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JÁN ĎAČOK SJ

Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome/Italy

University of Trnava, Bratislava/Slovakia

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2724-6097>

BIOPOLITICS AND INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.
CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the 20th century, and even more from the beginning of this century, biopolitics has become an important issue within political discussions at the national and international levels. During the last century, harmful tendencies in biopolitics have been accumulated, and in certain instances, have developed into unscrupulous structures of the true *biopolitics of death* or *thanatobiopolitics*. Seen most visibly within the postmodern biomedicine and health care realms, it permeates today, and in different modes, influences considerable proportions of the current public square. It will be impossible to contain the wrong uses of today's accumulated *biopowers* of the interest groups, the developed communities, or of the underdeveloped mankind as a whole, and the effective implementation of a sound and truly responsible *positive* or *integral biopolitics*. This poses strong historical challenges for the moral, political and social responsibility.

The true Christian vision opposes short-sighted utilitarian or mere pragmatic positions that result in degrading dehumanisation and depersonalisation of contemporary societies, including their medical/health care and social sectors, with worrying short as well as long term consequences. Positive biopolitics and integral human development may contribute to an achievement of the paradigm changes emphasized by Pope Francis. The Social teaching of the Church offers principles and useful guidance for an effective discernment in this vast and complex, but critically important area.

Theoretical reflection and practical experiences confirm that there is a close relationship between the social field and biopolitics. They are interconnected like two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, if one flourishes, the other also flourishes,

and on the other hand, if one is damaged, the other is also damaged or destroyed. The Social teaching of the Church is rich and well-articulated¹. This Paper takes its basic inspiration from the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis *Laudato si'* (*LS*)². She is enriched by complementary visions of his Apostolic exhortations *Evangelii gaudium* (*EG*)³, *Amoris laetitia* (*AL*)⁴, *Gaudete et Exsultate* (*GE*)⁵, *Christus vivit* (*ChV*)⁶, and by some aspects from the Magistry of his two predecessors: Saint John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

The purpose of this study is to present some concepts connected with very actual and urgent issues and to contribute toward the search of the responses from the position of the Catholic Church, especially from her moral and social teaching. After introducing few summary characteristics of „Culture of Care” and „Culture of Waste” (1.), relation among politics and society (2.), biopower, biopolitics and bioethics (3.) with several alarming examples (3.1), positive biopolitics and thanatobiopolitics (4.), this Paper proposes some means as the answers to the challenges for the Catholic Social Teaching (5.), through the Integral Human Development (5.1) and the invitation to the responsible creativity at the personal, social and political levels (5.2).

1. „CULTURE OF CARE” *VERSUS* „CULTURE OF WASTE”

As is known, Pope Francis, from the beginning of his pontificate, emphasizes the need of care of what is fragile and vulnerable (cf. *EG* 209-216). The Encyclical *Laudato si'* highlights the marked relationship between the degradation of the environment on the one hand, and between human degradation and ethics on the other (cf. *LS* 56). The pollution of the atmosphere and nature, the increase in the concentration of chemical products in soil, rivers, lakes, seas and oceans cause

¹ For the summary, see: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2004.

² Francis, *Encyclical Letter Laudato si' on Care for Our Common Home* (24.04.2015), w2.vatican.va/.../encyclicals/.../papa-francesco_-20150524_ encic (access: 24.04.2019).

³ Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World* (24.11.2013), w2.vatican.va/.../papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_ eva (access: 24.04.2019).

⁴ Francis, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia on Love in the Family* (19.03.2016), https://w2.vatican.va/.../papa-francesco_esortazioneap_-20160319_amoris-laetitia_en (access: 24.04.2019).

⁵ Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate on the Call to Holiness in Today's World* (19.03.2018), w2.vatican.va/.../papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_ga (access: 24.04.2019).

⁶ Francis, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christus vivit on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment* (25.03.2019), <https://press.vatican.va/content/sala-stampa/it/bollettino/pub-blico/2019/04/.../00556.html> (access: 24.04.2019).

social and health problems to large parts of the world population, especially the poor, and lead to the precocious death of millions of people. This reality represents a great challenge for all the fields of every society.

The main points of the Encyclical underline the urgency on the part of people and authorities of facing the environmental and social problems that affect the health and the psychophysical wellbeing of people. Pope Francis emphasizes that „the work of the Church seeks not only to remind everyone of the duty to care for nature, but at the same time ‘she must above all protect mankind from self-destruction’” (LS 79).

The Encyclical presents the Pope’s invitation, or his urgent call to protect human dignity and the dignity of all creation. LS calls for and encourages a friendly rapport between man and nature, that is, between the partners, who have now become rivals. At the same time, it proposes to replace the „culture of waste” (LS 16, 22) or social exclusion of pseudo-culture with a new style that is typified by Christian altruism, simplicity, humility and sobriety. Contrary to the exaggerated anthropocentrism of postmodernity (with its individualism, egoism, narcissism and self-affirmation)⁷, which is based on the human need to buy, possess and consume things, on the „disposable or throwaway” mentality (LS 123), on „the culture of relativism” (LS 123), and the obsession with the „technocratic paradigm” (LS 109) that leads to domination and aggression, *Laudato si’* invites all to create awareness and to change this lifestyle.

The situation can only be improved through the unification of forces and close collaboration in developing effective strategies for the culture of life or the „culture of care” (LS 231) and acceptance. Regarding the care of the sick, the weak and the poor, we need to have the courage to practice the solidarity and the love of the Good Samaritan. Only the Christocentric orientation, aimed at the person of Jesus Christ, the New Adam, leads to hope, trust and reconciliation with God, with oneself and with creation. In this sense, a broad range of action is opened for the new lifestyle, respect for the value and dignity of every human person and for „missionary creativity” (AL 57), including the social and political fields. These actions can preserve and promote our common home for present and future generations, but all these depend on the strategies, policies or biopolitics that are adopted and put into practice in every field of societies.

