

SIG ECI meeting in Helsinki November 8, 2017

Participants: Jolanta Šinkūnienė, Emanuel Kulczycki, Marc Vanholsbeeck, Stéphanie Mignot-Gérard, Haris Gekic, Michael Ochsner, Reetta Muhonen, Antun Plenkovic, Karolina Lendak-Kabok, Rita Faria, Thed van Leeuwen, Ioana Galleron, Stefan de Jong, Paul Benneworth, Marek Holowiecki, Mimi Urbanc.

Apologies if somebody's reflections are missing in the minutes, I tried to write down as much as it was possible, but this is not a recorded transcript, so some details might be missing.

Introduction:

Jolanta presented the status quo of the SIG ECI (see the slides attached) activities.

One of the questions that came up is the difficulty to ascribe certain disciplines to either Humanities or Social Sciences because this is different in different countries. Cases in point are, for example, Law, Communication, Education. One suggestion to deal with this would be to consult the national disciplinary classifiers in each individual country, where it is available. In some countries it does not exist, so in those cases the discipline has to be assigned to one or the other field according to the most common practice in that country.

Most of the further discussion was devoted to how we can divide in planning and getting advanced with the analysis and publications, having in mind that there are 16 people now who have contributed / are in the process of contributing interviews, and it might be too challenging to work efficiently on further steps and reconcile opinions of 16 people.

Jolanta and Stephanie suggested that perhaps we can make a major split between some people looking at the Humanities interviews, and the other group of people looking at the Social Sciences interviews. Then within each areas, the Humanities and Social Sciences, we can have two more groups - one focusing on careers, and another one focusing on evaluation (the proposed division, its advantages and areas of concern are available on the attached slides). This proposal, however, was not eventually approved as the most suitable one - see the summary of the discussion below.

Marc commented on the fact that career and evaluation might be too difficult to separate, and that we have to make data analysis feasible for all four groups. Maybe it is feasible to separate H and SS, and then the early early stage researcher experiences (during the PhD) and early stage researcher experience (after the PhD).

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Rita noted that if we use different methods of analysis in each different group, it will make the studies not comparable. The value of the SIG ECI data is that it offers many perspectives, and it is the whole data which contributes to the complete and full picture. So the question is whether it makes sense to fragment the data so much. Another thing is that it might be difficult to separate the data. A possible solution to those problems could be for all of us to do the same analysis on the same set of data, and for all of us to compare the results.

Michael asked whether there is really a problem if we just take one science field as we could have decided initially to only take just one science field, for example, just social sciences, and then we would have just one science field. Then we can find a number of areas to analyse within that one science field.

Marc commented again that it is difficult to differentiate between careers and evaluation and it would be interesting to see how both are contextualized in different contexts.

Paul asked about the logics of making a difference between evaluation and career. Jolanta explained that it was just an idea of how to split into smaller groups so that we can more efficiently proceed with the analysis, though of course both aspects are very much related.

Michael reminded of the initial potential research question on how evaluation impacts careers, and added that it is only one question, judging from the data there could be a plethora of other research questions.

Rita commented that we might be confusing research dimensions and research questions, also pointed out the fact that the discussion of the possible perspectives for analysis suggest more a descriptive approach rather than interpretative research.

Paul commented on the overall objective which is the fact that we want to understand the meaning of evaluation on careers. That could include different types of decisions ECI are making, career & evaluation from a short term and long term perspectives and suggested that maybe this could be thematic areas to be explored.

Jolanta reminded everyone the initial idea for the SIG for ECI was to generate ideas and elicit concerns that ECI have related to evaluation, so that this could be addressed in the training school which will be organized by WG1. Ioana further elaborated on the importance of the training school which could have a long term impact on ECI participants by making them aware of different evaluation aspects.

Emanuel raised concerns about the feasibility of different publications on the same, but divided data (how to avoid Salami slice for one of the groups) as it does not seem very feasible to write four articles based on the same data, especially when it is broken into separate groups.

The idea was raised that maybe some members of the group could do the reading and literature review, others - the analysis, etc., and divide work on publications in this way.

