

# The thorny way of European Bioethics: The Jahr journal case study

---

Šimunković, Gordana; Buterin, Toni; Muzur, Amir

Source / Izvornik: **Nova prisutnost : časopis za intelektualna i duhovna pitanja, 2022, XX, 417 - 430**

**Journal article, Published version**

**Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

<https://doi.org/10.31192/np.20.2.13>

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:184:467469>

Rights / Prava: [Attribution 4.0 International](#)/[Imenovanje 4.0 međunarodna](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-08-07**

Repository / Repozitorij:

[Repository of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Health Studies - FHSRI Repository](#)



## The thorny way of European Bioethics: The *Jahr* journal case study

Gordana Šimunković\*

[gordana.simunkovic@medri.uniri.hr](mailto:gordana.simunkovic@medri.uniri.hr)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0341-7066>

Toni Buterin\*\*

[toni.buterin@uniri.hr](mailto:toni.buterin@uniri.hr)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0725-1008>

Amir Muzur\*\*\*

[amir.muzur@medri.uniri.hr](mailto:amir.muzur@medri.uniri.hr)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9770-6733>

<https://doi.org/10.31192/np.20.2.13>

UDK / UDC: 608.1(4):050

1Jahr, F.

Prethodno priopćenje /

Preliminary communication

Primljeno / Received:

23. listopada 2021. / Oct 23, 2021

Prihvaćeno / Accepted:

19. travnja 2022. / Apr 19, 2022

*The ambiguity of the term bioethics has brought different views and has resulted in the development of European bioethics, which relies on the postulates of Fritz Jahr. The intention of this paper is to follow the development of the idea of European Bioethics by analyzing the growth of the journal Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics. Undoubtedly, Jahr had to counterbalanced mainstream bioethics (medical ethics) with the emerging European Bioethics based on Fritz Jahr's and Van Rensselaer Potter's original teachings, Euro-Mediterranean (and other non-Anglo-American) values, and the Integrative Bioethics methodology. Due to the broadness of the pluri-perspective approach, Jahr slipped into »thematic inconsistency« and its epistemological »rebelliousness« certainly will remain a problem for a long time.*

**Key words:** *bioethics; content analysis; European bioethics; formal analysis; Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics.*

---

\* Gordana Šimunković, MA, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine, Address: B. Branchetta 20, HR-51000 Rijeka, Croatia.

\*\* Toni Buterin, MA, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine; Address: B. Branchetta 20, HR-51000 Rijeka, Croatia.

\*\*\* Amir Muzur, MD, MA, PhD, Full Prof., University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Health Studies; Address: B. Branchetta 20, HR-51000 Rijeka, Croatia.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Bioethics is an ill-defined term. It is because the *bio-* part has so essentially different connotations. Fritz Jahr, who coined the word as early as 1926,<sup>2</sup> meant to relate *bios* (life) and ethics, while for Van Rensselaer Potter, who independently »re-introduced« the same word in 1970, »bio-« was an abbreviation of »biological sciences«. <sup>3</sup> This vagueness of bioethics may have a charming side as well: Tristram Engelhardt stated that

»... it is often the imprecision, the lack of clarity, that allows us to name and bring together at one time many areas of interest. An apt word can assemble a rich set of images and meanings and thus help us to see relations between elements of reality that were previously separated in our vision and thought of only as disparate. Such a word has a fertile or strategic ambiguity«. <sup>4</sup>

Upon that shaky ground (and probably because of it), a series of more disputable notions have emerged, like European Bioethics and its variations (Mediterranean Bioethics, Integrative Bioethics, etc.), adding to the confusion.

European Bioethics, at least in the sense advocated in this paper, has been a result of the broad discontent with the Georgetown Kennedy Institute of Ethics doctrine, disregarding values and traditions other than American ones. So Diego Gracia Guillén from the Complutense University in Spain, pioneered a »Mediterranean Bioethics,« fostering the values of amity and compassion. <sup>5</sup> The Danes Jacob Dahl Rendtorff and Peter Kemp, on the other hand, suggested by the late 1990s the use of a »set« of principles including autonomy, dignity, integrity, and vulnerability. <sup>6</sup> Of course, the attempt had to fail, since it kept the American pragmatic logics of principlism, even if replacing some of the American principles with more »European« values. More like Gracia, the Croat Ante Čović, only a few years later, launched the concept and project of »Integrative Bioethics« and cried for a »philosophisation« and »Europeanisation« of bioethics<sup>7</sup>: the Integrative Bioethics has indeed opened towards all, even cultural

<sup>1</sup> Funding: This work has been supported in part by Croatian Science Foundation under the project IP-2020-02-7450 and also by University of Rijeka (uniri-human-18-4-1130).

