

LIVING WITH THE H-INDEX?

**METRIC ASSEMBLAGES IN THE
CONTEMPORARY ACADEMY**

ROGER BURROWS

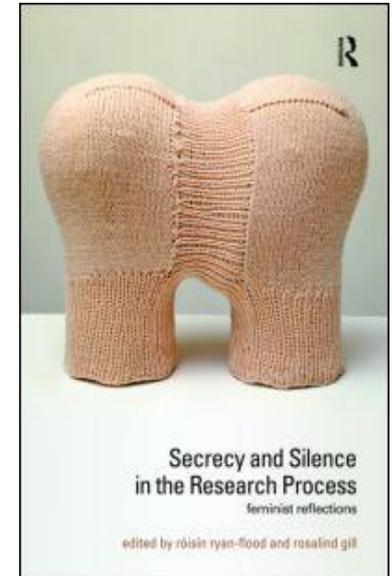
GOLDSMITHS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

SOMETHING HAS CHANGED IN THE UK ACADEMY

- Many academics are
 - exhausted
 - stressed,
 - overloaded
 - suffering from insomnia
 - feeling anxious
 - experiencing feelings of shame, aggression, hurt, guilt and 'out-of-placeness'

- Ros Gill, 2010

- One can observe it all around; a deep, affective, somatic crisis threatens to overwhelm us



Stress Reduction Kit



- Directions:
1. Place kit on FIRM surface.
 2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
 3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
 4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activity.

VALUE AND VALUES

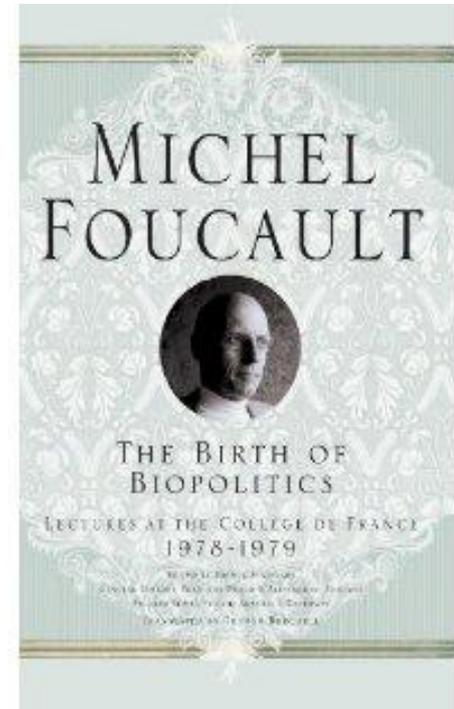
In the bygone world...different kinds of institutions embodied various, incommensurable kinds of value. Academic value was not to be identified with artistic value, nor artistic value with monetary value, and so on. But in our brave new world, it seems that a single final criterion of value is recognized: a quantitative, economic criterion. All else is no more than a means. And there is a single method for ensuring that this criterion is satisfied: quantified control.

