

Evaluation games as the resistance: Towards a framework for research evaluation studies

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In my presentation, I define the resistance of researchers caused by the research evaluation systems as *evaluation games*. This approach might help us to investigate the (un)intended effects of designing and implementing national research evaluation systems. I have been working on a theoretical framework by which a fruitful link across the three following perspectives would be possible: (1) researchers who work in academia and are subject to evaluation, (2) researchers who study research evaluation systems yet are subject to evaluation, and (3) policymakers who design research evaluation systems and evaluate researchers and research institutions. This presentation is a first attempt to discuss the main theoretical assumptions, limitations, and usefulness of this framework.

Intended effects can be understood as accomplished goals and successful public interventions. However, investigating the unintended effects cannot be reduced to tracking and reporting the unforeseen or unpredicted side effects of designed interventions. This is due to the fact that unintended effects are produced not only by social interventions themselves but also—among others—by the context in which such policies are implemented (e.g. unstable conditions of academic labor or publication-oriented scholarly communication).

Exploring dysfunctional consequences of performance measurement has a long tradition in administrative and organizational theories. During the first half of the 20th century, side effects and impact of performance measurements were analyzed in numerous areas, ranging from American and Soviet industries to public policies. Already then, the studies showed that the use of a single measure is not adequate and it should be replaced by using the composites, that is multiple and weighted criteria. This knowledge and experience were utilized within the group of ideas known as the New Public Management which transformed the performance measurement substantially into outcomes-based performance.

In my presentation, I undertake three tasks to put the theoretical framework forward and use it to explore the transformations of scholarly communication caused by measuring and evaluating science.

Firstly, I present a concept of the evaluative power of the state as a ground for developing the framework in which the effects of national research evaluation systems can be investigated.

Secondly, I present a concept of evaluation games by which the resistance caused by the evaluative power manifests itself. The evaluative games and their consequences are (un)intended effects of designing and using national research evaluation systems.

Thirdly, I rethink a history of the measurement of science and argue that a better understanding of the consequences of national research evaluation systems requires to add the omitted part of this history. In other words: I show that performance measurement in science sector is not only a hallmark of Western science but, actually, it was first implemented at the national level in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries. Bringing back this heritage to the reflection is a necessary step to understand why in countries with similar research evaluation systems —like Australia and Poland—the resistance against the systems manifests

by diverse evaluation games and why researchers perceive the same elements of those systems (like using bibliometric indicators or peer review) in substantially different ways.

Finally, using the results of these three tasks, I examine how research evaluation systems transform scholarly communication in contemporary academia and how various evaluation games can be used as a tool for understanding these changes.