Michael commented that it does not necessarily have to be like this, people can do both literature review and analysis, but perhaps different groups could address different research questions as there could be many of them.

Rita remembered an interesting aspect of the interviews which was the luck factor. It is something that is interesting and also most probably fairly novel and not researched before.

Michael commented that this is exactly how it should be - the more precise ideas on analysis come from reading the data, and that there could be hundreds of ideas coming from the data.

The question of the translations and their effectiveness and validity also was raised, to which Stefan provided an example of their analysis of 65 impact cases, all coming from 16 or 17 countries. On the one hand, the diversity was huge, but on the other hand there are not too many studies which collect data from so many countries. So it might not be a very high quality work in terms of comparability, but it is quite unique in its data coverage.

Paul suggested that we have to focus on something in the middle between a very rigid division into 4 groups and a very loose approach, maybe to come up with four schematic areas, one of which could be the luck factor. Ioana added that another area could be the diversity perspective of the humanities and social sciences.

Marc replied that as can be seen in the interviews, some people have had PhD in one science field, and then moved to another science field for their post PhD careers, so the diversity between science fields is rather tricky including the problem of categorizing the disciplines.

Rita suggested that maybe we could do something on various moments: PhD, funding, publications, and how these moments reflected in the careers of ECI.

Paul suggested other 4 areas - diversity, quality context, career development, perverse effects (dark side) of evaluation.

It was also suggested that what could be done is to find unique, interesting, unexpected dimensions of the analysis, such as for example the mentioned luck factor or the dark side of evaluation which could set people investigating those phenomena on interesting intellectual paths of analysis.

Jolanta commented that perhaps some aspects are broad enough, but other might be too narrow, so it is really difficult to decide on a set number of content areas without actually doing a proper detailed reading of the whole data set. Another risk which could not really be prevented without more careful data analysis is to have overlap between content areas.

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Stefan then suggested to form a core group of 5-6 people who could explore the literature and the data and come up with the broad topics preventing overlap by reading all the interviews. The first step of this group would be to put together the literature on ECI and evaluation and the second step would be to read all the data and suggest possible thematic segments to be covered in publications. As a reward for those people who would be doing this kind of work Stefan suggested to be the first authors in the publications that would stem from the data analysis.

The core group, which was put together on the spot, includes Marc, Michael, Rita, Stephanie, Stefan, Jolanta. Later on Karolina volunteered to join the group as well. It was agreed that the core group would propose research questions and possible distribution for publications for the rest of SIG ECI participants.

The second big aspect covered in the meeting was the questionnaire which was planned as the second stage following the semi-structured interview stage.

Jolanta reminded everyone of the original timeframe for the SIG for ECI (this is on slides), which roughly distributes in time as follows: 4 interviews conducted, transcribed and translated into English by Christmas 2017, STSM in Paris (under the supervision of Stephanie) during which Karolina will try to work out the grid for the questionnaire at the end of January 2018, which then could be discussed and finalized during the next COST meeting at the beginning of March 2018. More detailed steps are presented on the attached slides.

The question which was raised though was how we should proceed with the questionnaire bearing in mind the difficulty of getting contacts of potential respondents to the questionnaire.

Everyone agreed that it would be useful to have the quantitative questionnaire data supplementing the qualitative analysis data. But a number of problems related to that were raised. Some countries (ex. Poland) has a huge number of scholars. It is possible to contact them in a centralized way but it costs quite a lot of money. Michael raised the problem of finding the right people, especially bearing in mind the mobility of ECI and the fact that we have to have a uniform approach of searching and including respondents in every country.

Rita suggested to do the questionnaire in English as a possibility, but it was a joint decision that Eastern Europe is not an example of the area where everyone would be speaking English especially in SSH fields.

Antun suggested to load the questionnaire on the ENRESSH web, and then ask various official institutions to distribute a request for ECI to answer the questionnaire. On the other hand, Michael returned to the idea that we have to have a clear and uniform definition of the sample which would only be possible if we do the manual selection of respondents in each country rather than posing the questionnaire online.

