

How Values in Scientific Discovery and Pursuit Alter Theory Appraisal

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Abstract

Philosophers of science readily acknowledge that non-epistemic values influence the discovery and pursuit of scientific theories, but many tend to regard these influences as epistemically uninteresting. The present paper challenges this position by identifying three avenues through which non-epistemic values associated with discovery and pursuit in contemporary pollution research influence theory appraisal: (1) by guiding the choice of questions and research projects, (2) by altering experimental design, and (3) by affecting the creation and further investigation of theories or hypotheses. This analysis indicates that the effects of these values are sufficiently complex and epistemically significant to merit further attention.

Keywords: scientific discovery; pursuit; non-epistemic values; hormesis; endocrine disruption; multiple chemical sensitivity

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