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Trust in the Catholic Reformation. Genoa, 1594-1664
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Introduction

On 8 April 1546, during a homily that he had been asked to deliver at the mass that preceded the fourth session of the Council of Trent, Friar Agostino Bonuccio spoke the following words:

> … in wonderment at the disturbed, deformed state of the Church, many are practically giving up their faith. Surely they must think that Christ our Saviour is not so benign, powerful, wise, [and] certainly not very faithful; for in an unbecoming fashion he is allowing his Church – which He promised to maintain invincible and firm against all the power and work of the devil, and to preserve without stain and blemish as a devoted, reliable servant of the heavenly Father – to be defiled, overtaken, and almost destroyed by many powerful errors, by furious schism, by great moral corruption.[1]

Bonuccio thus confronted his audience of cardinals and theologians gathered in the cathedral of Trent with an uncomfortable truth: a crisis of trust threatened the Church. He was the Superior General of the Servite Order and one of the few voting members at the Council who was thoroughly knowledgeable about the writings of the Protestant reformers.[2] Yet the fears that he expounded in his eloquent Latin were common among the Council fathers: Martin Luther's ever more popular movement coupled with "the great moral corruption" within the Church were cause for a widespread crisis of trust among the faithful. Throughout Europe, doubts had surfaced whether this institution, with its overt earthly weaknesses, really was the true and necessary mediator of divine grace, as it claimed. People were asking themselves whether the Protestant reformers were right in asserting that the institutional Church was a human invention that diverted people from what was truly necessary for

[1] Ercole Severoli ed., *Concilium Tridentinum* 5, 2 (Freiburg, 1911) 99, lines 2-8, I cite the translation by Robert E. McNally, 'Freedom and Suspicion at Trent: Bonuccio and Soto', *Theological Studies* 29, no. 4 (1986): 755.
[2] Cf. Ibid., 754.

salvation. The Council fathers acknowledged that a faltering trust in the Church could have grave consequences: there was no doubt that if people saw this institution "almost destroyed", they would be tempted to renounce their faith and leave the Church. The gathering's top priority was thus the "salvation of souls", in particular the souls of those who might be on the brink of losing their trust.[3] The care of souls (*cura animarum*) would continue to be the main concern for the many reformers who, in the following decades, developed new practices in the spirit of the Council and started to implement its doctrines.

In his insightful analysis of the role of trust in different societies, Geoffrey Hosking has rightly characterised the Reformation era as "a crisis of trust": the central, mediating role of the Church in matters of faith was called into question by Luther and his followers.[4] In some areas of Europe, this caused the "salvific apparatus of Catholicism" to be abandoned, whereas, in those parts that remained Catholic, it led to a progressive regulation of devotion and reform of traditional practices that in turn caused a sensation of unwanted change.[5] According to Hosking, the decline of ecclesiastical mediation in the Protestant countries which caused the individual believer to be more solitary before God created a climate of fear and distrust; in areas that remained Catholic, a certain alienation from the changing forms of mediation by the Church had a similar effect (and, I would add, it also created anxiety among Catholics caused by witnessing the Church in a major crisis).

Departing from Hosking's observation that a crisis of trust dominated post-Reformation Europe, this thesis aims to study how, in Catholic regions after the Reformation, many reform-minded people consciously tried to find an answer to this

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[3] John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 16.

[4] Geoffrey A. Hosking, 'The Reformation as a Crisis of Trust', in *Trust and Distrust: Sociocultural Perspectives*, ed. Ivana Marková and Alex Gillespie (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2008), 29–47. Hosking argues that the Reformation period was also a time in which the ways of trusting changed. The great societal and religious changes and challenges fostered fear and distrust that led to new forms of religion, politics, and community, and thus new forms of trust. His broader attempt to understand the history of trust and its role in different societies is reflected in his book *Trust: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[5] Hosking, 'The Reformation', 33–36.

crisis. I study this attempt not on a theological but on a practical level.[6] Since it is clear that at least part of the highest echelons of the Church acknowledged and understood that what was at stake was the trust of the faithful, as we read in Bonuccio's words, this thesis looks at the strategies that the Church used in order to avert this danger and gain or regain the confidence of believers. More specifically, it explores the practices of trust and distrust that ecclesiastics used in their attempt to foster the reputation of the Church in the eyes of the faithful. I furthermore study how contemporaries viewed the effectiveness of these practices.

My analysis concentrates on the Republic of Genoa in the seventeenth century (1594-1664).[7] Genoa is an interesting case study, first of all because of its geopolitical position. At the beginning of the century, it was still closely tied by economic bonds to the Spanish crown, whose financiers were mainly Genoese. In the course of the following decades, freeing itself progressively from Habsburg influence, Genoa tried to find other means of safeguarding its independence amid the European great powers. Though generally rather successful in this endeavour, the Republic could not prevent French attacks in 1684. Genoa's favourable geographical position at a crossroads of several important routes for commerce and travel in the Mediterranean turned the city into an intersection of ideas and people. The city's wealth, or rather, the wealth of its wealthiest citizens made it attractive for religious initiatives that needed benefactors. Unlike Venice, the Republic was never in open opposition to the Pope. At the same time, the Genoese fought for their independence on all fronts: in international politics as well as in matters of jurisdiction, a field in which the Church was a key competitor. In close vicinity to Milan, the duchy that is well known for the Borromean Counter-Reformation, Genoa witnessed similar attempts at Church reform, especially during the time that Cardinal Stefano Durazzo was archbishop of the city (1635-1664). The city brimmed with different religious orders

[6] See, for an extensive introduction to early modern theology: Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and A. G. Roeber, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[7] I chose to include the years 1594-1664 in the title of this dissertation because 1594 is the year in which the *Medee* were formed, one of the earliest groups studied in this thesis. It is also the year of birth of Cardinal Durazzo, one of the protagonists of the Catholic Reformation in Genoa. The year 1664, on the other hand, marks the end of Durazzo's tenure as archbishop of the city.

and female convents, but lay religious life was also very dynamic. Confraternities, processions, and Marian devotions all played an important role in the life of the individual faithful. These are just some of the characteristics that suggest that this multifaceted city, which until now has been almost neglected in international scholarship on early modern Catholicism (while well studied by Italianists), represents a suitable laboratory in which to test the fruitfulness of looking at the Catholic Reformation through the lens of trust. With this experiment, I invite scholars of the early modern period to consider the historical dynamics of change and continuity in the light of trust, while offering students of early modern religion a window on the rather obscure but fascinating situation of the Church in Genoa.

Trust in the Catholic Reformation

What constituted the crisis of trust that the Church found itself in? Luther's two main charges against the Church identify its causes: they can be traced back to the doctrinal and the behavioural realm (*fides et mores*, as the Council defined it).[8] Luther attacked the core of Catholic doctrine by questioning the Church's mediating role: the sacraments and the apostolic succession. Reflecting many earlier critical voices within the Church, Luther also fiercely criticised the moral stature of its hierarchy, in particular the papacy, which he came to loathe more than anything else.[9] Consequently, those present at the opening of the Council of Trent were convinced that "the extirpation of heresies" could only be achieved through "the reformation of the Clergy and Christian people" so as to regain trust. After some discussion, mostly due to the different priorities of the two initiators of the Council – Pope Paul III, who stressed the importance of doctrinal clarity and preferred to keep reform issues under papal control, and Emperor Charles V, who favoured clerical reform in the hope of reconciliation with the Protestants – the members present at the opening of the Council decided to deal alternately with both reform and doctrine, as had been

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[8] O'Malley, *Trent*, 12–13; Idem, 'What Happened and Did Not Happen at the Council of Trent', in *The Council of Trent: Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond (1545-1700)*, ed. Wim François and Violet Soen, vol. 1, 3 vols (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 2018), 49–68.
[9] Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther* (New York: Random House, 2016), 371–72.

the custom at earlier councils.[10] Although no session explicitly concentrated on redefining the Church, its role as the indispensable mediator of God's grace and the perpetuator of Christ's acts in time was clearly spelled out in the Council's decrees on justification and the sacraments. Once more the decrees underlined that justification was channeled in a certain and trustworthy way via ordained priests who could administer the sacraments, in spite of the fact that their hands might be stained with sin.[11]

The Council's response to the overt abuses in the Church – simony, nepotism, absenteeism, and the selling of indulgences, among many others – could only be partial. Because of the continuous pressure from Rome not to touch the issue of papal and curia reform, no decree was drawn up for that purpose.[12] Instead, the Council mainly dealt with two other cornerstones of the Church hierarchy: the episcopacy, at which many of the reform decrees were directed, and the parish priests who were responsible for the care of souls. Yet even in this field, the decrees of Trent were merely instructions that still had to be put into practice. The historiography has shown that the full implementation of Tridentine reform decrees was a long-term endeavour, which continued until the eighteenth century and sometimes beyond. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that in large parts of Catholic Europe, the threat that Bonuccio described in the sixteenth century had essentially faded away by the end of the seventeenth if not earlier: by then, believers were no longer shifting in large numbers from one church to the other and they were more confident about the qualities of their church. In Italy, an important role in this development was given to repressive institutions like the Inquisition and the Index, that have already been thoroughly studied by Italian scholars.[13] However, since the same result was reached in parts of Europe where those institutions were not as powerful or were even absent,

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[10] O'Malley, *Trent*, 13–14.
[11] J. Waterworth, ed., *The Council of Trent. The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 55. Hereafter: CT, Session VII, Canon 12. See also, with regard to the sacrament of penance: Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 13–14.
[12] O'Malley, *Trent*, 252.
[13] See pages 19-25.

the role of the Inquisition and the Index on the Italian peninsula should not be overestimated. Other strategies for eliminating distrust and restoring trust were as important and might have reached people more in their day-to-day life than did the Inquisition or even the Tridentine decrees. My focus is on the reformers' attempts to restore the trust of the faithful. These attempts were predominently carried out by reforming bishops as well as the many new religious orders and congregations.[14] They were the onset of a broad and generally effective, albeit partial and slow, effort to counter the crisis of trust that had been made manifest by the Reformation.

Main question

The hypothesis that the Church's answer to the crisis of trust was only successful when accompanied by a trust offensive – i.e. by an effort to win trust in order to bring about the necessary changes – has prompted the questions that are central to this study. First, where do we see this trust offensive? Second, what impact did practices of trust and distrust have on the effectiveness of reforms? Third, how did the reformers themselves view the effect of their trust strategies?

To answer these questions, this thesis explores several features of the Catholic Reformation – the attempt to reform the secular clergy; new female religious initiatives; the effort to reform female cloistered life; and the establishment of new religious congregations with their drive for mission, both internal and overseas – in order to find out how the protagonists of these developments went about winning the trust they needed to reach their objectives.

