TECHNOCRATIC TOTALITARIANISM AS A RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

TOTALITARYZM TECHNOKRATYCZNY JAKO ODPOWIEDŹ NA KRYZYS DEMOKRACJI

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Abstract. The article addresses the context of the transition and evolution of post-industrial societies, in which technocracy is emerging as an alternative to traditional democracy, better able to cope with the challenges of the present day. The purpose of this article is to explore how the level of meta-analysis contributes to assessing the effectiveness of technocracy compared to democracy by analyzing the nature of the crisis of democracy, the relationship between democracy and technocracy, the advantages of technocracy over democracy, the changes required by technocracy, and the impact of technocracy on the quality of social life and political power. The research problem, therefore, is to evaluate the effectiveness of democracy versus technocracy as a political system. This study conducts a holistic and comparative analysis of technocracy, democracy and their interrelationship in the context of contemporary political systems. Technocracy, based on the optimisation of processes and data, offers long-term strategies and instant responses to social and economic change. Despite this, critics point to its lack of moral and ideological underpinnings, leading to risks such as bureaucratisation and specialisation, limiting pluralism and individual freedom. An analysis of technocracy in the context of Neil Postman's concept shows the potential risk of losing social values, authority and individual freedom due to bureaucratisation. Technocracy, as a cult of science and technology, deifies science and reifies religion, leading to totalitarianism and dehumanisation, transforming individuals into means of production and consumption. This study emphasises that technocracy is not clearly positive or negative, but a complex phenomenon. On the one hand, it can bring efficiency and social development and, on the other, lead to a loss of fundamental values and freedom. The analysis of this issue takes into account different perspectives and contexts, allowing for a fuller understanding of its implications for contemporary societies. The study presented here is an in-depth analysis of technocracy, revealing its advantages, disadvantages and the risks it poses to society. It offers a comprehensive perspective on technocracy and its relationship with democracy, shedding light on the controversial debate on the future of governance in the post-industrial era.
Keywords: technocracy, technopoly, technocratic totalitarianism, crisis of democracy, international security

Abstrakt. Artykuł odnosi się do kontekstu przemian i ewolucji społeczeństw postindustrialnych, w których technokracja wyłania się jako alternatywa dla tradycyjnej demokracji, zdolna lepiej radzić sobie z wyzwaniami współczesności. Celem artykułu jest zbadanie, w jaki sposób poziom metaanalizy przyczynia się do oceny skuteczności technokracji w porównaniu z demokracją, poprzez: analizę natury kryzysu demokracji, relacji między demokracją a technokracją, przewagi technokracji nad demokracją, zmian wymaganych przez technokrację oraz wpływu technokracji na jakość życia społecznego i władzę polityczną. Problemem badawczym jest ocena efektywności demokracji w stosunku do technokracji jako systemu politycznego. Niniejsze badanie przeprowadza holistyczną i komparatystyczna analizę technokracji, demokracji i ich wzajemnych relacji w kontekście współczesnych systemów politycznych. Technokracja, oparta na optymalizacji procesów i danych, oferuje długofalowe strategie i błyskawiczne reakcje na zmiany społeczne i ekonomiczne. Mimo tego, krytycy wskazują na jej brak moralnych i ideologicznych podstaw, co prowadzi do zagrożeń, takich jak biurokratyzacja i specjalizacja, ograniczając pluralizm i wolność jednostki. Analiza technokracji w kontekście koncepcji Neila Postmana ukazuje potencjalne ryzyko utraty wartości społecznych, autorytetów i wolności jednostki z powodu biurokratyzacji. Technokracja jako kult nauki i technologii, deifikuje naukę i reifikuje religię, prowadząc do totalitaryzmu i dehumanizacji, przekształcając jednostki w środki produkcji i konsumpcji. Niniejsze badanie podkreśla, iż technokracja nie jest jednoznacznie pozytywna czy negatywna, lecz jest złożonym zjawiskiem. Z jednej strony, może przynieść efektywność i rozwój społeczny, a z drugiej, prowadzić do utraty fundamentalnych wartości i wolności. Analiza tej problematyki uwzględnia różne perspektywy i konteksty, co pozwala na pełniejsze zrozumienie jej implikacji dla współczesnych społeczeństw. Przedstawione badanie stanowi głęboką analizę technokracji, ujawniając jej zalety, wady i ryzyka, jakie niesie ze sobą dla społeczeństwa. Oferuje kompleksową perspektywę na temat technokracji i jej relacji z demokracją, rzucając światło na kontrowersyjną debatę dotyczącą przyszłości rządzenia w epoce postindustrialnej.
Słowa kluczowe: technokracja, technopol, totalitaryzm technokratyczny, kryzys demokracji, bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe

