

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**

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**Bakalářská práce**

**Euthanasia in the United States of America**

**Markéta Hedvika Malá**

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**Euthanasia in the United States of America**

**Eutanazie ve Spojených státech Amerických**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

*Plzeň, duben 2017*

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Euthanasia is a common theme. Every person can hear it on the TV, in the radio, read it in newspaper. People have different opinions. It can be caused by religion, by different mentality or by nationality. Every state assumes a different attitude to this theme. Different opinions could also have people with their own experience. Some people have an experience with a terminally ill relative. This experience is very fundamental and it can change people's mind. This topic is chosen also because of my own experience. The whole issue of euthanasia is neither facile nor unequivocal. Everyone hope that their life will be happy and peaceful and then they will just die. Not everyone have this good fortune. Certainly, some people are strong they are ready to fighting for their lives and they can defeat a disease, but there are also people who would embrace the option of euthanasia to alleviate their suffering.

This bachelor thesis is concentrated on euthanasia in the United States of America and also on diverse opinions of different people.

The theoretical part is composed of professional literature. In the introduction, the reader is acquainted with the basic terms of euthanasia and with a brief history of euthanasia in the world. The next chapter refers to euthanasia in the United States of America. The reader is acquainted with a history and with major landmarks. The next chapter informs the reader about the topic of euthanasia and religion. Here, we can encounter with diverse opinions in every religion. We can determine that no religion support euthanasia.

Within the practical part of my bachelor thesis was approached the public with the target to ascertain the opinion on euthanasia. I created an electronic questionnaire, which was widespread among my vicinity. The questionnaire contains 14 question. The answers of respondents are analysed and showed in a graphs. The questionnaire is enclosed in Appendix.

## 2 EUTHANASIA

### 2.1 WORD MEANING

The term Euthanasia originates from the Greek word “euthanasia”, which originally means good or beautiful death.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, the word euthanasia means death on request. However, for each person this word means something else. Someone can imagine murder, someone can imagine mercy.

“The term euthanasia was used by the historian Suetonius to describe how the emperor Augustus died quickly and without suffering in his wife’s arms. In the seventeenth century, Francis Bacon was the first to use the word euthanasia in a medical context to describe an easy, happy, and painless death.”<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2 TYPES OF EUTHANASIA

“To begin with, different forms of euthanasia have been classified in many different ways based on the way it is administrated and who makes the decision.”<sup>3</sup>

- **Active euthanasia**

“Active euthanasia involves doing something to cause the patient’s death. For instance, it could happen by using lethal injection in order to terminate someone’s suffering and life.”<sup>4</sup> This active euthanasia is legalized in Netherland, Belgium, Luxembourg and Columbia.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LOUČKA, Martin, Štěpán ŠPINKA a Martina ŠPINKOVÁ. *Eutanazie: víme, o čem mluvíme?*. 2., přepracované vydání. Praha: Cesta domů, 2015. ISBN 978-80-88126-08-9, p.9

<sup>2</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p.5

<sup>3</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p.11

<sup>4</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p.9

<sup>5</sup> LOUČKA, Martin, Štěpán ŠPINKA a Martina ŠPINKOVÁ. *Eutanazie: víme, o čem mluvíme?*. 2., přepracované vydání. Praha: Cesta domů, 2015. ISBN 978-80-88126-08-9, p.21

- **Passive euthanasia**

“Passive euthanasia means withholding an important treatment or procedure that might keep the patient alive. Examples include withholding dialysis from patients with terminal-stage renal failure or withholding chemotherapy from cancer patient.”<sup>6</sup>

Passive euthanasia is legalized in several countries, namely in Denmark (since 1998), Finland, France (since 2005), India (since 2011), Ireland, Italy, Columbia, Mexico (since 2008) and Germany.<sup>7</sup>

- **Assisted suicide**

Assisted suicide is a suicide committed by someone with assistance from another person.<sup>8</sup>

Assisted suicide is legalized in several US's states, namely in Oregon, Washington, Vermont and California.<sup>9</sup>

Assisted suicide is also tolerated in Switzerland (since 1942). Switzerland is also the only country, where the assisted suicide may be executed to a citizen from another country. So you do not have to be the inhabitant of Switzerland. A lot people arrive to the country with this purpose. Since 2016 assisted suicide is also legalized in Canada.<sup>10</sup>

“The latest research done by the National Centre for Social Research shows that eight out of ten of people support a change in the law to allow doctors to help patients who are terminally ill and want to end their lives.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p.11

<sup>7</sup> LOUČKA, Martin, Štěpán ŠPINKA a Martina ŠPINKOVÁ. *Eutanazie: víme, o čem mluvíme?*. 2., přepracované vydání. Praha: Cesta domů, 2015. ISBN 978-80-88126-08-9, p. 23

<sup>8</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p. 12

<sup>9</sup> LOUČKA, Martin, Štěpán ŠPINKA a Martina ŠPINKOVÁ. *Eutanazie: víme, o čem mluvíme?*. 2., přepracované vydání. Praha: Cesta domů, 2015. ISBN 978-80-88126-08-9, p. 22

<sup>10</sup> LOUČKA, Martin, Štěpán ŠPINKA a Martina ŠPINKOVÁ. *Eutanazie: víme, o čem mluvíme?*. 2., přepracované vydání. Praha: Cesta domů, 2015. ISBN 978-80-88126-08-9, p. 23

<sup>11</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p. 12



## 2.3 BRIEF HISTORY

In 1870 Samuel Williams, who was the first person who proposes the idea of using anaesthetics and morphine to deliberately end a patient's life. Then, euthanasia was a highly discussed topic in the United States and in Britain.<sup>12</sup>

- 1935 – Establishment of the Euthanasia Society of England to support Euthanasia<sup>13</sup>
- 1939 – Establishment of a euthanasia program in Germany<sup>14</sup>  
“In the beginning it was focused on new-borns and young children who showed signs of mental retardation, physical anomalies, or other symptoms, but later on it expanded to include the old, the terminally ill and hopeless cases.”<sup>15</sup>
- “In 1995, Australia's Northern Territory passed a bill that legalized euthanasia, but it was changed in 1997 by the Australian Parliament.”<sup>16</sup>
- “In 1998 the state of Oregon legalized assisted suicide, and after that in 2000, the Netherlands became the first country in the world to legalize euthanasia.”<sup>17</sup>
- In 2002 Belgium became the second country in the world to legalize euthanasia.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2015 was legalized the euthanasia for children in Belgium.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p. 6

<sup>13</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p. 6

<sup>14</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p. 6

<sup>15</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p. 6

<sup>16</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p. 6

<sup>17</sup> BASRI, Zakyah. *Euthanasia: Which "M" is it? Mercy or Murder?*. USA: AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4678-8325-2, p. 6

<sup>18</sup> LOUČKA, Martin, Štěpán ŠPINKA a Martina ŠPINKOVÁ. *Eutanazie: víme, o čem mluvíme?. 2.*, přepracované vydání. Praha: Cesta domů, 2015. ISBN 978-80-88126-08-9, p. 23

<sup>19</sup> LOUČKA, Martin, Štěpán ŠPINKA a Martina ŠPINKOVÁ. *Eutanazie: víme, o čem mluvíme?. 2.*, přepracované vydání. Praha: Cesta domů, 2015. ISBN 978-80-88126-08-9, p. 22

### 3 EUTHANASIA IN THE UNITED STATES

Euthanasia is illegal in the most states of the United States. Assisted suicide and Physician aid in Dying is legal in Washington DC, California, Colorado, Oregon, Vermont and Washington and it is disputed in Montana.<sup>20</sup>

#### Physician aid in Dying

“Physician aid-in-dying (PAD) refers to a practice in which a physician provides a competent, terminally ill patient with a prescription for a lethal dose of medication, upon the patient's request, which the patient intends to use to end his or her own life.”<sup>21</sup>

#### 3.1 HISTORY OF EUTHANASIA IN THE UNITED STATES

History began in 1906, in Ohio, where was proposed the legalisation of euthanasia. The bill was ultimately defeated. Euthanasia advocacy in the U.S. peaked again during the 1930s and diminished during and after World War II. Euthanasia efforts increased during the 1960s and 1970s, under the right-to-die rubric, physician assisted death in liberal bioethics, and through advance directives and do not resuscitate orders. Several major court cases advanced the legal rights of patients, or their guardians, to practice voluntary passive euthanasia or physician assisted death. For example these cases: the Karen Ann Quinlan case (1976), Brophy and Nancy Cruzan cases.<sup>22</sup>

#### Karen Ann Quinlan case

“It was a landmark 1975 court case in the United States in which the parents of a woman who was kept alive by artificial means were allowed to order her removal from artificial ventilation.”

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<sup>20</sup> Assisted suicide is now legal in Colorado: Six states in the US now allow assisted suicide. *The Verge* [online]. [accessed 2017-03-15]. <http://www.theverge.com/2016/11/8/13520908/assisted-suicide-colorado-death-dignity-right-die-election-2016>

<sup>21</sup> Physician Aid-in-Dying. *ETHICS IN MEDICINE University of Washington School of Medicine* [online]. [accessed 2017-03-15]. <https://depts.washington.edu/bioethx/topics/pad.html>

<sup>22</sup> Euthanasia in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_the_United_States)

Karen Ann Quinlan was 21 years old in 1975. After a night of drinking alcohol and ingesting tranquilizers, Quinlan passed out and ceased breathing for two 15-minute periods. After it was determined that she was in a persistent vegetative state, her father wished to remove her from the medical ventilator. Quinlan's primary physician and the hospital both refused.<sup>23</sup>

### **Nancy Cruzan case**

“It was a landmark United States Supreme Court case involving a young adult incompetent. The first "right to die" case ever heard by the Court, Cruzan was argued on December 6, 1989 and decided on June 25, 1990. In a 5–4 decision, the Court affirmed the earlier ruling of the Supreme Court of Missouri and ruled in favour of the State of Missouri, finding it was acceptable to require "clear and convincing evidence" of a patient's wishes for removal of life support. A significant outcome of the case was the creation of advance health directives.”<sup>24</sup>

Afterwards, other cases were: Washington V. Glucksberg (1997) and the Terri Schiavo case.<sup>25</sup>

### **Washington V. Glucksberg case**

“It was a landmark case in which the Supreme Court of the United States unanimously held that a right to assistance in committing suicide was not protected by the Due Process Clause.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Terri Schiavo case**

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<sup>23</sup> Court and the End of Life - The Right To Privacy: Karen Ann Quinlan: supreme medical respirator jersey. *Library Index* [online]. [accessed 2017-03-15]. <https://www.libraryindex.com/pages/582/Court-End-Life-RIGHT-PRIVACY-KAREN-ANN-QUINLAN.html>

<sup>24</sup> Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cruzan\\_v.\\_Director,\\_Missouri\\_Department\\_of\\_Health](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cruzan_v._Director,_Missouri_Department_of_Health)

<sup>25</sup> Euthanasia in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_the_United_States)

<sup>26</sup> Washington v. Glucksberg. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington\\_v.\\_Glucksberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_v._Glucksberg)

“The Terri Schiavo case was a right-to-die legal case in the United States from 1990 to 2005, involving Theresa Marie "Terri" Schiavo, a woman in an irreversible persistent vegetative state. Schiavo's husband and legal guardian argued that Schiavo would not have wanted prolonged artificial life support without the prospect of recovery, and elected to remove her feeding tube.”<sup>27</sup>

### 3.2 PUBLIC OPINION ON EUTHANASIA IN USA

Reflecting the religious and cultural diversity of the United States, there is a wide range of public opinion about euthanasia. During the past 30 years, research showed that opinions on euthanasia have a tendency to correlate with religious affiliation and culture, though not gender.<sup>28</sup>

#### Opinion by race and gender

Recent studies showed that white Americans are more for the legalization of euthanasia than black Americans. Black Americans are almost 3 times more opposed to euthanasia than white Americans. Some speculate that this discrepancy is because of the low level of trust in the medical establishment. One study also found out that there are disparities in the medical treatment and pain management that white Americans and other Americans receive.<sup>29 30 31</sup>

Among black Americans, education relate with the support for euthanasia. Black Americans without a four-year degree are twice opposed to euthanasia than those with at least that much education. Some researchers suggest that black Americans have a

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<sup>27</sup> Terri Schiavo case. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terri\\_Schiavo\\_case](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terri_Schiavo_case)

<sup>28</sup> Euthanasia in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17].