<sup>2</sup> I. RINČIĆ, A. MUZUR, *Fritz Jahr and the Emergence of European Bioethics*, Zürich, LIT, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> A. MUZUR, I. RINČIĆ, *Van Rensselaer Potter and His Place in the History of Bioethics*, Zürich, LIT, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> H.T. Jr. ENGELHARDT, Foreword, in: V. R. POTTER (ed.), *Global Bioethics: Building on the Leopold Legacy*, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1988, vii-xii.

<sup>5</sup> S. SPINSANTI, *La bioetica: biografie per una disciplina*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1995, 100-110.

<sup>6</sup> J.D. RENDTORFF, P. KEMP, *Basic Ethical Principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw*, Vol. 1. Copenhagen/Barcelona, Centre for Ethics and Law/Borja de Bioètica, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> A. ČOVIĆ, Der Aufbau eines Referenzzentrums für Bioethik in Südosteuropa: ein weiterer Schritt zur Institutionalisierung des bioethischen Pluriperspektivismus, in: A. ČOVIĆ, T. S. HOFFMANN (eds.), *Integrative Bioethik: Beiträge des 1. Südosteuropäischen Bioethik-Forums, Mali Lošinj 2005 / Integrative Bioethics: Proceedings of the 1. Southeast European Bioethics Forum, Mali Lošinj 2005*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2007, 261-274.

non-scientific perspectives, promoting the resulting »orientation knowledge«, close to the idea of Jürgen Mittelstraß on the knowledge based upon values, as opposed to »information knowledge« based upon facts.<sup>8</sup>

All those approaches, however, could not have matched the Georgetown bioethics: launched from Europe, with the only common denominator being resistance to the global mainstream, without political, financial and the related scientific capital, these ideas have had the destiny of persisting as the islands of regional immunity against the narrowed-down principlism: In other words, bioethics seemingly »split« onto principlism and the critique of principlism.<sup>9</sup> And then, the work of Fritz Jahr (1895–1953) was discovered, whom we know as the author of the oldest concept of bioethics (*Bio-Ethik*). Theologian and teacher from Halle in Germany, he exposed his idea of the new discipline (of course, if we view bioethics in the Georgetown manner – that is, as biomedical ethics – we have to conclude it is difficult to defend its »novelty« as discipline<sup>10</sup>) as early as December 1926.<sup>11</sup> Among several ideas worthy of attention, Jahr's undoubtedly major intellectual contribution is the »Bioethical Imperative«, a broadening of Kant's Categorical Imperative, suggesting: »*Respect every living being on principle as an end in itself and treat it, if possible, as such!*« (*Achte jedes Lebewesen grundsätzlich als einen Selbstzweck, und behandle es nach Möglichkeit als solchen!*). In the period between 1924 and 1948, Fritz Jahr published altogether only 22 short articles, 10 of which are on bioethical issues,<sup>12</sup> and his modest, sessile life certainly did not increase his reputation in public. Thus, no wonder that his contemporaries did not quote Jahr, as well as that the Professor of the Berlin Humboldt University Rolf Löther discovered Jahr's idea almost by chance, seventy years later.<sup>13</sup> In the following 10-12 years after Löther's discovery, however, mostly thanks to Eve-Marie Engels from

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. MITTELSTRASS, The loss of knowledge in the information age, in: E. DE CORTE et al. (eds.), *From Information to Knowledge, from Knowledge to Wisdom: Challenges and Changes Facing Higher Education in the Digital Age*, London, Portland Press, 2010, 19-23.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. M. MORI, A bioética: sua natureza e história (translated by Schramm, F.R.), *Humanidades* (Brasilia) 9 (1994) 4, 333-341.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. CALLARI GALLI, Presentazione, in: M. CALLARI GALLI (ed.), *Itinerari bioetici*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1994, 1-18.

<sup>11</sup> F. JAHR, Wissenschaft vom Leben und Sittenlehre, *Mittelschule*, 40 (1926) 45, 604-605.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. A. MUZUR, I. RINČIĆ, Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): the man who invented bioethics, *Synthesis philosophica*, 26 (2011) 1, 133-139; I. RINČIĆ, A. MUZUR, Fritz Jahr: the invention of bioethics and beyond, *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 54 (2011) 4, 550-556; I. RINČIĆ, A. MUZUR, Variety of bioethics in Croatia: a historical sketch and a critical touch, *Synthesis Philosophica*, 26 (2011) 2, 403-428.

<sup>13</sup> R. LÖTHER, Evolution der Biosphäre und Ethik, in: E.M. ENGELS, T. JUNKER, M. WEINGARTEN (eds.), *Ethik der Biowissenschaften. Geschichte und Theorie – Beiträge zur 6. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Theorie der Biologie (DGGTB) in Tübingen 1997*, Berlin, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1998, 61-68.

