

## Welcome

Science, lobbies  
and the  
environment:  
marking the 60th  
anniversary of  
Rachel Carson's  
Silent Spring,  
Brussels, Norway  
House, October 6,  
2022



**Corporate  
Europe  
Observatory**

Beecaution



**UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN**

Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities

BeeCaution, Norwegian epistemic network in RECIPES on neonicotinoid pesticides and bees.  
RECIPES: REconciling sScience, Innovation and Precaution through the Engagement of Stakeholders

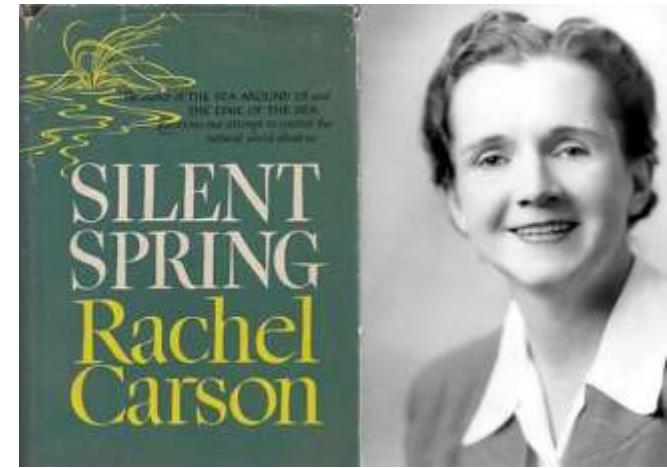
“This is an era of specialists, each of whom sees his own problem and is unaware of or intolerant of the larger frame into which it fits. It is also an era dominated by industry, in which the right to make a dollar at whatever cost is seldom challenged” p.15



“The ‘control of nature’ is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man” p. 154



Silent spring, from literature to ecology, from policy to metabolism, between yesterday and today



# 60 Years after Silent Spring Warned Us, Birds—and Humanity—Are Still in Trouble

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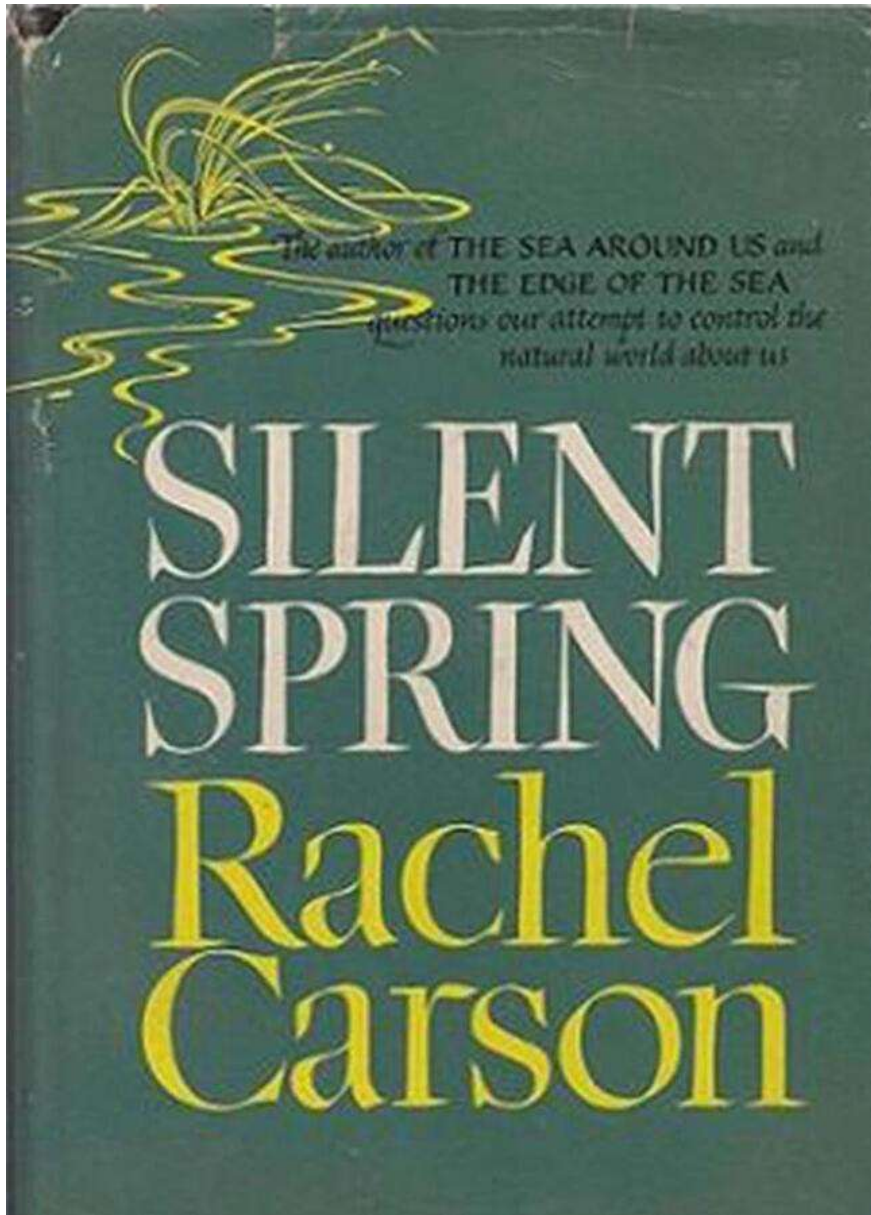
SCIENTIFIC  
AMERICAN.