- Lock and Martins, 2010

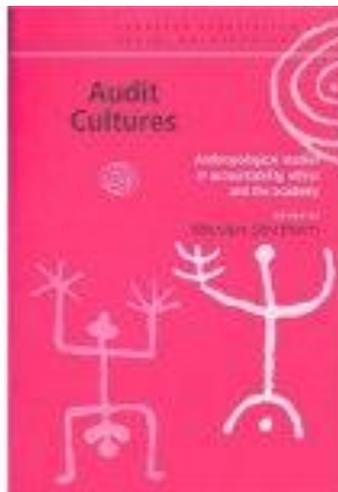
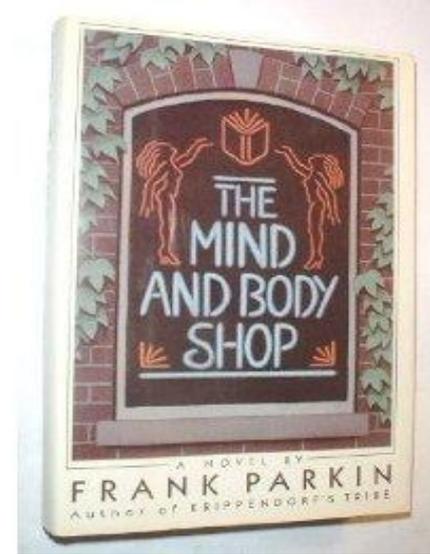
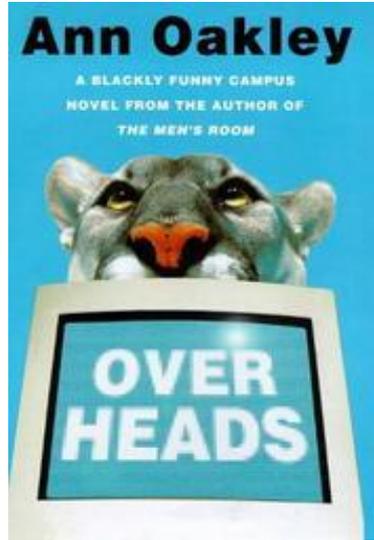
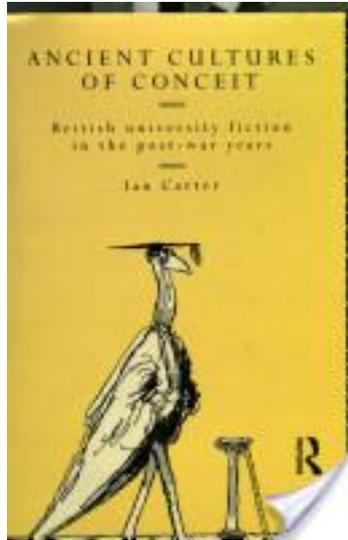


NEOLIBERALISM, AUDIT CULTURE AND BEYOND

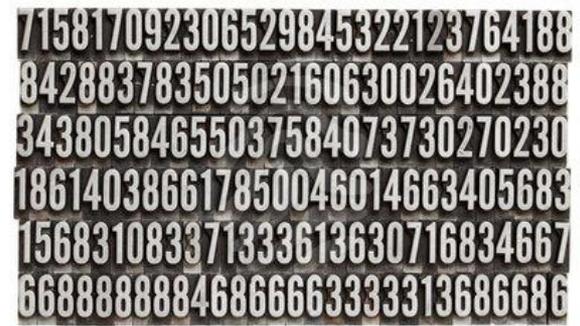
- Foucault, by drawing upon the *ordoliberalism* of the Freiburg School of political economy, suggests that this relation between state and market under neoliberalism is, in fact, the converse: ‘a state under the supervision of the market rather than a market supervised by the state’ (Foucault, 2008: 116)
- Under this model, the only mechanism by which the state can legitimate itself is via ‘self-marketization’. For sure, the neoliberal state has to secure the freedom of markets but it can only do this with authority if it extends the same logic of the market to its own organisational structures and practices



THE MOMENT OF THE METRICS?



NUMBER AND NUMBERS



- Different metrics operate at different scales: some at the level of the individual; some at departmental, school or faculty level; some at institutional level; some at national level; and some at international level.
- However, all are nested or folded into each other to form a complex data assemblage that confronts the individual academic.
- One could, for example:
 - have an individual h-index of X
 - publish in journals with an average 'impact factor' of Y
 - have an undergraduate teaching load below the institutional norm
 - have a PhD supervision load that is about average
 - have an annual grant income in the top quartile for the social sciences
 - work within an academic agglomeration with a 2008 RAE result that places it within the 'top 5' nationally
 - receive module student evaluation scores in the top quartile of a distribution
 - work within a school with 'poor' NSS results, placing it in the bottom quartile for the subject nationally
 - teach a subject where only Z per cent of graduates are in 'graduate' employment 6 months after they graduate, earning an average of just £18,500
 - work within a higher education institute that is ranked in the 'top 10' nationally in various commercially driven 'league tables', and within the 'top 80' globally, according to others.
- It would be quite easy to generate a list of over 100 different (nested) measures to which each individual academic in the UK is now (potentially) subject.

