

The relationship between technology and politics, culture, religion, government t...

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Executive Summary

Technology is one of the best scientific developments that have brought about economic, social, and political change in most of the world's economies. Nevertheless, there are varied reactions on the effect of technology on the environment, the economy, religion, culture, and politics among a host of many social, economic, and political phenomena.

Conversely, these factors also affect technology in different ways as will be discussed in this paper. Nevertheless, selecting technology for a specific situation depends on a list factors that either support or oppose such incentives.

Introduction

Science and technology are the current century's most influential challenges since it affects most of the societal perspectives. While technology has been considered one of the best developments, it has also been criticized for its devastating effects on the environment, politics, government, economy, the cultures of the world, and different religious institutions. Several researchers have concluded that technology both affects these factors, and in equally affected by them since they interact in the environment where technology operates. Some of the most contradicting phenomena include religion, culture and the environment, which are believed to suffer from technological activities. Consequently, these factors have led to the controversial debates of the relevance of technology to the century considering the opposing arguments such as environmental degradation, social and cultural erosion, and religious contrast of values. However, the economy, government, and

politics have greatly benefited from technological advancements. The purpose of this research paper is to investigate the relationship between technology with religion, culture, environment, government, politics and economy. This paper argues that despite the devastating effects of technological advancements of the recent century, technology remains an integral part of the society that should be embraced in all of these phenomena.

Culture and Technology

Cultural and technological progresses have been controversial components of the society. Cultural proponents believe that technology is subject to social and cultural change. However, before contrasting and comparing the relationship between culture and technology, it is important to distinguish between high and low culture. While high culture is usually associated with people who are refined, wealthy, and educated, the notion of low culture refers to the common members of the society, living in relative poverty, and less educated. Subsequently, these cultural notions are also related to countries with similar characteristics. There are different human cultures all over the world. These cultures also have varied effects on the development of technology as well as culture. Since culture provides different societal goals specific to that particular society associated to the culture, technological innovations vary with variation in locations as well as cultural boundaries. Currently, in several developing economies of the world, analysts relate the backward development in these economies to the insufficient scientific and technological advancements. On the other hand,

most of the industrially developed and productive economies possess greater technological and scientific advancements that are equally significant to the developments. Some of these developed economies have made technology part of their culture and abandoned their original cultural values.

Technology and culture have double faced implications on each other according to the two cultural categories discussed above. In low cultures, which are common less developed economies of the world, culture has been valued over technology. Most of these conservative cultures and the institutions that support cultural conservativeness have ensured that technology does not have a place in the economy. According to the proponents of the low culture societies, they consider their cultural practices as superior over the practice of embracing technology. For instance, these societies advocate for human labor as opposed to technological applications arguing that technology reduces opportunities. However, it is also a property of these societies to possess little education. Therefore, embracing technology in these societies would eventually prove their assertion. Consequently, these cultures have discouraged technological advancements.

On the other hand, high culture, which is common with the developed countries have encouraged technological progress. These progressive societies believe that embracing technology accelerates development since the firms have the opportunity to increase productivity in terms of both quality and quantity of the produce. This therefore implies that high cultures support technological progress. However, the question that still remains

unanswered questions are that, could it be possible that the traditional societies can import technology from the developed modern societies and embrace it as well as mend it into their cultural fabric? Does technology really cause estrangement? Alternatively, does the Iranian thinker's argument that technology is a necessary evil equally harmful in presence as in absence a reality? (Saraswati, 1997). These questions among a host of several other questions have been raised in the controversial cultural and technological concerns.

The controversies between the preservation of cultural values and technological development as well as the effect of technology on social and cultural changes have formed the agenda of several unresolved and unending debates. As human knowledge grows exponentially, technological developments equally increase. Innovators continue to invent sophisticated technologies that have been both supported and opposed by cultural experts. While technological advancement proponents believe that technology is responsible for high and positive cultures, the social and cultural proponents accuse technology for the erosion of cultural and social change. Embracing cultural change has been viewed to replace or contradict social values.

