



**Copenhagen
Business School**
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN

The researcher in the middle- strategies and reactions to research evaluation

Finn Hansson

Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy

Copenhagen Business School



The tradition: The Peer Review System as the touchstone of scientific quality evaluation as stated by Robert Merton

- **The ethos of science:** C(ommunism), U(niversalism), D(interestness), O(rganized), S(cepticism) - secured by peer review (1942):
- Errors of judgment, of course, occur. But the system of monitoring scientific work before it enters into the archives of science means that much of the time scientists can build upon the work of others with a degree of warranted confidence. It is in this sense that the structure of authority in science, in which the referee system occupies a central place, provides an institutional basis for the comparative reliability and accumulation of knowledge. (1971)



Peer Review in publication Surveys 2009

84% believe that without peer review there would be no control in scientific communication. (senseaboutscience)

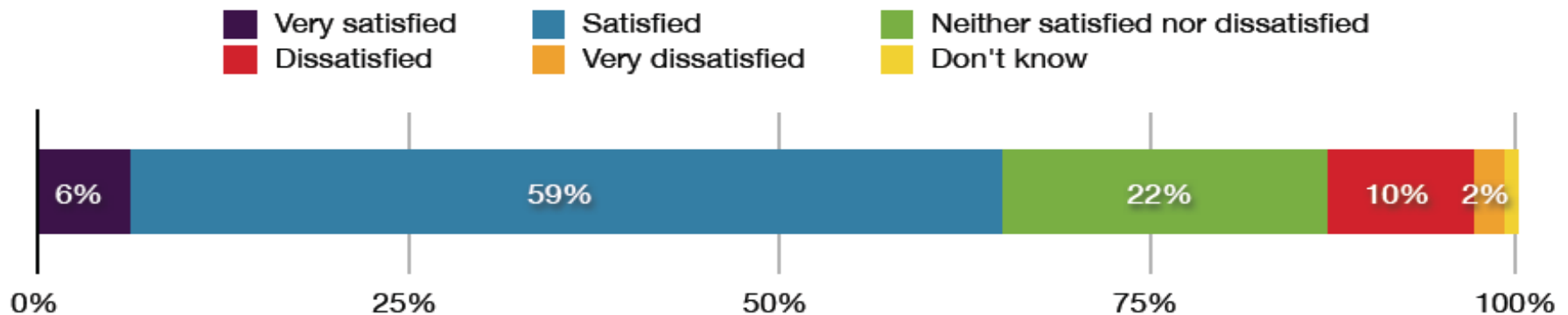


Figure 3: "Overall, how satisfied are you with the peer review system used by scholarly journals?" (n = 3040)



New evaluation systems - new role for the peer review - focus on dilemmas between learning and/or control

- When research evaluation systems become integrated part of the daily governance of the research organization/department, then how do these systems influence the researcher?
- The original balance in peer reviews between control and learning is changing – control taking over,
- Increase in competition for research funding/lack of public money increases the pressure and stress,
- Research evaluation transformed to a new management instrument on different levels – increasing demands for more evaluation – more and more use of (quantitative) methodologies (citation measures)

