

**Technology as a Metaphor:  
Mechanics of Power in the Global Development Marketplace**

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**Abstract:**

The issues of knowledge and its relationship to power have long been explored in literature. What adds a new level of complexity and indeterminacy to this discourse is the dimension of technology and its near universal valorization in the so-called “Information Age”. The current paper explores how ‘Technology’ as a metaphor perpetuates the agencies of power in the global development experience.

The paper has two principal sections. First, the notion of technology as a metaphor is framed within the broader discourse of knowledge and power. In the second section, the paper identifies some of the key mechanisms through which the metaphor of technology is used as a means of legitimizing certain viewpoints over others in the development discourse and practice.

The paper argues that the interchangeability and the purposive equivalency of technology and knowledge have made the relationship of knowledge to power not only more obscure but also less deterministic in terms of its benefactors and beneficiaries. The paper observes that through using the metaphor of technology as the currency for development knowledge, multilateral development institutions and donor states have significantly strengthened their hegemony over problematization of poverty and the knowledge for its elimination. Through analytical arguments and field-based experiences, the paper identifies and illustrates three broad sets of institutional practices of development organizations and donor states that continue to reinforce their hierarchy in status quo of power: 1) technology as a code for market, 2) knowledge networks as new modes of power, and 3) technology as a tool for co-opting participation. While the paper focuses on the domination aspects of the technology metaphor in global development project, it does conclude with a clear recognition of the potential of new technologies in the ‘democratization’ of development knowledge and practice.