I do not intend to measure in any way how successful the Catholic Reformation was or whether all Tridentine objectives were accomplished, nor to establish *if* or *when* trust in the Church was restored: these are questions that, if not impossible to answer, go far beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, I accept the invitation of Günther Wassilowsky "to try to discover the history of the subtler effects of the Council of Trent beyond the simplistic narratives of complete success

[14] Simon Ditchfield, 'De-Centering Trent: How "Tridentine" Was the Making of the First World Religion?', in François and Soen, *The Council of Trent*, 202–4.

or failure".[15] To do so, this dissertation studies what reforming looked like on a practical level and how practices of trust were used within larger strategies of reform. Studying reform from a trust perspective implies looking at practices of distrust as well: indeed, the importance of trust often surfaces only in cases of prevailing distrust or when an overt crisis of trust occurs.[16]

Three themes emerge while tackling the main subject of this dissertation: obedience, freedom, and the efficiency of reform tactics that hinged on trust. Studying trust will, first of all, help us understand better the practical implications of obedience as a central virtue in early modern Catholicism. Because of the importance of obedience in early modern religious thought and because of the hierarchical structure of the Church, historians tend to overestimate the power of top-down reform, of measures taken by powerful Church institutions, and of changes imposed from above. This thesis reveals that trust was necessary for obedience to become true compliance. That is why, notwithstanding the hierarchical structure of the Church, top-down reform was a slow and troublesome endeavour: reformers first had to win the trust of those needed to carry out the reform.

A second and related theme that emerges when studying the Catholic Reformation from a trust perspective is the relationship between rules, repression and coercion on the one hand, and freedom of choice, or agency, on the other. A tactic of repression may seem an easier method to effectuate change: it does not require trust in the people who have to undergo the reform, since they will be forced to cooperate. Yet, the reluctance of individuals to cooperate when they feel that they have no other option makes this reform tactic, paradoxically, less effective. By contrast, when trust is given and thus the freedom of the individual to cooperate is safeguarded, change will be slower (since the people have to be won over), but eventually more effective and permanent.

Third, when practices of trust were used in order to establish reforms and changes, these came about very slowly, precisely because complete obedience does

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[15] Günther Wassilowsky, 'The Myths of the Council of Trent and the Construction of Catholic Confessional Culture', François and Soen, *The Council of Trent*, 84.
[16] Hosking, *Trust: A History*, 22, 24.

not occur without trust, and trust, in turn, does not grow without freedom. The freedom of all parties involved was needed in order to reform or profoundly change people and institutions. Yet those whose free cooperation was asked could use their position to make sure that, while collaborating, they also furthered their own interests. That reform was not a straightforward process, depending as it does on practices of trust, is one of the aspects that this thesis tries to disentangle and expound.

Catholic Reformation, Counter-Reformation or Early Modern Catholicism?

There is much that we already know about the reform efforts of the Church that followed the Council of Trent, and yet the complexity of the Catholic Reformation – starting from the designation itself – continues to intrigue historians.[17] To understand what a trust perspective might bring to our current knowledge of the post-Reformation Church it is important to delve briefly into the historiography of the topic.

Historians from the nineteenth until the mid-twentieth century generally referred to the period of Church history after the Reformation as the "Counter-Reformation". It was described as a one-dimensional, successful effort by the higher echelons of the Catholic Church to change "the Clergy and Christian people", as the Council had intended. Depending on the side of the confessional divide to which they adhered, some historians labeled the Counter-Reformation as a glorious victory over the Protestants, while their opponents termed it a stifling and repressive period in which the Catholic Church was at the root of absolutist oppression. Around a century ago, the former started to adopt the more positive term "Catholic Reform" or "Catholic Reformation" in order to emphasise that post-Tridentine Catholicism was not just "reactive", while sometimes also implying that the only true reformation was Catholic.[18]

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[17] Wietse de Boer gives an insightful analysis of how the terminology concerning the post-Tridentine period and its connotations developed over time. De Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul*, 7–10.

[18] John W. O'Malley, *Saints or Devils Incarnate?: Studies in Jesuit History* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 23–24.

In 1946, in an attempt to create some clarity regarding these terms, Hubert Jedin proposed to use the terms Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation to describe two distinct developments: the former referred to instances of self-reform and revival that had been initiated long before the Protestant Reformation and continued long after, while the term Counter-Reformation indicated the Church's militancy and self-defence against Protestantism. This militancy, in Jedin's reading, was mainly a response to the critiques of the Protestant reformers.[19] In his groundbreaking article, Jedin gave particular weight to three agents of post-Reformation Catholicism: the Jesuits, the papacy, and especially the Council of Trent, the main object of his own research.

While Jedin and his followers succeeded in drawing attention to the complexity and breadth of Catholic reform, and showed that it went beyond a mere anti-Protestant, stifling reaction, others went further and focused on the parallels between the Catholic and Protestant Reformations. Many of them adopted the new historiographical approaches that gained prominence in the 1970s: on the one hand, the rise of comparative research, and on the other hand, "the cultural turn", i.e. the pursuit of broader research scopes that gave weight to the wider historical context and the use of interdisciplinary methods, combining history with sociology and anthropology.

As early as 1958, Ernst Walter Zeeden took an important step in this direction when he proposed a new field of investigation: *Konfessionsbildung*. With this term, he indicated the formation of confessionally distinct Church institutions which influenced all aspects of life, including politics and culture.[20] In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Zeeden's theory was taken up by two other German historians, Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard. They coined the term *Konfessionalisierung*, a broader concept than Zeeden's *Konfessionsbildung*, with which they set out to explain changes in early modern European society as a whole, especially the relationship between

[19] Hubert Jedin, *Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation? Ein Versuch zur Klärung der Begriffe nebst einer Jubiläumsbetrachtung über das Trienter Konzil* (Luzern: Josef Stocker, 1946).
[20] Ernst Walter Zeeden, 'Grundlagen und Wege der Konfessionsbildung in Deutschland im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe', *Historische Zeitschrift* 185 (1958): 249–99.

religion and early modern state formation.[21] Schilling, Reinhard and others drew attention to the parallels between the post-Reformation history of Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist areas, in an attempt to do away with the false opposition between a "progressive" Reformation and a "reactionary" Counter-Reformation.[22] In all cases, the churches managed to increase their grip on the population by creating a uniform identity within one territory with the help of regulations, disciplinary measures, and an expanding administration, as well as the teaching of a catechism that was in competition with the religious identity of others.[23] In this effort, the support of the secular powers was necessary for all churches. The religious uniformity and the potential for subjugation to the state that both Reformations presumably produced through social discipline, in turn, formed one of the backbones of early modern state formation and of modernity in general.[24]

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[21] These two historians saw confessionalisation as a "sozialgeschichtlicher Fundamentalprozeβ". Cf. Heinz Schilling, 'Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich. Religiöser und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in Deutschland zwischen 1555 und 1620', *Historische Zeitschrift* 246, no. 1 (1988): 4–5; Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?', in *Die Katholische Konfessionalisierung: Wissenschaftliches Symposion der Gesellschaft zur Herausgabe des Corpus Catholicorum und des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1993*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling (Münster: Aschendorff, 1995), 420.

[22] Instead, they argued, these churches underwent parallel processes both "in their temporal aspect, […] their material aspect", and their origin. Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State. A Reassessment', *The Catholic Historical Review* 75, no. 3 (1989): 384–85.

[23] See: Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Gegenreformation als Modernisierung?', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte - Archive for Reformation History* 68 (1977): 226–252; Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Konfession und Konfessionalisierung in Europa', in *Bekenntnis und Geschichte. Die Confessio Augustana im historischen Zusammenhang. Ringvorlesung der Universität Augsburg im Jubiläumsjahr 1980*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard (München: Verlag Ernst Vögel, 1981). Reinhard gives an insightful overview of the dimensions of confessionalisation, in: Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?', in Reinhard and Schilling, *Die Katholische Konfessionalisierung*, 425–37; idem, 'Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State. A Reassessment', *The Catholic Historical Review* 75, no. 3 (1989): 390.

[24] See, for a clear summary of this position: Luther D. Peterson, 'Johann Pfeffinger's Treatises of 1550 in Defense of Adiaphora: "High Church" Lutheranism and Confessionalization in Albertine Saxony', in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan*, ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlinton, VT: Routledge, 2004), 104–5. See also: Reinhard, 'Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State', 403–4; Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550-1750* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), 177; De Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul*, 39–42.

Partially preceding and partially parallel to this successful confessionalisation paradigm,[25] whose exponents mostly but not exclusively focused on the German case and on attempts at "social disciplining" from above, other historians investigated sources that could shed light on the *effects* of this effort, i.e. on how the respective Reformations played out on the ground.[26] These historians, either inspired by or themselves as members of the French *Annales* school, focused on religion as it was experienced rather than professed; they tried to look at it from the viewpoint of the "chrétien quelconque". In his seminal work *Le Catholicisme de Luther à Voltaire* (1971), Jean Delumeau had argued that the early modern period witnessed the crude imposition – by both Protestantism and Counter-Reformation Catholicism – of elite religion on the common people who, as he provocatively claimed, had until then been living in an effectively pagan world with some Christian overtones. John Bossy's famous *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (1985) essentially followed Delumeau's Christianisation thesis and described a change from a more community-focused experience of faith in the Middle Ages to the more rationalised, individualistic and bureaucratic forms of religion in the early modern period.[27] For these and other historians *le vécu religieux*, the lived religious experience of the populace as expressed in religious practices such as devotions and confraternities, religious images and missionary attempts, became a central interest in the historical endeavour.[28]

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[25] Heinz Schilling, 'Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirche, Staat und Gesellschaft. Profil, Leistung, Defizite und Perspectiven eines Geschitswissenschaftlichen Paradigmas', in Reinhard and Schilling, *Die Katholische Konfessionalisierung*, 1.

[26] Schilling himself resisted the equation of confessionalisation with social disciplining. Ibid., 6. Reinhard, too, has emphasised that "the people" were never seen as passive recipients within the confessionalisation paradigm: Reinhard, 'Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?', 423. Still, the confessionalisation paradigm clearly favoured a top-down approach: Cf. Marc Venard, 'Volksfrömmigkeit und Konfessionalisierung', in Reinhard and Schilling, *Die Katholische Konfessionalisierung*, 258–70.

[27] John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[28] Cf. Jean Delumeau, ed., *Histoire vécue du peuple chrétien*, 2 vols (Toulouse: Privat, 1979). Sources used to uncover this common experience were often administrative documents of a serial nature (revealing the intensity of devotions, participation at confraternities and associations, mass intentions, numbers of communicants and of vocations) or visitation reports. Willem Frijhoff, 'Van "Histoire de l'Eglise" naar "Histoire religieuse": De invloed van de „Annales"-groep op de ontwikkeling van de kerkgeschiedenis in Frankrijk en de perspectieven daarvan voor Nederland', *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis / Dutch Review of Church History* 61, no. 2 (1981): 143.

