

# Legitimacy of Science Autonomy: Three Options, Two Ontologies, One perspective.

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In my talk I will present three philosophical conceptions of science autonomy: Steve Fuller's *social eliminativism*, Joseph Rouse's *deflationism* and Dimitri Ginev's *cognitive existentialism*. Each of them provides an epistemic toolkit for the political legitimacy of science. Ontologically, these three options indicate two competing worldviews: Fuller and Rouse propagate a certain kind (though different types) of moderate naturalism, while Ginev holds onto phenomenological hermeneutics. However, our naturalists draw entirely different conclusions about the autonomy of science: Fuller's legitimation project tends to authorize "non-epistemic" means for the justification of scientific knowledge that result from an accountability to certain social norms and are consistent with the ideal of "participatory" politics. Rouse approves the notion of normative accountability of scientific research but rejects the very idea of the legitimation of science, since it challenges the naturalistic scientific endeavour. Scientific knowledge should not be restricted to any universalistic claims or meta-scientific principles, otherwise are too vulnerable to threats to scientific autonomy and authority. Therefore politics (in a broad sense) is incorporable into scientific practices. Unsurprisingly, Ginev opposes both models of the engagement between science and political sphere, for presumably they irreversibly lead to the destruction of cognitive autonomy of science and hence pose a threat to the democratization processes of modern societies. Yet, Ginev gives us no detail of what are these specifically hermeneutically reconstructable relations of democratization processes and supposed cognitive autonomy and epistemic sovereignty of science. Nevertheless, from all of this we can extract seemingly unshakable "modern" belief that despite epistemic as well as ontological controversies the presence of the Western world as it is proves itself as a virtually inseparable co-existence of *science-democracy-individual*. If one emphasizes the *science-individual* pair of the triplet, one addresses a concept of transhumanism, a nearly theological faith in humanity, or what Fuller calls "a concrete site for entertaining human self-transcendence". By stressing out *science-democracy* pair one captures the depths of cognitive existentialism, or the insight that for science to prosper there is no need of extra-terrestrial capacities, but rather freely-floating interpretations and ideals. Concentrating on the *democracy-individual* pair one experiences posthuman condition, where scientific community, at least in the Rousean vision, disentangles scientific practices from its imaginary subordinate bondage to humans and abandons human-nonhuman confrontation. Conclusively, I will presume that the salient feature uniting these science

legitimacy options rests in their nonrepresentationalist flexibility, or what Kenneth J. Gergen calls “a future forming orientation” – a perspective that no longer cares how accurately scientific research represents *what is*, but instead concentrates on *what is to become*.