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_the_United_States)

<sup>29</sup> Euthanasia in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17].

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_the_United_States) on end-of-life care and decisions. *The American Behavioral Scientist*; Oct 2002; 46, 2; pp. 204-219.

<sup>30</sup> Euthanasia in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17].

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_the_United_States)

<sup>31</sup> Euthanasia in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17].

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_the_United_States)

tendency to be more religious. Only black and white Americans have been studied in extensive detail. A recent Gallup Poll showed that 84% of males supported euthanasia compared to 64% of females. Some studies showed that women have a higher level of religiosity and moral conservatism as an explanation. Within both sexes, there are differences in attitudes towards euthanasia due to other influences. For example, one study found that black American women are 2 times more opposed to euthanasia than white American women. Black American men are 3 times opposed to euthanasia than white American men.<sup>32</sup>

Euthanasia is a discussed topic. Against it, euthanasia is still in the United States illegal. Maybe it will change in the future. At least, assisted suicide is legal in several states.

### **3.3 ASSISTED SUICIDE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

The first significant to legalize the assisted suicide in the United States of America was in the twentieth century. In a 2004 article in the Bulletin of the History of Medicine, Brown University historian Jacob M. Appel wrote about debate over legislation to legalize physician-assisted death in both Iowa and about Ohio in 1906. In Ohio, the legislation was inspired by the case of Anna S. Hall. Her mother suffered from cancer. However, the bill was rejected by the Ohio legislature by the vote of 79 to 23.<sup>33</sup>

#### **Washington v. Glucksberg**

It was a landmark case in which the Supreme Court of the United States held that a right to assistance in committing suicide was not protected by the Due Process Clause.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Euthanasia in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-17].  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_the_United_States)

<sup>33</sup> Assisted suicide in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-19].  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted\\_suicide\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted_suicide_in_the_United_States)

<sup>34</sup> Assisted suicide in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-19].  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted\\_suicide\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted_suicide_in_the_United_States)

## **Dr Jack Kevorkian**

Dr Jack Kevorkian was the main person in all history of euthanasia in the United States. He was a doctor, pathologist. His first public assisted Suicide was in 1990.<sup>35</sup>

## **Brittany Maynard**

Brittany Maynard was an advocate for the legalization of medical aid in dying. She suffered from terminal brain cancer. This case led to renewed the debate about legalisation of assisted suicide.<sup>36</sup>

### **3.4 JURISDICTIONS WHERE AID IN DYING IS AUTHORIZED**

#### **California**

In 1992, the group of Californians proposed the Proposition 161 for patients with less than 6 months to live. This proposal was the right to receive assistance from physicians in dying. This measure failed to pass with 46 percent of the vote. The California legislature passed a bill legalizing the practise in 2015. The bill was signed by Governor Jerry Brown. California is the fifth state to authorize medical aid in dying. The law came into effect in June 2016.<sup>37 38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Assisted suicide in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-19].

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted\\_suicide\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted_suicide_in_the_United_States)

<sup>36</sup> Assisted suicide in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-19].

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted\\_suicide\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted_suicide_in_the_United_States)

<sup>37</sup> ANNAS, G. (1994). "Death by Prescription. The Oregon Initiative". *The New England Journal of Medicine*. **331** (18): 1240–1243

<sup>38</sup> Gov. Brown signs bill legalizing medically-assisted suicide for terminal patients. In: *Fox 5* [online]. [accessed 2017-03-19]. <http://fox5sandiego.com/2015/10/05/gov-brown-signs-bill-legalizing-medically-assisted-suicide-for-terminal-patients/>

## **District of Columbia**

January 2015 – D.C. Council member Mary Cheh introduced Death with Dignity Act of 2015.

October 2015 - Committee on Health and Human Services voted 3 votes to 2 for the Death with Dignity Act of 2015.

November 2016 - The D.C. Council voted for the Death with Dignity Act of 2015 with 11 votes to 2.

After Mayor Bowser's signature on 23rd December, 2016 and after the mandatory 30 day Congress review, the law came into full effect on February 18, 2017.

## **Montana**

AID is legal in Montana because of the state Supreme Court decision. The Montana Supreme Court ruled by 5 votes to 2 that state law allows for terminally ill patients to request lethal medication from a physician under existing statutes.<sup>39</sup>

## **Oregon**

In 1994, Oregon voters as first approved the Death with Dignity Act by the general election by a margin of 51% to 49%. The law came into effect in October 1997. Terminally ill patients with less than 6 months to live can receive a prescription for lethal drugs.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Assisted suicide in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-19].  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted\\_suicide\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted_suicide_in_the_United_States)

<sup>40</sup> Assisted suicide in the United States. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-19].  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted\\_suicide\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assisted_suicide_in_the_United_States)

## 4 DOCTOR DEATH

This chapter of my bachelor thesis is about Doctor Death. He was the main person in all history of euthanasia. Doctor death was a promoter of euthanasia. He is very famous in the US. Many people called him killer. It is just because that they do not agree with euthanasia and with his suggestions. He was accused of murder several times and spent many years in prison. There are not only dissenters. Doctor Death had a lot of supporters and still has.

### 4.1 JACK KEVORKIAN'S LIFE

His real name was Jacob "Jack" Kevorkian. He was born on May 26, 1928 in Pontiac (Michigan, USA).<sup>41</sup>

Jack Kevorkian was obsessed with death and dying. It is maybe because his parents were Armenians, who escaped the genocide, because of their running away to America. During the World War I, when the genocide took place, Turks wiped out more than million Armenians. He said: "I wish my forefathers went through what the Jews did. The Jews were gassed. Armenians were killed in every conceivable way. Pregnant women were split open with bayonets and babies taken out. They were drowned, burned, heads were smashed in vices. They were chopped in half."<sup>42</sup>

In 1958, he created his first major stir. He published an article about changes occurring in the human eye at the time of death. That time he worked as a pathologist in Detroit and examined the dying patient at nights, precisely their eyes. Already at that time he gained his nickname Doctor Death. Examination of dead eyes had a rational basis. Jack Kevorkian established that doctors can identify if the patient is already died, to distinguish it from a coma and avoid unnecessary resuscitation. However, later he said about this research that it was very interesting and that was the main point. The other point was that this was a taboo topic.<sup>43</sup>

In 1987, Kevorkian started advertising in Detroit newspapers as a physician consultant for "death consultancy". In that time, euthanasia was his main theme. He propagated the idea of creation the special clinics. These clinics could be for persons

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<sup>41</sup> Jack Kevorkian. *Reflex*. 2007, **2007**.

<sup>42</sup> Jack Kevorkian. *Reflex*. 2007, **2007**.

<sup>43</sup> Jack Kevorkian. *Reflex*. 2007, **2007**.



who want to end their lives and also could be a site for experimentation with dying persons or removing organs for transplantation. It means that people could die according to their wish and they could also help other people.<sup>44</sup>

At the beginning, there was no answer to the advertising. However, Kevorkian became very popular for media. That resulted in the interest of patients. They wanted his consultancy. Jack Kevorkian was ready. He constructed an apparatus from old components, which he gathered in a garage or at a flea market. This apparatus got a name Thanatron. His first patient was Janet Adkins.<sup>45</sup>

According to Jack's lawyer, Jack helped more than 130 patients with their death. He was in court several times, but always acquitted. He had to replace Thanatron by another apparatus, because he had his medical licence revoked. He didn't have access to deadly poisons anymore. Therefore, he invented a new apparatus - Mercitron (mercy machine). Mercitron used gas. On 17 November 1998 he deviated from his previous practice. He applied the lethal injection to Thomas Youk. Jack had Thomas's written consent and he could film the whole event. Then he gave it into TV show. During that event, Jack Kevorkian called on the authorities to condemn him and stop him, or legalize his activities. He was judged and condemned of second-degree murder.<sup>46</sup>

He spent 8 years in prison. He was released from prison for health reasons on condition that he will never provide advice or otherwise participate in any suicide, including euthanasia.<sup>47</sup>

Jack Kevorkian died on June 3, 2011 in Royal Oak, Michigan. Doctor Jack Kevorkian created 2 new terms.<sup>48</sup>

The first one is medicide. Approach to Jack Kevorkian it means a suicide with assistance, concretely with a doctor. This term is created the same way as word suicide.

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<sup>44</sup> Jack Kevorkian. *Reflex*. 2007, **2007**.

<sup>45</sup> Jack Kevorkian. *Reflex*. 2007, **2007**.

<sup>46</sup> Jack Kevorkian. *Reflex*. 2007, **2007**.

<sup>47</sup> Jack Kevorkian. *Reflex*. 2007, **2007**.

<sup>48</sup> Jack Kevorkian. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [accessed 2017-03-24]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack\\_Kevorkian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Kevorkian)

Etymologically it is a word composed of 2 another words. Med (in Latin éri) which means to treat and –cid (originally ceadere) which means to cut, to kill.<sup>49</sup>

The second term is obitriatry. It is a medical discipline that cares about peaceful dying. The doctor who cares about these patients is called obitiatrist. It is also a Latin word (obitus) which means dead.<sup>50</sup>

### **Thanatron**

Invented by Jack Kevorkian, to use this device and called it a thanatron or death machine after the Greek daemon, Thanatos. It worked by pushing a button to deliver the euthanizing drugs mechanically through an IV (Intravenous therapy). It had three canisters mounted on a metal frame. Each bottle had a syringe that connected to a single IV line in the person's arm. One contained saline, another contained a sleep-inducing barbiturate called sodium thiopental and the third a lethal mixture of potassium chloride, which immediately stopped the heart, and pancuronium bromide, a paralytic medication to prevent spasms during the dying process. Two deaths were assisted with this method.<sup>51</sup>

### **Mercitron (mercy machine)**

“Kevorkian assisted others with a device that employed a gas mask fed by a canister of carbon monoxide which was called Mercitron. This became necessary because Kevorkian's medical license had been revoked after the first two deaths, and he could no longer have legal access to the substances required for the Thanatron. It was a rudimentary device consisting of a canister of carbon monoxide attached to a face mask with a tube. A valve must be released to start the gas flowing. Depending on the person's disability, a makeshift handle may be attached to the valve to make it easier to turn. Or, with the valve in the "open" position, a clip or clothespin could be clamped on

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<sup>49</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9.

<sup>50</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9.