Background

The technological advances we are witnessing are changing our perception of reality on many levels. One of these is politics understood as a way of exercising power. This paper intends to present the concept of technocracy in its relation to the crisis of democracy as a political system. To this end, it is worth asking a research question: how does the level of meta-analysis help to assess the effectiveness of technocracy in comparison to democracy? In order to solve this problem, answers to the following supporting questions can be used: What is the nature of the crisis of democracy? What is the relationship between democracy and technocracy and what advantages does technocracy have over democracy? What changes does technocracy require and what changes does it realise in the quality of the socio-political field of activity? Lastly, how can technocracy that improves the quality of social life improve the quality of political power?

A meta-analysis is understood to be a review of the main arguments from a comparativist analysis of the thought of Neil Postman and Parag Khanna. The objective of this meta-analysis is to create generalised comparisons. For this purpose, the methods used were typical of the social sciences. In addition to comparative analysis, a taxonomy of argumentation, deduction and induction from the creation of conclusions and generalisations was used.

The main works under scrutiny are Neil Postman's *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* and Parag Khanna's *The Future is Asian: Commerce, Conflict and Culture in the 21st Century*. Both present visions of technocracy. The first work from the early 1990s describes the USA as a technocracy (technopoly). The second, written 30 years later, analyses Singapore as a model technocratic state and the future dominant political system in Asia. The analysis was supplemented by a number of publications mainly related to the analysis of the crisis of democracy and the critique of liberalism.

This study focuses on several key aspects related to technocracy and its relationship to democracy. First, it sets out to understand the nature and sources of the crisis of democracy in the context of contemporary socio-political challenges. Second, it analyzes the relationship between the traditional democratic system and the developing concept of technocracy. It analyzes how technocracy can improve the quality of political power and aims to create general comparisons and generalizations based on an analysis of Postman's and Khanna's thoughts and other sources on the crisis of democracy and technocracy. In doing so, it partially identifies the changes that technocracy requires in the political and social system to be more effective and assesses the impact of technocracy on the quality of life of society.

Crisis of democracy and criticism of democracy by technocrats

Democracy as a form of regime is becoming the subject of increasing attacks, not only politically, but also scientifically (in the domains of political science and philosophy). For several years, there has been a noticeable and growing trend, a growing number of papers that critically address democracy as a form of governance. To illustrate this claim, it is useful to use the number of publications that feature the word 'democracy' in the Scopus database in the 20 years since 2000.

There has been a noticeable – sevenfold – increase in academic publications relating to democracy as a system since the end of the 20th century. This means an increase in scholarly reflection on democracy as such and this translates into a growing contestation around democracy itself as a useful, correct, and ethical form of government.

Arguments stemming from technocratic premises will be used to illustrate this problem. It should therefore be noted that the point of view presented will not be objective but will refer to objective observations that critically assess the characteristics and capabilities of democracy as a form of government.

One of the key arguments against democracy is that it is considered an undesirable system of governance (Pankow 2020, p. 83). In doing so, various etymologies of it are pointed out, referring mainly to the law of nature and the unnaturalness of democracy and its imperfections, a frailty resting in the wisdom of the crowd.
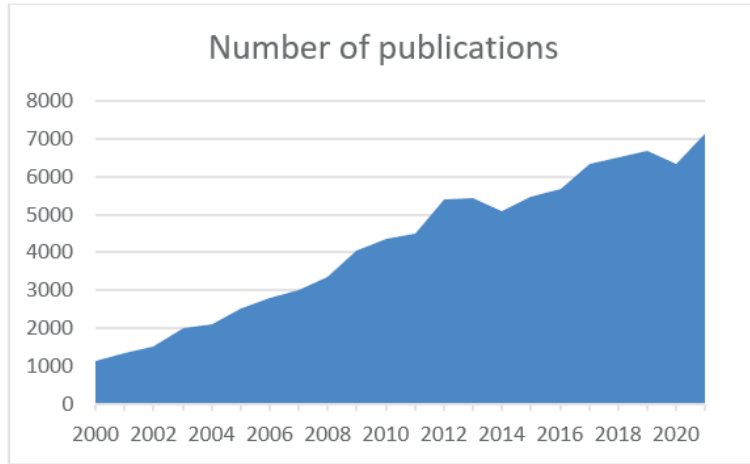
Fig. 1. Increase in number of publications with the keyword "democracy"
in the Scopus database from 2000 to 2021.
Source: own work.

