



# The Disordered Police State: German Cameralism as Science and Practice

*Andre Wakefield*

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Probing the relationship between German political economy and everyday fiscal administration, *The Disordered Police State* focuses on the cameral sciences—a peculiarly German body of knowledge designed to train state officials—and in so doing offers a new vision of science and practice during the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. Andre Wakefield shows that the cameral sciences were at once natural, technological, and economic disciplines, but, more important, they also were *strategic* sciences, designed to procure patronage for their authors and good publicity for the German principalities in which they lived and worked. Cameralism, then, was the public face of the prince's most secret affairs; as such, it was an essentially dishonest enterprise.

In an entertaining series of case studies on mining, textiles, forestry, and universities, Wakefield portrays cameralists in their own gritty terms. The result is a revolutionary new understanding about how the sciences created and maintained an image of the well-ordered police state in early modern Germany. In raising doubts about the status of these German sciences of the state, Wakefield ultimately questions many of our accepted narratives about science, culture, and society in early modern Europe.

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