

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH EVALUATION:

THE BULGARIAN CASE

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The concept of research evaluation is rather broad, and it covers different aspects as institutional, program, project, or team evaluation, the latter being associated with independent and professional evaluation of particular academic achievements or findings. Practices of research evaluation have been introduced in different countries in various periods of time. The general idea of such practices, however, is to improve a particular type of research activity depending on the goals and the target of the evaluation, rather than to impose retroactive sanctions.

This paper will describe the development of the practices of research evaluation and their impact on the efficiency of research activities in the evaluated institutional unit.

The effects brought about by research evaluation are multilayered, and it can affect not only the quality of given research results but also the volume of research production, the development of research competence in the relevant

field, the competitiveness of the evaluated unit, the rearticulation of competition as a normative foundation of the life of academic communities, the constitution of researchers as entrepreneurs of themselves. Furthermore, the introduction of new evaluation mechanisms unavoidably entails a reevaluation of the intangible capital accumulated by the individual researchers, by their institutions, and perhaps even by their intellectual traditions.

The paper will focus on the Bulgarian practices of research evaluation because of the fact that, as the country has joined the European Union relatively recently, their adequate enforcement reveals significant flaws which are particularly salient in the fields of humanities and social sciences. We will claim that such defects are not merely accidental, they are inescapable side effects of research evaluation practices that do take into account social inequalities and the path dependency of the research milieu.

We will demonstrate that by focusing on the case of humanities and by analyzing some specific evaluation aspects, the effect upon the achievements and the benchmarking of these scientific field. Building on that, the paper will make recommendations on the evaluation of research in the future so as to enhance its impact on the performativity of academic activities.