Principles of Christian Democratic Ideology

Ádám Darabos

April 2021

Principles of Christian Democratic Ideology

Ádám Darabos

Abstract*: In the scientific literature, the examination of Christian democracy generally belongs to the researcher interested in the history of politics; the Christian democratic movement, the parties, or its leaders are in the focus of a historical elaboration, and Christian democracy is rarely analyzed as a distinct political ideology. Partly this theoretical niche prompted Carlo Invernizzi Accetti (2019) to write a monograph on the question entitled What is Christian Democracy? Politics, Religion and Ideology. This article offers an overview – mainly based on Invernizzi Accetti's arguments – on the principles of Christian democratic ideology.*

Introduction

In the second half of the 20th century, Christian democracy has been one of the most influential political movements in Western Europe. Christian democratic *political parties* such as *Christlich Demokratische Union* (CDU) in Germany, *Democrazia Christiana* (DC) in Italy, and Parti *Social Chrétien-Christelijke Volkspartij* (CVP-PSC) in Belgium played decisive roles in their domestic political affairs most commonly taking governmental positions. In France, the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP) – as a Christian democratic party – was also part of governing coalitions and significantly influenced France's foreign policy. Moreover, Christian democrat *politicians* were leading figures of European integration from its birth. As Roberto Papini highlights: "On 9 May 1950, Schuman, then the French foreign minister, after consultations with Konrad Adenauer and Alcide de Gasperi, presented a first draft of a blueprint for the construction of Europe, conceived, as he said, 'as a great work of domestic peace and external cooperation" (Papini, 1997, p. 58). Papini also emphasizes that the prime

ministers and the foreign ministers who signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957 were all Christian democrats.

In other words, Christian democracy had several *constitutional* and *political achievements* after the Second World War among others, the creation of *welfare states* and the participation in the process of *European integration* (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019). However, what might be the most interesting for our times is not the fact that still today there are forceful Christian democratic parties in Europe (both in the nation-states and in the EU's framework) but what Carlo Invernizzi Accetti suggests when he argues that "because of its extended period of political hegemony in many advanced Western democracies, various constitutive aspects of the Christian democratic ideology have over time sedimented in the *institutional framework* and background *political culture* of these countries" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 6). This argument might not just be a "relief" for the contemporary Christian democrats who – for instance in a debate with liberals or social democrats – wish to formulate substantive statements about the historical legacy of their movement; this is also a crucial idea if they are searching for a source, or inspiration to strengthen their Christian democratic principles since the ground is assumedly there.

Still, the question remains: what is Christian democratic ideology in *content* that was "absorbed" into the institutional framework and political culture according to Accetti? Scientific sources scarcely analyze Christian democracy as an ideology[a]; probably the most comprehensive elaboration on the topic is by Invernizzi Accetti himself, who recently wrote an insightful monograph entitled *What is Christian Democracy? Politics, Religion and Ideology* on Christian democratic ideology (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019). Invernizzi Accetti suggests that "Christian democratic ideology can be defined in terms of a specific challenge or goal: that of reconciling Christianity (and in particular Catholicism) with modern democracy, by carving out a political role for the former within the institutional and conceptual horizon of the latter" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 20). Then, in the first part of the book, based on Michael Freeden's concept of ideologies, he names six conceptual building blocks of the Christian Democratic ideologies,

---

[a] In the scientific literature Christian Democracy is mostly analyzed by focusing on the Christian democratic political movements, political parties, or politicians and not by looking at its core „ideological" standpoints. For elaborations on the Christian democratic phenomenon and definitional questions see Kalyvas, 1996; Kalyvas – van Kersbergen, 2010; Invernizzi Accetti, 2019.

namely: (1) *anti-materialism*, (2) *personalism*, (3) *popularism*, (4) *subsidiarity*, (5) *social capitalism*, and (6) *Christian inspiration*. The central aim of this article is to shortly present the key principles[b] of Christian democratic ideology based on Invernizzi Accetti's capsulized arguments that are – by the author of this paper – subjectively collected and narrated. It should be noted that not all of Invernizzi Accetti's arguments or his historical overviews about specific Christian ideas will be presented and his views will not be elaborated as thoroughly as in his book. Still, this summary might help us to understand the core principles of Christian democratic ideologies, or even be used later as an instrument to analyze contemporary Christian democratic political parties and politicians.

