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THE TRIPLE CRISIS AND THE RESPONSE BY CREATIVITY IN CHARITY

ABSTRACT

The pontificate of Pope Francis has highlighted the need for practical application of the Church's social teaching to the key issues of caring for the poor, protecting the environment, and promoting world peace. Earlier pontificates also provided a foundation for this teaching, such as the category of "creativity in charity" introduced by John Paul II. In order to solve the complex problems of humanity, it is not enough to have a reflex of compassion, it is precisely the creativity that is necessary, which may consist, on the one hand, of an interdisciplinary study of the crises and their interdependence, and, on the other hand, in overcoming them through their "collision" and the resulting synergy. As the exemplification of such approach the analysis of the contemporary housing market, combined with deepened understanding of the complexity of recycling processes and their interrelationship to the wars being waged around the world are given. The theologian's task in the face of such an outlined area of research is to be faithful to the truth and to humanity, whom the Church, by supernatural motivation, wishes to serve as effectively as possible in a dynamically changing world.

Keywords: Charity, Ecology, Fratelli Tutti, Homelessness, Laudato Si', Novo Millenio Ineunte , Recycling, War, Waste

INTRODUCTION

This article was due to be published almost two years ago.¹ At the time, the biggest problem seemed to be the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, Moscow's tanks are standing at the borders of the European Union, and old debates are shifting their context, revealing new meanings of past economic and political ties. On the other hand, in the background of big politics creeps the old crisis of impoverishment of societies not only in developing countries, but also within developed economies. The decade of Pope Francis' pontificate leaves no doubt about his options for peace, for the poor and for the environment.² Is there a specifically Christian response to the triple or even multi-faceted crisis mentioned in the title, which has slipped out of the "Third World Ghetto" and engulfing more of those "so far safe" countries of a "Global Village"?³

FROM THE ANNALS OF THE WWW DOOM

At first glance, the following juxtaposition may seem arbitrary to say the least, and even falsely suggestive of the dark dimensions of the WWW net. After all, what do the housing crisis, recycling and war have in common (apart

¹ The original paper: Christian response to double crisis: housing, waste and "creativity in Charity". The XX-th International Online Scientific Conference by Program Excellent Science by Polish Ministry of Education and Science, Project Digital future of societies and economies of Central and Eastern Europe. 21-23 June 2021. At the time of due publication, however, Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began, which became a factor not to be overlooked in the considerations undertaken and in a significant sense clarified their trajectory.

² His numerous statements on these issues have been summarized in the pontiff's primary documents, encyclicals: "Laudato Si'" ("Praise be to You" 2015) and "Fratelli Tutti" ("All Brothers" 2020).

³ The World leaders represented by the UN Secretary General António Guterres have formed the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance. <https://news.un.org/pages/global-crisis-response-group/> Access 02.04.2023. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) made a statement, that "The war in Ukraine, in all its dimensions, is producing alarming cascading effects to a world already battered by COVID-19 and climate change. Serious damage is being done to the global economy, and particularly to vulnerable people and developing countries", which means, that although the most vulnerable "3rd World" countries get the most punishment, however all economies, including those in "developed countries" will be mirroring the global misery, effecting most of their inhabitants. <https://unctad.org/global-crisis> Access 02.04.2023.

from the initial “W”)? Taking into consideration the events of the last decade, it turns out to be quite a lot.

WANDERING (HOMELESSNESS)⁴

From Berlin, Germany through London, UK to California in the US, rental prices have soared in recent years, making these areas to serve as examples of unfriendly and tight rental markets worldwide.⁵ In Berlin alone from 2013 to 2019, rent prices in new contracts rose by 27%, according to the German Property Foundation (ZIA), which finally led to tensions and protests in May of 2021.⁶ London's entire social housing sector has been neglected and underfunded for at least 40 years. In the past 10 years, 23,000 socially rented homes have been demolished in London. That's almost twice the number of newly completed homes (12,050). According to Sharon Hayward from London Tenants Federation “throughout 2023, there will continue to be a huge unmet – and growing – need for social-rented housing. Without action, London’s housing crisis will rumble on, pushing millions of low-income households into unacceptably harsh conditions. Adults and children will remain stuck in poor quality temporary homes – separated from close friends, families and social networks. Thousands more will be in overcrowded conditions, deteriorating their health and wellbeing”.⁷ California's housing crisis has entered a new level in

⁴ The main focus of this study is on macroeconomic housing crises as a factor in homelessness. The author is fully aware of the complexity of the problem of homelessness itself, with non-macroeconomic factors such as mental health, substance abuse, family breakdown, social alienation, and extreme poverty adding as an indelible component to the overall problem. An interesting synthesis of the non-macroeconomic factors of homelessness is offered by the authors of the article: J.D. Wright B.A. Rubin. Is Homelessness a Housing Problem. *Housing Policy Debate*. 1991. 2:3 937-956; D.A. Timmer D.S. Eitzen K.D. Talley. *Paths to homelessness. Extreme poverty and the Urban Housing Crisis*. 2019. Routledge. London-New York. A comprehensive macroeconomic study: P. Malpass (ed.) *The Housing Crisis*. 1986. Routledge. London-New York.

⁵ A tale of two cities’ housing crises: Dublin and Berlin. <https://www.dw.com/en/a-tale-of-two-cities-housing-crises-dublin-and-berlin/a-49467210> Access 31.08.2021

⁶ R. Staudenmaier D. Janjevic. Berlin protests urge end to soaring rents. 23.05.2021. <https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-protesters-urge-end-to-soaring-rents/a-57635183> Access 20-03-2023.

⁷ S. Hayward. London in 2023: The housing crisis. <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/news/2023-housing/> Access 20-03-2023.

2019. Expensive housing has forced local Californians to live makeshift in their vehicles and RVs or pushed them out onto the streets, into homelessness on an unprecedented scale. In the search for a trade-off between good jobs, housing prices have perpetuated a pattern of colossal social costs and environmental pressure, caused by the increasingly long daily commutes of a growing population.⁸

However, the most dramatic illustration of the phenomenon described can be found in earlier events from Canada, which itself is not so populous after all. On June 28, 2016, a massive explosion rocked the normally quiet street of single-family homes on Hickory Drive in Mississauga, a city bordering Toronto, the metropolis of the Canadian province of Ontario, to the west. The bodies of the owners of the ill-fated house, Diana Page and Robert Nadler, were found in the rubble. What shocked the public the most was that the couple had left a suicide note.⁹ It is also known from other sources that the owners were unable to repay the loan for the house in the months before the disaster. A year after the tragic event, 25 houses in the blast radius were still empty and excluded from residential use.¹⁰

WASTE

On July 18, 2017, the World Trade Organization received a letter, the likes of which many governments exchange on issues concerning the globalized economy. Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China has notified the WTO, that “by the end of 2017, China will forbid the import of 4 classes, 24 kinds of solid wastes, including plastics waste from living sources, vanadium slag, unsorted waste paper and waste textile materials”. In the Section 7 “Objective and Rationale” of the aforementioned Notification

⁸ V. Ho. Silicon Valley has pledged billions to fight the housing crisis. It won't be enough. 06.01.2020.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jan/06/silicon-valley-california-housing-crisis> Access 20.03.2023.

⁹ P. Goffin. Double suicide at centre of deadly Mississauga house explosion, police say. 30.12.2016. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/12/30/double-suicide-at-centre-of-deadly-mississauga-house-explosion-police-say.html?rf> Access 19.03.2023.

¹⁰ L. Powers. 25 homes still empty 1 year after ‘intentional’ house explosion rocked Mississauga. 27.06.2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/mississauga-hickory-drive-update-1.4179041> Access 19.03.2023.

G/TBT/N/CHN/1211 authors argued as follows: “According to the Special Actions of Strengthening the Supervision and Strictly Striking of Illegal “Foreign Garbage” (...) we found that large amounts of dirty wastes or even hazardous wastes are mixed in the solid waste that can be used as raw materials. This polluted China’s environment seriously. To protect China’s environmental interests and people’s health, we urgently adjust the imported solid wastes list, and forbid the import of solid wastes that are highly polluted”¹¹.

