

The emergence of S&T indicators: why did governments supplement statistics with indicators.

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Benoît Godin

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Abstract

Science and technology (S&T) indicators are widely used in policy documents as well as in science and technology studies. This paper traces their origins and shows that it was the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that first imagined and developed science and technology indicators. In the 1960s, the debate on technological gaps between the United States and Europe gave the OECD the opportunity to develop the first world-wide indicators on science and technology. The National Science Foundation (NSF) followed in the 1970s and improved the methodology of indicators on science and technology with its publication entitled *Science Indicators*. Science and technology indicators remain contested however, because centered on inputs rather than outputs, and because preoccupied mainly with the economic dimension of science and technology.



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Keywords

S&T indicators; OECD; NSF

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