey, "Economic and Environmental Displacement: Implications for Durable Solutions." In *Driven from Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, ed. David Hollenbach, (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 231-47.

<sup>5</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to give an in-depth analysis of all theories of migration and their strength and weaknesses. However, Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller provide a detailed scholarship on the "Theories of Migration," in *The Age of Migration*, 25-54. They enunciate the strength and limitations of the *Historical-Structural theories*, which analyses how Globalization theory and Segmented Labour Theory impact migration; *Network, Transnationalism and Migration theories*, which deals with New Economic and Household Theory and Migration network theory; and *Transnational and Diaspora theories*, which focus on Migration systems theory and Cumulative causation. Also see Tisha Rajendra, "Migration Theory and Christian Ethics: Possibilities and Limitations," for more details on other theories of migration not mentioned in this study. (See Rajendra, *Migrant and Citizens*, 34-53).

because of inequalities in their country's labour market, declining wages for workers, and high levels of poverty and unemployment. In other words, such theories assume that migrants primarily seek jobs and socio-economic opportunities.<sup>6</sup> While useful for simplified understanding of the migrant crisis, these assumptions are unrealistic in viewing migrants as solely rational, self-centred agents.<sup>7</sup> They may apply to economic migrants, but overlook other types of migrants, including those seeking survival. Otherwise, how do we account for people from economically stronger and peaceful nations migrating, as against the world's poorest people, who often do not migrate?<sup>8</sup>

The neoclassical approach fails to explain why migrants prefer certain countries over others. For example, why do North Africans choose France rather than Canada, or why do Mexicans prefer the United States as against Germany? What about Nigerians' choice for the United Kingdom, the United States, or Canada, and the Irish people's preferences for the United States, Canada and other destinations, such as Australia or the United Arab Emirate (UAE)?<sup>9</sup> Could these choices be informed by some socio-political, socio-cultural, neo-colonial or trade affinity? Or just a random coincidence for convenience? These choices are not just merely coincidental. In this case, "citizens of former colonies, fluent in the language of the colonial power and other factors in these host countries accounts for these choices. Quasi-colonial ties, such as the US interventions in Guatemala and El Salvador also generated migration systems."<sup>10</sup> Other factors not included by the neoclassical migration theorists include government-sponsored labour recruitment. This was a form of temporary migration employed by Germany, Belgium, France, Switzerland and the United States to mitigate the effects of postwar labour shortages.<sup>11</sup> Although it was initially designed as a temporary measure to address labour shortages, it has become a pathway to permanent residency in foreign countries for many people. It is still used today in the recruitment of health workers, caregivers and ministers of religion, among others. This illustrates that the neoclassical theory tends to detach the discourse on migration from family ties, cultural values, and socio-historical context.

On the contrary, our findings indicate that many migrants undertake the journey for socio-economic emancipation, family preservation and family reunification.<sup>12</sup> This brings us to

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<sup>6</sup> See George J. Borjas, *Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigration on the U.S. Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 12. Also see Saskia Sassen, *Guest and Aliens* (New York: New York Press, 1999), 141; Ronald Skeldon, *Migration and Development: A Global Perspective* (London: Addison-Wesley Longman Higher Education, 1997), 8; Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 35-7.

<sup>7</sup> Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller "Theories of Migration," in *The Age of Migration*, 30-31.

<sup>8</sup> Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 36. Also see Hein De Haas, *How Migration Really Works: A Factful Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics*, 78-125.

<sup>9</sup> See Rajendra, *Migrants and Citizens*, 36-7; Douglas S. Massey et al., *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Sassen, *Guest and Aliens*, 138; Rajendra, *Migrant and Citizens*, 46.

<sup>11</sup> Rajendra, *Migrant and Citizens*, 46. Also see Sassen, *The Mobility of Labour and Capital: A Study in International Investment and Labour Flow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

<sup>12</sup> See Amartya Sen, "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioural Foundations of Economic Theory," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6, no. 4 (1977); Bill Ong Hing, "Promoting Family Values and Immigration," in *Departing Souls: Values, Morality, and Immigration Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 118-39.

the new economic theory of migration developed in response to the limitations of the neoclassical model. It presupposes that people migrate to improve the well-being of their families and communities. By broadening the definition of economic well-being, this theory suggests that migrants are not only concerned with matters of wages but also security and participation in community. This means that, beyond poverty, unequal opportunities, low wages or unemployment, migration is also driven by “lack of insurance against crop failures in agricultural communities, lack of access to credit, and the absence of [reliable] national pension or social security plans.”<sup>13</sup> These are essential for dignified livelihood in every political community. Therefore, this study advocates a more inclusive approach that investigates the socio-economic, socio-cultural, socio-political and even biological or familial factors behind the migrant crisis. Such determinant and patterns of migration fundamentally link migration to the core of development and social transformation.<sup>14</sup> It provides a foundation for a relational responsibility in creating a just world, in which the strong respond to the needs of the vulnerable, regardless of their background. It also marks a shift from the problem-resolving approach to the migrant crisis.<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, the prevalence of war, civil unrest, ecological disaster, humanitarian and human rights violations was also identified among the drivers of the crisis. As noted earlier, such narratives overemphasize the virtues of benevolence and hospitality towards migrants without critically engaging with the possible structural, institutional or organisational factors.<sup>16</sup> This approach portrays migrants as victims of circumstances with limited options. They are sometimes regarded with contempt because they rely on the goodwill of host communities. Conversely, it would be more appropriate to hold individuals accountable for their actions or inactions that lead to displacement and humanitarian crisis. Therefore, the valuable insights of “good politics,” contributive justice and the common good are essential in the debate on the migrant crisis. Ignoring the historical, structural, or institutional roots of the migrant crisis overlooks its complex and evolving nature. Portraying most migrants as passive victims of human-made or natural disasters is unrealistic.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, we need responsible structures, institutions, government agencies and socio-economic organisations accountable for the welfare of everyone in the political community.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Rajendra, “Migration Theory and Christian Ethics: Possibilities and Limitation,” in *Migrants and Citizens*, 38; Rajendra, “Justice, Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Rights of Migrants,” *Political Theology* 15, no. 3 (2014): 290-306. Also see Massey *et al.*, *Worlds in Motion*, 22-26; De Haas, *How Migration Really Works*, 78-9.

<sup>14</sup> See Stephen Castle and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movement in the Modern World* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Guildford, 2009), 20.

<sup>15</sup> See Mary M. Kritz and Hania Zlotnik, “Global Interactions: Migration Systems, Processes, and Policies,” in *International Migration Systems: A Global Approach*, ed. Mary M. Kritz, Lin Lean Lim, and Hania Zlotnik (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1992), 4. Also see Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movement in the Modern World* 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 26.

<sup>16</sup> See Rajendra, “Justice Not Benevolence: Catholic Social Thought, Migration Theory, and the Rights of Migrants,” 290-306.

<sup>17</sup> Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, “Theories of Migration,” in *The Age of Migration*, 36.