On March 23, 2018 in Geneva the US and UE representations raised substantial concerns to the Chinese ban, which actually has revealed the misery of the way the recycling system works in the high developed economies: “The European Union’s representative at the meeting said China’s policy would force scrap to be rerouted to third countries which may not have facilities for safe recycling, or to landfill or incineration, causing environmental damage”; whereas “The U.S. Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries said at the time that the ban would devastate an industry that supported 155,000 jobs and had exported scrap worth \$5.6 billion to China in 2016”.¹² It only took a few months of Asian political and economic pressure to expose the mystification of the recycling system in Euro-Atlantic countries, which one might like to think of as a package of ready-made and working solutions, and which turned out to be just a shell based on outsourcing and the passing on of environmental and social costs, to which (regardless of the backing rationale) someone finally said: enough is enough.¹³

¹¹ https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/FE_Search/FE_S_S009-DP.aspx?language=E&CatalogueIdList=237688

Access 19.03.2023. Interesting insight into environmental and economic challenges of Western waste exports to developing countries: K. Rapoza. China Doesn’t Want The World’s Trash Anymore. Including ‘Recyclable’ Goods. 29.11.2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2020/11/29/china-doesnt-want-the-worlds-trash-anymore-including-recyclable-goods/?sh=71a8ea8b7290> Access 10.10.2021.

¹² T. Miles. G. Jones. U.S. asks China not to implement ban on foreign garbage. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-environment-usa-idUSKBN1GZ2WI> Access 19.03.2023; K. de Freytas-Tamura. Plastics Pile Up as China Refuses to Take the West’s Recycling. 11.01.2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/world/china-recyclables-ban.html> Access 10.10.2021.

¹³ Daniel Cassidy from Forbes boldly quotes the outcomes of NPR and PBS Frontline investigation: “The industry knew for decades that recycling wouldn’t keep plastic out of landfills, with one industry insider writing in a 1974 speech that “there is serious doubt that [recycling plastic] can ever be made viable on an economic basis,”

WAR

Before the war, Ukraine was the fifth largest wheat producer and largest sunflower oil producer in the world. Taking these amounts of food away from the market could not go unnoticed to the household budgets worldwide. Western economies have moved to stop importing Russian energy in a bid to hamstring Russia's ability to finance its war effort, which contributed to significant rise of household energy costs. The end of COVID 19 pandemic paradoxically worsened the situation even more. With the easing of restrictions, demand has skyrocketed, placing pressure on global supply chains, causing new shortages and deepening the cost of living crisis.¹⁴

In addition to the rather obvious costs of a war that the European continent has not seen in eighty years, there were signs of a crisis of much deeper proportions, a crisis of intra-European confidence. As another example of the “dropping of the masks” resulting from geopolitical developments, one can cite the divergence of declared and actual motives for at least some environmental actions in Germany. Manuela Schwesig (SPD), Minister President of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, is alleged to have set up the foundation - which, according to its charter, also exists for environmental and nature conservation purposes - in early 2021, mainly so that the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline could be completed despite the threat of US sanctions. The foundation's largest donor was Nord Stream 2 AG with 20 million euros. The company, which is head-

the investigation found. Yet the plastic industry spent millions on advertising convincing the public that recycling would keep the environment clean while making billions selling new plastic”. D. Cassidy. Plastic Industry Pushed Recycling On America Knowing It Would Fall Short, According To Report. 11.09.2020.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielcassady/2020/09/11/plastic-industry-pushed-recycling-on-america-knowing-it-would-fall-short-according-to-report/?sh=73fa19091a68> Access 2023-03-19; L. Sullivan. How Big Oil Misled The Public Into Believing Plastic Would Be Recycled. 11.09.2020.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/09/11/897692090/how-big-oil-misled-the-public-into-believing-plastic-would-be-recycled> Access 19.03.2023.

¹⁴ J. Askew. How is the war in Ukraine affecting the cost of living crisis? 01.06.2022. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/05/31/how-is-the-war-in-ukraine-affecting-the-cost-of-living-crisis> Access 21.03.2023. J. Horowitz. Russia's war in Ukraine sparked a historic food crisis. It's not over. 17.01.2022. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/15/business/global-food-crisis-davos/index.html> Access. 20.03.2023.

quartered in the Swiss city of Zug, is 100 percent owned by the infamous Russian state corporation Gazprom. The state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern itself contributed just 200,000 euros to the founding capital of “Klima und Umweltschutz MV”. Immediately after Russia's attack on Ukraine, the state parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern decided to dissolve the foundation.¹⁵ Thus, it appears that German politicians could have been well aware of the essential purpose of at least some “ecological” activities, which in fact had little to do with ecology, as a factual projection of Moscow's influence in Europe.¹⁶

One of the key messages in the recent report published by the prominent EU think tank states, that “The war in Ukraine has exposed the urgent need for effective coordination and coherence between EU policy frameworks. To implement the EGD [European Green Deal], internal and external trade-offs between core issue areas, such as food and environmental protection or energy and industrial supply chains, and between short-term and long-term effects, need to be minimized”.¹⁷ Even with scientifically based enthusiasm to immediate carbon dioxide emissions cut, on top of unthinkable monetary figures in spending,¹⁸ possibly translating to financial strangle of some economies,¹⁹ The EU Directorate-General for Environment frankly states, that “Transition to a low-carbon economy will create additional demand for many raw materials, production of which will have a range of environmental impacts”, such as direct

¹⁵ Warum Manuela Schwesig und die Klimastiftung MV in der Kritik stehen. 18.05.2022.

<https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/schwesig-klimastiftung-nord-stream-2-gazprom-100.html> Access 19.03.2023; Skandal wokół Nord Stream 2. Niemiecka Fundacja Klimatyczna mogła być pomysłem... Rosji. 19.03.2023.

<https://polskieradio24.pl/5/1223/artykul/3136967,skandal-wokol-nord-stream-2-niemiecka-fundacja-klimatyczna-mogla-byc-pomyslem-rosji> Access 19.03.2023.

¹⁶ Th. Escritt S. Marsh. Explainer: How a German ‘climate’ fund set out to help Russia dodge U.S. sanctions. 11.02.2022. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/how-german-climate-fund-set-out-help-russia-dodge-us-sanctions-2022-02-10/> Access 20.03.2023.

¹⁷ The European Green Deal and the war in Ukraine: Addressing crises in the short and long term.

<https://ettg.eu/publications/the-european-green-deal-and-the-war-in-ukraine-addressing-crises-in-the-short-and-long-term/> Access 19.03.2023.

¹⁸ F. Harvey J. Rankin. What is the European Green Deal and will it really cost €1tn? 9.03.2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/09/what-is-the-european-green-deal-and-will-it-really-cost-1tn> Access 20.03.2023.

¹⁹ J. Pendlington. Will Europe's green future survive Russia's war in Ukraine? 27.09.2022. <https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/resource/will-europes-green-future-survive-russias-war-in-ukraine/> Access 20.03.2023.

environmental damage.²⁰

What if it comes out, that the Green Deal presented as the sole “climate change survival option”, not only at least partially based on Gazprom’s supplies and slave labor for “green” components, was as plausible as the aforementioned waste recycling policies? The vicious circle of growing consumption and poverty, sauced with selective moral panic leaves populations in a fog of war for resources with no winners finally.

HOW TO DWELL, RECYCLE AND REBUILD SERIOUSLY?

The crises described briefly have, as already declared, important points of contact. They all relate to the cost of living, and they all require a rethinking of existing strategies as to “wandering”, “waste” and “war”. We say “housing” – but what kind of ownership structure do we mean? When we say “recycling” - what kind of its effective methodology do we take into consideration, if it is not to be just a global outsourcing and cost shifting? When we say “peace” - how to organize the rebuilding of infrastructure to achieve social, economic and environmental benefits at the same time? In this paragraph we will try to go a little deeper into this “rabbit hole”.

²⁰ Estimating environmental damage from key resources required for EU low-carbon transition. 5.10.2022. https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/estimating-environmental-damage-key-resources-required-eu-low-carbon-transition-2022-10-05_en Access 20.03.2023: “The researchers estimate the total annual cost at €38.9 billion, with 48.5% arising from materials used for electric-vehicle batteries, including nickel, accounting for 24.9% of total cost (...) They report that 45.8% of the damage costs are associated with materials for batteries used for electric mobility purposes, and a further 8.4% linked with batteries for renewable-energy infrastructure. Impacts on climate change accounted for 47.5% of total costs, according to the researchers, and abiotic resource depletion for 45%. They highlight the disparity between imported quantities of each material and its contribution to impact, with nickel making up only 12% of imported mass, and cobalt, for example, making up 2% of mass but contributing 10.94% of total environmental costs”. Even more issues are concerned, as slave labor and political exploitation of some countries; Z. Caldwell. Testimony: China-backed cobalt mines in Congo exploit 40,000 child workers. 16.07.2022. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/251800/congo-cobalt-mines-china-child-labor> Access 20.03.2022.