By Naomi Oreskes on April 1, 2022

- How exactly is science instrumentalised by corporations in environmental conflicts (focus on Europe)?
- How can (investigative) journalism contribute?
- ...

## Questions for today

- What is the link with the current political context in the EU (EGD/Farm to Fork, etc)?
- ...



# Science and regulatory capture

Andrea Saltelli, Brussels, Norway House,  
October 6, 2022



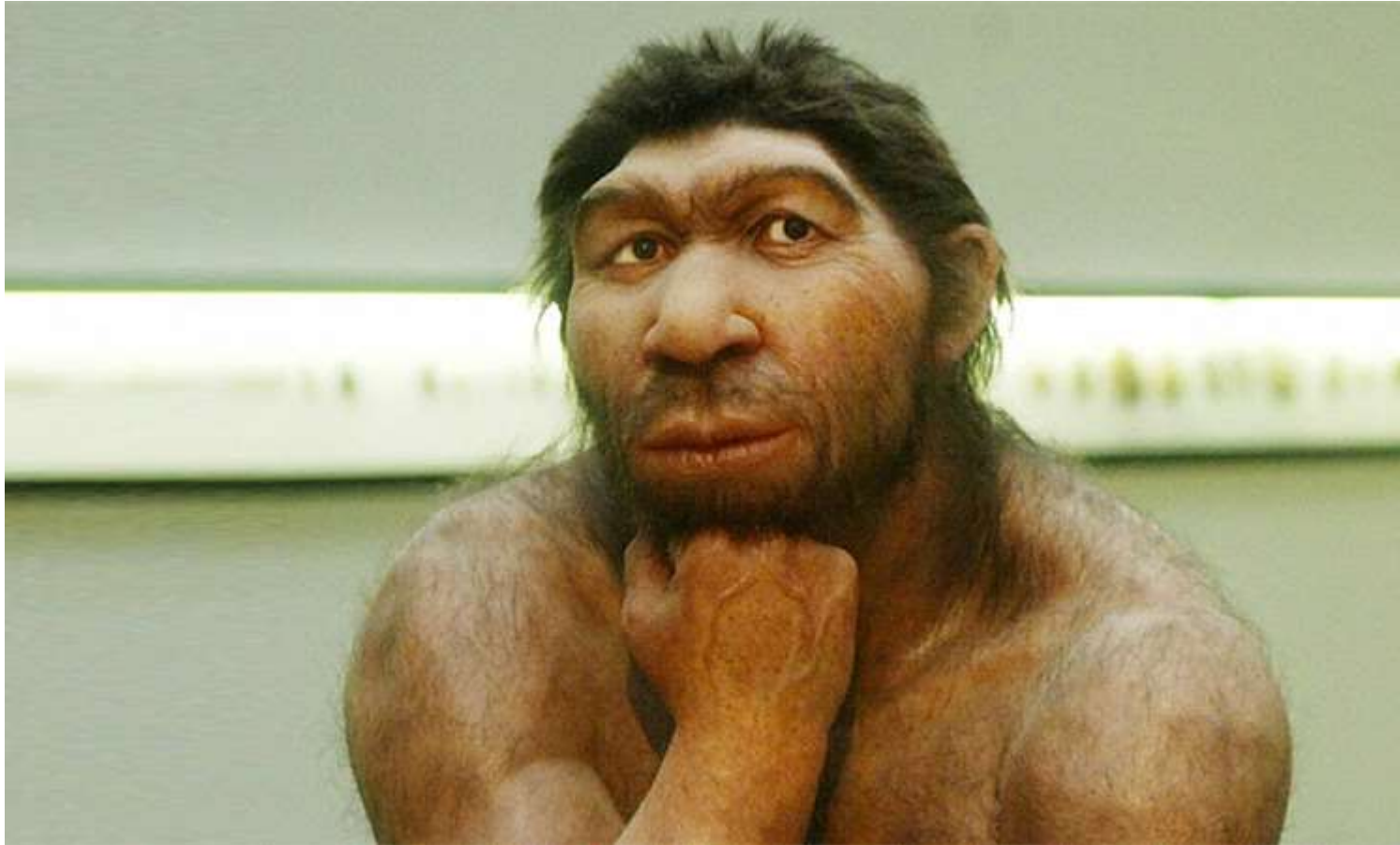
Science, lobbies and the environment: marking  
the 60th anniversary of Rachel Carson's Silent  
Spring

