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How to evaluate academic staff? Efficacy and performance of the structures and schemes

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Résumé

Cet article propose une mise en perspective de deux systèmes d'évaluations des universitaires, français et slovaque, dans le cadre théorique de la « justice organisationnelle », pour tenter d'apporter des éléments sur la problématique de l'équilibre entre contrôle et validation nationaux, d'une part, et autonomie locale de recrutement et de performance, d'autre part.

Mots-clés

Evaluation, Personnel académique, Processus de Bologne, Autonomie des établissements, Nouveau Management Public

Abstract:
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This article puts into perspective two systems evaluations academics, French and Slovak, in the theoretical framework of "organisational justice", to contribute to explore the issue of the balance between national control and validation on the one hand, and local autonomy of recruitment and of performance, on the other.

Key words
Evaluation, Academic staff, Bologna Process, Autonomy of HEIs, New Public Management

Introduction: Why and how evaluate the academic staff?

The question of how to evaluate agents is a recurrent question concerning human resource policies, more particularly within the framework of service management (Chanut & Rojot, 2011). It is nevertheless inextricably linked to the issue of why. In an organisation, the main aim of evaluation is to improve performance resulting in compliance with the objectives set and their adaptation to the changing environment as well as the incorporation of the social and cultural standards in force within the organisation and the sharing of a common vision. To this end, evaluation must ensure the sustainability of the regulation and limit any risk of internal conflict while it must be designed in accordance with a principle of neutrality. Evaluating agents must make it possible to understand and improve the response of the organisation to the real expectations and needs of consumers, to check the validity and execution of the objectives and their suitability in light of the practice and context and to set their level according to the available resources that could and have been implemented. It must be deemed fair by all agents while reflecting the reality of their actions. In a service economy, and more particularly within a knowledge-driven economy in a "learning society" (Béjean, Monthubert, 2015), the question of evaluating service providers is inextricably linked to the measurement of the system's performance. Evaluating academic staff is therefore part of a broader process of

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evaluating universities, their efficacy and their performance.

Between the Bologna process and the generalisation of the new public management (NPM) principles, the change in the higher education system in Europe forces universities – which are now independent but subject to an injunction of competition (Zeller, 2015) – to implement a system of self-assessment and to comply with the quality control procedures relating to the education provided and the research conducted as their resources now primarily depend on their performances. As a fundamental element of production, academic staff can no longer escape evaluation. Nevertheless, numerous stakeholders in higher education believe that while it is legitimate vis-à-vis the citizens to subject teaching and research staff to evaluation, in particular within the framework of the organisation of a public service, numerous aspects are called into question: how, why and for whom should these professionals be evaluated and who should conduct the process? Just how effective is an evaluation process in terms of the certain costs of measurement compared to potential benefits: the removal or return to work of inactive or suffering staff, the increased incentive for the vast majority of teaching and research staff to comply with this model at the risk of eliminating any original approaches or pedagogical innovation (Côme & Rouet, 2014)?

Evaluating teaching and research staff is nevertheless in no way a new invention. Long before the objective – observation or criticism – of implementing a "culture of evaluation" in teaching establishments, promotions, the creation of chairs, prizes, research programmes and the opening of courses were not only a means of encouraging and involving academic staff but also underpinned their reputations and served as forms of evaluation. This argument is recurrent in France in the criticisms and strong opposition to evaluation as stipulated in the LRU law of 2007 and implemented by the consolidated decree of 2 September 2014 and the decree of 31 August 2015 relating to the National Council of Universities (CNU). Today, the improvement in training for academic staff, the enhancement of their potential and their performances through motivation and involvement and the organisation of their career path management facilitating the introduction of anticipatory competence management as part of an accreditation policy are major objectives in terms of human resources for any public higher education system. Evaluation must be a tool conducive to the continuous improvement of the system and an integral part of a quality procedure within the establishment.

The evaluation system must ensure that academic staff members are as involved and motivated as possible so that their behaviour satisfies the objectives set. The notions of the transparency, fairness, equity and acceptability of the evaluation system become the necessary conditions for the success and sustainability of the system. "Perceptions of justice allow employees to assess the quality of the relations binding them to their employer" (Manville, 2008, p. 530). The system for evaluating academic staff must therefore be deemed fair to be accepted and more particularly to contribute to increasing their involvement. More than their desire, acceptance of the evaluation by the person being evaluated is a necessary prerequisite of the effectiveness of the systems as a factor of involvement and continuous improvement. The objective of improving the university system as a priority for its users must certainly be used as a basis for any evaluation, although the prior communication of the objectives and procedures is essential. If evaluation, even if it is fair and transparent, is perceived by the staff evaluated merely as a system for justifying sanctions, it cannot be accepted without a justification and legitimisation of the objectives assigned to it. Both the message and the method become conditions for the success of any evaluation system introduced.

To establish public managerial recommendations in terms of human resources policy in the field of higher education, it is useful to compare evaluation systems in a benchmarking process in order to understand both what makes it possible to accept and incorporate the system and what generates increased involvement and motivation of the staff evaluated. Analysing another European example thus enables us to understand how systems deemed “fair” and “equitable” by those concerned prove to be less contentious, cheaper and, ultimately, more effective. Comparing the French system, based on a balance between the local authority and the national structure, with the Slovak system of evaluation – a system that is accepted and incorporated by the academic staff evaluated – offers some initial lessons which are particularly useful in implementing an evaluation system in France and thus give rise to a thought process relating to the principles of organisational justice which should underpin its construction with a view to creating an effective system.

This article calls on theoretical works on evaluation, the management of higher education establishments and organisational justice as well as on the French and Slovak experiences relating to evaluation in order to determine which system would be fairest.

In the initial theoretical section, we begin by explaining the elements which constitute a fair evaluation, in terms of both the criteria and the procedures adopted, and which make it acceptable to the staff evaluated. We then present a comparative approach of the French and Slovak systems of evaluating teaching and research staff and the principles of organisational justice implemented.

1. A fair evaluation?

1.1 Criteria, judgements and mechanisms

The etymology of the term “evaluation” explains, illustrates or summarises both a current problem and recurrent controversies. In old French, *avaluer* conventionally means “determining the value” of something (or someone?). Value is at the heart of a fundamental element of the history of economic thought and the dual meaning, in the customs and practices, of simultaneously determining a price and estimating a value leads to a subjective approximation approach (this “estimation”, linked to “esteem”, either of oneself or of others, mimetic desire) being combined with a precise procedure of determining a price, score, result or indicator, a procedure objectified by the shared judgement of the other – the buyer, the consumer and, more generally speaking, the market.

Evaluation is thus a relationship with value (Vial, 2012), or event values, nurtured by incorporating the economic meaning, of course, but also the symbolic, ideological and social meanings. These values are called on to establish and legitimise a measurement of the value of objects, services or products by presenting it as the accepted, rational, regulatory or universal value of these objects, services or products. In particular, they serve to reinforce and verify the conformity of practices, writings and behaviours (for example whether or not a teacher/researcher is “compliant” with a disciplinary field, a key question in France in the staff evaluation system). When evaluating people (or rather when evaluating the file of a person in relation to their activity or their own explanation of this activity, posture or representation, etc.), this value is not, of course, materialised through the determination of a monetary value (at least not directly, even if the financial aspects are important both to those concerned and to public fund managers in the event of an evaluation of teachers/researchers with a view to changing category or to obtaining training or research leave), but through a judgement, a choice, a score or a ranking. Surprisingly, while the notion of value added is widely used to evaluate the performances of schools (Felouzis, 2005) or even universities, the assessment of a member of the academic staff’s potential and the evaluation of their work in light of this potential is never envisaged. Peer judgement also involves taboos and in no way excludes unequal practices, as confirmed by the continued existence of a strong glass ceiling in higher education in France and Europe, unfortunately to the clear detriment of women[4].

