THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF ‘INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT’ AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

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Abstract
In 1967, Pope Paul VI posited the notion of ‘integral human development’, which, as developed by his successors, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, broke with the modern project of purely economic and technological development, resulting in an original understanding of ‘development’. The papal doctrine, as conventional conceptions of development, is in favour of economic growth, technological innovation and the implementation of social programmes. As ‘integral human development’, however, emphasises the religious goal of reconciling humanity and God through the creation of a human family over these more material social and economic issues, it cannot be equated to secular development theory. This chapter highlights the unique character of this doctrine and examines its influences on the theoretical framework of the international development community.

1. Introduction
Contrary to popular belief, the Catholic Church and its associated institutions have, since the mid-nineteenth century, generally demonstrated themselves to be supportive of development.\(^1\) While it was critical of the social consequences of industrialism, as articulated, for example, in the 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* issued by Leo XIII, the papacy demonstrated its enthusiasm for technological innovations likely to bring material well-being and prosperity, leading to the formulation of an increasingly optimistic stance in favour of

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\(^1\) Despite the *Syllabus* – a list of 80 proposals explicitly condemning rationalism, freedom of opinion, religious freedom and the separation of the Church and the state – Pius IX (1846–1878) was seen as progressive by his contemporaries. He installed the telegraph and the railroad in the Papal States (Lagrée, 1999, 223–25).
moderate development under Pius XII (Lagrée, 1999, 99). In the 1960s, however, in response to globalisation and its many attendant crises, pontifical discourse began to change markedly. Aware of these radical changes in the political, economic, cultural and technological spheres, the Supreme Pontiffs consciously adjusted the Church’s social doctrine, originally concerned with labour issues, toward notions of development. Paul VI’s 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio* played a key role in this renewal. In the delineation of ‘integral human development’, this text laid out the initial foundations of a purely religious conception of development, which, supplemented by the writings of his successors, gradually distanced itself from the state-centric modern project of economic and technological prosperity.²

In order to highlight the unique character of this doctrine, and its influence on international development, this chapter demonstrates how the Magisterium, while recognising the legitimacy of the underlying principles of (secular) development theories (section 2), subordinates them to the religious desire for an historical reconciliation between humanity and God (section 3).

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2 Although their texts purport to share the same doctrine, there are noticeable divergences between the popes. That said, in order to focus on the issues inherent to the Catholic theorisation of development, this chapter does not address the historical development of the concept. For more detail, please refer to Denis Maugenest’s 1985 anthology regarding the Church’s social doctrine, or Bertina (forthcoming).