THESE METRICS, AND OTHERS, ALTHOUGH STILL EMBEDDED WITHIN AN AUDIT CULTURE, INCREASINGLY FUNCTION AUTONOMOUSLY AS A DATA ASSEMBLAGE ABLE NOT JUST TO MIMIC MARKETS BUT, INCREASINGLY, TO ENACT THEM

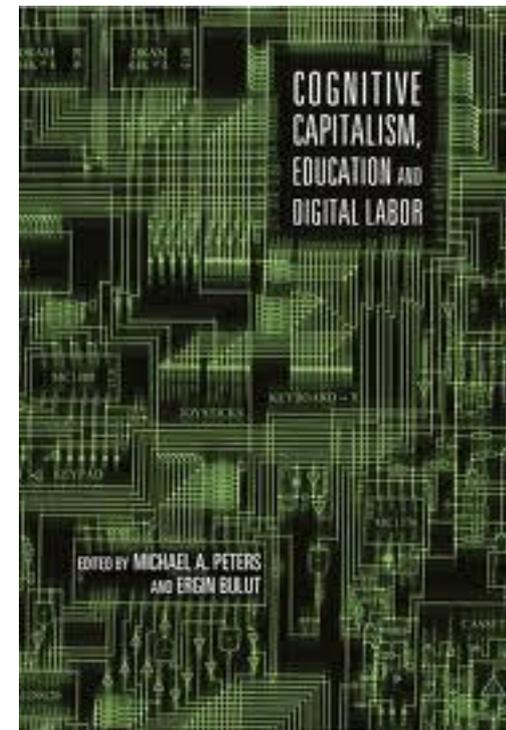
- 1. Citations**
- 2. Workload Models**
- 3. Transparent Costing Data**
- 4. Research Assessments**
- 5. Teaching Quality Assessments**
- 6. Commercial University League Tables**



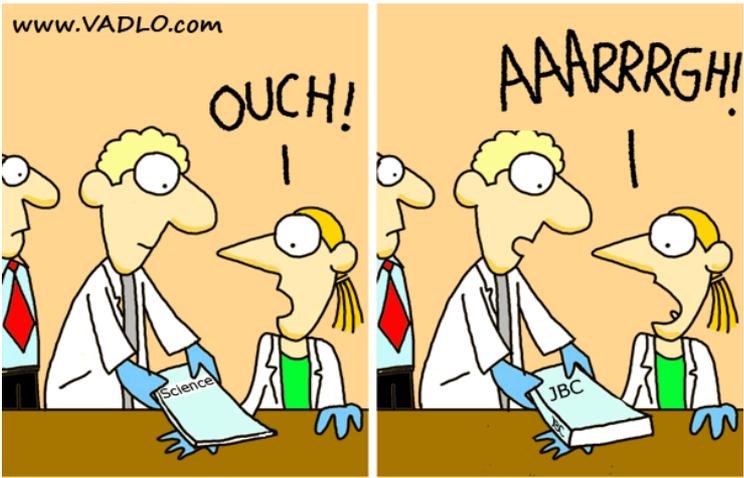
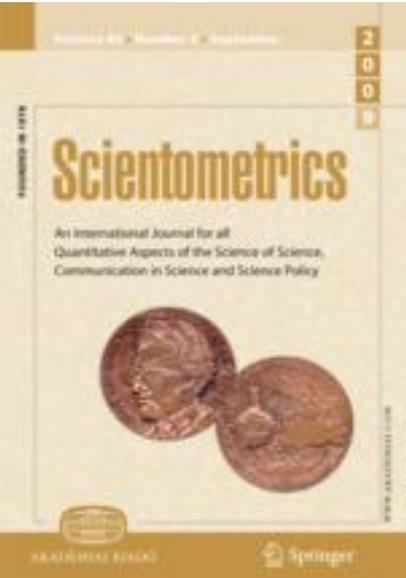
COGNITIVE CAPITALISM, VALUE AND MEASURE

De Angelis and Harvie (2009: 3) so ably express it:

