The diversity of SSH publications and its implications for evaluation of SSH

Seminar ‘Current challenges in the evaluation of social sciences and humanities’
Université Saint-Louis, Brussels, April 30th 2019

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Purpose

To provide an overview of diversity of publication patterns in the SSH and the implications for evaluation of social sciences and humanities, including the need for monitoring of publications and balancing societal relevance and impact with internationalization
Why are book publications important for the SSH?
Book publishing takes a prominent role in SSH, e.g. for epistemic reasons

Prestige associated with publishing a monograph, edited volume or book chapter

Findability and visibility of publications

However, research evaluations said to be at odds with book publishing
What share of scholarly SSH publications are book publications? Some results from

Data from VABB-SHW (Flanders, Belgium), VIRTA (Finland), NSI (Norway), PSB (Poland) and COBISS (Slovenia)

Some numbers
336,681 peer reviewed publications
2004-2015 for Flanders and Slovenia
2005-2015 for Norway
2009-2014 for Poland
2011-2015 for Finland
Monographs in humanities and social sciences

Table 1. Share of monographs in the humanities (%)

Table 5. Share of monographs in the social sciences (%)

[Graphs showing the share of monographs in the humanities and social sciences for different countries over a period from 2004 to 2015.]

- Flanders
- Finland
- Norway
- Poland
- Slovenia
## Book chapters in humanities and social sciences

### Table 2. Share of book chapters in the humanities (%)

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### Table 6. Share of book chapters in the social sciences (%)

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Table 4. Share of book chapters in the field of history (%)

Table 8. Share of book chapters in the field of economics and business (%)

Graphs showing trends in book chapters in history and economics & business for different countries.
Intermediate conclusions 1

Book publishing is not about to disappear from SSH scholarly publishing

Research evaluation regimes are not necessarily in conflict with book publishing
Publication patterns in SSH are peculiar in several respects, including book publishing and publishing in several languages, see e.g.


More generally

Percentage of peer reviewed publications in English, local language(s) and other languages in the social sciences and humanities in 2014
Social sciences and humanities have diverse publication patterns, e.g. in terms of publication types and in terms of language use. This leads to a plethora of relevant journals and publishers, both at national and international level.

And, consequently, low coverage in international citation databases such as Web of Science and Scopus.

Note that this is not unique to SSH, and applies to large parts of the applied sciences (engineering), computer science, product development and several other fields too, especially for research that is conducted outside of the Anglo-Saxon countries or Western Europe.
Ways to tackle this low coverage: national bibliographic databases
Focusses on *Databases and uses of data for understanding SSH research*, see also [https://enressh.eu/working-group-3/objectives/](https://enressh.eu/working-group-3/objectives/)

In addition to publication patterns, the members of this working group study national bibliographic databases, among others through in depth studies set up by Linda Sile

21 of those databases are described in Sile et al, [https://doi.org/10.6084/M9.FIGSHARE.5172322](https://doi.org/10.6084/M9.FIGSHARE.5172322)

The comprehensiveness of 13 of those databases is further analyzed in Sile et al, [https://doi.org/10.1093/RESEVAL/RVY016](https://doi.org/10.1093/RESEVAL/RVY016)

A web overview of national bibliographic databases for publications is available at [https://ecoom.uantwerpen.be/sshdatabases](https://ecoom.uantwerpen.be/sshdatabases)
Met at University of Antwerp, 10-11 September 2018 with 17 presentations on

- Identification of scholarly publications
- Integration of data from different sources
- Metadata accuracy control
- Classification of research output
- Collaboration with stakeholders

Full program and presentations on
https://www.uantwerpen.be/nl/centra/ecoom/programme/

Brief discussion on
What are good practices for national bibliographic databases?
publication

I Data input

Use of metadata standards
Use of classifications
Use of identifiers
Data retrieval
Parsing

II Data processing

Validation of identifiers
Deduplication
Enrichment with external metadata

III Organisation of data collection and processing

record in a national database for research output
COBISS in Slovenia

Nation-wide standardized practice for bibliographic control
Education and license for data entry
#2 Coordination between stakeholders

