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Summary of Thesis

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Transhumanism as a Thin-centred Ideology

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1. Subject of the Thesis

We are witnessing a technological revolution fuelled by rapid scientific innovation in fields such as artificial intelligence research, genetic engineering, computational science, nanotechnology, neuroscience, and biotechnology. The peculiarity of the current technological revolution lies in its exponential character, best expounded upon by Moore's Law, which was originally applied solely to the transistor density on semiconductor chips. Ray Kurzweil, the controversial evangelist of this technological revolution, argued that a similar exponential pace of change in speed and cost-effectiveness is present in other areas of the techno-scientific ecosystem (Kurzweil, 2000). Further uniqueness of the current scientific revolution can be identified in its interconnectedness and interdisciplinary character. Boundaries of scientific and academic disciplines are blurred as different fields shape one another to an unprecedented extent, boosting progress even further. The speed of change intensifies the dynamic interaction between science, technology, society, and the arts. Any discussion of a specific scientific achievement always and inevitably leads to the contemplation of its impact on society and the policy implications it entails. These changes terrify many individuals, who envision dystopian outcomes, while making others overly optimistic about the future. Those calling themselves transhumanists tend to belong to the latter group.

Transhumanism holds that humanity will transcend its biological limits of existence through technology and science, which will consequently have far-reaching implications for the political realm. This turbulence in science and technology has penetrated public and academic discourse and calls for new practices in policy-making and novel approaches in political science. As a starting point, this dissertation intends to put forward the first ideological analysis of transhumanism.

The purpose of this dissertation was to better understand transhumanism as an ideology, to identify its main ideational components, reveal its conceptual architecture, and position it in the ideological space. The main research question and hypothesis can be conveyed as follows:

R: Is transhumanism an ideology?

H: Transhumanism is a thin-centred ideology.

To answer the main research question and test the validity of the hypothesis, this dissertation conducted an ideological analysis based on Michael Freeden's morphological approach applied

through a content analysis of key transhumanist texts. As part of the analysis, the following secondary research questions were answered:

- **R1) Does transhumanism exhibit conceptual coherency?**
- **R2) What are the core ideas, key values, and claims (decontestation chains[1]) that make up transhumanism?**
- **R3) How can the conceptual structure of transhumanism be described?**
- **R4) What is the extent to which these concepts and claims are distinct from other ideologies?**

The first part of dissertation discussed why the morphological approach is the ideal method of analysis in the case of transhumanism. Chapter 2 focused on the social and cultural context. It summarised briefly the intellectual history of transhumanism, then, it presented the milestones of the history of the transhumanist movement: the formation of various organisations and its development into a global phenomenon with a multinational membership. Next, the quest to accept transhumanism in academic circles as an eligible subject for scientific scrutiny was explained. To comprehensively reveal the process of institutionalisation, the final section in this chapter covered the emergence of political representation among transhumanists. In Chapter 3 and 4, the dissertation engaged in the ideological analysis. It examined the major decontestations within the transhumanist conceptual architecture to reveal the core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts of transhumanist ideology. This part unveiled how transhumanism acquired unique issue ownership over a variety of social issues and addressed its attempt to create a novel semantic field to frame and interpret the perceived consequences of techno-scientific progress, revealing an intellectual project far more substantive, complex, and encompassing than its frequent reduction to a mere dystopia. Chapter 5 presented a conceptual map of transhumanism to visualise the key findings of the conceptual analysis and provide new insights into the study of transhumanism. The inferences from the preceding chapters allowed to test the main hypothesis and to foreground a new account of the transhumanist thought system in Chapter 6 where a three-part argument was presented to justify the categorisation of transhumanism as a thin-centred ideology.

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[1] The term 'decontestation chain' was coined by Manfred B. Steger to describe the decontestation process as a chain of concepts and ideological claims (Steger, 2008).

1.1. The Relevance of Transhumanism for Political Science

For political scientists, the relevance of studying transhumanism may lie in the fact that key transhumanist issues are already discussed at different levels of policymaking. There are now numerous white papers, committee hearings, advisory papers, and draft legislation on transhumanist topics and their number is rapidly growing. Furthermore, during the most recent five years, transhumanist political parties have emerged all over the world. Although these parties are at an embryonic stage and have yet to affect party competition, there is great potential for transhumanist topics to influence the party system because rapid techno-scientific advances raise the same issues transhumanists otherwise advocate (Szabados, 2019). Thus, these topics will inevitably be addressed with increasing intensity by political parties and other political actors with or without the presence of political representatives of a pro-science and pro-tech intellectual movement. Finally, transhumanist thinkers have devised novel theoretical suggestions that may shape many political science subfields.

The study of transhumanism as an ideology has various benefits. First, it can provide far-sighted explanations of the effects of techno-scientific achievements on political theory and practice in general, as well as illuminating the growing popularity of the pro-science transhumanist movement among specific social groups. By uncovering ideological morphologies, it is possible to depict how certain transhumanist ideas interlink to form a unique, multi-layered, utopian vision of society that currently no other ideologies represent. Second, it helps follow and gauge the historical development of transhumanist thought, therefore, both diachronic and synchronic analyses are possible. Furthermore, only by showing its interactions with other, competing ideologies can one understand the articulation of transhumanist political offerings and the policy initiatives put forward by transhumanist political parties in recent years. Finally, bringing ideology into the analysis of transhumanism allows us to look at current trends in political theorising from a valuable and new perspective.