TO BUILD MORE – IS THIS ENOUGH?²¹

The brutal face of ill-handled housing sector investments was made manifest in global financial collapse of 2008. Between 2007 and 2010, the U.S. housing market experienced a dramatic increase in the number of property seizures known as the foreclosure crisis. The financial crisis and Great Recession that emerged during this time included the foreclosure issue as one of its aspects. In the shortest words, the crisis was exacerbated by the overly generous provision of mortgage credit, intricate mortgage debt securitization schemes, and a sharp rise in foreclosures (in a market ill-equipped to handle them all).²² Although the overall housing market in the United States has recovered from the crisis that plunged the country into recession, however, according to a new Washington Post analysis, the recovery has been deeply uneven, with winners and losers based on race, income, and geography,²³ which reminds of the inevitable social factor, in addition to attempts at the most meticulous economic description.

An interesting insight on how the principles of handling the housing sector by governments influence the whole country's population has been proposed by Maciej Galent from Jagiellonian University, Krakow, in the recently

²¹ “Enoughism” is a theory propounded by John Naish, as he emphasizes the human vulnerability of an unending desire for more, especially the “filthy rich”. On the other hand, “enough of everything” makes this mother-earth inhabitable. J. Naish. *Enough: Breaking Free from the World of More*. 2008. Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. Bednicho Nyomi proposes to unveil the theology of enough as a way to balance the equation and to develop a sustainable society – for this planet to be once more habitable mother-earth. B. Nyomi. *Theology of enough: an agenda for the 21st century Church in Zimbabwe*. E. Chitando (ed.) *The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Development in Zimbabwe*. 2020. Palgrave Macmillan Cham. 207–220. In this regard Mahatma Gandhi may be quoted as well, that “there is enough for everyone’s needs, but there is not enough for anyone’s greed” <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/427443-the-world-has-enough-for-everyone-s-need-but-not-enough> Access 01.04.2023.

²² For in-depth study: D. Immergluck. *The Foreclosure Crisis, Foreclosed Properties, and Federal Policy. Some Implications for Housing and Community Development Planning*. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 2009. 75:4, 406-423; D. Corbae E. Quintin. *Leverage and the Foreclosure Crisis*. 2015. 123:1, 1-65.

²³ T. Mellnik D. Cameron D. Lu E. Badger K. Downs. *America’s great housing divide: Are you a winner or loser? Change in home values since 2004*. 28.04.2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/wonk/housing/overview/> Access 31.08.2021.

published interview.²⁴ According to his study, until the late 1970s, communal housing dominated the housing market in Britain. This changed with the beginning of Margaret Thatcher's administration, when communal housing was distributed and the housing model was adjusted to resemble what is used today in Poland.²⁵ It is predicated on the tenancy of properties from private landowners and the enormous sums of money used to support rent or, for instance, a homeowner's contribution. It's now possible to make more money by avoiding the construction of dwellings than by doing so. The UK currently has the smallest and most expensive housing among Western European nations. Almost 40% of family income is spent on housing. In the 1970s, it was between 20 and 25 percent. Renting was less expensive, but so did purchasing your own home or apartment.²⁶

²⁴ M. Galent, T. Borejza (ed.). Wielka Brytania doprowadziła do katastrofy mieszkaniowej. Idziemy jej śladem (The Great Britain has created a housing disaster. We are following in her footsteps). 09.03.2023. <https://krowoderska.pl/wielka-brytania-doprowadzila-do-katastrofy-mieszkaniowej-idziemy-jej-sladem/> Access 22.03.2023; reprint: https://www.onet.pl/informacje/krowoderskapl/w-brytania-doprowadzila-do-katastrofy-mieszkaniowej-idziemy-jej-sladem/fkxpx9y_30bc1058 Access 22.03.2023.

²⁵ Due to the marked and continuous increase in housing prices, Poland, despite its economic success, is likely to fall victim to similar housing crises as the previously described countries. J. Harper. Poland's housing market rises, as do bubble fears. 18.10.2020. <https://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl/in-english/business/polands-housing-market-rises-as-do-bubble-fears/> Access 31.08.2021; Poland's residential rental market: Boom or boon? <https://www.dw.com/en/polands-residential-rental-market-boom-or-boon/a-57531265> Access 31.08.2021.

²⁶ As a positive example, Galent cites Switzerland, where the smallest percentage of the population in Europe buys home ownership: "This may be a bit surprising, since this is one of the richest countries in Europe. But everything has been arranged in such a way - with the help of regulations, controls and mechanisms to secure tenants' rights - that the market affects a minority of the population. A house or apartment is bought by those who want it. The majority, however, don't want to, because they don't have to. And they don't have to, because they can rent an apartment, generally from local governments or cooperatives that put up buildings and manage them". In comparison, the British system looks prohibitive and even oppressive: "The apartments, for example, are built on land that belongs to the landlords and is not sold along with these apartments to them. And there is the fine print in the contracts, that the landlord can increase the fees for the use of that land by, say, 100 percent over five years. Ways to make housing rentals work are plentiful, and it's estimated that there are about 2.5 million people in the UK deriving income from renting. They are earning money by owning something. This is a huge lobby that preys on taxpayers thanks to the fact that there are rent subsidies". Therefore, according to the author, landlords live under socialism, because they receive unconditional state aid through

While financial investors “turn housing into chips for speculative roulette”, opposition to the “financialization” of housing is growing. In the fall of 2021 in a referendum, Berliners shook up politics by demanding the expropriation of large housing corporations. When the votes were counted, 57.6 percent of the city's residents voted “in favor”, while 39.8 percent voted “against”. This decision has an impact on private institutional investors who have been expanding their presence in the German housing market for several years.²⁷ It seems that the law of supply and demand has “unglued” from reality, turning into the law of need and plunder. Owners in the form of branched investment funds have become socially invisible, so even if there was some kind of “proletarian revolution” - “vengeance of the people” would hit the vacuum. Is there any other revolution available?

A NARROW WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR GENUINE RECYCLING

In a pathological market situation, even putting up a shack made of plywood on the surface of mining-degraded soil will have the same effect of inaccessibility as other practices. However, even if in theory we have obtained a building plot at a reasonable location and price, the issue of construction lumber costs and availability arises. Before we start experimenting with building material prices while maintaining quality, I'd like to revisit the topic of recycling and see, if the full potential has already been unleashed here.

To the best of my knowledge, at least four levels of recycling can be identified, using petroleum-based materials as an example, especially plastics - such as polyethylene.²⁸ According to Closed Loop Partners “Molecular Recycling” (synonymous with “Advanced Recycling”) is an early-stage industry,

tenant subsidies, while tenants are ruthlessly exposed to cruel market forces. Galent 2023.

²⁷ Ł. Dąbrowiecki. Wielki kapitał winduje ceny mieszkań. Europejczycy mają dość – chcą postawić mu tamę. 21.09.2021. <https://oko.press/wielki-kapital-winduje-ceny-mieszkan-europejczycy-maja-dosc-chca-mu-postawic-tame/> Access 31.10.2021; Housing Rights Watch. Citizens vote for the expropriation of large landowners to defend the right to housing in Berlin. 30.09.2021. <https://www.housingrightswatch.org/news/citizens-vote-expropriation-large-landowners-defend-right-housing-berlin> Access 22.03.2023.

