

Issues with
technological
rationality sociology
essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The relationship between technology and society is complex and intricate, comprising of many elements. The two go hand in hand with each shaping one another. With this being said, it is difficult to determine whether rational decisions about the implementation of technological advancements have been made justly. By definition technological rationality suggests that once the technology in question is fully implemented into society, it ultimately changes the notion of what is considered rational within that society (wiki). Thus creating a perplexing relationship between what is rational and what has adjusted itself to be considered rational (Poyntz).

The term “ technological rationality” was first captioned by the Frankfurt School of Thought’s theorist Herbert Marcuse, in his 1941 article, “ Some Implications of Modern Technology”(Marcus, 1941). Since then, the concept has proved to be pertinent in communication research of our modern society. Technology has proven to manipulate the environment in which it is placed in, evidently changing its environment. Some early examples of this were the invention of the wheel, the use of controlled fire, and the creation of the hand-axe. Technological advancements all made over one million years ago. While our ancestors of this time period lived a simple and primitive life they were still able to make technological advancements by allowing the wheel to permit travelling, the use of controlled fire to provide warmth and a viable cooking outlet, and by allowing the hand-axe to aide them in hunting for food and obtaining materials for shelter. Some detailed examples have been provided pertaining to the critiques of media technology and the dominance of technological rationality in highly industrialized societies. This paper will serve as an eye-opener for individuals

to have a deeper sense of responsibility in the application of technology in parallel with the adaptation of their human qualities. This paper explores in a narrow sense the issues of technological rationality and its impact on highly industrialized societies. It examines the way technology and the ideologies of technology affect the manners in which people live. To further analyze the concept of technological rationality, some examples have been cited for the purpose of describing how technology can manipulate the society. To better analyze the impact of issues of technological rationality, the application of three frameworks of technology including the Enlightenment, Critical Theory and Post-Critical Theory have been exerted.

Social characteristics of a highly industrialized technological society often include those of domination and control fuelled by different motives such as profit, social, and political control (Thompson, 2003, pp. 201-209). In the process of technological rationality, it has situated itself with a critique of the ideology towards that particular industrialized society (Thompson, 2003, pp. 201-209). Then it preconditions the citizens of the society to think on a one-dimensional based ideology of technology and later, attempts to articulate its impact for advancement (cite). “ The idea of compliant efficiency perfectly illustrates the structure of technological rationality. Rationality is being transformed from a critical force into one of adjustment and compliance. Autonomy of reason loses its meaning in the same measure as the thoughts, feelings and actions of men are shaped by the technical requirements of the apparatus which they have themselves created” (Marcuse).

Technological rationality may survive or eventually breakdown when it reaches the period of incidental or accidental physical and psychological sufferings (Lance, 2000). This statement on technological breakdown is possible when people in the society become shrewd with power and financial gain and will further the creation of new technologies without consideration of the majority of innocent lives that will be affected with their consequences (Lance, 2000). There is a need to look at the society on its economic and technological basis prior to reformation and modification of technological rationality on highly industrialized societies specifically in areas with insufficient public knowledge.

The first theory of the Enlightenment of technology is a very optimistic or utopian view of the relationship between technology and society. The key argument of this framework is the notion that technology is a signifier of progress. It us actually shaped as the ultimate signifier of progress and the most important tool in furthering humankind. This framework is based off the idea that technology can solve all of humanities problems, and societies before the time of technological innovation and capitalistic systems were repressive to the human spirit. In this perspective, technology is viewed as neutral, a tool that only helps further along mankind. If this were true why is there so much scepticism over the evolution of technology? This question brings us to the next theory of technology, the critical perspective.

The critical theory is just as it sounds, critical. It is a pessimistic or dystopian view of technology. In this framework, technology is never viewed as neutral it is seen as a form of authoritative control over the masses (Poytnz). It greatly shapes our world and ultimately it shapes humankind. This fear of <https://assignbuster.com/issues-with-technological-rationality-sociology-essay/>

what technology has in store for society is shared by many people ranging from worldly scholars such as Leo Marx and Andrew Feenberg to blue collar citizens of society with an average high school education. People around the world are noticing the hold that their technology has over them. While it is clear that technological advancements have had a profound impact on modern societies through the use of various inventions, from the 19th century's penny press, steam engine, telegraph, telephone, ect. to the innovative technologies that are apart of the 21st century. Examples of these types of technologies range from modern smart phones, mobile computers, texting, emails and in large part the internet in general. Technological innovation has changed the world entirely, as a result it has changed the way society perceives the world, creating an entirely different notion of what the world is itself. While there are bountiful optimistic attributes that could be listed, there are faults to which technologically driven societies live upon. Humanity has created technology as an extension of man, the typewriter an extension of the hand, the automobile as an extension of the foot. Systems have been formed to manage nature, but what is often forgotten is that society is a part of nature. With specificity to highly industrialized societies, the further progression of technological innovation results in a blurring of the distinction between what it is to be human and what is not. Various works have been centred around this idea of machine as an extension of man. As artificial intelligence comes into play in real life societies, how is it possible to define what is man? Ultimately, what has been created is a system that manages society, with authoritative control over citizens lives. The critical theory sets out to make these

distinctions of who is really in control of the ways society interacts with one another and with themselves.