Jolanta suggested to maybe consider the Science Europe representative's idea shared in the Antwerp meeting to focus on one or two disciplines within SSH rather than attempting to cover the whole of SSH in each country as getting the addresses of all ECI respondents in every country and in the whole of SSH might be a task hardly possible to achieve.

Thed also reminded of the ethical issues related to contacting people and asking to participate in the survey. Thed also mentioned a possibility to generate a number of addresses of scholars from the Web of Science, however, such approach might be also quite problematic as many SSH scholars, especially those from Humanities do not publish that much in the publications included into the Web of Science.

Finally, it was agreed to try and have respondents to the questionnaire from one discipline from SSH rather than attempting to address all ECI representatives in SSH.

Stephanie noted that it might be possible to suggest suitable discipline(s) during/after the STSM in Paris (January 2018).

The final note on the deadlines is that we agree to keep ideally to December 23, 2017 deadline for conducting, transcribing and translating the 4 interviews per country, and only in extreme cases we postpone that for January 2018.

It is also important to keep to the agreed criteria for the interview respondents: 2 from Humanities and 2 from Social Sciences, not more than 8 years after PhD (as per COST definition), ideally balanced in terms of gender (2 male + 2 female) and whenever possible not all of them from one institution.

The final aspect which was discussed in the meeting was the Agreement for the Ethical treatment of the Interview data, which has to be signed by the members of SIG for ECI. The discussed content of the agreement is attached as a supplement.

NBABA meeting in Helsinki November 8, 2017

Participants:

Geoffrey Williams, Antun Plenkovic, Stéphanie Mignot-Gérard, Janne Polonen, Tim Engels, Marc van Holsbeeck, Stefan de Jong, Paul Benneworth, Jadranka Stojanowski, Raf Guns, Gunnar Sivertsen, Thed van Leeuwen, Elias Sanz, Rita Faria, ?, Jolanta Stojanowski, Reetta Muhonen, Marek Holowiecki, Emanuel Kulczicky, Andrea Starcic Istenic, Mimi Urbanc, Alessia Zuccala, Ginevra Peruginelli, Michael Ochsner, Karolina Lendak Kabok, Haris Gekic, Jorge Manana, Ioana Galleron

The session starts with a presentation by G. Williams (see annex 1). Discussion points are

- status of different book formats
- status of publishers

Organisation of the session : a series of short presentations so as to flesh out some of these issues, then discussion about which aspects need to be tackled further. Some open questions are already listed in the presentation:

Jon Holms presents the main results from two recent evaluation exercises in Norway (see annex 2).

Thed van Leeuwen asks for a clarification about the figures concerning the share of books and journal articles: did someone look at the number of pages of books, because the percentages can change a lot if we take this aspect into consideration? Jon says the report did not.

Gunnar Siversten asks why NBABA, while many of the issues presented have obvious bibliometric aspects. G. Williams observes that bibliometry is not used in many countries, and the point of NBABA is also to look at motivations of scholars in writing a book rather than a series of papers. Gunnar is still wondering why should be separation from statistic information. Michael Ochsner joins the discussion to say that the bibliometric part is already been covered, but the qualitative aspect is less covered by literature.

Ginevra Peruginelli asks about the uniform definition of peer review. She does not agree on this, there are different things defined as peer review, ex. editorial review and external reviewers in Italy.

Thed comments on costs of OA: 10.000 euros is quite doable. Qualitative aspects are developing also.

Jorge Manana Rodriguez presents the SPI database and the qualitative aspects of books it covers (see annex 3).

G. Williams asks for some clarification about how low rated publishers who still can publish sometimes good books are managed. In Spain, this seems to be the case of university presses. He also asks how we can differentiate between prestige and known publishers.

Alessia Zuccala asks about the issue with subsidised publications. Is there a system of parallel publishing houses with the “pay for publish” model? Jorge Manana explains that scores of publishers/ imprints have been aggregated.

Michael Ochsner observes that it is normal that prestige ranking and publications habits of scholars are correlated, since they have been asked to publish with the best.

Alessia observes this tracks to the question of symbolic capital, and the question is circular. Jorge confirms that this circularity was observed in the SPI study, when looking at the ratings made by expert panels.