<sup>18</sup> The *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church* states that “Political authority is an instrument of coordination and direction by means of which the many individuals and intermediate bodies must move towards an order in which relationships, institutions and procedures are put at the service of integral human growth” (See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines*, nos. 394-5).

Consequently, this study highlights the lack of institutional and political will among governments to ensure the safety of lives and the socio-economic well-being of the populace in some countries. Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa fall into this category. Admittedly, Douglas S. Massey, Joaquine Arango, Graeme Hugo, Adela Pellegrino and J. Edward Taylor argue that “Each act of migration alters the social context within which subsequent migration decisions are made, typically in ways that make additional movement more likely.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, urgent intervention by all relevant institutions, agencies and policymakers is necessary. Catholic social teaching advocates political dialogue to address all kinds of conflicts. In this context, dialogue with migrants, their home countries and host communities become necessary. Stephen Castle, Heins De Haas and Mark J. Miller emphasize the importance of distinguishing between theories of the causes of migration and theories of its impact on home countries and host communities. They also suggest that it could be helpful to develop separate theories for different categories of migrants.<sup>20</sup> This suggestion highlights the importance of shared responsibility among all parties: migrants, their home countries, host communities and the international community.<sup>21</sup>

Catholic social teaching recognises the dialogical and cosmopolitan role of “good politics” in managing local and global socio-economic issues and fostering peaceful coexistence. “Good politics” could alleviate the structures of sin marginalising the vast majority in political communities. Pope Francis describes dialogue and social friendship within society as an encounter that involves “Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and to find a common ground.”<sup>22</sup> The Holy Father further affirms that dialogue is the pathway through which we engage and support one another. Unlike monologue and the exchange of opinion on social networks, which often attract attention through their sharp, aggressive, self-serving tone, dialogue is open to the truth. It is willing to give and receive from others. Dialogue promotes the common good rather than individual interest.<sup>23</sup> This indicates that “good politics” is concerned with negotiating and reconciling both local and global conflicting interests. It is a process of reasoning together through respectful debate, free from intimidation, threat, or violence.<sup>24</sup> The global migrant crisis requires such an approach to broaden the scope of the migration discussion.

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<sup>19</sup> Massey *et al.*, *World's in Motion*, 45-6.

<sup>20</sup> Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, “Theories of Migration,” in *The Age of Migration*, 26. Also See Rajendra, “Migration Theory and Christian Ethics: Possibilities and Limitations,” in *Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration*, 34-53.

<sup>21</sup> Here, the inadequacies of both the neoclassical and historical-structural perspectives on the complexity of the migrant crisis is identified. “Neoclassical approaches neglect the historical causes of migration and downplay the role of the state and structural constraints, while historical-structural approaches overemphasize political and socio-economic structures” in fuelling the crisis. Such deterministic approaches fail to capture migrants as active agents who intentionally made the choices to improve their livelihood through this channel. Such approaches limit the choices of migrants, their capabilities and contributions to their families, home countries and host communities. (See Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, “Theories of Migration,” in *The Age of Migration*, 36-7. Also see Rajendra, “Migration Theory and Christian Ethics: Possibilities and Limitations,” in *Migrants and Citizens*, 34-52).

<sup>22</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 198, 177, 182,

<sup>23</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 199-200, 202-03.

<sup>24</sup> See Sacks, *Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Time* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2020), 220. Also see Pope Francis, *FT*, no 202-03.

This research also highlights the misapplication of the concept of the “common good” in political debates and governance, leading to the marginalisation of the masses. Such misuse results in the misappropriation and mismanagement of national wealth intended for society’s flourishing.<sup>25</sup> Most economic, survival, and undocumented migrants are victims of the misapplication of the principle of the common good in their home countries. Such usage could best be described as “common interest,” which is centred on individuals or groups sharing a mutual agreement for their own benefits. In this regard, a good example of “common interest” is the activities of political parties during elections and political allies in forming a government. In this case, appointments are made based on an individual’s contribution to the party’s success at the election, not on merits, capacity, or the common good.<sup>26</sup>

Conversely, the common good involves all members of a political community working together to address their needs and the ultimate goals of the “universal common good of the whole of creation.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, the principle of the common good fosters a positive environment for the growth of potentials and the wellbeing of everyone in society. The migrant crisis requires such approach, rooted in “the dignity, unity and equality of all people.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, the significance of contributive justice in addressing the migrant crisis. It enhances distributive justice and is ethically connected to “good politics” and the universal destination of the earth’s goods, creating equal opportunities for all within the political sphere.

Finally, the disproportionate focus on distributive justice, without its corresponding counterpart, contributive justice, hampers productivity and socio-economic development in many countries. It creates inefficiencies, unemployment and impoverishment. These factors exacerbate the migrant crisis. Consumption without production causes numerous problems, including economic instability, socio-political tension, military coup, and the migration of various groups of people seeking better opportunities elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> The global migrant crisis

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<sup>25</sup> For a contextual, theological, and ethical understanding of the principle of the common good, see Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1905-1912; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Mater et Magistra*, (1961), nos. 417-421; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Pacem in Terris* (1963), nos. 272-73; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter, *Octogesima Adveniens*, (1971), no. 433-35. Also see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, 164-70.

<sup>26</sup> The English and Welsh Catholic Bishops’ Conference in their 1996 and 2001 Pastoral letter identified the common good as a key issue to be addressed in the political life of the United Kingdom especially at election time because it affects families, human life, global poverty and injustice, asylum seekers and refugees, and democratic participation. (See Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, *The Common Good and the Church’s Social Teaching*, 1996. <https://cbcw.org.uk/plain/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/11/common-good-1996.pdf>. Also see *Vote for the Common Good*, 2001. <https://cbcw.org.uk/plain/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/11/vote-for-common-good-2001.pdf> Also see citation by Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 73).

<sup>27</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, 167; 170.

<sup>28</sup> Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, 169; 164. Also see Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 73

<sup>29</sup> See Gomberg, “Why Distributive Justice is Impossible but Contributive Justice Would Work,” *Science and Society* 80, no 1 Special Issue: Socializing Philosophy (January 2016): 31-55; Sayer, “Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work,” *Res Publica* 15, no. 1 (2009): 1-16, DOI 10.1007/s/11158-008-9077-8; Timmermann, “Contributive Justice: An Exploration of a Wider Provision of Meaningful Work,” *Soc Just Res* 31, no. 1

is connected to an increasingly unequal distribution of goods and services, which affects the less privileged. It raises a series of theological and ethical concerns regarding local and global governmental institutions, human dignity, the dignity of labour. Ignoring contributive justice amounts to endorsing or legitimizing “distributive inequality.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, while distributive justice concentrates on the difficult task of sharing of goods, services, and status within society, contributive justice fosters opportunities and creates an enabling environment for socio-economic contributions that promote the flourishing of society for everyone. It enables all individuals to earn respect for their contribution to nation-building.<sup>31</sup> To adequately address the migrant crisis, the government must therefore take responsibility for the marginalised, ensure good governance, create job opportunities with fair pay, and apply the principles of social justice, participation, subsidiarity and solidarity with the vulnerable and unemployed in every political community.