It is also pointed out that societies, especially contemporary ones, value the effectiveness of power much more highly than their form. This means that what matters to society are outcomes and values such as security, stability, prosperity more than values such as freedom of choice, conscience, challenges or freedom of voice and equality before the law (Jasińska-Kania 2012, Bogunia-Borowska 2015).

Democracies as systems of government are totalitarian systems – they encompass all systems of human life. Adopting a feminist paradigm, it can be pointed out that they appropriate and politicise the spheres of an individual's private (intimate) life (Inglehart, Noris 2009). Everything becomes political. This gives rise to a natural resistance against democracy (and liberalism as an ideology identified with democracy) and contributes to undermining its functioning mechanisms by undermining its core assumptions. This in turn undermines the foundations of society, faith in democratic institutions and the state (Gadamer 1992, p.18).

There is another argument to be drawn from this inference and that is to stop recognising democracy as the only just and equitable system. A certain ideologisation of democracy and power is taking place here. Society expects utopian values and qualities in the implementation of the system of government (Mill 1995, Holowka 2006, pp. 301-319, Aminim 2007, pp. 52-60). Incorrect expectations and assumptions about the institutions of authority give rise to natural disillusionment and accusations of injustice and thus undermine the legitimacy of democracy.

One of the crowning technocratic arguments against what we would call the need for democracy (which means an argument against the growth of democratic attitudes and values in the world) is to point out that the post-Cold War paradigm

for democracy efforts has been exhausted. This, in turn, was to end democratic discourse. This conviction is derived from the thought of F. Fukuyama. Arguably, it triggered the Dior effect, in which the appeal of Fukuyama's thought caused a flurry of discussion about democracy in general. However, the cited data from the Scopus database indicates that interest in democracy is growing. Yet it must be borne in mind that there is a significant shift in the nature of the discourse from pro-democratic to anti-democratic.

Another group of arguments against democracy derives from research on social axiology. It was pointed out earlier that efficiency is valued more than other values of power. Ronald Inglehart's research on the transformation of materialist to post-materialist values, which on the one hand indicated the rise of democratic values is now being used to show that there is a collapse in the 'market of values' (Inglehart 2003, pp. 146-168). Instead of talking about post-materialist values, it would be appropriate to point to 'post-materialist' values that prioritise comfort of life, affirmation of life, luxury, prosperity and abundance over post-material values such as the common good or liberties (of choice, conscience, or religion). Post-material values re-evaluate the individual and place it above the collective. Post-material values are still important in them but are no longer a priority for social action and aspiration (Inglehart 2000, pp. 215-228).

Having a democracy with post-material values makes societies lose 'vigilance' and not have to worry about them considering them as an 'as-is' natural state. Their slow degradation is not objectionable until it starts to work against society (Fukuyama 2019). Democracy is no longer a goal for states and societies. There is a reorientation of activities where other values such as international prestige, recognition, capital accumulation matter. In addition to this, all states, according to the post-Westphalian concept of sovereignty, are equal, regardless of whether they are democratic or authoritarian (Barber 2005, p. 205).

A number of objections to democracy relate to the power elite. Here there is a misunderstanding of democratic principles, but also a distortion of them. The accusations against democracy relating to the power elite derive from non-democratic dependencies, mainly to the political culture of the nation (society) and are erroneously attributed to democracy as an externalisation of the will of the people.