2. Methodology

Michael Freeden's morphological analysis is considered one of the most influential methods of ideological analysis. His approach focuses on the ideational content and the conceptual structure of belief systems and is less concerned with the manifestation of those concepts in institutional or psychological layers. Morphological analysis also reveals the macro- and micro-structures of concepts, their relative positions to each other, and the interdependence and interactions among various concepts and conceptions. The results of such investigations are always comprehensive frameworks through which groups of people understand their political and socio-economic world, express their identity, and allocate meaning and significance to certain concepts.

The morphological approach holds that the core elements of an ideology are concepts, for example liberty, equality, order, authority, and welfare (Freeden, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). To constrain the extreme flexibility of concepts, and in its quest for semantic hegemony, ideology confers a specific meaning to a political concept. Freeden has termed this the process of *decontestation*, the determination of meaning based on a specific morphological arrangement (Freeden, 2013, p. 120). Decontestation is the way an ideology allocates a particular meaning or adds a stipulative definition to a concept distinguishing it from how other ideologies conceptualize the same concepts.

The morphological analysis differentiates core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts when examining the macro-structure of an ideology (Freeden, 1996, p. 77). *Core concepts* are characterised by their long-term durability, ubiquitousness, and indispensability. They are present in all versions and mutations of the ideology and determine the ideational content of the belief system. *Adjacent and peripheral concepts* refer to the mutations of core concepts. They appear less frequently than core concepts and refine the meaning of the ideological core. Combinations of adjacent and core concepts create different versions of an ideology. Adjacency can be determined by logical inferences as well as cultural variables. Peripheral concepts play a marginal role, rapidly change both culturally and diachronically, and are capable of moving to the ideological centre to become adjacent concepts or – in rare cases – core concepts. They react to externalities and, therefore, are sometimes connected to social practices, cultural variances, or historical events.

The morphological approach has multiple advantages, among which the most important is its lack of negative preconception against the subject of its scrutiny: it disapproves of the

pathologisation of ideologies that characterizes many other analytical methods. Second, the morphological approach seems suitable for detecting immature or proto-ideologies that do not yet participate in the ideational competition as a salient player. Third, the morphological approach does not separate ideologies from each other with theoretical barbwire. Conversely, the borders between various ideologies are permeable and allow for the exchange of ideas, conceptualisations, or definitions without weakening a belief system's solidity or undermining its internal coherence. Fourth, it moves beyond the left–right axis of conceptualisation, deploying instead a multi-dimensional research toolkit for the ideational study. Finally, conceptual mapping is a highly accessible mode of ideological analysis: such a visualisation provides a clear representation of ideological composition, which at the same time reveals the differences between ideologies and their mutations and can trace spatial and temporal changes to describe the position, ranking, and prevalence of components. The morphological approach enables researchers to pinpoint an ideological position at a given point in time and conduct a synchronic comparison with contested ideologies within the socio-economic context of that era, whereby the historical evolution of the given ideological position can also be revealed.

This dissertation investigated whether transhumanism could be described as having ideological coherency, what core ideas, key values, and claims (decontestation chains) make up its ideational architect, how, if at all, the conceptual structure of transhumanism could best be described, to what extent these transhumanist concepts and claims are distinct from those of other ideologies.

3. Results

First, this dissertation presented its argument that transhumanism was an adequate subject of ideological analysis since it could be described with the main ideological attributes of transhumanism within the Freedenian framework. It was proven that for four out of six attributes – relevance, influence, efficiency, consumability – transhumanism meets Freeden's criteria of the eligibility for ideational analysis, while its level of institutionalisation is immature. Then, the investigation continued with exploring the conceptual coherence of transhumanism, the most important ideological property in Freeden's set of criteria.

3.1. Core concepts

Four interconnected and interdependent core concepts were identified - liberty (freedom), progress, human welfare, and individuality - that emerged in the form of five unique decontestations: human enhancement, morphological freedom, longevity, the proactionary principle, and personhood. They point to the existence of a sound and unique ideological structure, a conceptual distinctiveness that corresponds to Freeden's set of criteria for determining an ideational cluster's degree of ideological maturity.

Transhumanism decontests liberty as **morphological freedom**, a concept positioned in the gravitational centre of the transhumanist ideological universe. According to Anders Sandberg's broad definition, morphological freedom is 'the right to modify oneself according to one's desires' (Sandberg, 2013). This modification must aim to enhance the subject's physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities through utilising the advances of technology and science. Similar to other basic rights, morphological freedom ought to prescribe that the subject is aware to a substantial level of the risks of the decision to their personal well-being, and the impact it will have on others within society; it should also stipulate that the subject must bear legal responsibility for their actions. Only well-informed agents can make decisions based on proper rational and moral judgements. Hence the prerequisites to morphological freedom are rationally consumed information and consensus. Nick Bostrom refers to this as the 'informed wish' of the subject who decides to avail themselves of any enhancement technology, making it a logically adjacent concept to morphological freedom (Bostrom, 2003).