Anti-materialism

Anti-materialism is one of the core principles of the Christian democratic ideology. The anti-materialist discourse was highly significant historically when Christian democrats began to formulate their ideas; the leading figures such as Luigi Sturzo, or Konrad Adenauer forcefully condemned materialism. At first glance, it seems clear that anti-materialism is a theoretically relevant oppositional stance and a proper instrument against the highly materialistic ideas of liberalism and totalitarian ideologies, namely communism and Nazism. However – as Invernizzi Accetti suggests – this anti-materialism is a historically embedded idea, or in other words, its roots are present in the Christian (and mainly Catholic) philosophy of history. All great ideologies have their philosophy of history: liberalism believes in the conception of "progress", conservatism is committed to a "view of slowly changing phenomena", or in "organic change", while Marxism postulates the revolution of proletariat in history – writes Invernizzi Accetti based on Freeden. Similarly, Christian democratic ideology has its views on the meaning and telos of history, which can be treated as a *counter-philosophy of history* that struggles against liberal and socialist expectations (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, pp. 31-32). Here, it is crucial to shed light on a partly more philosophical argument, since

---

[b] For the sake of easier understanding and since the two terms resemble in meaning, I argue that it is justified to use „principles" instead of „conceptual building blocks". Although for some, the term „principle" might contain normative tone, here it is taken as descriptive, and it is not suggested that it is necessary to follow these principles to be a „true" Christian democrat. Still, usually most of these views are shared by them.

it was vital to formulate the standpoint which "enabled" Christians (and in particular, Catholics) to participate in modern democratic politics.

By the end of the 19th century, the Catholic Church began to perceive the negative effects of its defensive stance that was dismissive towards everything new, modern, and progressive. Not just masses of people became indifferent or hostile towards the Church, but its faithful believers raised the following questions rightly: What is the historical mission of the Catholics in the modern era? Are public activities favorable for the Catholics in the framework of democracy (which form of governance is opposed by the Church)? Is it possible to fulfill the Catholic duty if the public sphere is ignored by the Catholics? Which Catholic doctrines should be left unchanged? And which instruments are permitted to defend them?

Several deep, novel, and theoretically rich ideas were articulated by Christian authors related to these kinds of questions. In the 1860s Carlo Maria Curci began to propose "a form of *pragmatic adaption* of official Catholic doctrine to the present historical context" by dividing Catholic doctrine into *theses* which referred to "universal principles regarding human nature and the divine order in themselves," and *hypotheses*, that considers "specific historical circumstances, usually contingent, often guilty, and nearly always lamentable, within which this or that people happens to be embroiled at a given moment" (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 34). This distinction paved the way for one of the key authors of Christian democratic ideas, the Catholic Neo-Thomist philosopher, Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), to differentiate between "general and immutable principles" of the Catholic faith and the "particular circumstances" of the given historical "moment". This line of thought made it possible for Maritain to treat political democracy as a manifestation of "evangelical impulse" that is assumed to be at work in human history, a conclusion that would have been unacceptable to the intransigents of the Catholic Church (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 34).

However, there was another useful idea to reconcile Catholic doctrine and modern democracy, namely St. Augustine's notion on the interplay of the impulses between the "City of God" and the "City of Man" in human events and history. If we accept that all historical eras contain both impulses (good and evil), it is erroneous to treat a whole period of history, in this case, modernity as wholly corrupted and something to be absolutely rejected. This era must also bear some evangelical impulse. Invernizzi

Accetti argues that in Maritain's thought, this "dualism" which – beyond Augustine – is present in the biblical parable of the wheat and the chaff, is connected to anti-materialism, since the "evangelical impulse" pushes humanity towards redemption, while the "sinful" or "lustful" pulls humanity backward. As Invernizzi Accetti concludes "this marks a clear contrast with the 'materialism' of both liberalism's and especially socialism's philosophies of history, which portray human events and epochs as the outcome of social and economic conditions" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 38).

