



Political and Social Forces Shaping Political Science Research and Knowledge Transfer in the Netherlands

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The development and autonomy of universities and academic disciplines within them is not a simple linear process but displays cycles that reflect predominant views in politics and society on the role of science and academic institutions. In these cycles, episodes of strengthening autonomy and democratization of universities are alternated by

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times of increasing government control, emphasis on relevance and efficiency, fitting in with strategic topics on the national policy agenda that appear imminent or urgent and calls for ideas on policy problems and solutions for the future. In this way, the relationship between academic institutions and government resembles the cultural dynamics in other domains such as the economy, social policy and immigration (Namenwirth & Weber, 1987). Research funding and programming in the Netherlands, for example, shows stability for periods of 5–8 years, interrupted by changes in emphasis and priority. Changes in the national research agenda of Dutch governments thus can be considerable, though budget changes typically are more incremental. Compared to other domains of public policy, academic research and education are not strong topics in the competition for political attention and spending (Breeman & Timmermans, 2014).

While autonomy as a concept implies a degree of institutional self-protection and resistance to external forces, universities typically appear to have permeable boundaries with their environment. From a government perspective, they are considered strategic institutions for innovation, creating a highly skilled labour force and promoting economic development. Universities are an object of politics, and university managers as well as many scholars working in academic departments must span the boundaries between the internal and the external sphere. In the Netherlands, academic institutions were established and acquired autonomy from the late sixteenth century onwards, with a time span of just over 400 years between the oldest (Leiden, 1575) and the youngest university (Open University, 1984). In the mid-eighteenth century, the first Academy of Sciences was created, and after some realignments, the—now—Royal Academy of Sciences is the main contemporary and prestigious scholarly institution nationwide. In the 1950s, funding and coordination organizations were established, such as the Dutch Research Council (1950) and the National Association of Universities (1956, under a different name, current name taken in 1985). As in most countries in Europe, political science, along with other social sciences, emerged and became embedded in the national academic system after the natural sciences and other disciplines had established themselves.

The chapter considers the relationship between governments and universities in the Netherlands, with a special focus on political science and the way in which scholars within this academic domain deal with forces from their political and social environment. While Dutch science

policy and fundamental research is dominated by some main actors and coalitions formed by them, individual scholars also may experience effects of externalization and increasing political and public debate on the position and relevance of scientific knowledge. For political science, government policy, control and trends in knowledge use and impact are particularly pertinent, as government and its democratic functions and performance itself are the central object of study. In this sense, political science may analyse any forms of co-optation of academe by governments as much as it is subjected to them.

We begin with a macro perspective, presenting the discipline of political science and its institutionalization, followed by a discussion of the main features of research programming and funding in general, and the domestic policy advisory system as two important contexts in which political scientists find their place and become active in any kind of role. Then we move on to a more microscopic view of the orientation and activities of political scientists in the Netherlands, the roles they assume at the boundary of their academic basis and the political and social environment.

How do scholars in this field interpret and act, given the regulatory regime of higher education, funding programmes and evolving impact requirements? *We suggest that, in the Dutch case, in between a scholar-selected relevance of science and a state-directed relevance of science there is also a society-induced relevance of scholarly work as a third type.* This type, to which we will refer as *entrepreneurial relevance*, and on whose characteristics we will enlarge below, may evolve due to experiences with limited state funding or apparent market (public sector or private sector)-demand, to which the motto and location of the authors' universities may testify: Twente is labelled an 'entrepreneurial university', Leiden University expanded a 'Hague mission' sort of collaboration with government institutions of the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, centred on The Hague. This third form may also be a typical venue for applied research, and it also may better *take into account the country's pragmatic and consensus-building political and social culture* (Van der Meulen, 1998).

Another reason for considering this third form is that research across different disciplines shows that scholars find it hard to interpret and deal with the impact policies of government and intermediary research organizations, but in their behaviour they actually do engage with many and diverse external parties to deliver their knowledge (de Jong et al., 2016: 112). This last point also is a main finding in a recent study of advisory roles of political scientists in the Netherlands (Pattyn & Timmermans, forthcoming).