“... the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man”





Are we past this age of Neanderthal?



# Are we past this age of Neanderthal? If not, why?



Futures  
Available online 26 October 2021  
In Press, Journal Pre-proof



Science, the endless frontier of regulatory capture

Andrea Saltelli <sup>a,\*,</sup> Dorothy J. Dankel <sup>b, c,</sup> Monica Di Fiore <sup>d,</sup> Nina Holland <sup>e,</sup> Martin Pigeon <sup>f</sup>

... a form of corporate penetration which is based on a strategic use of the image and legitimacy of science

...cases where lobbyists present themselves as upholders of the values of the evidence-based policy, and interested in the methodological and ethical aspect of science for policy

# An epistemic ladder for regulatory capture

- **Epistemic.** Invalidating the inference or the methods
- **Institutional.** Delegitimising and/or 'colonising' institutions
- **Political.** Promoting a worldview where the very idea of regulation is undesirable

Science, the endless frontier of  
regulatory capture



The ineluctability of regulatory capture cuts across schools of economic thought: public interest theory and regulatory capture theory



Arthur Cecil Pigou  
1877 –1959

George J. Stigler  
1911 –1991



Regulation in the public interest theory is seen as a need originating from market failure – hence the need for regulatory intervention



Arthur Cecil Pigou  
1877 –1959

Regulation in regulatory capture theory is seen as a result of particular interests which are favoured by it

*“regulation is acquired by the industry and is designed and operated primarily for its benefit”*

George J. Stigler  
1911 –1991



# Beryl L. Crowe: *a regulatory capture cycle*

- An agency is created as a result of a period of social alarm
- Eventually, interest groups take control
- In the final phase, even the staff of the agency comes from the interest groups it should regulate

**The Tragedy of the  
Commons Revisited**

28 November 1969, Volume 166, Number 3909

**SCIENCE**

A more recent concept: **regulatory capitalism**, the new global world order where the importance of rules as a source of power has increased in scope