Most of the Christians of the time agreed, that just as modernity is not entirely evil, it is not entirely good. Several authors referred to the notion of a "fateful split"[c] in history which resulted in the fact that man began to believe that it makes his history in which God is an unnecessary element. Invernizzi Accetti argues that this idea is closely connected to materialism which, in this regard, "appears as a fusion or synthesis – of all the intellectual and theological errors that are assumed to have contaminated the 'evangelical impulse' originally assumed to be at the core of the modern democratic era, which together had the effect of leading man to have more trust in himself and his capacity to control the material world than in God himself" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 44). To sum it up, anti-materialism became one of the key features of Christian Democrats not just around the totalitarian regimes, but later in the whole Christian democratic project as well. In this regard, the duty of Christians is to combat materialism and maintain the flow of "evangelical impulse" in the contingent context of modern democracy.

Personalism

Personalism is probably one of the most emphasized and stable concepts of Christian democratic ideology. The fundament of this idea is that the human person has a unique dignity, it has a special place in the order of the world which is created by God. The biblical basis of this idea is that the human person was created by God in his image and likeness. Naturally, this emphasis on the resemblance of humans and God points to the special spiritual (which is not the same as the rational) nature of the human

---

[c] Different Christian authors emphasized different sources of errors that culminated in the modernity. Maritain criticized Luther's reformation, Eric Voegelin pointed to the „gnostic heresy" of Joachim of Flora, Augusto del Noce found the roots of modern atheism in the Protestant reformation and the Enlightenment, while Michel Viley traced back the origin of modern political and legal thought to the „nominalist turn" of Duns Scotus and William Ockham (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, pp. 41-44).

person. This statement, in itself, would indicate the difference between Christian and liberal or Marxist views on human nature and its political consequences. Yet again, partly since the elaboration on this topic (the question of human nature) has a huge Christian scholarly tradition, Christian democracy can settle a well-defined and theoretically grounded stance to be able to confront other ideologies.

To understand the Christian (democratic) personalism, three terms should be understood that are at the heart of the Thomist (and Neo-Thomist) tradition: *order, telos/purpose, and the natural law*[d]. One of the substantial ideas here is "that the whole universe has been created by God as a rational and purposive 'order'; that is, as a system of necessary laws and relationships that assign a specific place and purpose to each individual object within it" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 55). Moreover, "God created the temporal universe with a specific purpose in mind: that is, as a means or pathway for the redemption of humanity from its original sin" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 55). Therefore, in nature, everything has its proper place and individual purpose, and the *organically structured order* contributes to the fulfillment of its ultimate end. Natural law is necessary since humans must be aware of their specific end destined by God (salvation). According to Thomas Aquinas, natural law is "the rational creature's participation in eternal law" (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 55), while Jacques Maritain expounds on the basis of this idea when he writes: "Natural law, or natural right, is nothing more than... an order or disposition that human reason can discover, and according to which the human will must act in order to attune itself with the necessary ends of the natural order" (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, pp. 56-57). Naturally, man is not alone in the world, and human nature has a social dimension. This causes a "sense of community" and also solidarity towards others, which is, according to Pierre Henri Teitgen, is an "essential complement to the idea of inherent 'dignity' – and therefore uniqueness – of the human person (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 61). One's "project" of salvation is naturally bound to the collectives and communities in which he/she is present, resulting in a common salvational project.

---

[d] Naturally, these concepts are extremely complex and were investigated and developed by numerous scholars, philosophers, and theologians in the past decades. Some academics might also argue that telos and purpose are not identical. Still, here it is only possible to give a gist about these three notions in few words.

Although these ideas might seem a bit theoretical, it is significant to mention them since these are the underlying ideas of Christian democratic thought.

In Christian democratic ideology, responsibility is highly connected to freedom, or in other words, freedom is not freedom from something (as in liberalism), but freedom to be fully aware and act according to the fact that natural law – through salvation – orients us towards God. Among other factors, this results in the fact that in social matters, Christian democrats (both in values and public policies) are proponents of "conservative social morality". They stand for the *sacredness of human lives* (which might appear in prohibitions of abortion and euthanasia), *defend families*, tend to respect *traditional gender roles*, *criticize moral permissiveness*, and *restrict freedom of expression* that offense a person's religious belief. Christian democrats argue that based on the dignity of the human person, every human being has *inalienable rights*, including a *right to life*, *freedom of religion/conscience*[e], *"rights of the family"*, and *"political rights"*. As Invernizzi Accetti highlights, the appropriation of these rights began in the 1920s and 1930s, much before the modern liberal dominance would have appeared in these questions. This achievement is acknowledgeable even though these rights mainly "functioned as a way of reaffirming the traditional social morality that has been the backbone of Catholic social doctrine for centuries" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 79).

