

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL ACCELERATION: INSIGHTS FROM SOCIOLOGY OF SPEED

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Abstract

There is no dispute over the fact that technology brings both positive and negative changes in our social fabric. Today's society is the product of modern technology. It is because of technological progression that our daily life has undergone tremendous change, even our modes of thinking have changed. Rapid technological Innovation has helped impressively in urbanizing our society. Today there is no arena of human life that has not been influenced by technology. Therefore technology is very important factor of social change. In this context the present paper entitled "Science and Technology: A Sociological Account" will discuss science and technology from sociological point of view. Secondly it will discuss critically that how modernity, technology and globalization gave acceleration to social change. Finally, the paper will conclude by presenting explorative view on how science and technology continues to accelerate the social change which in turn leads to changes in values, norms, lifestyle and relationship.

Keywords: Science, Technology, Sociology, Culture, Social Change.

1. Introduction

In the present times the question about science and technology is more relevant than in any other times in history (Krishna: 1997). It is a common sentiment that life is getting faster. However is it accurate and, if so, what does it mean? To talk of life, or social life, speeding up necessitates some working definition of 'social life' and what it would be for it to accelerate. Unfortunately these notions are more elusive than they may otherwise appear. Do we mean that things feel faster or that they are actually becoming faster? Whether we intend the former subjective sense or the latter objective sense, we face the problem of how to measure this putative acceleration – this is an empirical challenge of measurement but also a conceptual one concerning the units of measurement (Rosa:2016). In western turbo capitalism, people move faster and faster, but still feel stuck in the same place. Harmut Rosa addresses such questions in a sweeping and impres-

sive way, offering answers to these methodological challenges and using them as a basis upon which to build a comprehensive theory of social acceleration. His account has two aspects: the circle of acceleration and the external 'motors' which drive it. These internal mechanisms of social acceleration are mutually reinforcing but this 'circle' is set into motion by external mechanisms which initiate the process and contribute to its progressive, though uneven, escalation through their respective impact on each of the three processes of acceleration within the circle. (Rosa:1998).

1.1. Dimensions of Social Acceleration

In his notion of the 'circle' of acceleration Rosa distinguishes between three distinct processes: technical acceleration, the acceleration of social change and the acceleration of the pace of life. Social acceleration becomes self-propelling because each of these processes contributes to the escalation of the others. A de-synchronised society is one where people continue to do many of the same

things, such as work and read or watch the news, but no longer do them at the same time as others. The time-space paths of individuals are becoming more variable and spread. People still work as much or more, but the standard 9-to-5, five-day work week has lost its dominance (Krishna:1995).

1.2. *High Speed Society and Technology*

There are three types of technical acceleration including Acceleration of transport, the Acceleration of communication and the Acceleration of production. This encompasses the “faster movement of humans, goods, messages, and military projectiles across the earth, but also the more rapid production of goods, the speedier conversation of matter and energy, and, though in lesser measure, the acceleration of services.” Thus increasing flexibility and “time sovereignty” that technology affords to us does not reduce but increases our sense of being squeezed by time (zaret-sky : 2017). Children who used to previously engage in offline world like community activities, sports or cultural programmes are now spending more and more time in virtual world. As a result, the communication gap between parents and children is widening. Earlier, communities and families were places of social bond and closure; a family acted as agent of virtual supervision of children. Social bonds have become stretched across space but compressed in time, giving way to accelerated forms of sociality. New events like Modernity, technology, gave acceleration and with the escape velocity children’s have become free from reality and history. In other words, they are free in every sense of the term. However, a certain speed is needed to stay in reality and history (scheuerman : 2009).

2. Social Time and Analytics of Speed

It is true that many people feel that the frantic speed and the changes around us are only surface-phenomena, that there is total inertia underneath. It feels like we are going nowhere, but faster (Adam: 2003). This, in fact, is not surprising at all: in the 18th century and for a

long time afterwards, until very recently, acceleration, growth, and innovation were perceived as progress. Therefore, social acceleration was perceived as historical motion. The idea or more than that, the experience was that life got better though growth and acceleration: we can overcome material scarcity through economic growth, scarcity of time through faster technologies, and a better, free life through changes in science and politics. Therefore, for about 250 years, parents were convinced that their kids would and should have a better life than they had (Debeit: 1996).

3. Technology and Social Change

We millennials are the future of this country and if we can’t put our phones down for one second to have a normal conversation, then who knows what’s going to happen to real-life human interaction. We feel that the day — or the year — was long, when it leaves a lot of traces in our memory and on our identity. We remember the things that truly impress us, the moments which we really appropriate. Therefore, if we have lots of experiences that resonate with us deeply, the year — or a life — seems long in hindsight. But in late-modern lives, we lose the capacity to “appropriate” our experiences: we do many, many things, but they do not really touch or affect us. At the end of the day, we have forgotten them. This is part of what is called alienation (Persona:2011). Because most of what we do does not leave any traces in our memory, biography, or identity, we feel time is flying by quickly. This is the twofold explanation for the subjectivist side of social acceleration. In the era of information and technological, not only are the rhythms of life faster, but the rate of change has itself accelerated. While many factors are contributing to this phenomenon, information and communication technologies are seen as the main drivers. The pace of social and cultural change is much more rapid than in any previous era. Technology and social change are related because they are both the dynamics of the social life. Technology does not immediately cause social change but it facilitates the change. The process of global-

ization continues to accelerate the social change which in turn leads to changes in values, norms, lifestyle and relationship(Renzension:2012).

4. Life in the Fast Lane

In the 21st century, however, the cultural background has changed completely: now, acceleration has become a structural necessity. It does not serve progress anymore; it is needed to prevent us from going down the drain. If Italy, or Germany, or the European Union, or Greece, or any other country in the world, does not speed up, grow, and innovate, it cannot maintain social stability we lose the status quo. This is a very dangerous and frustrating situation: people feel that each year we have to run faster and faster just to stay in place. No matter how efficient and fast we are this year, next year we have to run a bit faster, otherwise, we lose out. We no longer believe that life gets better, that scarcity will be overcome, that the struggle will ease through improvement. On the contrary: we know that it will get harder and harder. This, for me, is the sign of the postmodern condition: we are no longer running towards a bright horizon in the future, we are running away from the dark abyss behind our backs(Chaumont:2012).

4.1.

4.1.1. *Addiction*

In today's society, we are addicted to our phones, computers, tablets and other technological devices.

4.1.2. *Relationship*

We spend too much time on our devices checking social media pages and it can really take a toll not just on yourself, but the relationships you have.

4.1.3. *Real world*

Cell phones disconnect people with the real world and real relationship.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The discussion in this paper highlights the relation between science and technology. It is evident from the discussion made in this paper that science and technology co construct from the very beginning. It has also been noted that a change in technology inevitably leads to a change in culture, a people's way of life.

In recent years pace of social change has accelerated alongside the pace of technological change. Also Social bonds have become stretched across space but compressed in time, giving way to accelerated forms of sociality.

New technologies generate new kinds of time characterized by unpredictable change and have shown that the impact which is far from straightforward. Time-space compression is a constant theme in sociology of speed.

New events like Modernity, technology, gave acceleration and with the escape velocity individuals have become free from reality and history. In other words, individuals are liberated in every sense of the term. However, a certain speed is needed to stay in reality and history. Once the gravitational effect has been lost bodies, processes and messages are lost in the hyperspace.

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