Tübingen,<sup>14</sup> José-Roberto Goldim from Porto Alegre,<sup>15</sup> and, especially, Hans-Martin Sass from Bochum/Washington,<sup>16</sup> the ideas of Fritz Jahr found their way to propagate all over the world.<sup>17</sup>

Every discipline has to launch a medium or media prone to exchange its ideas. Academic writing is an excellent medium for the scientific community dialogue, providing a permanent and significant written clue as a witness to the efforts of building a certain area that faces many challenges and opportunities, but also possible obstacles.<sup>18</sup> Thanks to the efforts of scientists from different fields from all over the world, today bioethics as a fast-growing discipline is taking up more space in the academic world.<sup>19</sup> However, there are not so many journals in the world using »bioethics« explicitly in their title. The reason for this is complex: medical ethics, namely, has been considered by many scholars a synonym for bioethics. Both Jahr and Potter, let us be reminded, advocated a broader version of bioethics, expanding it onto animals, plants, environment, etc. There are, so, *American Journal of Bioethics* and *Canadian Journal of Bioethics*, *Bioethics* and *Developing World Bioethics* (since 1987 and 2001, respectively, edited in UK and Canada), etc. All of them favour the mainstream bioethics – that is, medical ethics fostered by Kennedy Institute of Ethics (Georgetown, US), Oxford University Press, and other influential opinion-making institutions. It would be wrong to think that this mainstreamness is related only to the Anglo-American world: until the recent Pope Francis' turn to ecology, also the Catholic Church conceded primacy to it, spreading it to Belgium, Italy, Spain, and many other countries, while the absence of original traditions has resulted in its dominance in the most of Eastern Europe.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> E.M. ENGELS, Bioethik, in: C. AUFFARTH, J. BERNARD, H. MOHR (eds.), *Metzler Lexikon Religion* Vol. 1, Stuttgart, J.B. Metzler, 1999, 159-164.

<sup>15</sup> J.R. GOLDIM, Revisiting the beginning of bioethics: the contribution of Fritz Jahr (1927), *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 52 (2009) 377-380.

<sup>16</sup> H.M. SASS, Fritz Jahr's 1927 concept of bioethics, *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, 17 (2007) 279-295.

<sup>17</sup> A. MUZUR, H.M. SASS (eds.), *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: The Future of Integrative Bioethics*, Münster, LIT, 2012; A. MUZUR, I. RINČIĆ, Epistemological, political and cultural implications of the discovery of Fritz Jahr's work: the concept and project of European bioethics, in: F. STEGER, J. C. JOERDEN, M. SCHOCHOW (eds.), *1926 – Die Geburt der Bioethik in Halle (Saale) durch den protestantischen Theologen Fritz Jahr (1895–1953)*, Frankfurt a/M, Peter Lang, 2014, 45-56.

<sup>18</sup> P. SOYER, Academic productivity, *Diagnostic and Interventional Imaging*, 97 (2016) 2, 139-140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.diii.2016.01.006>; V. BARBOUR, The future of academic publishing: disruption, opportunity and a new ecosystem, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 211 (2019) 4, 151-152.e1.

<sup>19</sup> S. SCHER, K. KOZLOWSKA, The Rise of Bioethics: A Historical Overview, in: S. SCHER, K. KOZLOWSKA (eds.), *Rethinking Health Care Ethics*, Singapore, Palgrave Pivot, 2018, 31-44.

<sup>20</sup> A. MUZUR, I. RINČIĆ, *Bioetička Europa našeg doba* [Bioethical Europe of our time], Zagreb, Pergamena/ZCI za integrativnu bioetiku, 2018.

In Croatia, the »bioethical situation« has been particularly dynamic<sup>21</sup>: in the 1990s, the Catholic Church tried to introduce its view of bioethics and the ex-Marxists launched their own version(s) of it. So, in a small country, several lines of bioethics started to develop in parallel, including the Catholic one (faithful to the Anglo-American medical ethics), and a more original »Integrative Bioethics«, fostering the formation of an »orientation-knowledge platform« - close to the ideas of Jürgen Mittelstraß<sup>22</sup> – based upon the integration of inputs from various scientific and non-scientific (artistic, cultural, religious, etc.) perspectives.<sup>23</sup> Integrative Bioethics has been attacked for its alleged pseudo-scientificity,<sup>24</sup> but actually has produced several projects, conferences, and publications. In such a Croatian context, the appearance of a journal devoted to bioethics was only a matter of time.

