

Moral Progress through Disruption? The Role of (Socially Disruptive) Technologies for Progressive Moral Change

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According to the emerging paradigm of “technomoral change”, technology and morality co-evolve. Morality shapes the development of technology, and vice versa (Boenink, Swierstra and Sternerding 2010; Swierstra 2013). Accounts of moral progress differ in what roles they ascribe to different factors, such as particular individuals, institutions, or socio-economic developments, and how they see the interaction between those factors. Technology usually does not figure prominently in those accounts. In this talk, I address the so far underappreciated role of technological development in morally progressive developments. After having looked at the roles that technology played in some past instances of moral progress, I consider some new and emerging technologies and their potential for facilitating moral progress. In particular, I reflect on technologies that can be described as socially disruptive, such as artificial womb technology and advanced care robots, and how these technologies could disrupt social practices in a way that could be conducive to moral progress.