

Agenda

1. Science, technology, and society
2. The Internet as equalizer /
The Internet as divider

Science, technology, and Society

What is “technology”?

- Textbook: “The application of science to solve problems in daily life.”
- Frequently used more broadly

Consider a tiny innovation commonly found in European hotels: attaching large cumbersome weights to room keys in order to remind customers that they should leave their key at the front desk every time they leave the hotel instead of taking it along on a tour of the city.

Latour, Bruno. “Technology Is Society Made Durable.”
The Sociological Review 38, no. S1 (May 1, 1990): 103–31.



Technology and society

Technology *mediates* the way we live and interact in society:



Weapons

Interpersonal dominance
Warfare, conquest, colonialism



Transportation

Trade
Migration



Medicine

Personal health
Reproduction
Demographic change



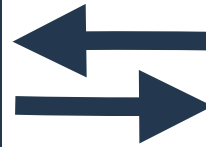
Automation

Increased leisure
Economic production

Communication ...

Science & Technology studies

Society & culture



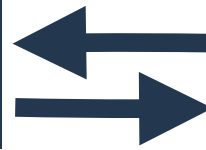
Science & technology

How does
technology
affect
society?

- Is technological change *exogenous*? something that happens *to* society?
Demographic transition theory, Weber on bureaucracy, etc.
- How can new science and technologies change the way we interact?
- How can new science and technologies alter power relations?

Science & Technology studies

Society & culture



Science & technology

How does
society
affect
technology?

- Production of scientific knowledge and technology is ***inherently social***.
- Social institutions and norms ***shape*** scientific knowledge.
Promote 'bad' science (phrenology, conversion therapy)
Hinder 'good' science (heliocentric astronomy, stem cells)
- Scientific knowledge is ***itself social***.
Kuhn: paradigms and structure of scientific revolutions
Latour: creation of a scientific fact