Culture is defined as the social norms and customary beliefs as well as the material traits identifiable with a specific religious, racial, or social group. The introduction of a new technology in a society might influence these social beliefs and norms. Popular culture also influences technology (White, 2007). Due to the differences in the human-environment interaction, different cultures create different social needs that require different

solutions. For instance, while some societies believe in agricultural productivity, others also believe on industrialization. These beliefs are shaped by the historical traits of these societies. Therefore, while one society might consider embracing agricultural technology, another society might also consider the industrial technology. Additionally, the social and cultural resources in different communities differentiate the technological requirements of these societies.

However, technology and culture are complementary components of the society. While social and cultural transformation influences the society's acceptance and assimilation of technology, it is equally important to note that the technology shapes the society's cultural practices. Some technological progresses might improve cultural values by adding values such as improving agricultural production through embracing new technologies. Nevertheless, some technologies discourage cultural values, thereby limiting change and development. In the developing economies, which are associated with cultural conservativeness, technological progress is considered negative and discouraging social and cultural advancement.

Religion and Technology

According most nonbelievers different religious affiliations and secularists consider science and religion as basically incompatible components of the society, which has been magnified to the relationship between technology and religion because technology is a product of science. However, the rising technological innovations and advancements alongside the resurgence of religious fundamentalism contradict the former assertion. As a matter of

fact, if technology (science) and religion were incompatible, the increase in one of these societal components would eventually lead to the reduction of the other. However, with the increasing scientific education among the current generation's students, religious fundamentalism also increases with similar or even more proportions.

Religion has played a very important role in the society due to the increasing ethical applications of technology. Technology is dynamic, and so is religion. According to Noreen Herzfeld in her publication titled *Technology and Religion: Remaining Human in a Co-created World*, she discusses the relationship between technology and religion and argues that technology is viewed in three perspectives. These perspectives include technology of the human body including stem cells, genetic engineering, pharmaceutical technologies, cloning, and mechanical enhancement, technology of the human mind such as virtual reality, cyberspace and artificial human intelligence, and technologies of the environment such as genetically modified organism (Herzfeld, 2009). She further relates these technological perspectives to the dynamism in religion as well as Abraham's traditions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Max Weber (1864 - 1920) is considered to be the first to examine the relationships between technology and religion. Weber focused on the Protestant Christianity's contribution to the capitalist industrialization development. The formal and informal religious communities as well as faith-based organizations are some of the most active social sector organizations in many countries of the world. These institutions have held contradicting views about the relationships between religion and technology. Most people

believe that technology contradicts religion. However, technology has been instrumental in the development of religion as well as religion in the development of technology.

Technology has assisted in the development of religion. Due to technological advancements, the printing of religious materials have made a success.

Additionally, technological advancements such as electronic technology have helped in the development as well as the increasing religious

fundamentalism. Due to technological progress such as social media, electronic/television, and print media, religious institutions have successfully

reached their believers through different ways. The religious programs throughout the world are accessible through these technological

components. Additionally, technology has improved communication, thereby allowing religious communities to communicate their messages to their

followers all over the world. In the religious historic past, Christians used scrolls, which have however been replaced by the books that have become

efficient, mobile and durable. Social media also provides platforms for religious discussions.

On the other hand, religion has contradicted technological advancement in different ways. The recent technological advancements include the stem cell

experiment, genetically modified organisms, and robotics, which all contradict the religious beliefs that argue that these technological

developments assume the role of the supernatural creator. According to the religious beliefs of most religious groups, the act of creation is a divine act of

the supernatural being, and therefore technology or science should not try to take part or copy these creations. Nevertheless, there have been

developments in the religious groups, which have elicited mixed reactions. For instance, according to the Catholic Church, through the outgoing Pope Benedict XIV, he believed that the technological advancements in the present science should be given a chance in the society. Additionally, the Catholic Church, which is the only religious groups that has not contradicted the scientific evolution theories, supported the Big Bang Theory.

Religious groups consider their places of worship as the most revered places since they believe that the supernatural beings that they worship reside in these places, and therefore deserve property places to stay. Therefore, these religious groups have ensured that they employ the latest technology in constructing these places of worship such as churches, temples, shrines, or mosques. As a part of technological development, architecture and engineering have been instrumental in the construction of magnificent places of worship.