Popularism

Popularism – as a distinct feature of Christian Democratic ideology – is based on the idea that the human person is intrinsically a social entity. As human individuals form specific natural communities, a political community is formed as well which is "held together by positive law and teleologically oriented towards the common good of its members" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 81). Two notions should be emphasized here: first, there are several natural communities (for instance family, neighborhood, universal community), the political community is just one of them, and it is not treated superior to the others. Second, the ultimate end of the human project (both individually and socially) is the otherworldly salvation, therefore the political community can only aim to reach temporal common good which should serve the primal aim. This is one of

---

[e] Here, this freedom is more a positive idea than a negative liberal one, meaning that it prompts specific religions to take a role in the public life, for instance their duty is to participate in education or healthcare.

the two main differences between Christian democratic and liberal, republican, or populist democracy since the former treats "people" as teleologically indeterminate while the Christian completely teleological. The second divergence lies in the fact that in Christian democratic ideology the "people" are internally differentiated, while in the rest, they are mostly homogeneous. The reason for this statement was mentioned above, early Christian Democrats viewed "people" as an organic unity (opposed to the mechanical aggregate of communism), which consists of several individuals and human groups such as families, or professional organizations (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, pp. 82-89).

Based on the Christian democratic conception of the people, a specific Christian democratic conception of democracy is formulated which – instead of popular sovereignty – rests on *popular autonomy*. For Christian democrats, a proper institutional setup is a "kind of regime that allows the people's inherent nature to express itself freely, according to its own teleology" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 90). Based on the idea of popular autonomy, Invernizzi Accetti derives four distinctive features of the Christian Democratic conception of democracy: *substantive democracy*, *consociational democracy*, Christian democratic *views on political parties*, and the idea of *constraining the people.*

Substantive democracy referred to the idea that democracy is not just a method of deciding on who rules but – as Luigi Sturzo suggested – "Christian Democracy means a popular organization of the whole structure of society, whether that concerns politics, law, economics, finance, or concrete social practice" (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 93). Moreover, it is committed to supporting the most disadvantageous by direct measures. This meant to open towards the rural layers and the workers. Though Christian democrats treat people as *equal before God*, they oppose the socialist idea of equality as it does not refer to the principle of *social differentiation*, *the different classes*, and their *different purposes* to reach temporal common good.

Consociational democracy implies the institutional character of democracy, in which the main idea is to "include as many constituent social groups and interests as possible in a cooperative process oriented towards the achievement of reciprocally beneficial compromises between them" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 94). The defining characteristic are the *cooperative* processes, works of *inclusion*, *mediation*, and

reconciliation while treating politics as a conflictual or competitive sphere is opposed. The most acknowledged political scientist of the topic, Arend Lijphart differentiated between "majoritarian" (Anglo-Saxon, or more specifically "Westminster model") which is based on *competition*, and "consociational" models of "continental" European countries where decisions are made with the *consent of a plurality*. After this distinction, Invernizzi Accetti highlights four elements[f] that are connected to this institutional setup which were mainly set up by Christian democratic parties and politicians, namely *proportional representation*, the *separation of powers*, *pillarization*, and the *cooperative elites*. The *role of the parties* is an interesting question in the case of Christian democratic regimes since parties usually represent particular and conflictual interests. In the beginning, some authors stressed this notion, but later it became accepted that political parties have *specific functions* (for instance they are *mediating organisms*) which justify their existence. Moreover, by representing more classes *vertically* Christian Democratic parties became successful *"catch-all parties"* in the electoral field.

As it was mentioned above, the Christian democratic conception of democracy opposes the idea of people's sovereignty. Furthermore, it wishes to constrain people with specific measures to move towards the temporal common good. The first instrument is *"religious constitutionalism"* which means the creation of constitutions that contain *substantive moral* and *political values* derived from religious sources. To defend these written ideals, early Christian democrats supported the creation of *constitutional courts.* The second tool is based on the idea that specific political tasks should be *depoliticized* and *decentralized*. There are public areas where political battles should not take place, instead, autonomy and technical competence embodied in professional administrative organizations (for instance in the form of independent central banks) should carry out public tasks to foster the temporal common good. The last idea is also based on the transfer of power, but in this case, to *supranational* political organizations (the openness towards European integration partly stemmed from this idea).