<sup>51</sup> Euthanasia device. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [ accessed 2017-03-24]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_device#Mercitron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_device#Mercitron)

the tubing. Pulling it off allows the gas to flow. By Kevorkian's estimates, this method took 10 minutes or longer. Sometimes he encouraged people to take sedatives or muscle relaxants to keep them calm as they breathed deeply of the gas.”<sup>52</sup>

## 4.2 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MAIN JACK KEVORKIAN’S PATIENTS

### Janet Adkins

She was 54 years old, from Portland, Oregon. She suffered from Alzheimer disease. Her life was terminated on 4 June 1990 by intravenous injection. Jack was accused of murder.<sup>53</sup>

### Virginia Harper

69 years old, from Loomis, California. She had a cancer. She swallowed sleeping pills. Jack did not help her. She came to Michigan in faith that assisted suicide is legalized here. Her husband was accused of murder.<sup>54</sup>

### Sherry Miller

43 years old, from Roseville, Michigan. She suffered from multiple sclerosis.<sup>55</sup>

### Marjoria Wantz

56 years old, from Sodus, Michigan. She suffered from pelvic pain.<sup>56</sup>

Sherry and Marjoria died on the same day on 23 October 1993. Sherry inhaled carbon monoxide, meanwhile Marjoria decided to die by intravenous injection. Jack was accused of murder again.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Euthanasia device. In: *Wikipedia: the free encyclopedia* [online]. San Francisco (CA): Wikimedia Foundation, 2001- [ accessed 2017-03-24]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia\\_device#Mercitron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_device#Mercitron)

<sup>53</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.9

<sup>54</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.9

<sup>55</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.9

<sup>56</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.9

### **Katie Roberts**

30 years old, from Mount Pleasant, Michigan. She suffered from multiple sclerosis. She committed a suicide by taking arsenic on 23 May 1919. This poison procured her husband and he was condemned to life imprisonment. Jack decided to peruse this case in connection with his accusation.<sup>58</sup>

### **Kevin Bashnaw**

20 years old, from Port Huron, Michigan. He suffered by depressions. He shot himself by ranged weapon, which procured him Steven Campbell. It happened on 3 October 1980. Although Steven Campbell encouraged him to shot himself, he was acquitted. The reason was that the assistance with suicide is not a crime. Dr Kevorkian used Steven Campbell's case in his defense.<sup>59</sup>

### **Susan Williams**

52 years old, from Clawson, Michigan. She suffered from multiple sclerosis. She committed a suicide by inhalation of carbon monoxide on 25 May 1992. Her death was qualified as a homicide (a murder). Jack was never accused from a murder, although he was present at this suicide.<sup>60</sup>

### **Lois F. Hawes**

52 years old, from Warren, Michigan. She had a cancer and she committed a suicide by inhalation of carbon monoxide on 26 September 1992. Jack was present at this suicide, but he was never accused.<sup>61</sup>

In 1992, Jack is accused from a murder because of his present at the suicide of Marjoria Wantz and Sherry Miller. His lawyer proved Jack's innocence and the accusation was cancelled.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.9

<sup>58</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.9

<sup>59</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.10

<sup>60</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.10

<sup>61</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.10

## 5 EUTHANASIA AND RELIGION

### 5.1 RELIGION

“Religion is the set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that define the relations between human being and sacred or divinity. A given religion is defined by specific elements of a community of believers: dogmas, sacred books, rites, worship, sacrament, moral prescription, interdicts and organisation. The majority of religions have developed starting from a revelation based on the exemplary history of a nation, of a prophet or a wise man who taught an ideal of life.”<sup>63</sup>

“A religion may be defined with its three great characteristics: Believes and religious practices; the religious feeling i.e. faith; unity in a community of those who share the same faith: the Church. It is what differentiates religion from magic.”<sup>64</sup>

“The study of disappeared or existing religions shows the universal character of this phenomenon and a very large variety in the ritual doctrines and practices. One generally distinguishes the religions called primitive or animists, the Oriental religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Taoism...) and the religions monotheists derived from the Bible (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). Christianity has itself given birth to several religions or Christian Churches (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelic...)”<sup>65</sup>

### 5.2 JUDAISM AND EUTHANASIA

Judaism arose in the second millennium before Christ. It is a monotheistic religion. According to Judaism, God originated the world and the world gave him the Testament – Torah. <sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> BROVINS, Joan M. a Thomas H. OEHMKE. *Vražda, nebo milosrdenství?: Dr. Smrt : [důvěrná zpráva o radikálním propagátorovi a praktikovi eutanazie]*. Praha: Brána, 1996. ISBN 80-859-4645-9, p.10

<sup>63</sup> *What is religion?* [online]. [accessed 2017-03-30]. <http://atheisme.free.fr/Religion/What-is-religion-1.htm>

<sup>64</sup> *What is religion?* [online]. [accessed 2017-03-30]. <http://atheisme.free.fr/Religion/What-is-religion-1.htm>

<sup>65</sup> *What is religion?* [online]. [accessed 2017-03-30]. <http://atheisme.free.fr/Religion/What-is-religion-1.htm>

<sup>66</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

According to Jewish tradition, the life is sacred and every human is accepted positively with all doubts. Nowadays, the focus of Jewish religion is still Torah. Regarding to literature, Tanakh is the most important. Tanakh is a collection of sacred texts, written mostly in Hebrew. Tanakh is composed of 39 books and of 3 parts:<sup>67</sup>

- Torah – the first five books of the Old Testament or the Pentateuch
- Nevi'im – books of the prophets; and
- Ketuvim – the remaining writings<sup>68</sup>

The Jewish medical ethic is based on clearly defined rules:

- Human is created by God, it means that life is sacred and dignified.
- The obligation of maintenance the health
- Disagreement with the myth, exorcizing etc.
- Code of hygiene measures<sup>69</sup>

Jews perceive the life as a gift from God and they are the major defenders of life's protection. They feel the unconditional obligation to maintain the life and they reject all compromises. They have the obligation of visiting seriously ill relatives. They come in order to console them and to pray.<sup>70</sup>

The obligation of a doctor is to save the life. This obligation takes priority over all other commands. The only exception is a state when the death is excepted within 3

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<sup>67</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](https://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>68</sup> *The Holy Books of Judaism* [online]. [accessed 2017-03-30]. <https://www.hobart.k12.in.us/ksms/worldreligions/Judaism/HolyBooks.htm>

<sup>69</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](https://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>70</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](https://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

days. If the patient's state is hopeless, it is not recommended to spin out the life artificially, but the active expediting of death is illegal. It is considered as a murder.<sup>71</sup>

According to Jewish law, a doctor has an obligation to come and rescue the neighbour and execute any action for saving the life, despite the patient's disapproval. The death means sad, but inevitable end of a well-lived life.<sup>72</sup>

“With regard to active euthanasia, the Jewish position seems clear. Immanuel Jacobovitz said: “It is clear, then, that, even when the patient is already known to be on his deathbed and close to the end, any form of active euthanasia is strictly prohibited. In fact, it is condemned as plain murder. In purely legal terms, this is borne out by the ruling that anyone who kills a dying person is liable to the death penalty as a common murderer. At the same time, Jewish law sanctions, and perhaps even demands, the withdrawal of any factor – whether extraneous to the patient himself or not – which may artificially delay his demise in the final phase. It might be argued that this modification implies the legality of expediting the death of an incurable patient in acute agony by withholding from him such medicaments as sustain his continued life by unnatural means. . . . Our sources advert only to cases in which death is expected to be imminent; it is, therefore, not altogether clear whether they would tolerate this moderate form of euthanasia, though that cannot be ruled out.”<sup>73</sup>

### **5.3 BUDDHISM AND EUTHANASIA**

Buddhism is a non-theistic religion that has its roots in India. The founder of Buddhism was Siddhārtha Gautama. He was the son of the ruler of small state at the foot of Himalayas. He lived in a comfort of the royal palace until the age of 29 years. Based on meetings with extreme poverty, disease and suffering, he has decided to leave the palace, the current way of life, the wife and the son. He was looking for a ways to

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<sup>71</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>72</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 s. Dostupné také z: <http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk

<sup>73</sup> LARUE, Gerald A. *Euthanasia and religion: a survey of the attitudes of world religions to the right-to-die*. Los Angeles: Hemlock Society, 1985. ISBN 0-9606030-3-4, p.19

solve a human misery. He went through asceticism and meditation, where he found enlightenment. From that time on his name is Buddha.<sup>74</sup>

The Buddha's first sermon after his Enlightenment was centered on the Four Noble Truths, which are the foundation of Buddhism. The truths are:

- The truth of suffering (dukkha)
- The truth of the cause of suffering (samudaya)
- The truth of the end of suffering (nirhodha)
- The truth of the path that frees us from suffering (magga)<sup>75</sup>

Buddhists believe in a rebirth, which means that they can be born repeatedly at different levels of existence. The karma affects next life. This natural law means that all human actions will have the consequences, either immediately or in some future lives. So, death is a stretch in the process of rebirth. The state of mind at the moment of death is also important. That may influence the character of the next birth.<sup>76</sup>

According to teachings of Buddhists, we should do everything to help the dying person cope with the worsening of health condition, pain and fear and offer him the loving support that gives sense to the end of life.<sup>77</sup>

Buddhism disapproves of euthanasia. One of the ethical principles is "Do not kill the living". Generally, every life is sacred and the first principle of human behaviour should be to avoid the destruction of life. It is also necessary to deal with each case individually. The state of mind of a dying person is important. It is necessary to consider whether the quality of the last days or hours is more important than keeping him alive if there is no hope of recovery. It is better to let a person die naturally. Euthanasia affects

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<sup>74</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 s. Dostupné také z: <http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk

<sup>75</sup> *The Four Noble Truths: The Foundation of Buddhism* [online]. [accessed 2017-04-01].

<https://www.thoughtco.com/the-four-noble-truths-450095>

<sup>76</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>77</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.



karma and motivation of all participating. If somebody will help to another person to avoid suffering, he still cannot avoid some form in the next life.<sup>78</sup>

“Zen Master Serng Sahn wrote regarding the Buddhist position: “Buddha said, Do not kill any life. Many machines and drugs are not necessary. Let all beings live in a natural way. When you die, where do you go?” Professor H. Uemura of Komozawa university in Tokyo, Japan, wrote concerning to attitude of Zen: Dōgen Zenji (1200-1253), who is a famous Buddhist priest wrote about the Life and Death in his writing “Shobogenzo.” A literal translation . . . follows:

When the Buddha exists in Life and Death, there is no Life and Death. Also, when the Buddha does not exist in Life and Death, anybody may not be puzzled about Life and Death.” I think the meaning in the first half of the sentence is “enlightening,” and in the latter is “nothing.” . . . . The Life and Death is the great natural rule and truth. Of course, this is founded on the Buddhist idea that Life and Death are rotating alternately forever in this world.”<sup>79</sup>

So I think that it means that you must endeavour to experience the stage of Buddha, in order to jump over and emancipate from the Life and Death.