Norwegian Science Index

Well-defined coordination and responsibility scheme among the different stakeholders

Strong representation of the scholarly community

Multiple spaces to express (alternative) views
#3 Documentation (also in English)

VIRTA (Finland), Norwegian Science Index (Norway), BFI (Denmark)
Elaborated manuals and guidelines on bibliographic record input

COBISS (Slovenia), RIV (Czech Republic)
Detailed description of research output type classification
# TYPOLOGY OF DOCUMENTS/WORKS FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY MANAGEMENT IN COBISS

30 September 2016

ARTICLES AND OTHER COMPONENT PARTS

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<th>1.01 Original Scientific Article</th>
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<td>An original scientific article is only the first-time publication of original research results in a way that allows the research to be repeated, and the findings checked. As a rule, it follows the IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) scheme for experimental research, or it is organised in a descriptive way for descriptive scientific areas. The article must be published in a scientific journal with a peer-review system of accepting articles and must be peer-reviewed. The peer-review system must be evident from the instructions for authors. Conference contributions, even if published in a scientific journal, are not classified into this type, but into type 1.06 or 1.08, with the exception of articles, written after the conference upon the journal’s editorial board’s invitation for a regular issue of the journal, and accepted for publication according to the same peer-review rules and procedures as other articles published in the regular issue of the journal, that comply with the definition for type 1.01.</td>
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<th>1.02 Review Article</th>
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<td>A review article is an overview of the latest works in a specific subject area, the works of an individual researcher or a group of researchers with the purpose of summarising, analysing, evaluating or synthesising the information that has already been published. A review article brings new syntheses, which also include the results of the author's own research. The review article must be published in a scientific journal with a peer-review system of accepting articles and must be peer-reviewed. The peer-review system must be evident from the instructions for authors. Conference contributions, even if published in a scientific journal, are not classified into this type, but into type 1.06 or 1.08, with the exception of articles, written after the conference upon the journal’s editorial board’s invitation for a regular issue of the journal, and accepted for publication according to the same peer-review rules and procedures as other articles published in the regular issue of the journal, that comply with the definition for type 1.02.</td>
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VABB-SHW (Flanders, Belgium)

Detailed legal framework that specifies the need to implement and maintain a database for research output.
#5 Collaboration with publishers

RINC (Russia)

Data transferred from publishers.
Reduced necessity for manual data input by research organizations.
#6 Interface for information retrieval

CROSSBI Bibliographic data can be browsed and searched for links to full-texts.
National bibliographic databases have been and are being set up in many countries.

Many of the issues are similar across countries, e.g. when it comes to:
- persistent identifiers (for authors, institutions, projects, outputs and more)
- development, implementation and maintenance issues
- challenges in terms of linking data, avoiding data silos

ENRESSH good practices manual forthcoming.
Societal relevance/impact and internationalization: impossible to reconcile for the SSH?
Tensions between International competition (e.g. the European framework program H2020) and national / regional / local visibility (e.g., in the case of sociology, Pineiro & Hicks, 2015)

Skills to describe and discuss research in native or regional language versus foreign languages

Languages that are widely spoken (e.g., for the case of Spanish, Chavarro, Tang & Rafols, 2017)
Possible solutions

No a priori preference for publications in English

Actively embrace multilingualism in scholarly communication, cf. the Helsinki Initiative [www.helsinki-initiative.org](http://www.helsinki-initiative.org)

Monitoring of the language of publications in order to have an information basis of the globalization process at work

Open science, i.e. making publications freely available online (cf. PlanS)
Societal relevance and impact needs to be included in all research policies and evaluations.

Language use in science needs to monitored (rather than ignored, cf. Sivertsen 2018).

Increasingly the tools and publication channels to make open science a reality are available: let’s not wait for PlanS, let’s do it.
Conclusions

Publication patterns differ vastly between fields and between countries

National bibliographic databases are needed to understand what is happening in terms of science in a country

Societal relevance and impact needs to be included in all research policies and evaluations

Research should be as open as possible, as closed as necessary
Thank you!

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