The development of normative evaluation procedures based on criteria that must be defined and selected (given that certain criteria cannot, *in fine*, be included in an assessment objectification approach) appears to mirror the very significant development of the conditions of these evaluations: in many fields, massive use is made of self-assessment procedure, thus making it possible to "prepare" an evaluation or to legitimise, a priori, results or both. Self-assessment, based on analysis by those concerned, of their compliance with predetermined (and clearly explained) criteria may be a factor of social peace and of the prevention of conflicts and tool for evaluators. It does not, however, replace evaluation by recognised external operators (whose recognition must be established by those being evaluated). Within the Bologna Process, the evaluation or accreditation agencies have therefore introduced recruitment procedures and transparency (online) concerning the CVs of the evaluators who must comply with a charter and a code of ethics.

1.2 Fairness and evaluation

The mechanisms, conscious or otherwise, used by the evaluators to measure the "value" based on the files submitted to them are linked to mental processes resulting in a judgement or "evaluation", the latter term often being preferred by its initiators as it does not lead to (or less so) the subjectivity which is nevertheless a clear element of the process. Suspicion of this subjectivity is nevertheless characteristic of current social change. The rejection of all new forms of staff evaluation, perceived as a form of control or additional oppression and in particular as a individualistic element of the collective regulation of wage relations, necessarily characterises most union positions with regard to the subject, even if a certain change in position can be observed when the evaluation becomes part of an operative support and advisory mechanism facilitating personalised and quota-free handling of any difficulties encountered. This evaluation-prevention, designed in particular to reduce occupational psychosocial risks (OPR), is in particular advocated by the CFDT. The career monitoring mechanism for teaching and research staff in France is largely based on this approach as presented by so-called reformist unions. It also reflects a rationale of balancing the power and decisions between local and national levels typical of the management of teaching and research staff.

There is, of course, no perfectly "objective" evaluation, simply mechanisms enjoying a greater or lesser degree of acceptance on the part of those concerned. Irrespective of whether it is a case of quantifying (a fact which is often contested compared to "qualification" by peers or experts), a key question is that of the criteria: which questions must an evaluator answer when providing an opinion concerning a course to the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES)[5] and which criteria must candidates satisfy to be qualified for a post of associate professor by the CNU?

When evaluating members of a professional body, it is important to ensure that the criteria are legitimised by those concerned. Nevertheless, establishing criteria does not in itself constitute objectification but must be part of an approaching involving the stakeholders, although this is often not the case.

Evaluation, as a decision-making tool facilitates judgements and questions concerning value issued by "experts", evaluators deemed to be legitimate due to

[4] The GCI (*Glass Celling Index*) is 1.7. For more details on the inequality between men and women in higher education, see the report published by MENESR "Vers l'égalité femmes-hommes, les chiffres clefs", September 2016.

[5] The HCERES is the French independent body which produces evaluation reports on research teams, university courses and establishments used by the Ministry of Higher Education for accreditation purposes. France has not chosen to authorise independent agencies to grant accreditations.

their experience, maturity and competences. Globally speaking, even if the objectives, approaches and tools vary, it is a question of highlighting a management panel, a "*limited set of indicators (5 to 10) designed to offer managers an overview of the changes in the systems they manage and enabling them to identify the trends influencing these systems within a timeframe consistent with the nature of their posts*" (Bouquin, 2008, p. 241).

The indicator must demonstrate operational relevance, although it informs the manager not only of how the organisation works; its very creation provides a framework for developing, implementing and monitoring a strategy enabling the stakeholders themselves to assimilate the performance indicators (Derujinski-Laguecir, Kerne & Lorino, 2011). If French public universities adopt this rationale, the introduction of evaluation mechanisms is not the result of the marketisation or privatisation of the public sector but represents an attempt to ensure the a new "human resource management" is operational for a changing administration that is endeavouring to monitor processes, results and impacts in the organisation of a public service based on the element that constitutes its strength and unity: the academic staff.

1.3 Acceptance of the evaluation and organisational justice

While not actually posing a problem, all of these questions are certainly at the heart of discussions, disputes and denunciations, part of classic union delaying tactics but possibly even including a refusal to accept the law[6]. As teaching and research staff would already be subject to numerous evaluations (for recruitment and promotions in particular), what would be the point in adding a new mechanism? Another argument is linked to the actual research approach which for many researchers is collective. Collective evaluations instead of individual ones would thus be necessary with an approach that would avoid giving rise to behaviour dictated by a desire to satisfy a standard, although this would appear to contradict any creative or innovative approach which in fact drives research forwards.

The discussions concerning its organisation and its use are certainly symptomatic of a malaise and even of a difficulty to ensure compatibility between professional identities (Dubar, 1991) and some institutional developments. The foundations underpinning the professional identity of teaching and research staff is still linked to a peer-based recruitment method which can vary (Pigeyre & Sabatier 2012) and to a "self-perception" which is barely fostered by a coherent and shared self-assessment approach (Fave-Bonnet, 2010) or even by the lack of a reflective stance in relation to the results obtained, in particular in the field of research (Alter, 2001). The changing status of teaching and research staff and the diminishing recognition of "university professors" occurring at the same time as a fall in purchasing power help to explain a falling back on the discipline (Fave-Bonnet in Bourdoncle & Demailly, 1998, p. 434) which can very often be observed in the debates relating to the CNTi.

The professional identity of teaching and research staff is based on their pedagogical freedom (there is no inspection) and their autonomy, specific in the case of a public official, thereby enabling them to exercise their profession of researcher in complete academic freedom. The evaluations following their request are otherwise legitimate, or at least accepted (in particular within the framework of these peer evaluations) in the event of recruitment or promotion, although the introduction of a regular procedure poses a problem. In such a mechanism, the work of teaching and research staff is linked to set objectives often perceived as a restriction of their ability to make a

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[6] Cf. the letter from Christophe Mileschi explaining why he refuses to submit to "any form of systematic and recurrent individual evaluation" at: <http://www.cnu.lautre.net/IMG/pdf/Lettre_de_Christophe_Mileschi.pdf>.

judgement, a denial of their level of competences and thus an obstacle to fundamental liberties.

In the most common representation of academic staff, public policies use (public) management tools sometimes without their having been legitimised by the stakeholders. They often denounce a public policy defined by the results of evaluations and by the implementation of benchmarking, a tool designed to identify efficient practices in a competitive market which, by calling on indicators subject to very little discussion or contestation (in particular when evaluating research), results in a loss of power for the decision-makers (and the researchers themselves).

Thus, even if it seems that, as a matter of principle, a regular and mandatory evaluation of all public service officers is acceptable, if the objective is linked to the performance of these services and to the career and recognition of the officers' work, the fundamental issue of the method remains (Meriade, 2011) all the more so if the very notion of performance is not explained.