POLITICAL SCIENCE AS AN INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCIPLINE IN THE NETHERLANDS

The discipline of political science in the Netherlands relies on a long tradition and is firmly institutionalized. The first pioneering professor of ‘politics’, Daniel Heinsius, was appointed as early as 1613, at the time with a selective and small student population. As in many other Western countries, the major rise of political science occurred in the post-war years of the twentieth century, when behaviouralism gained prominence in the social sciences and in economics. The first three chairs in political science were established between 1948 and 1953. In 1963, the first full professor of political science actually trained in the discipline was appointed, and in 1967, political science was officially included in the Academic Statute regulating education at universities (Reinalda, 2007). During that period, the research agenda of political science also came to be actively debated, a discussion which actually contributed to the separation of public administration from political science. This segmentation may be considered characteristic for the Dutch profile of the discipline. For instance, unlike other countries, Dutch public administration scholars have their own association (*Vereniging voor Bestuurskunde*), which functions independently from the Dutch Political Science Association (*Nederlandse Kring voor de Wetenschap der Politiek*). In addition, in the majority of universities, political science and public administration are co-existing in separate institutes and with different programmes, sometimes even at different faculties. Hence, when considering the discipline of political science in the Netherlands, this hybrid profile should be borne in mind.

At present, the political science academic community is large in proportion to population size, with about 460 scholars with a Ph.D. in political science/public administration working at one of the fourteen departments in the field (Pattyn & Timmermans, forthcoming). A somewhat lower number of junior scholars engaged in Ph.D. research and in full-time junior teaching positions may be added. Political science in the country not only expanded, it also always had an international orientation, indicated by the fact that the first Dutch political science chair, Jan Barents, was a member of the IPSA Executive Committee in the early 1950s. At present, almost 55% of the scholars in the field have worked abroad, or had a foreign country (and university) as departure point in

their career development. Participation in projects, conferences and publications at the international level is also high (PROSEPS Work Group 2, April 2019).

Data from the Dutch Association of Universities on enrollment numbers indicate a strong rise in the student population in political science since 2010, as compared to the previous decade and earlier years. In bachelor programmes, during the period 2010–2018 the number of students doing political science or a programme with a strong political science component doubled, as compared to the decade before (over 60,000 for the total nine-year period), and in master programmes it even tripled (over 30,000). These numbers not only indicate the firm basis of political science in higher education; the trend has additional significance for reasons of contingency:

While student numbers increased, the direct government budget did not evolve on a par with that rise. Instead, governments increased student fees and forced the universities to increase teaching loads. At many universities, the student-staff ratio went up and led to higher teaching work pressure and inversely to declining time for research, in particular for major research projects. Job advertisements for university staff mentioning a teaching load of 70% of total employment time are no exception. Even when such figures are not mentioned, the same percentage often applies in practice. To an important extent, substantial research time for staff depends on external funding of project proposals, which in the Netherlands is highly competitive. Since the early 2000s, universities minimized internal budgets for creating Ph.D. positions. Such positions are now mostly available only with external funding either by the National Research Council, or by public or private organizations via contract research projects. Further general characteristics of national research programming and budgeting will be discussed in the next section.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH: POLICIES FOR RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND RELEVANCE

To understand policy pressures on the current portfolio of research in any discipline in the Netherlands, it is useful to start in the early 1990s. At that time, the government started to structure its science policy along two main lines. The first line attempted to stimulate excellent science by creating a restricted number of graduate schools in a few disciplines in which the Netherlands would internationally excel. That attempt failed,

as universities organized all Ph.D. training in graduate schools, and excellent research could be identified in many disciplines, with the result that science organizations coined the low countries an academic highland.

In 1998, the focus shifted to stimulating careers of excellent scientists, which was strongly supported by the science organizations and became a real policy success. The core of this policy is the *Veni, Vidi* and *Vici* grants, which NWO, the National Research Council, provides to young postdocs, early career scientists and mid-career scientists to develop innovative projects and research lines. The programme grew in a few years to almost 200 million Euro. In 2006 the programme was copied by the new European Research Council, in which researchers from Dutch universities were relatively successful. By 2013, the budget for these grants had doubled to almost 400 M € (Van Arensbergen et al., 2013).

The second line in science policy since 1990 has been characterized by pressures to improve the relevance of public science funding for the Dutch industry. This policy has not been stable and remains an ongoing topic of interdepartmental contestation between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. In the early 1990s, analogous to the above-discussed experience, governments tried to create a few technological top institutes in fields where the Netherlands could be economically competitive. Around 2000, that policy was replaced by large innovation programmes funded by the public gas revenues that the government had set aside for investments in economic restructuring. In 2010, these funds were reduced, and the government implemented a new policy which focused on nine Economic Top Sectors. The approach gave the Minister of Economic Affairs a stronger role in science policy and forced the National Research Council (NWO) and public research institutes to allocate a considerable part of their budget to industry-led research programmes. For the Social Science Board of NWO, this implied that 20% of their budget had to be allocated to industry-related research (Koier et al., 2016). Science policy, in this way, came to involve a substantive element of state-directed relevance.