A major shortcoming of the Christianisation thesis was the arbitrariness with which historians had established what constituted "real" Christianity. Moreover, just as adherents of the social discipline and confessionalisation thesis, the historians who followed the Christianisation paradigm tended to portray common people, though central to their study, as rather passive in the processes of religious change.[29] In reaction to these paradigms, historians in the 1990s started to indicate that there were limits to the possibilities of social discipline, and contradictions in the view that the Reformations led to modernisation. With the alternative term "early modern Catholicism", first suggested by John O'Malley, he and Robert Bireley aimed to provide a neutral and "empty" designation that would enable scholars of post-Reformation Catholicism to go beyond some of the assumptions that accompanied earlier designations and paradigms.[30] They called upon historians to research the actions and choices of individual believers and the role of intermediaries such as the new orders and congregations, who, in Bireley's words, were "the main agents of Christianisation and confessionalisation".[31] Others actually concretised this appeal and, from the 1990s onwards, began to focus not merely on the reception of reform from above, but on how people forged their own local Catholic identities in a continuous exchange between ordinary people and elite, laity and clergy. These

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[29] Wietse de Boer, 'Reformations and Counter-Reformations. The Contested Terms of Reformation History', in *Martin Luther, A Christian between Reforms and Modernity (1517-2017)*, ed. Alberto Melloni, vol. 1 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 54. As Willem Frijhoff and others emphasised and showed, the next step in the *Annales* approach was to see religious developments as the product of interaction between people's initiative and the Church. Frijhoff, 'Van "Histoire de l'Eglise" naar "Histoire religieuse"', 131.

[30] John W. O'Malley, 'Was Ignatius Loyola a Church Reformer? How to Look at Early Modern Catholicism', *The Catholic Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (1991): 177; Robert Bireley, 'Redefining Catholicism: Trent and Beyond', in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 146; O'Malley, *Saints or Devils Incarnate?*, 28–29; Robert Bireley, 'The Religious Movements of the Sixteenth Century as Responses to a Changing World', in François and Soen, *The Council of Trent*, 29–48.

[31] Citation from: Robert Bireley, 'Neue Orden, Katholische Reform und Konfessionalisierung', in Reinhard and Schilling, *Die Katholische Konfessionalisierung*, 156. New methods, chronology and new takes on religion have since expanded our views. See, for example, John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700: A Reassessment of the Counter Reformation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999).

historians take into consideration local differences within areas belonging to the same confession, which neither the confessionalisation- nor the Christianisation paradigm could account for.

The Italian debate

Before delving into this new approach, it is expedient to examine the recent developments in Italian historiography on the early modern Church. In particular, I will discuss the positions of several prominent Italian historians who have continued to strongly emphasise the role of social discipline in post-Tridentine Italy.[32] After the Second World War, academics who studied the Church in early modern Italy were largely divided into two groups. Several followers of Jedin wrote institutional histories of the papacy, the Church and its powerful institutions, while a second group of scholars tried to shed light on the individual experience of believers and the influence of the Roman Inquisition. The latter focused primarily on dissidents and studied the lives of these individuals or small groups through the lens of the local Inquisition files. Carlo Ginzburg's *Il formaggio e i vermi* (1976) is a prime example of this type of study.[33] Massimo Firpo subsequently combined these two approaches – the study of Inquisition archives and that of major Church institutions – and turned them into a history of the Roman Inquisition, focusing on the direction that the higher echelons of the Church took during the sixteenth century, under a papacy controlled by the Holy Office.[34] One of Firpo's other interests was the Italian Reformation (a term coined by Firpo himself), which has since then held many Italian scholars in its grip. Even though this Italian Reformation did not play a prominent

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[32] Cf. Simon Ditchfhield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge: Rewriting Early Modern Italian Religious History'. *Cristianesimo nella storia* 19, no. 2 (1998): 257.

[33] Silvana Seidel Menchi gives an insightful overview of the historiography on the Counter-Reformation as it developed in Italy since 1939: Silvana Seidel Menchi, 'The Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Italian Historiography, 1939–2009', *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte* 100, no. 1 (2009): 204–5.

[34] Massimo Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e controriforma. Studi sul cardinal Giovanni Morone e il suo processo d'eresia.* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992). Firpo also took the lead in the efforts that were made, from the 1980s onwards, to make the inquisitorial source material available in print. See for an overview of publications by Firpo: Seidel Menchi, 'The Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation', 198, footnote 23.

role in ecclesiastical and social life on the peninsula, research into sixteenth-century "heresy" has continued throughout the historiographical shifts described above.[35]

Why has there been so much scholarly attention for the Inquisition, the small groups of Italian "heretics", the Italian Reformation, and power struggles? Part of the answer can be found in the post-war conviction that (totalitarian) societies can best be understood by looking at how they treat minority groups.[36] Another reason is that several Italian scholars seem to see the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the light of their current positions vis-à-vis the Church.[37] As the (non-Catholic) historian Christopher Black writes, "modern historians of Italian Protestantism tend to be strongly biased towards Protestants, whether from a religious conviction […], or from a left-wing political viewpoint, supporting the underdogs suppressed by an authoritarian […] Catholic Church".[38] Seidel Menchi confirms that in Italy, many scholars of the Catholic and Protestant Reformations "do not intend to write neutral history". Instead, they openly acknowledge that they are personally invested in the issues they study and this is, in her opinion, what makes their research so alive.[39]

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[35] The intensity with which Italian historians have studied heretics is, according to Seidel Menchi, "far out of proportion to their numbers or influence in early modern Italian society". Seidel Menchi, 'The Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation', 194. In the same article, Menchi even affirms that "[t]he field known in Italian universities as 'Età della Riforma e della Controriforma' […] is a history of heretics." Ibid: 197-8, 205-7.

[36] See, for instance: Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (Sussex, London: Sussex University Press and Heinemann Educational Books, 1975).

[37] De Boer, 'Reformations and Counter-Reformations', 51. "That the study of the Reformation should flourish in Italy, where the heretical movements ended in fairly quick, aggressive suppression, may be seen as ironic, but it also indicates how the current fascination with minority groups has given new life to an old historiographic category, while an upsurge in studies on the Roman Inquisition has revitalised the concept of Counter-Reformation". Ibid., 55-56.

[38] "Many such historians seemingly assume the Protestantism that would have prevailed, would have been 'better', intellectually and democratically" Christopher F. Black, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy*, European Studies Series (Basingstoke etc.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 3. See also: Simon Ditchfield, 'In Sarpi's shadow: coping with Trent the Italian way.' In *Studi in memoria di Cesare Mozzarelli* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2008), 585-606, and Christopher F. Black, *The Italian Inquisition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), vii–viii.

[39] Seidel Menchi, 'The Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation', 216. Scholars from other traditions might however be surprised, for instance, at the ease with which Firpo polemically assumes that those who find some interest in a broader term of 'early modern Catholicism' must therefore negate the fact that "religious and political choices taken by the Roman Church as a reaction to the Protestant Reformation are still a relevant historical problem, deserving research and reflection". Massimo Firpo, 'Rethinking "Catholic Reform" and "Counter-Reformation":

The personal engagement of Italian scholars of early modern Catholicism with their research subject may also be one of the reasons why the social discipline paradigm continues to be very popular among them: many see Baroque Catholicism, including institutions such as the Inquisition and the Index, as the main cause of the presumed decline of Italy's cultural relevance (another reason being the improved accessibility of archives such as those of the local Inquisitions).[40] Adriano Prosperi's seminal contribution, *I Tribunali della Coscienza*, for instance, published in 1996, emphasises the Church's capacity and intent "to control consciences" and stifle creative freedom. Admittedly, Prosperi's work also discusses another type of control, namely persuasion, as it recurred in the missionary efforts of the early modern period.[41] Yet, because his goal is to describe how the Church developed a long-lasting

What Happened in Early Modern Catholicism—a View from Italy', *Journal of Early Modern History* 20, no. 3 (2016): 296. People might also remain puzzled by the overtly polemical tones with which Firpo expresses himself in his recent article (on the reception of the sixteenth century Cardinal Giovanni Morone in historiography), accusing whole generations of "Anglo-Saxon" scholarship, Catholic and non-Catholic, of pursuing an apologetic agenda. Massimo Firpo, 'Salvatore del Concilio o eretico luterano? Giovanni Morone nella storiografia postridentina', in *Trent and Beyond: The Council, Other Powers, Other Cultures*, ed. Michela Catto and Adriano Prosperi, Mul edition (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2018), 244–45, 264.

[40] Danilo Zardin acutely shows this in his historiographical analysis: Danilo Zardin, 'Il concilio di Trento e il rinnovamento cattolico dell'età moderna', in *Religione, cerimoniale e società nelle terre milanesi dell'età moderna*, ed. Danilo Zardin, Fabrizio Pagani, and Carlo Alessandro Pisoni (Germignaga: Magazzeno storico verbanese-La Compagnia de' Bindoni, 2018), 34. In the same overview article, in which he animatedly writes against what he views as the unbalanced approach that dominates current Italian historiography, Zardin sums up how Italian historians have unjustly sketched an ineffective post-Tridentine Church that merely produced "a backward bureaucracy [that] opposed the growing wave of criticism by blocking all authentic experimentation, being intellectually closed off, the hardening of control, and blind submission to authority." Ibid., 32. Zardin also writes that while in other academic environments a middle position has gained ground, in Italy, the Reformation / Counter-Reformation divide has retained its currency. Massimo Firpo indeed recently insisted on using only the latter term for early modern Catholicism: Firpo, 'Rethinking "Catholic Reform" and "Counter-Reformation"'.

[41] Prosperi also acknowledges that from the last quarter of the sixteenth century the Inquisition progressively began to adopt a more pastoral approach. Adriano Prosperi, 'L'inquisitore come confessore', in *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna: Convegno Internazionale di Studio, Bologna 7-9 ottobre 1993*, ed. Paolo Prodi and Carla Penuti (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 1994), 217, 222–23. The Inquisition, after its initial decades, broadened its scope and became more educational and less punitive, targeting quasi-heretical beliefs, magical and moral issues. The institution attempted to follow due processes. Anna Schutte even remarked that it "offered the best criminal justice available in early modern Europe". Schutte, "Recent Studies", 93-5, cited in: Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, xi.

hold over Italian society, the main focus of his work is on the ever tighter grip of the Church on the people via the courts of the Inquisition and the confessional, which in his opinion was subordinated to the Inquisition.[42] Though very insightful, Prosperi's work is at risk of overestimating the efficiency of the Church's institutions in imposing its norms on the people.[43]

The work of Giovanni Romeo and Michele Mancino on criminal clergy is another recent example of Italian scholarship that views the early modern Church as a rather monolithic institution with an all-influential power on society. Its main thesis is that the Church could have reformed its clergy in due time, had it but wanted to.[44] However, since the priority of the Church was to safeguard its honour and keep up appearances, the so-called Tridentine reform never took place other than in the minds of a handful of reformers. It was not the local bishops but Rome that commanded, and Rome did not want real reform.[45] One example the authors give is that of the selection of clergy during the seventeenth century. They assume that, since a thorough selection of good parish priests often did not take place, this was because the Church did not want to select good priests but instead prioritised honour.[46] However, as I will show in chapter three, things were more complicated. Since good selection would in fact have led to a more honourable Church, it follows that, if Rome could have protected its honour straightforwardly in this way, it would

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[42] Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996); Idem, 'L'inquisitore come confessore', 190; Idem, 'Beichtväter und Inquisition im 16. Jahrhundert', in Reinhard and Schilling, *Die Katholische Konfessionalisierung*, 126. Prosperi in my opinion too readily assumes that rules which stipulated that issues pertinent to the Inquisition could not be absolved in the confessional reflect a widespread reality. In his review article of this book, Giovanni Romeo states that the large majority of confessors probably absolved even delicate cases completely autonomously, either out of ignorance of the rules, or because of certain privileges, or even to maintain a good relationship with the penitent. Giovanni Romeo, 'Sui Tribunali della coscienza di Adriano Prosperi', *Quaderni Storici* 35 (1999): 798. Prosperi himself acknowledges that it is very difficult to establish in what measure the rules were really followed: Prosperi, 'Beichtväter', 130.

