



# Technologies of Choice?: ICTs, Development, and the Capabilities Approach (The Information Society Series)

*Dorothea Kleine*

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Information and communication technologies (ICTs)--especially the Internet and the mobile phone--have changed the lives of people all over the world. These changes affect not just the affluent populations of income-rich countries but also disadvantaged people in both global North and South, who may use free Internet access in telecenters and public libraries, chat in cybercafes with distant family members, and receive information by text message or email on their mobile phones. Drawing on Amartya Sen's capabilities approach to development--which shifts the focus from economic growth to a more holistic, freedom-based idea of human development--Dorothea Kleine in *Technologies of Choice?* examines the relationship between ICTs, choice, and development.

Kleine proposes a conceptual framework, the Choice Framework, that can be used to analyze the role of technologies in development processes. She applies the Choice Framework to a case study of microentrepreneurs in a rural community in Chile. Kleine combines ethnographic research at the local level with interviews with national policy makers, to contrast the high ambitions of Chile's pioneering ICT policies with the country's complex social and economic realities. She examines three key policies of Chile's groundbreaking Agenda Digital: public access, digital literacy, and an online procurement system. The policy lesson we can learn from Chile's experience, Kleine concludes, is the necessity of measuring ICT policies against a people-centered understanding of development that has individual and collective choice at its heart.

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