In its science policy papers, the government also mentioned the social relevance of scientific research. Until 1990 the minister of Education, Culture and Sciences had separate budgets for joint research programmes with other ministries, but in 1990 this task was delegated to NWO. Other ministries, however, were not eager to work with NWO, and subsequently cut down their research budgets. The policy line got some impetus in 2015, when the Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences together

with the science organizations launched the National Science Agenda. While in the policy paper that announced the initiative, that Agenda served multiple goals, the most remarkable element was that it would be based on questions that citizens could send in. In the document, that participatory element was justified by referring to the interest and trust of the public in science, as well as on the grounds that the public is highly educated and in many ways a stakeholder in the impacts of science. Inspiration did also come from the Responsible Research and Innovation initiatives in the Horizon2020 programme of the European Commission, which was well received in the Netherlands.

Politically, though, this was a two-faced initiative, as citizens' participation also served to counterbalance the heavy emphasis on the economic value of science and regain some control over the allocation of the NWO budget. For good reasons it was expected that the public would be more interested in 'blue sky research' than the Minister of Economic Affairs and the captains of industry. The National Science Agenda was created out of 12,000 questions citizens had sent in, which were structured around 25 themes. Currently the agenda is used for an NWO funding programme for consortia of multidisciplinary researchers from universities and applied research organizations. Selection of proposals in the first two rounds was done by panels of up to fifteen members covering all fields of research, and having considerable experience with the impacts of science. Projects ranged from quantum microscopy to the histories of hunger in Europe, and from health care to sustainable economies. In every project, researchers need to show how citizens and civil society organizations are involved and in what ways their questions are addressed.

Compared to the Top Sector Approach, neither the state nor industry was, or is, in control of what is being researched. Instead, the state facilitates what are considered "productive interactions" between science and society. Thus the initiative may serve as a model for other countries to accommodate the tension which science organizations may feel between the need for autonomy and the political pressure to assume responsibility for the impacts of science.

Funding

Science policies usually come with funding, though in the Netherlands scientists often feel that new policies are financed from existing or even decreasing budgets. For the Economic Top Sector policy this is true, even

if the national science budget still shows a steady though small annual growth. Three developments in the allocation of funding help to understand the feeling of scarce resources. First, as mentioned above, student numbers increased and concomitantly the teaching load for academic staff. Second, scarcity may be caused by rises in the budget for medical science. While this never was announced in any policy document, between 1990 and 2010 public funding for medical science grew fast from 200 million euro to nearly 1 billion euro per year (Horlings & Van der Meulen, 2010). Third, the relative proportion of competitive funding to direct funding for university research grew, in particular due to the career grants scheme as well as to EU funding. Because these competitive grants usually cover only part of the full costs of research projects, universities need to match these grants. As a result, internal university allocation of research funds came to be steered strongly by competitive public funding allocation. This effect was reinforced by universities making academic careers more dependent on the results of such competition. The consequence was that NWO obtained and still obtains many more applications than it can absorb, and actual success rates for some schemes fell to below 10%.

Effects on Research

The effects of these different policies in terms of pressures on research agendas, funding opportunities and (perceived) autonomy are not uniform across disciplines, fields, research groups or universities. Investigation of effects at departmental level has shown that differences between research groups of the same disciplines are as large as differences between disciplines. Some research groups have been able to create a very stable influx of competitive funding (Koier et al., 2016). Studies of the impact of excellence funding schemes show that some of this funding accumulates around clusters of researchers, who are able to acquire such funding themselves, win prizes and thereby attract young researchers who in turn obtain this type of funding. The result is a self-perpetuating dynamic of scientific excellence which provides research with a strong autonomous position towards funding bodies and their own organization (Hessels et al., 2016).

Other groups are depending on a variety of funding sources. While that creates more uncertainty, some researchers again prove very successful up to a level that makes them really autonomous in their research strategy. Groups within faculties with large bachelor and master programmes may

acquire such autonomy through research funding attached to these education programmes, depending on their universities' allocation models and opportunities to organize teaching at relatively low costs. But just as there are winners in the new game, there are losers as well, who are less fortunate and depend on contract research for industry or government bodies, or even lack that opportunity and have to focus on teaching, management or leave the academic world.

Effects in Political Science

To understand the effects of these different factors in the field of political science, it is useful to review the current portfolio of projects funded by NWO, the National Research Council, which places political science and governance studies in one category. In January 2021, the NWO database included 141 research projects in political science and governance studies, after removing double counts, projects for supporting the management of research programmes, and projects whose description did not match with the database labels. These 141 projects were funded through 42 different programmes, which in itself demonstrates how government policies for excellence and relevance have created a myriad of different impulses.