## 7.2 Recommendations

This research, rooted in Catholic social teaching (CST), argues that the principles of “good politics,” contributive justice, and the common good offer a more inclusive response to the debate on the migrant crisis. It provides a theological and ethical explanation of the issue from the perspectives of the migrants, their home countries and their host communities. “Good politics” serves as a channel for dialogue, negotiation and decision-making regarding social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental challenges affecting humanity. It fosters an equitable platform for discussions around these challenges, ensuring that people are heard, supported, and protected.

This approach is often guided by the principle of the common good, which, according to the Church’s Magisterium is “the sum total of social conditions which allows people to reach their fulfilment more easily either as individuals or groups.”<sup>32</sup> The common good emphasizes the duty of humanity, especially those in position of authority, to protect the dignity and rights of every individual in society. It provides an atmosphere where people can achieve their potentials and promote societal flourishing. Contributive justice, on the other hand, ensures equal opportunities for people to contribute to the common good based on their ability and capacities. It complements distributive justice in every political community. Without contributive justice, the community will suffer social, cultural, political and economic deficit. Fundamentally, CST presents an objective socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural vision of a good human society rooted in biblical and theological anthropology. Arising from the commandment to love God and our neighbour,

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(2018): 85-111, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-017-0293-2>; Andrew Morrison, “Contributive Justice: Social Class and graduate Employment in the UK,” *Journal of Education and Work* 32, no. 4 (2019): 335-46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2019.1646414>.

<sup>30</sup> See Sayer, “Contributive Justice and Meaningful Work,” 1-16 at 1; Timmermann, Contributive Justice: An Exploration of a Wider Provision of Meaningful Work,” 85-111 at 85; Gomberg, “Why Distributive Justice is Impossible but Contributive Justice Would Work,” 31-55.

<sup>31</sup> Gomberg, “Why Distributive Justice is Impossible but Contributive Justice Would Work,” 31-55 at 32.

<sup>32</sup> Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, 164.

“it contains both permanent valid principles and contingent judgments that are pertinent to specific times and places.”<sup>33</sup>

The Church’s social doctrines originated from addressing social issues like exploitation of workers, racial discrimination, and the marginalisation of the less privileged in society. Therefore, its relevance to the debate on the migrant crisis cannot be ignored. CST advocates for “fraternal openness that allows [humanity] to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless of physical proximity [or] where he or she was born.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, CST focuses on a renewed appreciation for the dignity of all human beings. In the context of the migrant crisis, “good politics,” contributive justice, and the common good provides valuable insight into the root causes.

### 7.2.1 Reconsidering the politics of international immigration policies

International immigration challenges are numerous. To begin with, regional and national structures of contemporary society pose a problem to international immigration and integration. They hinder equity and fairness in international relations and immigration policies.<sup>35</sup> Political dialogue is necessary for a reconsideration. Immigration scholar Alexander Betts describes how migrants are treated unequally across different categories, including those fleeing similar serious human rights violations such as war, civil unrest, poverty and unemployment. This dichotomy of unequal treatment raises theological and ethical questions about the dignity and rights of every human person to equal opportunities for a dignified life. Can we justify why some migrants are offered protection, hospitality and employment, while others are arrested, detained, and, in some cases, deported?<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, CST’s principles of *the universal destination of the earth’s goods* and *the preferential option for the poor* guide the manner of engagement, especially with the poor and marginalised in society. These principles emphasise concern for those whose “living conditions interfere with their proper growth.”<sup>37</sup> They also recognise the equal dignity of all human beings, regardless of their region or nation-state.<sup>38</sup> Building on his predecessors, especially Pope Francis, Leo XIV laments the enormous gap between the rich and the poor

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<sup>33</sup> John Meinert, and Emily Stimpson Chapman, *Christ Alive in Us: An Introduction to Moral Theology* (Sleubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2019), 83. Also see Pope Francis, *Gaudate et Exsultate*, (19 March 2018), 96; Leo XIV, *Dilixi Te*, (9 October 2025), nos. 1-3 and Chapter 4, where the Holy Father presents an overview of the Church’s social teaching in addressing various social issues in history.

<sup>34</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 312-314. Also see Christina Boswell and Andrew Geddes, *Migration and Mobility in the European Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Geddes, *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe* (London: Sage, 2003); Geddes, *Immigration and European Integration: Towards Fortress Europe?* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000); Gallya Lahav, *Immigration and Politics in the New Europe: Reinventing Borders* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> See Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*, 8-9.

<sup>37</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 182; Corkery, *Companion to the Compendium*, 72.

<sup>38</sup> Pope Leo XIV, Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilixi Te* (hereafter, *DT*), (9 October 2025), no 13. [https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilixi-te.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilixi-te.html)

in the world today.<sup>39</sup> This highlights the theological and ethical gap in the approach for measuring poverty and exclusion in today's digital age. It emphasises that people's dignity and right to livelihood should be a priority for everyone. Drawing from *the universal destination of the earth's goods* and *the preferential option for the poor*, this study recommends a politics of international migration that safeguards migrants' dignity and rights, thereby preserving their well-being. The Church's social Magisterium has always advocated for a genuinely human and fraternal society that accompanies every member at every stage of life, provides their basic needs, and harnesses their talents and potentials for the common good.<sup>40</sup>

Thirdly, the migrant crisis calls for a united society that tackles inequality and discrimination worldwide. The American philosopher Michael Sandel, in his examination of meritocracy, argues that: "The explosion of inequality has enabled those [at] the top (the wealthy elites) to consolidate their advantages and pass them on to their children."<sup>41</sup> The world is experiencing a situation where the upper class remains at the top, living luxurious lifestyles, while the majority struggle to survive. This shows that addressing inequality is fundamental for human flourishing and for resolving the migrant crisis.<sup>42</sup> It requires justice, solidarity, social friendship, the culture of encounter, political charity, political dialogue and efficient leadership.<sup>43</sup> These principles theologically explain God's inclusive intention for all humanity.

Fourthly, CST advocates for people's right to remain within their home countries as a priority under normal circumstances, and the fundamental right to migrate and seek refuge elsewhere when their dignity is violated.<sup>44</sup> This involves a fair assessment of the conditions for emigration. It also signifies collective social responsibility in tackling the causes of the migrant crisis. Most international migrants risk everything to flee danger in their home countries. Sadly, the government of their home countries and host communities often overlook their critical needs. Consequently, the strict immigration policies in the Global North cause many people to become undocumented immigrants.<sup>45</sup> This study therefore

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<sup>39</sup> Pope Leo XIV, *DT*, no. 13. Also see Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 21; Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, (26 March 1967), 59; Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, (29 June 2009), 22.

<sup>40</sup> Pope Francis *FT*, no. 110. Also see Mulligan, "'Builders of New Social Bond': *Reflections on Fratelli Tutti*," *The Furrow* 71, no. 12 (December 2020): 647-53 at 648.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good* (London: Penguin Books, 2021), 23.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Sandel, *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good* (London: Penguin Books, 2020, 2021), 24-28. Also see Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limit of Markets* (London: Penguin Books, 2012); Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (London: Penguin Books 2009).

