

## THE RISE OF TECHNOCRATIC GEOPOLITICS

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**Abstract:** *The contemporary world, generally speaking, the modern world including so-called post-modernity, is seen as an unprecedented age in the history of mankind. According to the official narrative, it is an era of Enlightenment, emancipation, and the flourishing of man that should do without religion and old ways of thinking and feeling. These are seen as remnant of the past that should disappear. They are both obsolete and an obstacle towards a better future. Pragmatism, science, and technology should reign and through them, a new world order should be brought about. A unified humanity. A globalized world without nation-states and the conflicts they engender, without private property. This should be the result of progress and technology. Technocracy will solve all problems. And man will be made anew. This view is an autocratic one, hostile to democracy and government by elected representatives. It is a rule by unelected and unaccountable people. A programmatic blueprint thereof can be found in Z. Brzezinski's *Between Two Ages. America's Role in the Technotronic Era*. The book revives some ideas that were presented in the thirties of the twentieth century. According to those views, technocracy meant a movement and the creation of a new system of government based on the measurement of energy, including the control, and transformation of all areas of society and private life. This happens right now, being known that such proposals are being made regarding the so-called carbon footprint.*

**Keywords:** technocracy, Brzezinsky, globalism, totalitarianism, utopia

### 1. Introduction

The age we are living in is defined by a permanent technical revolution and by a restructuring of the political and social structures within humanity that has lived for a long time. In the seventies, the Polish American security of President Jimmy Carter – Z. Brzezinski (1926-2017) penned a name for this era. He called it the Technotronic era. This era was seen as an era of world integration and of the emergence of a new planetary consciousness, an era that followed the third stage in the development of humankind, an age or a stage defined by the birth of Marxism. For him, Marxism was the best instrument to understand the modern world, but it failed to deliver because when applied it didn't fulfill its humanist (!) and internationalist promises, instead becoming sectarian and nationalistic (or worse) in the Third World. The new and fourth stage of humanity would fulfill these promises. The history of mankind is supposed to go in a progressive and integrative direction. Nationalism and the nation-state seem to be the target of his attacks. And in a sense, he can be considered a supporter of the slogan: „True Marxism (or Communism or Socialism) has never been tried”. Globalization and technocracy represent therefore the same narrative of relentless progress that plagues humanity at least from the Enlightenment onwards.

„Under the pressure of economics, science, and technology, mankind is moving steadily towards large-scale cooperation. Despite periodic reverses, all human history clearly indicates progress in that direction. The question is whether a spontaneous movement will suffice to counterbalance the dangers already noted. And since the answer is probably no, it follows that a realistic response calls for deliberate efforts to accelerate the process of international cooperation among the advanced nations”. (Brzezinski 1970: 296)

He states that this process cannot be accomplished if a kind of global state is built because this would be only the projection of a nationalistic point of view on a global scale, notes Brzezinski. Nevertheless, his positive and implicit acceptance of Marxism, whose endpoint is the abolishing of the state, still points toward a global state or worldwide government. Instead of trying to build a unified global state, he recommends a piecemeal indirect approach based on the already existing limitations of national sovereignty.

## **2. Two ways to understand technocracy**

It can be understood or defined as the power (*kratos*) of technology. Beyond the etymological meaning, the same word can denote a movement that started in the US in the thirties, and also the totality of persons or groups that share a distinct view about the way to run the world. Technocracy, in this sense, is more than the power of technology. It is a particular view of the world bound to a particular time. The name 'Technocracy' was given to a new kind of economic system not based not on exchange and money, but on energy. Technocracy, in both its meanings, can't be divorced from the historical development that produced modernity, although it is rooted way back in West European history. Technocracy, both as a comprehensive worldview and as a specific way to govern and remodel society, has religious and magic roots. The wish to build/to regain paradise or to erect the heavenly city on Earth are some of those roots. It implies treating science and technology as a kind of religious dogma that can't be questioned or denied. It is a substitution of God, technology being the thing that will help mankind to attain transcendence.