Contemporary family belongs also to the category of fragile and vulnerable realities. The „culture of waste” passes also to the family. The Pope indicates many challenges, which current family confronts. Some of them can lead to the significant weakening or destruction of marital and familiar relations (cf. AL 31-57). The same author hereby encourages an adequate response. Balanced social

⁷ For basic peculiarities of the philosophical postmodernity, the anthropologic and moral value of human life and the characteristics of the postmodern man, see: J. Ďačok, *La postmodernità nel dibattito bioetico. Il caso delle questioni di fine vita*, Trnava: Dobrá kniha 2007, p. 57-135.

and political assistance, pastoral discernment and accompanying are considered as effective means for consolidation of families and prevention of broken relations. According to the Pope: „Today, more important than the pastoral care of failures is the pastoral effort to strengthen marriages and thus to prevent their breakdown” (AL 307). The Magistry of Pope Francis furnishes adequate motions for reasonable proposals how to create from the family the first, natural and the most import place of the culture of acceptance or the biopolitics of respect and reciprocity.

2. POLITICS AND SOCIETY

It should be emphasized that the concept of biopolitics⁸ is broad and complex, and it is problematic to provide a precise definition. The concept of life and politics dates back to the Greek words *bíos* (life in the biological sense) and *politikós* (the adjective – „political”, from the root *polis* – the city-state). However, the concept itself does not express the relationship between the two words that make it up. In the last decades biopolitics represents current issues of different discussions at all levels. We are witnessing fascinating scientific and technological progress that leads to new knowledge, which also gives rise to the possibilities of manipulating life in general, and human life in particular. This progress must be seen in close connection with financial and economic interests, with the race to achieve utilizable results and benefits in the field of production. Furthermore, it is necessary to mention the political interests of domination by some international and global groups and lobbies.

As it is well known, different contents can be assigned to the notion or concept of „politics”. One can talk about the politics of a financial institution, a cultural association, a company, etc. Strictly speaking, however, in the vision of Carlo Casini, „we refer to the organization and action of civil society, in particular the State in all its articulations and in all its horizons (internal, international, local government, etc.)”⁹. In other words, politics can also be understood as: „Practical activity relating to the organization and administration of public life; the art of government. From the various areas in which public life is developed, the specific determinations are derived, which are procured or adopted by politics (international, economic,

⁸ For the genesis and the history of biopolitics, see: S. La Rosa, *Biopolitica: Prospettiva globale per governare la vita*, Morolo: IF Press 2008, p. 25-56; N. Corsi – C. Navarini, *Vita e reciprocità. La felicità del dono in prospettiva biopolitica*, in: A.G. Spagnolo – V. Tambone (eds.), *Proposte per una biopolitica personalista*, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2015, p. 191-193.

⁹ C. Casini, *Biopolitica – Parte giuridica*, in: E. Sgreccia – A. Tarantino (eds.), *Enciclopedia di Bioetica e Scienza giuridica*, vol. II, Napoli-Roma: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane 2009, p. 248.

financial, etc.)”¹⁰. Or, in brief, politics can be perceived „as a moral commitment to the community”¹¹.

It is important to remember this reality in the context of the contemporary pluralistic and democratic societies, when politics has, from one hand, to take in the account the fragility of life, particularly of the human life, and, from the other hand, to be in confrontation with „sin’ and ‘structures of sin’”. The last ones are connected with concrete acts of persons and with their personal sins¹². „Structures of sin” grow up when there is not an effective carefulness to the moral dimension in the society and they can lead to a dehumanization of the life, of social and political institutions too. It is a challenge for the people of good will, and particularly for the Christians, to put their personal commitments to promotion and defence of the sanctity of human life and the dignity of the human person, of common good, of the indissolubility of marriage and dignity of family, based on the permanent relationship of two persons of different sex. They are invited to the integral service of the political and social life in the spirit of serious personal and institutional discernment and to implement at the practical level natural, moral and – in the case of believers in Jesus Christ – also supernatural values. It is clear, that for realisation of these goals, fundamental is the appropriate choice of political means and parties as expressions of the political participation¹³.

From the point of view of the Catholic Church, it belongs to the mission of the Church „to pass moral judgments even in matters related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it. The means, the only means, she may use are those which are in accord with the Gospel and the welfare of all men according to the diversity of times and circumstances”¹⁴. But when civil authorities ask something that is against the fundamental rights of the persons, to the moral order or to the common good, the Christian has to refuse his obedience to them. It is his moral duty and his obligation according the conscience, applying to the institution of conscientious objection. To serve God and to obey Him is more important than to obey those authorities and to serve the social and the political communities under their direction¹⁵.

¹⁰ Aa. Vv., *Politica*, in: *Dizionario di filosofia – Treccani* (2009), [www.treccani.it/enciclo-pedia/politica_\(Dizionario-di-filosofia\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclo-pedia/politica_(Dizionario-di-filosofia)/) (access: 14.04.2019).

¹¹ A.A. Bello, *Introduzione*, in: E. Stein, *Vado per il mio popolo*, A.A. Bello (ed.), Roma: Castelvocchi 2012, p. 10.

¹² Cf. Jan Pavel II., *Encyklika Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30.12.1987), in: *Sociální encykliky (1891-1991)*, Praha: Zvon české katolické nakladatelství 1996, n. 36.

¹³ For deepening of these interrelations, see: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 565-574.

¹⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church with Modifications from the Editio Typica*, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1997², trans. by United States Catholic Conference: New York-London-Toronto-Sydney-Auckland 1997², n. 2246.

¹⁵ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2242.