## 5.4 CHRISTIANITY AND EUTHANASIA

Christianity is a monotheistic religion, which follows the Judaism. It is the most widespread and the fastest spreading religion. It was founded in 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and it is associated with the figure of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was seen as the Son of God, the Prophet and Savior. He came from Galilee (part of Palestine) and he was approximately 30 years old, he became a healer of sick people and popular preacher. He announced the coming of God’s Kingdom.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. <://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>79</sup> LARUE, Gerald A. *Euthanasia and religion: a survey of the attitudes of world religions to the right-to-die*. Los Angeles: Hemlock Society, 1985. ISBN 0-9606030-3-4, p.135

<sup>80</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. <://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

He was crucified in Jerusalem. For the establishment of Christianity is crucial the resurrection of Christ on Easter. It is annually celebrated. From the perspective of Christians, it is the beginning of eternal life. Christians believe that through Christ's death may receive forgiveness of sins and his resurrection is a proof that death is not the end.<sup>81</sup>

After Jesus' death, the followers began to spread the faith and at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century was established the Early Church. After a period of persecution, Christianity was legalized by the Milan Decree and became the official religion. Over time, there were differences of opinions between the leaders of the Church, which culminated in a split between the Latin-west and Greco-eastern Christianity. This gave rise to two branches of Christianity – Catholic and Orthodox. During their development, there was a dissatisfaction and distrust towards the official church of believers, which resulted in the reform movement. There was a genesis of a variety of Protestant Churches.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the differences, Christians agree that there is only one God. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient and he exists in three persons – the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. The holy book is the Bible, which is the collection of liturgical texts, divided into two parts:

- The Old Testament – contains 39 books, written in Hebrew, this part is common for Jews
- The New Testament – written in Greek, has 27 books and 4 parts -Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Epistles, Apocalypse (Revelation)<sup>83</sup>

The Bible is the most widely read book in history. It is used for private and public worship and it draws on philosophy, literature, law and ethics. The issue of euthanasia is not expressly addressed, but we can infer it from various standpoints. It appeared already in the Ten Commandments: "Do not kill". This commandment shows respect for life and resistance forcibly caused death. According to Christian tradition, Šiler sees

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<sup>81</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. <://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>82</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. <://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>83</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. <://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

death as retribution for sin. The consolation is that human is not alone in death. Death is a condition to get into eternal life.<sup>84</sup>

Human is not the owner of his life, he is only the administrator and he must behave accordingly, because we will pay the accounts to God for our lifestyle. Likewise, we cannot give up our lives. In 2008, at the Congress in Vatican, the pope stressed the ethical negativity of euthanasia. On the contrary, according to him, the church should cooperate with civilian institutions and help to the seriously ill and their families. The whole society should respect the terminally ill and the dying persons and help them wait with the dignity until the moment of death. Doctors should respect human life at all stages.<sup>85</sup>

Catechism of the Catholic Church states that is morally unacceptable. Sick and handicap people should be supported to lead a normal life. On the other hand, it is possible to interrupt intensive and costly medical procedures, if the intent will not be to cause the death, but it is recognized that the death is inevitable. Such a decision, however, must be done by the patient, if it is possible.<sup>86</sup>

Tomáš Halík, president of the Czech Christian Academy, said: “The argument that humans have the right to decide about their life is a mistake, we did not give the life, life is a gift. We have received it as a gift and task.”<sup>87</sup>

The death and euthanasia commented also John Paul II in his encyclical, which is called: “*Evangelium vitae*”. It points out that one of the features of contemporary society is that a growing number of elderly and sick is a nuisance. Progress in medicine allows doctors to control the pain and prolongs life, but it also can be an attraction for those who would like to control your life and plan their end of life. According to him,

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<sup>84</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>85</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>86</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>87</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

the legalization of euthanasia will be actually approved a murder (suicide), which contradicts to civil law and the basic principles of respect for life.<sup>88</sup>

## 5.5 ISLAM AND EUTHANASIA

Islam is one of the youngest major religions originated in the 6th century AD in today's Saudi Arabia. The followers of Islam are called Muslims. Islam is one of the largest religions in the world, with over 1 billion followers. It is a monotheistic faith based on revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad in 7th-century Saudi Arabia. The Arabic word Islam means “submission,” reflecting the faith's central tenet of submitting to the will of God.<sup>89</sup>

“According to Islamic tradition, the angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet over the course of 20 years, revealing to him many messages from God. Muslims recognize some earlier Judeo-Christian prophets—including Moses and Jesus—as messengers of the same true God. But in Islam, Muhammad is the last and greatest of the prophets, whose revelations alone are pure and uncorrupted. The Prophet dedicated the remainder of his life to spreading a message of monotheism in a polytheistic world. In 622, he fled north to the city of Medina to escape growing persecution. This event marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Eight years later, Muhammad returned to Mecca with an army and conquered the city for Islam. By Muhammad's death, 50 years later, the entire Arabian Peninsula had come under Muslim control. The sacred text of Islam, the Qur'an, was written in Arabic within 30 years of Muhammad's death. Muslims believe it contains the literal word of God. Also important is the tradition of the sayings and actions of Muhammad and his companions, collected in the Hadith.”<sup>90</sup>

Islamic practices center on the Five Pillars of Islam:

- Faith
- Prayer
- Fasting

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<sup>88</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>89</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. [://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057](http://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057). Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>90</sup> Islam. *ReligionFacts* [online]. [accessed 2017-04-01]. <http://www.religionfacts.com/islam>

- Pilgrimage to Mecca
- Alms<sup>91</sup>

Islamic morality places great emphasis on the family and its values. So, Muslims are obligated to take care for their loved ones until the last moment. For this reason, practically there were no nursing homes and similar institutions. The dying persons lie with their face turned to Mecca and their own death is seen as a separation of the soul from the body. A suicide is a serious offense in Islam and Muslims are strongly against to euthanasia. They believe that life is sacred, because it was given by Allah and only Allah can decide how long a person will live. No person can intervene in. <sup>92</sup>

In Islam, there is also the general principle that if they want to eliminate a problem and they know that we could worsen it, they must not to do so. This principle could be applied to the issue of euthanasia. In case of the enactment of euthanasia, it could happen that we must to solve whether used it in other cases, not only in cases when patients are in the end stage of life.<sup>93</sup>

“At the meeting of the Fifth World Congress of Right-to-Die Societies held in Nice, France in September, 1984, Dr Mohammed Ali, a Muslim scholar from London, England, explained the basis for Islamic opposition. He stated that, according to Islamic teachings, an individual’s moment of death is foreordained: “His birth and his death are already recorded – that is, who will be born and how he is to die.” Clearly, euthanasia constitutes an interference with the divine plan.”<sup>94</sup>

“Dr Ali referred to the 17<sup>th</sup> Surah of the Koran which reads: Glory to Him (Allah) Who carried his servant (Mohammed) by night from the Sacred Mosque (Mecca) to the

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<sup>91</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. <://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>92</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. <://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>93</sup> DITTRICHOVÁ, Lenka. *Eutanazie a náboženství*. Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2011, 59 p. <://hdl.handle.net/10563/20057>. Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně. Fakulta humanitních studií, Katedra pedagogiky. Vedoucí práce Šigut, Zdeněk.

<sup>94</sup> LARUE, Gerald A. *Euthanasia and religion: a survey of the attitudes of world religions to the right-to-die*. Los Angeles: Hemlock Society, 1985. ISBN 0-9606030-3-4, p.140

distant mosque (Jerusalem) – the precincts of which We have blessed – in order that We might show him some of Our sign.”<sup>95</sup>

## **5.6 SUMMARY**

This chapter Euthanasia and religion shows that all the above mentioned religions are opposed to euthanasia. It means that religion very influence human’s opinion on euthanasia. It is very important if the person is religious or not. Simply, religion forbids the euthanasia. Life is sacred and religious people have to appreciate it. It is a gift from God and the death and the progress of death is a part of life.

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<sup>95</sup> LARUE, Gerald A. *Euthanasia and religion: a survey of the attitudes of world religions to the right-to-die*. Los Angeles: Hemlock Society, 1985. ISBN 0-9606030-3-4, p.140

## **6 CZECH PUBLIC OPINION ON EUTHANASIA**

### **6.1 TARGET AND METHODS OF SURVEY**

Within the practical part of my bachelor thesis was approached the public with the target to ascertain the opinion on euthanasia. I created an electronic questionnaire, which was widespread among my vicinity. The target was also to ascertain their cognizance of euthanasia and their experience. I approached men and women in different age categories. I posted it on a social network and asked people for few minutes to answer these questions.

I chose a questionnaire, because it allowed me rapid collection of answers from many respondents. In the beginning, I introduced myself and my target of this questionnaire. I also inform the respondents that the questionnaire is anonymous and that they do not have to be afraid of expressing their opinion. The questionnaire has 14 questions. The questions are clear and understandable. Several questions have an option to answer with your own words. First 3 questions refer to personal data like age, gender and religion. These questions are important for better classification of respondents. For better overview, I chose graphs, as you will soon notice. I endeavoured to arrange the questionnaire in an order that would ensure continuity and natural flow of ideas and simultaneously not to discourage from completion. The questionnaire is included in Appendix. This questionnaire was created via page [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and this page facilitated the creation and distribution for me. The questionnaire is in Czech language for better understanding. For this reason, I translated every individual question.

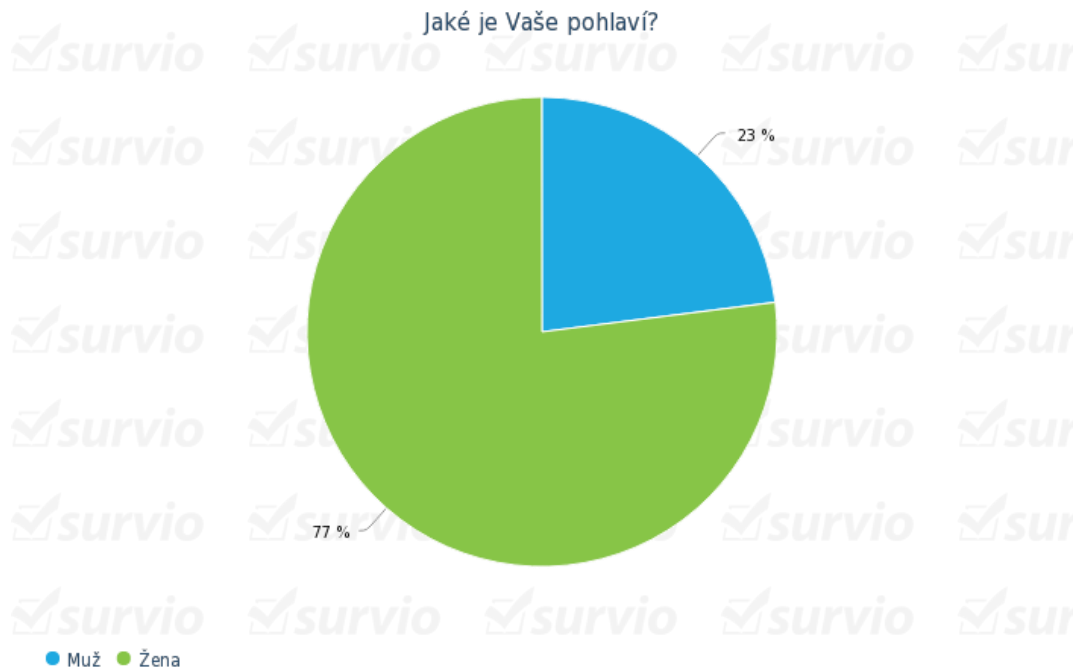
During the survey I determined these hypothesis:

- Almost all respondents know what the euthanasia means.
- The majority of respondents are for the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic.
- Most of the respondents are atheists.

## 6.2 SURVEY RESULTS

I received the completed questionnaire from 100 respondents.

