

Cambridge Elements

Elements in the Philosophy of Science
edited by
Jacob Stegenga
University of Cambridge

OBJECTIVITY IN SCIENCE

Stephen John
University of Cambridge



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-009-06533-7 — Objectivity in Science
Stephen John
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009065337

DOI: 10.1017/9781009063647

© Stephen John 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-009-06533-7 Paperback

ISSN 2517-7273 (online)

ISSN 2517-7265 (print)

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Objectivity in Science

Elements in the Philosophy of Science

DOI: 10.1017/9781009063647
First published online: May 2021

Stephen John
University of Cambridge

Author for correspondence: Stephen John, sdj22@cam.ac.uk

Abstract: Objectivity is a key concept both in how we talk about science in everyday life and in the philosophy of science. This Element explores various ways in which recent philosophers of science have thought about the nature, value and achievability of objectivity. The first section explains the general trend in recent philosophy of science away from a notion of objectivity as a 'view from nowhere' to a focus on the relationship between objectivity and trust. Section 2 discusses the relationship between objectivity and recent arguments attacking the viability or desirability of 'value free' science. Section 3 outlines Longino's influential 'social' account of objectivity, suggesting some worries about drawing too strong a link between epistemic and ethical virtues. Section 4 turns to the value of objectivity, exploring concerns that notions of objectivity are politically problematic, and cautiously advocating in response a view of objectivity in terms of invariance.

Keywords: philosophy of science, objectivity, bias, trust, values in science

© Stephen John 2021

ISBNs: 9781009065337 (PB), 9781009063647 (OC)
ISSNs: 2517-7273 (online), 2517-7265 (print)

Contents

1 Objectivity: Processes and Products	1
2 Values, Interests and Ideals	13
3 Values, Diversity and Debate	35
4 Is Objectivity Just Male Subjectivity?	46
References	62