<sup>43</sup> See Pope Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution: *Exsul Familia*, (1 August 1952); Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 63, 65-66, 84 and 87; Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* (Vatican City: 2004), nos. 1-20; Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*. *Exsul Familia* is considered "the *magna carta* of the Church's thought on Migration. It is the first official document of the Holy See to delineate the pastoral care of migrants globally and systematically, from both historical and canonical point of view, placing the primary responsibility of the pastoral care of migrants on local bishops." (See *Erga Migrantes*, no. 20).

<sup>44</sup> See Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* (Vatican City: 2004). Also see Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 65, Rowlands, "The State Made Flesh," 178.

<sup>45</sup> Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 312-13.

recommends sustainable socio-economic policies that creates opportunities to help people remain in their home countries, along with compassionate international immigration policies that upholds migrants' dignity in precarious situations. Migrants should be assisted to integrate, and those needing rehabilitation – such as sex traffickers, drug peddlers, and political refugees - should be empowered and helped to return home when it is safe for them.

### 7.2.2 Rethinking Anti-immigrant movement

The rising global anti-immigrant movement needs to be contextually addressed to protect the wellbeing of all immigrants. It is an anti-social behaviour that compromises our shared humanity and diminishes the contributions of legitimate immigrants in their host communities. Reconsidering the anti-immigrant movement is necessary, especially as demographic studies show a shortage of human resources due to low birthrate and aging population in the Global North. Internal solutions such as encouraging higher birthrate, government-subsidized childcare, parental leave legislation and other incentives in some Western countries, have not yet yielded the desired results.<sup>46</sup> Immigration scholar Hein De Haas contends that: “Although ‘babies, no immigrants’ makes for an attractive slogan frequently recycled by anti-immigration politicians, pro-baby family planning policies have proved to have only marginal long-term effects.”<sup>47</sup> This indicates that addressing these challenges requires more than internal remedies. It involves recruiting personnels from abroad to expand the workforce.<sup>48</sup>

It is understandable that where resources are scarce, new competitors are seen as imaginary existential and socio-economic threats. Although the anti-immigrant movement is often masked as protecting national identity, religious tradition, cultural or ideological values, the socio-economic and political undertone are evident. The demographic challenge affecting the labour force in the Global North is rooted in some “*structural* social, cultural, educational, political and economic changes that seems impossible to reverse internally.”<sup>49</sup> It requires a comprehensive and more realistic approach than simply offering incentives to boost birth rates. In this regard, the realities of legal immigration and integration should be promoted to help address the challenges posed by an aging population, low birth rate, and

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<sup>46</sup> See Hein de Haas, *How Migration Works*, 129-44, 160-79, 209-21, 234-45. Also see Linda J. Cook, Elena R. Iarskaia-Smirnova and Vladimir A. Kozlov, “Trying to Reverse Demographic Decline: Pro-Natalist and Family Policies in Russia, Poland and Hungary,” *Social Policy and Society* 22, no. 2, (2023): 355-75; Ronald Lee, “The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of immigration,” *Population and Development Review* 43, no. 8 (2017): 169; H. Kulu et al., “Fertility by Birth Order Among the Descendants of immigrants in Selected European Countries,” *Population and Development Review* 43, no. 8 (2017):31-60.

<sup>47</sup> Haas, “We Need Immigrants to Fix the Problem of Aging Society,” in *How Migration Works*, 234-45 at 235. Also see, Linda J. Cook, Elena R. Iarskaia-Smirnova and Vladimir A. Kozlove, “Trying to Reverse Demographic Decline: Pro-Natalist and Family Policies in Russia, Poland and Hungary,” *Social Policy and Society* 22, no. 2, (2023):355-75.

<sup>48</sup> See John J. Hoeffner and Michele R. Pistone, “But the Labourers Are... Many? Catholic Social Teaching on Business, Labour, and Economic Migration,” in *And You Welcome me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), 55-92.

<sup>49</sup> Haas, “We Need Immigrants to Fix the Problem of Aging Society,” in *How Migration Works*, 234-45 at 235.

labour shortages.<sup>50</sup> This study recommends reconsidering anti-immigrant movements, which obscure the *imago Dei* in every human being.

Evidently, Catholic social teaching is grounded in the central importance of our shared humanity as the key to fulfilling our earthly mission, regardless of nationality or background. It is the reason for the *Incarnation, ministry, passion and Redemption* of Christ. Emphasising our common humanity is especially urgent today, given the complex network of relationships arising from the migrant crisis.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, our perception of national identity should embrace the acceptance and integration of other nationalities without creating unnecessary tension simply because they are different. Sometimes, conflicting ethnic, religious and national principles are unavoidable in human relationships. However, these differences should not be allowed to define our humanity or unfairly undermine and exclude others from any political community.<sup>52</sup> In this regard, the Church's social anthropology offers a new perspective that keeps the dignity of the human person at the centre of the debate on the migrant crisis. It reminds us that, created in the image of God, we are a pilgrim people, and our own very existence is migratory.<sup>53</sup>

Accordingly, the theological, ethical and social anthropological dimension of interpreting and responding to the migrant crisis remind humanity of our responsibility towards one another.<sup>54</sup> This study advocates for the theological and ethical application of the concepts of globalisation and development as well as those of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. These are ambiguous realities that humanity pursues amid the complex nature of the "gated global village" and numerous socio-economic and political problems.<sup>55</sup> Catholic social Magisterium recognises the significance of globalization and development for human flourishing but warns that it must be guided by the common good.

To achieve this, Pope John Paul II recommends: (1) "Increased coordination among the more powerful countries. (2) The interest of the whole human family be equally represented. (3) Sufficient consideration to peoples and countries which have little weight in the international market, but which are burdened by most acute and desperate needs, and are thus more dependent on support for their development."<sup>56</sup> In the Church's social doctrine, migration offers humanity the opportunity to recognise the image of God in all those who are different and to treat them with dignity and respect. Therefore, global solidarity is essential for addressing the world's socio-cultural and socio-economic challenges leading to anti-migrants' movements across the globe.

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<sup>50</sup> See Hoeffner and Michele R. Pistone, "But the Labourers Are... Many? Catholic Social Teaching," 58-60.

<sup>51</sup> Pope John Paul II, *CA*, nos. 54-55.

<sup>52</sup> Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, 232.

<sup>53</sup> Groody, "Theology in the Age of Migration: Seeing the Image of Christ in the Eyes of a Stranger," *National Catholic Reporter*, September 18, 2009, 22.

<sup>54</sup> See Pope John Paul II, *CA*, no. 55.

<sup>55</sup> See Hoeffner and Michele R. Pistone, "But the Labourers Are... Many? Catholic Social Teaching," 55.

<sup>56</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 58.