As a movement, 'Technocracy' started in the thirties in the United States, presenting a program meant to transform economics, government, religion, and law. Governing by unelected experts is the magic formula it presents (Wood 20015-6: xiii). Later in the twentieth century, similar ideas are revived by Z. Brzezinski in *Between Two Ages* (1970), but in another form: as a supposed necessary development of history. If for Hegel the Spirit found its expression in the Prussian states, for Brzezinski, the United States replaces the Prussian state in the schema of the unfolding of the historical development/progress. According to him, the first country to embody the technocratic and globalist way of government is according to Brzezinski the United States. The term he uses is not technocracy but technotronic. The book is speaking about globalization and the Technotronic age that ushers it in. The US was the main disseminator of this Technocratic age (Brzezinski 1970: 24). The US exports this model, which differs from the old, classical imperial one. The US influence is scientific and technological, contends Brzezinski. And even if one should use the term empire, then it should be informally. America's influence is supposed to be something new – just like the Technotronic age is supposed to be. This influence that the US exerts upon the world is made up of: „the interpretation of economic institutions, the sympathetic harmony of political leaders and parties, the shared concepts of sophisticated intellectuals, the mating of bureaucratic interests. It is, in other words, something new in the world, and not yet well understood.” (Brzezinski 1970: 33). The US compels the other countries to imitate, to engage in a scientific and cultural revolution. It stimulates also the export of new techniques, methods, and skills from the more advanced countries to the least advanced. Or industrial espionage – an ever-present reality, one should add. The main tool to export this revolution and the worldview which come with it were and are the private or (less private) foundations (Brzezinski 1970: 34). The impact of this revolution is double-edged. On one side, it generates the need/wish in other countries to emulate the United States, while on the other side, it generates resentment by producing disruption, destroying existent institutions, undermining mores and modes of behavior, etc. It produces resentment and the need for policies that give birth to progress and material wealth. Also, it could be said that it destroys cultures in the long run. It does so because even if someone wants to resist the influence of the US, it must use the same means as the United States to resist it. Such a policy requires the establishment of a competitive market economy, an industry, and new institutions

that act according to the technotronic image of the world. It would require the re-education of the people, etc.

The term technocracy was used in 1919 in an article with the title *Industrial Management* by W. H. Smythe. The idea conveyed is that society should be governed by engineers, scientists, and technicians not by elected officials (Wood 2015-6: 2-3). The supporters of technocracy excluded other forms of government be they communism, fascism, liberalism, democracy, etc. although if it suited the occasion, they would accept a blending of ideas coming from these sources, too. The conception behind the technocracy movement is utopian, seeking to establish a system that replaces price-based economics with energy/resource base economics. Such a dreamed-up system could be rightfully seen as totalitarian since it requires permanent monitoring of the person and also decision-making made by unelected experts that decide what someone should or should not do.

The technological and scientific development and also the Great Depression helped the technocracy movement to gain speed. Capitalism seemed dead. The restructuring of society along scientific lines will save the world, making such events as the Great Depression obsolete and impossible to produce. This can't come true without the establishment of a new way of ordering society. A new comprehensive system of ordering human life needed to be set up regarding all facets of society and human behavior. Thus, a comprehensive monitoring system of the life of each member is needed. What happens in a section of society affects every other sector. All these domains have to be completely entangled with each other since society is a holistic structure. Total surveillance, control, and means of implementation of the decisions taken by the unelected experts are necessary to accomplish the goals that this new aristocracy set up. This kind of totalitarian management of life is what today is called governance. It is a holistic view of society. The idea behind it pertains to the whole earth, postulating an evolution towards a global state/society. Since the whole is more important than the particular members it is made of, people have to give up their rights and freedoms.

Another source of inspiration for this view is Taylor's scientific method of management whose tenet was based upon science, cooperation, and harmony, which should be fostered, and not on individualism and discord, which should be fought off (Wood 2015-6: 20-21). Such management would be efficient and would eliminate the use of arbitrary power. Even someone like the sociologist Thorstein Veblen railed himself to this point of view and began to call for a revolution of the engineers meant to replace the conventional way of doing politics. He alongside Howard Scott (leader of the Technocracy movement in the early 1920s) formed started a group called the Technical Alliance whose purpose was to build up a „soviets of engineers”. In 1921, Veblen clearly expressed its views on this subject matter. The whole economy of a country should be treated as a whole, managed only by competent technicians and not by individuals that seek only their private interests. Such a style of scientific management would, the sociologist believed, have exceeded by several hundred percents the output of the normal economical system (Veblen 1921 in Wood 2015-6: 22). As already stated, the technocratic view proposes the establishment of an economic system based on energy-value that would replace the profit as motivation. Thus, this technocratic view promises both utopia and economic freedom. Technology will free man from the unpleasant effort of labor (Wood 2015-6: 23). Of course, to get there one has to brush away all obstacles, including politicians, nation-states, and everyone that doesn't accept this new ideology. No square pegs for round holes.