²⁸ The author is aware of the complexity of the issue of plastics, the existence of at least seven types, denoted by numerical symbols of Resin Identification Code (RIC) from 1-7, among others, such as high and low density polyethylene, vinyl, polypropylene

uniquely positioned to take in a wide range of contaminated plastic waste and purify the plastics or transform them at the molecular level so that outputs can be looped back into manufacturing without being downcycled. This is particularly significant because there is insufficient supply to meet the demand for high-quality recycled plastics (e.g. foodgrade applications). Together with mechanical recycling, these two systems can help decarbonize manufacturing and the plastics economy while also meeting the demand for different grades of recycled plastic resin.²⁹ As mentioned, this technology is still in the early stage and may be added resources demanding and thus expensive, but also highly effective for the purity of the output chemicals. In Europe, leading companies in this sector include Holland Circular Hotspot, located in the suburbs of Amsterdam, adjacent to Schiphol International Airport, but they characterize their business as chemical recycling.³⁰ Molecular / Chemical recycling will be cate-

and polystyrene. For educational purposes see i.e. The Plastic Oceans. The Basics On 7 Common Types of Plastic. 23.02.2021. <https://plasticoceans.org/7-types-of-plastic/> Access 22.03.2023. As an example of the authoritative use of RIC “the Public Resource Code PRC Division 12.7. Plastic waste [18000-18017]” added in 1988 by The California State Legislature may be given: “18015. (a) All rigid plastic bottles and rigid plastic containers sold in the state shall be labeled with a code that indicates the resin used to produce the rigid plastic bottle or rigid plastic container. Rigid plastic bottles or rigid plastic containers with labels and basecups of a different material shall be coded by their basic material. The code shall consist of a number placed inside a triangle, and letters placed below the triangle. (...) (d) The resin identification code required pursuant to subdivision (...) (Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 507, Sec. 3. (SB 343) Effective January 1, 2022.) California Legislative Information. https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=PRC&division=12.7.&title=&part=&chapter=2.&article= Access 22.03.2023. However, although this may not apply to all plastics, based on observations of socio-economic phenomena, I have attempted to define “recycling levels”, which will help to methodologically guide further argument.

²⁹ Closed Loop Partners. Assessing Molecular Recycling Technologies in the United States and Canada. Research Report 2021. <https://www.closedlooppartners.com/research/transitioning-to-a-circular-system-for-plastics-assessing-molecular-recycling-technologies-in-the-united-states-and-canada-2/> Access 22.03.2023.

³⁰ As it can be read from their portfolio: “Circular Biobased Delta was already at the forefront of chemical recycling around 2015, with the establishment of the Pyrolysis Experimentation Garden South Netherlands, together with Port of Moerdijk and Rewin. Since then, developments in the region have gained momentum: Shell is investing in pyrolysis technology to supply the company’s crackers with bio-based naphtha within a few years, Neste and Ravago are planning the construction of a chemical recycling plant in Vlissingen and the start of the PyroChempark project including the Green Chemistry Campus in Bergen op Zoom”. Chemical recycling,

gorized as the fourth-level recycling, which I would nickname the “Dutch” version.

The third-level recycling may be assigned to “traditional” recycling of some plastics, which as I believe has been the most popular, but also the most resource-consuming (energy, water) so far. I would nickname it the “Chinese” version, where ballots of PET bottles are being unpacked, crushed, washed and remade, i.e. from a bottle to a fleece jacket or blanket.³¹ Clear and educative illustrations of differences between mechanical and molecular recycling may be found on the website of the Eastman company, which by the way, is also aiming at the “Dutch” level of recycling (See graph 1).³²

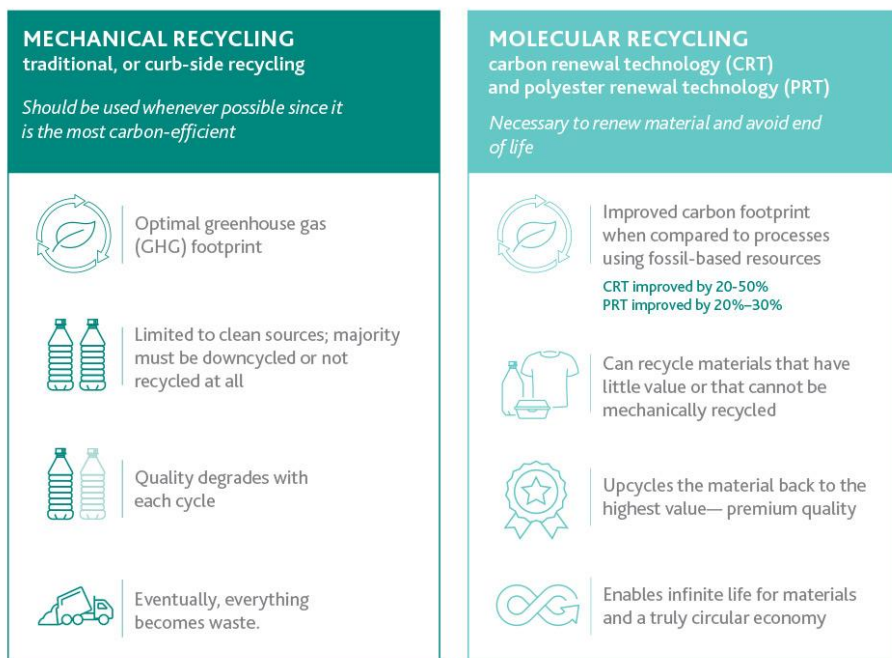
in turn, is divided into such processes as: solvolysis (dissolving, technically actually part of mechanical recycling), depolymerisation, pyrolysis (cracking) and gasification. Holland Circular Hotspot. Chemical Recycling is gaining momentum! 11.11.2022. <https://hollandcircularhotspot.nl/news/chemical-recycling-is-gaining-momentum/> Access 22.03.2023. Another Dutch company of this kind is Chemistry NL: <https://chemistrynl.com/> Access 23.03.2023.

³¹ This process has a detailed description in the research paper: Z. Ma M.W. Ryberg P. Wang. L. Tang W-Q. Chen. China’s Import of Waste PET Bottles Benefited Global Plastic Circularity and Environmental Performance. ACS Sustainable Chemistry & Engineering. 2020 8:45 A-H. DOI: 10.1021/acssuschemeng.0c05926 Access 22.03.2023.

³² Credits for “The Mechanical vs. Molecular Recycling” diagram: <https://www.eastman.com/Company/Circular-Economy/Solutions/Pages/Mechanical-Molecular.aspx> Access 22.03.2023.

Graph 1

Both **mechanical** and **molecular recycling** are required to eliminate waste and create a **truly circular economy**.



Source: Source: “The Mechanical vs. Molecular Recycling” diagram:
<https://www.eastman.com/Company/Circular-Economy/Solutions/Pages/Mechanical-Molecular.aspx> Access 22.03.2023

The second-level of recycling I would name “Polish” for a reason given below, although it is not limited to my country alone and quite popular i.e. in Africa or India. The process involves, on the one hand, crushing and heating various plastics to the melting point of the most refractory of them, and on the other hand, crushing to a sand fraction rubble, ceramics, concrete waste, or using sand alone, heating it, evaporating it and mixing the aggregate thus prepared with the plastic molten mass. The process produces an extremely durable and strong material, which can, for example, replace asphalt, patented as eco-asphalt by Polish inventor Arkadiusz Brzeski,³³ as well as roofing in the form of tiles,

³³ According to the reports, the road surface made from plastic bottles and sand is three

products that replace concrete and other construction materials - structural and finishing.³⁴ A variation of this process may be the heating of the plastics themselves,³⁵ to produce extruded products or, in one of the sublime variations, 3D printer filament³⁶. In Canada, this type of recycling technology is represented by Polysand company. In their informational materials, they claim that with their roofing made with aggregate and plastic blending technology, you can relieve landfills and the environment of 220,000 used plastic bags every time by tiling one average-sized house.³⁷ The benefits of second-level recycling applications may include scalability of production and possible technological simplification, especially in conditions of poor infrastructure, crisis and low technological development of a given economy (but also more finesse varieties of

times cheaper than traditional asphalt. The invention was inspired by another passion of the Polish Citizen, a resident of the city of Lodz – sailing. As he testifies: “I started thinking seriously about this project when I read somewhere that at the moment there is more plastic than fish in the oceans. I really like sailing, and I thought to myself, this is unthinkable! Instead of entering a shoal of fish, to enter a shoal of PET bottles...” The inventor assures that during testing he has verified that his eco-asphalt can withstand temperatures of more than 800 degrees Celsius and can last up to several hundred years. Eco-asphalt can withstand similar stresses as asphalt, provided the proportions of plastic and sand are equal: 50/50. The machine for producing such a mass is very simple: two mills, one for plastics, the other for sand. For this, a container on wheels. The plastic is heated, mixed with sand and the mass is ready to be laid on the road. M. Gałczyńska. Eko-asfalt z plastiku i piasku? Wynalazł go łodzianin, państwo nie było zainteresowane. 15.03.2016. <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/lodz/eko-asfalt-z-plastiku-i-piasku-wynalazl-go-lodzianin-panstwo-nie-bylo-zainteresowane/t775jfs> Access 20.03.2023.

