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

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This theoretical paper addresses a major issue in the literature about the governance of technology, and the extent to which scientists, engineers, and healthcare professionals address the ethical implications of their research. This has become an important feature of the governance of technology literature, which stands for the importance of scientific practice involving a diverse set of stakeholders and producing knowledge that is more attuned to the needs of society. My understanding of the author's argument is that such a request for research that is aligned with societal goals is less urgent than suggested by other authors, since researchers in "value-ladden" fields like biomedicine already engage with ethical considerations of their work, and it is not straightforward what improvement can be gained from engaging with social scientists.

As this is a speculative and theoretical paper, the author cites relevant articles in the literature. However, I find one major flaw related to the author's conceptualization of a "co-production model of science." I understand the model suggested as the Mode 2 model suggested by Michael Gibbons and colleagues in 1994, which is part of a decades-long trajectory about the duties and roles of science in society. While this has been addressed with early conceptualizations such as technology assessment, this has had several ramifications, including constructive technology assessment, anticipatory governance, and real-time technology assessment, to name a few. Among the latest iteration of this are recent frameworks of responsible research and innovation. This is surprising since the author does seem to be aware of this literature, maybe with a different interpretation of what is at stake. The first mention of co-production is (without a citation provided), "For the newly emerging co-production ideal, scientists ought to steer their research towards socially desirable ends and, to do so, they must integrate the views and stances of other stakeholders and of the general public into their work." The second mention cites Jasanoff, 2004 and MacNaghten, 2021. Jasanoff, 2004 has developed the "idiom" of co-production in a very different context and direction, calling for the recognition of the ways in which epistemic and normative concerns emerge and shape each other in society; it is not a model or framework for ordering science-society relationships.

The author takes issue with the notion of "value-free science," an ideal promoted by authors such as Michael Polanyi decades ago, suggesting that science should be kept isolated of normative concerns in order to produce the best and right knowledge. However, this notion has been long abandoned in STS and the author does not provide any evidence that this is taken seriously today in scientific or policy circles. So this rests relevant from the overall analysis presented. In this regard, the core of the argument is that fields such as biomedicine are inherently value-laden, and researchers already engage with the moral aspects of their work, mainly finding therapies for patients. As patients are already in

communication with scientists to develop better therapies, this diminishes the need to improve science-society frameworks. This, however, presents a reductionist view of what ethical dilemmas are faced in biomedical research, which includes considerations of access to therapies, the efficacy of treatments, available alternatives, protection of privacy and consent, and implications on wider society, to name a few.

The third conceptual shortcoming I identify is the moral disciplinary identity. Sure, the “identity” of researchers has been a subject of study in sociological literature, including the “moral economy.” It seems like the author aims to develop and propose the concept of “disciplinary moral identity.” If that is the goal, the paper should be reorganized in a way that reflects this aim. I agree with the author’s point that disciplines shape their practitioner’s way of thinking and standing in the world.

As a whole, this paper could be organized more clearly so the argument is developed in a more coherent way for the reader. Different sections address different topics, which seems disjointed at times. For example, section 3 addresses AI in healthcare, and its potential for overmedicalization. Section 5 addresses the limitations of interdisciplinarity to resolve moral quandaries and power imbalances between scientists and bioethicists and social scientists. In the last section, the author turns to the limitations of public engagement to improve the social relevance of research, but this comes too late in the paper, as this is a key consideration.

One point that the author comes back to again and again in the paper is whether scientists do reflect on the implications of their research. Arguments against and in favor are provided. As this is a central aspect of this paper’s theorization, it would be useful to be more clear about the author’s stance and provide more evidence or examples.