Globally speaking in Europe, while teaching and research staff are recruited by peer selection and the institutional mechanisms are increasingly subject to evaluations conducted by external experts, self-assessment measures are becoming more generalised, both when preparing accreditations and recruiting teaching and research staff. The question is then to determine how to link the self-assessments with final decisions?

Several aspects are important:

–the self-assessments must be based on criteria that are understandable, clear and legitimate in relation to regulatory texts, for example the definition of the missions of the people concerned or a shared understanding of a professional body or a disciplinary field;

–the use of self-assessments by commissions or evaluators before taking a decision, *in fine*. The latter must also be legitimised. In many countries, incorporating external evaluators is a means of avoiding too high a degree of endogamy.

Furthermore, self-assessment can also be conducive to the adoption of a reflective posture, increase the accountability of the stakeholders and encourage a collective search for meaning and the intelligibility of activities, for example in the administrative field. Finally, self-assessment can be incorporated into a benchmarking approach which is often implied in the process of highlighting and communication "best" practices in the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)[7].

The contribution of research on "organisational justice" provides an interesting theoretical framework concerning the procedures and staff evaluations in any organisation. This research focuses on the role of equity in the world of work (Adam, 1963; Greenberg, 1990; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). In particular, it involves exploring employee perception of the equitable nature of evaluation and promotion procedures and responses to their demands, for example in terms remuneration and work conditions (Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993) and examining how this perception can impact attitudes and behaviours or what are the positive and negative impacts on employee productivity or individual and collective performance. It is also interesting to study how the perception of the equity of situations determines, at least in part, a change in professional behaviour.

As the perception of the level of equity is naturally subjective and linked to specific situations which can be described by numerous characteristics, this notion of organisational justice is often only highlighted when "fairness", or equity", is violated. This is the case, for example, for wage differences between men and women performing the same work in equal positions within the same company or for arbitrary dismissals.

[7] Cf. <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index_fr.php>.

The authors have highlighted three distinct types of organisational justice: distributive, procedural and interactional.

"**Distributive justice**" (Adams, 1965) is based on the theory of equity and concerns results distributed proportionally to inputs, level of education, experience, production, etc. In a labour context, this can involve remuneration, social recognition, job safety, career opportunities and promotions. The key issue is to be able to establish a relationship between contributions and results, in particular in a constrained situation (for example the number of possible promotions for university professors). An evaluation is therefore necessary but is often similar to a judgement in relative terms which, when formed between peers elected to this effect, can result in a political dimension being prioritised and therefore departing from a rationale of equity.

In numerous organisations, human resource policies are largely standardised (collective agreements, industry agreements, etc.) and employees are familiar with – and often legitimise – the procedures, including when it means benefiting from a promotion or increase in salary based on their evaluated results.

An employee may nevertheless perceive situations to be inequitable such as the promotion of a colleague deemed to be undeserved. The transparency of procedures is therefore not enough: it is necessary to prove that the contributions of one employee are significantly different from those of another. When the rules relating to the evaluation of the contributions are clearly established, the employee who has not been promoted will attempt to adopt a behaviour designed to satisfy the criteria for promotion. If the rules are unclear or are interpreted in relation to other higher texts, it is possible, in particular for a civil servant, to abandon all hope of a promotion and to adopt a specific behaviour designed to provide a poor performance. Any international comparison must take account of intercultural variations (Storey, 2000, Friedberg, 2005) and it is necessary to place the weight of equity in perspective, in particular in relation to a principle of "equality".

"**Procedural justice**" is linked to the perception of the equity of the decision-making process leading to a particular result. Employees may indeed be willing to accept an undesirable result if they feel that the decision-making process was conducted in accordance with the principles of organisational justice. It is therefore possible that the perception of the equity of the decision-making process results in the legitimisation of a results which is nevertheless not equitable from the standpoint of distributive justice. Greenberg (1994), for example, observed that employees who smoked more readily accepted a ban on smoking at their place of work when they felt that they have received full information concerning the change in the company's policy. An associate professor not qualified by the CNTi to assume the role of university professor can therefore accept the situation if he believes that the system used is transparent and impartial. One of the main aspects of this type of analysis lies in the information relating to the procedures and the application thereof. The involvement of employees in participatory rationales increases the quality of reception of this type of information (Storey, 2000) which, if it remains hierarchical, can be seen as a form of manipulation. The perception of the equitable nature of the procedures is thus linked to the modes of command, human resource policy, the culture of the organisations and the participation of the employees concerned. The procedures must be perceived as being "fair" and be accessible, effective and impartial.

Leventhat et al. (1980) highlighted other criteria that can contribute to employee perception of an equitable decision-making process: the *permanence* of the procedures applied systematically to everyone; *neutrality*, whereby decisions must be based on verifiable factual elements, sometimes obtained by different sources; *precision*, as the information used to justify a decision must not be approximate; a *means for appeal*, with provisions available to contest decisions; *representativeness*, whereby the process must concern all employees corresponding to the criteria and, of course, *ethics*.

"**Interactional justice**", refers to the quality of interpersonal treatment of the employees within the organisations, in particular through official decision-making procedures (Tyler & Lind, 1992). The perceptions linked to the authority of a manager or administrator can affect procedural justice judgements in relation to trust, neutrality and compliance with rights. The perception of the equitable nature of decisions will thus be linked to the level of trust granted to decision-makers and the employee appraisal of their intentions and behaviour. Furthermore, acknowledged neutrality pushes employees to consider decisions to be impartial.

Certain organisational configurations and certain types of behaviour of managers are conducive to distributive, procedural and/or interactional justice, thereby benefiting both the employees who feel they are being treated equitably and the organisation, which can implement accepted procedures which are therefore more likely to be effective.

Individuals can react differently to a perceived injustice with varying degrees of impact on the organisation and numerous factors can influence the decision to act in light of a situation perceived to be unfair (DiFabio & Bartolini, 2009). Turnley & Feldman (1999) highlight four possible behaviours in response to a situation perceived to be unfair: departure, either permanent or temporary, from the organisation; withdrawal or renunciation, with reduced involvement and effort; loyalty to the organisation which allows the injustice to be ignored or rationalised; and denunciation of the injustice which may or may not lead to compensation. In the case of decision-making bodies such as the CNTi, the means for appeal, for example with regard to promotions, might not exist but the parties concerned may attempt to take action through the unions or represented groups, which amounts to a political game.

The behaviour most harmful to the organisations is withdrawal or renunciation as not only is the situation not resolved, but the contribution of the employees also stagnates or diminishes. In countries such as Slovakia where academic staff are not civil servants, withdrawal is rare because the employees, most of whom have fixed-term contracts, are subject to mandatory evaluation in relation to objectives which determine the renewal of their contracts.

The contributions of works on organisational justice are very interesting for the issue addressed in this article. In France, perceived injustices and inequities do not appear to be compensated by loyalty towards universities and an approach should be adopted enabling the systems and procedures to be revised in order to eliminate cases of serious injustice completely (Brumback, 2005). In particular, it is essential to ensure the use of appropriate performance criteria (for academic staff in France, for example in relation to the official missions of the university) and the competence of the evaluators, which is not necessarily the case in the situation where the members of the CNU are elected by their peers.