Nevertheless, considering the arguments for and against the relationships between technology and religion, it is important to note that there is no single statement that best describes these relations. Religion has not only restricted the quest for technological advancement, but it has also done major contributions to several technological advancements and breakthroughs including sponsorship of popular scientists such as Isaac Newton among others. While religion is responsible for the ethical protection of the community, it has ensured that most of the technological activities seek to protect the societal interest. Religious groups also differ in their ethical stands as well as views on technological advancements, which have

helped technology to develop as well as posses potential future developments.

The Environment and Technology

Technology does not operate in a vacuum. It operates in an environment. Therefore, the technological applications must have some effect on the environment, whether positive or negative effects. On the other hand, the environment could also influence the choice of the specific technology or the possibility to apply these specific technologies on it. The elements of the environment including the location, atmosphere, and geographical formations among others often put constraints to specific technology application. For instance, air conditioners are only used in specific environments such as coolers in hot environments. Technology on the other hand comprises three dimensions: which include the physical devices (apparatus) used in accomplishing technological tasks; the activities involved in the performance of these tasks; and the organizational networks associated with activities and apparatus (Reuss, & Cutcliffe, 2010).

Technology has been blamed for most of the environmental problems experienced in the world today. Due to technological activities such as mining, land has been left bare and susceptible to soil erosion with the effects of wind and floods. Additionally, technological establishments such as paper milling industries have led to the depletion of forests, which are supposed to act as water catchment areas. Indigenous plants have also become extinct due to activities such as timber harvesting for construction purposes. Some of these indigenous plantations are irreplaceable and

possess medicinal value, which is important to the local communities residing in the areas surrounding the forests. Following the discovery and mining of crude oil, the environment has become susceptible to air pollution from the emissions from different industries such as production and service industries like vehicles. The machines emit dangerous gases to the environment, which has consequently destroyed the ozone layer, thereby leading to global warming, which has become a global catastrophe (Reuss, & Cutcliffe, 2010).

On the other hand, the environment is a crucial component of technology. The environment dictates the technological considerations undertaken in any instance. Due to environmental challenges such as disasters, diseases, and other environment related difficulties, technology has found the root of development in such a way that it seeks to solve these problems. For instance, when oil deposits are discovered in a specific location, efforts are made using technological developments to ensure that the oil is mined. Additionally, during the cold or hot weather, technological advancements ensure that warm or cold gears are manufactured and supplied to the relevant environments. Additionally, environments facing challenges such as water shortages use technological developments to drill boreholes that provide water for usage in the homes as well as for irrigation in the farms. Technology also aids communication through the construction of network communication lines as well as the manufacture communication apparatus that ensure that environments with limited communication tools achieve this reality.

Agriculture and air are some of the largest compositions of the physical

environment. Some countries have geographical terrains that do not support farming. Others also have arid land that is barely cultivatable. Due to technological advancements, these countries have not only developed artificial planting grounds, but also sought optional water sources to irrigate the arid land. Additionally, due to technological advancements, genetically modified organisms have been developed, which are suitable to different environmental conditions. On air pollution, which is greatly blamed on technological consequences, technology has also managed to solve these problems through reducing the carbon gas emissions to the environment. Recent technological developments have seen the emergence of solar powered and electric vehicles, electric trains, and destructive aviation fuels, which have reduced the carbon gas emitted into the atmosphere. However, technology's opponents argue that these new developments have been used only in the developed countries, yet the consequences of pollution are evident in the whole world including the less developed nations.

The environment is the host of all technological activities. Scientists behind technological advancements have the responsibility of preserving the environment. Different governments have enacted legislations that ensure that technological advancements have the environmental conservation as a priority. Firms that conduct their activities in their environments not only ensure that they protect the environmental resources that they use from extinction, or create more of these resources, but also ensure that they take responsibilities for their activities. For instance, the Coca Cola Company engages in water harvesting and conservation in order to ensure that it does not deplete water during its production processes. Additionally, mining firms

are charged with the responsibility of restoring the land to its normal terrain after completing its activities. These activities ensure that technological advancements work concurrently with environmental conservation and improvement. Most of the multinational corporations have been on the forefront of environment conservation, running campaigns aimed ensuring that technology does not overexploit the environment. Nevertheless, technology does not only preserve the environments, but it also destroys irreplaceable species, which have become extinct.