- ³⁴ E. Waita. Kenyan recycles plastic waste into bricks stronger than concrete. 02.02.2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-environment-recycling-idUSKBN2A211N> Access 22.03.2023. H. Mahmoud H. Maher A. Lewis B. Lewis. Plastic paving: Egyptian startup turns millions of bags into tiles. 20.03.2023. <https://www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/plastic-paving-egyptian-startup-turns-millions-bags-into-tiles-2023-03-20/> Access 22.03.2023.
- ³⁵ This methodology has been apparently taken into commercial level by another Dutch company: Pretty Plastic. <https://www.prettyplastic.nl/> Access 22.03.2023.
- ³⁶ A comprehensive study on the subject has been provided by joint-team affiliated to Polish and Greek universities: K. Mikula D. Skrzypczak G. Izydorczyk J. Warchoł K. Moustakas K. Chojnacka A. Witek-Krowiak. 3D printing filament as a second life of waste plastics - a review. Environmental Science and Pollution Research. 2021. 28:12321–12333; a practical, though desperate example of makeshift uses of recycled 3D printing filaments: A. Aponte L. Ramos. Venezuelan engineers turn plastic trash into car parts amid crisis. 18.07.2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-plastic-idUSKBN1K81UH> Access 22.03.2023.
- ³⁷ <https://www.polysand.ca/green.html> Access 22.03.2023.

production with better resources), as well as business opportunities and infrastructure improvements for significant segments of society with a low monetary entry threshold. This level of recycling unfortunately features certain weaknesses, as well. Without the use of proper air filtration systems, plastic fumes are released into the environment, which in extreme cases can have a carcinogenic effect on those involved in production. It's doubtful, that plastic once mixed with aggregate, can be recycled again when it reaches the end of its lifecycle. Not to be overlooked are also the costs of electricity or other sources of thermal and kinetic energy, needed for the efficient process of grinding, drying and melting the ingredients. Nonetheless, second-level recycling looks promising due to the aforementioned positives, the elimination of tedious sorting of raw materials and the lack of water consumption for pre-treatment of plastics.³⁸

The first-level recycling I would name “Unwasting”, because it needs next to zero energy and little of external resources to be accomplished. This first-level has also more to re-purposing than to re-cycling. Preemptive repurposing design of goods, which usually go to waste could add to the effectiveness and enlarged impact of the process. Not many examples can be given, because the first choice strategy for lowering environmental impact of packaging may be designing the packaging to reuse as... packaging.³⁹ I remember times when

³⁸ Thus further research is needed. The in-depth study on mixing plastic materials with concrete offered by scientists affiliated with Mangalam University, India concludes: “Plastic waste from PET, PVC, PU, LDPE, HDPE, nylon 66, etc. can be efficiently used in conjunction with fly ash, sand, cement and other materials for the production of bricks, blocks and tiles. However, PET waste is a favorable replacement. Lightweight concrete containing 10% of HIPS and LDPE plastic wastes attained 30 N/mm² compressive strength after 28 days of curing (...) Plastic waste-based concrete possessed greater resistance to chloride ion penetration and less shrinkage on drying. Recycled plastic aggregates can successfully be used in concrete bricks/pavement blocks non-structural panels. Concrete containing waste plastic bottles is useful in making temporary shelters. Plastic waste-based concrete can be highly useful for low load-bearing structures such as partitions and decorative tiles. Mix of waste plastic with crumb rubber acts as modifier and binder in road construction”. P. Lamba D.P. Kaur S. Raj J. Sorout. Recycling/reuse of plastic waste as construction material for sustainable development: a review. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*. 2022. 29:86156–86179.

³⁹ R. Mosca. Reusable Packaging: design, creativity and sustainability. 26.05.2022. <https://www.oppaca.com/en/blog/case-history/reusable-packaging-design-creativity-and-sustainability> Access 22.03.2023; <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/how-design-packaging-reuse> Access 22.03.2023.

milk was delivered daily in uniform glass bottles. To receive a new supply the empty bottles needed to be returned... cleaned. Although this procedure reduced factory costs, the water and heating expenses stayed on the customer side, along with the expenditure of these resources.⁴⁰ So reuse of packaging may be a dead end, while reuse of packaging as construction material could be quite another story. The only industrially-applied example of “Unwasting” first-level recycling I can quote is case of Aqua Costa Rica water bottles, which after use “are compacted slightly with a special device to create a shape that can then be filled with a mixture of recycled paper, foam and cement to provide stability and strength. Those bottles are mounted on rails and weaved together with string to provide hurricane-force roof protection”.⁴¹ Genius, but not a very common practice.

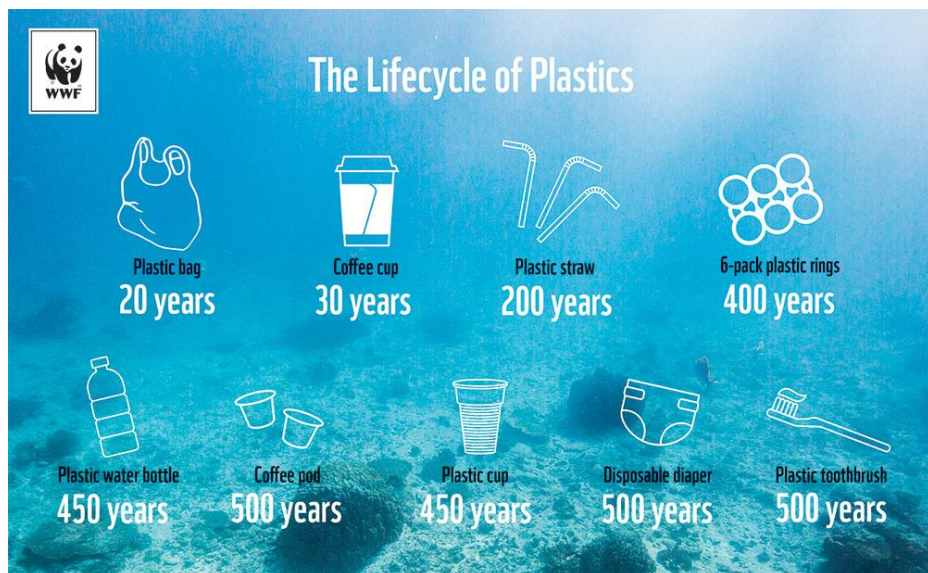
Some authors do not hesitate to portray the waste crisis caused by the decision of the Chinese authorities, as a blessing in disguise: „Western countries will be left with no choice but to handle their waste by themselves, which will be bad for the environment at first (...) [but] these countries are empowering themselves and taking responsibility for the safety and the health of their people and of the environment that surrounds them (...) we’ll need scientists, governments, companies, and NGOs working together and coming up with bold and new ideas and managing strategies to deal with the plastic and overall waste that we’ll always create” (See graph 2).⁴²

⁴⁰ This paradox is being exposed simply in the article: Glass Bottles vs Plastic Bottles – Lower Cost Gives Plastic the Advantage. 06.10.2020. <https://www.drugplastics.com/glass-bottles-vs-plastic-bottles-lower-cost-gives-plastic-the-advantage/> Access 23.03.2023.

⁴¹ J. Johnson. Agua Costa Rica turns water bottles into roof tiles. 13.05.2015. <https://www.plasticsnews.com/article/20150513/NEWS/150519967/agua-costa-rica-turns-water-bottles-into-roof-tiles> Access 23.03.2023.

⁴² <https://youmatter.world/en/how-is-chinas-policy-to-ban-plastic-waste-from-foreign-countries-maybe-going-to-help-save-the-world/> Access 23.03.2023. Credits for “The Lifecycle of Plastic” diagram: <https://www.wwf.org.au/news/blogs/the-lifecycle-of-plastics#&gid=1&pid=1> Access 23.03.2023.

