

The Center for Organization Research & Design Lecture Series Presents:



Niels Opstrup

Thursday, February 23, 2017

UCENT 480

Downtown Phoenix campus

11:00-12:00 pm

From a “taste of science” to a “taste for publications”? A qualitative study of how performance-based university research funding systems impact researchers’ intrinsic motivation for research

Abstract

A growing number of countries have made public funding for universities depend on ex post evaluations of research output by means of so-called *performance-based university research funding systems* (PRFS). PRFS are controversial, however. Critics accuse this type of system for instrumentalizing academic research and impairing the intrinsic motivation of researchers by substituting “a taste for science” with “a taste for publications”. Still, almost no research has been undertaken to investigate the effects of PRFS on individual researchers’ motivation or research- and publication decisions. Based on 42 qualitative interviews with Danish scholars from all main areas of research and at all career-levels, this article examines how the Danish PRFS, the so-called Bibliometric Research Indicator, impact their intrinsic motivation for research. The results suggest that PRFS may undermine intrinsic motivation by limiting autonomy, triggering a loss of professional (academic) competences, and distorting professional relations. This is in particular prominent for researchers within “soft” sciences and among younger scholars. Others simply ignore the system, however.