Of the groupings of these arguments, it should be pointed out that the most grave one is the recognition of democracy as ineffective. Without entering into a broader polemic against this assumption, it is worth asking which countries in the world are efficient and how to measure this? Objections are mainly directed at democratic elites that are ineffective and unable to manage the complexity of state structures in an efficient way that guarantees social welfare.

The strong politicisation of all areas of social life, including the infiltration of family groups, is recognised by opponents of democracy as destructive of democratic values. This is especially the case in intermediate democracies, where the electorate

cedes its power so that politics and politicking are the business of the power elite. The emerging necessity to constantly penetrate everyday life with political issues destroys this postulate, and politics (democracy) itself moves from the zone of the sacred into the profane of everyday life, becoming widely deliberated and thus undermined by a society forced to be active (primarily in terms of informational activity) (Grygienć 2017).

Technocrats accuse democracy of its values no longer being able to meet the vital goals of the state. Categories such as sovereignty, raison d'état or the national interest serve only a particular and mostly partisan game of interests, as well as national and international rivalries. State strategy in democracies in general is overlooked as an activity with political properties and only takes declarative forms (Grygienć 2017). Democracies are also unable to ensure the security of their citizens and act to protect the state especially when clashing with non-democratic states.

Democracies do not employ long-term strategies. Planning in a democracy is short-term. It is limited to the stages of governance. Strategies are not implemented because they require a lot of resources, systemic and profound changes, as well as periodic inconveniences that populist governments and elites do not want to expose their constituents to.

One of the key findings that grows out of the nature of representative democracy itself is to deal a blow at its nature of creating political compromises. "Democracies produce compromises, technocracies bring solutions; democracy adapts (satisfies), technocracy seeks the best solution (optimises)" (Bellone 2018, p. 82) note the authors of a study relating to the feasibility of modernising urban space. Democracy, insofar as it was formerly identified with progress and created as a natural, evolutionary system of government (Barber 2005, p. 204), is becoming a relic in the face of the possibilities offered by modern technology and the challenges of the future.

The accusations against democracy often refer to the elites and their quality. First of all, an objection is raised against the education of the political elite, or rather the lack thereof. However, this allegation is secondary to the much deeper and more significant phenomena that can be pointed out here. There are several theories of democratic elites in the social sciences, including political science, which answer the question of the quality and condition of political elites in democratic systems. We are referring, for example, to institutional nomads and flexians *(institutional nomads take over institutions, loot them and, when they bring them to a state of crisis, move elsewhere without being held responsible for the damage done. They use instruments of power without investing in their consolidation and development)* (Kamiński 2012), predatory elites (who manage predatory states) (Robinson 1999) and are characterised by predatory identities (Nawrocki 2021, pp. 19-45), or lumpenelites (Pawełczyńska 2014, p. 129). There are several categories for political elites operating in a democracy. Each draws attention to the negative, even pathological, effects of elite circulation theory in practice. In the case of democracy, the circulation of elites does not occur

in its classical form. The best does not come to power, and those who already hold power take part in rent-seeking (Sękowski 2021, pp. 11-27). Technocrats often point out that democratic elites are populist and survivalist, which research seems to confirm. However, this is an indictment of elites and their (national) political culture and not of the democratic system.

What is worth noting is that monarchical systems have evolved over centuries. In its current form, democracy had no such opportunity. The societies which exercise democracy were not prepared for it. Quite simply, at the time of implementation, democracy was already becoming a system inadequate to the needs and political capabilities of Western societies. It is now being increasingly pointed out that "democracy is becoming an anachronistic system and will not be possible in any country in the world" (Pawełczyńska 2014, p. 79).

Democratic values are not a need in some regions of the world. Besides, each state and each nation have its own culturally and traditionally shaped right to build its desired political system. Democracy has a specific teleology dependent on place and time.

In addition to this, democracy (its elites) is accused of failing to understand and act on the development of the national economy. "The marriage of democracy and economy is not always easy. In order for it to be successful, the fiancées must first and foremost understand each other and agree on important matters" (Cohen 2011, pp. 198-199). The relationship between the regime and the economy is now one of the main determinants of state performance. It is linked to the development of geo-economics as a major axis of competition between states (Lewandowski, Gębska 2021, pp. 3-21).