As compared to other social science disciplines, the total number of political science projects is in the same range as that in management sciences and in pedagogy. With only one third of that figure, cultural anthropology is much smaller. Sociology and economics each contribute an additional 20%. In the case of economics, that is remarkable, as its numbers of researchers and students considerably surpass that of political science. Psychology and educational sciences outnumber the other fields, each obtaining almost 25% of the project total. For educational sciences, this may be explained by the existence of a separate NOW funding section that supports mainly applied science projects. For psychology, the high score probably reflects its positioning between the social and the life sciences and its reliance on experimental approaches.

We analysed the policy aims of the 141 political science programmes and structured them into four categories, according to their main aim. Three of these reflect the main lines in Dutch science policy, i.e. international excellence, economic top sector-related programmes and societal relevance and policy-oriented research. The fourth set of programmes consists of smaller programmes aimed at research at universities of applied

science—often of rather limited size. Table 7.1 presents the results of this project.

Most projects are funded through programmes aiming to stimulate excellent research. Of these projects more than 50% were funded by *Veni* and *Vidi* grants, each with a research budget of some 250,000 and 800,000 €, respectively. These grants are meant to facilitate career development of young and early career scholars. No prestigious *Vici* grant (some 1.5 M € research budget for setting up a new research group) was obtained by a political scientist thus far. The 42 career grants include also two grants for scholars with a political refugee status. Most of the seventeen international collaboration projects are funded through two

Table 7.1 National research council-funded projects in political science (Netherlands)

<i>Policy aim</i>	<i>Program aims</i>	<i>No. programmes</i>	<i>No. projects</i>
Excellence	Scientific career	3	42
	International collaboration	5	17
	Open competition	3	16
	Scientific infrastructure	1	1
		12	76
Relevance and policy	Local governance	2	8
	Corona studies	1	5
	Policy support	4	5
	Transitions	4	5
	Pensions	1	1
	12	24	
Top sector	Transitions	4	7
	Innovation	2	4
	Infrastructure	1	3
	7	14	
UoA oriented	Collaboration	3	11
	Local governance	3	9
	Capacity	5	7
	11	27	
Total		42	141

thematic NORFACE programmes, a collaboration between social science research councils in Europe. One programme is on dynamics of social inequality, the other on democratic governance. Furthermore, we find projects funded for science diplomacy reasons, strengthening international relations through joint research projects. Of the sixteen projects funded in the Open Competition programmes most are meant for Ph.D. projects of teaching staff at secondary schools. The Infrastructural project is a large venture to develop a mobile lab for field studies in the social sciences.

If we look at the topics of these excellence-oriented research projects, about half of the career grant projects focus on typical political science issues such as the dynamics of party politics, voting behaviour, political polarization, civil participation in politics, interests and lobby groups and the impact of digital media. The other part is more governance-oriented topics. In the international collaboration programmes, again about half are from political science, mainly because of the NORFACE programme on democratic governance.

Table 7.1 also shows that political science and governance studies are effectively steered towards research projects which are socially relevant, policy-oriented or industry-related. Most, if not all focus on governance and management. Two main topics stand out: transition towards sustainability and local governance. There are a few projects that aim to support policymaking, as well as some addressing political and governance issues related to the corona pandemic. One project is financed by the National Science Agenda fund and analyses the democratic governance of pension funds.

The results suggest that for political science the main function of the National Research Council is to fund researcher-driven project ideas and support the scientific autonomy of the field. The role of the career funds for young academics reflects the change in science policy in the 1990s towards promoting academic career development. The emphasis here however is on early career, not mid or later career political scientists. Pressures for industrial, social and political relevance seem to have a limited influence on the fundamental research programme applications. Traditional areas of policymaking also are not very present in the projects allocated; more visible are contributions to innovation-led transitions and local governance, both specialized research topics. Moreover, as regards these topics, an increasing emphasis on data-driven research puts more theoretical and normative approaches at a funding disadvantage.

A final and different factor indirectly relating to budgets and the substance and orientation of research is the recent claim that social scientists, and political scientists among them, have a leftist tendency and that there is ‘too much consensus pressure and too little diversity in viewpoints and topics of study’. That claim which may exemplify the wider tendency of politicization of science (Weingart, 1999) was made in the Chamber of Representatives which adopted a parliamentary motion in February 2017, following debates on the position of social science scholars in other countries such as the United States and some countries moving towards authoritarianism, such as Hungary and Turkey. A brief inquiry done by the Royal Academy of Sciences in March 2018 however did not confirm such political tendencies within the scholarly community (KNAW, 2018).