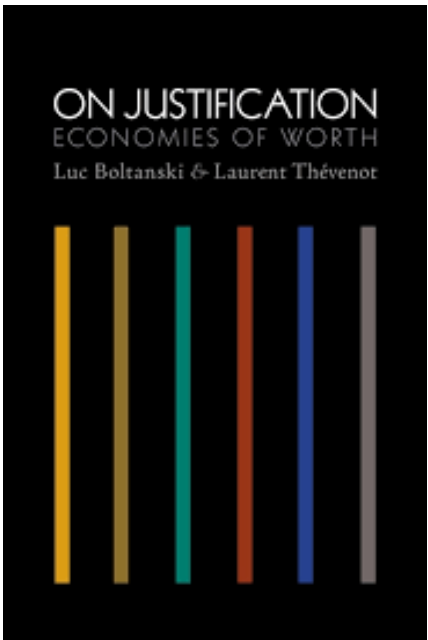
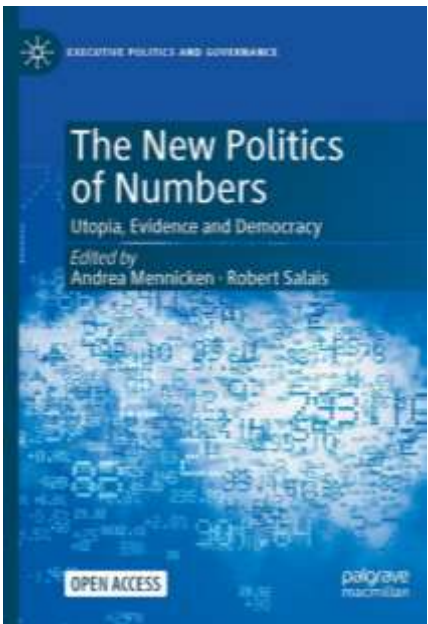


# Regulatory capitalism

**Optimistic view:** allowing a more balanced approach to the distribution of power and resources in favour of the global poor (Levi-Faur, David [Editor of Regulation and Governance]. 2005. “The Global Diffusion of Regulatory Capitalism.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 598 (1): 12–32.)

**Pessimistic view:** act of the tragedy of commodification, made possible by a subservient and commodified science (Drahos, Peter. 2020. “Responsive Science.” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 16 (1): annurev-lawsocsci-040220-065454.)

Standards as an  
instrument for the  
commodification of norms



A New Calculable Global World  
in the Making: Governing Through  
Transnational Certification Standards

# Laurent Thévenot

critical public debates between  
conceptions of the common good



individual consumers' choices  
between certified market goods



# Cognitive capture?

“regulators may come to view the world the way firms do, not because they have been captured through incentives, but because they have been convinced”

(Dal Bó, Ernesto. 2006. “REGULATORY CAPTURE: A REVIEW.” Oxford Review of Economic Policy 22: 203–25)

P. Mirowski, “Hell Is Truth Seen Too Late,” Bound. 2, vol. 46, no. 1, pp. 1–53, Feb. 2019.

What has science to  
do with all that?

Power asymmetries in the framing of issues:  
those who have the deepest pockets marshal  
the best [foremost 'scientific'] evidence