3. BIOPOWER, BIOPOLITICS AND BIOETHICS

The State systematically exercises its power concerning the different periods of human life (conception, intrauterine life, birth, health, and death). It is called the *biopower* which – according to Michel Foucault (1926-1984) – connotes a „great two-sided technology – anatomical and biological – acting on the individual and on the species, aimed at the activities of the body and the processes of life”¹⁶. The biopower is represented by different elements that control relations between the State and members of its society, communities and institutions. The same author marks the power as a reality what „has to be analyzed as something that circulates, or better something that works only like a chain. [...] The power operates, exercises through a reticular organization”¹⁷. From this point of view, the power is the intrinsic – capillary – property of all vital parts of the society. It is able to infiltrate and dominate them and through them to change, to transform modalities and politics of direction of the society. The power tries to be nameless and proactive. M. Foucault describes its action as follows: „it penetrates the bodies, produces the things, brings the pleasure, forms the knowledge, produces the discourses; it is necessary to consider it as a productive network which passes through all the social body, much more than a negative requisition that could have functioned as repression”¹⁸. It is possible to recognize these strategies from the XVIIIth century when the States started to interest themselves in the lives of their citizens (as bodies) and to use different scientific disciplines, as economy, medicine, statistics, sociology, hygiene, for political reasons. The biological aspects of the social body were exposed to the mechanisms of knowledge and power and introduced to the political level. The power of the States became the biopower as a means of the biopolitics. In this mode it opened the way to manage the biological life and to operate in favor of it or against it, to permit to live or to reject it through death. Consequently, the biopolitics was evolved in two opposite directions: biopolitics of life and biopolitics of death¹⁹.

The systematic and bright elaboration of the concept of biopolitics is assigned to M. Foucault. He dedicates his attention to this issue in many of his works,

¹⁶ M. Foucault, *La volonté de savoir*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard 1976, *La volontà di sapere*, trans. P. Pasquino, G. Procacci, Milano: Feltrinelli 1991², p. 123.

¹⁷ M. Foucault, *Microfisica del potere. Interventi politici*, Torino: Einaudi 1977, p. 144, cited by: V. Tambone – A.G. Spagnolo, *La probabile bellezza di una biopolitica personalista*, in: A.G. Spagnolo – V. Tambone (eds.), *Proposte per una biopolitica personalista*, p. 15.

¹⁸ M. Foucault, *Microfisica del potere. Interventi politici*, p. 13, cited by: V. Tambone – A.G. Spagnolo, *La probabile bellezza di una biopolitica personalista*, in: A.G. Spagnolo – V. Tambone (eds.), *Proposte per una biopolitica personalista*, p. 16.

¹⁹ Cf. V. Tambone – A.G. Spagnolo, *La probabile bellezza di una biopolitica personalista*, in: A.G. Spagnolo – V. Tambone (eds.), *Proposte per una biopolitica personalista*, p. 16-17.

especially in *La volonté de savoir* (1976), where he understands the biopolitics as: „something which helps the life and its mechanisms to enter into the field of explicit calculations and does from the power-knowledge an agent of transformation of the human life”²⁰. We present here also some of his other definitions of biopolitics: „The increasing state concern with the biological well-being for the population including disease control and prevention, adequate food and water supply, sanitary shelter, and education”. In complementary sense, it is: „the mode, with which it was tried from the XVIIIth century, to rationalize the problems posed to the governmental practice from its own phenomenon of the whole of living beings formed in population, health, hygiene, birth, longevity, races”. Or, shortly: „The style of government that regulates populations through bio-power”²¹.

As a consequence, and particularly in our days, it is possible to recognize a reduction of spaces for the private or personal life (naked life – *bíos*) where it could be accepted and protected. It refers especially to the family as the place and space where the life comes to light, because – in the perspective of biopower and biopolitics – every kind of concern with biological life has to be publicly recognized and permitted²².

It is undeniable that biopolitics also expands the range of its actions in the field of animal and vegetable life; however, the objective of our investigation will only consider human life. In the context of the vast technological possibilities, in the era of globalization and of numerous planetary emergencies, human life is also examined by bioethics. The latter came about as a scientific discipline in the seventies of the last century. According to the recognized definition given by W.T. Reich (1995), bioethics is „the systematic study of moral dimensions – including moral

²⁰ M. Foucault, *La volonté de savoir*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard 1976, *La volontà di sapere*, trans. P. Pasquino, G. Procacci, Milano: Feltrinelli 1991², p. 126.

²¹ Cf. M. Foucault, *La volontà di sapere*, p. 126. See, also: M. Foucault, *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir: Cours au Collège de France (1970-1971)*, Paris: Seuil/Gallimard 2011; M. Foucault, *Lezioni sulla volontà di sapere. Corso al Collège de France (1970-1971)*, trans. M. Nicoli, C. Troilo, Milano: Feltrinelli 2015; M. Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France (1978-1979)*, Paris: Seuil/Gallimard 2004; M. Foucault, *Nascita della Biopolitica. Corso al College de France (1978-1979)*, Milano: Feltrinelli 2005, cited by: M. Maioni – V. Tambone, *Proposta per una biopolitica personalista*, in: A.G. Spagnolo – V. Tambone (eds.), *Proposte per una biopolitica personalista*, p. 152; E. Midolo – S.M. Bowman – N. Casillas – M. Casini, *The Most Relevant Dilemmas regarding human life in U.S.*, in: A.G. Spagnolo – V. Tambone (eds.), *Proposte per una biopolitica personalista*, p. 107. For complex context of the biopolitics and directions of its practical applications, see: E. Corradi, *Filosofia della „morte dell’uomo”*. *Saggio sul pensiero di Michel Foucault*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero 1977; R. Esposito, *Bíos. Biopolitica e filosofia*, Torino: Einaudi 2004; P. Montani, *Bioestetica. Senso comune, tecnica e arte nell’età della globalizzazione*, Roma: Carocci 2007; F. Lucrezi – F. Mancuso (eds.), *Diritto e vita. Biodiritto, bioetica, biopolitica*, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino 2010; P. Valvo (ed.), *Quale scienza per quale uomo? La sfida della biopolitica*, Siena: Cantagalli 2010.