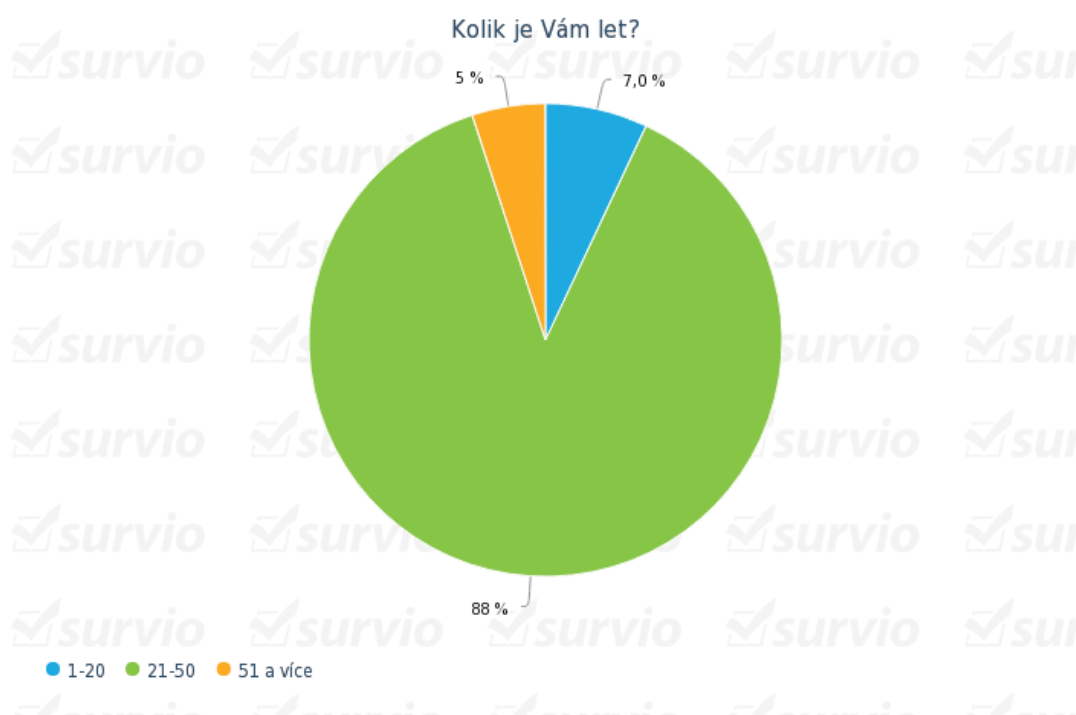
**Question number 1** is about the gender of respondents. The questionnaire filled in 77 women and 23 men in total. All respondents are from the Czech Republic.



Graph number 1, Gender (survio.com)

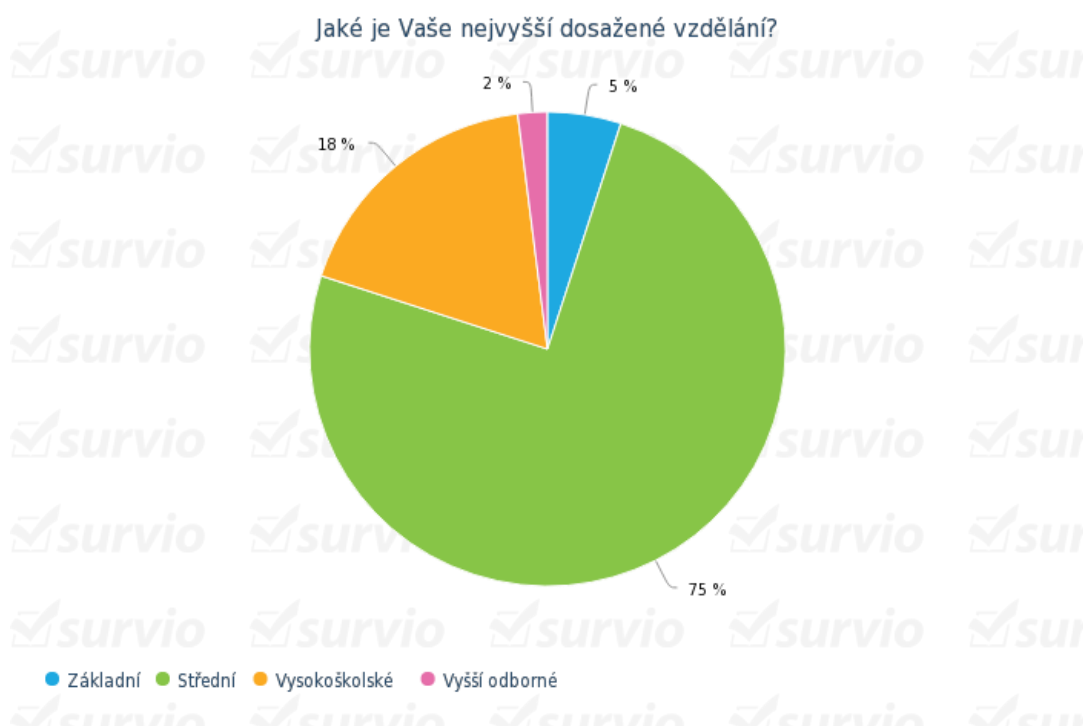


**Question number 2** refers to the age of respondents. Respondents could choose their age category. We can notice that the most of respondents was in the age from 21 to 50. Just 7 respondents were younger than 20 years old and just 5 respondents were older than 51 years old. It could be caused by the way of distribution. The link to the questionnaire was posted on a social network and it is clear that the most frequent users are young people. Age stratification was as follows:



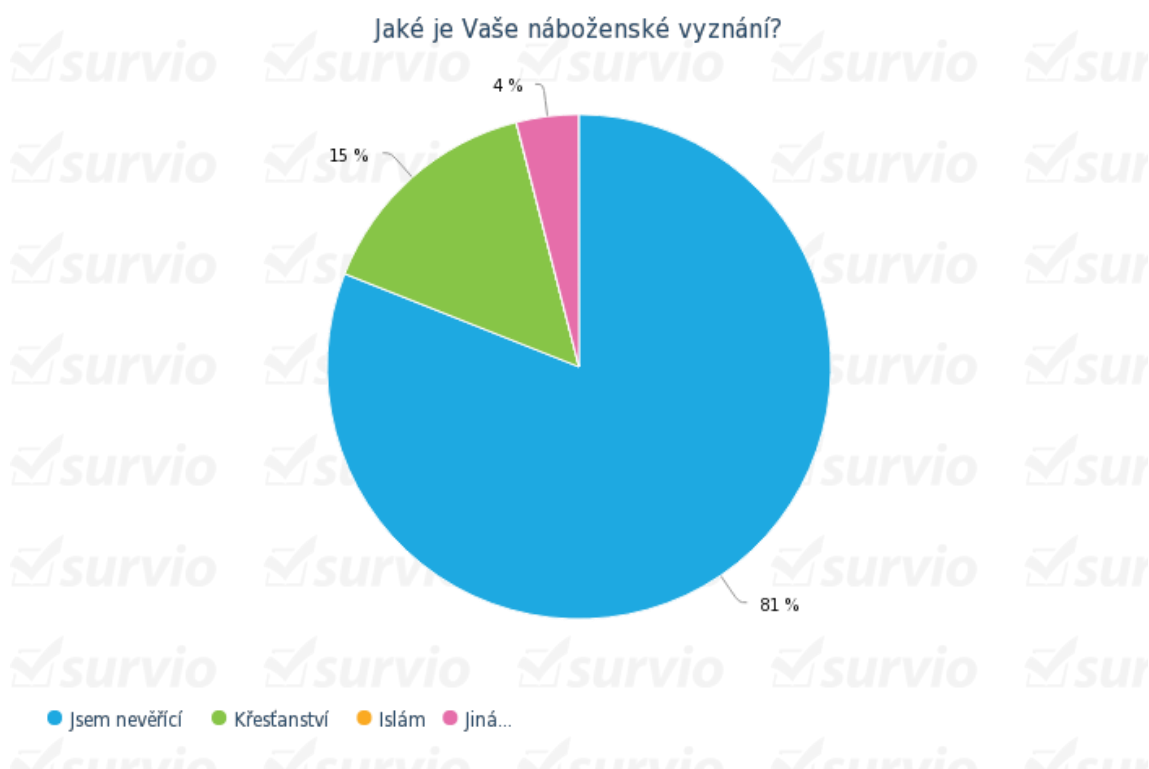
Graph number 2, Age of respondents (survio.com)

**Question number 3** refers to the highest level of education. I chose this question because I wanted to know if there are differences between more or less educated people. The respondents could choose from several options. The options were – elementary school, high school, university or higher vocational school. Most of the respondents (75) answered that they finished high school. University finished 18 respondents. Just 2 respondents finished higher vocational school and 5 respondents finished just an elementary school.



Graph number 3, Highest level of education (survio.com)

**Question number 4** refers to the religion of respondents. Unabridged – “What is your religion?” Religion is a very important thing in this topic. One chapter of the theoretical part of my thesis is about Euthanasia and religion. It is clear that no religion supports euthanasia. It is caused because of the perception of life. It is known that the Czech Republic is mainly atheistic republic. The respondents could choose one of these answers: “Atheist”, “Christianity”, “Islam” and “Another”. It is evident that most of the respondents (81) chose the first option – “Atheist”. And vice versa, the second option (Christianity) chose 15 respondents. Nobody chose the option “Islam”. 4 respondents chose the option “Another”. Here is the graph of answers:



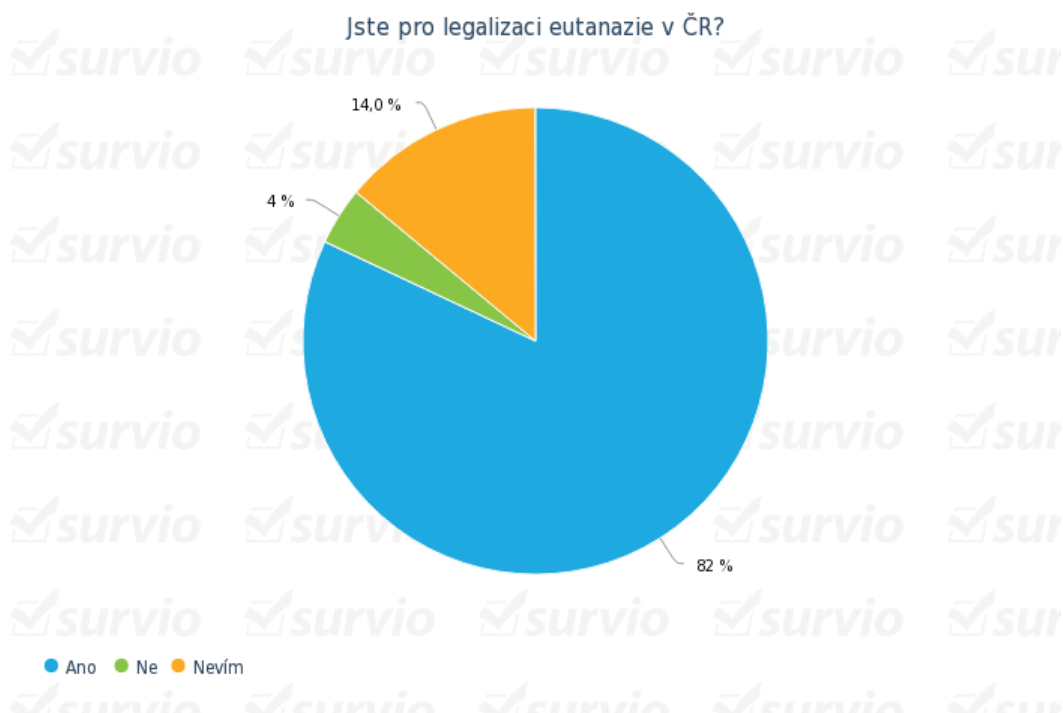
Graph number 4, What is your religion? (survio.com)