# Sylvain Laurens

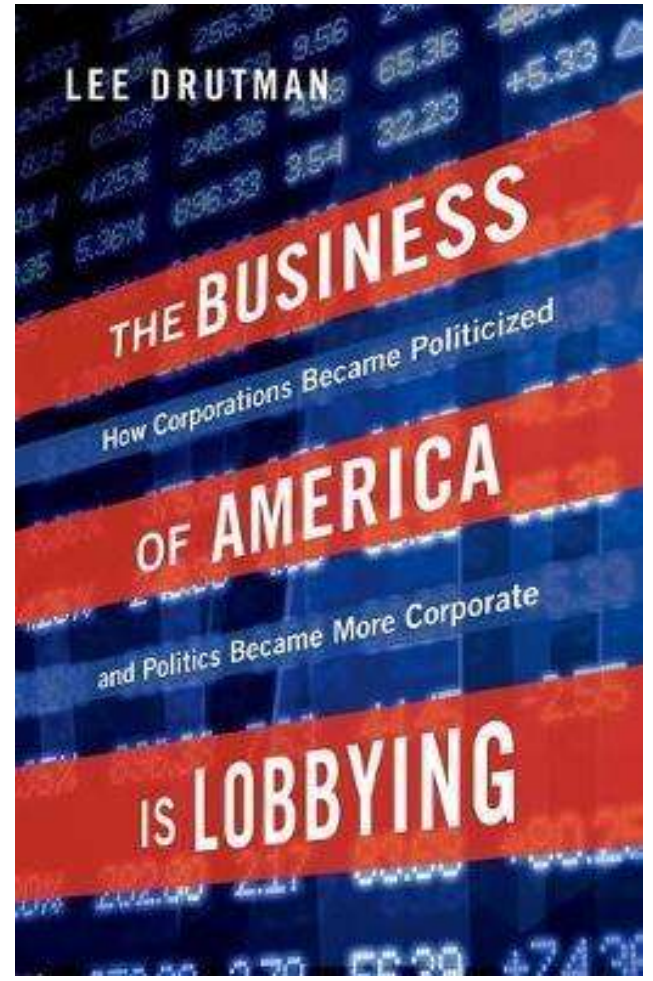


**LOBBYISTS AND  
BUREAUCRATS IN BRUSSELS**  
CAPITALISM'S BROKERS

Sylvain Laurens



# Lee Drutman



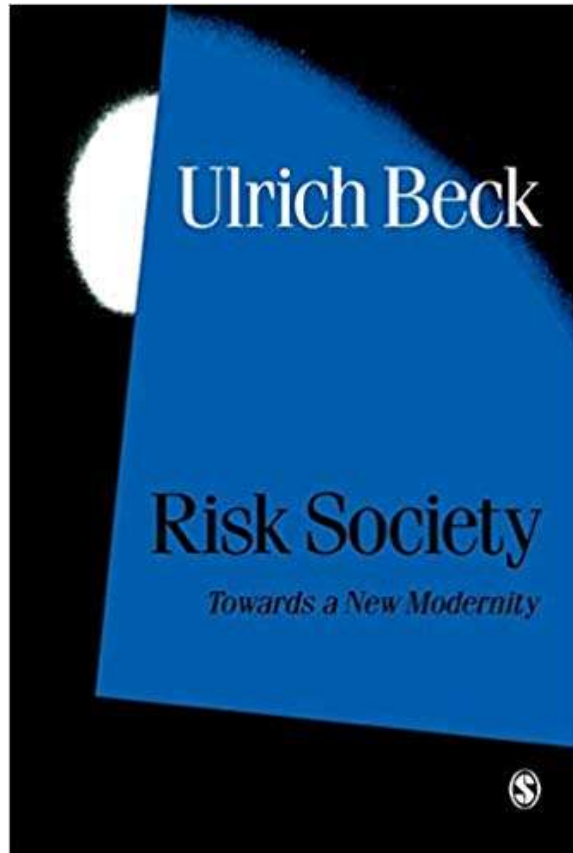
For both Laurens and Drutman a salient aspect of this power is lobbyists' access to more and better disseminated knowledge/science

“They have the data”





Science as a self-service shop for financially well-endowed customers in need of arguments (Beck 1992)