Subsidiarity

Beside personalism probably the most emphasized principle of Christian democracy is subsidiarity. The idea of subsidiarity is strongly related to the question of state

---

[f] Proportional representation, the separation of powers, pillarization, and the cooperative elites.

authority. Based on the Christian democratic ideology state should not be sovereign in the sense to exercise absolute ("separate and transcendent") power. First, the idea that there is an absolute power that is not God, is in itself irreligious. Second, if political authority is unaccountable there is no guarantee that the temporal good is exercised; if political power is sovereign, it can do anything in the name of justice and it must be obeyed – argues Maritain. The French philosopher also points to the fact that sovereignty does not bear any autonomy around itself; if the Sovereign is possessed of power which is absolutely supreme "the pluralist idea is not only disregarded, but rejected by necessity of principle. Centralism, not pluralism, is required… It is therefore at the price of patent self-contradiction that sovereign states will reluctantly accept the smallest amount of autonomy for particular agencies and associations born out of freedom" (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 115). This can easily lead to political despotism or totalitarianism. Third, if states are sovereign (or treat themselves as sovereign), it could easily corrupt the relation between them leading to an international conflict between sovereigns fighting for the highest sovereignty.

The solution that Christian democrats offer is to distribute state power regionally, locally, and internationally. Related to the idea of subsidiarity, Alcide de Gasperi argued for the importance of local, regional, and municipal levels, highlighted the importance of family and free association. As it was emphasized before, Christian democracy is in favor of the natural communities which all have their specific purpose in the organic order. Just as family, neighborhood, or region, the state is also a specific agency, an instrumentg for the temporal good and not a separate or a transcendent entity. Obviously, the state has its roles and core tasks in the Christian democratic ideology; as Pius XI wrote mainly in "directing, watching, urging [and] restraining" (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 123). One of the fundamental ideas of subsidiarity supposes that the state should not intervene until it functions well. One might suggest that subsidiarity is identical to federalism, but it is not the case. In federalism sovereignty is divided which supposes its existence, this division is usually set in a legal document (most commonly in a constitution) and the powers are divided in a top-down logic. In contrast, subsidiarity is against any sovereignty, most of its manifestations appear spontaneously and it is predicated on a bottom-up logic.

---

[9] As it is proposed, man is not for the state, state is for the man.

The leading Christian democrats of the 1940s were open to distribute a part of the state power on an international level. In other words, they were proponents of regional and global forms of supranational governance. Three key assumptions were behind this politics. First, there are worldwide problems, and a worldwide political body (a world government) might be more successful to offer proper worldwide solutions. The second is connected to the first idea but it is more specific: after the Second World War, it was crucial to build organizations that prevent the outbreak of a new war and change the anarchic international relations in which sovereignties are constantly contenting. Third – closely connected to the universality of Christianity and the Catholic idea of respublica christianorum – it was an aim to reach a kind of brotherhood among the peoples of the world.

Social Capitalism

Two foundational concepts lie behind most of the arguments of Christian democratic political economy: the idea of *private property* and *distributive justice*. Not just biblical references but several Church documents affirm the idea that man must have a *"natural right"* to use everything for the fulfillment of his personality. Therefore, in Christian social doctrine the existence of private property is justified, though it is *limited*, partly based on the idea that if an individual possesses private property, he/she also should use it in a right way considering not only his interest but the common good as well. Again, possibility and power are followed by responsibility and duty. The second idea is distributive justice which "concerns the fair distribution of material goods amongst the members of given community" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 143), also plays a decisive role in the Christian social doctrine.

These fundamental ideas were crucial in themselves but were used as well in the critical arguments of Christian democrats posed against the economic views of capitalism and socialism. The central objections against capitalism – beyond the traditional Catholic exposition that it is part of modernity, individualist, and materialist – was the idea that by encouraging the individual profit and material well-being "it fails to recognize the inherently social dimension of personality and private property, thereby laying the conditions for massive social injustices" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 146). Still, several Christian (Democrat) authors acknowledged the positive side of capitalism (technical and technological progress, growing economy, etc.) and the

critique was not aiming to abolish capitalism as a system. This could not be said in the case of socialism which was one of the prime targets of the Church and Christian democrats. The defense of private property was already set in the *Rerum Novarum* in which Pope Leo XIII condemned socialism as an economic system because of its "unjust" and "inefficient" nature (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 148).

