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Dr. Pralhad V Chengte
Assistant Professor of Political
Science, Government First
Grade College, Humnabad,
Bidar District

Global politics in modern technology

Dr. Pralhad V Chengte

Abstract

The reality of international politics has rapidly grown in complexity. This complexity has been pressuring the discipline of International Relations (IR) to engage with new phenomena, concerns, and issue areas, and to translate them into innovative theorizations. Science and technology is one of these issues. Contemporary human life is tied to and thoroughly permeated by artifacts, technical systems and infrastructures, making it hard to imagine any international or global issue that does not have technological or scientific aspects. The growing preeminence of science and technology in today's world no longer fits into most existing analytical frameworks. Material elements, technical instruments, and scientific practices are intertwined with basically every aspect of global politics.

Keywords: Global politics, modern technology, Material elements, technical instruments

Introduction

Individuals today are no longer isolated but are active participants connected to the world through Internet and social networking technologies. The vocabulary has changed. Words such as Facebook, Twitter, Apps, and Cloud have meanings today that differ entirely from those less than a decade ago. In other words, at a low level students are already engaged, and to some extent knowledgeable, when they begin to study global politics. They need, however, to be encouraged to understand that making good choices requires being informed and reflective. To do this, they need to read, inquire, debate, and consider; not push facts and ideas into convenient boxes if they do not belong there. As well, the study of global politics is not simply moralizing. Political affairs certainly have an ethical dimension, but they are not solely about morality. The reality of international affairs has rapidly grown in complexity, pressuring the discipline of International Relations (IR) to engage with new phenomena. IR scholarship thus has to address concerns and issue areas by translating them into innovative theorizing. Science and technology is the most prominent among these it is hard to imagine any international or global issue that does not entail technological or scientific aspects. International security, statehood, global governance as well as warfare and foreign policy are thoroughly permeated by and embedded in material artifacts, technical systems and infrastructures, and scientific practices. As topic, science and technology attracts significant attention within IR; security studies are perhaps the most notable case, treating science and technology as key strategic tools in the Cold War. However, for many approaches within IR the analysis of science and technology remains fundamentally challenging. They have been largely treated as exogenous to theoretical schools and the field. Thus, while an increasing number of IR scholars are looking at the politics of science and technology, the subject matter needs to be scrutinized much more systematically. The discipline still needs to build up internal logics capable of integrally capturing the diverse meanings and dynamics of science and technologies.

Exploring the global politics of knowledge and technology

- The role of knowledge and technology in global/international power shifts/power relations.
- Global governance of technologies, IPR, and research
- Innovation in the context of state-company and military-commercial interactions/relations/competitions.
- The co-production of time and space of global knowledge economy in production chains and networks.
- Depicting and measuring the power dimensions of global knowledge shifts. The global "skill revolution", brain drain, and brain gain.

Correspondence

Dr. Pralhad V Chengte
Assistant Professor of Political
Science, Government First
Grade College, Humnabad,
Bidar District

Comparative perspectives on technological power

- National innovation and technological policies, strategies and their foreign/domestic dimensions.
- Different national perspectives on technological innovation and IPR.
- The role of technologies and knowledge in foreign policies and strategies (in emerging and leading technological powers)
- Political implications of long-term shifts in human capital: between brain-drain and brain-gain.
- International and transnational dimensions of national innovation systems.
- Technological change, development and regional (i.e. East Asian, Latin America, Scandinavia) experiences.
- Statesmen' and elites' perceptions and states responses to global knowledge Shifts.
- Negotiating science, expertise and politics in complex governance environments.

Conclusion

The subfield of global politics of science and technology entails a great variety of approaches. This introduction has focused on two different “techno-political” perspectives, interaction and co-production, indicating that they offer a productive theoretical starting point for research. These perspectives open up novel analytical understandings of classical problems of international politics.

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