*Jahr* entered the world in May 2010 as *Jahr – Annual of the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities* (University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine) with its scope to publish articles on a wide range of topics including ethics, bioethics, history and philosophy of science and medicine, sociology, cultural anthropology, theology, law, etc. After four years, the journal went beyond its domicile framework and changed its name into *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics* with its scope to publish papers dealing with bioethical topics from the perspective of different sciences.<sup>25</sup> From the founding of *Jahr*, the idea was to focus primarily on the promotion of European bioethics, as opposed to the mainstream bioethics, narrowed-down to a new medical ethics.<sup>26</sup> Over the years, the *Jahr* has become more recognizable, accessible and readable. On-line access was established through the Croatian scientific Journals portal *Hrčak* (<https://hrcak.srce.hr/jahr?lang=en>). Since 2015, the journal has had its own website ([www.jahr-bioethics-journal.com/](http://www.jahr-bioethics-journal.com/)) which allows all interested readers direct open access to the articles, and allows for electronic manuscript submissions for authors through the Open Journal System. In the second part of its first decade, *Jahr* entered into ERIH PLUS, DOAJ, and SCOPUS databases and followed digital trends by being including the Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

<sup>21</sup> Rinčić, Muzur, *Variety...*, 403-428.

<sup>22</sup> Mittelstraß, *The loss...*, 19-23.

<sup>23</sup> H. JURIC, Uporišta za integrativnu bioetiku u djelu Van Rensselaera Pottera [The footholds of integrative bioethics in the work of Van Rensselaer Potter], in: V. VALJAN (ed.), *Integrativna bioetika i izazovi suvremene civilizacije* [Integrative Bioethics and the Challenges of Contemporary Civilisation], Sarajevo, Bioetičko društvo u BiH, 2007, 77-99.

<sup>24</sup> T. BRACANOVIĆ, From integrative bioethics to pseudoscience, *Developing World Bioethics*, 12 (2012) 3, 148-156; V. IVANKOVIĆ, L. SAVIĆ, Integrative bioethics: a conceptually inconsistent project, *Bioethics*, 30 (2016) 5, 325-335; A. MUZUR, The nature of bioethics revisited: a comment on Tomislav Bracanović, *Developing World Bioethics*, 14 (2012) 2, 109-110.

<sup>25</sup> *Jahr* Journal History & Letters from the editors, available at: <https://www.jahr-bioethics-journal.com/index.php/JAHR/about> (26.06.2021).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

for wider visibility. Entrance to PubMed/Medline was twice denied because of thematic inconsistency.<sup>27</sup>

The intention of this paper is to try to follow the development of the idea of European Bioethics by analyzing the growth of the first journal dedicated to it. Several different indicators have been monitored, some of which speak to the journal's regular challenges, and some may speak of an understanding of what bioethics is.

What is European Bioethics today and in general? Certainly not every bioethics that is evolving on European soil. European bioethics is bioethics that is not enslaved to principles – that is, to a clichéd approach – especially not to those rooted in a non-European cultural corpus. European Bioethics is based on a long and complex, sometimes contradictory, tradition of antiquity, Christianity and free thinkers and schools, part of which, after all, is embedded in the official and unofficial foundations and documents of the European Union. European Bioethics is the original teaching of Fritz Jahr, but also of Van Rensselaer Potter, upgraded by original concepts of Mediterranean, Integrative and other bioethics not based on the Georgetown doctrine.

European Bioethics is an early-stage discipline. From a mere reaction to the unacceptability and exclusivity of the »mainstream«, over time it began to develop thematic and methodological preferences. The journal – the only one in the world so far – which in its title declared its commitment to European Bioethics – *Jahr*, logically goes through the same problems in profiling as the discipline itself. In researching the variations of its content during the first ten years, we wanted to point out the wanderings in its orientation, wanderings that reflected and still reflect the wanderings of European Bioethics itself as an academic and ideological, and even moral orientation.

## *1. Methodology*

The analysis included all volumes of the journal published from May 2010 to December 2019 (a total of 20 published volumes in 10 years). The indicators were the following: volume of journal by years, structure of journal (number and titles of sections), dynamics of publishing, categorization of papers, type of article, number of papers total and per year, number of papers by individual category of papers (total and by years), authors (number of authors of each article, geographical area according to the corresponding author), language of papers, most visited article of *Jahr* through the central portal of Croatian scientific and professional journals which offers open access to their content - *Hrčak*, members of editorial and advisory board, publishing procedure, thematic of the

<sup>27</sup> JOURNAL DOCUMENTATION, »Fritz Jahr« Documentation and Research Centre for European Bioethics, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Health studies.

paper and frequency of the keywords provided by the authors. Information for the analysis were collected from the *Hrčak* (<https://hrcak.srce.hr/jahr?lang=en>), journal internet page ([www.jahr-bioethics-journal.com/](http://www.jahr-bioethics-journal.com/)) and journal documentation<sup>28</sup>. Collected information was organized and processed in the Microsoft Excel program. To determine the topic of the paper the titles were analyzed independently by three members of research team. In case where the title was not clearly indicating the topic, the topic was determined by the abstract. Once the topic was determined it was assigned to a particular area and field of science as in a higher connecting category. Frequency of the keywords was determined based on the root of each provided keywords. Only papers categorized as an original scientific article, preliminary communication, review article and professional article were included in the analysis of titles and keywords.