The third theory, The Post Critical Theory is possibly the best theory in which to use for understanding the current relationship between media technologies and society today. This period made the people realize the significance of actual transformation upon review of so much theoretical knowledge without proper implementation of principles. This theory is a balance between the first two theories. It is not nearly as optimistic as the enlightenment; however it is not as drastic and dire as the critical theory. The Post Critical Theory is based heavily upon technological mediation, finding the middle ground. It is through this theory that a better understanding of how media technologies continue to shape and influence lives will be gained. This theory preaches that society must be cautious while progressing forwards. Understanding that as society progresses towards a completely digital age, an essence of humankind's past and a fundamental element of what society is will be lost. Through technological mediation a balance between a positive and negative view of technological rationality must be found that will allow for society to preserve its past and stabilize its future.

The diversity of information on innovation, invention and diffusion has been simplified according to its essentials and priorities. Progress through technology is but only one of the avenues in which society choses to propel itself forward through. Life is a succession of stages with differentiating fulfillment in life in the case of man who is reluctant to get married and have children for he is still seeking for some sort of " fulfillment" in his life. This <https://assignbuster.com/issues-with-technological-rationality-sociology-essay/>

scenario proves that human does not have contentment in life and will continue to explore the world with an aid of technological rationality to achieve his goal. The impact of technological rationality will be given more emphasis on the following concerns that created significant problem:

Oral and Writing Community

There are different methods of communication and interpersonal interactions that should be clear for proper delivery of its meaning (Bryson, 2011, pp. 213-218). The oral communication is unique is such a way that he said or not said if unclear will be reflective to his personality. On written communication, the advances in technology make it possible to communicate in different methods like emails, text messages and by placing print advertisement (Bryson, 2011, pp. 213-218). It is significant that prior to oral and written communication; an individual must determine who will be his audience. For communicating with respected personnel and government personalities, one must avoid the use of slang and street termed languages, it must be briefed and concise for better understanding. Through technological rationality, an individual can relay their messages in various means but there are circumstances that a written and verbal communication may not be accurately received that in the end will create barrier and misunderstanding (Lagman, 2009, pp. 245-254). There are instances that technological problems occur in the process of sending emails and some terms may have different meaning from the point of view of the reader, a face to face interaction is still advisable but the time constraint may hamper the intent (Bryson, 2011, pp. 213-218). When the internet suddenly bog-down the time to transfer the message to the recipient might be delayed, this is crucial

especially when the message has something to do with medical field wherein a patient need the help of virtual means to immediately attend to her medical needs (Lagman, 2009, pp. 245-254). In emergency cases, one must identify which among the technological rationality can deliver the messages on time (Lagman, 2009, pp. 245-254).

Printing Press and Democratization of Knowledge

Nowadays, the printing press has impacted the society, these are accessible means of communication channels to give feedback and to educate people. Scholars and professors relied on printed materials like books, journals and bulletin to acquire knowledge (Lagman, 2009, pp. 245-254). People with exposure on technological rationalization can easily have access on latest historical events and state of the world. Imagine the hundreds of thousands of books utilized in the academe authored by one person but with the power of printing press, no one can control the fast production that could happen (Lagman, 2009, pp. 245-254). However, there are instances that many authors would create and invent the copyright so that others may not have a chance to copy their works (Lagman, 2009, pp. 245-254). In some ways this is applicable to boost their morale and be recognized, however, it also make the use of certain theories limited because other people need to have a consent prior to its use.

Churches can no longer control what people want to print, although Bible has been the first book to be printed but others like Martin Luther's ideologies became best sellers with great impact on reformation of Protestantism (Poynitz, 2010, pp. 110-139). Unlike before that church heads and leaders can control their constituents on what to tell in public and be able to filter <https://assignbuster.com/issues-with-technological-rationality-sociology-essay/>

the bad images that others inflicted on them, with the technological rationality, everything is possible at a spurn of a finger to communicate worldwide (Poynitz, 2010, pp. 110-139). The democratization of knowledge through printing press provides awareness to majority of people all over the world through newspapers, magazines and books (Poynitz, 2010, pp. 110-139).