**Question number 5** is “Do you know what the term euthanasia means?” Euthanasia is a very common topic. We can encounter with it every day on TV, in newspapers, on internet. However, I met people who absolutely do not know what euthanasia actually is. Respondents could choose from 2 options: “Yes” or “No”. Nevertheless, most of the respondents know what euthanasia is. Just 1 respondent chose the answer “No”. Here is the graph of answers:



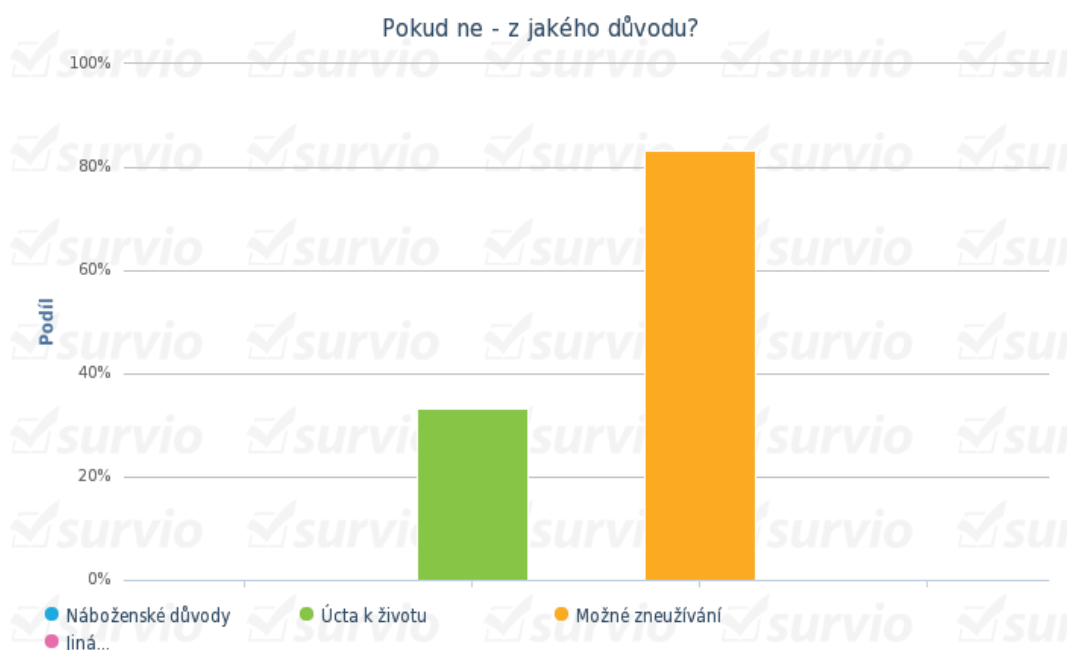
Graph number 5, Do you know what the term euthanasia means? (survio.com)

**Question number 6** is “Are you for the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic?” This question is very direct. People have to think about all risks. It can be an easy question for somebody, but for a lot of people is difficult to answer. Respondents could choose from these answers: “Yes”, “No”, “I do not know”. Despite to all risks, most of the respondents chose the answer “Yes”. Concretely, it was 82 respondents. The answer “No” chose only 4 respondents and 14 respondents do not know. I’m glad that some respondents chose the answer “No” or “I do not know”, because I could inquire them for the reason why. It can be caused by several reasons. We will follow up it in next question. In term of respondent’s gender, I set this hypothesis. The answer “No” chose 2 men and 2 women. It means that this unambiguous question is in state of equilibrium. More interesting answer is “I do not know”. This answer chose 14 respondents, but just 2 men. It means that the rest of respondents are women. I can observe that women are more indecisive. It could be caused because of men are more interested in this topic. Possible cause could be that women are more sensitive and they take all risks into consideration. They have better power of visualization and that is the reason why they are so indecisive. Here is the graph with the answers:



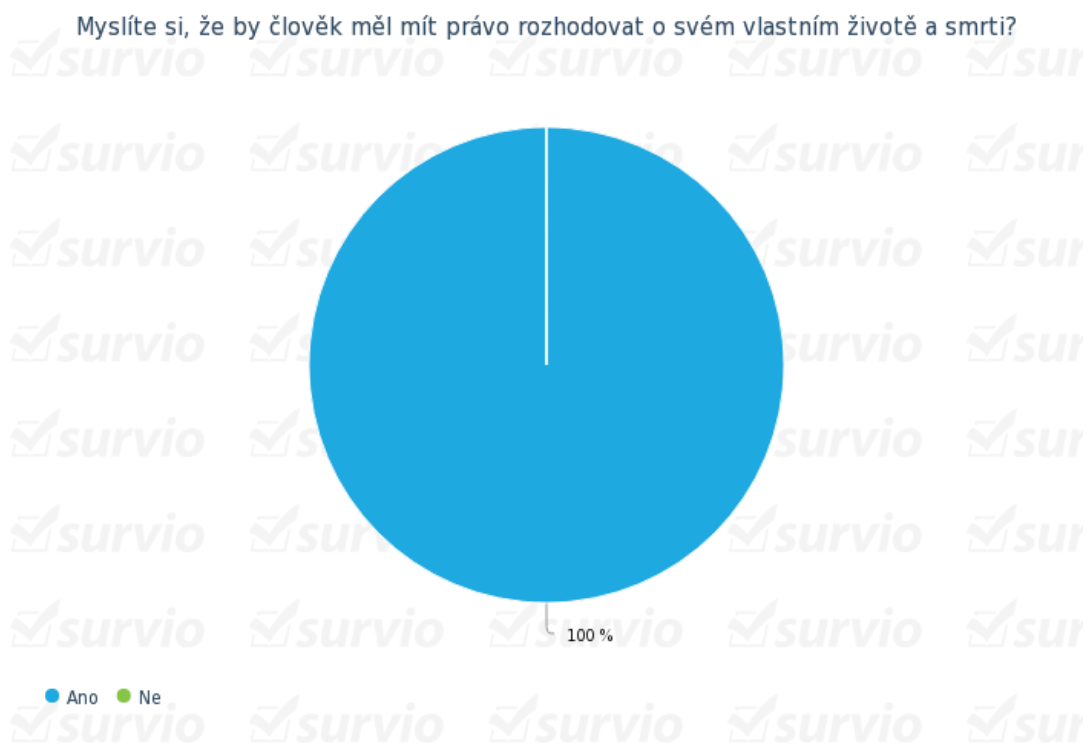
Graph number 6, Are you for the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic? (survio.com)

**Question number 7** is connected with the question number 6. This question is intended for those, who answered “No” or “I do not know” in previous question. This question is “If not, why?” It means that if the respondent answered that he is not for the legalization, I want to know the reason why. I determined several answers. I determine the answer “Because of the religion”, because my respondents are also religious people and as we know, religion does not support euthanasia. Other answers are “Respect for life”, “Potential abuse of euthanasia” and “Another”. I determined these answers because I think that these are the most common and the most logical answers. Despite 15 of my respondents are Christians, nobody chose the answer “Because of the religion”. This can look strange and I think that it is strange, because I studied the topic of euthanasia and religion a lot and it is clear that no religion (including Christianity) does not support euthanasia. Individual answers of religious respondents will be dealt in another part of this chapter. The answer “Respect for life” chose 4 respondents. It is logical that you do not have to be religious person to appreciate life. Life is in some way a miracle and we should respect it. The most chosen answer was “Potential abuse of euthanasia”. This option chose 10 respondents. Nobody wrote their own answer and their own opinion. Here is the graph of answers:



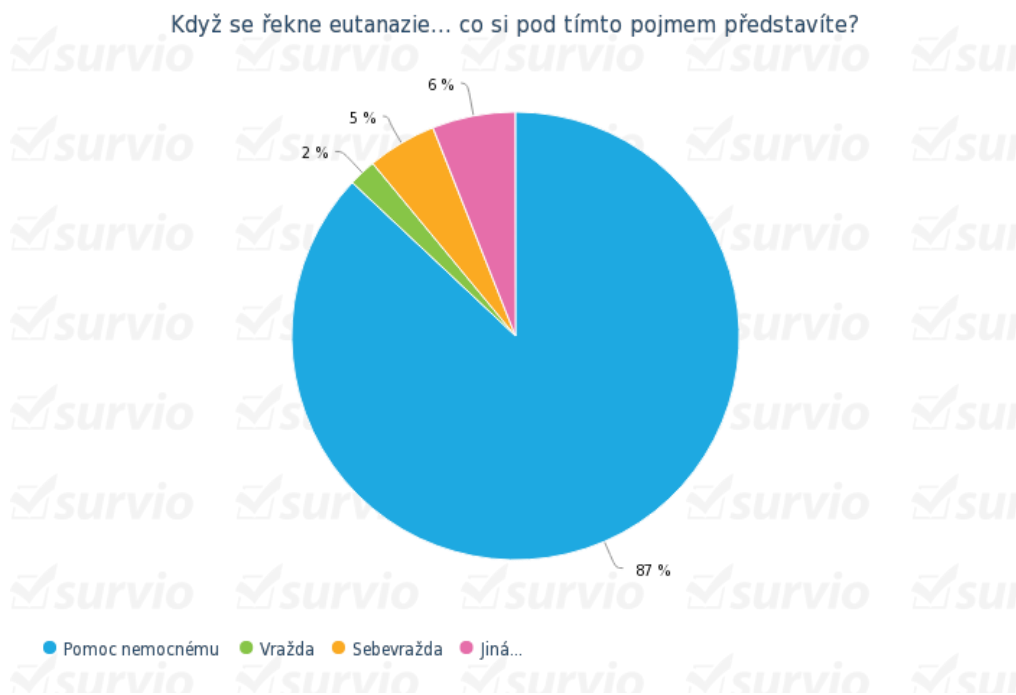
Graph number 7, If not, why? (survio.com)

**Question number 8** is “Do you think that people should have the right to make decision about their own life and death?” This question is also connected with the religion. Religion could influence people’s mind and their opinion. The respondents could choose from 2 options: “Yes” or “No”. The options are clear and simple. This question is very unequivocal, because everyone chose the answer “Yes”. It means that 100% of respondents think that everyone should decide about their life. It is their own option. Here is the graph of answers:



Graph number 8, Do you think that people should have the right to make decisions about their own life and death? (survio.com)

**Question number 9** refers to the term of euthanasia again. Unabridged – “What do you imagine under the term euthanasia?” Now we know that almost all respondents know what euthanasia is and all respondents heard about it. What we do not know is what individual respondents imagine under this term. Somebody can perceive it as a help to another person, somebody can perceive it as a crime, as a murder. It depends on people’s mind and also on knowledge of this topic. Respondents could choose from these options: “Aid to ill person”, “Murder”, “Suicide” or “Another”. Most of respondents (87) chose the answer “Aid to ill person”. The next option “Murder” chose just 2 respondents. Both of these respondents are in the last age category. It means that they are older than 51 years old. For this reason, I determined the age stratifications. I supposed that the opinion on euthanasia can be different in different age. I can state that older people have different opinion than young people. It could be caused by dissimilar way of life in the past. The next option was “Suicide”. This option chose 5 respondents. Several respondents (6) chose the answer “Another”. Respondents could write their own opinion and option. The answers were for example: “Release”, “Voluntary death” or “Kill on request”. Here is the graph:



Graph number 9, What do you imagine under the term euthanasia? (survio.com)

