In 1956, C. Wright Mills published “The Power Elite,” a book that describes how modern industrial societies rely on the institutionalization of social life for the management of human, material and intellectual and natural resources. Although, Mills centered his argument around three specific institutions (military, corporate, and political), it is necessary to recognize that what Scott G. Knowles and Stuart W. Leslie identify as “postwar science” has been a key element for the creation of an institutionalized form of authority, under which citizens seem to be simple subordinates or masses. Even when this setting has to be contextualized to the United States in the postwar and cold war, the hegemony of this country reflected in the outdated term “First World” and as product of the increasing globalization (not just economic) have had a visible effect in the world’s social, economic and political orders. Is in the incorporation of technoscientific knowledge into international governance structures that technocracy justifies “the supremacy of technoscientific elites”.

In this sense, the discourse to promote STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) vocations seems a primary need in international policies to enhance the preparation of qualified professionals for high-tech jobs, who should be properly trained through institutionalized education systems. For example, the Obama administration has paid extreme attention to the improvement of STEM education “to realize the vision of a highly diverse, creative, and sufficient STEM workforce and a STEM-literate citizenry” (www.whitehouse.gov). Does a STEM-literate citizenry a global need? Is the STEM discourse a myopic approach to perpetuate “modern” post-industrial values that claims to give more opportunities to those who have been underserved by integrating them into factory model schools that undermine differences and imposes homogenization through standardization?
Under this perspective, it is necessary to adopt a critical perspective of the role of science and technology in the world. First and foremost, it is essential to recognize that technoscience has become a form of power under which Western-centric are being subtly imposed. The key has been to “export” standardized technologies that respond to particular ideologies shaped by the ideal of scientific knowledge as a source of civilization and modernization. Cellphones, computers, refrigerators, televisions, even internet need a certain level of standardization to be able to interconnect and function. This is where two of the three institutions mentioned by Mills acquire importance. When technoscience is linked to political and corporate interests, then it becomes a source of control through the creation of new “needs”. Just ask a college student if s/he could live without a computer and a cellphone? In an era when information becomes a valuable resource, technoscience has become central in the process of globalization. Actually, those who are able to work in technoscience positions are generally better paid than, sometimes, even a doctor! Even when the expansion of technoscience has become a form of neo-colonialism linked to post-industrial and post-fordism approaches, hasn’t an indigenous child in the global South the same right to make good money and have more chances to survive by entering into this “system’ than a white privileged child in the United States?

Unfortunately, in the current era the best opportunities can be achieved most of the times by becoming part of the system, even if this system does not recognize cultural or other social differences or even when the system extends the unfortunate division between human and nature through different representations that go from the planned design of urban areas to the construction of particular “centers of knowledge” intended to maintain a production model. Is in this space that Science and Technology Studies become more relevant. Then, we should ask, what counts as knowledge, who determines its legitimacy, and what are the trade-offs in this power dynamic?
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