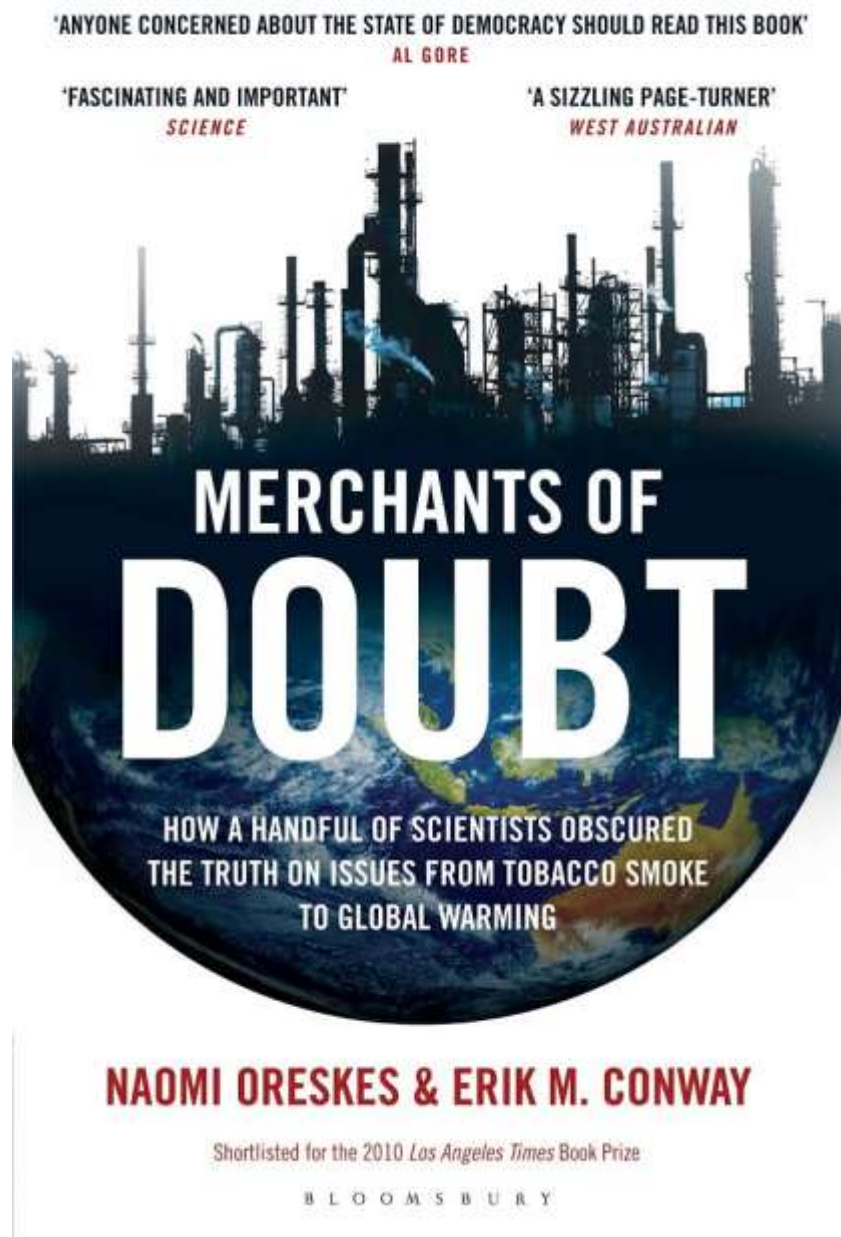


1992 (1986)



Ulrich Beck  
(1944 -2015)

From doubt to  
domination



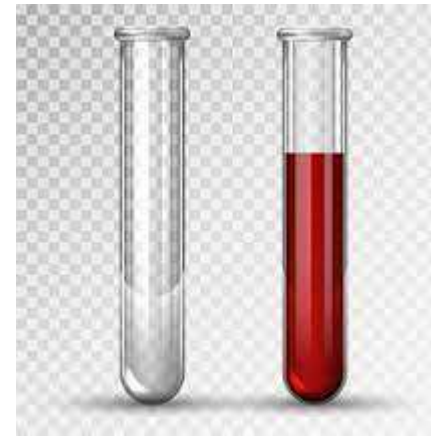
Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway

‘sound science’ and  
‘good epidemiology’  
against ‘junk science’