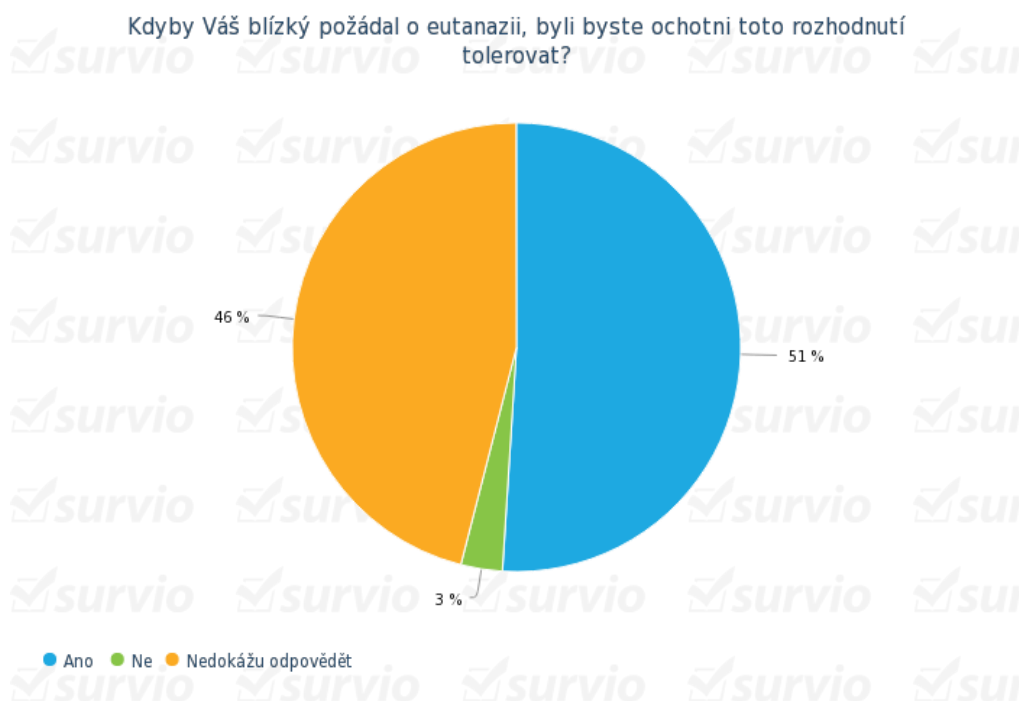


**Question number 10** refers to the legalization. The question is: “Do you know where euthanasia is legal?” This question is open. Respondents do not have any options. They have to write their own ideas. I selected this question just because of my nosiness. I wanted to know how much are people informed about this topic. For reminder, active euthanasia is legalized in Netherland, Belgium, Luxembourg and Columbia and passive euthanasia is legalized in Denmark (since 1998), Finland, France (since 2005), India (since 2011), Ireland, Italy, Columbia, Mexico (since 2008) and Germany.

I was sure that all respondents will answer that euthanasia is legal in Switzerland. Switzerland is very connected with the topic of euthanasia. However, 20 respondents indicated that they do not know. It is a high number and it shows that many people know what euthanasia is, but that is all. They are not interested in this topic and they are careless. It is clear, because the media are full of this topic and there is a mention of countries in almost every new. I think that it is a detriment concerning to the future. Anyway, most of respondents (40) indicated that euthanasia is legal in Switzerland.. The second most frequent answer is Belgium. 24 respondents chose this answer. Next answer was the United States of America. This answer shows that all these respondents are interested in the topic of euthanasia more than others, because it is not known so much. This answer is not quite true, because active euthanasia is illegal. But it is truth than the assisted suicide is legal and I am pleased that the respondents wrote this answer. Concretely, 16 respondents wrote this answer. The respondents who wrote the answer Switzerland also mentioned Belgium and Luxembourg. In terms of respondent’s gender, I ascertained that almost all respondents whose chose the answer “I don’t know” are women. Just 4 men chose this answer. It confirms my surmise that men are more interested in the topic of euthanasia.

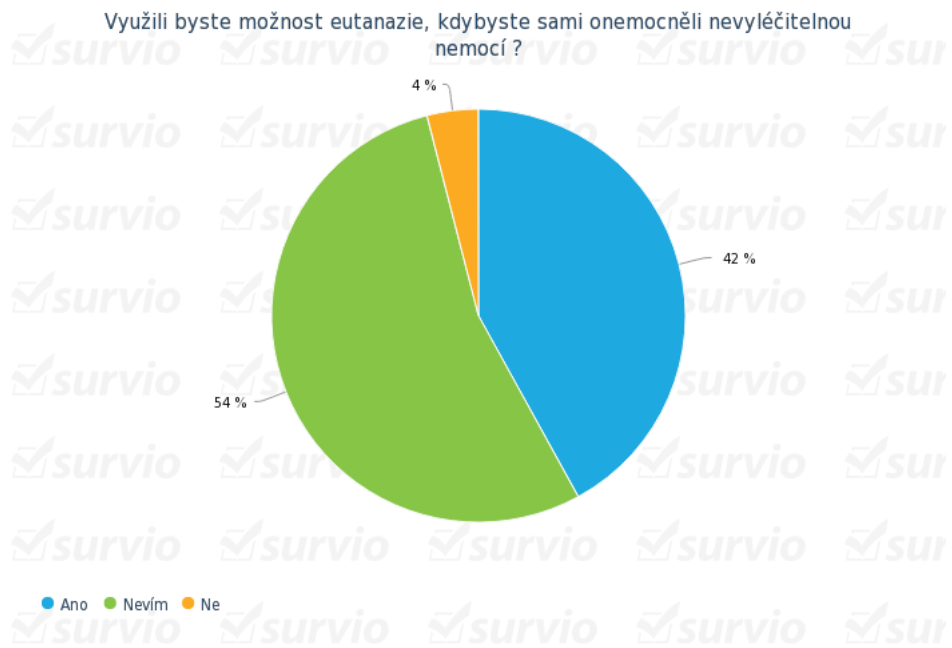
**Question number 11** is “Would you tolerate the opportunity of using euthanasia by one of your acquaintances?” It is another complicated question. The respondents have to imagine a situation, when one of their acquaintances is terminally ill. The patient decided to use the opportunity of euthanasia. That it is a very complicated question shows the answers. The respondents could choose from 3 options. The first one is “Yes”. It means that they accept euthanasia, they perceive euthanasia as a positive

thin, as a help to terminally ill patient. Possible cause could also be their own experience. This answer chose approximately half of respondents, concretely 51 respondents. Another option to choose is “No”. This answer is primarily for the dissenters of euthanasia. They can perceive it as a negative thing, even as a crime. This option answer chose just a couple of respondents, concretely 3. We can conclude that these respondents absolutely refuse euthanasia and they will never accept it, even it applies to their family or acquaintances. The rest of respondents, concretely 46, chose the answer “I cannot answer”. It means that they cannot imagine the situation when someone from their vicinity or from their family wants to request euthanasia. Or it can be caused because they just do not want to imagine it, they do not countenance this option or it is very difficult to think about it. In term of respondent’s gender, it confirms that women are really more indecisive than men. From the quantity of respondents whose chose the answer “I cannot answer”, just 6 respondents are men. The rest of respondents are women. Thus, 40 of respondents are women. Here is the graph of answers:



Graph number 10, Would you tolerate the opportunity of using euthanasia by one of your acquaintances? (survio.com)

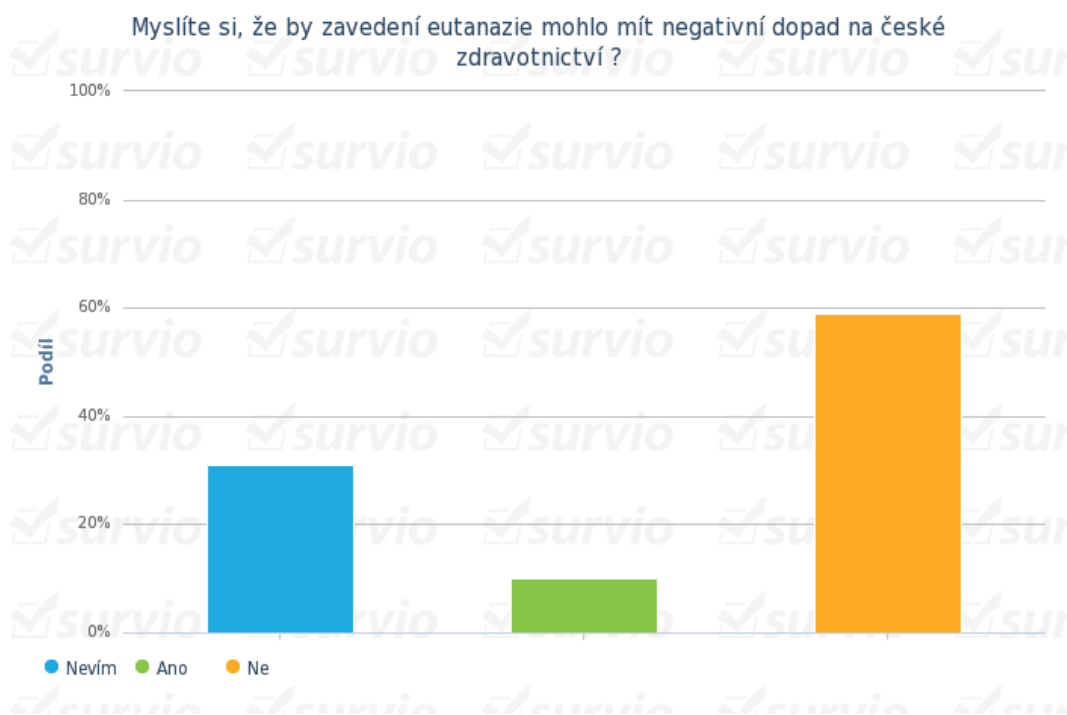
**Question number 12** is “Would you use euthanasia if you were sick with a terminal disease?” It is another treacherous question. The respondents have to imagine the situation when they are terminally ill and they do not have a chance to survive. It is not an easy question and it can be an awkward question. Despite all these inconveniences, all respondents answered on this question. This question can be also difficult because of the differences of general views of life. Some people could want to live as long as it is possible, despite all problems and despite suffering. Some people can imagine that they depend on their family for help. For this reason they can want to use euthanasia, just to make it easier for their family and their close relatives. It could be one of the main reasons of using euthanasia. Another possibly cause could be that the situation when they depend on the help of others can be humiliating and they will not want allow it. Another cause why this question is so difficult to answer is because they do not want to mean to hurt their family by make a decision to use euthanasia. The respondents could choose from 3 options. The first answer is “Yes”. This answer was chosen by 42 respondents. The answer “No” was chosen by 4 respondents, concretely by 2 men and 2 women. These respondents also answered that they are not for the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic. It is clear that these respondents are absolute dissenters of euthanasia. Thus, this question was quite easy for them. The last possible option is “I do not know”. This answer was chosen by 54 respondents. In term of respondent’s gender, the statistic shows that this option was chosen by 9 men and 45 women. It indicates again that women are really more indecisive than men. As I have already mentioned, it can be caused by women’s perceptiveness or also by maternal instinct. Here is the graph of answers:



Graph number 11, Would you use euthanasia if you were sick with a terminal disease? (survio.com)

