

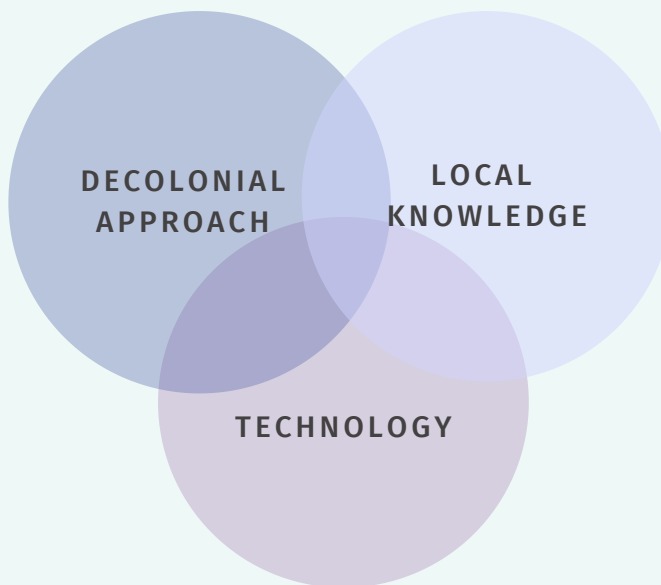
Social Technology

Presentation of the concept of "social technology" and its distinctive elements

Research projet : *Innovations for Social Inclusion - Quebec, Peru and Brazil*

<https://iupe.wordpress.com/2021/03/15/innovations-pour-linclusion-sociale-quebec-perou-bresil-publication-en-fr-en-esp/>

SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY IS ...



- A South American concept that refers to mechanisms of social transformation;
- As presented below, although it shares some common features with social innovation, this concepts differs from it in various ways.

1. ITS HISTORY IS LINKED TO DECOLONIALISM



The history of social technology is inscribed in the history of decolonialism. From its origins, starting with Ghandi's resistance to British imperialism, social technology has called into question the hegemony of occidental technologies and the superiority of occidental knowledge imposed as universal.

2. LOCAL ACTORS AS PROTAGONISTS



When a social technology is conceived or implemented, the 'local' is or should become the protagonist of the transformations. The emergence of peripheries as protagonists implies the valorization of popular knowledge and local resources, without neglecting the integration of external/scientific knowledge/resources, if needed. The local protagonism should transform production/consumption relations in order to guarantee more autonomy to local communities.

3. TECHNOLOGY AT THE HEART OF THE CONCEPT



Key to the concept is the term "technology" that embraces here an extended meaning as it could be :

- Material (an artefact, a device);
- Immaterial (a methodology or a way of doing); or
- Both

To be called a social technology, a given social innovation should have at its heart some type of *tool* – material or immaterial – that should be recognized (we can identify its *core principles of functioning*) and reframed (*sociotechnical reconfiguration*), i.e., it could be re-appropriated or re-signified in other contexts.

BEYOND ADDRESSING SOCIAL NEEDS ...

Social technologies seek to act on and change the conditions that produce inequalities and social exclusion.



In this regard, social technologies might sometimes share some common points with **critical approaches** of social innovations, described as transformative or radical.

ADVANTAGES

Identifying a given program or project as a social technology allows us to :



Identify its core mechanisms;



Increase our understanding of the process of social transformation;



Recognize the 'technology' that operates behind the program or project, in order **to increase the opportunities to reapply it in other contexts.**

INNOVATIONS VS. SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES?

By refuting views inspired by Schumpeter's concept of innovation, social technologies propose instead the perspective of a decolonial political process :

- It promotes a vision aligned against neoliberalism;
- It questions several premises of the Western-based view of 'progress', particularly the supremacy of universal 'technical/scientific' knowledge over historically situated localized native/indigenous knowledge.

Therefore, promoters of social technologies do not necessarily consider them as innovations (i.e., new ways of doing). On the contrary, very often they seek to recover ways of doing things that resisted colonialism, revalorizing :



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