The new economic and social system was exposed in the Technocracy Studies Course from 1934. Technocracy was, as afore-mentioned, the name of a movement and of organization – Technocracy Inc., which was organized in a para-military manner. The manuals stated it was a non-profit organization and neither a political party nor a financial racket. It entailed a comprehensive and totalitarian view of human existence as a whole, whatever interacted with human action. It was a blueprint for a new society and a new man. It precluded the accumulation of wealth and profit as motivation for action. The resemblance with the communist system is

not by happenstance, both are totalitarian and centralized ways of governing society. The same delusions and will to power are at play in both. The ideological grounding was found in the conviction that the problems which confront society are entirely the products of man's actions and they pertain to climate, biology, and natural resources. Without scientific dictatorship, mankind would suffer destruction. Mankind is the enemy. The assumptions upon which this view is based are the same assumptions that underly present UN programs such as Agenda 21/30, UN's Green Economy, etc. The proposal of Ali Baba Group's President J. Michael Evans about the development of a technology that will measure the carbon print of each individual being around the world could be taken directly from the Technocracy Manual. The idea is to develop technologies and systems able to monitor and translate individual activities into carbon (social credits) credits. Those are to be used to set up and develop lifestyles and communities that use low-carbon (\*\*CTR Wire 2022). If the imagined economical system was to work, monitoring and measuring the goods and energy resources that are used would be mandatory. This control must be constant otherwise there would be no monitoring of society with the required scientific precision. The system would have to register 24 hours per day the net conversion of energy, utilizing the registration of the consumed and converted energy to make it possible to have a balanced load. It should provide a continuous inventory of all production and consumption. It should provide the type of all produced and used goods and services, where and when they are used, thereby furnishing specific information regarding the consumption of each person, along with a profile and a record of each individual (Wood 2015-6: 31). Every facet and aspect of individual activity must be monitored, recorded to build this new economic and social system. Another necessary requirement was the complete conditioning of the population and the creation of a centralized organ of control. There was no room for dissent since all the decisions were made by experts and science cannot be questioned. According to the manual of Technocracy Inc. the whole north American continent -including Canada and Mexico – was considered to be necessary for building this new society. There was no specification of the means that had to be used during this process. What comes out of the pages of the manual is the complete disdain toward the nation-state, national sovereignty, and normal citizens alike (the fact that many citizens if those countries might not accept the proposed new economical and governance system or might not accept the abolishment of the national borders didn't even cross the mind of the supporters of Technocracy Inc is very telling). Eradicating national sovereignty is also one of the conditions of building the new world and economic order that today the members of the World Economic Forum intend to impose against national sovereignties and the will of the different peoples. Abolishing national sovereignty and the nation-state are predicated as *sine qua non* conditions of the utopia. Another 'perk' of this system would be the disappearance of money. The money would be replaced by Energy Certificates that would be issued anew at the beginning of each new accounting period of energy. The function thereof would be to acquire goods and services, but only for a defined period. Their validity will vanish before the new period of accounting the energy. This precludes the existence of money, accumulating wealth, and the existence of private property. No accumulation of wealth, no private property? The communist dream becoming reality but through technological means. In the very words of Technocracy, Inc. the whole endeavor can be seen as social engineering.

„Technocracy is the science of social engineering, the scientific operation of the entire social mechanism to produce and distribute goods and services to the entire population of this continent. For the first time in human history, it will be done as a scientific, technical, engineering problem.” (The Technocrat, 1948 in Wood 2015-6: 33)

### **3. The rebirth of technocracy. Global dominance**

Some parts of the program established by the supporters of the technocratic movement were adopted quietly by the Roosevelt administration (Wood 2015-6: 35). Though the movement wasn't successful in the thirties of the past century, the ideas, and the mindset were