An additional argument for the salience of morphological freedom within the ideological analytical context stems from the fact that its emergence is a purely cultural phenomenon. Its birth and elevation to the height of a conceptual arrangement is due to the disruptive techno-scientific advances that characterise our times. Genetically enhanced humans, cross-species, human-machine hybrid life forms, machines with human-level – or even surpassing human-level – cognitive capabilities have been unfathomable for those thinkers who laid down the theoretical foundations of the concept of liberty in previous centuries. However, science provides new evidence on a daily basis that the traditional conceptualisation of the notion *human* needs fundamental reconsideration and that transcending human exceptionalism is a necessary prerequisite for theorising any form of liberty.

Morphological freedom fundamentally transforms the debate over *whom we ought to be* because it expands not only our capabilities, but also our moral horizon given the possibility of the beyond-human perspective created by science and technology. However, it does not prescribe what we exactly '*ought to be*', as in what bodily modifications we are compelled to implement. Instead, it allows for and promotes pluralism in the life of the individual, with the limitation of not doing harm to others. This explains why contemporary transhumanists delve so deeply into the issue of **moral enhancement** (Persson and Savulescu, 2010). It also explains why most of the criticism against transhumanism is morally grounded and targets the concept of morphological freedom. Morphological freedom logically entails and promotes the removal of cultural constraints from the creation of radically novel and diverse forms of existence. These advances first raise a logically deductible set of ethical issues, followed by several political ones. The concept of morphological freedom can no longer be reduced to an ideological notion. It demands diverse forms of policy actions: public deliberation, regulation, institutionalisation, or ban. Freeden claimed that one of the main characteristics of ideologies that distinguishes them from political philosophies is that ideologies always inspire political action. The same claim can be extrapolated to ideological concepts as well. In this regard, morphological freedom has an extraordinarily strong motivational power on politics.

Liberty is decontested as morphological freedom in the transhumanist conceptual arrangement, but another concept emerges logically from this decontestation. Freedom entails self-determination, which is further decoded as self-development combined with bodily self-determination. However, it logically entails two additional rights-related concepts. One of them is the **'freedom of experimentation'**: applying technology without major constraints. It should be accorded to both private or state-funded institutions in which research and development are practiced with as few regulations as possible, restricted mostly by the ethics of science. But such liberty refers also to the individual, who ought to be free to apply these developments. Chan et al. (2011) have conveyed the concept of **'scientific citizenship'** in their argument for patients' participation in high-risk clinical research. Steve Fuller further developed this concept and demonstrated that morphological freedom can be defined as extended scientific citizenship, the practice of which creates lower costs (or losses) for society than socially approved activities such as extreme sports or playing the lottery (Fuller and Lipińska, 2014a).

Figure 1. The decontestation chain of scientific citizenship
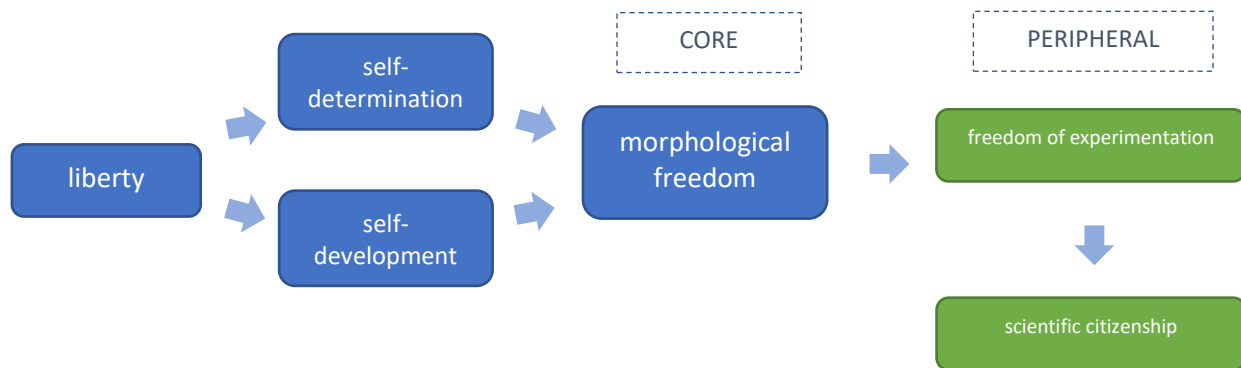
One of the most controversial and heavily contested transhumanist peripheral concepts is **procreative beneficence**, which was put forward by Julian Savulescu to defend the transhumanist advocacy for germline modification. According to this idea, parents (or single reproducers) with full personhood and risk-evaluating capabilities should be accorded the right to 'select the child, of the possible children they could have, who is expected to have the best life, or at least as good a life as the others, based on the relevant, available information', employing genetic tests (Savulescu, 2001). In practice, this means that parents are free to genetically screen their embryos and select freely the embryo which the parents think has the best chances for a good life. Others moved even further, demanding the freedom of the parent(s) to apply inheritable alterations (germline modification) to their children in order to enhance the offspring's capabilities, provided they are entirely, or at least to the current state of scientific knowledge, aware of the risks and their consequences for the invasive procedure on their child.