Graph 2



Source: “The Lifecycle of Plastic” diagram:
<https://www.wwf.org.au/news/blogs/the-lifecycle-of-plastics#&gid=1&pid=1>
 Access 23.03.2023

Table 1

Summarized levels and methods of recycling according to Filip Krauze			
Level and method	Facilitator exemplification	Pros	Cons
<p>Fourth “Dutch”</p> <p>Molecular / Chemical re-composition</p>	<p>Chemistry NL, Netherlands</p> <p>Holland</p> <p>Circular Hotspot, Netherlands in cooperation with Shell</p>	<p>Pristine and versatile raw material or fuel of choice</p>	<p>Advanced and expensive technology needed, some energy consumption</p>

	Eastman, USA		
Third “Chinese” Classic Recycling – new pure commercial product by num- ber of processes	Most of the industrial pro- cesses on the mar- ket, so far availa- ble in China	Polyeth- ylene products of pristine con- dition	Energy and water con- suming pro- cess, limited cycles of recy- cling due to material degra- dation
Second “Polish” Low-to- middle-scale projects utilizing melting and mix- ing techniques	Polysand, Canada Precious Plastic, Interna- tional low-tech enterprises in de- veloping countries Brzeski’s patent for eco-as- phalt	Strong and durable con- struction and paving materials – tiles, eco-as- phalt	Heat- ing energy con- sumption, toxic fumes’ release, possibly one- time recycling cycle
First “Unwasting” Primary product redesign to make a sec- ondary use of it as construction material	Aqua Costa Rica, Costa Rica (?)	Low – to – no energy Plastic bottles turned into roofing tiles with a dedicated hand tool, re-re- cyclable on lev- els 2-4	?

Source: Author’s elaboration

After decades of lamenting over plastic “islands” over the oceans’ depths and microplastics in the seafood and everywhere else, it may be worth the reverse of thinking. The scientifically backed claim that a polyethylene bottle can withstand half a millennium of torture by salty ocean water, frictional ocean currents and ultraviolet radiation brings a piece of very good news to

builders. Here we have received an excellent construction and insulation material, certified even for food contact. And I'm not necessarily referring to the frequent (though, after all, also inspiring for the use of waste in countries with hot climates) YouTube videos about building houses out of bottles, filled with sand because that won't work where one should bet on low thermal permeability of the walls. What's different is, that if the bottles are filled with compressed air or CO₂, unwanted elsewhere (even better thermal insulation and better fire protection), the edifice achieves not only rigidity but effective thermal insulation as well. For me personally, the turning point in such thinking about plastics was a video (approaching 5 million views, the channel has over a million subscribers) in which Canadian tinker Chris Notap decided to build a working raft out of 2-liter soda bottles, filled with compressed air (15 psi). And the moment when, on his way to the lake, he placed this raft of bottles parallel to a brick wall of similar thickness....⁴³.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTIONS

It has already been mentioned that a serious treatment of the housing crisis demands an adequate reflection on the structure of home ownership, as well as a mature approach to recycling requires a minimum knowledge of how complex this enterprise is and what socio-economic costs it entails. The same is true of the issue of peace, which does not mean the mere absence of war⁴⁴, and all the aforementioned crises, after all, affect at least some societies in some way, especially in Central Europe, which's perspective I naturally take, but not limited to respectively.

According to data provided by Uppsala Conflict Data Program in 2021 alone there were 54 open armed conflicts engaging state-based violence, resulting in more than 84.000 registered deaths, including such actors as Azerbaijan,

⁴³ Chris Notap. DIY Raft • From 2L Pop Bottles ! 08.09.2020. <https://youtu.be/sy95m1Q6EeE> Access 23.03.2023.

⁴⁴ "Peace is not merely the absence of war; nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies; nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice. Peace results from that order structured into human society by its divine Founder, and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice". II Vatican Council. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*. Vatican 1965. 78.

Cameroon, Ethiopia, India, Islamic State, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Kurdistan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, People's Republic of China, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Philippines, South Sudan, Syria, Turkey and Yemen.⁴⁵ Since 1968, beginning with pope Paul VI, the pontiffs of the Roman-Catholic Church have been marking the World Day of Peace by a special message, reflecting contemporary global tensions and tendencies.⁴⁶ Already in the second year of his pontificate Pope Francis, as he began his brief visit to northern Italy, following his prayer at a nearby Great War military cemetery, stated: “Even today, after the second failure of another world war, perhaps one can speak of a third war, one fought piecemeal, with crimes, massacres, destruction”.⁴⁷ Similar statement in form of 2016 World Day of Peace message could not go unnoticed.⁴⁸ This idea will return in his later statements, including “Fratelli Tutti”.⁴⁹

From Francis’ perspective the recent war between Russian Federation and Ukraine might not be anything out of ordinary, however, factors exceeding Southern-American or Central-European perspectives make a difference of importance in the case.⁵⁰ According to Jonathan Masters from Council on Foreign

⁴⁵ <https://ucdp.uu.se/encyclopedia> Access 01.04.2023.

⁴⁶ Message of His Holiness Pope Paul VI for the observance of a Day of Peace, 1 January 1968. https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19671208_i-world-day-for-peace.html Access 01.04.2023.

⁴⁷ S. Rellandini. Pope says world’s many conflicts amount to piecemeal World War Three. 13.08.2014. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pope-war-idUSKBN0H808L20140913> Access 01.04.2023.

⁴⁸ “Sadly, war and terrorism, accompanied by kidnapping, ethnic or religious persecution and the misuse of power, marked the past year from start to finish. In many parts of the world, these have become so common as to constitute a real “third world war fought piecemeal”. Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the celebration of the 49th World Day of Peace 1st January 2016. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20151208_messaggio-xlix-giornata-mondiale-pace-2016.html Access 01.04.2023.

⁴⁹ “War, terrorist attacks, racial or religious persecution, and many other affronts to human dignity are judged differently, depending on how convenient it proves for certain, primarily economic, interests. What is true as long as it is convenient for someone in power stops being true once it becomes inconvenient. These situations of violence, sad to say, “have become so common as to constitute a real “third world war” fought piecemeal”. Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of the Holy Father Francis on fraternity and social friendship. 2020 Vatican. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_encyclica-fratelli-tutti.html Access 01.04.2023.

⁵⁰ According to Nils Redeker, even within European Union itself, “the overall economic costs of the war are still difficult to predict. However, the impact will be different for different member states. After the pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is

Relations since 24th of February 2022 we are facing the worst European conflict in 80 years, ignited by the 2nd military superpower's unjustified invasion. Ukraine as a former Soviet republic shared strong cultural, economic, and political ties with the present invader, whose brutality with an adverse effect shifts the oppressed on the fast-tracks of European integration. On top of these seemingly obvious observations, the recent conflict may be taken as evidence of re-kindled geopolitical rivalry between all existing world superpowers.⁵¹ Especially the last of the above is being supported by Pope Francis, as of his recent statement reported by Reuters, that the conflict was fueled by "imperial interests, not just of the Russian empire, but of empires from elsewhere".⁵²

Although the outcome of the aforementioned war is still uncertain, our Central-European experience shows that even the worst war should be followed by the reconstruction of volume infrastructure.⁵³ On April 2, 2022, I accompanied a group of young people from the former Soviet Union republics on a trip to Warsaw. Among them there were several young Ukrainians. They received my tale with disbelief, that the beautiful city we were just passing through, in 1945 laid completely in ruins. "Your cities will be rebuilt in the same way" – I told them, sincerely believing this consolation.⁵⁴ In addition to many military and political-economic predictions, a certain kind of vision is unconditionally needed, which, related to hope, can effectively focus on the future. Such hope

yet another external economic shock with asymmetric consequences across Europe". N. Redeker. Same shock, different effects: EU member states' exposure to the economic consequences of Putin's war. 07.03.2022. <https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/economic-consequences-ukraine> Access 01.04.2023.

⁵¹ J. Masters. Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia. 14.02.2023. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia> Access 01.04.2023.

⁵² Pope says Ukraine war fuelled not just by 'Russian empire'. 10.03.2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/pope-says-ukraine-war-fuelled-not-just-by-russian-empire-2023-03-10/> Access 01.04.2023.

⁵³ An example of the Western-European perspective of the post-war rebuilding of Europe may be found: M. MacMillan. Rebuilding the world after the second world war. 11.09.2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/11/second-world-war-rebuilding> Access 01.04.2023. The comprehensive study on why Poland (along with other Central-European countries) could not benefit from the Marshall Plan has been provided by Sheldon Anderson: Poland and the Marshall Plan, 1947-1949. 1991. Diplomatic History 15:4. 473-494.