## 2. Results

From May 2010 to December 2019, 403 articles in 15 different categories have been published in *Jahr's* 20 issues in open access (Fig. 1) with the constant dynamic of 2 volumes per year. Number of published articles through the year is mostly regular but in the 2019 there was an increasing number of submission (twice as many papers were submitted for review in comparison with the previous year). The categorization has been reduced through the years to a narrower structure, where reviewed articles are categorized as Original Scientific Articles, Preliminary Communications, Review Articles, and Professional Articles. *Jahr* also published Editorials, Reviews and Other Contributions.

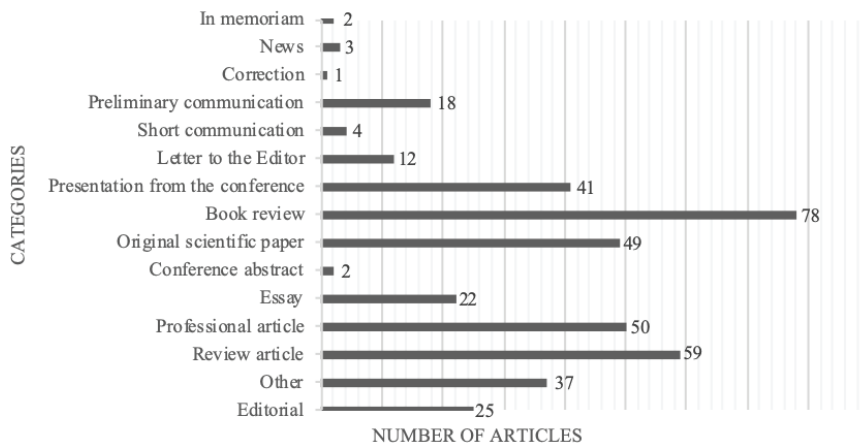


Figure 1. Number of articles published in different categories during the last 10 years

<sup>28</sup> Available in »Fritz Jahr« Documentation and Research Centre for European Bioethics, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Health studies.



In the assessed period of 10 years, 361 authors published their articles in *Jahr*.<sup>29</sup> Geographical areas of corresponding authors show that most of the authors are coming from Europe (Table 1). Majority of articles were signed by one author, three times more than, for example, articles signed by two authors. The language of papers is equally distributed between English and Croatian, with tendency of publishing more papers in English.

Table 1. Corresponding authors' domicile

Europe			Worldwide
Albania	Hungary	Russia	Argentina
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ireland	Serbia	Bangladesh
Bulgaria	Italy	Slovakia	Brazil
Croatia	Macedonia	Slovenia	Chile
Cyprus	Malta	Spain	Colombia
England	Montenegro	Turkey	India
France	Netherlands	Ukraine	South Korea
Germany	Poland	United Kingdom	Taiwan
Greece	Romania		USA

Editorial and advisory board was constituted from respectable domestic and international scientists with noticeable increase in number of international scientists in 2014 – 2015. The standard procedure for every submitted paper includes blind peer review by two scientists through the Online Journal System. The Online Journal System is in usage from 2015, while the integrated marketing platform Mailchimp is in usage from 2018 for sending some specific information (e.g. call for papers) to the population of scientists.

On the Portal of Croatian Scientific Journals (*Hrčak*) in the period between September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 the third most visited article comes from the medical terminology area, the second place holds the review of a business ethics book while the first place belongs to the paper dealing with therapeutic communication. Comparing the positioning of the *Jahr* journal with other scientific journals on *Hrčak*, *Jahr* placed itself very near to (or in) the first quarter of most visited journals in Social sciences (61 of 208), Humanities (55 of 221), Biomedicine and health (26 of 80) and Interdisciplinary areas of sciences (7 of 40).

There were 180 papers categorized as an original scientific article, preliminary communication, review article and professional article that were included in the determination of the topics of the articles. Analysis indicated the highest representation of topics from the field of humanities (40 %), social sciences (24

<sup>29</sup> Where the authorship was signed by a group of authors, such as declarations or letters of support, texts have not been considered.

%) and the interdisciplinary area of science (16 %). In the area of humanities, the most frequently appearing fields are philosophy, with its branch ethics (53 %) and philology with its branch English language (44 %). In the area of social sciences, the most represented field is kinesiology (40 %) and afterwards the field of educational and rehabilitation science (23 %). In the interdisciplinary area of science, the most frequently represented field is integrative bioethics (72 %) (Fig. 2). Comparing the first five years and the second five years of analyzing period, we can notice that the humanities are predominant in the second half of the journal's publication period, i.e. that they show an increase.

