

Technology development pathways: enigmas of appropriate technology choice

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Abstract

The quest for technological development as a solution for sustainable development is the genesis of the multidimensional conflict between sustainability, competitive innovation and technological progress. Albeit persistent cognisance for appropriate technology solutions for a specific issue, the debate on the choice between short-run solutions and sustainability, local or global development, awareness and consumption, political gains, and citizens' benefits remains inconclusive. This paper argues that the debate stems from misunderstanding the term sustainability and the strategic misrepresentation of technology for political gain. Concurrently, the inability of the market failure rationale to choose appropriate technology to minimise the divergence between the private and social benefit makes the policy formulation problem more intricate. Furthermore, despite increasing awareness regarding the environmental status, failure to alter their consumption pattern to reduce the energy requirement exacerbates the issues. These multidimensional aspects can obscure possibilities for true sustainability and socially deliberate technological futures.

Keywords: Technological innovation · Choice of technology · Sustainability · Technology and politics · Technology and market failure · Technology and environmental awareness

1 Indispensable technological development

The transformation of early civilisation to modern civilisation is predominantly a consequence of adopting technology. Technology is the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes and, therefore, aims to solve the problems at hand more quickly and accurately. Considering that technology use requires energy, based on the fundamental foundation of scientific knowledge, technology has the propensity to impact society and the neighbourhood environment [1–3], at least in the long run, if not in the short run. Therefore, the success of new technology is conditional on its long-run impact [4].

The continuous evolution of civilisation alters the demands in various facets of life, hence the requirement for technology. Technological development, initially based on human needs, changes as society evolves. Albeit technology entwines development, the development outcome represents only a slice of that relationship [5]. This technological development results in economic growth [6, 7], environmental changes [8], depletion of minerals and organic resources [9], and inequality [10]. Therefore, while technology ameliorates society by providing solutions, it also breeds new problems. Since technology entrenches our society, there is a call for consensus regarding the specifications of the technologies to pursue a continuous growth process without stressing the Anthropocene.

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Appropriate Technology Choice And Development

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