The core concept of welfare is presented in transhumanist ideology through two components: human enhancement and longevity. Welfare is defined as the fulfilled 'desire for more life, more intelligence, more freedom' (More, 1990a, p. 4). **Human enhancement** is the tool for humanity to transcend its biological limits, end the biological evolution based on random selection, and start a new era of technology- and science-driven directed evolution. The augmentation of cognitive, physical, and emotional capabilities will lead to a world with less or no pain and suffering, as the *hedonistic principle* of transhumanism promises (Pearce, 1995). The main reason that explains and justifies enhancement is that transhumanists view the human as a handicapped, faulty biological being, the unfinished project of nature (More and Vita-More, 2013, p. 449). James Hughes expanded Max More's description of human enhancement, defining eight layers where

enhancement should be applied: curing disabilities, improving general health conditions, longevity, upgrading intelligence, exerting better emotional control, widening the opportunities for aesthetic expression, achieving spiritual goals, and ensuring better lives for our children (Hughes, 2010).

However, transhumanists are divided and lack a consensual understanding of enhancement. Stefan Sorgner differentiated between strong and weak transhumanist approaches to enhancement (Sorgner, 2016, p. 144). Representatives of the strong version claim that it is a moral – though not legal – obligation of the individual to apply the available enhancement technologies, and it is the political task of governments and the legislature to allocate financial resources to scientific research aiming to develop such technologies. Advocates of weak transhumanism decline any moral or legal obligation concerning enhancement, even if it may lead to many people living a good life. They argue that such a moral duty cannot be established and, consequently, policy action cannot be articulated because any theoretical consensus about the concept of good life does not exist and seems impossible to reach. To resolve the debate, Sorgner suggested a radically pluralistic account, which promotes the individual's pursuit of a good life according to their own idiosyncratic and diverse standards. Therefore, Sorgner pointed out the significance that transhumanists invite the peripheral concept of **good life** to cement the core concept of human enhancement in its central position while utilising a further adjacent concept, diversity.

Persson and Savulescu suggested that moral enhancement is also inevitable if we want to protect the human species from itself. Inherently human behaviours – such as the proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorist attacks, or anthropogenic climate change – jeopardise human existence (Persson and Savulescu, 2012, p. 660). Our current moral dispositions were designed for an archaic, primitive civilisation with rudimentary technologies, living in pastoral communities. Our natural, or 'species-specific', cognitive and psychological capabilities make us easily manipulable and in possession of conflicting moral dispositions. Consequently, we are unfit for the high-tech civilisation and the globalised world. Consequently, the concept of moral enhancement became an integral part of the broader concept of human enhancement.

According to transhumanists, the most important aim of practicing one's right to bodily self-determination and the proactive approach to scientific and technological advances is to extend the healthy lifespan far beyond the current human-specific life expectancy. They started using the term '**longevity**' to describe this desire. Transhumanists prefer deriving longevity from the concept of

welfare by claiming that without the expansion of the healthy lifespan or, even more explicitly, without immortality, human welfare cannot be significantly improved. Death is the most salient limit to the realisation of human potential, which dwarfs poverty and wealth in comparison. Additionally, the death of our loved ones is the most terrifying source of emotional suffering that puts human psychological capabilities to the test. Within the transhumanist ideological structure, the concept of longevity serves as an effective tool designed for mass consumption and to popularise the transhumanist ideology. In addition to evoking the most archaic and fundamental human psychological trait – the fear of death and the lament over the finiteness of life – a welfarist argument was also put forward in favour of longevity through the introduction of the idea of the **longevity dividend** (Bailey, 2007; Sandberg, 2007; Olshansky, 2013), which encompasses the assumed economic benefits of extending the healthy lifespan indefinitely and reducing the health care costs associated with ageing.

The concept of **progress** also has an eliminable role within transhumanism, which conceives of progress as a 'boundless expansion' (More, 1990b, p. 17), a perpetual and endless process. It adopts the theory of evolution and hypothesises that science and technology will enable humanity not only to take control over the fallible, nature-driven evolution, but also to accelerate its pace and define its direction. Humanity will be able to take control over evolution, and our obligation is to proactively pursue this endeavour (More, 1990c). Progress is not only a desirable process, but also is the open-ended goal of (political) action through which the end-state, the posthuman condition, ought to be reached as soon as possible. Progress is the meaning of life (More, 2011, p. 140).

Transhumanists demand that all individuals should support and proactively act according to the cause of progress. Morphological freedom allows the individual to voluntarily apply enhancement technologies, and these individual endeavours accumulate, thus contributing to the progress of all humanity. The demand and advocacy for proactivity is reflected in the adoption of the **proactionary principle** in transhumanism (Fuller and Lipińska, 2014b). This principle proposes decision-making based on transparent risk evaluation and an objective cost–benefit analysis that considers not only the potential dangers, but also the opportunity costs of inaction. It supports minimal regulations on technological innovation and scientific research as well as the unrestricted practice of morphological freedom to experiment with one's own body. Thus, it stands in close proximity to the peripheral concept of the freedom of experimentation. Also, the proactionary

principle reflects activist impulses at the core of transhumanism and suggests profound ways of surpassing the fringe status of the contemporary movement, especially from a political context. This activist impulse demonstrates another ideological property of transhumanism.