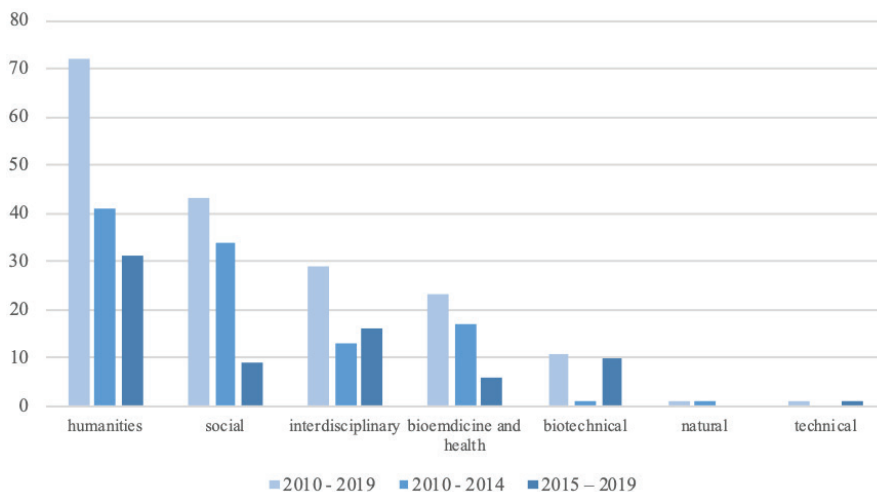


Figure 2. Representation of scientific areas

For 14 articles categorized as an original scientific article, preliminary communication, review article and professional article, the keywords provided by the author were missing so the analysis included 166 articles. Our analysis detected 832 provided keywords. The most frequent keywords contain the root »bioeti« (e.g. bioethics; bioethical education; 5.64 %), »eti« (e.g. ethics; ethical challenge; 3.60 %), »sport« (e.g. sports; sports rules; 2.52 %), »right« (e.g. rights; legal right; 1.92 %), »English« (e.g. English; Medical English; 1.80 %), »terminolo« (e.g. medical terminology; terminological principles; 1.68 %) and »communicat« (e.g. communication; communication barriers; 1.56 %) <sup>30</sup> (Fig. 3).

<sup>30</sup> The roots were chosen in the way they would cover both English and Croatian expressions.

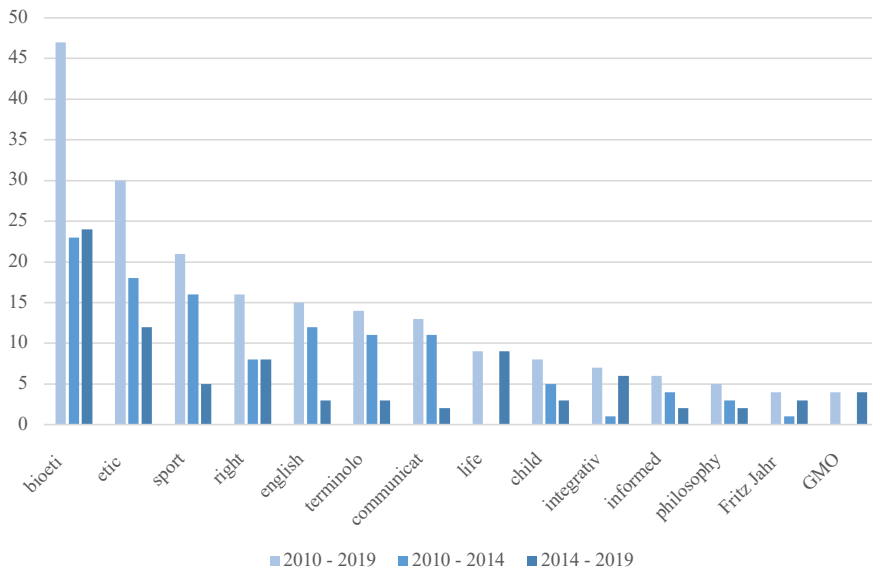


Figure 3. Overview of the most common keywords provided by the authors

### 3. Discussion

Some of the indicators and results may tell us more of the quality of the journal while not much about the development of the European bioethics. The authors would be interested in publishing in specific journal if they noticed a high representation of quality criteria. Those criteria are: High standards of acceptance, Subject and geographical representativeness of the Editorial Board; Use of a critical refereeing system; Promptness of publication; Coverage by major abstracting and indexing services; High confidence level of scientists using the journal in its contents; High frequency of citation by other journals (impact); Inclusion of abstracts/summaries in English; Providing author(s) addresses; Providing complete bibliographic information.<sup>31</sup> According to those facts and based on the given results, we can assume that *Jahr* is a medium – or maybe high-quality journal but it was not like that in the beginning of publishing the journal, so the increasing number of submitted articles may be the consequence of the recognizing the quality of the journal.