living a rebirth after the second world war. One work that restates the same mindset is *Between Two Ages. America's Role in the Technotronic Era* by Zbigniew Brzezinski. This book made it possible for him to be selected by David Rockefeller to join the CFR. What is main message of Brzezinski's book? That the development of certain technologies furthers what we call now globalization and that the way the whole thing will be run will not be the conventional one. The global city will be run by a transnational elite, a technocratic elite. His essay is advocating globalization and technocracy, this time based on the development of mass media and communications – computers, for example. This new era is the fourth stage of a process that supposedly started at the beginning of humanity itself. This fourth age, the technotronic one represents a spatio-temporal revolution (Brzezinski 1970: 107). This stage expresses itself in the form of a new society born in the United States. The post-industrial society was meant to become the technotronic one. According to Brzezinski: „The post-industrial society is becoming a 'technotronic' society: a society that is shaped culturally, psychologically, socially, and economically by the impact of technology and electronics – particularly in the area of computers and communications” (Brzezinski 1970: 9). The scientific and technological revolution will spill over in all the areas of life. Not only that but the revolution that this age will bring about will be animated by the passion for equality, which becomes a self-conscious force. The development of the means of communication leads to a greater interconnection between different areas of the world, thus making it possible to go beyond the local or national level and combat inequality at a planetary level. This development leads to the increase of the potential magnitude of human control upon society, environment, etc., increasing the pressure of changing and imposing certain lines on the development of society (Brzezinski 1970: 10). A new society emerges from these changes and this new society will differ in many ways in its social, economic, or political dimensions from the previous one. The economic power will become inseparable from the political one (or indistinguishable), becoming more invisible. There will be a partnership between the public/governmental sectors and the private ones. On a more personal level, the social binds tend to fragment, the communities too and so do the ties between generations. On another level though, the individuals will be integrated into global structure. This would be the result of developing electronic communications and computer networks – global intimacy. The individual will be absorbed by this new global reality (Brzezinski 1970:18). But the final product is not the global village. It is a global city, a fragmented reality, a web of tense and nervous interdependent relationships that do not possess the stability, personal intimacy, or implicitly shared values that characterize life in a real village (Brzezinski 1970: 19). The way global/foreign affairs are considered will change. No one can remain non-affected by what happens on the planet. Distant events will impact life back home and give rise to new attitudes. The global access to information might engender a sentiment of deprivation and resentment in certain nations, and those might generate political or military action against the perceived source of the said deprivation – the United States, as already explained. On the other hand, the same interconnectivity might lead to global action against what the transnational elite/public might perceive as dangerous for the global city (due to long years of propaganda and brainwashing imposed on the public). Increased interconnectivity and access to information around the globe lead to the rise of a supposed planetary consciousness.

This new technocratic age is related to the rise of planetary consciousness, to the necessity of international cooperation above the national level; this would involve the integration of entire transnational regions or even continents (Brzezinski 1970: 55). This planetary consciousness is bound to the rise due to transnational elites made up of businessmen, scholars, etc. They are bonded to each other across national borders and their perspectives are therefore not limited by or to national tradition, having international interests at heart (Brzezinski 1970: 59). According to him, the national-state has ceased to be the principal creative force in the world. The state-nation is replaced by multinational corporations and banks, who are planning and acting in more advanced ways than the state (Brzezinski 1970: 56). According to the polish-American author, these new international elites will tend to see

things in terms of global magnitude and conform to their interest not conform to the views of the most citizens of the places where they live. The totalitarian approach can be clearly seen.

„More directly linked to the impact of technology, it involves the gradual appearance of a more controlled and directed society. Such a society would be dominated by an elite whose claim to political power would rest on allegedly superior scientific know-how. Unhindered by the restraints of traditional liberal values, this elite would not hesitate to achieve its political ends by using the latest modern techniques for influencing public behavior and keeping society under surveillance and control. Under such circumstances, the scientific and technological momentum of the country would not be reversed but would actually feed on the situation it exploits.” (Brzezinski 1970: 253)

This type of ruling a country, Brzezinski dubs technological managerialism. In this system, the distinctions between public and private bodies tend to become blurred. The tendency goes also in the direction of policy-making (Brzezinski 1970: 261). This is the result of the evolution of mankind, the establishment of a planetary consciousness being the result of the widening of man’s horizon. The planetary consciousness belongs to the aforementioned transnational elite made by businessmen, etc. They would perceive in a certain way the problems that confront humanity and tend to see them in terms of overcoming technological backwardness, eliminating poverty, the extension of international cooperation in education and health, preventing the so-called overpopulation (a problem born in the middle of the same elites), or – in today’s terms of global warming, etc. This consciousness would give rise to the feeling that one has to act. The problems could be solved by applying the accumulated social and scientific knowledge. The approach has to be global and planned, non-nationalistic, including transnational entities such as corporations. Corporate governance would thus be born. These developments and the significance Brzezinski grants them can be better understood when his view on Marxism comes into play.