The concept of the proactionary principle is attached to morphological freedom in the ideological arrangement and the two together logically imbue the concept of freedom of experimentation, which, then, develops further into the concept of human enhancement to create an explanatory framework for the latter (see Figure 2). What we see here is a well-structured, logical, and culturally coherent set-up, where the proximity of four core and adjacent concepts provide transhumanism with exceptionally strong conceptual cohesion.

Figure 2. The decontestation of the concept 'human enhancement'

human enhancement
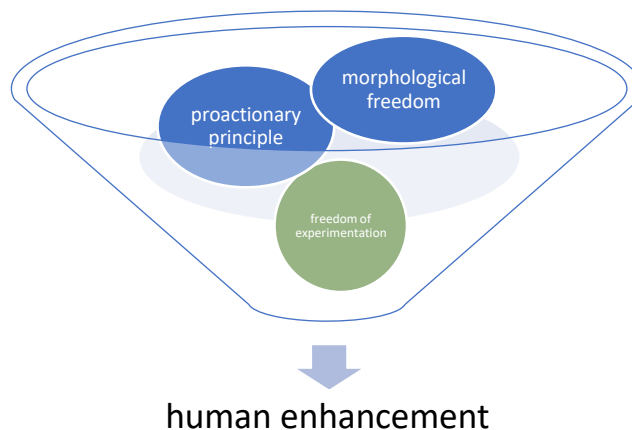
Transhumanists propose a new rights framework, based on the philosophical concept of **personhood**. It moves far beyond the anthropocentric view of other belief systems. In this new framework, the subject of the legal system is not required to necessarily belong to the human species. Transhumanists suggest that sapience, sentience, and most importantly non-anthropocentric personhood serve as the new standard of rights (More, 2013). If enhanced biological and synthetic life forms and their hybrids with various levels of sentience are possible, it can logically be inferred that the rights system must be expanded to such personhood-possessing forms of existence. In his seminal work, Hughes proposed a rights system based on the personhood model (Hughes, 2004). He distinguished property-level and citizen-level rights statuses based on the cognitive capabilities of the rights bearer. In the former group belong those life forms who possess sentience but are not self-aware (e.g., most animals, embryos, brain-dead humans), while

the second, self-aware group is bestowed with two types of citizenship: disabled and full. Children, mentally constrained human adults, and great apes would possess disabled citizenship with a limited set of rights, such as the right to life and the right to assistance to achieve full self-determination, while full citizenship would entitle its bearer to all the rights available in the current rights system, extended with the right to morphological freedom. But the rights-bearer of full citizenship can be any intelligent life form – be they carbon-based, synthetic, or their hybrids – that possesses mature personhood with the capacity to reason.

The **post-anthropocentric perspective** does not only distinguish transhumanism from other ideologies, but also confronts it with them. The bioconservative perspective (Fukuyama, 2003; Habermas, 2003), from which all contemporary ideologies derive their respective conceptualisations of the ideal social order, is fundamental for their self-articulation. As a result, the idea to replace this perspective with a broader one is necessarily received with disapproval and hostility. Thus, post-anthropocentrism entails a previously unseen level of confrontation between ideologies, and in this conflict, transhumanism stands alone as the newcomer challenger to established ideologies.

3.2. Adjacent Concepts

Transhumanism utilises a great variety of adjacent concepts also present in other mature ideologies, but it creates peculiar ideational morphologies. In general, these adjacent concepts serve two fundamental goals. First, they provide unique decontestations of meaning that strengthen the particularity and distinctiveness of the transhumanist ideological core. Second, transhumanism borrows familiar concepts and decontestations from other ideologies to follow the intellectual enrichment and political expansion of the transhumanist movement, as well as addressing major criticism against transhumanist ideas and policy proposals.

Rationality has an adjacent role in transhumanism. As mentioned before, it is decontested as 'informed wish' or 'informed consent' and attached to the core concepts of morphological freedom, human enhancement, and personhood. The agent is free to exercise morphological freedom irrespective of the community's reaction, any form of peer group pressure, or implications for the society as a whole, provided that the consequences of their action do not harm others. Rationality

is also at the centre of the transhumanist argument in favour of allocating an increasing role to artificial intelligence in policy decision-making. As current human intelligence is vulnerable to manipulation – one of the main causes of the contemporary phenomenon of democratic backsliding and the loss of public trust in political institutions – artificial intelligence provides the means to correct the abuse of this human fallibility. Technology is presented as a tool to support and expand the limited human capability for making rational decisions. In this role, the concept of rationality is attached to another adjacent concept in the transhumanist ideological structure: democracy.