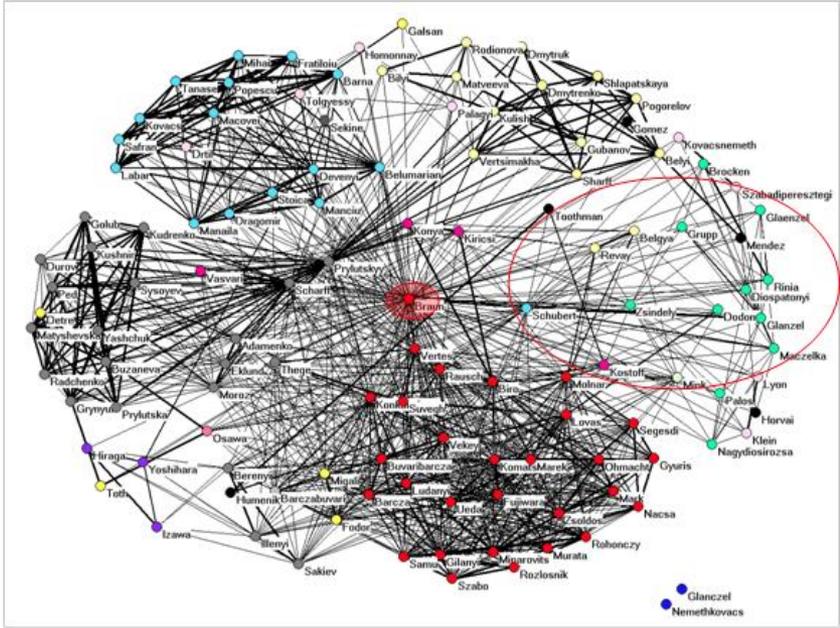
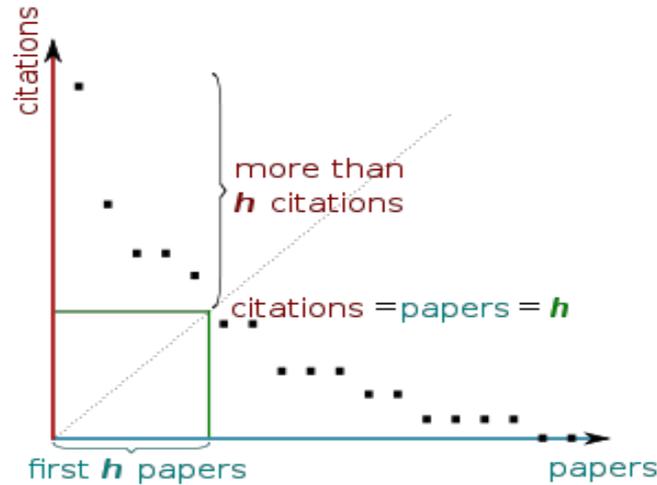
‘Armies of economists, statisticians, management-scientists, information-specialists, accountants and others are engaged in a struggle to connect heterogeneous concrete human activities on the basis of equal quantities of human labour in the abstract - that is, to link work and capitalist value...[there is now an]...attempt to (re)impose the 'law of value' through...measuring...immaterial labour....[in] higher education in the UKsocially-necessary labour-times of 'immaterial doings' are emerging and being driven down at the same time as heterogeneous concrete activities are being made commensurable’



CITATIONS



“Issue settled. JBC has it higher!”





Roger Burrows

Professor of Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

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Top 20 publications for Sociology

Title	h5-index	h5-median
1. The American Journal of Sociology	37	63
2. Annual Review of Sociology	35	58
3. Sociology of Health & Illness	28	37
4. Sociology	25	38
5. The British Journal of Sociology	23	41
6. Current Sociology	21	27
7. Sociology of Education	20	32
8. International Political Sociology	19	31
9. British Journal of Sociology of Education	19	28
10. Sociology Compass	17	23
11. Rural Sociology	16	20
12. International Journal of Comparative Sociology	15	27
13. International Sociology	15	23
14. Sociology of Sport Journal	15	20
15. Journal of Sociology	13	24
16. Cultural Sociology	13	19
17. International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy	12	21
18. International Review for the Sociology of Sport	12	15
19. Sociology of Religion	11	22
20. American Journal of Economics and Sociology	11	18

Dates and citation counts are estimated and are determined automatically by a computer program.

