Technology and Society Reader: Case Studies

Peter B. Heller

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This reader presents case studies from a number of sources that illustrate the mutual, reciprocal impact of technology on one hand and the social sciences, including government policy, on the other. Along the way, the introductory text and cases suggest that advanced technology (high tech) is not always compatible with the different settings in emerging societies with other geographic, economic, social, cultural, and political environments. This may be a delicate message to convey with reference to both civilian and military technology, whose spinoffs may be significant. In the frequent controversy on this issue, it is useful to remember that at the end of the day, both private and public decisions are made by individuals who bring their own "baggage" to the decision-making process. The fact that technology has made the world more of a "global village" and transparent, and thus technological diffusion and transfer easier, is also contextually relevant. But whatever technology's downsides, emphasized in this work, admittedly technology has generally (though not universally) helped raise both the world's standard of living and its quality of life.

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