[43] See, for instance: Prosperi, 'Beichtväter', 131.

[44] Though many tribunals either originated in the wake of Trent, or flourished in the same period, they did not help to reform the clergy, according to Giovanni Romeo and Michele Mancino. Giovanni Romeo and Michele Mancino, *Clero criminale: L'onore della Chiesa e i delitti degli ecclesiastici nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Rome: Editori Laterza, 2013), V–VIII.

[45] Ibid., vi. My research, however, demonstrates that Rome certainly did not have overall command, and was by no means the main or only obstacle to reform (see chapter two).

[46] Ibid., 201.

probably have done so. The reason it did not was that the obstacles to a strict selection policy were many.[47] Moreover, priorities within Church ranks differed remarkably. The authors also overlook that the Church was only one player in a network of different powers and was embedded in a society that had different priorities. Their viewpoint should therefore be complemented by one that allows for a more nuanced context and studies individuals as they implemented their ideals.

The work of Massimo Firpo, too, seems to assume that the Church was rather monolithic, or at least its policies were monolithically determined, in his view, by the Roman Inquisition.[48] During two decennia of power struggles (in the mid-sixteenth century), the Inquisition first made sure that the papacy was calling its tune and all possible enemies were eliminated, then fought any occurrences of heresy, and subsequently banned every creative expression and moral deviation on the peninsula. Again, taking power as a starting point creates the impression that power struggles were the ultimate cause of all action, and other possible explanations for the absence of historical change have to be explained by unwillingness on the part of the Church.[49] Though Firpo concedes some explanatory power to the context (the

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[47] In several other passages in their chapter on the seventeenth century (chapter six), Romeo and Mancino first state what the Church should have done in their eyes if reform was to be taken seriously, and subsequently conclude that, since there is no evidence that these steps were taken, *therefore* "the Church" did not want to act against certain abuses. See, for instance: Ibid., 186–87. An evident example are the pastoral visitations. From other sources that we will encounter throughout this dissertation it will be clear that Cardinal Durazzo had some interest in shaping the clergy in line with Tridentine ideals. However, in his pastoral visitations little is said about the moral status of the clergy. Romeo and Mancini immediately link the general absence of this information in visitation reports with a presumed lack of interest in reform on the part of the bishops. Ibid., 200. The case of Genoa already shows that such reasoning is flawed.

[48] "The goals that the Church was called upon to pursue […] had been forged by the fierce battle which Gian Pietro Carafa [the leader of the Roman Inquisition and later Pope] and his Theatines had united against all forms of what they regarded as heretical deviations." Firpo, 'Rethinking "Catholic Reform" and "Counter-Reformation"', 297.

[49] In a reaction to Firpo's article, Dermot Fenlon emphasises that the dominance of the Inquisition over papal conclaves lasted only for two decades, and many influential Church leaders worked against this dominance (as Firpo himself acknowledges). "[T]he (scarcely uninfluential) circles of Carlo Borromeo (1538-84), Agostino Valier (1531-1606) and Federico Borromeo (1564-1631) utterly rejected and worked to bypass the [Inquisition's] seizure of power." Cf. Dermot Fenlon's response to Firpo in: Ibid., 308. In Firpo's contribution, the power perspective influences not only the selection of sources but also his perspective on these sources: some of his most audacious conclusions, for instance that the Church constituted the strongest force against progress in Italy

centralism of the curia, the difficulty of changing the system of benefices, the privileges of many religious orders), he readily ascribes the failure of Trent to the unwillingness of the highest echelons of the Church, and to the primacy of obedience and orthodoxy over moral reform.[50] Other scholarship, however, suggests that the early modern Church in Italy can be better understood if we take into consideration different perspectives: even in a hierarchical structure in which obedience is an important value, people do not automatically lose their own agency, their own interests and ideals, and their own ways to act upon them.[51]

Hosking is right when he states that the use of power as a concept through which to see historical reality (as Foucault has proposed), produces as many pitfalls as insights: power easily becomes a vague and all-embracing concept, a phenomenon without a particular source or centre.[52] A focus on power does not reveal how people made decisions and acted in specific social settings according to their various convictions and contrasting interests, appropriating and mediating the Tridentine religious culture.[53] It obscures the fact that early modern Catholicism in Italy continued (as elsewhere) to be "plural" and, as Danilo Zardin writes, "not rigidly 'disciplined' in the sense of levelled out".[54] Nor does it allow us to see the ungoing "*dialogue and osmosis*" between secular and religious power, between Church and state, which, as Paolo Prodi has demonstrated, was formative for Europe's course towards modernity.[55] We should therefore find an alternative that allows us to avoid describing the Church as a "coherent if not monolithic organisation" and to account

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up until the nineteenth century, are based on merely one citation Ibid., 306. See also: Dermot Fenlons rebuttal on p. 307-8.

[50] Firpo, 'Rethinking "Catholic Reform" and "Counter-Reformation"', 300. Power and force trumped all other aspects of the Church as it developed in the early modern period, in Firpo's perspective. Ibid., 305.

[51] "The conflicts and tensions within the church system prevented the creation of an overweening church, left room for some dissent (if discreet), and debate" Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, 227. See also: Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7–8.

[52] Hosking, *Trust: A History*, 6.

[53] Ditchfield, 'In search of local knowledge', 286-7.

[54] "non rigidamente 'disciplinato' in senso livellatore". Zardin, 'Il concilio', 41.

[55] Italics in the original. Paolo Prodi, 'Europe in the Age of Reformations: The Modern State and Confessionalization', *The Catholic Historical Review* 103, no. 1 (2017): 1-19.

for the fact that, as Christopher Black reminds us, "political monarchism […] could hardly be enforced within the Papal State, let alone into state areas", among other reasons because "the 'Church' itself was made up of competing institutions and individuals, following different ideal 'models', or selfish interests."[56] In line with the work of the French scholar De Certeau, we should acknowledge the numerous ways in which common people used "the imposed system" in their everyday lives to their own ends, employing tactics that subverted, resisted or changed what was imposed upon them from above.[57] To do so, we are helped by turning again to the international scholarship on early modern Catholicism that, in the last two decades, has started to combine an interest in the top-down perspective with a revaluation of initiatives from below. In contrast to the paradigms of the last century, historians no longer view lay people as passive recipients of beliefs and reforms imposed from above, but study them as protagonists in forging their own diverse confessional identities.

Identity, negotiation and persuasion

The work of Marc Forster is an early example of this new historiographical approach. In his 1992 book, he argued that the main change that occurred in the post-Tridentine era was that people *consciously* internalised their confessional identity. Using the example of the Bishopric of Speyer, he showed that this identity was not imposed from above, and that the genesis of a confessional culture could also happen without a strong state.[58] Instead, villagers themselves reshaped local Catholic identities and the practices through which these were expressed.[59] These practices, in turn, were accommodated by the Church hierarchy via a process of negotiation that

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[56] Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, 225.
[57] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), See also: Ditchfield, 'In search of local knowledge', 286-7.
[58] "Divisions within the clerical elite make the standard distinction between reforming elite and traditionalist population very problematic". Marc R. Forster, *The Counter-Reformation in the Villages: Religion and Reform in the Bishopric of Speyer, 1560-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 7.
[59] See for a recent article on an Italian example of this process: Celeste McNamara, 'What the People Want: Popular Support for Catholic Reform in the Veneto', *The Catholic Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (2016): 492-516.

took place within the boundaries of doctrine and was mediated by intermediaries such as members of religious orders and parish priests, but also by secular lords. These intermediaries were by no means passive "agents of the Counter-Reformation", but pursued their own agendas and convictions.[60] Studying the situation in Bohemia, Howard Louthan has dealt with the ways in which Catholic identity became crystalised in the area: not only by force from above but also through persuasion. The missions that constituted an essential part of the re-Catholicisation of Bohemia show that early modern Catholicism was adaptable to local circumstances: missionaries to the rural poor attempted to meet the needs of the local people in order to be more persuasive.[61] The adaptability of early modern Catholicism to local situations also comes to the fore in the work of Marie Juliette Marinus, who, already in the 1990s, wrote about the readiness of the clergy in Antwerp to adjust to the needs of the faithful, following the adage *cura animarum prima lex* (the care of souls [is] our first law).[62] Marinus's work shows the importance of religious orders as mediators in the exchange between the Church and the faithful in an urban context. Concentrating on the diocese of Grenoble, Keith Luria has shown that religious change came about in the interaction between local elites, such as a reforming bishop, and villagers.[63] Post-Tridentine Catholicism is revealed in the work of these researchers to be pluralistic and shaped by interaction between elites and the people.

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[60] Forster, *The Counter-Reformation*. To understand local Catholic identities, Foster argued, we need to look at religious practices and consider that the role of the elites in determining these practices was limited. Marc R. Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[61] Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation*, New Studies in European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[62] Marie Juliette Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen, (1585-1676): kerkelijk leven in een grootstad*, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Letteren 155 (Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1995), 293.
[63] Keith P. Luria, *Territories of Grace: Cultural Change in the Seventeenth-Century Diocese of Grenoble* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). Cf. also Keith P. Luria, '"Popular Catholicism" and the Catholic Reformation', in *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.*, ed. Kathleen M. Comerford and Hilmar M. Pabel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 114–30.