Man’s history has, according to him, fourth stages. The third stage in the development of man was, in his view, the one that gave birth to Marxism. Marxism, surprise, surprise, is held in a high position by the supposed defender of the free world and former national security adviser. Marxism is a further creative stage in the process of attaining a universal vision of man, expressing at the same time the victory of external man over the inner man that is passive, the victory of reason over belief, etc. It also expressed the capacity of mankind to shape and control its material destiny. Marxism also states, according to the polish-American author, that man possesses an absolute capacity to understand reality and that this understanding is the starting point of his endeavor to mold reality at his will (Brzezinski 1970: 72). The whole struggle of human existence goes in a certain direction, human evolution has a goal, and Brzezinski quotes Teilhard du Chardin who developed an evolutionist account of man, completely anti-Christian – and affirms something that every Marxist would. That the goal of history is human emancipation, and equality – be it in the face of the supernatural as in supernatural religions is seen as a part of this process. But focusing on the inner man is the wrong way to do it. Taking control of the external conditions, and modifying them seems the way to achieve the aforementioned emancipation. Social change is an important part of this process. The problem with Christianity is in his eyes that the accent was put on the Kingdom of Heaven instead of taking control and changing the material and social condition of man.

As already said, Marxism is held in high regard by Brzezinski. Marxism offers „a unique intellectual tool for understanding and harnessing the fundamental forces of our time. As both a product and a response to a particularly traumatic phase of man’s history, it supplied the best available insight into contemporary reality” (Brzezinski 1970: 123). Marxism also raised the flag of internationalism in the age of national hatred, another good quality in his eyes. This squares, of course, with the view that supports and promotes globalization and rules by experts, a centralized undemocratic rule just like in the former Soviet bloc. What is the main failure of Marxism in his eyes? Concerning the former Soviet Union, he says that it succeeded in transforming Marxism into a „conservative bureaucratized doctrine” (Brzezinski 1970: 123).

His main accusation is that the USSR didn't succeed in remodeling human society as it purported to do. Contemporary Marxism gave up its Promethean commitments to universal humanism. The ideology that killed maybe 100 million people, and established some of the most totalitarian regimes on Earth are expressions of this universal humanism. The technocratic society does require more and more planning (Brzezinski 1970: 260). Communism arrived too early to be a source of true internationalism because it came to be in the era in which national self-awareness was born and because of the lack of technological communications. It came too late because the Western states had taken away its humanistic appeal with the help of the nation-state. If communism took despotic forms, that happened because it was applied in Russia and took oriental despotic features. It became de-Westernized. He thinks that there were valid alternatives to the brutal way in which Marxism was applied in the former empire. He quotes Trotsky to support his view because this he in 1930 that the physical liquidation of millions of kulaks was a moral monstrosity (although nothing about his conception of overman!). Moreover, Stalinism is considered to be even a blessing in disguise – not for the Soviet Union though, but for the world at large. The main sin of the Soviet Union, and of the communist parties in the former Eastern Bloc, was the fact that they were basically acting in a more or less nationalistic manner even if they thought of themselves as acting in an internationalist manner (Brzezinski 1970: 136). The Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc states have destroyed the revolutionary character of communism and ruined its appeal (Brzezinski 1970: 138). It has become sectarian thus intensifying the fragmentation of the world (Brzezinski 1970: 177). In his eye, Marxism is the representative of humanism. Humanism was a central Marxist concern (Brzezinski 1970:142). Communism was supposed to be an internationalizing and humanizing force, but at its best, says Brzezinski, had become a force for national modernization (Brzezinski 1970: 187; also 193). The virtues of Marxism come to light when it is not in power. When in power it tends to take extremely oppressive forms or intense nationalistic modes. In the East, communism became a force of stimulating nationalism. Observing that many communist parties in the Third World were driven by nationalism and racism, the Polish-American author states that this means that these parties capitulate in front of reality instead of shaping it (Brzezinski 1970: 192). His view on Marxism and therefore of highly centralized, dictatorial ideology is very appreciative:

„Thus, even if one is not a Marxist, it is not necessarily a cause for rejoicing to note that communism – which helped to enlarge the collective consciousness of mankind and to mobilize the masses for social progress -has failed in its original objective of linking humanism with internationalism.” (Brzezinski 1970: 192-3)