### 7.2.3 Caring for the Vulnerable, the Less Privileged and Our Common Home

The Church's social Magisterium and climate scientists agree that the Earth, our common home, is threatened by climate change.<sup>57</sup> Both emphasise that global collaboration is necessary to protect it for the well-being of future generations. CST specifically identifies two ethical misconceptions that led to the ecological crisis: The first is a disordered relativism which drives some powerful people to exploit others and treat them as mere objects.<sup>58</sup> This form of relativism extends to humanity's reckless treatment of the environment. Pope Francis regrettably describes the effect of this recklessness on the earth as: "burdened and laid waste, [...] abandoned and maltreated, looking more like an immense pile of filth."<sup>59</sup> The second ethical misconception is a distorted anthropology, conceptualised by Pope Francis as "misguided anthropocentrism" that "leads to a misguided lifestyle."<sup>60</sup> The Holy Father laments how this misguided view of anthropology empowers human beings "with absolute priority to immediate convenience" and gratification at the detriment of the rest of creation.<sup>61</sup> Such misconception threatens the global common good and the universal destination of the earth's resources. They marginalise others, create vulnerabilities, and lead to ecological disasters, which contribute to the migrant crisis. Therefore, international solidarity is necessary to address these issues.

International solidarity is equally necessary to prevent war and violent conflicts. The Church has always emphasised that war is not the solution to any social, economic, cultural, or political problem. The war in the Middle East, the Russia – Ukrainian conflict, and all other violent struggles around the world should have been avoided through political dialogue. The harmful effects of such violence on humanity and our common home cannot be overstated: loss of lives and property, displacement of millions, and an increase in vulnerable and less privileged population. If these challenges are unchecked, survival migration will remain inevitable. Therefore, international cooperation represents a form of solidarity in safeguarding our common home and upholding the inviolable dignity of every person, especially the vulnerable and less privileged in society.<sup>62</sup> The migrant crisis underscores the need for genuine international collaboration and political dialogue.

Likewise, caring for the vulnerable, the less privileged and our common home also involves preventing human suffering and impoverishment. These issues dehumanise individuals and

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<sup>57</sup> See The Vatican Pontifical Academy of Science, *The Fate of Mountain Glaciers in the Anthropocene*, (Vatican City: June 2011); Pope Francis, *Laudato Si (LS)*, Chapters 1, 3, 4; Ellen Teague, "The Threat of the Anthropocene," in *Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians Can Help Rebuild Our Broken World*, 145.; Sean McDonagh, "How will Humans Cope with a Serious Rise in Sea-levels this Century?" *The Furrow* 73, nos. 7-8 (July/August 2022): 423-26. Also see the call for action that follows the international recognition in the Paris Climate Agreement, ratified in 2015 by 175 countries of pending disaster climate change poses to humanity and our common home. (Michael G. Lawler and Todd Salzman, "Pope Francis, Ecology and Climate Change," *The Furrow* 70, no. 11, (November 2019): 579-87 at 579.

<sup>58</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 123.

<sup>59</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, nos. 2 and 21.

<sup>60</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 122.

<sup>61</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 122.

<sup>62</sup> Pope Leo XIV's remarks to Italian President: "Peace Requires Dignified Life, Prosperous Coexistence," *Vatican New*, 14 October 2025, vaticannews.va.

often force them into migration as a means of survival. Bill Clinton suggests various approaches to address these challenges, including: dedicating our time, resources, skills, good ideas and the gifts of reconciliation and renewal.<sup>63</sup> We all have twenty-four hours daily and can provide selfless services to those in homeless shelters, troubled families, elderly neighbours, children from poor neighbourhoods, the displaced, migrants and those in refugee camps.<sup>64</sup> These acts align with the principle of contributive justice, underscoring that we can contribute to society for the welfare of all.<sup>65</sup> This study advocates shared responsibility in uplifting one another, culminating in the recognition of the *imago Dei* in every human person. The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 provides a blueprint for engaging with the vulnerable and the less privileged in our world. It emphasises love over prejudice, empathy over animosity, compassion over indifference, solidarity and hospitality over mere sympathy and hostility. Such an approach to relational responsibility will help mitigate the migrant crisis.

Additionally, caring for our common home and safeguarding our shared humanity are inevitably connected to “good politics” and contributive justice. Pope Francis emphasises that the earth is “essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. Hence, ecological approach needs to incorporate a social perspective which considers the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged.”<sup>66</sup> “Good politics” offers humanity inclusive option and facilitates local and global dialogue. It creates an environment conducive for negotiation, leading to favourable decisions on how to address local and global challenges. It also provides opportunities for contributive justice, safeguarding the common good.

The American Novelist and Journalist, Martha Gellhorn (1908-1998) reiterates the indispensable role of “good politics” in every political community. Like Crick and Pope Francis, she advocates for people’s unrestrained involvement in politics, arguing that it shapes our standard of living, health, employment, rights, freedoms, and future.<sup>67</sup> This research recommends distinguishing “good politics” from “bad” and “corrupt” politics.<sup>68</sup> Bad politics manipulates the electoral process, contradicts democratic values, breaches the rule of law, marginalises the people, neglects the principles of checks and balances, and disregards the separation of powers. It also contributes to dictatorship and totalitarianism.<sup>69</sup> CST condemns such politics, asserting that “misuse of power, corruption, disregard for law and inefficiency must be clearly rejected, [...] since this would make it impossible to handle

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<sup>63</sup> Bill Clinton, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 13-137.

<sup>64</sup> Clinton, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World*, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Irish Bishops’ Conference, *The Work of Justice: Pastoral Letter* (Dublin: Veritas, 1977), no.44.

<sup>66</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 93.

<sup>67</sup> Martha Gellhorn, “Letter: We Must Be Interested in Politics” *MetroWest Daily News* <https://www.metrowestdailynews.com> Accessed 12 August 2025.

<sup>68</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, 180. Also see Maria Steen, “Leinster House ‘Like an Underworld’” *The Irish Catholic*, Thursday October 9, 2025, 1-2.

<sup>69</sup> See Eamonn Coyle, “Donald Trump: A Leader You May Love or Loathe, But Cannot Ignore,” *The Irish Catholic*, October 23, 2025, 10.

the various aspect of the present crisis.”<sup>70</sup> Mitigating the migrant crisis requires “good politics,” which yields effective policies and good governance.