The Economy and Technology

Economic development is the goal of every nation of the world. They nations employ strategies that are aimed at ensuring that they achieve economic development in the shortest time possible with the least resource possible. Developing nations of the world generally consider that the relationship between economic development and technology as productive. Some of the strategies employed in these countries to accelerate technology transfer include foreign direct investment from the developed economies, networking, licensing, and joint ventures (Kačerauskas, 2012). Most countries that embrace technology consider technology to increase their productivity thereby enabling them to achieve a considerably higher output in the same production period as normal labor.

Technology not only increases the quantity of production, but also the quality of products. Most of the domestic and multinational corporations from the developed countries of the world use technology in their production processes. These corporations record a relatively higher output considered

to similar companies from the developing economies that implement less of the same technologies in their production. This is because technology increases the rate of work thereby increasing the quantity of output. The predetermined programs and machines produce relative higher quality products in terms of measurements such as weight, and lengths, and general product quality.

Technology improves the infrastructure of any economy. The physical infrastructure such as healthcare, transport, education, and telecommunication are important components of the economy, which must be developed in order to realize economic development. Technology improves the machines used in the healthcare institutions thereby ensuring proper healthcare services to different patients with ailments that might require technological attention such as sophisticated tissue operations. Telecommunication is one of the most important sectors in the economy. Due to improved technologies, nations have access to better communication techniques including video teleconferencing, social networking through the internet, and even mobile phone communication, which has become one of the most means of modern communication. Telecommunication has made sharing of information across and within borders easier through developed communication networks.

Transport allows for the easy transfer of both goods and services among and within countries. Through developed transport systems, movement of goods from one destination to the other has become very easy. Heavy goods have been transferred across borders using containerized shipments. Experts also move from one destination to another using developed air and road

transport. Most nations of the world are currently developing their rail transport systems to very fast moving electric trains that are aimed at decongesting roads. The education sector is the backbone of development. Learners acquire necessary knowledge for the development of services and goods in their economy. Through improved technology, the education sectors in most economies have been improved through services such as online lectures, online libraries, better laboratory equipments for experiments, and improved learning environments. Technology has brought about the construction of modern classrooms designed to satisfy the needs of every learner in every unique environment such as special schools for learners with disabilities have learning equipments that accelerate learning processes. All these factors associate technology with economic development.

Technological advancement leads to improved economic growth; however, achieving sustainable development in any economy requires proper decision making on the best suitable technology for every economy. Despite the adverse effects of technology on human health and the environment, most countries have ignored technology as an adversity and considered it an integral component of attaining development. The introduction of new technologies in any economy has been considered to increase productivity since these technologies ensure the highest production with least resources in specific durations. Nevertheless, proper choice of technology is very important in order to ensure that production is increased. The wrong choice of technology might not only yield lower results, but also become a liability to the economy since the acquisition, installation, and maintenance costs might not be relatively equal to the output of the same technologies.

The size of the economy also determines the technologies that can be employed in the production processes. While every nation of the world intends to use the best technologies in production, it is important to note that acquiring, maintaining, and managing these new technologies come with many expenses. Therefore, most developing nations of the world cannot acquire the best-desired production technologies due to these costs. This has not only slowed the pace of development in these economies, but also reduced the probabilities of increasing productivity. In these developing economies, the cheap technologies only lead to increased unemployment as workers are laid off due to replacement with technology. Therefore, it can be concluded that as much as the economy depends on better technology in order to improve the economic status of every country, the developing economies of the world face the challenge of fewer resources to implement these new technologies, thereby slowing technological development in such economies. Nevertheless, technology has some devastating effects on human health and the environment, which should be put into consideration when making technological decisions such as choice.

Technology and Politics

While technology constitutes a crucial element of governance and politics in the modern democratic economies of the world, politics also plays a significant role in the production of scientific knowledge as well as technological development. One of the most influential political offices in the world is the office of the president of the United States. According to Pandora Sales Executive Eric Rosenberger, Google's GOP Advertising Manager Rob

Saliterman, and Facebook's Policy Manager Katie Harbath, President Obama's success in the presidential elections was the result of active and positive use of social technologies. Through social sites, the president accessed his supporters and rallied them behind him through sharing his manifesto online. Technology is very important in influencing political decisions as well as personalities, especially in this century that is characterized with active social interaction.

