

## The Technocratic Turn, 1937-1952

*Anna Vallye*

This paper traces a set of historical realignments in the professional identity of American architects, which may be called a technocratic turn. In its course, the architectural profession attempted to expand its disciplinary purview from the design of built structures to the coordination of large-scale territorial operations, and to reconfigure its constitutive modes of practice from skill and invention to techniques of management and knowledge production. This was accompanied, and indeed motivated, by the consolidation of the federal state apparatus and the integration of the national economy as a whole, including the building industry as its most strategically significant sector, within the legislative domain of the state during the New Deal and war mobilisation. Beyond instances of architects working for the state, or effects of given legislation on architectural projects and practices, the technocratic turn must be seen as a vector splicing architectural and governmental rationalities at mid-century.

### Biography:

Anna Vallye is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Washington University in St. Louis. Previously, she was Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and curator of the special exhibition *Léger: Modern Art and the Metropolis* (2013-2014). She holds a Ph.D. in architecture history from Columbia University, where her dissertation was titled *Design and the Politics of Knowledge in America, 1937-1967: Walter Gropius, Gyorgy Kepes*.