### 7.2.4 Responding Adequately to irregular immigration

This study advocates a response to irregular immigration grounded in human dignity, the universal common good, the preferential option for the poor, and the universal destination of the earth’s goods. Each of these principles focuses on the individual and universal human flourishing.<sup>71</sup> Irregular immigration is a risky endeavour undertaken by many people due to a lack of knowledge, funds and proper travel documents. It results from socio-economic inequality, as well as disparities and inconsistencies in international immigration policies.<sup>72</sup> It highlights the need for political dialogue on inequalities in the distribution of opportunities, wealth and in international relations: How do we explain the limited travel benefits of some international passports in a “global village” or “International community?” What are the ethically implications of such policies on the concept of “shared humanity” and “our common home?” How can global politics promote fairness in international relations and the distribution of goods and services? This study questions why the root causes of irregular immigration are ignored and why undocumented migrants are framed as societal problems? Are they not victims of a failed system? Why are they often excluded from socio-political analysis, international relations and socio-economic policies?<sup>73</sup>

As a way forward, this study considers the European Union (EU) immigration policy, which allows visa-free travel among member states, as a good model that should be adopted in other regions, such as African Union (AU), and by the global community. This would improve international relations and reduce irregular immigration. Additionally, adopting the EU’s socio-economic development model by the international community could elevate and stabilise the economies of poor countries.<sup>74</sup> Obviously, “development is the long-term solution to the root causes of irregular migration. With it, poor people will no longer feel tempted to embark on dangerous journeys to the West, or be driven into the hands of smugglers, traffickers and exploitative employers.”<sup>75</sup> CST articulates this understanding of development, indicating that its goal is to rescue people “from hunger, deprivation, endemic diseases and illiteracy.”<sup>76</sup> Therefore, every organised society has the social, economic,

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<sup>70</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, 177; Pope Francis, *LS*, nos. 189 and 196.

<sup>71</sup> Hoeffner and Michele R. Pistone, “But the Labourers Are... Many? Catholic Social Teaching,” 55.

<sup>72</sup> Pope John Paul II, *LE*, no. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Helmut P. Gaisbauer and Clemens Sedmak, “Neglected Future: Considering Overlooked Poverty in Europe,” *Eur J Futures Res* 2, no 57 (2014): 1-8. DOI 10.1007/s40309-014-0057-2. This article is also published with open access at Springerlink.com

<sup>74</sup> Silvana Sciarra, “Challenges to Solidarity: Governance and Democracy in Sustainable European Union,” in *Integral Human Development: Challenges to Sustainability and Democracy*, ed. Jacquineau Azètosop, SJ (Eugene, Oregon: PICKWICK, 2019), 50-65 at 51.

<sup>75</sup> Hein de Haas, *How Migration Really Works: A Factful Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics*, 79.

<sup>76</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, (June 29, 2009), no. 21. [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html).

political and ethical responsibility “to promote and support the culture of work for human flourishing.”<sup>77</sup>

Sadly, wealthy nations and influential people only focus on complementary relationship of mutual benefits – de-emphasising the equal dignity of the rich and the poor.<sup>78</sup> In this regard, Groody theologically articulates the dignity of irregular migrants: “If the term *alien* is to be used at all, it has little to do with one who lacks political documentation, but more with those who have so disconnected themselves from their neighbour in need that they fail to see in the eyes of the stranger a mirror of themselves, the image of Christ and the call to human solidarity.”<sup>79</sup> Most irregular migrants are victims of the current global economic system that has marginalised them. If their government failed them, should their host community not offer them sanctuary? How does the concept of “international community” ethically reduce irregular immigration, lift people out of poverty, and provide socio-economic welfare for the human family? How does it unite humanity? The concept of community goes beyond living in the same neighbourhood. It is about connection, solidarity and resilience, especially in moments of challenges or crisis.<sup>80</sup>

Contextually, the *universal* nature of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church can serve as an operational model for the “international community” in support and solidarity with the less privileged. It fosters a sense of belonging among members worldwide. According to Rowlands, “the Church retains a transcendent perspective on the human person, not in the sense that the human meaning is centred on the next world but in the sense that it transcends any economic or political worldview or agenda. The transcendent value of the human person means that the state, political life and economic structures should exist for human flourishing and not vice-versa.”<sup>81</sup> For example, the universal Church supports local churches and communities in humanitarian crises, and socio-economic and developmental projects through the Pontifical Mission Societies (*Missio*), Aid to the Church in Need and *Propaganda Fidei*.

In Collaboration with regional Episcopal Conferences, local ordinaries (Bishops), the Church’s Justice, Development, Peace and *Caritas* organisations, and *Tròcaire*, the universal Church empowers displaced persons in various ecclesial and political

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<sup>77</sup> Pope John Paul II, *LE*, nos. 8-10. Also see Pontifical Council for Justice and peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines*, no. 447.

<sup>78</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 94.

<sup>79</sup> Groody, “Theology in the Age of Migration,” 22.

<sup>80</sup> Andrea Hayes, “Finding Community,” *The Sacred Heart Messenger*, June 2026, 32.

<sup>81</sup> “This is why ‘Social’ teaching is primary to a political or economic teaching. The latter are means, and can vary according to time and need, the former is built into what it is to be human. The teaching of Pope Francis on the Environment applies this not only to the human but to the created world as well. The social now come to include the ecosystem in which we ‘live and move and have our being’ (Acts.17:28). Natural goods are not to be exploited for political or capital purposes but need to be used sustainably for the benefit of local populations and future generations.” (See Anna Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social teaching in Dark Times*, reviewed by Stefan Gillow Reynolds, “Featured Review: The Church’s Best Kept Secret” *The Furrow* 73, no 3 (March 2022): 181-185.

communities.<sup>82</sup> Such interventions are essential to the understanding of the Catholic Church's universal mission to the poor and vulnerable in the globe. This also accounts for the various social encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, and pastoral letters across different eras and context.<sup>83</sup> The Church's social teachings emphasise the importance of unwavering solidarity in all humanitarian crises, including the migrant crisis. Thus, the social Magisterial memorable invitation for an authentic, true, genuine and complete response to the "development of the whole human being and of all peoples."<sup>84</sup> This conception of development implies a spatial expansion necessary to address irregular migration and the migrant crisis.<sup>85</sup>

### 7.3 Next Steps? Possible Areas for Further Research

This research uncovered the underemphasised impact of political and administrative corruption on the migrant crisis.<sup>86</sup> Many people are at the margins of society today because of global inefficiency in controlling corruption. James Wolfenson, when he was newly appointed leader of the World Bank in 1996, highlighted the problem of corruption as a major setback to the economic development of many countries in the Global South. This indicates that Officials of the World bank are not oblivious of the misappropriation of fund meant for the common good in many poor countries.<sup>87</sup> Public officials vested with state, institutional, and organisational powers often violate the basic moral principle of due diligence, transparency, and accountability to their people.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, it is unsurprising that many poor countries are grappling with socio-economic and political leadership crises leading to excessive migration. Corruption impedes the rule of law, empowers the political class, creates high level of unemployment, and distorts the principles of "good politics," contributive justice, and the common good.

There are clear indications of a correlation between corruption and failed governance in many countries. The Church's Magisterium identifies this socio-economic problem with structural or social sin. Corruption cases occur in both government institutions and non-

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<sup>82</sup> See "Accompanying Migrants," in Pope Leo XIV, *Dilixi Te*, nos 73-81; Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, "A Hundred Thousand Times Welcome: Exploring What Hospitality for Migrant People Means in Contemporary Ireland" *Pastoral Letter* 2024.

<sup>83</sup> See Pope Leo XIV, *Dilixi Te* (October 2025), Chapter 4, nos. 82-102; Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, "A Hundred Thousand Times Welcome: Exploring What Hospitality for Migrant People Means in Contemporary Ireland" *Pastoral Letter* 2024.