²² Cf. G. Gambino, *Il fragile confine tra biopolitica e biodiritto: Riflessioni a margine del principio procreativo*, in: A.G. Spagnolo – V. Tambone (eds.), *Proposte per una biopolitica personalista*, p. 67-83.

vision, decisions, conduct, and policies – of the life sciences and health care, employing a variety of ethical methodologies in an interdisciplinary setting²³. The term bioethics is used less as a synonym of medical ethics. The issues covered by both bioethics and biopolitics coincide, and for this reason some consider biopolitics to be a particular sector or part of bioethics. In fact, politics affects, influences, favors, promotes, regulates, restricts or discards life...

3.1 A NUMBER OF ALARMING EXAMPLES

We have witnessed a very rapid and disturbing proliferation of pressing questions regarding biopolitics. We will list only a few examples here:

a) The legalization of abortion promoted as a „fundamental right” of the woman. This practice has spread from the Soviet Union and the countries of the ex-Soviet block²⁴ and from the Western countries²⁵ to planetary level. After exercising and strengthening of this use, abortion has become a part of the mentality of many peoples and has led to paradoxical situations at the political level in the European Union and in some its Member States. For example: In February 2017 the European Parliament has approved the resolution which refuses the statement of D. Trump, the President of the US, and his decision to not sponsor nongovernmental organizations supporting and practicing abortions as a means of family planning. The resolution suggests to the Member States to create, from their internal resources, an international financial foundation for promoting „services” of family planning and of „safe and legal abortion”. The members of the European Parliament have approved (with the majority of voices /371 on behalf, 198 against, 74 delayed/)

²³ S.G. Post, *Introduction*, in: S.G. Post (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, vol. I, Detroit-New York-San Francisco-New Haven, Conn-Waterville, Maine-London: MacMillan-Gale 2004³, p. XI.

²⁴ The Law n. 68 regarding artificial abortion was accepted in the communist Czechoslovakia in 1957 in the name of the atheistic ideology which has not respected the value of conceived and yet non born child. The abortion was perceived as a method of birth control. For the historical context of this law and its contemporary consequences in Slovakia, see: J. Ďáčok, *Základné črty bioetického zápasu*, in: Fórum života (ed.), *60 rokov legalizácie potratov v Československu. Morálne a politické aspekty práva na život*, Rajecké Teplice: Fórum života 2017, p. 50-59, <http://www.forumzivota.sk/wpcontent/uploads/2013/05/Zborn%C3%ADkcel%-C3%BD.pdf> (access: 1.04.2019).

²⁵ In Italy, for instance, the Law n. 194 has been introduced in 1978 (*Norms for the Social Protection of Maternity and Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy*) which has decriminalized the practice of abortion. According to the Ministry of Health of Italy, from the beginning, when the law has come into force, until 31 December 2005, 4.603.525 abortions were performed. It could be confronted with loss of population in a big Italian region... According to the Annual report of the Ministry of Health of Italy, the total number of abortions in Italy until 2017 was 5.895.368. Carlo Casini presents the history of the struggle for life's right in the Italian society and politics from the 1983 until 2007, with the contribution of the Catholics. Cf. C. Casini, *Biopolitica: l'ora è venuta. Politica e diritto alla vita*, Siena: Cantagalli, 2007. See also: Centro di aiuto alla vita di Cassino, *I numeri dell'aborto in Italia*, www.centrodiaiuoallavitadicassino-it/da-sapere/i-numeri-dell-aborto-in-italia/ (access: 1.04.2019).

the resolution which pushes abortion, contraception and sterilization as parts of „sexual and reproductive health, sexual and reproductive rights”. It depends only on a concrete Member country if it will contribute to that fund or not. Netherlands just contributed with the sum of 20 million of Euro²⁶.

b) Tragic consequences of selective abortions of female sex, especially in India and China (with the presence of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities /UNFPA/ and the past biopolitical program of unic child), bringing about disparity between the sexes and the disappearance and dearth of women (*missing women*). While at the international level the average relation among the newborn boys and girls is 107 %, in China it is 119 %, and in some regions 136 %. According to the estimations, about 40 million of girls are missing. That’s why, there are many social difficulties, especially for men who are not able to get married. Ten years ago, the number of those men was about 25 million, in 2020 they will be about 40 million. There is an increase in crime, emigration or transport of women to China as logical consequences of that situation. According to the sources of the UNFPA from 2005, about 650.000 girls and women were brought to China every year, especially from poor countries of Asia (Myanmar, Vietnam). Their destination was usually prostitution or trade of brides²⁷.

c) Supernumerary frozen embryos as consequences of artificial techniques of medically assisted fertilization, in particular FIVET (*Fertilization In Vitro with Embryo Transfer*) or ICSI (*Intracyto-plasmatic Sperm Injection*). Only in Italy, for instance, in 2008 there were 763 non transferred and cryopreserved embryos who were artificially produced. In the following years, because of the intervention of the Constitutional Court, their number was rapidly growing up: from 7.337 in 2009, to 16.280 in 2010 and 22.143 in 2013²⁸. In conformity with national legislations, the storage areas and stocks of the centers for assisted fertilization are periodically „set free or emptied”, naturally bringing about the destruction of the frozen embryos.