Time, Space, Culture and Nation

While culture comprised the shared values, artifacts and ideas, there are material and non-material categories (Poynitz, 2010, pp. 110-139). Material culture comprised the tangible products in the human society while the non-material ones are everything that includes in the people's way of life (Poynitz, 2010, pp. 110-139). Lives became more meaningful with the application of culture. On the other hand, a nation can be recognized with their shared culture including their own symbols, language, beliefs and values. Even time constraints because time varies among other nations like when it is morning in the United States it is night time in the Philippines (Poynitz, 2010, pp. 110-139). Hence, majority of the call center companies that are operating outside of the United States need to adjust their body clock in order to acquire job. These people are now entwined with their life at home and life at work, their weekend can no longer be consumed and enjoyed with other family members. This usually happens nowadays, because majority of the clients will make a phone call at night time in some other satellite offices. This is one of the disadvantages of technological rationality, the compensation will be good but the family bonding is no longer practice. The diversity on time, space, culture and nation created

barriers in some ways for they have different meaning about the physical attractiveness, goodness and desirability.

There are categories that has been tagged undesirably to others and may also served as reason for not considering them for a key position at work (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88). The technological rationality may reveal a similar name from the website with derogatory records and a person will be mistaken as the same and one person.

Visual Revolution

The art of cinema during the technological rationalization in highly industrialized societies allowed viewers by means of computer media to choose different paths and equate the movie with storytelling (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88). There is excitement in defining the characteristics of cinema of today where an individual can view through a three dimensional space simulated by computers (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88). The whole repertoire of cinema including its stylistic innovation, methodical and prosaic process has been exposed to viewers and let them be inspired to understand the shutter from the start of film rolling , recording and the spontaneous events at the lens. The technological rationality is somehow a contributor for some actions that is not acceptable in the society especially for the young viewers that could watch cinema without the supervision from old ones. Their exposure to violence, sex films and latest trends in fashions and gadgets will inspire them for some wrong doings. There must be regulation on this aspect of technological rationality (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88). Not all of the advances will be advantageous, some of the latest technology need to

have guidance to avoid younger generation to have an impression that it is normal to mimic what they watched from cinema.

Digital Transformation

The distinct logic of digital transformation has found its place during technological rationality made it possible to create interface metaphors n variety of images with an aid of computer software and hardware (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88). There are now CD-Rom-based games and other hypermedia that can stand alone which succeeded in creating illusions in such a way that it looks like a dynamic reality.

The digital transformation can be applied to improve the means of communication, entertainment, educational settings, government facilities and a lot more (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88). On the other hand, its unregulated application and accessibility to purchase has been taken into consideration for advancement of criminal attempts and operations. The underground people can now have a hand to create their own gadgets for bombing and other terrorist activities with the help of digital transformation. Travelling by land and by water utilized digital transformation in order to reach other places as fast as they can. Even on political arena, it is now easier to have the results of votes from Commission on Election with digital information.

Digital marketing could better engage a corporation to their customers and it holds true for new product launching (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88).

Unquestionably, the digital transformation can help in many ways to learn and engage in their current and future concerns, but in some instances it is

also easier to copy and duplicate one's job without their knowledge. Hence, film piracy became rampant and that is one price for having digital capabilities.

Conclusion

The issues on technological rationality in highly industrialized societies increases the life expectancies in developed countries and could make an individual acquire all that he wanted for life convenience. However, they also inflicted severe damage to the environment and destabilized other society due to some technological advances that kills lives and created widespread psychological sufferings (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88). The technological innovations are important but in a deeply troubled society, there is a need to balance everything to make this world worthy of living by the future generation (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88).

The author is not the first one to affirm that worlds seems to be going crazy due to launching of rockets and missiles for unknown reasons, for making duplicate human counterpart through robotics and isolation of man from nature (Stephen, 1993, pp. 67-88). There is good reason o believe that our primitive ancestors live a life with less pressure with their harmonious relationship with nature while in modern society, there are consequences brought by abuse of mankind to mother earth.

Recommendation

To ensure that the existence of technological society will be beneficial to everyone, there is a need to impart some of the traditional values to continue connecting the human bonding than their loyalty to the

technological system. One may well ask, if the creation of technological rationality by the highly industrialized societies an advantage or any rate just satisfied the need for power process. Every individual has the responsibility to save the nature from further devastation in their own little way. There is light at the end of road on technological rationality when people realized the vast destruction if they will not act now to responsibly utilized the modern resources.