<sup>84</sup> See Paul VI *Populorum Progression*, 42; John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nos. 15, 27, 41, 50; John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 3,

<sup>85</sup> See Hoeffner and Michele R. Pistone, "But the Labourers Are... Many? Catholic Social Teaching," 62.

<sup>86</sup> Simcha B. Werner argues that "Administrative corruption was long a neglected area of research in American Public Administration primarily due to the axiomatic belief that American public administration was inherently moral." This research reveals that both political and administrative corruption needs further theological and ethical investigation because it impoverishes, dehumanizes and deprives many people of their fundamental rights to dignified livelihood. (See Simcha B. Werner, "New Directions in the Study of Administrative Corruption," in *Classics of Administrative Ethics*, 191-208.)

<sup>87</sup> For details on Wolfenson's Speech, see Sebastian Mallaby, *The World's Banker: A Story of Failed States, Financial Cities, and the Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 176-77.

<sup>88</sup> York Willbern, "Types and Levels of Public Morality," in *Classics of Administrative Ethics*, ed. Willa Bruce (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 115-27.

governmental organisations. For example, some staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were arrested in Nairobi in the year 2000 for corruption allegations involving refugees. They had exchanged and replaced a recognised refugee's resettlement files for \$4,000 (Four thousand US dollars).<sup>89</sup> Such cases raise questions about illegal immigration and the reputation of institutions and organisations dealing with vulnerable migrants. How do we explain why human trafficking and the migration smuggling industry continue to thrive, despite the strict immigration policies and border controls in the Global North? Does it indicate some administrative gaps and compromises the security system across borders?

If this is the case, then an ambitious Structural-Smugglers Dominance Agency Theory of migration could be developed to explain the correlation between political and administrative corruption and illegal immigration. Research depicts smuggling people as an organised, secure, and lucrative business.<sup>90</sup> When interviewed by a British journalist, a Syrian doctor involved in smuggling immigrants admitted to the lucrative nature of the business and the difficulties of penetrating and cracking down on the syndicate. He said, "They are almost entirely comprised of family members, with draconian vows for secrecy and loyalty."<sup>91</sup> Unravelling how such dehumanising industry thrives requires further research. All forms of corrupt practices betray both the moral and ethical principles of governance and the norms of social justice.<sup>92</sup> Political and administrative efficiency are vital to democratic governance and human flourishing. They promote the rule of law, contributive justice and the common good in political communities. Unfortunately, political and administrative corruption remains a persistent issue in many countries.<sup>93</sup> It fuels the migrant crisis.

Mismanagement of public goods impoverishes many nations, making them vulnerable to corrupt politicians. Political Economists label distorting the political system for personal aggrandisement "rent seeking."<sup>94</sup> It disregards the rule of law, distorts economic incentives through misappropriation, and fosters dictatorship and totalitarianism. Catholic social teaching classifies political and administrative corruption as a form of Structural sin that threatens human dignity, violates human rights, and inhibits the benefits of true

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<sup>89</sup> Abebe Feyissa and Rebecca Horn, "There is More Than One Way of Dying: An Ethiopian Perspective on the Effects of Long-Term Stays in Refugee Camps," in *Refugee Rights: Ethics, Advocacy, and Africa* ed. David Hollenbach (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 13-26 at 24.

<sup>90</sup> Castle, Hein De Haas, and Mark J. Miller, "Human Smuggling and Trafficking," in *The Age of Migration*, 236-39.

<sup>91</sup> Richard Spencer, "Syrian Doctor Turned People Smuggler," *The Telegraph*, September 20, 2015. Also see Patrick Johnstown and Dean Merrill, "Why People Run," in *Serving God in the Migrant Crisis: Ministry to People on the Move*, 37.

<sup>92</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Hereafter CSDC), 411.

<sup>93</sup> See Gerald E. Caiden and Naomi J. Caiden, "Administrative Corruption," in *Classic of Administrative Ethics*, 177-90. Also see Simcha B. Werner, "New Directions in the Study of Administrative Corruption," in *Classics of Administrative Ethics*, 191-208; Herman Finer, "Administrative Responsibility in Democratic Government," in *Classic of Administrative Ethics*, 5-26.

<sup>94</sup> See Anne O. Krueger, "The Political Economy of the Rent-Seeking Society," *American Economic Review* 64, no. 3 (1974): 291-303.

democracy.<sup>95</sup> It is the collective behaviour of certain individuals or groups that marginalises and/or excludes the masses from their legitimate right to participate in decision-making and contribute to their communities' well-being. In other words, "it is the accumulation and concentration of [individuals] sins against justice in interpersonal relationships, committed either by the individual against the community or by the community against the individual."<sup>96</sup> Theologically, political and administrative corruption can be likened to greed and avarice – excessive desires for worldly possessions that lead to unjust accumulation of material goods meant for the common good.<sup>97</sup>

In Politics, it is the unethical embezzlement of public funds for personal aggrandisement either by commission or omission. To put it differently:

Those who are in position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit certain social evils but who fail to do so out of laziness, fear or the conspiracy of silence, through secret complicity or indifference; those who take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world and also those who sidestep the effort and sacrifice required, producing spacious reasons of higher order.<sup>98</sup>

It is obvious that the injustice of political and administrative corruption is not invincible.<sup>99</sup> Many migrants from the Global South are victims of a failed political system, trying to escape corrupt leadership that manipulates politics, ethnicity, religion and poverty. The migrant crisis and declining trust in politicians and governments worldwide indicate a global desire for "good politics" combined with contributive justice for the common good.<sup>100</sup>

#### **7.4 General Conclusion**

This research examines the benefits of "good politics," contributive justice, and the common good in addressing the migrant crisis. It contributes to scholarship in numerous ways: First, its methodological approach, where relationality responsibility, and the narrative and normative methods are combined in examining the crisis. These methods are grounded in Christian anthropology, moral theology and social ethics, highlighting our interdependence on one another as destined by God. The novelty of this study lies in its rare focus on examining the migrant crisis through the lens of the three principles of Catholic social teaching. This approach emphasizes relational responsibility, virtue ethics, and the roles of government, citizens, migrants, non-governmental organisation (NGO), and faith communities in addressing the migrant crisis. This understanding of our shared responsibility to the well-being of the human family and our common home could enhance global relationship and break the "us" and "them" barrier driving the anti-immigrant's

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<sup>95</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines*, no. 411.

<sup>96</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Reconciliation and Penance*, no. 16

<sup>97</sup> See TAN Books, *The Seven Capital Sins: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth* (Charlotte, North Carolina: Saint Benedict Press, 2000), 15-20.

<sup>98</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Reconciliation and Penance*, no. 16

<sup>99</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, no 74.

