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Author

BIANCO, Mariela (GRAS, Natalia; SUTZ, Judith)

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Academic evaluation: Universal instrument? : tool for development? / Mariela Bianco ; Natalia Gras ; Judith Sutz

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Abstract

Research agendas and academic evaluation are inevitably linked. By means of economic incentives, promotion, research funding, and reputation academic evaluation is a powerful influence on the production of knowledge; moreover, it is often conceived as a universal instrument without consideration of the context in which it is applied. Evaluation systems are social constructions in dispute, being the current focus of international debates regarding criteria, indicators, and their associated methods. A universalist type of productivity indicators is gaining centrality in academic evaluation with profound effects on the content of research that is conducted everywhere.

Specifically, evaluation systems based on this type of indicators are sending negative signals to scientists willing to conduct research on contextualized agendas, particularly those negotiated with non scientists. On the basis of theoretical and empirical studies documented on the specialized literature and extensive personal engagement with university research policy in Uruguay, we argue

16.5.2024

that the consolidation of evaluation practices of alleged universal validity deteriorates and discourages a type of research which is undeniably important in developing contexts. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)