WORKLOAD MODELS

$$s.t. \sum_{j=1}^6 X_{ij} = 1 \quad \forall i \in S1$$

$$\sum_{k=1}^3 Y_{ik} = 1 \quad \forall i \in S2$$

$$\sum_{i \in S1} X_{ik}(d_{it} + s) + \sum_{i \in S2} Y_{ik}(d_{it}/2 + s) \leq W/6 + \varepsilon$$

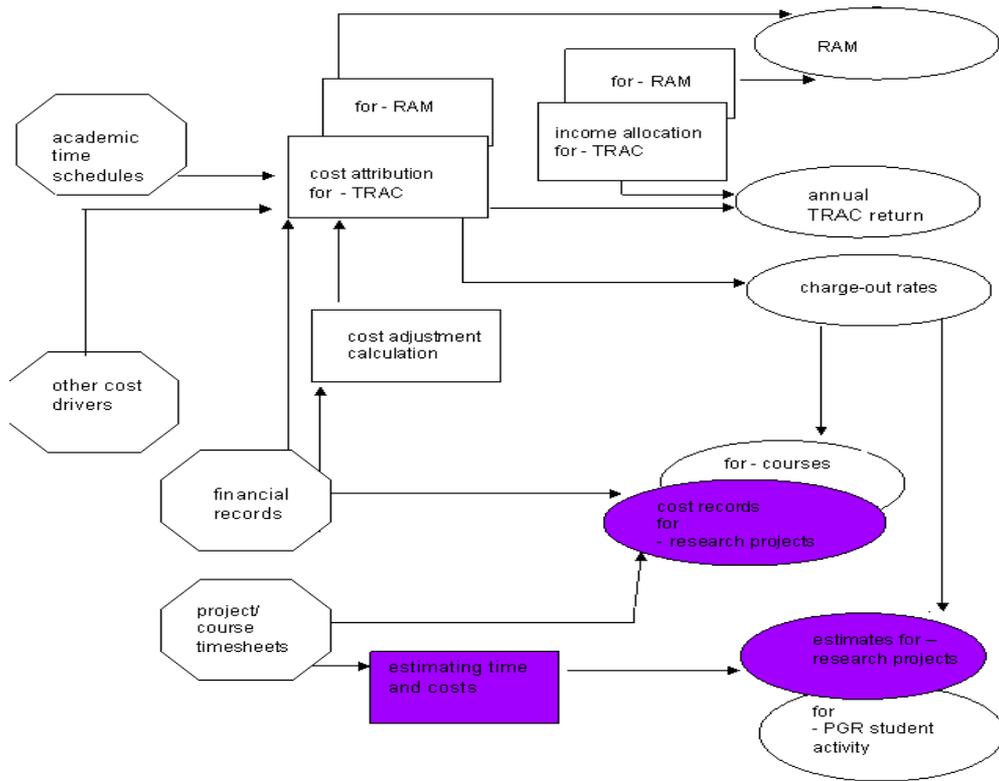
$$\forall k = 1, 2, 3$$

$$\sum_{i \in S1} X_{i(k+3)}(d_{it} + s) + \sum_{i \in S2} Y_{ik}(d_{it}/2 + s) \leq W/6 + \varepsilon$$





TRAC/FEC



TAS Details Help Me ?

Time Period Covered
Department
Staff Number
Surname

Activity	Category	Hours Worked during the Period			Total	%
		Core	Support	PGR		
TEACHING	Undergraduate Degree Level	0	0	0	0	0%
	Postgraduate Taught Level	0	0	0	0	0%
	Continuing Education	0	0	0	0	0%
	Other Teaching Support/Administration	0	0	0	0	0%
RESEARCH	Over/Institutional Funded	0	0	0	0	0%
	PF Research Councils	0	0	0	0	0%
	NPF UK Charity	0	0	0	0	0%
	PF UK Govt Local/High & Health	0	0	0	0	0%
	NPF UK Industry/Commerce/Public Corp	0	0	0	0	0%
	PF EU (European Commission)	0	0	0	0	0%
	NPF EU Other (inc EU National Govts)	0	0	0	0	0%
	NPF Other Overseas	0	0	0	0	0%
	NPF Other Sources	0	0	0	0	0%
	Other Research Support/Administration	0	0	0	0	0%
OTHER	Clinical Services	0	0	0	0	0%
	Consultancy	0	0	0	0	0%
	Continuing Professional Development	0	0	0	0	0%
	Service Contracts (Services Rendered)	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	Faculty, Dept & Institutional Support	0	0	0	0	0%
	Total	0	0	0	0	100%

N.B. Scaled figures will be overwritten if further figures are entered.