As a consequence of these developments in research agenda-setting, NOW funding provides a rather narrow window for maneuvering and financial support for political scientists on topics that are fundamentally domain-specific.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND THE POLICY ADVISORY SYSTEM

Research funding by universities and intermediary organizations such as NWO are one type of channel, but to understand the reality of academic research and knowledge transfer, it is important to also consider the structures and practices of the domestic policy advisory system. The policy advisory system contains different spheres of interaction between producers of (scientific) knowledge and policymakers who demand, receive and may use this knowledge. With Halligan (1995), we conceive a policy advisory system as the interlocking set of actors and organizations in a particular jurisdiction providing recommendations for action to policymakers.

For the purposes of this book chapter, a policy advisory system may be approached from two directions. From a demand-side perspective, the system indicates the landscape of actors whom policymakers can rely on for evidence-based input addressing state-selected relevant topics. Scientific advice may in fact also be requested and delivered outside the sphere of formal policymaking institutions, such as by and to corporations, interest organizations, civil society groups and, perhaps less strictly packed as advice, also the media. Importantly, universities are part of the policy advisory system, but they exist next to a plethora of other actors

also equipped to provide evidence-based information. Advisory councils and think tanks are examples. From a supply-oriented perspective, a policy advisory system reveals which routes scientists themselves may use for the proverbial speaking truth to policymakers, or for voicing concerns.

In this section, we highlight some key features of the Dutch policy advisory landscape, which influence the ‘size of the shadow’ which the state casts on political scientists.

Particularly in comparative terms, the Dutch landscape of policy advisory actors is strongly institutionalized, densely populated and diverse in nature. Scholarly work on the issue typically attributes this ‘richness’ and strong institutionalization to the consensus-oriented nature of the country (Van Nispen & Scholten, 2015). Consensus-style knowledge regimes, such as the Netherlands, commonly value scientific expertise for providing the non-partisan source on which political agreements can be constructed (Pattyn et al., 2019). Also in empirical survey data on trust, scientists commonly rank on top. Compared to other institutions such as government, parliament, the judiciary, large corporations, trade unions and the media, science enjoys the highest degree of public trust in the country (Rathenau, 2018).

It is this important role for scientific expertise and its potential to depoliticize debates which has given rise to the establishment of many independent institutions charged with policy analysis and providing pertinent knowledge for policymakers. Sufficiently relevant to name, and unique worldwide, are the Planning Bureaus (including the Netherlands Institute for Social Research, the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis and the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Environmental Assessment Agency) and the high-level Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR). The planning bureaus’ mission centrally includes evidence-based advising (Halffman, 2009), and the WRR in addition is an important and powerful source for policy ideas delivered directly and independently to the government (Van Nispen & Scholten, 2015).

Other than this, the Dutch policy advisory landscape includes a range of bodies advising the government in an evidence-based way on general strategic and more specific technical issues. Examples in the domain of political science are the Council for Public Administration (*Raad voor het Openbaar Bestuur*), advising on the structure and working of the government itself; the Electoral Council (*Kiesraad*), focusing on electoral processes and system issues or the Advisory Council on International Affairs (*Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken*). Unlike some other

countries, advisory councils in the Netherlands often have academics appointed, usually on a rotation basis. In the councils mentioned above, political scientists provide even the most important staff by temporary appointment. Although the number of advisory councils and bodies was reduced significantly since the 1990s, they still constitute a cornerstone of the Dutch advisory system (Scholten & Van Nispen, 2015). They are a prominent legacy of the corporatist-style ‘poldermodel’ characterizing Dutch policymaking.

Where formal institutional advisory arrangements do not exist for involving academics in policy analysis, it is also common practice to appoint them in advisory committees of applied research, such as policy evaluations. Unique for the country as well is the large number of endowed professorships, for which the funding of chairs is supported by external parties (such as foundations, private actors, but also ministries). Examples are, e.g. a chair in policy evaluation, funded by the Ministry of Economics and a chair in public affairs funded by the Association of Public Affairs.

All these provisions have contributed to relatively permeable boundaries between the sphere of academia and institutions involved in the policy process. At the same time, the Dutch policy advisory system also experiences trends of pluralization and externalization that occur in many other OECD countries (Craft & Howlett, 2013). New actors entered the arena, and some took a prominent place in the policy advisory landscape, with an impact on the ‘market share’ of academics. Comparatively, the Netherlands has a high density of consultants in policy advising (Van den Berg, 2017). In addition, more and more think tanks were established over the years, which also aim to supply scientific advice to policymakers. In fact, quite a lot of academics in the Netherlands combine their university affiliation with a position in a consultancy firm or a think tank, although specific numbers of colleagues holding double affiliations are not available (to our knowledge).

