The Paradox of Scientific Authority

The Role of Scientific Advice in Democracies

Wiebe E. Bijker
Roland Bal
Ruud Hendriks

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Like any piece of scholarly work, *The Paradox of Scientific Authority* has a frontstage and a backstage. This preface is one place to say a few words about the research process and the writing of our book, especially by thanking the numerous people with whom we worked in the course of this project. The other places are the third and last chapters, where we will say more about the research and the writing.

Doing fieldwork at the Gezondheidsraad (the Health Council of the Netherlands) in the intimacy of its secretariat, meeting rooms, and offices was a true pleasure. In this book we describe how the Gezondheidsraad’s openness and self-critical attitude play important parts in its coordination work and enable it to live the paradox of scientific authority. Here we put our analytical distance aside and express our gratitude for the hospitality and cooperation we experienced.

We are indebted to many people. First and foremost, we thank the Gezondheidsraad for giving us the opportunity to enter the sanctuaries of science advisory work, to talk with members of the Gezondheidsraad’s scientific and non-scientific staffs, and to use the Gezondheidsraad’s archives. In addition to the interviewees and focus-group participants mentioned in the appendixes, we thank Marja van Kan, André Knottnerus, Wim Passchier, and Jan Sixma. Research assistants Marjo Hermans, Marlous Blankensteijn, and Agnes Kovacs helped us at various stages of research and manuscript preparation.

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