A new political and social framework has to be set up to confront the new socio-political realities, a framework that could deal with and integrate change. This new framework is not the government as an expression of the national will (Brzezinski 1970: 215); he speaks of the United States but the US was used as the paradigm of globalization and the technocratic age. The traditional government as an expression of national will is not able to answer the basic and strategic questions raised by modern society. It can give no direction. The new way of governing society has to find a way to adopt and integrate the ongoing technological change. This is paramount. The government has, therefore, to become technocratic. As such, among the main goals of politics in the global city should be– in order to be more humane – the definition of the conceptual frame in which humane and meaningful ends could be assigned to the rapid technological change, and also finding a way that would allow the application of technological success to the social realm plagued by different social problems that plague society, like poverty, discrimination, ecological problems, etc. If this new kind of society could be built, then it is necessary to produce a framework of meaning that would give coherence and solidarity to it, lest it not fall into dissolution (Brzezinski 1970: 241). This set of beliefs have to integrate the ongoing technological change.

The aforementioned transformations can't be attained by constitutional reform. The restructuring of society and the government thereof would be the result of covert actions and

it will take incrementally. Democratic processes are thus ignored or bypassed by this endeavor. This process can be far-reaching if the political process will assimilate the technological and scientific change, or, according to Jacques Ellul, if the political process becomes more and more restrained and ordered by the expansion of the technological system. Brzezinski states that through the implementation and expansion of information technology throughout the whole of society more responsibility could be transferred to the lower levels thereby increasing freedom – though it is plain to see that the development and implementation of information technology in the whole society does not increase freedom. The spread of information technology would make possible better coordination and national planning and, of course, can make it on a planetary scale. The technological development would require more and more planning though. Instead of a free democracy, one gets a society that will be increasingly planned, a society that will start to reassemble the countries from the former Eastern bloc, despites Brzezinski's nice words.

The planner will become the key legislative factor (Brzezinski 1970: 260). Defining and implementing goals to be achieved will gain in importance and thus the accent will be put on meeting goals. During this process, the legislator and society would become more self-conscious about social ends. Harmonizing personal freedom with planning will become the key dilemma. The implementation and development of information and communication technology will ease the way to this transformation of society. The expansion of the communication means, of computers, will lead to the birth of a participatory pluralism that does not function according to the way government works in liberal democracies. New systems of coordination will be set up, and in the United States, this would further the extant tradition of blurring distinctions between public and private institutions, or, as one might add, between corporations and government. This will lead to the increase the participation of businessmen in social problems, furthering the blurring of the distinction between private and public activity. It will be more or less a fusion between sectors, between public and private, a gradual fusion or synthesis between the institutions of society and of government (Brzezinski 1970: 263-4). The distinction between private and public bodies will be softened increasing the chances of giving birth to participatory democracy. This is the kind of rational humanism that the United States has to bequeath to the world. This new rational humanism – also named the third American revolution – promises to link liberty with equality. As previously stated, this new humanism and new reality require a new framework, one that does not accept national sovereignty. The mantra of novelty is all-present in the ideological framework of this so-called technotronic era (Brzezinski 1970: 274).

#### **4. The roots of Technocracy**

Though it might seem strange, this progressist view has some older roots than assumed. The basis of the religion of progress can be found as in the early Middle Ages, according to some authors such as Lynn White – despite the far-spread belief that the Middle Ages despised w technology and manual work. If what he says is correct, then technology gained even then the redemptive value that it is attributed to it nowadays by some people. It has seeded the roots of the idea that progress is unavoidable – at least in some version of the ideology of progress (Taguieff 2019: 336). It is an ideology or a set of ideologies that are bound to a certain kind of religious belief expressed in the idea of emancipation. As the French philosopher Pierre Andre Taguieff puts it, this is a messianic ideology, which makes man the agent of his own redemption, replacing God.

„L'«émancipation humaine», dans tous les récits idéologiques où elle est posée comme objectif final, est l'objet d'une promesse : l'horizon reste celui du messianisme et des doctrines, sécularisées ou non, de la rédemption universelle. Mais l'universel s'entend de diverses manières, selon les individus ou les groupes, les cultures ou les croyances.” (Taguieff 2019: 102 ways, according to the individual and the groups, to cultures and systems of beliefs.”)



