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HAMANN, Julian

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Abstract

Far from allowing a governance of universities by the invisible hand of market forces, research performance assessments do not just measure differences in research quality, but yield themselves visible symptoms in terms of a stratification and standardization of disciplines. The article illustrates this with a case study of UK history departments and their assessment by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and the Research Excellence Framework (REF), drawing on data from the three most recent assessments (RAE 2001, 2008, REF 2014). Symptoms of stratification are documented by the distribution of memberships in assessment panels, of research active staff, and of external research grants. Symptoms of a standardization are documented by the publications submitted to the assessments. The main finding is that the RAEs/REF and the selective allocation of funds they inform consecrate and reproduce a disciplinary center that, in contrast to the periphery, is well-endowed with grants and research staff, decides in panels over the quality standards of the field, and publishes a high number of articles in high-impact journals. This selectivity is oriented toward previous distributions

10.2.2026

of resources and a standardized notion of “excellence” rather than research performance. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Hamann, Julian, E-Mail: hamann@uni-bonn.de