The question was whether Christian democracy is able to form a distinct but still a robust alternative to these prevailing economic orders. Invernizzi Accetti suggests that a well-specified third way between capitalism and socialism did not occur, but through the economic "experiments", at least three different pathways manifested: solidarism, the social market economy, and neoliberalism. Another acknowledged author, Kees van Kersbergen argued that there is *"social capitalism"* which is connected to Christian democratic parties, and it has four key set of features. First, "Christian democracy promotes what has been identified empirically as a *passive* or *reactive* welfare state" (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 157). It accepts a capitalistic economic system, private property, and market-based society but it is open to correct market failure and compensate if necessary. Second, social capitalist welfare regimes tend to "rely heavily on benefits in cash rather than any kind" and "oriented towards replacing incomes rather than protecting or creating jobs" (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, pp. 157-158). Third, as a way of supporting the traditional gender roles and acknowledging them as the basic unit of social organizations, social capitalistic regimes are characterized by a *family bias* in their tax and benefit system. Fourth, Christian democratic social policy is mostly characterized by *minimalizing state control* and place several social services on the regional and local level, to both private and semi-private institutions. Furthermore, the special mission of the Church – as it was mentioned above – regarding education and other social services are expected and supported. As a summary, van Kersbergen highlighted that while social democracy is *universalistic* in its principles and *centralized*, the Christian democratic model of welfarism benefits *membership* in specific social categories, and beside the state, *other actors* serve social tasks (Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 160).

Christian Democrats were highly committed to a growing economy that was based on the labor of man and the natural resources created by God. They were praising the sphere where the production of this "interplay" was the most visible, in agriculture. Following the idea that industry is an extension, intensification of agriculture and

production contributes to the common good, they also made peace with industry (and based on the same reasons later with the financial system as well). However, to avoid the overproduction of industry that endangers and spoils the nature created by God, specific industrial activities should be limited. As a form of inter-classism, Christian democrats tried to build connections and encourage cooperation, reconciliation between the classes. Moreover, it was crucial for them to define and build a system that affords the sufficient objective needs of every individual in every class to live a "decent life".

Christian Inspiration and a concluding question

It would be highly erroneous to claim that Christian inspiration was not a necessary part of the Christian democratic movement, or it could not be treated as a principle of Christian democracy. Yet, the extremely insightful lamentations of Invernizzi Accetti on the role of religion in politics do not constitute a well-defined principle, especially compared to the other five elements. Therefore, here, only one idea of his investigation will be delivered mainly in order to denote a dilemma. I believe that this idea – although maybe just in a subtle way – is present in all past and contemporary Christian Democratic political communities.

Maritain makes a distinction between two different forms of Christian actions when he writes the following: "acting 'as a Christian' *(en chrétien)* is said to be a form of action oriented towards the ultimate goal of otherworldly salvation, and therefore to be directly subject to the religious authority of the Catholic Church. Acting 'in the name of Christianity' (…) is assumed to be a form of action oriented towards the 'infra-valent' goal of the temporal common good, which is not of immediate religious significance, and therefore doesn't require a literal application of the religious precepts dictated by the Catholic Church, but may nonetheless still 'draw inspiration' from Christian values and beliefs, in order to contribute more fully towards the fulfillment of its ends, both at the natural and supernatural levels" (quotes Invernizzi Accetti, 2019, p. 177). Based on this idea it follows that Christian democratic politics could be exercised without owing allegiance to the Church. Moreover, Christian democratic politics could also be represented and supported by unbelievers. Still, the unanswered question follows: what are the political and moral costs and the benefits of confessional compared to aconfessional Christian democratic politics?

Bibliography

INVERNIZZI ACCETTI, Carlo: What is Christian Democracy? Politics, Religion and Ideology. Cambridge - New York, Cambridge University Press, 2019., 385 pp.

KALYVAS, Stathis N.: The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe. Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1996., 301 pp.

KALYVAS, Stathis N. – VAN KERSBERGEN, Kees: Christian Democracy. In: Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci., 2010., 13, pp. 183-209.

PAPINI, Roberto: The Christian Democrat International. Lanham - Boulder - New York - London, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993., 312 pp.