There are many more fact-based arguments directed against democracy. The work of Frank Karsten and Karel Beckman dissects the most common perceptions of democratic values such as, for example, equality, power of the people, belief in the wisdom of the majority, development, progress, tolerance, the fight against corruption (Karsten, Beckman 2012). Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn analyses democracy in terms of its partisan utility, pointing out that it is not much different from other totalitarianisms and develops nationalist or racist attitudes in the same way as authoritarian systems (albeit with different methods and mechanisms) (Kuehnelt-Leddihn 2012). An analysis of the breakdown of democratic values is made by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt showing how contemporary political action uses democracy to entrench non-democratic mechanisms of power (Levitsky, Ziblatt 2018).

Another phenomenon worth noting in the context of the weakening of democracy is the shift away from absolute social norms, described by Ronald Inglehart. As an advocate of modernisation, Ronald Inglehart believes that the world is changing, causing the collapse of existing values (Inglehart 2003, pp. 146-168 Inglehart 2000, pp. 215-228, Inglehart, Norris 2003, pp. 62-70, Inglehart, Clark 1990, pp. 3-56). Economic growth has the effect of reducing interest in the values of the existing

state, in favour of the expected state. This is, as it were, part of the development of societies, but it dictates that social expectations are constantly directed and channelled into various forms of activity, including political activity. Democracy and democratic values are not attractive to societies that have grown up in a democratic system (Lilla 2018).

This series of arguments against democracy does not exhaust the technocratic critique of this system in its entirety. It is related to the volume of research and approaches critical of democracy. They are caused by the natural process of emerging and analysing the failures of the political system, which, in the case of politics, becomes a challenge.

Technocracy versus technopoly

The construction of a vision of technocratic government will be based on the juxtaposition of two theoretical concepts: technopoly as proposed by Neil Postman and technocracy as understood by Parag Khanna. Postman believed that a 'technopoly is a totalitarian technocracy' and in his view the USA is an example of a technopoly (Postman 2004, p. 65). Technopoly in Postman's thought is a state of information surplus, a state of culture and mind that deifies technology and eliminates man as a flawed being. Criticising the thought of F. Fukuyama, Postman pointed out that there is an ideological struggle between liberal democracy and technopoly.

Postman's thought is highly critical, pessimistic and a negative attitude technopoly. Nevertheless, he points to the essential elements that constitute the essence of technopoly and these are: bureaucracy, specialisation and technical equipment. He views all three phenomena through the prism of information. Bureaucracy or the 'tyranny of administration' serves to reduce information and is not based on intellectual or moral theories. In this dimension, the technopoly has seen the degeneration of the bureaucracy, which has itself become the main producer of information contributing to its entropy and has appropriated all rights to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas (Postman 2004, p. 65 et seq.).

The power of specialists, or 'elite group', is another feature of technopoly the value of which has been reduced. Specialists demand control over the field they represent and over other branches, especially social technical ones. Specialists exercise social control over all aspects of human activity and contribute to the breakdown of social bonds by displacing previous roles and functions derived from culture. Specialists do not allow discourse, appropriating the field of knowledge each time and constructing a social hierarchy based on the system of knowledge they possess (Giddens 2009, p. 114).

The technical equipment is to be used by bureaucrats and specialists to control information. It is used to control entire societies through suitably doctored information. In doing so, the necessity to act in a spirit of efficiency, precision, objectivity is instilled, replacing hitherto existing social categories (stemming, for example, from religion) (Postman 2004, pp. 104-112).

Khanna describes the specifics of technocratic rule differently. He points out that technocracy, as a system of governance, towers over other regimes through three elements: reliance on expert analysis and long-term planning; meritocracy rule (the power of experts); and utilitarianism (the pursuit and prioritisation of those goals that bring the greatest benefit to society) (Khanna 2020, p. 293). These three elements are the essence of technocracy as an effective regime. What fundamentally distinguishes Khanna from Postman is the emotional approach to the phenomena they describe. Khanna is an optimistic idealist towards technocracy, which he describes on the basis of a case study of Singapore and emphasises only constructive solutions to this system (Wojciuk 2016). Postman, on the other hand, is a sceptical realist, pointing out that technology will contribute to the loss of the essence of humanity.