As critics of transhumanism often have accused transhumanists of neglecting contemporary social problems, transhumanism developed a new decontestation to enrich its welfare concept. Technological abundance, or as it was reconfigured later, **sustainable abundance**, produced by the future, robot-driven economy was added to the conceptual structure of transhumanism to fill an ideational gap and make the ideology more intelligible and consumable for wider audiences. The concept of abundance presents a unique morphology within the transhumanist ideology. In its early articulation it referred merely to the need for the redistribution of funds to secure infinite basic natural resources and create material wealth. Several decades later it morphed into an enriched concept that incorporated other ideas such as self-development (through education), access to adequate health care and information technologies. Then it borrowed a concept from the green ideology to stimulate the imaginary of new audiences who otherwise had concerns about the consequences of unrestricted and permanent technological development. When it reached its current format (Wood, 2019) attached to the peripheral concept of sustainability, its maturity and shift to adjacency entailed that it incorporate other core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts as its main components and took a new position within the transhumanist conceptual arrangement: it shifted slightly further from welfare and progress and relocated in proximity to the concept of equality. This morphology also enabled transhumanism to reframe and re-contextualise long-existing policy proposals present in other mature ideologies – for example universal basic income or environmental protection – and put them into the service of the transhumanist ideology.

Democracy is decontested as a radically extended version of deliberative democracy in almost all transhumanist morphologies of the concept. Again, technology has a crucial role in articulating the transhumanist version of democracy. Direct democracy, conceptualised as the uttermost egalitarian and participatory form of partaking in shaping policy and politics, should be practiced

through applying the latest digital technologies to extend knowledge and electoral participation and garner collective intelligence. Transhumanist theorists agree that the contemporary functioning of democracy is utterly flawed; it needs to be reformed to better serve societies. David Wood proposed a new political system predicated on a mixture of plebiscitary democracy and technology-driven, knowledge-based policy decision-making in which well-informed, engaged voters enabled by new technologies would participate in frequent referendums while elected and accountable politicians decide on complex policy issues and consult a group of technocrats (Wood, 2018, pp. 233–252). Wood coined the notion superdemocracy to present his understanding of this new social arrangement (Wood, 2019, p. 101), which would utilise transhumanist technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data, computational science, and cognitive enhancement, to mend human fallibilities and vulnerabilities that stem from the lack of immunity from manipulation and the tendency for irrational behaviour immanent in human nature. These are supposed to enable the electorate to ameliorate executive accountability and to fact-check the validity and adequacy of political claims. This technophile vision of democracy, however, raises concerns of a totalitarian dystopia, of losing control and succumbing to 'machine overlords'. To mitigate the totalitarian potential of transhumanist ideas, theorists of the left-leaning wing of the transhumanist movement, technoprogressives, adopted the idea of the need to democratise technology. For them, transhumanism is the democratisation of technology and the technologisation of democracy. Thus, democracy presented a unique morphology in which two components – participation and equality – have particular importance, and the concept itself was attached to the concept of abundance to become its essential component.

The concept of **equality** is first associated with the equality of opportunity as a distinguishing component in the transhumanist conceptual arrangement. Then, it is further contextualised from the socio-economic perspective as the equality of opportunity to access enhancement technologies. A further peripheral concept emerges in transhumanism with regards to the equality issue and reveal the semantic aspects of ideology formation: accessibility. It is present in two distinguished manifestations. The first emphasises free access to enhancement technologies, while the other accentuates the access to free enhancement technologies. The order of the words reveals a deep ideological distinction that gave birth to the two main political branches within the transhumanist movement. The 'free access' branch stresses freedom and neglects the social equality aspects while the 'access to free' branch emphasises the need for a redistributive scheme to guarantee social

equality and prevent exclusion based on wealth. Hence, the adjacent concept of equality is further decontested in two distinct forms in the transhumanist conceptual arrangements. However, both equality interpretations are based on the precondition that the future socio-economic environment will secure technological abundance and scarcity will disappear from the economy.

Figure 3. Transhumanist decontestation of the concept of equality
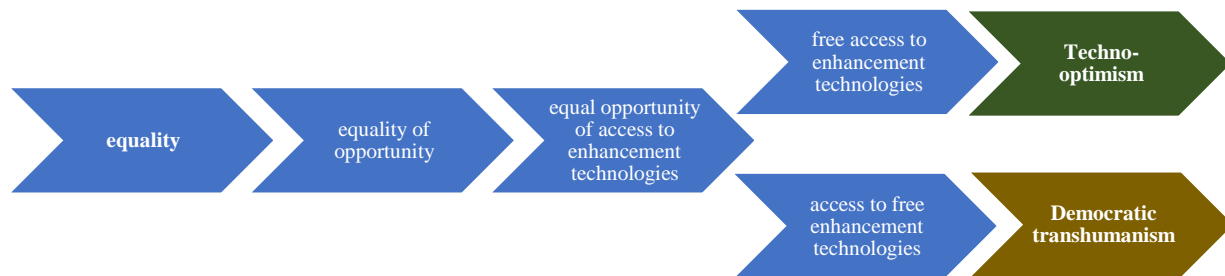
Diversity occupies an important position within the conceptual structure of transhumanism. First, morphological freedom will allow a great variety of new technological tools for expressing individuality and uniqueness while contributing to the decrease of peer pressure, prejudices, and societal pressure endemic in contemporary communities (Sandberg, 2013, p. 59). Second, germline modification and controlled evolution will produce physically and cognitively more diverse humans as well as new living beings (Sorgner and Ranisch, 2015, p. 210; Hauskeller, 2016, p. 18). Third, the right to abstention is inherent to morphological freedom: those who choose to remain 'natural' are not only free to do so, but also entitled to special protection. This situation will result in a greater variety of people living together.