This quest for self-emancipation leads to the idea of sovereignty and to the idea of abolishing limits, which are seen as a hindrance to this process. The limits can be seen as arbitrary, the expression of a will directed against humanity by hostile forces that are today known as reactionary, right wing-extremists, homophobe, transphobe, bigoted, or as enemies of the people, kulaks in the parlance of Marxism. This whole endeavor has as its target the conquest of creation and the setting up of man as the main ontological force in nature. Mankind must become the owner and master of nature and thus the only author of his destiny: „L'homme est sujet-auteur - de son propre destin” (Mairet, 1997: p. 207). Briefly expressed, the whole enterprise has - even if not stated explicitly - to replace God with man. The creation as such, nature and man's own nature are seen as enemies, as objectives that have to be conquered, subdued, and modified to satisfy man's wishes. From this point of view, it is understandable the former national security adviser of Jimmy Carter deemed Marxism or the application of Marxism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere as a failure. Its pretensions caved in in front of reality, a thing that can't be accepted by ideologues and technocrats alike. This view also redefines what humanity is and does. The way the human community is understood changes. According to Gerard Mairet this paradigmatic modern attitude, which he subsumes under the concept of sovereignty, implies a power relationship towards reality. What humanity is, is not given in advance. Humanity does not have an essence, but it defines what it wants to be. The foundation is completely unstable. Humanity and the political community are essentially a perpetual revolution and *Machtausübung*. What the nature and the definition of human existence is, is determined by power, that is by the people who held it. The sovereign establishes what humanity is. An expression of this fundamental modern worldview can be found in transhumanism, in the quasi-religious conviction that one can change his/her own gender since they are the master of their own body. To be a free person means in this framework that there is no nature or essence to man, that man can be whatever man wants - a reverberation of the idea or the Neoplatonic absolute divine simplicity doctrine that states the inexistence of any distinction in divinity and thus affirming the identity between essence, person, knowledge, will, etc. When transferred into the realm of anthropological understanding, this doctrine translates as the conviction that man has no essence. If someone wants to become something, then it will become that something. Thus, the conviction that man has an essence can be considered by some as being oppressive, an obstacle to attaining happiness or a hindrance to a further evolutionary step. If man has no fixed essence - and this is compatible with an evolutionary worldview, then he can become whatever he wants. Mankind can through technology transcend its bodily limits and maybe transcend time and space and become a kind of god. Transhumanism certainly thinks so. Within this framework, history can be considered to be the process of man's self-deification. The person is redefined as a kind of self-existing subject that is free and master of nature (even in the Marxist view this is something that is accomplished); this is, at least, a purpose that must be achieved (Mairet 1997: 215). So, the idea that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will change mankind is not really new. It is the expression of the same mindset that underlies modernity and the religion of progress/technology. Modernity is the age that emancipates man, the era of novelty with no parallel in the past (Gillespie 2008: 2).

This new paradigm is similar to a religious one that makes from novelty and change supreme values and that cuts history in half. What was before is bad, but what comes in modernity is fundamentally good. History is a relentless movement toward emancipation. This is the sense and meaning of history, its purpose that will be fulfilled in two ways: through human revolutionary or less revolutionary action and by the movement of history proper. Undergirding this whole concept is the idea of emancipation, as already mentioned (Taguieff 2019: 48). These ideas are very radical and change the way mankind regards its history and past.

„Tout attachement à une passe particulière une aliénation. L'histoire, la culture, la langue et la religion exercent une emprise insupportable sur l'individu. Ne parlons pas de l'ethnicité. Toute identité particulière est une prison.” (Taguieff 2019: 280)