Considering these different institutional provisions together, it may be clear that entrepreneurial Dutch scholars have multiple formal and informal routes to dialogue with policymakers, speak truth to power and express concerns on issues in their field. At the receiving end, Dutch policymakers can use several arrangements for collecting input from advisory actors other than scholars based at universities. Such a rich and diversified boundary system may provide opportunities for scholars, but on the

other hand makes policymakers less dependent on academics for obtaining scientific input on issues relevant to them.

Given this general context, the question is what this implies for political scientists, whose object of study is governance and state-society interactions. Are they themselves motivated or perhaps feel obliged to engage with policymakers through existing institutional arrangements, and by conducting mission-orientated research projects? Or does the pluralistic nature of the Dutch advisory system leave political scientists the possibility to focus mainly on scholarly selected topics, while other, non-academic actors provide scientific evidence to policymakers? A third possibility is that political scientists are active in advisory work, and seek such engagement, because the aforementioned competitive and selective research programming and funding arrangements force them to look for alternative financial resources, relevance and recognition. In the next section we consider these three types of relationships between political science scholars and their environment in which incentives for academic professional work ensue.

THE IMPACT FACTOR: INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS, POLICYMAKERS AND THE PUBLIC

The Rise of Impact Criteria

Given the institutional properties of research funding and programming and the general nexus between research and policy making, Dutch academia as in other countries encountered a shift towards emphasis on the non-academic value and relevance of research to society. While reinforced, this emphasis is not novel. Societal impact already was explicitly mentioned as a core task of universities since the reform of the *Higher Education and Research Act* (WHW) in 1992. The Act conceptualizes societal impact generally as ‘knowledge transfer for the benefit of society’ (article 1.3). This clause initially may have had a mere symbolic meaning, but in 2004 the Minister of Science made societal impact one of the main priorities in formal science policy. The publication of a policy document in 2004 carried the introduction of the notion of *valorization*, which is still the most commonly used term when referring to added value and relevance of academic research in the Netherlands (de Jong et al., 2016). The concept first was meant to indicate the importance of universities collaborating with private organizations, but later the meaning of valorization

was broadened to societal impact and dissemination—not just economic value. Following negotiations between the government, representatives of the Dutch science and higher education system and knowledge users, the standing government definition of valorization is ‘the process of creating value from knowledge by making knowledge suitable and/or available for economic and/or societal use and translating that knowledge into competitive products, services, processes and entrepreneurial activity’ (Nederland Ondernemend Innovatieland, 2009: 8, also cited in de Jong et al., 2016).

Following this formal introduction of the concept in science policy, the Dutch Research Council in 2009 formulated a ‘knowledge utilization paragraph’ and included it standard in almost all funding schemes (de Jong et al., 2016). In this context, knowledge utilization is conceived as an iterative process towards societal impact. Emphasis is put on the interaction and coordination of researchers and knowledge users during the entire research process, as a means to increase the chance of knowledge utilization, and as such the chance of social impact (NWO, 2021). The knowledge utilization paragraph has been made mandatory as of 2014, and counts for 20% of the score for grant applications.

Subsequently, universities, too, increasingly integrated valorization in their policies. The Dutch Association of Universities VSNU explicitly refers to valorization in the framework that details academic job descriptions from junior to full professorships. This also implies that valorization is translated in promotion policies of individual institutions (de Jong et al., 2016). In practice, there is variation in the extent to which university departments put emphasis on valorization criteria when making decisions on career advancement, but overall it has become a relevant factor. In a comparative study of approaches to impact assessment across European countries, Bandola-Gill et al. (2019) categorized the Netherlands as a country where impact assessment is used explicitly in academic decision-making. These authors found that this is not the case in many other countries, but in the Netherlands, impact assessment (valorization) plays an increasingly significant role in making career steps.

Thus, next to grant proposal requirements, there are additional incentives for paying attention to impact.

Having sketched the broader impact agenda dominating Dutch science policy, the question is how academics experience the politics of research assessment and respond to valorization policies. A qualitative empirical study by de Jong et al. (2016) concludes that valorization is perceived

as a struggle and challenge by most academics. Differences were found across academic ranks with junior scientists struggling mostly with how to reconcile valorization in a way that does not hinder their academic career. Senior academics seem to struggle more with the justification of valorization in bureaucratic procedures. While this study targets all disciplines, the general conclusions also apply to political science. For a more specific view on this field, we next present empirical findings on the Netherlands from a survey on the professionalization and social impact of political science in Europe (Brans et al., 2019).