The position of the concept of **state** within the transhumanist ideational configuration has also undergone significant diachronic changes. Today its position clearly separates major political branches of transhumanism. Libertarian techno-optimists remain sceptical and suspicious of state intervention and regulations while democratic transhumanists (technoprogressives) allocate a key redistributive role to the state in their political and theoretical arguments. Technoprogressivism upgrades the concept of the state to adjacency together with the peripheral concept of redistribution. It envisions an activist state as the guarantor of equal and free access to enhancement technologies as well as preventing and repairing injustice that may arise from the wide diversity of forms of existence.

3.3. Peripheral Concepts

Today, transhumanism can be considered an 'umbrella ideology' under which advocates of distinctive policy agendas, issues, and subcultures gather and construct ideological subvariants of transhumanism. Consequently, the emergence of peripheral concepts is closely linked to this ideological variegation. Peripheral concepts are mostly borrowed from other established or less-developed ideologies: reconciliation ecology from environmentalism (Rosenzweig, 2003, p. 1), blockchain-backed digital privacy from cryptoanarchism, and technological gender neutrality from feminism (Haraway, 1987, 1991) are prime examples of this ideational expansion.

Their significance is manifold. First, they change the position and proportion of core and adjacent concepts within the transhumanist conceptual structure. The role of such relocation is to enable the transhumanist ideology to overcome existing cultural constraints or create new ones, as well as responding to logical constraints that emerge from moving closer to other concepts. For example, the appearance of the peripheral concepts of redistribution and accessibility allows the adjacent concept of equality to occupy a greater space and gain higher ranking within the conceptual arrangement proposed by technoprogressivist transhumanism. Second, they create new bonds with other concepts, and thus, they generate novel policy actions that otherwise the original concept would not necessarily entail. For example, the adjacent concept of abundance alone does not necessarily demand ecological considerations in policymaking. Finally, peripheral concepts spawn new ideological versions, as was shown above. These peripheral concepts greatly contribute to the ideological thickening of transhumanism, as it becomes capable of expanding to greater semantic fields and occupying symbolic territories to capture the public imaginary.

3.4. An Ideological Map of Transhumanism

During this morphological analysis, four core concepts and a number of adjacent concepts were revealed that mutually reinforce each other. These key concepts form the conceptual architect of transhumanism – a distinct arrangement to evince the solidifying ideational cluster of transhumanism. Figure 10 shows a possible conceptual map of the transhumanist ideology based on Freeden's two-dimensional spatial map, in which the position of the concept reflects priority, proximity, and permeability.

Figure 4. The conceptual map of transhumanism
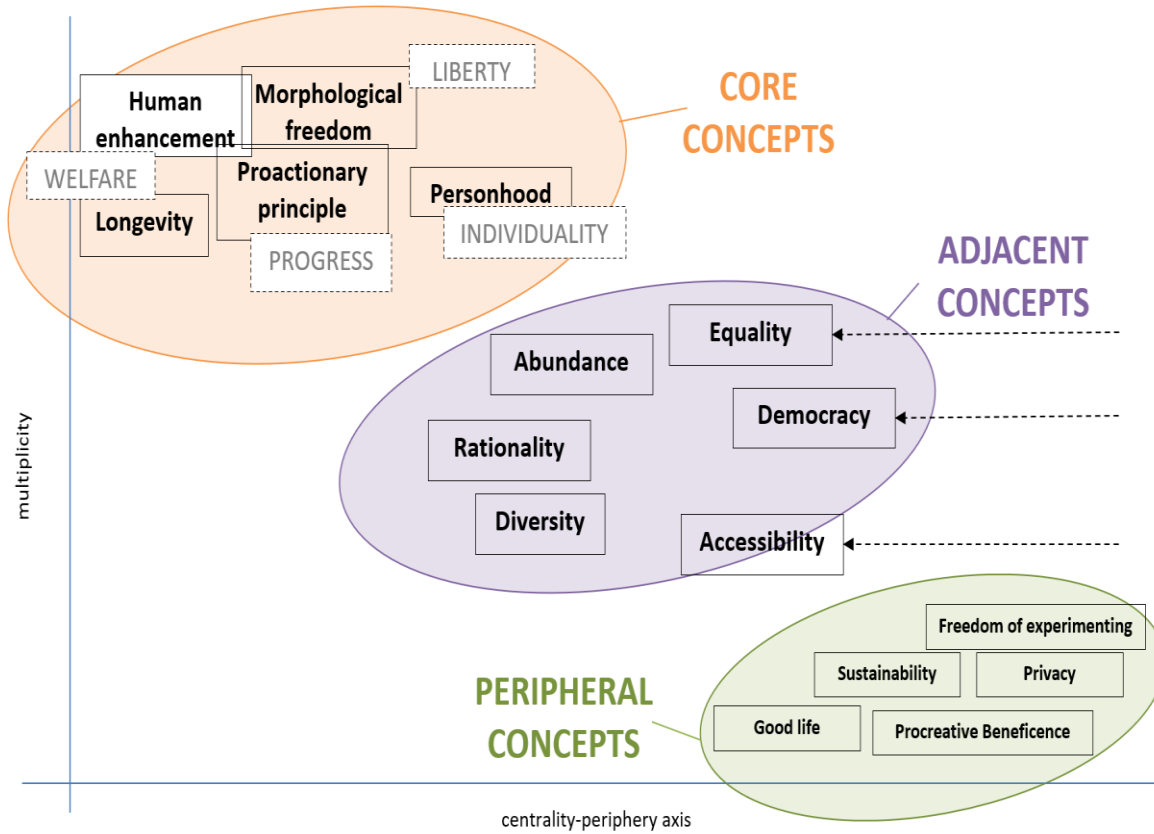
3.5. The Thin-Centredness of Transhumanism

