Review of: "Social responsibility, disciplinary moral identity, and not-so-value-free biomedical research(ers)"

Joseph Graves Jr[1]

1 North Carolina A&T State University

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The author provides a solid review of the fallacies of the “value-neutral” view of the scientific enterprise. However, the review stops short of providing the reader an understanding of how the scientific enterprise is always associated with the social dominance characteristics of the societies that produce the scientists themselves. For example, there is no discussion of how in modern capitalist nations, the values associated with the enterprise are so often driven by profit. This omission is particularly troubling in the sense of the growing subordination of scientists to the “translational" research model in capitalist societies. Here governmental funds are directed to do basic research in ways designed to support the privatization of research outcomes. Such privatization, by necessity supports that agendas of particular constituencies, and are not directed towards providing social justice ends. The lack of attention to social justice, in turn impacts what scientific questions are pursued, not because these are not valid questions to ask, but because the corporations who employ the scientists gain greater profit by these discoveries (Graves JL Jr, Kearney M, Barabino G, Malcom S. Inequality in science and the case for a new agenda. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2022 Mar 8;119(10):e2117831119. doi: 10.1073/pnas.2117831119.) Research in pharmaceutical development is an excellent of the gap between the profit motive and development of interventions that would benefit the majority of people without the use of drug treatment.

The author does not discuss the relationship between the demography of the scientific workforce and its values. This is particularly disturbing in that all societies are structured in social dominance hierarchies. It is nonsense to think that the values of the enterprise are not also impacted by the systemic underrepresenation of women, LGBTQ+, and racially-subordinated people. In countries such as the United States, the historic underrepresentation of racialized people led to the predominance of racial misconceptions that entirely structured research in biomedicine throughout the 20th century. These misconceptions are only now being seriously challenged (for example see the recent report of the National Academy of Sciences USA on the use of population descriptors in genetics and genomic research: https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26902/using-population-descriptors-in-genetics-and-genomics-research-a-new). So far, there has been no such policy advances resulting from modern thinking addressing racial misconceptions in human biological variation and how it structures biomedical research in Europe, India, the Middle East, or East Asia.

In conclusion, while this paper is a solid review of the problems of the “value neutral” model of science, it does not spend enough time discussing how the values of scientists come about, and are related to their own positions within the social hierarchy. Without such a perspective the paper falls short of providing potential solutions to help science become more

likely to provide outcomes that contribute to social justice.