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**Thematic Project**  
**Origins and Significance of Technoscience:**  
On relations among science, technology and society

ABSTRACT

The central objective of the project, to be carried out during 2017–2021 based on the achievements of the project during 2007–2011 and 2012–2015, is to investigate critically the roles played by ethical and social values, whether held by individuals or embodied in institutions, in current scientific and technological practices. This will encompass three sets of investigations. The first concerns the contemporary significance of technoscience, including the impact of its research and development on the processes and institutionalization of scientific research; the second deals with the historical development of technoscience; and the third develops a sociological strategy of the transversal approach on the relations among science, technology and society in Brazil.

Among the issues investigated in the first set will be: **(a)** the changes that have occurred in recent decades in the modes of social production of technoscientific knowledge with the shift towards greater private financing of research; **(b)** the way in which these changes have affected the status of the traditional values of the scientific community: objectivity, neutrality and autonomy; **(c)** the function of intellectual property rights in this process; **(d)** theoretical and practical problems of biotechnology; **(e)** appraisal of the meaning of these changes in the light of alternatives to technoscientific practices and the roles of bioethics and approaches influenced by the ‘precautionary principle’. Investigations of the second set will include: **(a)** the idea of ‘the control of nature’ and the values of technological progress and their impact on shaping modern scientific research, **(b)** relations between science and technology in modernity, especially the role represented by machines and mechanistic ideas, and by the advance of experimentation in science; and **(c)** the impact of ideas from the tradition of skepticism on the development of modern science. The third set focuses on the study of Brazilian society, reflecting on: **(a)** the public debate on education: the contemporary production of public opinion in Brazilian society; **(b)** digital culture and inequality: the social uses of the new information and communication technologies; and **(c)** institutions of the production, diffusion and legitimation of knowledge.

The three sets of investigations will be strengthened by utilizing a model of scientific activity, which has been widely discussed and endorsed among the members of the research team, that identifies the interrelationships between adopting particular methodological strategies in research and holding particular ethical and social values.

The second objective of the project, no less important, is practical: to continue and expand our activities of organizing seminars, publishing important works, and participating regularly in events that bring together, for constructive and rational discussion, Brazilian (and other) scientists, philosophers and social scientists of divergent methodological approaches and ethical outlooks, in order to ensure that a wide range of viewpoints are considered in the investigations, and to explore how the results obtained may impact positively on scientific research, the teaching of science, and higher education.