There are also some more possible influences. The increasing number of submitted papers can be assumed to be a reflection of the entry of *Jahr* into the SCOPUS base (which also relates to the quality standard). But, did authors rec-

<sup>31</sup> B. MUKHERJEE, 4 – Qualitative analysis of journals' websites, in: B. MUKHERJEE (ed.), *Chandos Information Professional Series, Scholarly Communication in Library and Information Services*, Chandos Publishing, 2010, 105-140.

ognize it because of the quality of the journal or because of the necessity to advance in academic rank and publish in prestigious citation databases? Another possible influence is certainly visibility. In the times of advanced technology and opportunities for online advertising, journals are becoming more accessible and visible to society. *Jahr* uses that opportunity with its own website, *Hrčak*, Open Journal System and integrated marketing platform Mailchimp (usage started in the year before increasing). But the more a journal informs scientists by sending e-mails, links and advertisements about newly published volumes, calls for papers, and news, the more suspicious it appears for its aggressiveness.<sup>32</sup> That can be a risk for the future.

The highest frequency of European authors is expected (Table 1) given that *Jahr* is a journal that promotes, amongst other, the foundations of European Bioethics. An article signed by one author is usual for the humanities and social sciences<sup>33</sup> and we found that it has the highest representation in topics published in *Jahr* in the assessed period (Figure 2).

When we look the most visited articles of *Jahr* in the portal *Hrčak*, we notice that these articles relate to bioethics in a very broad sense. They can be the reflection of general interest of readers or some others factors such as possibility to include these articles as an obligatory literature for certain kind of education. Nevertheless, comparing the positioning of the *Jahr* journal with other scientific journals in Croatia, we notice a favorable scientific development path (of bioethics) in Croatia, but whether this is enough for the worldwide level – time will tell.

The results have indicated that the highest representation of keywords provided by authors were with the root »bioeti«, »eti«, »sport«, »right«, »English«, »terminolo« and »communicat« and that the highest representation of topics was in the areas of social sciences and humanities science and in the interdisciplinary area. Such surprising results may be influenced by several elements.

From May 2010 to December 2013, the journal *Jahr* was titled *Jahr – Annual of the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities* with broaden scope where bioethics was just one part of it. In June 2014, when the name of the Journal was changed to *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics*, the scope was focused only on bioethics. Some keywords with the root like »sport«, »English«, »terminolo« which may be confusing in the attempt to examine the development of European bioethics, are mostly from the period when journal did not have very clear focus on bioethics as from 2014 (Figure 3). The highest

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. S. ERIKSSON, G. HELGESSON, The false academy: predatory publishing in science and bioethics, *Med Health Care and Philos*, 20 (2017) 163-170; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-016-9740-3>; J.A. PROEHL, K.S. HOYT, Predatory Publishing – What Editors Need to Know, *Advanced Emergency Nursing Journal*, 37 (2015) 1, 1-4.

<sup>33</sup> B. MACFARLANE et al., *Co-authorship in Humanities and the Social Sciences: A global view*, Abingdon, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.

representation of topics in the areas of social sciences and humanities can also be explained by different name and scope.

There is special reason why *Jahr* as a journal was began in Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities at University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine. At that Department, years ago, scientists who are considered to be the leaders of bioethical activities at the national level were placed, significant publishing on the topic of bioethics was recorded and constant scientific events such as *Rijeka Days of Bioethics* were held.<sup>34</sup> In the context of the set goal of this paper, we can say that the Department has continued its significant role in the development of bioethics, more specifically European bioethics, by launching the publication of the *Jahr*. Certainly, a different result could be seen if the journal had a narrow focus on only bioethics all along.

If we are looking in the journal for the evidence that would tell us about the development of the European bioethics, we will find ourselves in the problem of separating the influence of different factors such as the usual developmental elements of the journal, understanding what bioethics is and broader national and international context (mentioned in the introduction). We can, definitely, conclude that *Jahr* built quality space for communication about European bioethics with its constant dynamics of publishing, strong publishing procedure and with respectable international board members. But if we would like to observe greater reflection of European bioethics in it, there is still much work to be done. Bioethics, as it wanted to develop with/through the *Jahr*, is characterized by multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and pluriperspectivism. The area of sciences represented through the published articles in the assessed period can speak to the fact that such features are nurtured but in accordance with the previously stated, only partially. In order to be able to claim something like that much more, we should single out the topics affected by a particular published paper and then observe for each how much it is affected according to the previously pointed out features. This would provide us answer on how much of which problem was represented and by which perspective. If we observe that bioethics wants to address issues related to »life, for life as a whole, and in each of its parts, for life in all its forms, stages, phases and appearances«,<sup>35</sup> then we could see that analyzed articles lack those keywords and topics that may, in addition to thematizing medical, environmental issues and etc., also cover e.g. economic issues of distribution of material goods.