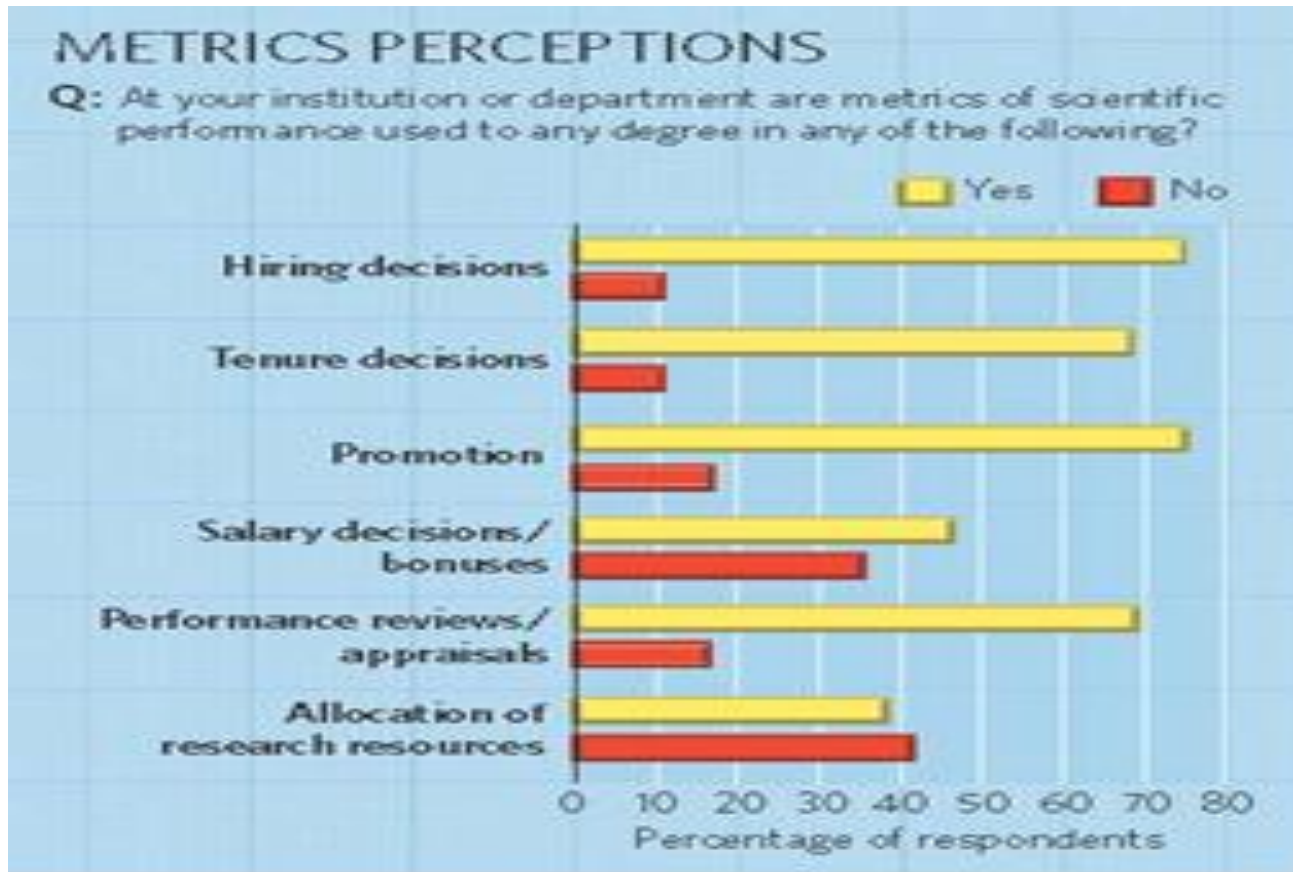


What we know about the impact on researchers

- Our empirical knowledge on how researchers experience and act in relation to PR and research evaluation is limited.
- We know or assume that assessment systems has impact – not only the anticipated but also unanticipated – as sociology of work and organizational tell us, that changes in work organisation heavily influence the people working in the organization.
- From a recent qualitative study by Lamont on the evaluative cultures in research funding:
- Peer review is secretive only those present in the deliberative chamber know exactly what happen here.
- Participants faith in the system has a tremendous influence on how well it works.



Researcher perception of uses of research evaluation systems





The peer review in daily life of the researcher

- Classic peer review world gave researchers a feeling of self-governance; you could to some degree select when to be evaluated (submitting articles, job and funding application),
- Moving to a NPM world, research evaluation in larger systems with metrics and peer reviews, it is no longer a question about individual decision making to be evaluated,
- Large evaluation systems with or without peer reviews evaluate departments, institutions as well as individuals, creating a foreseeable culture of adaption to the new systems and strategies to cope.
- The career of the individual researcher depend on individual and institutional evaluation results



But more than one role for the researcher

- the double role; the researcher as performer of peer review based evaluations (member of committees) and researcher as the object for the evaluation.
- **Implication:**
- learning to use evaluation systems as tool for improvement of institutions or own selfinterests:
- Influence the researcher in relation to:
- Risk taking, moving into new research areas, move to collaborative research, cross disciplinary research, career planning.



Some negative influences - from literature reviews

- Block innovative and risky research, decrease diversity and experimentation in research
- Encourage 'publication inflation' (e.g., 'salami publishing') and 'game playing' (e.g., with indicators, self citation, citation clubs)
- The logic is 'looking good' rather than necessarily doing better
- Encourage traditional 'academic' research at expense of research linked to society's needs, cross disciplinary research, risk taking.
- Separate research from teaching (downplay teaching)
- Rewards past performance not current or future potential reinforce research elite (Matthew effect)

- (Martin and Genua 2003)



Alternative?

Looking for ‘quality’ in production of new knowledge - lessons from studies of knowledge management organisations—key issues from recent studies :

- Belief, commitment and tacit knowledge
- Social capital
- Social networks, structured holes
- knowledge value collective

From Nonaka, Nahapiel and Ghoshal, Burt, Bozeman.



New roles for the peer review system?

- The challenge to the evaluation system is how to integrate new aspects without producing overwhelming quantification or bureaucratisation. Trust instead of control.
- Let funders and heads of institution take the risk of failure as well as the honour of success.
- The reviewers are no longer anonymous persons but known faces participating in dialogue with applicants
- The evaluation takes shape of a constructive formative evaluation, supporting development.



Evaluating complex research organizations:

The challenge to the evaluation lies in focussing the evaluation on some of the important aspects for the best possible organization of successful research programs, without relying only on evaluation of indicators of productivity like end results, articles or other products, but on organizing, leadership, networking, communication.