Complementing the top-down perspective described in the previous section, several scholars of early modern Italy have recently adopted a similar approach and have focused on the initiatives of laymen and the lower clergy on the peninsula.[64] In the field of women's studies, for instance, Querciolo Mazzonis has highlighted the ways in which women exploited the possibilities that they had in the religious realm.[65] In his study of the local religiosity in Puglia, David Gentilcore has emphasised the importance of negotiation and mediation, much in line with historians like Louthan and Forster.[66] Celeste McNamara has recently done the same for the diocese of Padua.[67] Other historians have looked at local missions as focal points of the new religious orders or at different devotional and artistic expressions of Counter-Reformation religiosity. The recently published collection of essays on *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy* (2019) has opened the door to a whole new and scarcely explored world of devotional life and religious initiatives from below, namely that which took place in family households.[68] Yet the most prominent field that uses a bottom-up perspective as a window onto the Italian Church is that of early modern confraternities (studied from the late 1950s onwards). Confraternities were the most common way in which people in early modern Italian cities engaged religiously and the Church itself relied heavily on them in its parishes.[69] Studying confraternities

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[64] Black already emphasised in his overview work that "[t]he diversity of forces within the church, clerical lay, meant that when some cooperated, education was improved, philanthropy spread more widely, and religious culture became more exciting, varied and enticing". Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, 227.

[65] See pages 210-11. Yet, when writing about lay initiatives, Querciolo Mazzonis tends to see anti-institutional devout companies that sprang up in the first half of the sixteenth century as confessional groups "squeezed between the Catholic and Protestant Church", a view which, in my opinion, reinforces the idea of a Church as a monolithic institution which it hardly was (even after Trent). Querciolo Mazzonis, 'Reforming Christianity in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy: The Barnabites, the Somaschans, the Ursulines, and the Hospitals for the Incurables', *Archivium Hibernicum. Irish Historical Records* 71 (2018): 271.

[66] David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), 4–7.

[67] Celeste McNamara, 'What the People Want'.

[68] Maya Corry, Marco Faini, and Alessia Meneghin, eds., *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy*, vol. 59, Intersections. Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019).

[69] Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), xviii. Confraternities were "the most common way of organizing lay spiritual life through the early modern period. Nicholas Terpstra, 'Ignatius, Confratello: Confraternities as

helps us to counter the tendency to privilege the institutional Church in our research: as Nicholas Terpstra put it, "brotherhoods were the most public face of the church, yet were almost entirely lay".[70] Their number increased in the post-Tridentine period, and they were fostered by reforming bishops and new or reformed orders.[71] By their mere existence and prominence, confraternities remind us that the post-Tridentine Church in Italy was shaped by interaction between initiatives from below and the ecclesiastical authorities as much as it was elsewhere in Europe.

Recently, scholars of early modern Catholicism have started to elaborate on the fact that such interaction must have been based on choices by Church members and lay people alike: both parties consciously engaged in a process of negotiation. Craig Harline and Eddy Put have vividly described the necessity of negotiation as a basis for reform in an urban context: disciplining alone cannot explain successful reform, since it was never simply accepted without negotiation.[72] Judith Pollmann has underlined that reform, new initiatives, and new devotions all required a lot of money and energy, thus a conscious choice not only by ecclesiastical or lay initiators but also by those who chose to support them. With their choices, even less privileged individuals could influence the course that certain reforms would take: their support and engagement with, for instance, a new order, could secure its success in the future.[73] Persuasion and negotiation appear to have been paramount also in reform efforts from above, as people accepted authority only when persuaded that clerical

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Modes of Spiritual Community in Early Modern Society', in Comerford and Pabel, *Early Modern Catholicism*, 176. See also: Angelo Torre, 'Faith's Boundaries: Ritual and Territory in Rural Piedmont in the Early Modern Period', in Terpstra, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, 243–61; Danilo Zardin, 'Relaunching Confraternities in the Tridentine Era: Shaping Conscience and Christianizing Society in Milan and Lombardy', in Terpstra, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, 190–209. Both Torre and Zardin have written extensively on the importance of confraternities in the post-Tridentine Church.

[70] Terpstra, 'Ignatius, Confratello', 177; Idem, 'Introduction. The Politics of Ritual Kinship', in idem, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, 1.

[71] Christopher F. Black, 'The Development of Confraternity Studies over the Past Thirty Years', in Terpstra, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, 14.

[72] Craig Harline and Eddy Put, *A Bishop's Tale: Mathias Hovius among His Flock in Seventeenth-Century Flanders* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

[73] Cf. Judith Pollmann, 'Being a Catholic in Early Modern Europe', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, ed. Alexandra. Bamji, Geert Herman Janssen, and Mary Laven (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 165–82.

leaders were working in their best interest.[74] In the absence of collaboration and persuasion, the choices that people made could just as easily lead to conflict between all parties involved.[75] The Catholic Reformation, including its authoritarian aspects, can thus be seen as an exchange between all parties involved.[76] Education and persuasion, disciplinary reform and the forging of confessional identity from below all required conscious cooperation between regular people and the elite, and between the laity and the clergy. Scholars of the global dimension of early modern Catholicism have come to the same conclusion: the peoples in areas that were reached by the Catholic mission were never passively 'influenced' by a religion imposed on them by an outside power, but always found ways to appropriate, shape, select from, copy, or change the message and practices of the missionaries.[77]

Trust and distrust

The state of the debate, however, leaves the answer to one important question implicit: what was the basis of this cooperation and reciprocity when it took place? What triggered people in their choices to adhere to one initiative for reform rather than another, and what induced the ecclesiastical and political elite to give their consent to new initiatives started among the people or by the lower clergy? Historians have already pointed to financial motivations, the services offered, and the content proposed, which could all influence the choices of the lay people.[78] They have also stressed that cooperation between lay people and clergy was furthered when a

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[74] According to Judith Pollmann, "most believers proved quite willing to accept clerical leadership, and indeed authority, as long as they were persuaded of its value and its relevance". Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 201.

[75] Luria, '"Popular Catholicism" and the Catholic Reformation', 126–27.

[76] Cf. Nicholas Terpstra, 'Lay Spirituality', in Bamji, Janssen, and Laven, *The Ashgate Research Companion*, 261–79.

[77] See Simon Ditchfield, 'Decentering the Catholic Reformation. Papacy and Peoples in the Early Modern World, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*. 101, no 1 (2010): 186-208, in particular p. 201; and Idem, 'Of Dancing Cardinals and Mestizo Madonnas: Reconfiguring the History of Roman Catholicism in the Early Modern Period'. *Journal of Early Modern History* 8, no. 3 (2004): 408. For further reading on this topic and literature suggestions, see: Karin Vélez, Sebastian R. Prange, and Luke Clossey. 'Religious Ideas in Motion'. In *A Companion to World History*, ed. by Douglas Northrop (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 352–64.

[78] Marinus, *De contrareformatie te Antwerpen*, 194–202.

common interest was found in a process of negotiation.[79] The next step in furthering our understanding of the Catholic Reformation is to trace the dynamic that underpinned the cooperation, persuasion, and individual choices that were the basis of effective reform. This is where trust comes into play. Practices of trust, I will argue, made cooperation possible, led to certain choices, and helped efforts at persuasion.[80] A trust perspective clarifies how people came to share the same interest and thus work for the same goal, or failed to do so. Secondly, once we appreciate the importance of trust in the choices that people made, we need to find out whether contemporaries grasped its importance. Did they believe that in the context of a trust relationship cooperation and persuasion come about more easily? If they did, why did they not always apply practices of trust? What were the disadvantages or perceived disadvantages of a trust approach as a means to reform? The exploration of these two issues, the importance of trust for reform and contemporaries' awareness of it, will complement what we already know about early modern Catholicism in general, and the situation in Italy in particular.

My dissertation is not an attempt to downplay the importance of repression and authoritarian reform at play in the Church of early modern Italy. Instead, its goal is to further explore what Prosperi described as the omnipresent "opposition between [strategies of] trust and distrust, mildness and persecution" and to see how these strategies played out at a local level in the seventeenth century.[81] Such "local knowledge", to use Simon Ditchfield's phrase, indeed helps us to reconfigure "the geography of power" and to study the "at times, bewildering variety of expressions"

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[79] Marinus also describes the negotiation that surrounded popular devotions, which, as is clear from the example of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel in Harline and Put's work, could only become of major importance in the context of successful cooperation between different layers of society towards the same goal: Ibid., 246–55, 284. Harline and Put, *A Bishop's Tale*, 92–108.

[80] Interestingly, Frijhoff already proposed similar questions in 1981: "Wat waren nu precies de machtsverhoudingen binnen de kerkelijke groeperingen, niet alleen op kerkordelijk gebied, maar ook in de sociaal-economische en culturele orde? Hoe waren top, buik en basis van deze groeperingen samengesteld en met andere vervlochten? Wie bepaalde in feite wat? In hoeverre werd gehoorzaamheid c.q. volgzaamheid ten aanzien van de gestelde doeleinden niet alleen axiomatisch verondersteld (of juist met systematisch wantrouwen tegemoet getreden), maar ook werkelijk bereikt?" Frijhoff, 'Van "Histoire de l'Eglise" naar "Histoire religieuse"', 152.

[81] Prosperi, 'L'inquisitore', 194.

that characterize the early modern Church in Italy.[82] Historians such as De Boer and Prosperi himself have indicated that, for the Catholic reformers, there must have been a conscious choice to be made between "softness" and "harshness", between persuasion and force.[83] To arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the post-Tridentine reality of the Church in Italy, both aspects – that of persuasion and spiritual renewal and that of tribunals and discipline - should be taken into account evenhandedly, and their weight in forming a pluralistic Catholicism (as opposed to a "disciplined" monolithic religion) should be taken into account.[84] Trust can help us explain how the choice between softness and harshness was made. Studying strategies of trust and distrust and their outcome may also nuance our understanding of the presumed capacity of the Church to control consciences. In short, it gives insight into the reasons why reform required cooperation, why it was a very slow and rather ambivalent endeavour, and why tactics of discipline and persuasion were tried alternately, with variable success. Finally, it sheds light on the often misunderstood concept of obedience that was pervasive in the early modern Church.

In carrying out this study, we are helped by another area of Church history as it is practised in Italy, which I have not yet touched upon: namely the countless local studies that give insight into individual religious orders, local bishops and Church reformers, local devotions, and many other aspects of the local churches on the peninsula. As we will see in the first chapter, existing studies on the Genoese reality constitute an indispensable support in our attempt to uncover the trust mechanisms at play in the seventeenth-century Church.

What is trust?

Over the last two decades, trust has become a topic of interest not only within but also outside academia: trust and its presumed decline in our societies are very much part of our common awareness. Trust-related topics like fake news, the financial

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[82] Ditchfhield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge', 259.
[83] De Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul*, 53. Hosking writes how "we need to replace [Foucault's] 'genealogy of power' with a genealogy of trust", and distrust, I would add. Hosking, *Trust: A History*, 7.
[84] Cf. Zardin, 'Il concilio'. Ditchfhield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge', 259-62.

crises, the loss of trust in European institutions, but also the loss of reputation of charity organisations, scholars, and churches, populate the headlines every day.[85] Yet what do we mean by trust? This a question that sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, philosophers, and economists have all tried to answer.[86] An early and significant contribution came from the sociologist Niklas Luhmann who described trust as an essential tool to reduce the "extreme complexity of the world", which no one can withstand: "Without any trust […] [a man] could not leave his bed in the morning."[87] It is undeniable that trust is a human capacity that is vital for everyday life as well as for the most fundamental experiences of existence. The universality of trust does not, however, make the concept any easier to define or study. To use Martin Hollis' phrase: trust "works in practice but not in theory".[88] The philosopher Annette Baier rightly remarked that "we inhabit a climate of trust as we inhabit an atmosphere and notice it as we notice air, only when is becomes scarce or polluted".[89] Its universality makes trust interesting as a prism through which to look at history, yet its elusiveness challenges scholars.