Technocratic rationales are those elements of socio-political and cultural life that can be considered, following Khanna, as determinants of the feasibility of implementing technocracy as a political system. The basic premise is the recognition of economic growth as the goal of technocracy. It grows out of the tenets of liberalism and is common to technocracy and democracy (Khanna 2020, p. 293).

Another premise is that a national (political) society has developed an assumption that can be described as indifference to democracy, or more precisely indifference to the form of the system. This follows from the assumptions cited earlier indicating that the pro-democracy discourse ended with the Cold War. Democracies are not associated as stable, only right forms of government; they do not ensure economic growth, security, or openness. Added to this is the whole cultural and social spectrum of global values, which produce a post-ideological discourse in which the public's assessment of governments occurs not through the prism of democratic freedoms, but of their effectiveness (Khanna 2020).

Arguments are made against technocracy that relate to the philosophy of politics. First of all, the authors draw attention to the ontological emptiness. Technocracy has no ethical underpinnings – it does not grow out of archaic models, nor does it have a form to follow, long traditions or references. Governance itself in a technocracy is essentially social engineering (Postman 2004, p. 112). Khanna, however, uncovered the foundations for technocratic rule. He interprets Plato's ideal state as a technocracy, in which he sees the 'guardians' of the state as competent experts/engineers (Khanna 2020, p. 296).

In this way, technocracy appears as a new form of ideal governance. It is presented in an uncritical and utopian way, in which an idealistic world of correct actions, decisions and growth based on the assumptions of technological determinism is realised.

Technocracy does not need democracy to thrive. In doing so, there are two approaches that speak of the development of technocracy in the future. The first approach indicates that technocracies will be the natural consequence of democratic rule. The second approach is that technocracies will grow up on other forms of regimes (authoritarianism or communism) alongside democracies. For the first assumption, Khanna states that when democracy fails to deliver on its promises, its citizens turn to technocracy (Khanna 2020, p. 297). Exhaustion of democratic potential is now in progress in Western countries, but the trend towards technocratic governments is still not clear.

Democracy, however, favours the rise of technocracy. Above all, it develops a certain framework of social acceptance of technocratic governance and also needs that only technocracy can solve, or that can be solved in a technocratic (expert--based) manner. Democratic societies are more open and trusting, which facilitates the process of transferring power to specialists, while at the same time avoiding controversy among political societies with clear ethnic differences. Democracies also rely on determinisms of various kinds including, in particular, communication and technology, recognising the primacy of science as dominant to the development of societies. This is a central ontological assumption for technocracy and grows precisely out of the premises of liberal democracy. Besides, democracy is a form of cooperation, social solidarity, and action for the public benefit. Democracies teach societies to bear common costs to improve quality of life and progress. It can be pointed out that a democratic base model (Markowski 2021, p. 98) consisting of values, institutions and procedures that enable the implementation of technocratic solutions is required for the development of technocracy.

Democratic systems have developed methods of providing data to decision--makers that can be binding, become indicators, trends, elements of social strategy, or drivers of direction. Constant monitoring of public behaviour, public opinion, etc. allow for rapid responses to social problems and challenges, as well as the exploitation of opportunities. However, democracies fail to optimise the information they obtain. In this dimension, technocracies that control information are ideally suited. They are able to use information for more than just a party's political expediency, social manipulation or adapting political discourse to suit public expectations. Specialists who rule do not have to solicit constant support and can therefore optimise their decisions, which will be implemented for the benefit of society as a whole. Thus, they treat mechanisms such as political elections, civil society action, surveys and other interactions of government with citizens as an information resource for social

foresight and forecasting (Khanna 2020, Zaher 2015, pp. 617-641). Democracy has therefore laid the foundations for the functioning of efficient technocratic tools.

The main advantages of technocracy can be deduced from the above arguments against democracy. It is worth pointing them out again and listing them for synthesis:
– technocracy is based on long-term strategies;
– technocracy is based on a solution-seeking culture;
– technocracies operate like companies;
– technocratic elites are managers;
– technocracy rules based on inference from previous analytical errors, risk management, as well as strategic thinking and decision-making (Khanna 2020, pp. 291-334).