²⁶ Cf. Tlačová kancelária Konferencia biskupov Slovenska, *Europarlament navrhól zriadiť medzinárodný fond na financovanie potratov*, <https://m.tkkbs.sk/mview.php?q=2&cisloclan-ku...> (access: 12.04.2019). In February 2017 French Parliament has approved the law which permits a punishment to those persons responsible for the Webpages which offer some references regarding the abortion. Each information which could lead to changing of the accepted decision in favour of abortion, will be judged as „offence from obstruction of abortion”. Penalty can arrive up to 2 years of jail or 30.000 Euro of financial ban. Cf. D. Zappalà, „*Ostruzione digitale all’aborto*”, *Parigi decide*, „Avvenire” 16.02.2017, p. 16. See also: Aa. Vv., *Esteso a internet il reato di ostruzione all’aborto*, „L’Osservatore Romano” 18.02.2017, p. 2.

²⁷ Cf. L. Negri – R. Cascioli, *Perché la Chiesa ha ragione. Su vita, famiglia, educazione, AIDS, demografia, sviluppo*, Torino: Lindau 2010, p. 63-85; 189-209.

²⁸ A study dedicated to the origin, the destiny of abandoned embryos, their anthropological status in postmodern society, bioethical and biogiuridical implication at the international level and in Italy, is: L. Lodevole, *Embrioni „abbandonati”*, Ariccia: Aracne 2016. For the approximate numbers of embryos *extra uterum* in Italy, see in particularly p. 55-72.

d) Political and ideological pressure for the legalization of euthanasia. Extensive attention is paid to „dramatic cases” diffused through the media, with a gradual opening to assisted suicide and euthanasia. The other, but very important motivation, is ageing of the worldwide population or the growing up of persons over 60 years. According to the statistical tendencies, in the period from 2001 to 2050 the number of the persons over 60 could be three times higher – from about 606 million to 2 billion²⁹. It is foreseeable to expect (as was the case with abortion), an augmentation of euthanasia as a biopolitical and bureaucratic practice regarding the end to an individual human life³⁰.

4. POSITIVE BIOPOLITICS AND THANATOBIPOLITICS

Each kind of biopolitics which valorizes itself, serves society and human dignity, promotes and protects them. In this way it can bring about the noble and moral commitment which serves the common good and is „in favour of the community”³¹. This kind of biopolitics is the true policy of life – positive biopolitics or personalistic biopolitics.

Unfortunately, in the course of the XXth century, in serving the Nazi and Communist ideologies, biopolitics wrote the blackest pages of its history. Here biopolitics was transformed into true thanatobiopolitics or negative biopolitics. On the one hand, after the second World War there was the social and political will to condemn the Nazi ideology at the Nuremberg trial (from 20th November 1945 until 1st October 1946), sentencing some of the bearers and implementers of that ideology, and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10th December 1948), the United Nations accepted something that set out to protect humankind from barbarism.

On the other hand, after the fall of communism, what was lacking and still is missing was the social and political will to proceed in the same manner against the main representatives of the Communist ideology. This ideology – as some say – melted away like snow, but still penetrated all the structures of post-communist societies, creating „an underground network” with its different negative consequences...

²⁹ Cf. M. Schooyans, *Controllo delle nascite e implosione demografica*, in: Pontificio Consiglio per la Famiglia (ed.), *Lexicon. Termini ambigui e discussi su famiglia, vita e questioni etiche*, Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane 2003, p. 159. See also: G.-F. Dumont, *Demografia, transizione demografica e politica demografica*, in: Pontificio Consiglio per la Famiglia (ed.), *Lexicon. Termini ambigui e discussi*, p. 167-175.

³⁰ For a synthetic presentation of four mentioned alarming examples, see: F. D’Agostino, *Bioetica e biopolitica. Ventuno voci fondamentali*, Torino: G. Giappichelli Editore 2011, p. 56-59.

³¹ A.A. Bello, *Introduzione*, p. 10.

Today Western society is characterized by its widespread liberty and by the „euphoria of death”: to take the life of others, naturally, from the point of view of the healthy and adults (to kill – e.g. by means of genetic pre-implantation diagnosis, the destruction of frozen embryos or with chromosome damage, abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia etc.) or to take one’s own life (e.g. suicide)³². In the context of planned projects through the vision of law as „legitimization’ of violence”, Michel Schooyans, a very renowned Belgian philosopher and theologian, states the following: „Euthanasia appears [...] as a lordly expression of a philosophical conception of man, fascinated with death and vertigo of self-destruction. It could not be amazing, if a society, opened to accept a law so perverse, passes from planned destruction of individuals to planned destruction of itself. The main cause of demographic fall of the Western European states prosper in this double will of self-destruction, in this drive of death”³³.

The central point regarding discussions and decisions in biopolitics revolves around the natural value of human life. Recognizing this value signifies establishing a base for the respect and protection of human life, which could lead to the rejection of the genetic pre-implantation diagnosis with a possibility of abortion, to the rejection of experimentation with a human being in each period of his development without informed consensus, only accepting therapeutic interventions. The result of this outlook is the requirement for binding regulations at national, international and world levels. Looking back on the past experiences, scientific and technological progress should induce the formulation and codification of limits which are able to avoid or put a stop to eugenic practices³⁴ with very serious social and personal consequences.

5. SOME MEANS OF THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The biblical foundation serves as a basis for theoretical and moral reflection and all kind of activities. According to the Christian Revelation, „God created mankind in his image” and „likeness” (*Gen 1,26-27*) so that he could be his collaborator and interlocutor: „This shows us the immense dignity of each person, ‘who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and

³² For discussions regarding bioethics and biogiuridics, their histories, competencies and practical applications, see: F. D’Agostino, *Bioetica e Biogiuridica, oggi, „Medicina e Morale”* 5 (2017), p. 659-663.