The definitions of trust are manifold and often contradictory. Some scholars argue that trust *increases* over time; the more experience one has with the actions of a trusted person, the more certainty about his or her behaviour can grow.[90] Others, who see trust as an act of blind faith, claim the opposite. Trust, they say, *decreases* with increasing experience; since one knows more about the trusted person; "blind" faith

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[85] Rosalind Searle, Ann-Marie Nienaber, and Sim B Sitkin, 'Introduction', in idem eds, *The Routledge Companion to Trust* (New York: Routledge, 2017), xxix–xxx.

[86] For a recent overview, see: Searle, Nienaber, and Sitkin, *The Routledge Companion to Trust*. Interestingly, when Stefan Alexander Rompf writes about the flourishing field of trust research, he mentions all kinds of disciplines, except history: being of recent origin, historical research on trust has received little attention. Stefan Alexander Rompf, *Trust and Rationality: An Integrative Framework for Trust Research* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2015), 15.

[87] "äußersten Komplexität der Welt" "Ohne jegliches Vertrauen […] könnte er morgens sein Bett nicht verlassen". Niklas Luhmann, *Vertrauen: ein Mechanismus der Reduktion sozialer Komplexität* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1968), 1.

[88] Martin Hollis, *Trust within reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 1998), 1.

[89] Annette C. Baier, 'Trust and Antitrust', *Ethics* 96, no. 2 (1986): 234. The same will prove to be true for historical studies of trust: crises of trust are easier to detect than functional trust relationships.

[90] This is, for instance, Geoffrey Hosking's understanding of trust, in: Hosking, *Trust: A History*.

is less necessary. [91] This contrast already shows that researchers often adopt completely conflicting approaches. The same goes for the distinction that is frequently made between trust as an attitude and trust as an act.[92] A trusting attitude indicates the recurrence, in social situations, of the positive approach to the world and to others that is transmitted to an individual from childhood.[93] One can be more trusting in certain situations, for example among friends, because of earlier positive experiences, or less trusting, for instance when confronted with radically new situations. Trust can, however, also be described as an act or a practice. In the often cited definition of Russell Hardin, the trusting act consists of three parts: person A trusts B to do X.[94] Trust, by his definition, means that the trusting person has the positive expectation that the trusted person will act for his good according to his or her competences.[95] Marek Kohn added that such an act of trust requires freedom: to speak of trust, the trusted person should be able to refuse to carry out the given task or, instead, to go beyond his or her own interests in answering to the given trust.[96] In sociology, both appearances – trust as an attitude and trust as an act – have been

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[91] Cf. e.g. Annette Baier's comment: "The more one knows about people (oneself included), the less one has occasion strictly to trust them", Annette C. Baier, 'Trusting People', *Philosophical Perspectives* 6 (1992): 132. Using the contributions of others in the volume, Diego Gambetta however defines trust as "a particular level of subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action, both before he can monitor such action (or independently of his capacity ever to be able to monitor it) and in a context in which it affects his own action...[a probability] high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him". Diego Gambetta, *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1988), 217.

[92] Trust has been described as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another". Two added conditions that the authors indicate are risk and interdependence: Denise M. Rousseau et al., 'Not so Different After All: A Cross-Discipline View of Trust', *Academy of Management Review* 23, no. 3 (July 1998): 395.

[93] See e.g. Karen Jones, 'Trust as an Affective Attitude', *Ethics: An International Journal of Social, Political and Legal Philosophy*, no. 1 (1996): 4–25. See also: Eric M Uslaner, *The Moral Foundations of Trust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[94] Russell Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), 9.

[95] Katherine Hawley adds that in order to speak of trust, the trustee should also have a commitment to do the task you give him. Katherine Hawley, 'Trust, Distrust and Commitment', *Noûs* 48, no. 1 (2014): 1–20.

[96] Marek Kohn, *Trust: Self-Interest and the Common Good* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

analysed extensively. Even though the starting point for this study has been a general attitude of distrust that characterised a particular historical situation, namely the post-Reformation period, I will show that for historical research it is expedient to consider not only attitudes but concrete acts, practices and strategies of trust and distrust as well, since these can be better studied from a historical perspective.

Interestingly, in the scholarly enterprise to better understand trust and its role in the most various ambits, social scientists usually do not see history as a separate discipline with its own contribution.[97] Despite that, they often use the historical dimension of their trust research to underline the presumed uniqueness of the modern situation.[98] Some scholars have argued that people have become less trusting in the modern period, because they rely more and more on people they do not know for important matters. The problematic result, these scholars claim, is that people are losing the willingness and ability for social cooperation. Martin Hollis, for example, has argued that the increasing rationality that he attributes to the post-Enlightenment period has eroded trust: people have come to treat each other in a more individualistic and instrumental way.[99] Marek Kohn has maintained that, in modern secular societies, trust has been replaced by contracts because there is no ultimate authority, God, to sanction trust relations.[100] Others, while agreeing that "trust is no longer the central pillar of social order," claim that cooperation might take the place of trust and become the foundation of modern societies: in their opinion,

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[97] In their introduction to their 'companion to trust', the three editors mention behavioural economics, cultural anthropology, organizational behaviour, management studies, political science, psychology and sociology as fields that have delved into the subject of trust, but not history. Searle, Nienaber, and Sitkin, 'Introduction', in idem, *The Routledge Companion to Trust*, xxix–xxx.

[98] "[B]uilding on the idea that during transition from constrained feudal toward more liberal European societies social relations became highly differentiated and rationalised, some social scientists have suggested that trust and distrust are modern concepts (e.g., Barber, 1983; Giddens, 1990; Luhmann, 1979; Seligman, 1997), tracing their origin into the 16th and 17th centuries." Ivana Marková, Per Linell, and Alex Gillespie, 'Trust and Distrust in Society', in *Trust and Distrust: Sociocultural Perspectives*, ed. Ivana Marková and Alex Gillespie (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2008), 18.

[99] Martin Hollis, for example, has argued that the increasing rationality that he attributes to the post-Enlightenment period has eroded trust: people have come to treat each other in a more individualistic and instrumental way. Hollis, *Trust within reason*.

[100] Marek Kohn has maintained that, in modern secular societies, trust has been replaced by contracts because there is no ultimate authority, God, to sanction trust relations. Kohn, *Trust*.

cooperation does not require trust but only shared interest and the reduction of opportunism.[101] The problem is that such claims are often not based on the study of trust in actual historical societies.

Some inquiries, however, have gone further back in tracing the history of trust. Geoffrey Hosking's attempt to write a history of trust led him to conclude that, whereas our medieval and early modern counterparts relied mostly on what he defines as "strong thick trust" – a reliance for important matters on people one knows well – today's society is mostly based on what he calls "strong thin trust". This means that we have delegated vital aspects of our lives to people and institutions that we hardly know. [102] Hosking writes that "strong thin trust is ever more prevalent in our social life today" without our being aware of it and as a result we have the impression of living in an era of little mutual trust (or even of a crisis of trust).[103] He concludes that some "strong thick trust" should therefore be brought back into our modern day social relationships. My research helps to nuance Hosking's thesis because it reveals the prominence of strong thin trust in a time and place that Hosking characterises as one of strong thick trust, namely seventeenth-century Italy: people's relation to the Church as an institution was one of strong *thin* trust. The Church was an institution on which people relied for something very vital – the salvation of their souls – and yet many aspects of it were unknown or far removed from them. Many Church leaders after the crisis of trust that we call the Reformation were conscious of the fact that some "strong thick trust" was to be brought back and reinforced in the Church's relation with the faithful in order for people to really be able to rely on its role as the mediator of grace.

Adam Seligman argued that the importance of trust – which, in his definition, does not include the confidence in people with whom one is familiar or in certain sanctioned role patterns but only reliance on virtually unknown people – is variable through time: although present throughout all ages, trust is more predominant in

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[101] Karen S. Cook, Russell Hardin, and Margaret Levi, *Cooperation Without Trust?* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation Publications, 2007), 1.
[102] Hosking, *Trust: A History*, 47.
[103] Ibid., 47.

modern times. According to Seligman, nowadays the number of roles that exist simultaneously is higher and these roles are more negotiable than they were prior to the eighteenth century. Trust, meaning the reliance on another person who is completely unpredictable, has become more important now that roles are less well defined, Seligman argues.[104] My discussion of the attempts to improve the trustworthiness of early modern priests will show that even though institutional roles may have been more clearly defined in the seventeenth century, this clear delineation in itself created new trust-related problems.

Recently, historians of the early modern period have started to focus on trust as well. First among them were socio-economic historians who deployed the concept in order to interpret the functioning of pre-modern commercial networks and other economical interactions.[105] In non-commercial organisations that relied on long-distance communication, trust was an indispensable asset as well: a good example is *Propaganda Fide*, the papal Congregation in charge of the overseas missions.[106] The historiography of early modern long distance networks shows that trust and trustworthiness were consciously assessed by contemporaries, for example to further reciprocal economic interests.[107] Assessing trustworthiness was also essential in

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[104] Adam B. Seligman, *The Problem of Trust* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[105] Francesca Trivellato has studied the trust basis on which new commercial contacts were made. Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). See also: Zijlstra, Suze. "To build and sustain trust: Long-distance correspondence of Dutch seventeenth-century Merchants". *Dutch Crossing* 36, no. 2 (juli 2012): 114–31. Others have analysed the dynamic of trust and mistrust within the organisation of early modern chartered companies. See e.g.: Ann M. Carlos and Stephen Nicholas, ""Giants of an Earlier Capitalism": The Chartered Trading Companies as Modern Multinationals," *Business History Review* 62, no. 03 (1988); "Agency Problems in Early Chartered Companies: The Case of the Hudson's Bay Company," *The Journal of Economic History* 50, no. 04 (1990).

[106] Heiko Droste, 'Sending a Letter between Amsterdam and Stockholm. A Matter of Trust and Precautions', in *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek, and Badeloch Noldus (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006); Thérèse Peeters, 'Trust and Mission. Seventeenth-Century Lazarist Missionaries in North Africa', *Trajecta* 26, no. 1 (2017): 90–106.