⁵⁴ A brief overview of this phenomenon may be found on the UNESCO records, as the historic center of Warsaw has been enrolled into the World Heritage List in 1980: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/30/> Access 01.04.2023.

accompanied the founders of the State of Israel⁵⁵, or Haller's Blue Army formed in the United States and Canada, while Poland was still non-existing on the World maps⁵⁶. Thinking about war without thinking about reconstruction deprives of hope a nation, already deprived of peace.⁵⁷ Hence, the context of Ukraine's post-war reconstruction needs to be considered in further conclusions about the role of the creativity in charity in response to the triple crisis of homelessness, waste and war.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Noteworthy, that the national anthem of the State of Israel is named "The Hope" (Hatikva) as inherited by the state from the Zionist Movement. The first version of the poem – originally named "Tikvatenu" – was written by the poet Naftali Herz Imber circa 1878, and published in Jerusalem in 1886. https://m.knesset.gov.il/en/about/lexicon/pages/national_anthem.aspx Access 01.04.2023. According to Philissa Cramer, "Golda Meir, the fourth prime minister of Israel and a native of Kyiv whose family fled amid antisemitic violence, has loomed large ever since Russia launched its war on Ukraine late last month. Her words have appeared in pro-Ukrainian memes, been quoted by Ukrainian diplomats and even been pulled from the backpack of a battle-ready Ukrainian soldier". P. Cramer. Kyiv-born Golda Meir becomes a symbol of hope for Ukrainians. 10.03.2022. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israels-former-pm-golda-meir-has-become-a-symbol-of-hope-for-ukrainians/> Access 01.04.2023. One of her traits was wisely-optimistic look into the future, as expressed in one of her recorded sayings: "When peace comes we will perhaps in time be able to forgive the Arabs for killing our sons, but it will be harder for us to forgive them for having forced us to kill their sons. Peace will come when the Arabs will love their children more than they hate us". https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/223411.Golda_Meir Access 01.04.2023.

⁵⁶ The synthetic study on sustaining effort of reinstatement of independent Poland by Polish diaspora may be found: J.S. Paula. "Our Sacred Duty": Poland's Diaspora Fights for Polish Independence, 1894–1921. *Studia Historica Gedanensia*. 2021. XII. 331-356.

⁵⁷ According to Nancy Qian, Professor at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, "Winning the actual armed conflict is only half the battle, maybe even less than half the battle, because conflict with Russia will just happen again if Ukraine doesn't have a strong and functional economy. Having economic stability is a prerequisite for political stability, which is a prerequisite for social stability. If they want a strong European Union, they want a strong Ukraine". R. Garver. Ukraine Begins Plans for Post-War Reconstruction. 14.02.2023. <https://www.voanews.com/a/ukraine-begins-plans-for-post-war-reconstruction/6963528.html> Access 01.04.2023.

⁵⁸ As an example of visionary insight into Ukraine's future the paper by renowned political writer Dalibor Rohac may serve, where the 700 years old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth design is brought to attention as the original model for the United States constitution as well as the future counterweight to Moscow's imperialist agenda. D. Rohac. It's Time to Bring Back the Polish-Lithuanian Union. A political construct created nearly 700 years ago offers solutions for Europe today. 26.03.2023. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/26/its-time-to-bring-back-the->

HOPE BEYOND IMAGINATION: CREATIVITY IN CHARITY

In the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the beginning of the new millennium) dated of 6th of January 2001 pope John Paul II, as facing the shocking contrast between expectations of humanity's progress in the 21st Century and the gruesome reality (still yet before the September 11th attacks, adding dread to the picture) stated: "In our own time, there are so many needs which demand a compassionate response from Christians. Our world is entering the new millennium burdened by the contradictions of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others not only on the margins of progress but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity. How can it be that even today there are still people dying of hunger? Condemned to illiteracy? Lacking the most basic medical care? Without a roof over their heads?"⁵⁹

This diagnose is, though, not left without a certain call, which is to be exposed as the specific thesis of this paper. In the same paragraph the pontiff follows: "In this context Christians must learn to make their act of faith in Christ by discerning his voice in the cry for help that rises from this world of poverty. This means carrying on the tradition of charity which has expressed itself in so many different ways in the past two millennia, but which today calls for even greater resourcefulness. Now is the time for a new "creativity" in charity, not only by ensuring that help is effective but also by "getting close" to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters"⁶⁰. In the same document the warning has been issued against self-deception of underestimating problems we face or seeking "magic formulas", for "we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person [of Jesus Christ]⁶¹, and the assurance which he gives us: I am with you!"⁶² Although no formula itself is salvific, the truthful perception of its meaning is crucial. So linguistic, doctrinal and practical consequences of "creativity in charity" in the context of "the triple crisis" will be analyzed in the following paragraphs.

[polish-lithuanian-union/](#) Access 02.04.2023.

⁵⁹ Nr 50. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.html Access 02.04.2023.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ The corresponding chapter has been given a title: "Starting afresh from Christ".

⁶² Ibid.

CREATIVITY IN CHARITY – LANGUAGE AND MEANING

The quoted statement arises a certain translation difficulty: the meaning of the key formula of “creativity in charity” differs from language to language in the official translations of the papal document, which I strongly experience as the Polish language user. Spanish “imaginación de la caridad” and French “imagination de la charité” are much closer to Polish, meaning “imagination of mercy”, but not as accurate as English. Understanding the balance between activism and deepening personal relationship with Christ represented by the poor, which is to be read from context of the quoted paragraphs, one can imagine, how bad situation of his neighbor be, one can make an attempt to “walk in his shoes”, but this is still, although important, but a half-way of what is to be achieved. Italian “fantasia della carità” slips meaning of the expression even closer to feeble things of daydreaming, while German “Phantasie der Liebe” brings about even erotic associations. In this context the English translation “creativity in charity” may be the closest to Latin as the “native” language of the Roman documents, which says “inventionis caritatis”. The use of term “resourcefulness” in the previous sentence even amplifies the interpretation considered.⁶³ This tiny example, in addition to demonstrating the complexity and importance of the translational process of official Church documents, significantly clarifies the meaning of the call, which also in the context of in-depth diagnoses of contemporary crises generate a practical directive for people of Christian faith.

At the same time the term “Charity” (or “Mercy”!) may be seen no less complex for a theologian, because of its long pre-Christian history. In Greco-Roman culture, the word “mercy” appears in a variety of settings. The Latin and Greek terminology employed here have significant theological significance because early Christian writers heavily influenced their use. This was the case during the first centuries of the Church. *Misericordia*, in Latin, was a term for sympathy, acts of kindness, and compassion. This word’s basic origin comes from the combination of the words *miser* (miserable, destitute) and *cor* (heart). The Greek word *eleos*, which stands for mercy, compassion, and pity, was near to having this meaning. It is where almsgiving (*eleemosyne*) originates. The

⁶³ Based on vatican.va official release Access 02.04.2023. “Resourcefulness” (in Polish “zaradność”, but Polish official translation has it as “inwencja twórcza” – English “creative invention”) in other official translations is being represented as: Latin: “inceptum” (in Polish translated to English: “initiative”), Spanish “creatividad”, French “inventivité”, Italian “inventive”, German: “Einfallreichum”.

words *oiktirmos* and *splanchna*, which are also found in the Bible, were employed as well. Philanthropy, often known as generosity, compassion, gentleness, and courtesies, had a meaning similar to that of the Greek word *eleos*. *Humanitas* and *clementia*, two related Latin concepts that refer to being kind in the face of someone else's suffering. Generosity (*liberalitas*, *beneficium*, *benignitas*) was associated with this.⁶⁴

Application of “creativity in charity” to the wider context analyzed in this article leads to more adequate meaning of its use, which is still manifold. First this is about perception of poverty in terms of humans being endangered by homelessness caused more by the systemic failure than personal factors, which is in any case an obvious way to destitution. Then seeing roots of the problem allows for counteraction by confronting or bypassing oppressions of the system manifested by “wandering, war and waste”. Confrontation comes to social appeal, advocacy, lobbying and protest. Bypass is about finding technological, economic and social niches versus the mainstream solutions, empowering destitute communities with instruments of change. Both need focus on the needy person and resourcefulness in action. Both are meant serious in the Christian doctrine and practice.

CATHOLIC DOCTRINAL APPROACH TO HOUSING CRISIS

A comprehensive study on the focus of Catholic social teaching on housing has been provided by Paula Franzese and Angela Carmella in the article “Housing and hope” (2021), where they refer to the three plagues of modern housing: unsafe and uninhabitable properties that pervade the rental market in poorer communities; the lack of affordable housing, which impacts both the poor and the middle class; and the failed promise of authentic neighborhoods that are conducive to sustained relationships. Their intent was “to provide examples of reform efforts in each of these areas that are consistent with the lessons of Catholic social thought and channel private law decisions in ways that are consistent with the common good”.⁶⁵

The housing issue is undoubtedly planted on the problem of property,

⁶⁴ W. Zyzak. Miłosierdzie jako termin teologiczny. *Polonia Sacra* 19 (2015). 134.