## 5. Conclusion

Thinking of technology as redemptive and imbuing it with those qualities is a big departure from the traditional value attached to them. Nevertheless, during the Middle Ages, in the Augustinian West, things changed. The meaning of arts and technology shifted. Technology ceased to be seen as being in opposition to transcendence. Both liberal and mechanical arts became gradually associated with the lost perfection and lost Edenic condition and with the possibility of getting those back. (Noble 1997: 12). This situation might have been caused by some technological innovation such as the introduction of the heavy plow within the Frankish (White 1971). The advancement and technological improvement were seen as signs of the coming millennium, as evidence of salvation as a means to prepare for it. This agricultural innovation produced a fundamental change in the relationship between man and nature. It inverted the relationship and now nature become something that was there not to be respected but exploited. The modern relationship to nature was born. An important role in this ongoing process has been played by the Benedictine monasteries, the monastery being the place where was pioneered the use of things such as windmills, watermills, and agricultural innovations. According to David F. Noble, all these developments meant the elevation of man above nature. The growing importance and reevaluation of the role and worth of the so-called mechanical arts in society were based on the conviction that the lost likeness to God could be regained. But the agent of this action was not God. It was the man and his technology. For certain, the biblical incarnational view of the world had brought its own contribution to this new development. The world, despite the Fall, is neither an illusion nor something wicked. It was the contented creation of God. And the body was not a container of the soul, a container that could be discarded. It was seen as an essential part of man. Even such a thinker as Scotus Eurigena has held the mechanical arts in high esteem. He dubbed them mechanical arts, which were known until then under the name of useful arts. Though the mechanical arts were at a certain time despised, they began to gain in importance and they gained a positive meaning. For him, they held the same high status as the liberal arts (grammar, dialectics, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, harmony). The driving force that lent positive value to the former useful arts was the quest to retrieve the lost God-likeness, or in other words, to regain access to the knowledge that God imparted to Adam. The Irish theologian highlighted the role these arts play alongside the liberal ones in the effort to restore the lost God-likeness. Both kinds of arts were supposed to belong to the endowments that God bestowed upon Adam's true nature. Both kind of arts were seen as a birthright that was lost, and they belong naturally to man. (Noble 1997: 17). Moreover, since they were seen as a real true link to God, cultivating them was a means of attaining redemption. Through technology, man can free himself from the bad consequences that followed his Fall. From the 12<sup>th</sup> century forwards, this view of the redemptive virtues of technology had become commonplace. Such an elevated view on technology can be seen even in such works as Th. Morus's *Utopia* (Noble 1997: 39). Technology acquires such a high value that it becomes the human medium of salvation. This process produces the conviction that mankind can restore paradise on Earth by its efforts, without any divine intervention. This would be possible by setting up a privileged class of wise men, a scientific elite, that will know how to plan so that this would be achieved. The rest of mankind had to obey these 'wise men'. The engineer became in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the latest incarnation of this figure of the redemptive wise man, of the enlightened one that could guide humanity to its new Eden (Noble 1997: 79). Science would restore man as the head of the living hierarchy of beings, wrote the father of modern sociology Auguste Comte (Noble 1997:84). The French thinker displays a clear religious perspective, leaving aside his ideas of a positive religion. His positivism, despite its anti-theological position, expresses an attitude that belongs to the realm or religion. He aimed at the attainment of perfect unity of the Great Being, that would bring humanity ultimate regeneration, happiness, etc. His efforts were also aimed at the reconstruction of man's nature. Such an endeavor was to be undertaken by people like A. Comte, savants, and scientific-minded

people which were occupied with the study. They were supposed to form a new kind of priesthood. Other thinkers like Robert Owen had expressed the conviction that technology should be seen as a means to achieve emancipation, of delivering man from his bad condition. Along these lines came Karl Marx who saw the technical development of the means of production not only as an instrument for wealth accumulation but for the revolution that would end exploitation and would transcend history (Noble 1997: 87). Despite being expressed in evolutionist and progressist terms, the core of the Western view remains bound to the other-worldly millenarism that was present from the beginning (Noble 1997: 104). But the agent of this enterprise is not God. It is mankind and therein lies the main difference. It fuels what might be called a politic of perfection and, just as the original millenarist expectations were shared by some groups and had no universal bearing, so is the present politic of perfection, of technocracy.

The reevaluation of technology that started in the Middle Ages is, despite some Christian roots, Gnostic. The idea that technology is redemptive implies that mankind doesn't need God to achieve this redemption. Regaining power through technology is not an entry ticket to Heaven. This project is still going at full speed both in the realm of hard technological development and in the socio-political one. Technology is not something pertaining only to the domains of physics, or building machines. It pertains to everything that implies a way to get something done efficiently, be it building a car, organizing a *coup de état*, or organizing successful revolutions. Technology means a procedure aimed at accomplishing something with the highest efficiency possible. Less efficient procedures are discarded during the selection process. The technological system, as J. Ellul describes it, doesn't tolerate opposition and other values than itself. The idea that through technology mankind become freer and emancipated is a delusion. Being permanent under surveillance so that the carbon footprint can be ascertained and getting a certain score in the social credit system which sets limits to what one can do, is not freedom. Especially when this will be bound to other monitoring systems in an overreaching network, with the abolishing of paper money, with the systems that monitor the speed of your car – if there would be still such a thing as a privately owned car. Eat too much meat, read a banned or political book, drove too fast or too far away from home and the social credit will be low and, afterward, the car won't start, access to the e-money won't be possible, etc. Technocracy is a total surveillance and control system, a tool of oppression, and run by totally unaccountable experts, dogmatically-minded that despise everything else.

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