

Enlightening the dark zone

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Propositions appended to the dissertation

ENLIGHTENING THE DARK ZONE

UNESCO, Science and the Technocratic Reordering of
the World in the global south, 1937-1959

Thomas Mougey

1. Science is and should be seen as a political and ideological imaginary. Science is not just a mirror of nature nor a neutral technical fix. From 1930, it spawned a prolific body of technocratic ideologies conveying diverging political assumptions about the world and intersecting with all existing political ideologies from the radical left to the authoritarian right.
2. Between the 1930s and 1950s, science became a dominant political imaginary of the post-war period. Science informed the re-ordering of post-war society by either re-inventing or reinforcing existing national, imperial and international modes of governance.
3. Technocracy was a disputed political ideology. Competing conceptualizations of technocratic rule fuelled controversies as each served conflicting political aspirations.
4. In contrast with their proclaimed universal-scientific character, technocratic ideologies often excluded or silenced other voices.
5. Post-war technocracy did not originate in the Western Great Powers but emerged across the globe, in the global colonized and decolonized south as well as within the emerging UN system.
6. Scientists were significant political agents of the mid-twentieth century. They not only politicized science but also successfully enforced the technocratic re-organization of the political order after World War II.
7. Today, ecological science and environmental technocracy dominate our understanding of the environmental crisis. However, environmental scholars should not overlook the fact that ecology and technocracy formed some of the core ideological, political and cultural building blocks of the Great Acceleration of the 1950s that is said to have precipitated the environmental crisis.
8. Valorisation is not a-political nor is scientific research relevant and beneficial to society *per se*.
9. The idea of a scientific Dark Zone remains relevant to problematize the segregating organization of contemporary international science: Southern scientists are still marginalized from the main development of modern science. They continue to suffer from the same colonial attitudes and predatory practices from western scientists as those that condemned UNESCO's plan to include southern voices in the concert of science.
10. "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well." – Virginia Woolf
11. Power meters should be banned from professional cycling races.

Maastricht, 28 November 2018