⁶⁵ P.A. Franzese A.C. Carmella. Housing and hope. Private property and Catholic social teaching. R.F. Cochran Jr. M.P. Moreland (ed.) *Christianity and Private Law. Law and Religion*. 2021. Routledge. London-New York. 126-142.

in this case on its Christian doctrine. In this context, it is impossible to ignore the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, Pope John XXII's *Mater et Magistra*, Vatican II's teaching on social solidarity. John Paul II's special interest in the problem of homelessness was expressed in conjunction with the efforts of the international community when 1987 was dedicated to the issue by the United Nations, as reflected in the Letter to Cardinal Roger Etchegaray on the occasion of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (December 8, 1987)⁶⁶, in accord with the *Justitia and Pax* report "What Have You Done to Your Homeless Brother?"⁶⁷. These reflections have been echoed by a Statement of the Administrative Board of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1988, which indicates, that already at that time the Church exercised awareness of universal importance of the problem.⁶⁸ Back to the Etchegaray's Report, analysis of a variety of housing programs provided by the local churches allowed for indication of three applied solutions: material help to provide shelter to homeless families; education and community development; dialogue with authorities in view of legislation and housing policies that are favorable to the poor.⁶⁹

Pope Francis' plea for urgent attention to the stewardship of the land, given how the abuse of "our common home" has come to hurt both the environment and the poor and vulnerable, is the most recent proclamation on property and its limitations. In this passage, Francis synthesized nearly a millennium of church teaching on real estate: "The Christian tradition has never recognized the right to private property as absolute or inviolable, and has stressed the social purpose of all forms of private property. Saint John Paul II forcefully reaffirmed this teaching, stating that "God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favoring anyone". These are strong words. He noted that "a type of development which did not respect and promote human rights – personal and social, economic and political, including the rights of nations and of peoples – would not be really worthy of man". He clearly explained that "the Church does indeed defend the legitimate right to private property, but she also teaches no less clearly that there is always

⁶⁶ https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/letters/1987/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_19871208_etchegaray.html Access 2023-05-15.

⁶⁷ R. Etchegaray. What Have You Done to Your Homeless Brother? The Church And The Housing Problem. Document of the Pontifical Commission "Justitia et Pax" on the Occasion of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless 1987-12-27. <http://theolibrary.shc.edu/homeless2.htm> Access 2023-05-15.

⁶⁸ Franzese-Carmella. 129.

⁶⁹ R. Etchegaray.

a social mortgage on all private property, in order that goods may serve the general purpose that God gave them”. Consequently, he maintained, “it is not in accord with God’s plan that this gift be used in such a way that its benefits favor only a few”. This calls into serious question the unjust habits of a part of humanity”.⁷⁰

In the conclusion of their paper Franzese and Carmella indicate weaknesses of the present housing system and the principle inspirations available in the Catholic social teaching to the crisis of homelessness. Instead of emphasizing the strength of social trust and community, the current homeowner association structure places more emphasis on punishment and regimentation. The promise of social capital must be based on a set of laws that provide common interest communities’ residents legislative rights and end developer-imposed servitudes. This requires the deployment of a cost-effective alternative dispute resolution procedure as well as measures to ensure openness. Configuring conventional common interest communities’ models is necessary. Restrictive covenants shouldn’t be used excessively; instead, there should be a manageable set of basic guidelines that people can live with and not grow to hate. The necessity for forceful regimentation and rule enforcement should be eliminated by allowing more natural norms of neighborliness to emerge and flourish. Governing boards need to be held accountable.⁷¹ As for direct influence of Catholic teachings the authors state, that they: “provide an important foundation upon which to rest the aims of inclusion, equal opportunity, neighborliness, and justice. The compassionate lens of Church doctrine helps to put into sharper focus the imperative that we allay the suffering experienced by those excluded from the promise of sustainable, peaceful dwelling. In so doing, we achieve even more than success. We achieve significance”.⁷²

⁷⁰ Pope Francis. *Laudato Sí*. P. 93. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/en-cyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html Access 2023-05-15.

⁷¹ Franzese-Carmella. 141.

⁷² *Ibid.* 142.

THEOLOGICAL OBLIGATIONS IN FACE OF THE TRIPLE CRISIS

By “theological obligations” the relationship between the mission of Catholic theologians, schools and universities, and its’ practical fulfilment is being meant. The Apostolic Constitution “Ex corde Ecclesiae” leaves no doubt, that the Catholic universities cannot just stand aside of the global events and processes. On the contrary, “A Catholic University, as any University, is immersed in human society; as an extension of its service to the Church, and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society”.⁷³ Encouragement to study “serious contemporary problems” have been issued in the document, as of “dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world’s resources, and a new economic and political order” – all these with the intent of improvement of serving the human community by the Church globally.⁷⁴ Then the Instruction “Donum Veritatis” comes with particular description of theologians’ mission of preservation and handing on the gift of truth.⁷⁵

The truth itself is being presented as a unifying force, which “frees men from isolation and the oppositions in which they have been trapped by ignorance of the truth. And as it opens the way to God, it, at the same time, unites them to each other.”⁷⁶ Combining approaches of both documents, the relationship between Catholic theologians and fulfillment of their mission is based on how fidelity to the truth (or rather personalized Truth of God) is being applied, though not limited to, serving the human community in its vital needs: conflict resolution, rational resources management and wellbeing manifested in dignified and affordable housing. This has been done by the people of the Church theoretically (i.e. Catholic social teaching) and practically, by missionaries,

⁷³ John Paul II. Ex corde Ecclesiae. P. 32. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html Access 2023-06-06.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith. Instruction ”Donum Veritatis” on the ecclesial vocation of the theologian. P. 3. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19900524_theologian-vocation_en.html Access: 2023-06-06.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

charity workers and theologians⁷⁷ applying “see-judge-act” methodology,⁷⁸ and has been at least partially attempted to be applied in this paper.

CONCLUSION

The crises faced by the modern World may seem to have different natures and characteristics, however, their disjoint analysis may turn anti-heuristic at some point. Because described phenomena are interlacing in one another’s origins and outcomes, interdisciplinary research becomes in high demand for their resolution. Particularly in the assessment phase of a situation, abandoning objective truth can prove to be fatal. The desire for imperial rule over others, for example, can take on the robes of ecological concern, the expropriation of the population can be passed off as a natural market game, and wars are used by some as a shortcut to achieve the aforementioned “benefits”. Creativity in charity does not favor any political force, it favors solutions that serve people and communities first. This may look naïve at first glance, but in the end, many historical examples, such as the current war in Ukraine, show that it is impossible to build a community based on theft, exploitation, and violence, that kleptocracy eventually implodes when there is nothing more to loot. Some may ask, why as a theologian I want to “dig in the trash”? This is because the win-win scenario is needed as a serious alternative to solutions being prone to anti-human manipulations, the solutions like affordable and dignified rebuilding of the post-war countries, effecting in reduction of waste and minimizing the possibility of another war for natural resources.

⁷⁷ As the examples of studies on the existing practical applications of the Christian and Catholic approaches to the contemporary society’s problem solving the following articles may be given: D. Fields. On the Practical Applications of Catholic Social Teaching. *Claritas. Journal of Dialogue & Culture*. 2015. Vol. 4, No. 2. 148-150; E. Cornuel A. Habisch P. Kletz. The practical wisdom of the Catholic social teachings. *Journal of Management Development*. 2010. Vol. 29 No. 7/8. 747-754; J. Miller. Missions, Social Change, and Resistance to Authority: Notes toward an Understanding of the Relative Autonomy of Religion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 1993. Vol. 32, No. 1. 29-50. Examples, like providing affordable housing by Habitat for Humanity and various humanitarian missionary actions have to be recalled at this point, as well.

⁷⁸ A. Pietrzak. *Modele ewangelizacji kultur i inkulturacji wiary w teologii latynoamerykańskiej*. Lublin 2019. 190-207; Catholic Social Services Australia. <https://cssa.org.au/catholic-social-teaching/> Access: 2023-06-06.

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