

Changing the Rules

Psychology in the Netherlands 1900 1985

The history of the social sciences has been marked by frequent and fierce debates on the rules of scientific methodology. Even the most general criteria - which are generally agreed upon in the natural sciences - are emphatically disputed in the social sciences. Presenting the history of psychology in the Netherlands as a case representative of Western social science, this book examines the divisive nature of social methodology more closely. The author scrutinises published books and articles, as well as archival material and taped interviews, to sketch a history in which psychologists call their colleagues semi-intellectuals who take lack of clarity for profundity or accuse them of undermining respect for men. As to the question of how such disagreements on the rules of sciences should be understood, this book contradicts the common picture in which social scientists only gradually came to understand how their profession should be scientifically practised.

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