Most of the world's population - about two-thirds of the world's total population - is comprised the youth. According to research results, most of the voters today are the youth. Other findings assert that the youths are the most socially interactive members of the society. Therefore, following technological advancements that have ensured that communication through social site such as Facebook and Twitter among other sites can be done easily, politics has become easier than it was several decades ago. Through social network accounts, politicians can reach their followers and share with them their agenda, give them their campaign schedules as well as well as receive their concerns and address them as well. Internet politics also helps politicians to analyze their opponents in anticipating their next moves, thereby making necessary adjustments to stay ahead of the competition, which is the main trait of politics. With the increasing democratic movements and governance, politicians have little control over the news and media than the politicians of the previous decades had. This leads to increased social political interaction.

Technology also improves fundraising for political parties and politicians in general. In order to make a successful political campaign, politicians face the

challenge of raising the funds for these political campaigns. One of the most successful politicians that have benefited from technological fundraising include Howard Dean who initially gained fame resulting from grass root internet donations filling his treasury (Hall, 2012). The internet exposes the political candidates to their supporters who in turn ensure that their desired representatives get the necessary resources to compete against their opponents. In this regard, technology has been a beneficial fundraising tool for most political candidates.

On the other hand, the internet technology has become a great challenge to politicians in this century. Due to the supposed reduced political control of the media and the freedoms of expression, all of the internet users are “journalists” notwithstanding their professional qualifications or credibility. These internet journalists follow the politicians’ activities and report every detail about these activities on the internet including negative information that would otherwise be scrutinized. These have not only helped in keeping politicians on check of their activities, but also reduced the activities of politicians in the public domain with the fear that they might make utterances that might ruin their political career.

On the other hand, politics is one of the influential factors that determine the technological advancements. Politicians have control over the economy and enact legislations that control the development of different technologies. Whenever these politicians consider some technologies repressive and inappropriate, they might enact legislations either outlawing or discouraging such technological developments. On the other hand, politics has been encouraging to technology through the support of policies such as

reservation rights that prohibit imitations of patented production rights to technology. Nevertheless, politicians who command most of the economic decisions have misused this political capacity. These politicians have ensured to enact legislations that only support the technological firms that support their agenda in returns. However, due to increasing democracies, political control has greatly reduced.

Politics and technology are interdependent entities that affect each other in one way or the other. While politicians need technology to advance their political agenda, technology also relies on political decisions in order to produce the best desired results in its development. Democratic political environments have proved more tolerant to technology than the autocratic political spheres, where the latter exercises ultimate control of the media and “journalists.” The controlled technological environments also provide discouraging environments for development as politicians divert their attention to exercising control of the media than advancing their agenda as well as serving the citizens. Due to technological advancements of the current decade as well as the anticipated developments in the subsequent decades coupled with the increasing democracies, political engagement has become more interactive, and would possibly become more interactive in the future.

Technology and the Government

It is assumed that in the current century, information technology has greater impact on the government than private individuals or corporations do. While corporations advance and propel technology, private individuals embrace the

new technologies, thereby leaving the government lagging behind and trying to cope with the challenge. The current trends in business and production demands that the governments must conform to technological challenges. Due to the increasing social changes in the society, the government is also forced to adjust to technological advancements in order to keep up with the pace of technological transformation.

The government is not always at the forefront of technological advancement. However, it reacts to the changes in the surrounding technological environments instead of seeking new ways of efficiency (Caerteling, Halman, & Dorée, 2008). Consequently, the government faces the challenge of transforming into the new technologies, which might involve great capital investments because the transformations is usually a rapid and not a gradual process. The costs of technological transformation to the government include the acquisition costs of the equipment, the staff training costs, and the maintenance costs.

On the contrary, technology is a very crucial part of the government. Due to the devolved government departments, networking and linkage is very important. For instance, while the immigration processes data about the movement into and out of the country, this department needs records from the registration authorities in order to successfully accomplish it duties. Criminal activities pose the greatest challenge to governments in the world today. However, with the increasing use of technology in departmentation, governments have the capabilities of sharing critical information within a specific government's departments, or between governments with similar interests on a specific issue (Miller, Lake, & University of Washington, 2012).