³³ M. Schooyans, *La face cachée de L’ONU, Il volto nascosto dell’ONU. Verso il governo mondiale*, trans. M. Biasutto, Roma: Il Minotauro 2004, p. 133-134.

³⁴ Cf. L. Lippolis, *Biopolitica – Parte etica*, in: E. Sgreccia – A. Tarantino (eds.), *Enciclopedia di Bioetica e Scienza giuridica*, vol. II, Napoli-Roma: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane 2009, p. 243-247.

of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons” (LS 65). Recalling the position of John Paul II, pope Francis emphasizes the particular love of God for each person who receives from the Creator „an infinite dignity” (LS 65).

God wanted each person for himself as an expression of his free love. Mankind belongs to God, who gives him life and with it a particular and original mission too. Every human life is important, sacred and precious, a foundation of other values, and this is why it is inviolable for its entire existence – from conception until natural death. The respect for the Creator, the promotion and the defense of human life are parts of the whole Tradition of the Church and its Magisterium.

5.1 INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

It is understood as a generous and positive approach or vision of the human existence in her complex relations with family, community and all humankind. It is based on respect for human dignity which is creative and expresses herself not only by work and economic activities, but also by cultural and artistic manners, religious beliefs and spiritual customs³⁵. Integral human development is founded on four principles of the Catholic social teaching: a) the dignity of human person, b) the common good, c) subsidiarity and d) solidarity. The character of these principles is general, universal and fundamental. They reflect the human and social realities in the light of reason and faith and the Church considers and proposes them as the criteria for moral, social and political discernment and doing. „These principles – according to the Social doctrine of the Church – have a profoundly moral significance because they refer to the ultimate and organizational foundations of the society. To understand them completely, it is necessary to act in accordance with them, following the path of development that they indicate for a life worthy of man”. Their intrinsic moral character regards the personal behaviour of individuals and institutions³⁶.

The human person, as an original being, is opened to transcendence and to all creations. It has intellect, consciousness and freedom. They are not the basis for the

³⁵ As is known, Benedict XVI has dedicated the whole Encyclical letter to integral human development, where – moreover – he states: „The development of individuals and peoples is likewise located on a height, if we consider *the spiritual dimension* that must be present if such development is to be authentic. It requires new eyes and a new heart, capable of *rising above a materialistic vision of human events*, capable of glimpsing in development the ‘beyond’ that technology cannot give. By following this path, it is possible to pursue the integral human development that takes its direction from the driving force of charity in truth”. Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter Caritas in veritate on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth* (29.06.2009), n. 77, w2.vatican.va/.../hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate (access: 14.04.2019). Cursive is in the English text.

³⁶ Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 160-163.

person, but the person is the point of departure or the essential premise for them and their acts. The human person is a subject with consciousness and freedom who demands not only to be respected from the institutions and from the others, but especially has to be promoted by all in his/her integral development. In other words, integral human development means to respect the intellect, the consciousness and the freedom of the human person and to develop them in balanced mode. The human person is a responsible, active and creative subject. For this reason, the institutions and the others must serve only for his own development, and not for some kind of manipulation. The highest goal of the development of the human person is the communion with the personal God and his salvific project. According to Bernard V. Brady, professor of moral theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN, „the Church offers not only her social doctrine and, in general, her teaching about the human person redeemed in Christ, but also her concrete commitment and material assistance in the struggle against marginalization and suffering”³⁷.

There is a close relation among bioethics and the integral human development, as stressed by Benedict XVI: „A particularly crucial battleground in today’s cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and human moral responsibility is the field of *bioethics*, where the very possibility of integral human development is radically called into question. In this most delicate and critical area, the fundamental question asserts itself forcefully: is man the product of his own labours or does he depend on God? Scientific discoveries in this field and the possibilities of technological intervention seem so advanced as to force a choice between two types of reasoning: reason open to transcendence or reason closed within immanence. We are presented with a clear *either/ or*”³⁸. As it is evident, the anthropological vision of the man also in the field of bioethics is the question of life or death for the man.

Integral human development calls for the solidarity in the field of biopolitics, human work and peace as the signs of justice and love. The integral development at the personal, communitarian and worldwide levels requires an essential

³⁷ B.V. Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 2017², p. 246. For improving this vision, in the context of Social Teaching of the Church and Moral Theology, see also: K.E. McKenna, *A Concise Guide to Catholic Social Teaching*, Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press 2013²; B.V. Brady, *Be Good and Do Good. Thinking Through Moral Theology*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 2014; T. Massaro, *Mercy in Action. The Social Teaching of Pope Francis*, Lanham-Boulder-New York-London: Rowman-Littlefield 2018.

³⁸ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, n. 74. (access: 14.04.2019). Cursive is in the english text. For some actual and worrying tendencies in the field of bioethics and in the western societies, see: A. Filipowicz, *Bioetyka. Dialog w obronie życia*, Warszawa: Bobolanum 2002; K.S. Rajan, *Biocapital. The Constitution of Postgenomic Life*, Durham-London: Duke University Press 2006; H.T. Engelhardt Jr., *Dopo Dio. Morale e bioetica in un mondo laico*, Torino: Claudiana 2014; M.D. Lemay, *The Death of Christian Thought. The Deception of Humanism and How to Protect Yourself*, Abbotsford, WI: Aneko Press 2016.

precondition: the defense and promotion of human rights³⁹. But human rights need a basis, a nail, a hobbyhorse which offers the fundamental support for them: It is the dignity of the human person⁴⁰, as stresses pope Francis: „Underlying the principle of the common good is respect for the human person as such, endowed with basic and inalienable rights ordered to his or her integral development” (*LS* 157).

