

Disincentivizing the performance: the case of the Romanian national criteria for evaluating research in Economic Sciences

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"...the vital problem for the Romanian culture, for the Romanian science: the still very large number of those who, working in research, lack the courage, the capacity, or the will to enter the global game of competition for value"

-Solomon Marcus-

More general motivation

- The audit culture of universities/ research institutions that try to break in the discipline top ranks—their newly found, *unconditional* love for metrics, impact factors, citation statistics and rankings—all too often incentivizes bad academic behavior.
- The new academic fraud is to produce *near invisible* publications, by gaming the system whenever possible (plagiarism, rigged peer-review; self-citations and circular citations; etc), and matching the typically "original" performance metrics used by such research institutions.

- Compares how three different samples of Romanian economists, based abroad and inside Romania, fare research-wise for promotion to tenure/ professorship, both under the Romanian domestic minimum criteria (CNATDCU), and, as control, under several widely used international minimum criteria/ targets. The samples:
 - Sample 1: Externally affiliated Scientific Committee members for the ERMAS conference, editions 2014-2015
 - Sample 2: Externally affiliated contributors to the ERMAS conference, editions 2014-2015
 - Sample 3: All (candidates for) Full Professors in Economic Sciences from Romania, between 2013-2015, in the 4 main Romanian universities with this profile
- Uncovers a hallucinating reality, a true parallel universe, in terms of evaluating research in Economic Sciences
 - explicitly ignores research quality and implicitly incentivizes and enables the proliferation and promotion of scientific pseudo-values and fraud.

A few highlights

- Nobody in Sample 1 meets minimal domestic (“CNATDCU”) criteria for Full Prof, less than 20% meeting them even for Associate Professor, although >80% of them meet tenure criteria in top 100 universities, and some are *de facto* tenured as full or associate prof in world top 10 universities in Economics
- Viceversa, none of the people from Sample 3 meets minimal tenure criteria in any decent research institute abroad, for instance as according to the Tinbergen Institute Research Fellow norm, where the output of Sample 3 altogether sums up to less than 2 such norms
- Sample 2, mostly composed of asst professors, postdocs, and PhD students, produces on average 10-20 times more publications in the principal research flux than Sample 3, such as in outlets listed by CNRS, Tilburg Univ, or Tinbergen Institute. Over 99% of the research produced by Sample 3 is in fact irrelevant according to the Tinbergen or Tilburg standards, with almost 25% of it published in journals temporarily or permanently suppressed from the JCR for academic fraud.

	Comitet Științific (CS) ERMAS 2014 & 2015 (17 persoane – 100%)	Contributors ERMAS 2014 & 2015 (33 persoane – 100%)	Candidați la prof. univ., domeniul economice, Universitaria/ RO, '13-'15 (67 persoane – 100%)
Persoane îndeplinind criteriile CNATDCU de profesor universitar în România ^a	0 persoane	1 persoana (3%)	66 persoane (99%)
Persoane îndeplinind criteriile CNATDCU de conferențiar universitar în România ^a	3 persoane (18%)	3 persoane (9%)	67 persoane (100%)
Persoane cu minim 4 articole în reviste ISI cu factor de impact pozitiv (doar în domeniul E&B) ^b	14 persoane (82%)	15 persoane (45%)	37 persoane (55%)
Persoane cu minim 4 articole în reviste ISI cu factor de impact pozitiv doar în domeniul E&B și care nu au fost declassate ^h , și cel puțin un articol în reviste CNRS France ^e	14 persoane (82%)	15 persoane (45%)	9 persoane (13%)
Îndeplinirea criteriului de publicații al „Research Fellow Tinbergen Institute” ^c	14 persoane (82%)	4 persoane (12%)	0 persoane

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Articole în reviste ISI (100%)	130 articole medie: 7,6 art/prs	139 articole medie: 4,2 art/prs	407 articole medie: 6 art/prs
- din care în domeniul E&B (%)	114 (88%)	135 (97%)	233 (57%)
La rândul lor, din care (conform Thomson Reuters Web of Science JCR 2015):			
- zona roșie ^d	80 (61%)	31 (22%)	3 (1%)
- zona galbenă ^d	19 (15%)	58 (41%)	9 (2%)
- quartila a treia ISI AIS	14 (11%)	33 (24%)	10 (2%)
- quartila a patra ISI AIS	1 (1%)	13 (10%)	118 (29%)
- declassate la un moment dat în istoricul lor de către Thomson Reuters Web of Science ^h	0	0	93 (23%)

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Articole în reviste CNRS France (100%)	101 articole medie: 6 art/prs	163 articole medie: 5 art/prs	33 articole medie: 0,5 art/prs
-CNRS Nivel 1 ^e	82 (81%)	44 (27%)	4 (12%)
-CNRS Nivel 2 ^e	13 (13%)	64 (39%)	10 (30%)
-CNRS Nivel 3 ^e	6 (6%)	40 (25%)	13 (40%)
-CNRS Nivel 4 ^e	0	15 (9%)	6 (18%)
Articole în reviste din lista Tilburg ^f	88 articole medie: 5,2 art/prs	34 articole medie: 1 art/prs	1 articol medie: 0,015 art/pers
Articole în reviste BDI (fără ISI)	8 articole medie: 0,5 art/prs	71 articole medie: 2,2 art/prs	1476 articole medie: 22 art/prs
Articole în editori prestigioși ^g	122 articole medie: 7,2 art/prs	149 articole medie: 4,5 art/prs	103 articole medie: 1,5 art/prs

- If "research universities" and other "research institutes" indeed care about *research*— in Economics and beyond:
 - High time Romania inspired itself from places where science and science policy excels, and abandoned its "originality" in organizing and evaluating research.
 - High time a basic system providing the right incentives for current and, especially, future, generations of academic economists was put in place and maintained.
 - High time Romanian researchers regained "the courage, capacity, and will to enter the global game of competition for value".