Technological Responsibility
and
Socialisation of S&T

Wiebe E. Bijker

Maastricht University

Final Workshop SS-ERC

Brussels, 26th June 2009

Questions...

How to mediate between a small firm and a university?

How to improve a research group's practices to cope with societal changes?

How to improve communication between a university and regional actors?

How to improve a parliament's instruments for evaluation of S&T?

Technological responsibility:

… aims to capture both:

- A positive attitude towards stimulating and nurturing role of S&T in society

+

- A recognition of inevitable risks of S&T

And thus pleads for balancing risks and benefits of S&T in an integrated way

3

Technological responsibility
implies:

- Responsibility of engineers and scientists:
  - To think about social goals and consequences

- Responsibility of politicians:
  - To think about S&T when realizing societal goals
  - To consider benefits & risks of S&T from the very beginning

- Responsibility of citizens:
  - To engage in public debates on S&T projects

Joint responsibility:
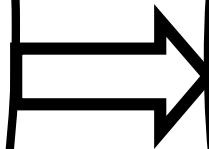
to stimulate S&T,

to engage in S&T at the earliest stage,

to democratically govern risks and benefits of S&T

Technological responsibility

$\updownarrow$

- recognition of living in a knowledge society and technological culture

- studies of risk and benefits in all stages of S&T development

- policy measures to nurture and govern S&T

Socialisation of science and technology

Socialisation
of science & technology:

- … aims to describe *societal* embeddedness of technology and science …

- by analysing
  - Institutional and cultural support processes
  - … at all societal levels, from micro to macro, in the following areas:
    - ➢ **practices**
    - ➢ **mediation**
    - ➢ **communication**
    - ➢ **evaluation**
    - ➢ **governance**
    - ➢ **innovation**

6

Requirements for socialisation of science & technology

For the role of civil society:

- Involvement of public also in 'non-ethical' and 'non-controversial' research topics

- Public involvement as integral part of research, not as mere social lubricant

- Openness as to problem-definition, goals, agenda, means, criteria

For the role of social sciences:

- Early role for all social sciences in management and governance of S&T

- Integral role for social sciences in ERA, and not only as problem-solver

- Role of social sciences in translating societal priorities and needs into a research and innovation agenda

Conclusion

Whether you want S&T to help solve societal problems...

... or you want S&T for their own (critical, cultural heritage) sake...

Socialisation of S&T is a key condition ...

... to be realized by enhancing **technological responsibility**

Crucial role for **social sciences and humanities**

8