The included indicators suggest about the interplay of the development path which each journal goes through in its construction with the effort to open space for the development of bioethical thought, and that which is not reduced to bioethics as a medical ethic or a branch of applied ethics. We can say that as

<sup>34</sup> I. ZAGORAC, H. JURIĆ, *Bioetika u Hrvatskoj, Filozofska istraživanja*, 28 (2008) 3, 601-611.

<sup>35</sup> Jurić, *Uporišta...*, 83.

the journal was more focused with changing the name and narrow scope in the instruction, readers got a better idea of what bioethics inspired by Jahr is and how far it has come in its development. The closest part of the consideration of the development of European bioethics through the *Jahr* is through the topic of published papers, which for the purposes of this paper is classified into a particular area and field of science and the representation of keywords provided by the authors. Therefore, we can say that there is space for the inclusion of other areas (or for greater involvement of some areas of science covered). However, it is a good way to collect the activities done at certain points in time and analyze them in the context of achieving the goals for which they were launched. This is precisely the added value of this paper as well, as it pointed to the space for improvement in the development of European bioethics through the journal *Jahr*. The lesson learned is that the need to ensure *Jahr* continued quality and visibility among other journals nationally and internationally remains. Through this quality and recognizability, there will be room for further communication about European bioethics. In this communication, it is also necessary to clearly communicate what European bioethics is through the selection of topics and through the specified calls for the publication.

### *Conclusion*

Probably every new journal has to experience similar difficulties: how to attract manuscripts, increase quality, form a broad pool of reviewers, enter the most important indexing bases, etc. so in that regard, *Jahr* was no exception, but it had to face one more challenge, its mission becoming to counterbalance the mainstream bioethics (medical ethics) with the emerging European Bioethics based on Fritz Jahr's and original Van Rensselaer Potter's teachings, Euro-Mediterranean (and other non-Anglo-American) values, and the Integrative Bioethics methodology. Due to the broadness of this approach (pluri-perspectivism!), *Jahr* necessarily slipped into »thematic inconsistency« and thus was twice denied to enter the PubMed/Medline base (run by the American National Library of Medicine, preferring »more focused« medical ethics). Even if one might say that *Jahr* has accomplished its fundamental call, its epistemological »rebelliousness« certainly will remain a problem for a long time.

It is true that citation databases prefer to classify journals into »drawers« of disciplines, which is a problem for bioethics in general. However, it is also true that European Bioethics, in its (beginner's) fear of self-limitation and the resulting lower potency, initially accepted everything under its wing - not only different perspectives, which would be in line with its theoretical foundations, but also thematically and methodologically inconsistent production (it is enough to look at the titles of papers presented at bioethical gatherings in Rijeka, Mali

Lošinj, or Sarajevo). Therefore, for *Jahr*, as a journal that simultaneously reflects on developments in European Bioethics and – at least it is expected so - directs them, the ultimate task is that the selection of papers – strict or, more realistically, gradually more stringent, dictates thematic and methodological horizons of European Bioethics and its variations.

Gordana Šimunković\* – Toni Buterin\*\* – Amir Muzur\*\*\*

*Trnovit put europske bioetike: slučaj časopisa Jahr*

Sažetak

Višeznačnost pojma bioetika donijela je različite poglede i rezultirala razvojem europske bioetike koja se oslanja na postulate Fritza Jahra. Namjera ovog rada je praćenje razvoja ideje europske bioetike analizom razvoja časopisa *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics*. *Jahr* je nedvojbeno morao uravnotežiti *mainstream* bioetiku (medicinsku etiku) s europskom bioetikom u nastajanju koja se temelji na izvornim učenjima Fritza Jahra i Van Rensselaera Pottera, euro-mediteranskim (i drugim neangloameričkim) vrijednostima i metodologiji integrativne bioetike. Zbog širine pluriperspektivnog pristupa, *Jahr* je skliznuo u »tematsku nedosljednost« i njegova epistemološka »buntovnost« zasigurno će još dugo ostati problem.

*Ključne riječi: bioetika, europska bioetika, formalna analiza, Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics, sadržajna analiza.*

---

\* Gordana Šimunković, prof. soc. ped., Sveučilište u Rijeci, Medicinski fakultet, B. Branchetta 20, HR-51000 Rijeka.

\*\* Toni Buterin, mag. sanit. ing., Sveučilište u Rijeci, Medicinski fakultet, B. Branchetta 20, HR-51000 Rijeka.

\*\*\* Prof. dr. sc. Amir Muzur, dr. med., Sveučilište u Rijeci, Medicinski fakultet, B. Branchetta 20 / Sveučilište u Rijeci, Fakultet zdravstvenih studija, V. C. Emina 5, HR-51000 Rijeka.