[107] See, among others: Sheilagh C. Ogilvie, *The Use and Abuse of Trust: Social Capital and Its Deplayment by Early Modern Guilds* (Munich: CES, 2004); Laurence Fontaine, *The Moral Economy: Poverty, Credit, and Trust in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Ricardo Court, '"Januensis Ergo Mercator": Trust and Enforcement in the Business Correspondence of the Brignole Family', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 35, no. 4 (2004): 987–1003.

obtaining other kinds of knowledge. Stephen Shapin shows that, in the seventeenth century, much of the knowledge, including scientific knowledge, found its basis in testimony and personal authority.[108] Barbara Shapiro similarly has studied how people tried to assess the trustworthiness of the news and of travel reports by evaluating the witnesses to these facts.[109] These and other studies not only reveal that early modern people consciously thought about whom to trust, but also that trust and trustworthiness are realities that can be studied historically.[110] Peter Schröder has broadened the scope of trust research to the field of early modern politics, exploring the ways in which political thinkers of the seventeenth century willfully deployed trust as a possible solution to the political instability of the time.[111] My study aims to broaden the field even further by trying to understand the role of trust in the context of religion.

Ute Frevert has taken the first steps in this direction. Her emphasis, however, is on the meaning that people have attributed to the word trust rather than on the practical consequences of trust relationships. Using early modern German lexicons, she has argued that until the eighteenth century the word *Vertrauen* (trust) was mainly associated with trust in God.[112] In the Enlightenment period, according to Frevert, confidence in oneself and in others became more central to the discourse on trust.[113] This shift in the meaning of the word also suggests some change in what trust meant for people who lived before and whose life was dominated by insecurities: according to Frevert, only in the late eighteenth century did the experience of trust and the

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[108] Steven Shapin, *A social history of truth: civility and science in seventeenth-century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), xxvi.
[109] Barbara J. Shapiro, *A culture of fact: England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).
[110] See e.g.: Toon van Houdt et al., eds., *On the Edge of Truth and Honesty: Principles and Strategies of Fraud and Deceit in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002). Instead of researching the role of trust throughout history, Ute Frevert and Dorothea Weltecke have dealt with the history of the word trust. Ute Frevert, 'Vertrauen - eine historische Spurensuche', in *Vertrauen, historische Annäherungen*, ed. Ute Frevert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 7–66; Dorothea Weltecke, 'Gab es "Vertrauen" im Mittelalter? Methodische Überlegungen', in Frevert, *Vertrauen, historische Annäherungen*, 67–89.
[111] Peter Schröder, *Trust in Early Modern International Political Thought, 1598–1713* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[112] Frevert, 'Vertrauen - eine historische Spurensuche', 15.
[113] Ibid., 21.

concept itself become something thoroughly positive.[114] In her contribution on trust in the Middle Ages, Dorothea Weltecke rightly argues that to further the debate on trust, scholars need to concentrate on individual actors.[115] The part of my research that focuses on personal experiences of trust responds to this call. It shows that, contrary to what Frevert argues, also for seventeenth-century religious, trust in God and one's neighbour could constitute a thoroughly positive experience.

The work of all these different scholars helps us to better understand the phenomenon of trust. The insights offered by the social sciences make us more familiar with the concept; the contributions of scholars of the early modern period show us that trust can be studied historically; and Frevert and Weltecke's work demonstrates that we can explore how our historical subjects experienced trust. However, in the light of the wide-ranging (and sometimes even contrasting) uses that scholars have made of the concept, a precise conceptualisation of trust is expedient. A definition of trust that one applies to history should, in my opinion, take into account the following aspects. First, in order to study trust in a historical context one should acknowledge the importance of the dimension of time: trust is an expectation that can be proven as correct or false with the passing of time, and which can accordingly change.[116] Furthermore, an act of trust requires one to assume that the trusted person *freely* wants to do what is expected of him or her: otherwise, instead

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[114] "Vertrauen und Misstrauen waren also auch in der Vormoderne keine unbekannten oder ungebräuchlichen Erfahrungen und Begriffe. Aber erst im späten 18. Jahrhundert erwarb Vertrauen jenen durch und durch positiven Nimbus, der ihm bis heute anhaftet. Das hat, wie zu zeigen sein wird, viel mit den gesellschaftlichen Umbrüchen, politischen Neuerungen und wirtschaftlichen Entwicklungen zu tun, die Europa seit der Französischen Revolution erlebte". Ute Frevert, *Vertrauensfragen: Eine Obsession der Moderne*, 1st ed. (München: C.H.Beck, 2013), 26.

[115] She also shows that for Luther, who, Weltecke argues, marked the turn from medieval thinking about *Vertrauen* to more recent uses of the word, trust in God was the only legitimate form of trust and all other trust was idolatry Weltecke, 'Gab es "Vertrauen"', 87–88.

[116] "Eine Theorie des Vertrauens setst eine Theorie der Zeit voraus" Luhmann, *Vertrauen*, 7. Also Hosking rightly remarks that past experience, that is, history, constitutes a fundamental aspect of trust. Geoffrey A. Hosking, *Why We Need a History of Trust*, (review no. 287a) http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/287a. Date accessed: 20 October, 2014. We should be well aware that in trusting someone, one does not only "embrace a hypothesis that seems secure enough to predict the other's action", as Schröder presumes, because the prediction that someone will do you harm is not captured by the word 'trust'. Schröder, *Trust*, 9. Trust, instead should be the prediction that one expects the other to do something that is for one's own good.

of trust, we would be talking about coercion.[117] Thirdly, to speak of trust one should have the prospect that the other is *able* to do what is asked: one can trust someone to speak the truth only about the things that he or she knows.[118] Finally, I consider as trust only those expectations that are based on earlier experiences (as opposed to "blind faith" – a form of trust that is impossible to detect in historical documents), because it is these expectations and the acts based on them that historians can find in the sources and thus describe.

These four premises can be summarised in the following definition: trust is an expectation based on experience that the other party, be it an individual or a group, will be *able* and *willing* to do what is expected.[119] Certainly, one might contend that an early modern European would not recognise such a modern understanding of trust.[120] Yet, as Weil has rightly affirmed: trust "can be considered […] a problem about which seventeenth-century people consciously thought rather than a concept imposed on the past by later historians".[121] Combining my own analysis of what seventeenth-century religious people thought about trust (as covered in chapter seven) with the results of modern research has resulted in a definition in which early modern people, in my opinion, could recognise themselves.

The primary objective of this thesis is not to explore the history of trust in the early modern age or to provide a conceptual analysis of how trust was expressed and experienced by seventeenth-century people. This would require a very different exploration from the one that I have undertaken. Instead, my goal is to verify the

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[117] The freedom of the other to act contrary to his or her earlier actions makes that the experiences on which one bases his or her trust never exclude at least some risk. Marek Kohn added that to speak of trust, the trusted person should be able to refuse to carry out the given task or, instead, to go beyond his or her own interests in answering to the given trust: Kohn, *Trust*, 14–17.

[118] These two aspects – ability and a benevolence, or willingness to act in favour of the one who trusts – are, together with integrity, the characteristics of a person in which we are likely to trust, according to our current knowledge. Michael D. Baer and Jason A. Colquitt, 'Why Do People Trust? Moving toward a More Comprehensive Consideration of the Antecedents of Trust', in Searle, Nienaber, and Sitkin, *The Routledge Companion to Trust*, 163, 168–72.

[119] This definition is inspired by that of Annette Baier, who wrote that: "Trust is reliance on others' competence and willingness to look after things one cares about which are entrusted to their care" Baier, 'Trust and Antitrust', 259.

[120] Frevert, *Vertrauensfragen*, 7–13.

[121] Rachel Weil, *A Plague of Informers: Conspiracy and Political Trust in William III's England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 5. Cited in: Schröder, *Trust*, 2.

hypothesis that trust was central to the Tridentine reform attempts. This hypothesis first arose out of the work I had done on missionary correspondences, which suggested that a trust-approach had the potential to further the debate on the Catholic Reformation. In order to verify this hypothesis, I analysed different situations in which trust appears to be a decisive element, firstly, by looking at *words* in the sources that expressed such trust (not only *fiducia*, but also verbs like *confidare*, *fidarsi*, *credere*, and *dar credito*), secondly, by exploring the *practices* through which trust was asked, given or withheld, and finally, by studying something that is closely related to trust, namely the perceived *trustworthiness* of people. All this is not to deny, of course, that other dynamics besides trust also played a decisive role in the Catholic Reformation in general, or in the particular situations that I researched.

There are several advantages of using trust as a lens rather than related concepts such as respectability, belief, honour, truth and loyalty. First, trust constitutes an antidote to the current Italian paradigm in which the focus on power and discipline tends to obscure the plurality of the Italian Church in the seventeenth century. The concept moreover provides a key to explain several contradictions with which the current historiography on the Catholic Reformation confronts us[122]: 1) the juxtaposition of instances of freedom and compulsion in the realm of female religiosity; 2) the contrast between the imposition of Tridentine mandates from above and the creative appropriation of the same Tridentine spirit from below; and 3) the paradoxical coexistence of very successful and very ineffective attempts to reform. Finally, trust offers the opportunity to consider a range of different situations that characterise the Catholic Reformation, and to analyse them together without infringing upon their singularity.

Approach and sources

In his book *Trust, a History*, Geoffrey Hosking has argued that historians influenced by Michel Foucault and Clifford Geertz have focused too much on power on the one hand, and meanings, representations and discourse on the other. Trust comes in where one wants to understand what connects ideas and perceptions with actual

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[122] See: Ditchield, 'In search of local knowledge', 287, 290-91, 293-94.

actions, decisions, and the behaviour of real people outside the text. Moreover, by focusing solely on power, one cannot understand actions inspired by "people's [...] lively and apparently ineradicable tendency to seek reciprocal relationships." With his study, Hosking invites historians to investigate the basis for human interaction, and thus a crucial aspect of society.[123] Departing from a different angle, Brad Gregory, a historian of the Reformation, proposed a similar attitude when he wrote that historians of religion should try to approach their subject matter on the terms of the religious people whom they are studying.[124] In the footsteps of Quentin Skinner, Gregory claims that scholars should try to depict religious people "in a manner in which they would have recognised themselves". In Skinner's words, we should "approach the past with a willingness to listen".[125] A study of the role of trust in the Catholic Reformation requires a combination of both methodologies. It necessarily centres around and acknowledges trust and distrust as basic motives of human interaction, specifically when confronted with novelty. At the same time, it presumes that one should take into consideration the religious assumptions, intellectual framework and goals that inspired people's acts of trust and distrust. In my view, Hosking and Seligman, who both studied the historical dimension of trust, have in some sense failed to "see things their way" where they bring in religion. Both assume that in all belief systems, faith is a form of unverified, blind trust. Yet, *in the*

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[123] Hosking, *Trust, a history*, 6.