In other words, the integral human development „is a question of building up a more decent life through united labor, of concretely enhancing every individual’s dignity and creativity and capacity to respond to his or her personal vocation, and thus to God’s call. Total recognition must be given to the rights of the human conscience, which is bound only to the truth, both natural and revealed. The recognition of these rights represents the primary foundation of every authentically free political order”⁴¹. It is clear, that this kind of political order is – and has to be – in favor of positive biopolitics or „biopolitics of gift”⁴². The one who recognizes that every life, world and all human good activities are gifts, also recognizes that this is the way to happiness for all humankind. But it is a strong challenge for education and permanent formation at all levels.

5.2 RESPONSIBLE CREATIVITY

It could be the response to the challenges connected with biopolitics and the care of our common home. John Paul II’s exhortation expressed in his Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae* could act as an inspiration: „Individuals, families, groups and associations, albeit for different reasons and in different ways, all have a responsibility for shaping society and developing cultural, economic, political and legislative projects which [...] will contribute to the building of a society in which the dignity of each person is recognized and protected and the lives of all are defended and enhanced. This task is the particular responsibility of civil leaders. Called to serve the people and the common good, they have a duty to make courageous choices in support of life, especially through legislative measures”⁴³. This appeal presents a broad range of social and political actions, which can inspire not only

³⁹ Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 130-134; 317-322; 494.

⁴⁰ Cf. C. Casini, *Biopolitica – Parte giuridica*, p. 268.

⁴¹ B.V. Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought*, p. 246.

⁴² Cf. N. Corsi – C. Navarini, *Vita e reciprocità. La felicità del dono in prospettiva biopolitica*, in: A.G. Spagnolo – V. Tambone (eds.), *Proposte per una biopolitica personalista*, p. 99-203.

⁴³ John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Evangelium vitae on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life* (25.03.1995), n. 90, w2.vatican.va/.../hf_jpii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html (access: 14.04.2019).

Christians⁴⁴, but all people of good will. In fact, it is a strong cry for creativity, moral, social and political responsibilities: «For this reason I urgently appeal once more to all political leaders not to pass laws which, by disregarding the dignity of the person, undermine the very fabric of society» (*EV* 90).

In a similar manner, Pope Francis invites us with urgency „to move forward in a bold cultural revolution” (*LS* 114) through love in the social and political fields: „Social love is the key to authentic development: ‘In order to make society more human, more worthy of the human person, love in social life – political, economic and cultural – must be given renewed value, becoming the constant and highest norm for all activity’” (*LS* 231). Consequently, the personal testimony is crucial and it becomes ever more urgent. To accept others, to bow according to the example of Christ, who was humble, merciful and simple, to grow up in the wisdom of the Gospel, to strive for „a return to that simplicity” (*LS* 222) and for the realization of a „new and universal solidarity” (*LS* 14) and a „universal fraternity” (*LS* 228) – these represent the challenges which require the most personal, moral and the highest commitment from all people of good will.

Pope Francis, on the one hand, recognizes that the life style according the Gospel and the Beatitudes is not easy and will not be easy, especially „for the thirst for power and worldly interests often stands in our way” and for alienation of the society which could be „an obstacle to authentic human and social development”; on the other hand, he encourages us to „continue to grow and offer something greater to God, even in those areas we find most difficult” (*GE* 91,175).

In this sense, eloquent is his invitation, addressed to the young people in the recent Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*: „Dear young people, make the most of these years of your youth. Don’t observe life from a balcony. Don’t confuse happiness with an armchair, or live your life behind a screen. Whatever you do, do not become the sorry sight of an abandoned vehicle! Don’t be parked cars, but dream freely and make good decisions. Take risks, even if it means making mistakes. Don’t go through life anesthetized or approach the world like tourists. Make a ruckus!” (*ChV* 143). At the same time, pope Francis invites young people, but in collaboration with the adults and all others, to be the friends and collaborators of Jesus Christ and together with him to contribute toward building of „his kingdom in this world”; to be the messengers of his light and love (cf. *ChV* 153). This is the path of the rising, the maturity, the brotherhood, the commitment and the missionary (cf. *ChV* 158-178). This is the way of „mercy, creativity and hope” which promotes life: „Continue to fight apathy and to offer a Christian response to the social and political troubles emerging in different parts of the world. I ask you to build the future, to work for a better world.” Fighting „for the common good” and serving others, particularly the poor, is the way to be the „protagonists of the

⁴⁴ For the importance of the social teaching of the Church and his influence for social work, see: M. Šmidová – K. Slezáková, *Counseling v pomoci rodinám*, Trnava: Dobrá kniha 2016, p. 27-41.

revolution of charity and service, capable of resisting the pathologies of consumerism and superficial individualism” (*ChV* 173,174).

CONCLUSIONS

Our period needs especially the hope and the courage. The Christian Revelation invites us to the hope in each situation and in front of each challenge. In Jesus Christ, who is the new man and the perfect man, we are the sons of God. As sons, we are invited to find, to respect and to promote the dignity of the others, of ourselves and to appreciate the free gifts of God for the whole mankind⁴⁵.

For the same reason we are invited also to the creativity in the fields of the positive, integral, personalistic biopolitics, biopolitics of reciprocity or gift. This kind of biopolitics will only be faithful to its genuine mission, if it seeks and fosters the truly integral human development (of individuals, families, and larger communities and nations), based on centrality and dignity of each human person. Positive biopolitics – which is in an unfabled favour of life and of the whole creation – is therefore vitally needed.

Without adequate biopolitics, it will be impossible to prevent the biopower in the hands of technicians and scientists, from transforming biopolitics into thanatobiopolitics. This reality confers a heavy responsibility to the legislators in the political and social fields. For this responsibility, it is not possible to accept the separation of the private sphere from the public one. With regards the contemporary world, with its globalization and open or penetrable frontiers, we can recommend the rejection of any kind of social and political activities for which it is impossible to anticipate the consequences. As we have shown, there is a very strict relationship between the social field and politics. Politics as the „art of government” of public life, will only find its essence in searching for just solutions without discrimination, in the social field and that of bioethics.