Some works, in particular by Sharpe (2006), show that the perception of equity affects the way in which employee accept and adjust to organisational change. This can be illustrated by analysing the implementation of the architecture of university courses within the framework of the Bologna Process in the different countries of Europe. According to different research works (Côme & Rouet, 2011, Lips, 2016), it is clear that Slovak academic staff, for example, legitimised and organised a radical change in their courses far quicker than their French counterparts. This is, of course, only one of several possible causes.

2. Evaluating teaching and research staff: a French-Slovak comparative approach

This empirical research is based on numerous official reports on the French system, both political (Senate reports) and administrative (in particular IGAENR reports). Interviews conducted with Slovak academic staff in 2015 enabled us to refine our knowledge of their evaluation system and, more particularly, to understand their appraisal of it. The authors' experiences within French and Slovak universities and in the national evaluation bodies such as the CNU, AERES (now HCERES) and the CNESER or in European programmes are also called on in a reflective approach, in particular with regard to evaluation practices. We have also studied the literature produced by these evaluation bodies along with the analyses and comments of union organisations. Cross-referencing these data has enabled us to analyse and understand the differences in the approach to and understanding of the evaluation system by French and Slovak academic staff. A final, more subjective, source allowed us to perform a triangulation by comparing the data collected with our experience as international experts having participated in numerous institutional twining arrangements financed by the European Commission with the aim of reforming university regulations, in particular the evaluation of teaching and research staff and accrediting programmes and establishments in a co-construction approach between experts from different countries. With this external view, we could more easily identify the particularities of the French and Slovak systems.

The means of evaluating and validating applications and/or appointments of teaching and research staff in Europe would appear to differ greatly from one country to another. It is nevertheless possible to identify different types of mechanism using two variables: national and/or local validation and the method of evaluating applications. Solely local validation can consolidate the reputation effect of establishments when there is little or poor preparation for such as rapid change. This is the case in Bulgaria where the national commission inherited from the former regime was abolished in 2009 (Rouet, 2012). The recruitment of academic staff now depends on the establishments' strategies, thereby favouring localism in most institutions except the most renowned universities where the selection of candidates is more intense, essentially based on an evaluation of their scientific activity and calling on an examination of applications by peers. The introduction of national commission to verify appointments is regularly requested by certain political opponents, but without success.

The debates on this issue reflect the dogmatic relationship between the autonomy of higher education establishments, at least in terms of recruitment, and the development of a liberal democracy, a debate which has also been relatively intense in Poland where a system for verifying appointments has ultimately been reinstated, as in all Central European countries. Unlike in France, the measures taken to break with the Soviet administrative heritage provide for a national verification (and/or appointment) after recruitment and not before, thereby raising the problem of the validity of applications *a priori*. In contrast, France chose in 1992 to introduce a "qualification", an *a priori* control of applications for university posts (after having experimented with an *a posteriori* system of control).

2.1 The evaluation of teaching and research staff in France: a blocked system?

In France, one of the elements of this approach, the evaluation of teaching and research staff, is at the centre of polemics and controversies. French public universities have followed a trend, relatively widespread in Europe, of "autonomy" and since the enactment of the law of 10 August 2007, French universities have become "managers" of their own jobs and payrolls (Balme & Cytermann, 2012). This transfer of personnel management has been something of a poisoned chalice and "the most formidable challenge of autonomy"[8]. Elected by their boards of directors, chancellors now play a more important role in terms of human resource management[9] thereby implying the introduction of a regular evaluation of the different members of staff, a mechanism implemented everywhere for administrative and technical personnel. The professional interviews conducted for the latter categories have now become a reality in all universities. For researchers and teachers-researchers, whose remits are broad and prescribed by law[10], the introduction of regular and, more importantly, accepted evaluation remains a problematic objective. Some missions may indeed be subject to evaluation within the establishment while others can, as chosen, by conducted by the National Council of Universities whose structure and organisation are nevertheless founded on "disciplines", often historically built on a rationale of teaching rather than research.

Until recently, a member of the academic staff in France could, in practice, avoid any evaluation during the course of their career if they were never a candidate for promotion, a change in pay grade, a research sabbatical or a doctoral supervision bonus (in which case their file is evaluated by the CNU and/or the local authorities in accordance with conditions proper to the CNU sections and the elected councils). The decree of 23 April 2009 introduced a periodic evaluation procedure for teaching and research staff specified, following strong contestation by all departments of the CNU, by the decree of 2 September 2014 which introduced "career monitoring" and its experimental implementation. Since 2016, this career monitoring has become effective in connection with the five-year evaluations of the establishments. For the first time, an evaluation mechanism for teaching and research staff was to be generalised and mandatory, albeit within the framework of the criteria defined by the CNU sections.

This systematic measure does not fundamentally change the mechanism which is still based on the definition of criteria, not necessarily transparently, by elected members or those appointed by the government of the different disciplinary sections of the CNU. This organisation is naturally inconsistent with the development of multidisciplinarities and does not allow a GPEC mechanism to be legitimised within the establishment, as there is no homogenous treatment in accordance with the CNU sections (a French member of the academic staff can only be affiliated to a single section), or to avoid withdrawal or renunciation behaviour.

The changing management methods in French universities bring an element tension to this issue. Regular evaluation is now intended for chancellors, who are managers of public amenities, and it is necessary to apply this regulatory measure although the "profession" is not ready to accept a supposed sacrifice of its "liberty" and any mechanism primarily controlled by the establishment is likely to be deemed yet another management instrument. It is, of course, possible to object that introducing a benchmarking practice in a budget situation which, if not comfortable, is at least acceptable cannot be seen in the same way as in a situation of permanent restriction. However, this external restriction on public institutions in terms of promotion quotas or

[8] Gillot D., Dupont A., "L'autonomie des universités depuis la loi LRU; le big band à l'heure du bilan", RI no. 446, Senate, 26 March 2013, IV, B

[9] "It is a question of improving the living and working conditions of the entire university community, of strengthening courses to ensure greater success among students and of developing the attractiveness of higher education and research professions", excerpt from the presentation of the law of 2007, at http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid55933/presentation-autonomiedes-universites.html.

[10] Article L952-3 of the Education Code specifies that, "*The functions of teaching and research staff fall into the following domains: 1° education, both initial and continuing, tutoring, orientation, advice and assessment; 2° research; 3° the dissemination of knowledge and liaison with the economic, social and cultural environment; 4° international cooperation; 5° the administration and management of the establishment.*"

PEDR[11], for example, makes it impossible to implement an autonomous HR policy.

There is therefore a high level of distortion between the legitimate introduction of comparative evaluations, often focusing on institutions in the case of public universities, and the implementation of a regular evaluation of the staff in these establishments. However, is it really possible to perform the first without implementing the second?