Political Scientists as Boundary Workers

The opening chapter of this book presented a fundamental distinction between, on the one hand, technocratic and *policy-oriented intellectuals* in line with conventional policies and paradigms, and on the other hand more critically inclined *value-oriented intellectuals*. A shift in institutional logic and policy regime in higher education and academic research was seen to reduce the protected space for true autonomous academic thinking and work and induce work with more direct policy relevance. These two main orientations implying fundamentally different functions and outcomes may be related to a typology of roles assumed by university-based scholars in a comparative study of advisory activities of political scientists in Europe (Brans & Timmermans, forthcoming 2021). In this typology, *pure academics* who refrain from any engagement with policymakers or a wider audience are distinguished from *experts* who bring mostly facts as input to the policy process and provide occasional news interpretations, *opinionating scholars* who typically voice more normative viewpoints and concerns, and *public intellectuals* who have a broad repertoire of evidence-based but often also eloquent contributions to policymaking and public debate.

The comparative analysis in this study of advisory work shows wide variations across European countries as well as between age groups, gender and employment status of scholars. The findings on the Netherlands reveal a relatively high level of activity in advising. Dutch political scientists are significantly less often pure academics than in the European average (Pattyn & Timmermans, forthcoming). This is shown in Table 7.2.

Also, in accordance with this finding, Dutch political scientists consider themselves visible and capable of achieving social and political impact.

Table 7.2 Roles of political scientists in the Netherlands

<i>Advisory role</i>	<i>Proportion of respondents</i>	
	<i>Dutch respondents (N = 84) (%)</i>	<i>All European respondents (N = 2354) (%)</i>
Pure academic	9.5	19.6
Expert	28.6	28.2
Opinionating scholar	57.1	47.9
Public intellectual	4.8	4.3

Source Pattyn and Timmermans (forthcoming)

Visibility and impact estimations do not automatically correspond, but in the Netherlands a majority of political scientists thinks their disciplinary knowledge has a real impact on society and policymaking. The most important topics are, naturally, the form and functions of government and administration, international affairs and the EU, but political scientists also deliver knowledge in policy domains such as social welfare, immigration, civil rights including gender issues, and the environment. Attention to these topics indicates that problems often are complex and require an understanding of political processes and governance and not just of technical content. Furthermore, a vast majority of respondents considers providing advice a contribution to society, and a somewhat smaller group thinks it is part of their professional duty.

At the same time, engagement is not strongly driven directly by motivations of career advancement, rather more by a search for opportunities of research funding and arranging for knowledge delivery. This is consistent with the earlier finding that scholars struggle with ‘valorization’ criteria as they are stated in programme calls of the formal research funding organizations. The data from the study on roles of political scientists in the Netherlands also reveal that the least engaged in advising are younger scholars. The average age of pure academics is 38.1 years, against 47.8 years for opinionating scholars (and 42.7 years for experts) (Pattyn & Timmermans, forthcoming).

This is a significant difference that may indicate how incentives for academic career advancement come with agenda-setting and criteria defined by the formal research funding organizations, such as the National Research Council. For those more settled (and with a permanent contract), entrepreneurship becomes more visible. While this may

indicate a focus on scholar-selected relevance for political scientists further advanced in their careers, an additional element is the need to push for financial resources, given the high competitiveness of fundamental research funding programmes. In contrast, NWO's scientific excellence programmes appear more important for young political scientists intent on developing their careers and on obtaining more research time, as compared to teaching. We note here that another background variable used in the advisory roles project hits the eyes: as compared to the European average, female political science scholars are much more pure academics and much less experts or opinionating scholars (Pattyn & Timmermans, forthcoming).¹ And age and gender are interacting: most female pure academics are young scholars. Conversely, entrepreneurial academics are much more often advanced career male scholars.

These findings correspond to the more general points made in this chapter's previous sections. It also may indicate that next to the two types of intellectuals guided by either technocratic or critical considerations there is a third type possible, which is the pragmatic scholar seeking alternative windows for research funding, knowledge delivery, relevance and recognition. This third type may be called 'entrepreneurial relevance'. Academics after all are not only involved in a nexus with government and formal science funding organizations but, with the growing emphasis on impact and 'valorization' in the Netherlands, also with all those public and private actors providing impact "arenas".

More empirical evidence for this point emerges from an analysis of the recipients of advice by political scientists in the aforementioned survey study. Civil servants were the most frequently mentioned recipients of political science knowledge (two thirds of the respondents had experience with them), but civil society groups, advisory bodies and think tanks were also recognized as relevant targets by a majority of political scientists. While less prominent, international organizations and private interest organizations were additionally mentioned by one quarter to one third of those participating in the survey. These findings become more pronounced when taking into account that these types of recipients of advice emerge more frequently than on average for all European countries. This not only illustrates the density of the policy advisory system,

¹ An observation by one of the authors is that in a core course of the Ph.D. programme of the Netherlands Institute of Government, a collaboration of most relevant departments in the country, participants are by a large majority female.

but testifies to the orientation of political scientists in the Netherlands towards advising and outreaching.