In a true dialogue and collaboration with all men and women of good will, it is possible to promote and to strengthen the „culture of care” (*LS* 231) which is the culture of acceptance. Delicate social and biopolitical questions, especially those concerning the beginning and the end of life, will not be resolved through abortion, genetic manipulations, euthanasia or assisted suicide, which are the signs of irresponsibility, arrogant biopower, fear and escape from reality. What is truly valid is the presence and interest in hope and love.

⁴⁵ Cf. L.F. Ladaria, *Antropologia cristiana*, in: R. Latourelle – R. Fisichella (eds.), *Dizionario di Teologia Fondamentale*, Assisi: Citadella Editrice 1990, p. 49-56.

Christian hope highlights the Christian experience according to which „all the creatures of the material universe find their true meaning in the incarnate Word, for the Son of God has incorporated in his person part of the material world, planting in it a seed of definitive transformation” (*LS* 235). In line with this same Christian hope, what follows is also valid: He who serves others imitates Christ and He will repay him generously. This belief, which recognizes free received love, is also a motivation for altruistic and responsible activities at all levels.

BIOPOLITYKA I INTEGRALNY LUDZKI ROZWÓJ. WKŁAD NAUKI SPOŁECZNEJ KOŚCIOŁA

Streszczenie

W artykule zostaje poddana analiza katolickiej nauki społecznej, szczególnie jej sformułowanie w encyklice papieża Franciszka *Laudato si'* i innych dokumentach Magisterium. Zostają przedstawione główne cechy charakterystyczne „kultury troski” oraz „kultury wyrzucania”, a także pytanie związane z bio-władzą, pozytywną i negatywną biopolityką (tanatopolityka) wraz z niektórymi alarmującymi przykładami (legalizacja aborcji, selektywna aborcja dziewczynek, niszczenie nadliczbowych zamrożonych embrionów, lobbowanie na rzecz legalizacji eutanazji). W dalszej części zostaje podkreślony wkład Kościoła w tych debatach w aspektach biblijnym, teologicznym i etycznym, jak też znaczenie aktywności w tych obszarach. Największe wyzwania w ramach bioetyki muszą zostać przezwyciężone przez kreatywność w społecznym, moralnym i politycznym obszarze. „Kultura troski” jest kulturą akceptacji innych, uformowaną przez chrześcijańską nadzieję i miłość. Jest kulturą obecności i zainteresowania innymi według przykładu Jezusa Chrystusa.

Słowa kluczowe: „kultura troski”, „kultura wyrzucania”, bio-władza, pozytywna i negatywna biopolityka, *Laudato si'*, nauka społeczna Kościoła, chrześcijańska nadzieja, miłość, kreatywność.

BIOPOLITICS AND INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

Summary

This Paper takes in consideration the Social teaching of the Church, particularly expressed in the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis *Laudato si'* and in other documents of the Magisterium. The article presents the basic characteristics of „Culture of Care” and „Culture of Waste”, of biopower, of positive biopolitics and of negative biopolitics (thanatobiopolitics) with some alarming examples (legalization of abortion, selective abortions of females, destruction of supernumerary frozen embryos, lobbying for the legalization of euthanasia). Subsequently, it introduces the contribution of the Christian faith to these

debates, from the biblical, theological and moral point of view, and invites the reader to respond to the urgent challenges in biopolitics by the responsible creativity in the social, moral and political fields. The „Culture of Care” is a culture of acceptance of the other, shaped by Christian hope and love, a culture of presence and of interest in the other, following the example of Jesus Christ.

Key words: „Culture of Care”, „Culture of Waste”, biopower, positive and negative biopolitics, *Laudato si'*, Social teaching of the Church, Christian hope, love and creativity.

BIOPOLITIK UND INTEGRALE MENSCHLICHE ENTWICKLUNG BEITRAG DER KIRCHLICHEN SOZIALLEHRE

Zusammenfassung

Im Artikel wird die Soziallehre der Kirche analysiert, vor allem wie sie in der Enzyklika vom Papst Franciscus *Laudato si'* und anderen Dokumenten des Lehramtes formuliert wird. Es werden die grundlegenden Charakteristika der „Kultur der Fürsorge“ sowie der „Kultur des Wegwerfens“ vorgestellt, aber auch die Fragen der Biomacht, der positiver und negativer Biopolitik (Thanatopolitik) mit manchen alarmierenden Beispielen (Legalisierung der Abtreibung, selektive Abtreibung der Mädchen, Zerstörung der überzähligen eingefrorenen Embryos, Lobbying für die Legalisierung der Euthanasie). Des Weiteren wird der Beitrag der Kirche in diesen Debatten unter biblischen, theologischen und ethischen Aspekten vorgestellt sowie die Bedeutung der Aktivität in diesem Bereich unterstrichen. Die wichtigsten Herausforderungen in der Biopolitik müssen durch die verantwortungsvolle Kreativität in sozialen, moralischen und politischen Bereichen bewältigt werden. „Kultur der Fürsorge“ ist eine Kultur der Akzeptanz der anderen, gestaltet durch christliche Hoffnung und Liebe. Es ist eine Kultur der Anwesenheit und des Interesses für andere nach dem Beispiel Jesu Christi.

Schlüsselworte: „Kultur der Fürsorge”, „Kultur des Wegwerfens”, Biomacht, positive und negative Biopolitik, *Laudato si'*, Soziallehre der Kirche, christliche Hoffnung, Liebe und Kreativität.

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