In France, the CNU is based on elections between peers and not a selection based on competences. Despite the criticism and numerous attacks it has faced, because it is the symbol of academic conservatism for some and for others because it is a terrible, mandarin institution or because it promotes clan-like procedures, the CNU is a legitimate institution for the profession. This was clearly demonstrated by the success of the petition launched to maintain its role, which was signed by one-third of the academic staff in less than one week (17,000 signatures out of the 51,000 members of teaching and research staff). The alternative credible option of abolishing the national qualification procedure and replacing it with a solely local procedure was categorically rejected. This compliance with a principle of a convention, as described by Lewis (Côme, Diemer, 1995) clearly underlines the legitimisation of the institution among the teaching and research staff. Its real role and organisation are nevertheless poorly understood, its procedures are as vague as ever and the slightest discrepancy in its practices (self-promotion, plagiarism, network effect, disciplinary infringement, bibliometrics as the single criterion, etc.) is immediately commented, denounced and criticised on all the social networks without these supposedly fraudulent practices actually being analysed. Can we, for example, really talk about self-promotion in the sections when the rate of promotion of the members of the CNU, be they elected or appointed, of deputies and that of the colleagues present on the lists is lower than the average rate of members of the section? The fears expressed by the academic staff concerning the introduction of career monitoring and its management by the CNU relate as much to the real utility of the system as to their representation of the institution's operations. Through its Permanent Commission (CP CNU) and its bureau, the CNU has reacted and introduced new rules of conduct (Chappoz, Côme, Dorbaire, Pupion, 2016), made its procedures more transparent and introduced a process to standardise the practices of its different sections. Despite this, CNU career monitoring as an evaluation process is far from receiving unanimous approval. The legitimacy of an institution does not guarantee acceptance of the evaluation procedures it introduces. This can only be obtained through the active participation of the person being evaluated in their own evaluation. Volunteering and election or appointment by the ministry do not call on the same mechanism, driven by the process of professional identification described above.

2.2 Self-assessment in Slovakia at the heart of a rapidly changing mechanism

The example of the Slovak mechanism in terms of recruiting and evaluating teaching and research staff illustrates a dual choice of procedure: introducing an *a posteriori* control of appointments that is more or less severe depending on the country and government and because it was relatively difficult to design an *a priori* system of control in countries attempting to break with a centralised administrative heritage. Slovakia is also an interesting example because the country experience a relatively short period of administrative reconstruction between 1990 and 1992 (within the framework of the new Czechoslovakia), before introducing a new

[11] For each CNU section, the candidates' files are classified in three groups: A for the best 20% who fully satisfy the criteria, B for the next 30% and C for the remaining 50%. The latter can also fully satisfy the criteria and thus receive an A for each criterion adopted, but the quotas imposed on the section requires a classification and prevents them from obtaining a global A grade.

state from 1 January 1993 in a very pragmatic manner, drawing inspiration from the different European models.

Slovak universities are still for the most part public; education is free and guarantees certain services for students (catering, accommodation conditioned by distance, resources and academic results) (Kosova & Rouet, 2013). Fewer than 20% of students are enrolled in the private sector. In this respect, the situation would appear relatively similar to that in France, all the more so as the regions, autonomous communities, also have an interest in the universities. Public institutions are under the direction of the ministry which, for example, controls and authorises the internal structures (for example modification or creation of components), but they have been independent, for about ten years, in managing buildings and personnel and in defining the strategy for their teaching offer (subject to accreditation by the independent agency). Accreditation for courses and diplomas is in particular founded on the criteria of "sustainability" and academic coherence: only teaching and research staff who have actually published in their domain can run a course.

The Slovak higher education system is characterised by:

- *student mobility from the very first year*: as students undergo a selection process (application and/or competitive exam), candidates apply to several universities chosen according to their reputation (an annual national ranking is published) and other criteria (services). As student accommodation is relatively easy to find (except in Bratislava) and transport is easy and relatively cheap, students are quite willing to leave the family environment to pursue their studies. This early mobility in part explains the students' interest in the Erasmus scheme;
- *relatively low state funding* (less, proportionally speaking, than in France: 0.60% of GDP compared to 0.76%): the establishments attempt to generate their own resources (national and international research projects, welcoming foreign students from outside the EU who are required to pay tuition fees of at least 6,000 euros per year);
- *An original calculation method*: different criteria are used (number of students, surface areas of the premises, etc.) and in particular the publications and scientific works of each member of each university are evaluated in budgetary terms and condition the state allocations to the establishments. This collectivisation of scientific activity only directly benefits the teaching and research staff through the operations of each faculty and each university.

Globally speaking, implementing the main axes of the Bologna Process has not been opposed, as it is seen as an instrument of EU membership by all stakeholders in favour of Europe (Gura & Rouet, 2011), and Slovakia has drawn considerably on certain mechanisms to introduce several means of evaluating both the establishments and the staff, and in particular the teaching and research staff for their recruitment, their activity appraisals, their contract renewals or their promotion to a higher category. Successive governments have avoided budget increases and have gradually introduced budget control tools and regulatory options enabling public institutions to generate their own resources (for example by authorising them to rent out their premises).

One of the major breaks between the old and "new" regime after the fall of the wall was the abolition of the civil service and the adoption of fixed-term contracts for all university staff. Academic staff are regularly required to compete for their job, which does not prevent them from breaking an ongoing contract to be recruited in another university. Like contract renewal, recruitment is only open to candidates who satisfy specific criteria relating to their scientific, teaching, value creation, administrative, project management and international outreach activities. We observe the same missions as those define by regulation in France, but with a particular emphasis on international outreach and especially conditions for creating criteria grids incorporating the actors concerned, both locally and per research field.

Like elsewhere, recruitment often begins with the doctorate. Post-doctoral students can apply for a post of teaching assistant and must satisfy certain criteria (publications, scientific activities, etc.) which are, *de facto*, easily satisfied as they are already included in the doctoral programme. After a few years, a teaching assistant can gain accreditation before competing, if satisfying another series of criteria, to become a *docentura* (associate professor). Appointments are controlled *a posteriori* by the ministry. Access to the post of university professor follows the same procedure except that the President of the Republic appoints the professors upon submission of their files by the ministry and therefore has a right of veto. A ceremony is organised at the Presidential palace on a regular basis (twice a year) to formalise these appointments).

The ministry defines a regulatory basis for the criteria (more or less restrictive depending on the political options of the different governments) and each establishment can adapt these lists, although a control may be organised at any time and there is nothing to be gained from a university making an exception for or trying to appoint a candidate who does not satisfy the criteria.

It is interesting to analyse the criteria themselves and the means of defining these criteria. In the first case, this analysis helps identify the expected profiles of the candidates and their activity. The lists of criteria are defined, *in fine* using a general base (regulation and the missions of teaching and research staff), by the teams and validated by the academic councils of the faculties and universities who adapt them to the institutions' policies and to the characteristics of the fields of research with a pragmatism that does not allow some fields to be opposed to others (for example exact sciences to human sciences).

Table 1 is the translation of the official table of criteria adopted by the Economics Faculty at the University of Matej Bel in Banska Bystrica[12]. To be validated, applications must satisfy all the mandatory criteria (M), at least two optional criteria (O) and at least 6 additional criteria (A). It is therefore a question of satisfying the conditions corresponding to the different missions of the teaching and research staff while retaining the possibility of fitting different profiles.

All forms of publication are considered. Every candidate must provide proof of publication of articles in international reviews with reading committees referenced in a database (SCOPUS, Web of Science, DOAJ, EBSCO, Index Copernicus, etc.). Proof is all the easier to provide as the teaching and research staff must regularly provide a summary of their publications and update a verified database managed by each faculty (part of the faculty budgets is calculated according to the intensity of the teams' publishing activity).