[124] Brad S. Gregory, 'The Other Confessional History: On Secular Bias in the Study of Religion', *History and Theory. Theme Issue 45: Religion and History* 45, no. 4 (2006): 132–49. Where historians ceased to write confessional historiography, they, in his view, soon switched to a "secular confessional historiography", unthinkingly bringing "undemonstrable metaphysical beliefs" in the practice of scholarship. (p. 136) Religion seen through the lens of modern social theory (as developed by Feuerbach and Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Freud and others) must be reducible to something else, whether it be political, economic, cultural or natural. In Gregory's opinion, this approach leads to a biased account because "an action that might look non-religious and that could be interpreted plausibly in secular terms might have been motivated by and understood by its protagonists in religious terms". (p. 133). These might seem very banal observations, yet, according to Gregory, they "run deeply counter to the dominant ways in which many historians of early modern Christianity [...] have tended in recent decades to approach their subject matter" (p. 135).

[125] Quentin Skinner, Visions of Politics, vol. 1, 6. Cited in: Brad S. Gregory, 'Can We "See Things Their Way"? Should We Try?', in *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion*, ed. Alister Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad S. Gregory (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 25.

eyes of seventeenth-century Catholic ecclesiastics this was certainly not the case: as we shall see in chapter seven, they based their faith in God on concrete experiences just as they did with faith/trust in people.[126]

For early modern people, faith and trust were basically the same experience, as – for many religious people – they still are.[127] It is not my intention, in this thesis, to delve into the theological meaning of trust and faith: a short glance at the Bible suffices, though, to see that the word belief is often used in a meaning that comes very close to, or even coincides with trust.[128] Since seventeenth-century people also experienced faith and trust in very similar ways, I will not make an artificial divide between the two. Still, the focus of this research is mostly on interpersonal trust. The lived experience of this interpersonal trust is, as we will see, closely related to values that were paramount to seventeenth-century religious life: values such as obedience and what should be the free pursuit of virtue and salvation.

Yet even "seeing things their way" cannot offer a complete picture of historical change, since the viewpoint of contemporaries is likely to be varied and limited. Besides the motives of trust, we should therefore also study the *outcome* of trust (or distrust) with respect to the envisioned reform. That is why I have looked for correspondence and other private documents that gave me insight into motivations, while supplementing these with juridical and institutional sources that

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[126] A clear example of a reductive account of faith that largely overlooks the perspective of "what it meant to them", is a chapter by Geoffrey Hosking about the importance of trust in religion. Hosking, 'Godly homelands', in: idem, *Trust: A History*, 50–80. Hosking's views are not exceptional. Also Seligman, for example, argues that the ontological trust "which in fact bypasses all epistemological procedures of verification" that is required by the *Deus absconditus* of Calvinist belief, "has been, in one form or another, central to all religious thought". Seligman, *The Problem of Trust*, 22. In my view, it is precisely the way of believing, of trusting, that makes religions different from one another, and in studying them we should do justice to these differences. For Luther's take on trust: Sasja Emilie Mathiasen Stopa, '"Through Sin Nature Has Lost Its Confidence in God" – Sin and Trust as Formative Elements of Martin Luther's Conception of Society', *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 5, no. 2 (2018): 151–71.

[127] The former leader of the Anglican Church, Rowan Williams, asserts that belief in God often starts "from a sense that we 'believe in', we trust some kinds of people. We have confidence in the way they live, the way they live is a way I want to live." Hosking, *Trust: A History*, 51–52.

[128] Jesus often used the word belief in a sense that comes very close to trust (echoing the Old Testament), and Paul, too, explains faith as an absolute trust in Christ, through which one can be saved (central, obviously, in Luther's *sola fide*).

highlight the results of strategies of trust or distrust. The sources that I used range from very personal, autobiographical letters of Jesuit novices to the repetitive decrees of diocesan synods; from anonymous letters of complaint by Genoese cloistered sisters to juridical documentation produced in the city's different courts; and from a religious congregation's internal correspondence to the pleas for material help from a lay woman running one of Genoa's largest charitable institutions. Though running the risk of being eclectic, the advantages of using such a wide range of sources are evident: they offer a many-layered glimpse into how contemporaries saw the importance of trust for the reforms, while at the same time enabling us to see the results of different approaches.

As Valeria Polonio wrote, for the different ambits of the Genoese ecclesiastical landscape in the early modern period we either have hardly any material, or the sources are abundant but barely researched.[129] The choice in favour of the sources that I used was partially determined by their availability: thus, I was helped by Jesuit and Lazarist correspondences that are respectively accessible in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu* and available in print; and I made use of published manuscripts and edited sources on female religious individuals in seventeenth-century Genoa. However, I also studied many juridical and administrative documents as well as letters that can be found in the Genoese *Archivio di Stato*, the *Archivio Diocesano*, and the Vatican Archives. In these different archives, I mainly selected source collections that could teach me something about situations of distrust between religious or between religious and lay people (accusatory letters, investigation reports, and the institutional responses to this type of documents). Further research on, for instance, the popularity of certain religious orders might benefit from serial sources on donations or other financial documentation, as well as lists of entries in the different religious orders. Much of this material, however, is either lost or spread over the archives of the different religious institutions in Genoa or elsewhere (around the turn of the eighteenth century, when many religious groups were suppressed, their archives were dispersed). Pastoral visitations, in general an important source for the

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[129] Valeria Polonio, *Istituzioni ecclesiastiche della Liguria medievale*, vol. 67, Italia Sacra. Studi e documenti di storia ecclesiastica (Rome: Herder, 2002), IX.

kind of research that I have in mind, are not absent for Genoa in the seventeenth century, yet they predominantly provide descriptions of the different churches and their belongings, together with demographic information: there is little or no assessment of the population's or the clergy's religious habits and morals, and obstacles in the drafting and conservation of these visitation reports have made them less useful for our aim (even though in other areas of Europe they have proven very valuable).[130] Another important archive for the research I propose, that of the local Inquisition tribunal, has largely been lost.[131]

Overview of the dissertation

The aim of this thesis is to analyse how practices of trust and distrust were used to bring about reforms that were typical of the Catholic Reformation in Genoa in the first half of the seventeenth century until the end of Cardinal Durazzo's tenure (1664). This analysis resulted in a varied range of reform situations in which the role of trust and distrust comes to the fore. Before delving into these case studies, the first chapter sets the scene: it sketches the geopolitical and economic background of the Republic in the seventeenth century, introduces us to Cardinal Durazzo, the most prominent ecclesiastical personality of that time, and surveys the many local studies on the Genoese Church that constitute the fertile ground on which to conduct our trust research. Finally, the chapter delves into the role of the lay people in the Catholic Reformation as studied in recent scholarship on the Genoese situation.

Against this background, the second chapter uses three case studies to introduce the phenomenon of what I will call trust management, i.e. the strategy with which reformers tried to appease a certain group of people (be it other clergy or lay people) and convince them of a shared interest in order to win their trust. When they did, it was always with an aim that went beyond merely maintaining the trust of that

[130] Valeria Polonio Felloni, 'Le più antiche visite pastorali della diocesi di Genova (1597-1654). Presentazione di una fonte', *Serta antiqua et mediaevalia. Nuova serie* 1 (1997): 428–29; Black, *Church, Religion and Society*, 79.
[131] Paolo Fontana, 'L'Inquisizione a Genova e in Liguria. Situazione degli archivi locali e prospettive di ricerca sulla dissidenza religiosa nel tardo Settecento', in *Atti del Convegno. L'Inquisizione Romana e i suoi archivi. A vent'anni dall'apertura dell'ACDF (15-17 May 2018)*, ed. Alejandro Cifres (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2019), 1. Consulted on 28 June 2019 at: http://www.memoriafidei.va/content/dam/memoriafidei/documenti/32%20Fontana.pdf.

specific group. The three examples in the chapter demonstrate that this approach was not infallible, and could even result in an unintended loss of trust. Apparently, the use of trust management nonetheless appealed to many reformers because they often returned to such strategies to further their reform goals.

Winning or winning back the trust of the laity was a prime concern of the Council of Trent: its decrees insisted that a more trustworthy clergy was to set an example, in behaviour and devotion, and that the laity would follow. The third chapter illustrates why this effort to foster the trustworthy image of the clergy brought with it new trust-related problems. Focusing on the Tridentine regulations regarding clothing, we will see how the scandal provoked by a betrayal of trust – a trust that had been awakened by appearances but did not correspond with reality – was much greater than the indignity caused by a priest who openly lived a life that did not conform to Tridentine standards. Reform efforts such as these clothing regulations could thus backfire in unexpected ways.

The next chapter shifts our attention from male secular priests to the world of female religiosity in Genoa. In this environment, trust was a scarce good. Even though the Council of Trent had decreed otherwise, halfway through the seventeenth century the convent continued to be a place where the urban elite could safely put away their daughters, including those without a religious vocation. The tactic used to discipline these convents was one of distrust: rules, a tight control over the convents' visitors, and punishments for transgressors were intended to solve the problematic situation. My analysis of this situation will shed light on the efficacy of this method, and on the ways in which contemporaries experienced it.

The fifth chapter in turn investigates the ways in which an approach of distrust, the easiest reaction in the face of a new initiative and the logical approach in solving abuses, sometimes turned into trust. Initiatives of female religiosity outside the walls of the convent were looked upon with suspicion by the urban elites. Still, Genoa witnessed the birth of two initiatives of women who wanted to live a religious life in the world: the Medee and the Brignoline. The chapter also delves into the dynamics that underpinned the support given to the Turchine, a new order that observed strict enclosure. The trust that was eventually given to the three initiatives

was, as we will see, closely related to the level of personal freedom that their female founders managed to obtain.

The sixth chapter returns to the male clergy and centres on the intermediary groups that historians have identified as essential actors in the reform: religious orders and congregations. In particular, the analysis concentrates on the arrival in Genoa of the Lazarists, a young, French congregation of priests founded in 1625. In order to establish itself successfully in the city, not only did this new congregation need to win trust from different sides; its members also had to find out for themselves whom to trust in the new environment. In this chapter, I explore the thought process behind this endeavour and show that a new congregation like the Lazarists was well aware that trust was vital for success in a new area.

Finally, from the collective awareness of the importance of trust I zoom in on the experience of religious individuals. The letters of Genoese Jesuits who offered themselves for one of the many overseas missions give an exceptional insight into the personal considerations of these individuals. The candidates described with acuteness the experiences that infused them with the trust necessary for making the life-changing choice to go to Japan, China, Paraguay, or elsewhere. The letters therefore help us to further understand how contemporaries experienced trust. The chapter shows that a trust perspective not only offers a possibility to better grasp why some reform attempts were more effective than others; it also provides a vital key to witness the lives of those involved and understand their individual choices.

In the conclusion, I will take stock of the results of this experiment that involved looking at the Catholic Reformation through the lens of trust. Without any pretention to completeness, we will see what this approach brings, firstly to our understanding of reform mechanisms within early modern Catholicism; secondly, to the current insights in the seventeenth-century Church in Genoa; and, finally, to our present-day conceptualisation of early modern trust, especially in the context of religion.