**Question number 13** is “Do you think that the legalization of euthanasia could have a negative impact on Czech healthcare?” The target of this question was to make people think about Czech healthcare. It is just for my inquisitiveness. I wanted to know if people are interested in this topic, if they know what opinion have the doctors. It could be another hard or treacherous question for many respondents. It can also be an obscure question, because respondent can have a problem with good understanding and with imagination. Every respondent can grasp the question in a different way. The respondents could choose from 3 options. The options are: “No”, “Yes” and “I do not know”. Most of respondents chose the answer “No”, concretely 59. It was 43 women and 16 men. The option “Yes” was chosen by 10 respondents, concretely 7 women and 3 men. We will analyse the individual answers and reasons in the next question. The last option “I do not know” was chosen by 31 respondents. In term of respondent’s gender, we can observe that most of respondents who chose this option were women, concretely

27. Just 4 men chose this answer. This again shows the imprudence of women and their hesitance in this topic. Here is the graph of answers:



Graph number 12, Do you think that the legalization of euthanasia could have a negative impact on Czech healthcare? (survio.com)

**Question number 14** is connected with the question number 13. This question is meant for the respondents who answered “Yes” in previous question. It means that it is meant for 10 respondents. This question is open. Respondents do not have any options to answer. They have to write their own answer. This question is maybe quite difficult to answer and respondents could have problems or inconveniences, because not everyone answered. From 10 respondents, 2 of them did not answer. It means that these 2 respondents who did not answer think that the legalization of euthanasia could cause a problem, but they cannot imagine it. Alternatively, they can imagine it, but they cannot describe it. Another possible cause could be that this question is the last one. The respondents could be distracted or they just want to finish it already. It is caused by my fault, maybe if the question would be placed in the beginning of the questionnaire, the respondents would pay more attention and I would have more answers. As I mentioned, this question filled in 8 respondents. We will analyse the individual answers now. From 8 respondents that filled in the questionnaire were 3 men. The first one wrote this

answer: “Because the Czech healthcare would not receive enough money for expensive treatments and medicaments.” It means that the treatment of ill patients is very expensive and the Czech healthcare receives money from state. In the case of legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic, the Czech healthcare will lose a lot of money, because there would be less terminally patients in hospitals. Another man wrote this answer: “Sometimes it would be difficult to prove that the patient really know what he wants to do, alternatively, if the euthanasia is not requested by family for their benefit (for example because of patrimony)”. This answer can be anticipated in this time. Unfortunately, people can have these immoral intents. As I mentioned, this question could be difficult to answer. My notion confirmed the last man, because he wrote this answer: “I do not know.” Now, we will analyse the answers of women. The quantity of women who answered is 5. Three women have the same opinion. Their opinion is that people could abuse the euthanasia. It could be caused by people who want to inherit from their family. It could be also caused by depressed people who just do not want to live. They do not see the solution of their problem. All these reasons are truth, but it is not possible. For these reasons, in countries where euthanasia is legal, are special laws. When you want to request for euthanasia, you have to meet the requirements. Another woman wrote this answer: “It seems that anything new what is adopted from another country (for example smoking ban in pubs) has a negative impact here in the Czech Republic”. It could be caused by unpreparedness of Czech people for innovations. They rely on things which are proved. The last woman wrote this answer: “I do not think that it would have a negative impact on the healthcare industry, but the financial impact would definitely affect pharmacy. The treatment of oncological ill patients is expensive and some powers would be financially aggrieved if people could make their own decision to end the life.”

### **6.3 THE ANSWERS OF CHRISTIANS**

From the quantity of respondents filled in the questionnaire 15 people, who determined his religion as Christianity, concretely, 5 men and 10 women. It is not too much, but it is known that the majority of Czech people are atheist. We can conclude that women are more religious than men from this survey, but it does not have to be truth. We cannot identify it just from 100 of respondents. Most of religious women were in the age category from 21 to 50 years old, concretely 7. Thus, 2 women were younger than 20 years old and only 1 woman was older than 51 years old. As far as men are

concerned 4 of them were in the age from 21 to 50 years old. The option younger than 20 was chosen by 1 man and the last age category (older than 51 years old) was not chosen by anyone. In term of education, most of respondents chose the option “High school”, concretely 8 women and 5 men. Only one woman chose the option “University” and the option “Elementary school” was chosen by 1 respondent, concretely by woman. Next question refers to the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic. Due to my study of this topic, I was sure that Christians will be that ones who will not agree with the legalization. However, I was wrong. Only 2 respondents were opposed to the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic. Both of them were men. Women were primarily for the legalization, they chose the answer “Yes”, concretely 9 women. Only 1 woman chose the option “I do not know”. It seems that women are more confident that the legalization would be beneficial for the citizens of the Czech Republic. The option “I do not know” was also chosen by 1 man and 2 men chose the option “Yes”. Another question was “What do you imagine under the term euthanasia?” Almost everyone chose the answer “Aid to ill person”, concretely 9 women and 2 men. No woman chose the answer “Murder” or “Suicide”. The option “Another” was chosen by 1 woman, but without the own answer. The option “Suicide” was chosen by 2 men and the option “Murder” was chosen by 1 man. As far as tolerance of euthanasia is concerned, women were more indecisive than men. The option “I cannot answer” was chosen by 5 women and 1 man. No woman chose the option “No” and 5 women would tolerate use of euthanasia in their vicinity. As far as men are concerned, 2 men chose the option “Yes” and 1 man would not tolerate use of euthanasia in his vicinity. Next question refers to use of euthanasia. The question is “Would you use euthanasia if you were sick with a terminal disease?” Respondents were very indecisive in this case, because 9 of them chose the option “I do not know”, concretely 6 women and 3 men. The option “No” was chosen by 1 woman and 1 man. The quantity of respondents who would use euthanasia was 4, concretely 3 women and 1 man. The last question refers to Czech healthcare. The question is “Do you think that the legalization of euthanasia could have a negative impact on Czech healthcare?” Most Christians chose the answer “No”, concretely 7 women and 4 men. The option “Yes” selected only 1 woman. 3 respondents were indecisive and chose the option “I do not know”.

As I mentioned, 2 respondents were against to legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic and both of them were men. One of them was a man younger than 20 years old and finished a High school. The reasons why he is against to euthanasia are because he thinks that this option could be abused and the second reason is because people should respect their life. He imagines a suicide under the term of euthanasia and he would tolerate the decision of use euthanasia in his vicinity. As far as he is concerned, he does not know if he would use euthanasia. He thinks that the legalization would not have a negative impact on the Czech healthcare. The second man who was against to euthanasia was a man in the age from 21 to 50 years old. He finished a High school and the reason why he is against to euthanasia is because of the respect for life. When someone says euthanasia, he imagines a suicide and he would not tolerate the decision to use euthanasia in his vicinity. He also would not use euthanasia by himself and he thinks that the legalization would not have a negative impact on Czech healthcare.

## **6.4 EVALUATION**

The target of this practical part of my bachelor thesis was to address Czech people and ascertain their opinion on the topic of euthanasia. Most of respondents perceive euthanasia as a positive thing and it is good for the future of euthanasia. All respondents encountered with the term euthanasia or they have heard about it. The target of this survey was also to ascertain the differences between religious people and atheists. According to one of my chapter of my bachelor thesis, I was sure that religious people are against to euthanasia. However, this survey disproved my argument. Almost all religious respondents are for the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic. During the survey was also confirmed the last hypothesis. Almost all respondents were atheist.



## 7 CONCLUSION

Death is a part of life. In this time, the progress in medical science is large and today's medicaments can prolong people's life. It is evident that people are afraid of abusing the euthanasia. People sometimes really do not know how to behave toward ill patients and sometimes there is a suggestion if this suffering is really necessary.

This bachelor thesis evaluated the theme of euthanasia from several standpoints. According to professional literature, we can review the individual points of view of religious people, including Christians, Islamists, Jews and Buddhist, and also of American people. The opinion can be distinct due to nationality. This thesis also deals with the opinion of Czech people.

Despite diversity of opinions, most of Czech respondents who filled in the questionnaire are for the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic. It is a good basis for the future of euthanasia. People can imagine the situation and empathize with the role of terminally ill patients.

In term of my opinion, I am absolutely for the legalization of euthanasia in the Czech Republic. Terminally ill patients should have the option to end their lives and avoid the suffering. I cannot imagine the situation when I am terminally ill and I am just waiting for death. The opinions of people are very influenced by their own experiences. Unfortunately, I have an experience which very influenced my mind. It is also the reason why I chose this theme of my bachelor thesis. The worst thing that you can witness is when you look on an intimate and you cannot help him. You have to look on his suffering and waiting for death. I accept the fear from possibly abusing, but there should be the option to end the life for terminally ill patients.

Euthanasia is still illegal in the Czech Republic and it is consider as a crime.

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to gather the information about the theme of euthanasia and the perception of euthanasia by different people.

## **8 ABSTRACT**

This bachelor thesis is focused on the ethical topic of these days – on euthanasia. This work includes general information about the issue of euthanasia. There are mentioned cases of using euthanasia, the opinions of people with different religion and different nationality. The practical part includes the opinions of Czech citizens. The information was acquired by the questionnaire which was distributed by a social network.

## 9 RESUMÉ

Téma předkládané bakalářské práce je Eutanazie ve Spojených státech Amerických. Cílem této práce je seznámit čtenáře s tématem eutanazie jako takovým a pohlédnout do historie a současnosti v zahraničí, konkrétně ve Spojených státech Amerických. Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část.

V první kapitole teoretické části jsou vysvětleny základní pojmy, se kterými se v tomto tématu často setkáváme. Další kapitola se zabývá eutanazií ve Spojených státech Amerických. Následuje kapitola o Jacku Kevorkianovi a kapitola zabývající se eutanazií a náboženstvím.

Cílem praktické části této bakalářské práce bylo analyzovat znalost a názory českých občanů. Byl rozeslán anonymní dotazník. Odpovědi respondentů jsou analyzovány na základě grafů. Rozesílaný dotazník je přiložen v příloze.

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## 11 APPENDICES

### Appendix number 1 – The questionnaire

Dobrý den,

jmenuji se Markéta Malá a prosím o vyplnění následujícího dotazníku. Zabere je to jen chvíli a celý dotazník je anonymní. Tento průzkum poslouží jako podklad pro mou bakalářskou práci.

Děkuji

#### 1. Jaké je Vaše pohlaví?

Muž            Žena

#### 2. Kolik je Vám let?

1-20            21-50            51 a více

#### 3. Jaké je Vaše nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání?

Základní            Střední            Vysokoškolské            Vyšší  
odborné

#### 4. Jaké je Vaše náboženské vyznání?

Jsem nevěřící            Křesťanství            Islám            Jiná..

#### 5. Víte, co znamená pojem "Eutanazie"?

Ano            Ne

#### 6. Jste pro legalizaci eutanazie v ČR?

Ano            Ne            Nevím

#### 7. Pokud ne - z jakého důvodu?

Náboženské důvody            Úcta k životu            Možné zneužívání            Jiné

#### 8. Myslíte si, že by člověk měl mít právo rozhodovat o svém vlastním životě a smrti?

Ano            Ne

#### 9. Když se řekne eutanazie... co si pod tímto pojmem představíte?

Pomoc nemocnému            Vražda            Sebevražda            Jiné

**10. Víte, ve kterých státech je eutanazie legální? Napište alespoň jeden...**

**11. Kdyby Váš blízký požádal o eutanazii, byli byste ochotni toto rozhodnutí tolerovat?**

Ano                      Ne                      Nedokážu odpovědět

**12. Využili byste možnost eutanazie, kdybyste sami onemocněli nevléčitelnou nemocí?**

Ano                      Nevím                      Ne

**13. Myslíte si, že by zavedení eutanazie mohlo mít negativní dopad na české zdravotnictví?**

Nevím                      Ano                      Ne

**14. Pokud ano – Proč?**