The validity of applications is not based on publications in specific lists of scientific journals, disciplinary field by disciplinary field. The disciplinary qualification of the journals can be taken into consideration at recruitment, but not when compiling the criteria. On the one hand, no commission in Slovakia defines a list of journals or publishers, only taking into consideration the existence of a reading committee, referencing databases and possibly (increasingly) the impact factor while on the other hand, the posts on offer are not linked to "disciplines" but to "fields". The weight of the books and chapters in books is important and pedagogical publications are also considered. Thus instead of forcing academic staff to publish in a limited list of journals by defining specific criteria, Slovakia

[12] Text adopted by the academic council on 6 November 2008 in accordance with § 82, paragraph 7 of law no. 131/2002 concerning universities and the modifications implemented on 15 June 2008 by the Slovak parliament. The original document is available at <https://www.umb.sk/app/cmsFile.php?ID=4093>.

has chosen to define general publication categories which also incorporate professional or technical publications, catalogues or notices which therefore correspond to all the missions of the academic staff. As the criterion relating to publications in international journals is difficult to satisfy, the regulations nevertheless offer the possibility of adapting the criteria (and reducing the number from 10 to 6, for example for an application for the post of professor), on condition that a sufficient number of articles has been published in national journals with a reading committee.

The candidates must provide proof of their participation in (or coordination of, for candidates for professorships) national and international scientific projects. This criterion is certainly more difficulty to satisfy for numerous candidates, hence the constant search for scientific partnerships and the promotion of projects awarded, in particular European projects.

With regard to previous experience, candidates must justify 5 or 10 years of teaching depending on the grades within the "field" of the desired post or a "related field", with both the candidate and the members of the commission given the freedom to appraise (or debate) this related nature. As with publications, it is not a question of recruiting by disciplinary section but by profiles which can be (and often are *de facto*) inter- or multi-disciplinary in nature. The "fields" are not precisely defined but are part of a dynamic approach.

Generally speaking, publishing scientific monographs in Slovakia remains an easy task as each university has its own publication programme (the faculties also develop their own scientific journals which are now subject to an obligation of referencing and thus of publication in foreign languages), but participation in foreign conferences and journals remains costly and problematic, in particular with regard to language problems. The trend is this to attempt to publish rather than contribute to conferences. Furthermore, with regard to activities abroad, many Slovak academic staff members validate activities in neighbouring countries, although far fewer can declare activities in other countries, which is desired by the ministerial policy.

Slovak academic staff are more than happy to quote their colleagues who repay this in kind as it is necessary to demonstrate quotations and avoid quoting oneself as this is easily detected. Each time a member of the academic staff succeeds in being published in a referenced journal, it has become common practice to insert colleagues' quotations, even if the subjects are not the same. This behaviour does not seem to have any serious effects.

Implementing this criteria-based approach has several significant consequences:

- *on the profile and activity of the academic staff*: the minimum criteria require an activity and its validation across all the missions without specialisations that are too specific: a teacher-researcher is not a researcher and the lists of criteria take his/her different missions into consideration. This situation is all the more significant as, unlike in France[13] Slovak law concerning higher education does not specify the different functions of teachers-researchers. Adopting criteria therefore leads to a general job profile which does not de facto prioritise the pedagogical, research or project coordination aspects. The operations of the CNU sections in France generally prioritise publications in reviews listed above and do not, therefore, take other aspects of the teacher-researcher's missions into

[13] Article L123-3 of the education code defines the mission of public higher education service while article L952-3 divides the posts of teacher-researchers into 5 fields: "1° education, both initial and continuing, tutoring, orientation, advice and assessment; 2° research; 3° the dissemination of knowledge and liaison with the economic, social and cultural environment; 4° international cooperation; 5° the administration and management of the establishment", of which only points 1, 2 and 5 are subject to a genuine evaluation by the National Council of Universities.

account, or only at the margin leading to specific profiling.

- *on the preparation of applications*: the criteria grid, validated and legitimised by the academic community (through the academic committees) is published and used by candidates to prepare their application, often with the help of colleagues[14]. Once the candidates feel that they are ready, the applications are submitted when a competitive exam is opened. Self-assessment is therefore generalised in Slovakia while the verification of criteria falls under the aegis of the administration. The cost of recruitment is therefore much lower in relative terms than in France as there is no meeting of a national university commission either before or after the recruitments, but only a single local commission and an administrative control of the criteria conducted by the administrative staff based on proof provided locally when validating the applications and then possibly by the central administration once the recruitment process is complete.

The mechanism therefore combines three rationales: self-assessment, administrative verification (which is not an evaluation) and peer evaluation.

[14] Interviews conducted with 14 academic staff (assistants, docents and professors) at the University Matej Bel in Banska Bystrica in February 2015, drawn from 4 different faculties (humanities, political science and international relations, economics and natural sciences).

Table 1: Validity criteria for applications for the posts of docent (MCF HDR) and university professor

Activities		*Criteria*	*Docent*	*Professor*
Teaching activities	M	Academic scientific diploma or academic degree (PhD., science candidate)	Yes	Yes
	M	Authorisation to direct research (docent)	-	Yes
	M	Experiences of pedagogical activities in the field	5 years	10 years
	M	Theses supervised and defended	-	1/1*
	O	Masters dissertation supervised (defended)	10	20
	A	Bachelors dissertations supervised (defended)	10	0
	A	Scientific officer in a teaching unit	No	Yes
	A	Responsible for a study programme	No	Yes
	A	Preparation of a new study programme	No	Yes
	M	Scientific monograph	1	2
Scientific research and publications	M	Articles in international scientific journals with a reading committee	5	10
	M	National/international research projects (including European research	2	5
	M	Works quoted in national journals, monographs, university manuals and manuals for secondary	20	45
	M	Works quoted in international journals, monographs, university manuals and manuals for secondary education	10	20
	M	Author or co-author of a manual for universities or a monograph	0	1
	M	Manuals for secondary education	1	2
	O	Articles in national scientific journals with a reading committee	20	45 20 2 25
	O	Conferences during international scientific events	3	7
	O	Conferences during national scientific events	10	20
	A	Notices in encyclopaedias or dictionaries	2	5
	A	Reviews, reports, critiques in journals with reading committees	10	20
	A	Prize or distinction for a book	No	Yes
	A	Participation in international conferences	Yes	Yes
	A	Participation in national conferences	Yes	Yes
	A	Editor of scientific publications	2	5
	A	Appraisal and evaluations of monographs, professional books, doctoral	2	10
	A	Other scientific research activities (doctoral study conferences, doctoral thesis evaluations, etc.)	Yes	Yes
	A	Research or teaching visits abroad (total time)	1 month	2 months
Other activities	A	Member of foreign or national editing committees of scientific journals with	No	Yes
	A	Member of juries to award scientific titles (PhD.)	No	Yes
	A	Member of scientific committees of conferences	Yes	Yes
	A	Member of juries for bachelor's and master's degrees	Yes	Yes
	A	Scientific prize	No	Yes

** 1 supervision of a doctoral student and one thesis defended*

Source: Matel Bel University, Banska Bystrica

2.3 What lessons to be learned from a comparison between France and Slovakia?

An experiment was carried out to place the Slovak process (representative of the recruitment processes in Central Europe) and French process into perspective. Three CVs of academic staff (two candidates for a professorship and one candidate for a post of associate professor) were submitted to this list of criteria (corresponding to the field of "economics and management" including, for example, sports management). It was impossible to use the CVs produced for the French CNU (and formatted in relation to the criteria announced by the disciplinary sections) and the analysis was conducted using the candidates' complete CVs. The two candidates for the post of university professor would have validated the criteria in Slovakia and could have hoped to apply while the candidate for the post of associate professor satisfied the majority of the criteria to apply for a post of docent (outside the HDR)[15]. This experiment highlights the limits of the French system of checking the validity of applications ("qualification") based on a partial appraisal of the mission of academic staff: the three candidates had themselves checked that they satisfied the criteria announced by the CNU section and were surprised by the final result. It is indeed difficult to reduce a "peer" procedure to an administrative verification of criteria and the commissions necessarily evaluate the candidates based on their application files whereas these candidates might better correspond to profiles proposed by local universities than to a more theoretical national profile.