The argument to define transhumanism as a thin-centred ideology is three-fold. First, its ability to distinguish itself from other ideologies through distinct core concepts and the post-anthropocentric perspective is properly verified within the Freedenian theoretical framework. Second, despite the recent thickening, transhumanism still exhibits limited responsiveness due partly to its reduced capacity to respond to a broad range of policy areas without borrowing ideas and solutions from other, mature ideologies, and because it addresses only a specific (mostly technology- and science-related) group of political issues. Whenever transhumanists attempt to provide answers to policy issues unaffected by the techno-science revolution, they struggle to find or create original, decontested concepts typical of transhumanism. Finally, it is justified to assert that to a limited extent transhumanism can present effective conceptual decontestations; put differently, decontested explanations of the current reality of our world. Table 1 summarises the main ideological attributes of transhumanism and their manifestations and evaluates them with

respect to their presence, significance, and prevalence according to Freeden's description of ideologies. It illustrates that some key attributes are missing or have restricted significance in transhumanism which buttresses the thin-centredness hypothesis.

Table 1. Ideological maturity of transhumanism based on Freeden's description.

Attribute	Manifestation	Evaluation	Example or comment
Distinctiveness	distinctive configuration of concepts	yes	presents a unique ideological core
	unique decontestations	yes	morphological freedom human enhancement
Relevance	raising novel issues	yes	procreative freedom longevity
	proposing novel and distinct solutions to existing issues	yes	liquid democracy freedom of experimentation
	offering solutions to a wide range of policy issues	no	it needs to borrow concepts from other ideologies to fill the gaps
	aiming to challenge the existing status quo	yes	post-Anthropocene Hughes's 3D model of politics Fuller's 90-degree shift of politics
Coherence	diachronic and synchronic stability of the conceptual core	yes	the five core concepts have been present since the beginning of the transhumanist movement
	Adaptability	yes	the ability to internalise concepts or ideas from contested ideologies: for example, sustainability
Influence and efficiency	shared by significant groups	no	the current membership of the movement is estimated at 50k
	broad circulation	restricted	pop culture contributes to popularising transhumanist ideas
	inspiring policy action	restricted	some public discussion, but not mainstream
	control of language	no	it has so far been unable to modify the language of politics
	group product	yes	
	mobilisation potential	restricted	low membership
Consumability	Language	yes	simple, comprehensible language
	Visuality	yes	globally unified logo
	Emotions	restricted	it does not assign emotional importance to its key values, nor recognises it the centrality of emotion in socio-political interactions
	overt and coded messages	no	not yet developed such ambiguity to allow for various interpretations
	Creativity	yes	it is able to stimulate public imaginary
Institutionali-sation	political representation	restricted	niche proto-parties
	Elections	no	very few candidates
	elected officials	no	only some rare and insignificant cases
	NGOs, think-tanks	yes	very active organisations, WTO IEET, Transpolitica

In the 21st century, thin-centred, immature ideologies are tools in the hands of those who initiate change in society and politics. Albeit utopias and thin-centred ideologies fundamentally differ, their role is similar: to contest dominant ideologies and dogma. Among the newcomers, transhumanism has great potential for ideological thickening as the process is supported by disruptive technological and scientific progress.

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5. List of the Author's Publications

5.1. Publications on transhumanism

Szabados, K. (2018) 'Transhumanist Parties as Niche Parties' *Journal of Posthuman Studies*, 2(2), pp. 213-237, doi: 10.5325/jpoststud.2.2.0007

5.2. Conference presentations on transhumanism

2019   **11th Beyond Humanism Conference**, Catholic University, Lille, France
        presenter ("Transhumanism as a Thin ideology")
2019   **MPSA Annual Conference**, Chicago, IL, USA
        presenter ("Transhumanism as a Thin-Centered Ideology")
2019   **PhD Conference**, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary
        presenter ("The Ideological Analysis of Transhumanism")
2017   **9th Beyond Humanism Conference**, John Cabot University, Rome, Italy
        panellist ("How Transhumanists Can Win the War on Science")