Emanuel poses the question of the relation between prestige of publishers and reviewers. Jorge answers the study did not cover this aspect.

Also, there is no correlation between the activity of a publisher in a certain domains, and his prestige in that domain.

Gunnar comes back to the commercial aspect of book publication. Prestige can be also related to the understanding by an author as to what extent a given publisher is willing to invest money in a publication from such field, or in such and such type of output (a very specialised publication, on a very specialised topic).

Jane comes back to the observations he made in the morning about open access for books with very limited market value.

Rita Faria thinks that it is a good idea to look at the intellectual conflict between commercial aggressive behaviour and prestige, which cumulate in some cases.

Gunnar proposes to keep a market for the SSH where there is a market, then to keep the rest in OA, under the form of academic book series (the academic core).

Michael gets back to the question of the cost of publishing. He considers that if a publisher is offering a good service for publishing, not too costly, there is no reason not to go for it. More problematic is when APC are obviously raised for commercial reasons.

Jon supports Gunnar’s proposal for book series, but is concerned with how to organise such a system, how to make sure that someone takes ownership and decisions, and continuously ensures quality.

Marc observes that Gunnar’s idea is more or less covered by the Public library for Humanities. Gunnar agrees and proposes to work in the same direction.

Marc also observes that are some parameters of prestige, as coming from the SPI study, we can work with.

Ginevra thinks we mustn’t concentrate on the content, but on the respect of the procedures for the peer review.

Geoffrey proposes to conduct interviews to understand why someone having published with a bad book publisher has actually did it: understanding motivation is key.

After the coffee break.

Janne Pölönen presents the label for peer-review publications that has been developed in Finland (annex 4).

Geoffrey asks if the label goes to the publisher or to the collection; Janne says both. Ioana asks what are the effects on the system? Modification of publications/authors? Janne says this was not investigated. Rita Faria follows on this asking if this helps authors, for instance for obtaining better funding for their proposals.

Geoffrey asks if there is any resistance against double peer review, apparently not.

The van Leeuwen how was taken into consideration the fact that in the H the peer reviewing is often done by the editorial board and not by external partners. Apparently this did not pose real problems to publishers, they were willing to have external reviewers. Publishers have built pools of external reviewers they can draw on.

Jadranka Stojanowski asks how the peer-review difference has been taken on board, knowing that in the same field researchers can do more detailed and rigorous peer-review for international journals than for national ones. JP says that the difference has been considered, but that for the moment the label was considered as a tool to implement good practices, and that differences in procedure will maybe be addressed at a second time.

JS asks about the enforcement of the rules. JP explains again that the TSV trusts the publishers, and the learned societies which are behind them. They rather see whether the criteria are clearly indicated on the webpage of the publisher, and if this corresponds with the actual practices.

Raf asks if the label applies to monographs. The answer is yes.

Gunnar Sivertsen observes that other types of publishers, the non-academic ones, must not be imposed this kind of label, their criteria are different. He wonders what entails promoting such a label in other countries, knowing that peer-review practices are different in the different European countries.

Emanuel Kulczicky congratulates Janne for the fact that publishers can be trusted. In Poland is not possible. He asks if there is a way to know what happens when a paper has been refused by the two reviewers: can it still be published by decision of the editor, or not?

Ginevra Peruginelli presents the results of a survey on legal monographs in Italy (see annex 5).

Jon asks if, with regards to books, there is some difference in those domains of law where researchers are also used to blind peer review of journals. Is this affecting the attitude towards peer review of monographs? No, because journals are still considered less important than books.

Jorge Manana wonders why scholars consider that publishers cannot be ranked. Everybody has a ranking, but there is no formalisation of these rankings. Instead, there is a formalisation of journals.

Gunnar sees the study as a good way of how we should work in ENRESSH, as a way for gathering information from researchers and correcting perceptions.

Geoffrey asks how many books we are talking about. Ginevra does not have the figures.

Alessia, Ginevra and Elea propose a special issue of *IJ Information Management* on book evaluation: national registries for book, PFBR, library holding counts, publisher rankings, prestige, and specialisation, reviews in social media. This is a call for contributions. A formal proposal will follow and will be circulated within ENRESSH.