It is also a system based on trust and not suspicion: CVs are not dissected to find assumed flaws but to highlight the criteria to be met. From the very outset, the approach requires the academic staff to demonstrate a certain level of responsibility that they will have to maintain throughout their career. Since 2002, self-assessment has been a general and legitimised practice which would appear to contribute to playing down a singular situation: academic staff in Slovakia are subjected to two types of evaluation, independent of the 1-, 3- or 5-year contract renewal procedures and therefore conduct a self-assessment of their activity at each step of the way.

First, each university organises a mandatory evaluation of the teaching staff by the students and the results are communicated to the faculty and university authorities. Naturally, the members of the teaching staff are notified of the results and if they are problematic, they are summoned for an interview. This evaluation can have repercussions on contract renewals (as can objectives that have not been met). The other evaluation is annual and systematic and is more like an administrative verification. Every year, each teacher-researcher must report their publications (cf. annexe), their scientific activities, their distinctions and their consulting activities. This work can be completed continuously as the elements are entered in the publications database and as checked by an administrative department in liaison with the central administration. Thus while in France the relations between the central services of the universities and those of the central administration generally do not exist for teacher-researchers, the situation is very different in Slovakia where each academic staff member directly documents a database used to verify their activity, document the accreditation file and calculate a part of the budget allocated by the state[16]. It would

[15] There is no equivalent of an associate professor in Slovakia, rather a position of teaching assistant for which there is no list of criteria: only a PhD is required before a hearing by a recruitment commission.

[16] As the publishing activity of the members of a university contribute to determining part of the public subsidy, each component will benefit from encouraging the academic staff to publish as much as possible. Each university does not receive a direct premium linked to this activity, but has the

appear that this system helps make the stakeholders more responsible.

In the French system, it is difficult to improve the situation: maintaining a process of peers examining the applications, even if framed by a list of criteria corresponding to the functions of the teacher-researchers should rely on a criteria-based approach which is difficult to standardise as this means defining a national profile and not a set of profiles taking account of the different functions. From this standpoint, implementing a system of administrative verification based on quantitative implementation of criteria is not only advantageous from a financial point of view but also with regard to the candidates themselves who can anticipate and develop their activity in relation to a professional project. Self-assessment ensures commitment and increased responsibility.

Table 2: Comparisons of positive and negative elements of the French and Slovak evaluation mechanisms

	France		*Slovakia*	
	Positive elements	Negative elements	Positive elements	Negative elements
Distributive justice	* Status of civil servant and stable salary grid	* No real incorporation of all missions of the academic staff	* All missions of the academic staff taken into account	* Salary partly linked to the policy of the establishments
Procedural justice	* Legitimacy of the CNU as a national evaluation body * Effort by CP CNU to standardise practices * Relative effort by sections to provide information * Emergence of a code of conduct	* Weight of disciplinary rationales with criteria proper to each CNU section * Suspicion of favouritism and clientism (for example, self-promotion in certain sections) * Demagogic behaviour in certain sections (very different qualification rates from one section to another) * Absence of means of appeal in numerous procedures	* Evaluation criteria set nationally and adapted locally * Transparency of criteria (no interpretation of criteria) * Systematic use of self-assessment * Neutrality of verifications of the criteria	* Verification deadline by the national level * Any change of grade is linked to a vacancy and thus depends on the policy of the establishment
Interactional justice	* Role of unions or associations (depending on the CNU sections) for their members * Possible effect against local arbitration by generalising career monitoring	* Major political games (local and national elections - CNU -) * HR policy of chancellors under major constraint * Absence of interviews and meetings in many procedures.	* Weak external constraint for HR promotion policy * Team effect with the self-assessment procedures * Importance given to thesis and qualification juries	* No arbitration or external remediation system

Source: Authors

possibility of negotiating service obligations, for example, or work conditions, a very important element when numerous academic staff in Slovakia work in several universities at the same time to enjoy a better income (an experienced university professor has a net monthly wage of less than 1,000 euros.

In France, the system for evaluating teacher-researchers is based more on procedural justice and the procedures are ensured by the legitimacy of the CNU which is governed by a peer-based elective system. However, numerous aspects (cf. the table above) demonstrate the limitations of this legitimisation with regard to promotions, changes in grade, etc. as each teacher-researcher must attempt to understand and adapt to criteria that are often unclear and fluctuating and which cannot always be applied. The collective institutional appraisal is globally positive (judging by the results of the numerous petitions defending the CNU) while at an individual level, the number of withdrawal and renunciation behaviours remains very high (for example, in section 6, management sciences, less than 10% of the members request a PEDR whereas 20% could possible obtain it).

In Slovakia, the evaluations – prepared by self-assessments often shared within the teams – are founded on a national base in a process organised at local level, which is more a case of interactional justice whereby all the missions of the academic staff are taken into account. The academic staff members are all the more ready to accept the procedure if it gives rise to discussion (and adaptation) at local level, a situation which is diametrically opposite in France where the fear of local arbitration encourages the national mechanism to legitimised, even if it is often criticised.

Conclusion: evaluation, self-assessment and administrative verification

Putting the situations in France and Slovakia into perspective provides elements concerning problem of balance between national control and validation on the one hand and local recruitment and performance autonomy on the other (Côme & Meskova, 2011).

In Slovakia, the establishments manage an academic personnel subject to objectives and thus to an obligation of results. Self-assessment based on a grid of criteria that have been discussed and validated has been generalised for activity monitoring as well as for recruitments and promotions (for which scientific publications assume greater importance). The international dimension is central to any general approach and the incentive to be mobile is thus of the utmost importance. This rationale is not only linked to the size of the country but also to political choices which have resulted in a very rarely contested criteria-based approach (perhaps due to the "administrative" treatment of the criteria) which gives rise to self-assessment practices being combined with stakeholder strategies enabling academic staff to compare themselves locally with their peers for recruitment or career advancement. Contestation lies more in the resources allocated to the public universities, and thus to possibility of opening academic staff positions, than in the processes used for recruitment and regular evaluation, even if this contestation *de facto* rarely finds its way outside academic circles.

The approach also makes it possible to find a balance between local autonomy and national control while not sacrificing a disciplinary rationale which would quickly have found its limitations in the Slovak context. As stakeholders of the system, the authorities have certainly envisaged that the disciplinary fields could not be defined solely in reference to Slovak scientific activities but in a far broader scope.