<sup>100</sup> See "Public Trust in Government 1958-2017," *Pew Research Centre*, 14 December 2017, as cited by Jonathan Sacks, *Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2020), 119.

movement. However, this requires a re-assessment of the various dimensions of the migrant crisis, the politics of international relations, our lifestyle, the organization of societies and the meaning of our existence in relation to our ultimate end.<sup>101</sup>

Secondly, it identifies Pope Francis' use of "good politics," in *Fratelli Tutti* as aligning with Bernard Crick's conceptualization of "politics." Crick argues that "politics" have a life of its own when free of the negative traits associated with it.<sup>102</sup> Instead of blaming politics for all societal problems, humanity should take responsibility for its misuse through corruption, disregard for the rule of law, and the failure to develop sound public policies for the common good.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, we require an understanding of politics that is "far-sighted and capable of new integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspect of the [current migrant crisis]."<sup>104</sup> Pope Francis teaches that "good politics combines love with hope and confidence in the reserves of goodness present in human hearts."<sup>105</sup> He further maintains that "authentic political life is built upon respect for law and frank dialogue [...] and the realization that every human being and every new generation brings a new relational, intellectual, cultural and spiritual energies."<sup>106</sup> Such understanding of politics is crucial for the socio-economic wellbeing of the human family. It focuses on good governance, creates equal opportunities, and identify, harness and develop potentials for the common good. "Good politics" should be valued as a vocation that safeguards the common good against contemporary ideologies that threaten our shared humanity. The misapplication of "politics" and "the common good" overemphasise distributive justice, making it difficult to adequately address the migrant crisis.

Thirdly, this study observes that the concept of "contributive justice" is relatively new to the migrant crisis scholarship and has been underutilised in Catholic theology and social teaching. When applied to "good politics" and the migrant crisis, "contributive justice" means individual and collective effort in protecting fundamental human rights to livelihood and sustaining the common good. Fair treatment and equal opportunities for livelihood protects people's dignity and promotes human flourishing. In this regard, contributive justice is highlighted as an interdisciplinary principle that is theologically and ethically expressed in the principles of participation, subsidiarity, stewardship, the preferential option for the poor, and the universal destination of the world's resources. It focuses on what we give to society rather than what we receive or get - shifting from "getting," "receiving" or "taking" from the often-scarce human and natural resources.

Fourthly, Contributive justice complements distributive justice in managing the human and natural resources meant for the flourishing of society. In other words, contributive justice deals with what needs to be done to improve livelihood and safeguard all creation. The

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<sup>101</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 33.

<sup>102</sup> See Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, 1.

<sup>103</sup> See Pope Francis, *LS*, no. 197 and *FT*, no.177.

<sup>104</sup> Pope Francis, *LS*, nos. 196-197, 181, and *FT*, no.177.

<sup>105</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 196-7.

<sup>106</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, no. 196-7.

migrant crisis requires such an integral and interdisciplinary approach with a “healthy politics capable of reforming and coordinating institutions and promoting best practices.”<sup>107</sup> Many people are on the move in this era because they are socio-economically displaced in their own political communities. To nip the problem in the bud, CST advocates for “stronger and more efficiently organised international institutions, with functionaries who are appointed fairly by agreement among government and empowered to impose sanctions where there are violations of fundamental human rights.”<sup>108</sup> This highlights the potentials in the concept of “good politics” and its core principles of contributive justice and the common good. These principles protect everyone’s interest in the allocation of goods and services in society.

Fifthly, the study highlights the benefits and challenges of migration and how it has contributed to the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political transformation of society. It also identifies the failure of political leadership in providing equal socio-economic opportunities, human right violations and environmental disasters, among other factors, as drivers of the migrant crisis. It defines “good politics” as a globally recognised human activity involving negotiation, persuasion and decision-making regarding governance, policies and the welfare of every political community. This suggests that “good politics” is required for equal opportunities in the distribution of the commonwealth and the flourishing of society. It facilitates socio-political dialogue worldwide, providing a sense of belonging with shared opportunities and responsibilities based on the essence of our shared humanity than our classified regional, cultural, social, economic or political differences.<sup>109</sup> This study argues that “good politics” should be appreciated as a necessary vocation that preserves our shared humanity, locating every political community in a functional political structure, and not in the widely shared personal agenda of the political class.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, political communities should be defined in terms of functional institutions, moral values, and citizens’ freedom to participate in public discourse regarding their well-being.

Additionally, the migrant crisis highlights how regional socio-economic and political privileges create a barrier between the rich and the poor countries of the world. It also reveals the limitations of the Neoclassical theory of migration in addressing the crisis without “more enlightened government policies, more competent and honest public administrators, and more investment of the taxpayers’ resources for the common good. The world needs more effective and competent political leadership that can produce higher incomes, better living conditions, more social justice, and a cleaner environment worldwide.”<sup>111</sup> Without “good politics” humanity cannot successfully address the social, economic, political and environmental challenges driving the migrant crisis.

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<sup>107</sup> Pope Francis, *FT*, 177; Pope Francis, *LS*, nos. 197 and 181.

<sup>108</sup> See Pope Francis, *FT*, nos. 172 and 177.

<sup>109</sup> Clinton, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World*, 4.

<sup>110</sup> See Pope Francis *Gaudate et Exsultate* (March 19, 2018), no. 78, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20180319\\_gaudate-et-exsultate.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudate-et-exsultate.html). See also Ludvic Lado SJ, “Toward A Spirituality of Politics,” *Theological Studies* 84, no. 2 (2023): 198-211 at 211.

<sup>111</sup> Clinton, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World*, 4.

In conclusion, the migrant crisis highlights some significant domestic and global challenges to be addressed including, political and administrative corruption, inefficiency in the governance of many poor countries, the problem of socio-economic inequalities, alleviating extreme poverty, practically combating climate change, dismantling the structures associated with human trafficking as well as the smuggling industry, and promoting religious, ethnic, and racial reconciliation and tolerance.<sup>112</sup> This study advocates for a new socio-economic and political reality where human dignity and the rights to dignified livelihood is preserved worldwide. Any system that contravenes and denigrates the poor, marginalises the powerless, and exploits the vulnerable and helpless fails to recognize the *imago Dei* and dignity of every human person.

The principles of “good politics,” contributive justice and the common good are required in addressing the root causes of the migrant crisis. They are crucial to good governance, protecting fundamental human rights, promoting the dignity of labour, and advancing responsible local, national and international relationship with guaranteed rights to employment, adequate remuneration, functional healthcare services, adequate housing policies, security of lives and property, quality education, and other social welfare that fosters human flourishing. In responding to the migrant crisis, CST “obliges us to re-plan our journey, to set new rules for ourselves, to discover new forms of commitment, to build on positive experiences and to reject negative ones. The crisis is an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future.”<sup>113</sup> This study proposes a framework for the migrant crisis that protects the dignity of all migrants as victims of structural and systemic failure. It reiterates a firm belief in the common destination of the earth’s resources, and advocates for a sincere collaborative dialogue between various categories of migrants, government officials, host communities and non-governmental organisation aiming at safeguarding the dignity and right of every human person.

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<sup>112</sup> Clinton, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World*, 12.

<sup>113</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, (June 29, 2009), no. 21. [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html). Also see The Council for Justice and Peace of the Irish Episcopal Conference, *From Crisis to Hope: Working to Achieve the Common Good*, 2011, <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/From-Crisis-to-Hope1.pdf>

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