All these elements combine to link technocracy to success. It is pointed out that such a model of governance is essentially managing the state like a business. The strengths of technocracy mainly relate to the political culture and maturity of societies that are ready to put power in the hands of specialists with all the consequences, although they do so with the conviction that they are putting power in the hands of specialists who will optimise social, economic and political processes (Achen, Bartels 2017).

Technocracies also have their weaknesses. Here, it is important to point to the reflections of Postman, who makes a critique of technocratic power. The lack of a moral and ideological underpinning is cited as a weakness of technocracy. Therefore, the model of the development of technocracy a foundation of democracy can be considered more complete, as it grows out of a long-standing and evolutionary socio-cultural model of governance. In doing so, it accuses technocracy of operating weak social institutions based on the criteria of efficiency and objectivity.

The two main 'sins' of technocracy according to Postman are: bureaucratisation and specialisation. These are the elements that, in this model of governance, bring the greatest efficiency and are responsible for success. However, Postman assesses them from a different angle, pointing out that they are destructive to the social system as a whole.

Bureaucratisation in his view is essentially a tyranny of administration. What Max Weber described as the greatest achievement, the ideal type in the exercise of power – the bureaucratisation and dehumanisation of state-individual relations through the introduction of standardised. rules and the optimisation of the circulation of information, Postman regards as a manifestation of totalitarianism. Looking closer at his argument, it can be said that it is not without merit. Indeed, Postman accuses bureaucratisation of overriding all political, social, economic and other relevant processes (Postman 2004, pp. 102-103). Bureaucratisation has become the meaning of the functioning of states, while at the same time it has rendered itself meaningless through hyper utilitarianism. Bureaucratisation began to be used to settle moral, social and political issues, while in technocracy, through new means of

communication and oppression, it controls all aspects of human activity. According to Weber, bureaucratisation was supposed to become the key to the modernisation of societies; in fact, however, it became the embodiment of totalitarian authority (Goody 2010, p. 84).

The specialisation of power, or the rule of managers, is also a threat in Postman's thought. First and foremost, it relates to the idea of specialisation itself – a narrow, cognitively limited specialisation, which means that in an increasingly complex world there will be an increasing need to employ specialists to decide on newer and smaller issues. Knowledge is a limited resource over which specialists and bureaucracies exercise power. The limitations of knowledge perception mean that knowledge will always be narrow and fragmented, not allowing for strategic decision-making in a holistic political world and in an increasingly networked world of relationships (Postman 2004, pp. 111-112).

In addition to this, technocracies will contribute to the breakdown of social institutions, which they will remedy through increasingly intimate fields of power. Here, the assumption of the feminist movement that 'everything is political' is put to the test and at the same time becomes publicly, gregariously discussed and questioned (Mattei 2009). Rationality, whose main proponent was supposed to be bureaucratisation and managerial power, therefore collapses and 'technological rationality becomes political rationality' (Marcuse 1991, p. 13).

The bureaucratisation of social life results in a loss of power over the circulation of information. Societies are condemned to believe in the veracity of technocratic information. What emerges is indivisibility of the information message (Husson 2011, p. 110), which is truncated in such a way that it does not inform but evokes certain social response. These responses are emotions that will be a substitute against dwindling values such as empathy, compassion, closeness, or care. For these become institutionalised in subsequent bureaucratic activities. On top of all this, according to Postman, there is also the struggle against the burdens of nature, which has to be fought and tamed because it is becoming less and less conducive to a culture of progress, decreasingly efficient and increasingly flawed. Hence, there is a bureaucratic development of environmental and sozological movements.

Postman's thought as a whole is built on assumptions of the 'terror' of the future and, through this, differs little in originality from earlier technocratic assumptions that reacted with fear for the security of the individual in the modern world (Kurczewska 1997, p. 17).

Technocracy or technopoly is a kind of culture that, although external, creates internal beliefs and thus becomes total (Zuboff 2020, Lewandowski 2021). Technocracy, despite the fact that it does not grow on ontological foundations, can be attributed certain qualities derived from the cult of science developed during the Enlightenment. Technology and science began to be ascribed with objective cognitive truths. It is not only technology that has become the subject of scientific

development, but also social beliefs, including political ones. Technology has become the object of deification, while the progress identified with it, the object of a social cult of rationality. Science has become the new religion explaining what has hitherto remained in the realm of faith. In addition, there has been a strong challenge to existing beliefs. Cognitive categories that previously constituted the foundations of society (e.g. religion, art, culture, family, or gender) have so far been subjected to social judgement.