Globally speaking, therefore, it would be necessary to verify precisely the hypothesis that – in Slovakia (as in most other countries of Central Europe) – this generalisation of the criteria grids, leading to self-assessment practices and administrative verification prior to the evaluation by a peer commission, facilitates recruitment and activity monitoring for academic staff while minimising the procedural costs and leaving the discussion of disciplinary boundaries open without disturbing the mechanisms of professional identification and enabling each academic staff member to manager their own career development.

This mechanism is clearly perceived by those concerned as a guarantee of professional identity, all the more so as the criteria used would seem to take all the missions of teacher-researchers into account. The academic staff members appear to have incorporated (or even accepted) this rationale that they do not consider particularly "neo-liberal". Ultimately, analysis of recruitments and contract renewals over ten years in several universities within the country shows that few academic staff are subject to sanctions (non-renewal of their contract) following difficulties in satisfying their objectives and that the collective financial incentive is a useful and relatively effective motivation tool. *A contrario*, this mechanism pushes academic staff to act according to the criteria and, for example as participation in conferences without any recognised publication (with a reading committee) is rarely taken into account, opportunist behaviours are easily identified.

The academic staff members are this subject to (or contribute to) evaluation systems that differ considerably from one country to another and it would be interesting to extend this comparison of mechanism by means of an analysis of their effects on the behaviour of academic staff, in particular the youngest among them. While Slovak academic are less encouraged to take part in conferences, French academic staff are primarily driven to publish articles in journals included on lists drawn up by national commissions. It is unproductive for a young associate professor to publish a book, either in France or elsewhere, or an article in a Russian, Polish, Brazilian, Indian or German journal even if it has a significant impact factor (as this criterion is not taken into account). Conforming to the criteria of the different mechanisms naturally has rapid effects on the behaviour of academic staff and consequently on the very attractiveness of the university.

Equity, the transparency of decisions and recognition of their validity naturally contribute to this incorporation of the system's rules and objectives by the academic staff and to their acceptability. The network effects, conformism effects and reputation effects are not in themselves a guarantee of increased involvement of the academic staff, but it is the evaluation mechanisms and their alignment with the characteristics and behaviour of teacher-researchers in each country and, more broadly speaking, the national contingency factors which determine how effective they are.

Beyond the issues of the performance of these evaluation and professional identity mechanisms, analysing the change in practices resulting from these mechanisms could quickly constitute a source of evaluation of the latter, this time in relation to the role of the university in constructing and disseminating knowledge at a global level.

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Appendix: Publication evaluation form

Matej Bel University, Banska Bystrica, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

The evaluation is based on the list and on the proof of publication recorded by the university and submitted to the ministerial subsidies section of the ministry.

Cf. http://www.library.umb.sk/index.php?module=articles&id=105&language=1 rotations.

NB: the originals and at least photocopies of the covers and first and last pages, of the summary and of the ISBN no. or other; they are recorded in a national database. Part of the subsidy is calculated according to the scores of each member of the faculties. Each university and each faculty can adapt the mechanism using the criteria established at the nation level. This procedure is conducted at the end of each period. Maximum number of points (100%) and professor and docent = 100 points; teaching assistant = 80 points.

		Category (agency)	€	Difficulty	Points
AAA	Scientific monograph published by a foreign publisher	A	100%	6	130
AAB	Scientific monograph published by a national publisher [in one of the main world languages –UK, FR DE, ES, RUS]	B	100%	6	115
AAB	Scientific monographs published in national publications	C	100%	6	100
ABA	Collections, scientific anthologies published abroad	A	100%	6	130
ABB	Collections, scientific anthologies published in the country		100%	6	100
ABC	Chapters in scientific monographs abroad	B	--	2	30
ABD	Chapters in scientific monographs in the country		--	2	25
ACA	University manuals published abroad	B	20%	6	100
ACB	University manuals published in the country	C	20%	6	80
BAA	Popularisation monographs published abroad		20%	4	50
BAB	Popularisation monographs published in the country		20%	4	50
BCB	Manuals for primary and secondary schools	(C)	20%	6	80
BCI	Course documentation	(C)	20%	6	80
CAA	Artistic monographs, catalogues published abroad		20%	4	50
CAB	Artistic monographs, catalogues published in the country		20%	4	50
EAJ	Translations of popularisation works		20%	4	50
EAI	Exercise books		20%	3	40
FAI	Other editorial work (bibliography, encyclopaedia, catalogues, dictionaries, collective reviews, etc.)		20%	3	40
ADC	Scientific articles published in international scientific journals with a reading committee	A	65%	2	50
ADD	Scientific articles published in national scientific journals with a reading committee	A	65%	2	50
BDC	Popularisation article published in international scientific journals with a reading committee		65%	1.5	30
BDD	Qualified work in national scientific journals with a reading committee		65%	1.5	30
CDC	Works of art and translations in foreign scientific journals with a reading committee		65%	1.5	30
CDD	Works of art and translations in national scientific journals with a reading committee		65%	1.5	30

ADE	Scientific articles published in international journals without a reading committee [if recorded in international databases / index]	A	1%	2	40
ADF	Scientific articles published in national journals without a reading committee [if recorded in international databases / index]	A	1%	2	40
AEC	Overviews of scientific articles published in international journals, scientific conference reports, monographs.		4.5%	1.5	20
AFA	Guest contributions at international scientific conferences	A (B)	4.5%	1.5	35
AFC	Other contributions at international scientific conferences	A (B)	4.5%	1.5	30
ACC	Chapters in manuals published by a foreign publisher		2.5%	2	20
BEC	Professional documents published abroad, conference proceedings		2.5%	1	10
AED	Overviews of scientific articles published in national journals, scientific conference reports, monographs		2%	1.5	20
AFB	Guest contributions at national scientific conferences	C	2%	1.5	30
AFD	Other contributions at national scientific conferences	C	2%	1.5	25
ACD	Chapters in manuals published by a national publisher		1%	2	20
BED	Professional documents published domestically, conference proceedings		1%	1	10
BBA BBB	Chapters of other monographs published abroad Chapters of other monographs published domestically		0.5%	1.5	15
BCK	Chapters of manuals and pedagogical texts		0.5%	1.5	15
BDA BDB	Lexicons, dictionaries, terminology works and encyclopaedias published by foreign publishers Lexicons, dictionaries, terminology works and encyclopaedias published by national publishers		0.5%	1	5
BDE BDF	Popularisation publication in foreign journals without a reading committee Popularisation publication in national journals without a reading committee		0.5%	1	5
CDE CDF	Works of art and translations of foreign works in foreign journals without a reading committee Works of art and translations of foreign works in national journals without a reading committee		0.5%	1	5

The € column shows the financial advantage of ministry funding: group A1 (6270 € = 1 = 100%), group A2 (1243 € = 1/5 = 20%), group B (4121 € = 2 / 3 = 65%), group C - sub-group C1 (4.5% - 2.5%), sub-group C2 (2% - 1%), sub-group C3 (1%), sub-group C4 (0.5%). Difficulties: the degree of difficulty depends on the work provided, the time and the number of people involved in preparing the monographs (min. 60 p.). Ultimately, the points are allocated on the basis of these three different categories of indicator.