For instance, sharing of information between different government agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the CIA, and the Secret Service, the United States government managed to get every detail about the Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, who was a security threat to the United States government.

Globalization also ensures that governments engage in mutually beneficial relationships. Through technology, different governments have different capabilities to produce different technological products unique to other countries. While these unique products provide revenue to the government through exports, this government also imports technology, which it would otherwise have not produced locally from other countries. Additionally, due to technological advancements in different governments, different professions are shared between governments. In this regard, professionals familiar with a technological product might invite other governments to train on the new technology through sending selected experts on the particular field.

Service delivery is the responsibility of every government to its citizens. Through the improvement of technology, service delivery has become more efficient and reliable. Government hospitals, schools, and other social amenities such as libraries have been equipped with the latest technologies that have ensured that the clients get the best services upon visit. The trained government personnel that attend to these equipments also produce even better results in service delivery. Other government physical infrastructures such as roads, airports, and railroads have greatly benefited from technology. Airports have been serviced with the latest technology and

physical infrastructure including the best technology in flight equipments.

While roads have been developed into superhighways designed by qualified architects, rail transport has received the major technological boost with the emergence of electric trains that move at faster speeds with less environmental effects.

Information sharing in the government is crucial to management of different government departments. However, due to the increasing cyber insecurity, there are many hackers who intrude in to governments' databases and retrieve citizens' personal and confidential information thereby making these citizens susceptible to fraud. In addition, government departments require the data from other departments in order exercise their mandate. Therefore, technological failure in one government department might interfere with the operations in several other departments.

However, technology also depends on the governments' willingness to accept them into the system. Some governments might reject the technological advancements introduced or proposed by corporations or private individuals. These rejections could result from security risks or other issues that the government considers irrelevant to the economy. In exercising its control over the economy and consequent rejection of technology, the government becomes an obstacle technology. Therefore, it would be relevant to conclude that both technology and the government are mutually interrelated components of the society that require harmonization. When the government becomes an obstacle to technology, it implies that there would be little or no technological development in that economy. On the other hand, when technology becomes oppressive to the government,

the main purpose of embracing technology might not be achieved thereby leading to losses to the government. However, technology has been an important component of the society that the government should always embrace.

Conclusion and Limitations to the Research

Technology is one of the multi-faced phenomena that cut across the social, political, and economic aspects of life. Technology does not only affect the individuals, but also governments and non-governmental institutions.

However, while technology affects these political, social and political aspects of life, it also depends on these phenomena to operate. Technology has been criticized for its devastating effects on the environment such as exposing the ground to soil erosion through mining, air pollution from industries, and depletion of natural resources that face extinction; it has also been praised for working towards restoration of environmental conditions. On the other hand, the environment has been instrumental in technological developments through the different applications aimed at solving environmental challenges. In relation to the economy, technological advancement is greatly responsible for industrialization and economic development as evidenced by the developed economies of the world.

However, some technologies are too expensive and demanding that developing economies cannot afford them in their systems. Culture has been considered the greatest challenge to technological development. Social and culture consider technology to counter the values of the former. On the other hand, technology has helped transforming retrogressive culture into the

modern culture aimed at development. Religion is another beneficiary of technology. Technology has not only transformed religion from the ancient means of communication such as Christian scrolls into portable books, but it has also helped in the construction of fully equipped modern places of worship. Religion on the other hand has helped through sponsorship of major scientists such as Isaac Newton among several others. Politics are the largest gainers in technology since the latter has brought about changes that work to the advantage of the government, politics and the economy such as improved physical like roads, railroads, and air transport facilities and social infrastructure like the internet, hospitals, and schools. The greatest limitation to this research is the varied arguments that do not provide reliable positions about the topic of the research.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research proposes that in the future research studies, different aspects of technology such as the origin should be discussed when considering its effects to the environment, culture, religion, politics, economy, and the government. The history of technology in relation to these phenomenon is important in understanding the important understanding how these factors have been interrelated before drawing conclusions.

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