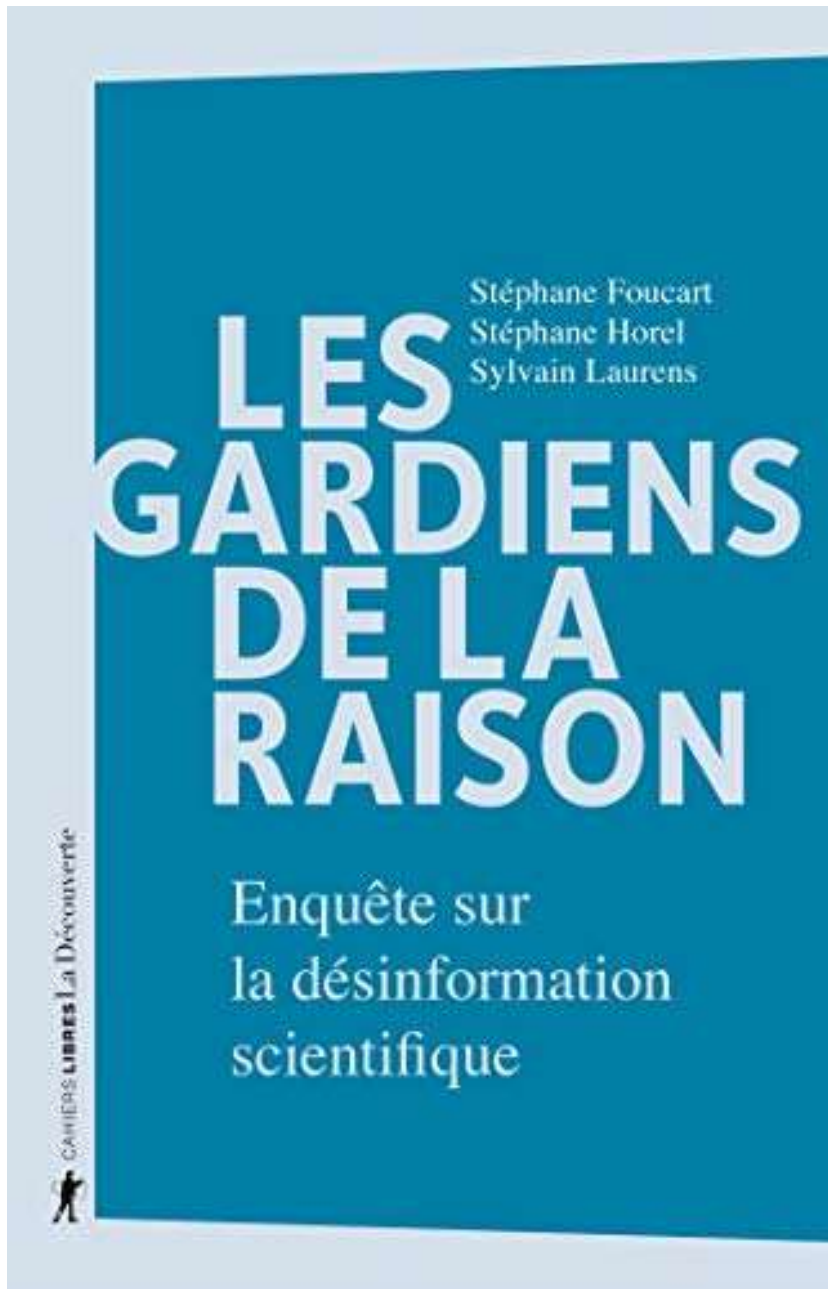
Guardians of reason



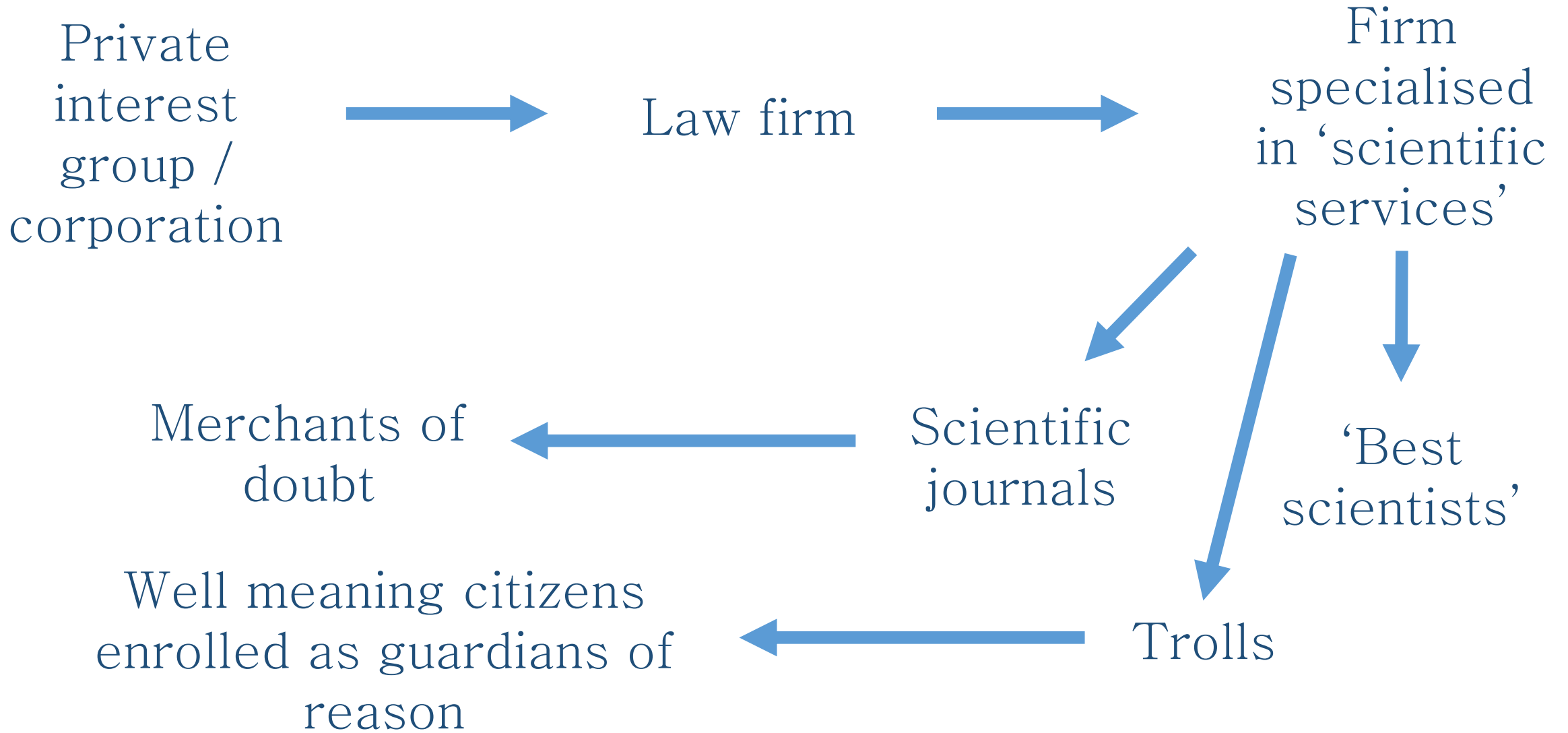
Guardians of sound science



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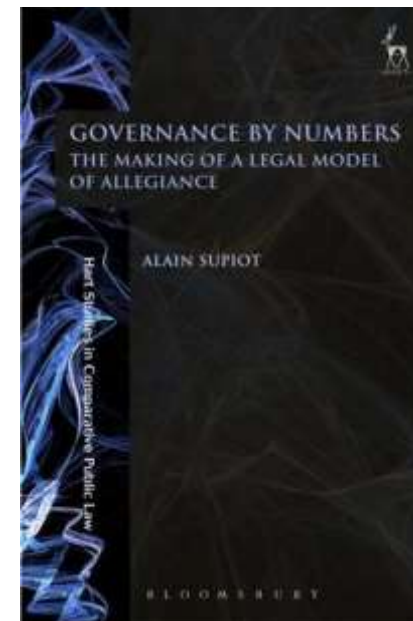
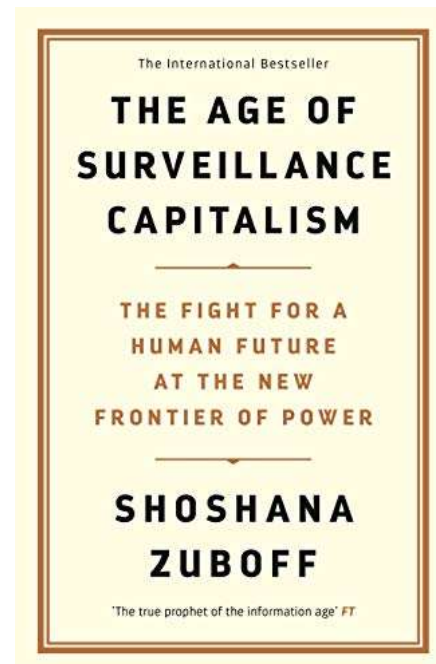
An army of self-proclaimed ‘fact checkers’ becomes mobilized in the defence of a neoliberal and conservative credo, posing as victims of an assault on science perpetrated by the purported enemies of reason



## Strategies so *rapides et inédites*



New powerful instruments such as the use of AI and algorithms in combination with cognitive psychology and the new social media to influence the behaviour of consumers / voters



The End



@andreasaltelli



# Readings

Saltelli, Andrea, Dorothy J. Dankel, Monica Di Fiore, Nina Holland, and Martin Pigeon, “Science, the Endless Frontier of Regulatory Capture.” *Futures*, 135 (2022) 102860.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2021.102860>.

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