Technocracy becomes totalitarianism, especially as it grows out of totalitarian foundations rooted in twentieth-century politics. No matter where technocracy develops, each time it will refer to the liberal totalitarianism that currently dominates the global international order. Technocratic totalitarianism is in fact just a fixation of liberal totalitarianism, which it encases in new mechanisms of social control. At the same time, the cult of technology itself has become the object of beliefs, convictions and truths that cannot be challenged and therefore is becoming a new rationality that displaces beliefs.

The meaning of human existence oriented towards the consumption of technocratic goods is also changing (Szmyd 2017, pp. 13-36). The goal of labour has become productivity, while the goal of life – consumption. At the same time, there is a shift in priorities in social and public life, in which the ends give way to the means. The human being itself becomes a means, a mode, a stage in the production process and the measure of its social utility becomes productivity (Postman 2004, Kowalik 2015).

The culture of technopoly is a crisis in human relationships and the collapse of authority. A specialist or a manager who manages his or her branch, field or discipline is not an authority. No one can be an authority in technopoly because, as a human individual, he or she operates the most fallible system – thought, which is complex, ambiguous, biased. The human individual and his or her cognitive process are becoming constrained by technology and displaced by bureaucratic procedures or replaced by automatic technical solutions. At the same time, there is a growing awareness of the need for and role of specialists and the range of social activities requiring them is diversifying (Pieliński 2011, pp. 22-23).

Technopoly as a cult of science glorifies the education system at every level indicating that it is a value. In reality, however, education is designed to create a coherent social worldview, improve the status of science, especially the sciences, and emphasise the role of technocracy in social life. It excludes from the educational system those phenomena and social elements that are unmeasurable or have no utilitarian value. On the one hand, this form of education allows to understand the surrounding complexity of the world, but on the other it excludes fields of interpretation by becoming metaphysics, the belief that science can explain the incomprehensible.

A tendency dangerous to democracy is the elimination of rationality, which excludes pluralism in the social sphere. Added to this is the appropriation of grassroot initiatives by technocracy, which excludes humanity as a realisation of social values.

Conclusions

A crucial conclusion in the context of pondering on the relationship between technocracy and democracy is the constatation that democracy is relevant but not necessary to technocracy. Technocratic discourse increases in direct proportion to technological development. The crisis of democracy is in fact a crisis of the political cultures of individual societies caused by the emergence of post-materialistic values and the exhaustion of pro-democratic potential. Technocracy thus grows up on an anti-democratic course that seeks an alternative to a system of power that is inadequate to the demands of reality.

Technocracy or technopoly is presented as the pinnacle of social government and politics. On the one hand, either is presented as a remedy to social issues and challenges, as well as deficiencies of democracy. On the other hand, however, either is presented a threat to fundamental social values. In this vein, Postman's and Khanna's ideas also stem from a critique of democracy. They are emphasised to varying degrees but indicate that democracy as an ideal form of political system is in crisis due to social evolution and the exhaustion of its ideological potential.

Technocracy is creating a new quality of social reality. It is a peculiar culture in which there is a deification of science and a reification of religion. It is also a totalitarian system, and in the most feasible way of implementation because it affects all spheres of life and social activity.

At the same time, symptoms of technopoly are already evident in individual systems of power, where new fields of international competition (geo-economics, knowledge and information) are being celebrated. In this domain, technocracies will be a new form of statehood, governed by old social, political and geopolitical laws and dependencies which will put them to the test and verify technocratic optimism.

The analyses discussed above allow us to conclude that technocracy and democracy as systems of governance, despite their different forms, are strongly correlated. Technocracy is a form of governance, based on the optimisation of processes, which in theory should benefit society. In reality, however, as a theoretical assumption and a slowly implemented product of governance, it is an issue that requires new research categories relating to the individual-state relationship. It is idealised at a theoretical level and thus closer to utopia than to viable political solutions (Horkheimer 2007).

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