

## PREFACE

In recent years, values and virtues in scientific practice appear to have been rediscovered. Within and outside academia, concern about scientific fraud, data manipulation, plagiarism and the like has increased enormously. In all disciplines, in all faculties, and in all institutes for academic research, new measures have been initiated—for example, workshops on research ethics, hot lines to report abuses, special courses, codes of conduct, more transparency, and stricter systems of peer review. Some blame the typical career system, which demands publications and visibility, for the (alleged) increase in fraud, data trimming, and the like. Others refer to the perverting effects of the need to attract external funds to do research and the quick results that commissioning parties demand. All appear to agree, however, that some *ethical reveal* in science is in place; the relevance of values and virtues must be reconfirmed and elaborated. This book agrees with this latter conclusion, but for a completely different reason.

The concern here is not about doing methodologically sound research or about what might possibly threaten that activity. The subject of this book is the relationship between science and politics, between scientist advisors and policymakers. According to many observers, this relationship has been changing lately. Some identify a scientification of policymaking, that is, an increase in technocratic thinking on political issues. Others note a politicization of science by which they mean that political or other partisan interests ever more determine scientific practice and outcomes (e.g., Jasanoff 1990; Letsch & Weingart 2011). Both

types of commentators agree, however, that there is a problem of one side intruding upon the sphere of the other. These critics of contemporary developments maintain that each sphere should be able to function autonomously, following its own type of rationality. Policymaking belongs to the sphere of value-deliberation; it should not be forced into the mould of technical reasoning. Science, conversely, should be free from values and politically neutral.

In this book, the ideal of a value-free science will be contested. It is argued that to be a good scientist, more is needed than avoiding fraud and data manipulation and knowing how to create valid knowledge. Good scientists are also involved in making social and political value-judgments. They must in fact possess a certain virtue at doing so.

Within the fields of Public Administration and Policy Analysis, the concern for values in research and in scientific advice is not new. The issue has been addressed, in one way or another, as part of a variety of subjects. It arises in discussions about the type of knowledge these disciplines can provide (e.g., in the Waldo-Simon debate). It is often active in the background of debates on interpretive versus positivist research. It was at issue in particular comments of mainstream Public Administrative research (as in the Minnowbrook Manifesto). Many more examples can be given. Here, the ideal of a value-free science and scientific policy advice will be addressed head-on. To do so, findings from policy analysis, the philosophy of science, and ethics will be brought together. The formal position of scientific advisors, and therefore their dependency upon the political agent they advise, can take many different forms. The advisor might be a completely independent (university) researcher, a contract researcher, a partner in a think tank, or a government employee. The particular type of relationship might bring all types of particular problems and opportunities (see for instance Bijker et al. 2009; Vining & Weimer 2017; Letsch & Weingart 2011). In this book, these typical principal-agent issues will be neglected. It focusses instead on the general aspects and complications of the relationship between scientific advisor and policymaker.

In addressing these issues, the argument of this book connects to an older research-tradition that encompasses Plato, Machiavelli, Weber, and many others who have analysed the relationship between knowledge and power or between science and politics. Its intention is not to offer a chronological overview of classical authors; nor does it want to draw a complete picture of all the issues and positions in this field. It focusses on

a particular problem and tries to address it systematically. Of course, that does not mean that Weber and the others do not turn up in the argument.

This book is not a report of an empirical investigation. There is no attempt to verify reported trends (such as those on an increase in scientific fraud or the politicization of science); nor is there any intention to explain such phenomena. In this book, arguments and positions are discussed; it questions presuppositions and investigates logical consistency. The focus is not on what actually occurs, on what scientists do or on how that can be explained but rather on the question of what good scientific policy advisors should do.

In its intention, this book, at least in one aspect, resembles critical analyses of dominant discourses. It tries to bring into the light aspects of scientific advice that are often neglected, things that currently appear to be overlooked in the self-understanding of many scientists. Contrary to critical approaches, however, this book does try to unveil hidden power-positions or processes. Furthermore, the argument in this book does not challenge the scientific ambition of creating valid knowledge about the empirical world. In fact, it endorses that ambition.

A word on scientific knowledge. In this book, no particular scientific epistemology is defended. It merely presupposes, without further argument, that knowledge of the observable world is possible. More precisely, it takes as given the possibility of distinguishing better from worse beliefs about how the observable world actually is. These beliefs might concern causal theories or interpretations of meaning. Arguments for a radical scepticism or relativism about the possibilities of science, or knowledge in general, are neglected in this book.

The issues that this book addresses are of relevance for scholars that are involved in policy advice, but also for students and policymakers. Members from these different audiences might be more accustomed to some elements of this book than with others. For readers who are already familiar with the arguments that are made in the first part: the second part of the book can be read independently.

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