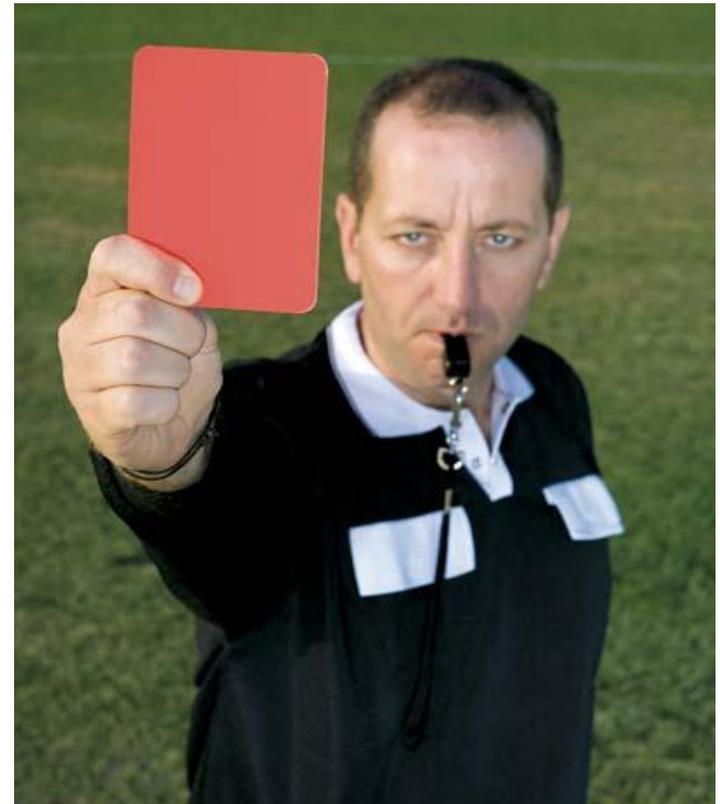
PF = Publicly Funded
NPF = Non Publicly Funded

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Aids Memoire
The data on research awards comes from Agresso, the University's financial database, and represents the basis on which external funding for research has been accepted by the Committee on Outside Research Grants and Contracts. If you have any queries or comments on the data presented please contact RGSU@ucl.ac.uk



REF



TEACHING QUALITY



the National Student Survey

www.thestudentsurvey.com



LEAGUE TABLES



THOMSON REUTERS

- The emergence of a particular structure of feeling amongst academics in the last few years has been closely associated with the 'autonomization' of metric assemblages from auditing processes in the academy.
- Whereas once metrics were simply part of auditing process and, as such, functioned to ensure *accountability* they have, in more recent times, taken on another role, and now function as part of a process of, what has been called 'quantified control'.
- In essence academic metric assemblages are at the cusp of being transformed from a set of measures able to mimic market processes to ones that are able to *enact* market processes.
- In the neoliberal university world of student fees and ever-greater competition for student numbers and research grant income, these metrics function as a form of measure able to translate different forms of value.
- Academic *value* is, essentially, becoming monetised, and as this happens academic *values* are becoming transformed.
- This is the source of our discomfort. It is not just that we might have some political objections to these value transformations. The root of the issue is that - as we have learnt from colleagues working in science and technology studies on the social life methods - we are fully *implicated* in their enactment.

***IT'S
PLAY
OR GET
PLAYED***



- Are metrics really experienced as oppressively as I have characterised them here?
- And, if so, with what 'impacts'?
- Are different metrics experienced differently?
- Do proximate workload models impinge more upon the psyche than the h-index for example?
- What are the particular and cumulative effects on person-value?
- Does it lead to a sense of permanent failure to live up to the idealised academic performing well on all fronts?
- And how are such responses and affects distributed? They are almost certainly highly gendered, but likely also linked with generational, ethnic, class and other differences.
- How do they vary by discipline, institutional type and/or location within the professional hierarchy?
- What are the wider effects on the academic division of labour, careers, on the student experience and, crucially, on our scholarship?

RESIST?

KIS

My

FECing

AcSS?