The expert and opinionating roles are also recognizable from the topics on which political scientists engage in advising. We already saw that the main topics of advising are the general structures, operations and possible reforms of government, plus international or European matters. These appear particularly prominent for opinionating political scientists, and are less exclusively the focal points for experts and for (the few) public intellectuals, who focus specifically on immigration, civil rights as well as education. Experts and opinion makers attend also to some other policy topics. For experts, the environment, agriculture and food, and some specific social policy and labour-related topics are matters of advice, while more or less active opinionating scholars move into the fields of social welfare, civil rights, immigration and, occasionally, defense and public works. While experts seem to specialize, opinionating political scientists together display the broadest scope. This points to differences in kind of impact.

The finding that opinionating is a more frequently visible activity of political scientists in the Netherlands than in the European average, and that pure academic work is much less prominent than in the European average also may indicate an orientation on other, alternative venues for knowledge delivery and search for impact. These other venues are not captured entirely with the concepts of scholar-selected relevance for academic autonomy and state-directed relevance for a more technocratic approach to research agenda-setting and funding. Again, we note that with this finding and interpretation comes a strong correlation with age and gender. Given the low frequency of pure academics but the comparatively high proportion of females among them, and the high frequency of opinionators and the comparatively low proportion of females, 'entrepreneurial relevance' in Dutch political science seems to be still mostly 'a man's world'.

CONCLUSION

In the Netherlands, since long, political science is a strongly institutionalized and internationalized discipline that particularly in recent years attracted an increasing number of students in university programmes. One consequence of this is a rise in teaching load and declining formal space for research activities for most academics working in departments

of political science (and public administration). At the same time, the government and the main intermediary for project grants, the National Research Council NWO, have acquired higher primacy in setting the research agenda conditioning funding opportunities. We observe an increase in the number of research projects obtained by political scientists within the general excellence programmes (*Veni* and *Vidi*) of the National Research Council relative to other programmes that are more topic-driven. This may indicate that especially younger scholars seek such funding in order to create time for fundamental research directly contributing to career advancement. To a proportion of the scholarly community, it offers a limited space for scholar-selected relevance. While political scientists also participate in projects of state-directed relevance (with topics pre-set on the research agenda and connected to funding), that variety figures less prominently.

The space not used (or available) for that formal and centralized fundamental research funding is to a large part compensated by access to additional venues for research agenda-setting and funding. Political science in the Netherlands is visible and increasingly prominent in the domestic policy advisory system. This is (even if not exclusively) the domain of experienced—and comparatively much more often male—political scientists. In the activities of these scholars, valorization is given more substantive meaning, including also a financial component, mostly in ad hoc arrangements where they interact with recipients and users of their knowledge and skills. Developments in the policy advisory system itself contribute to this, as the advisory landscape has become more diverse. The Dutch advisory system displays increasing overlaps and interactions between government, academia and the public sphere. These developments have ensured that political scientists may choose from a range of formal and informal windows for policy advice, either reactively on demand or more proactively on their own initiative.

Thus the scholarly political science community is intertwined strongly with government and other organizations involved in the policy process, interest representation and the public arena through an extensive advisory network, which enables political science to have an impact in all areas of policy making. The national excellence programmes for fundamental research are mostly pursued by young, early career political scientists, while senior scholars appear much more in boundary work relationships than in such programmes. There is, thus far, no political science project

in the *Vici* programme, the most advanced of the excellence programmes for which finding proposals can be submitted.

The role taken by political scientists in the policy advisory system, both in formal and in informal arrangements, structural as well as ad hoc, provides a reason for identifying ‘entrepreneurial relevance’ as a third type of relationship between academics and funding organizations and recipients (paying or not paying) of scientific knowledge. This mode of relevance also gives a more substantive meaning to impact criteria and what in the Netherlands is called ‘valorization’. Strong interactions between political scientists and government organizations and civil society—also their main object of study—thus offer an evolved substitute (but not a secondary choice) for reported difficulties that senior scholars have with the justification of ‘valorization’ in bureaucratic procedures linked to programmes of the National Research Council (de Jong et al., 2016).

Though academic political scientists in the Netherlands in their choices of topic and content display more diversity than sceptics of the social sciences want to believe when making allegations of ideological (‘leftist’) drift, there is still considerable gender and age bias in the entrepreneurial chorus of this research community. A key question to be addressed in Dutch political science is whether this bias in academic entrepreneurship is driven by factors over which political scientists themselves have control, or is the result of national science policy in the Netherlands.

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