

Watching over innovation studies: Profiling the gatekeepers

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Introduction

Academic serials (especially peer-reviewed journals) play a very critical role in the scientific ecosystem and both integrity and independence are perceived as essential for good editorial governance (Rynes, 2006). For being responsible for articles selection (Bedeian et al., 2009; Feldman, 2008), elite board membership ensures the scientific quality of publications and “occupy key roles as opinion formers, gatekeepers and arbiters of disciplinary values” (Burgess and Shaw, 2010, p.630). So far, board elites have not been subject to a scrutiny proportional to their decision power (Burgess & Shaw, 2010) and an overall lack of transparency has been reported about the general editorial process despite of being actual gatekeepers (Miner, 2003; see also Bedeian et al., 2009; Horan et al., 1993).

In this work, we draw on the existing, but limited, body of knowledge available to examine empirically journal editorial boards (EB) in innovation studies field. We shed some light on demographics characteristics of editorial members. We believe this work may add some relevant information for those interested in science governance and social structures of research activities.

The Boards of “Innovation Studies”

Fagerberg et al. (2012) studied both the most productive journals in innovation as well as those using the most findings already published. For the 20 top-tier journals identified, we aim to present the demographic features of scholars behind. Scholars’ names, affiliation country and gender were collected from official journal’s editorial page. A total of 3,005 available seats were recorded occupied by 2,440 distinct persons from 30 countries.

The size of EBs

The mean size of Boards is 150 editors. Although *R D Manag* Board was found with only 19 editors, others have over 300 scholars: the likes of North-American outlets as *Acad Manage J* and *Acad Manage Rev* while *Manage Sci* stands out as the one with the largest team, 399 editors as presented in Figure 1.

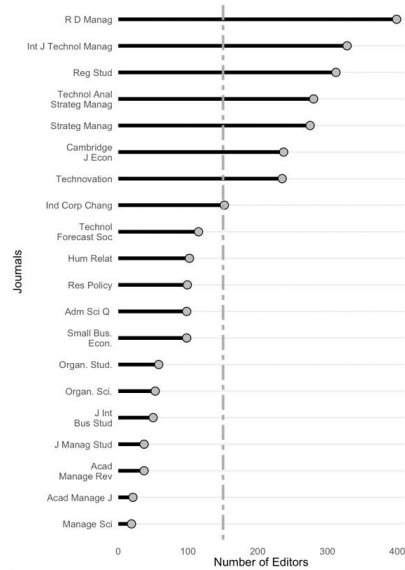


Figure 1: Editorial Board size per journal intercepted by the mean number of editors.

Geographies of editorship

Braun (2004) defined international journals as those with scholars from 5 countries in EB. Thus, all outlets from our study set are international ones, as their editors come from 8 to 30 different countries. Figure 2 shows a world representation of editors’ frequency found in each country. Darker the colour, higher the frequency of editors.

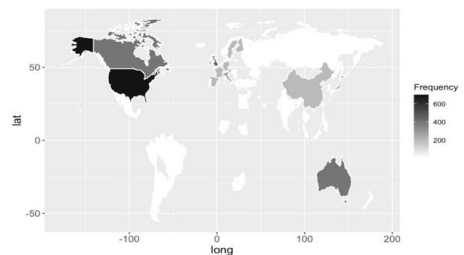


Figure 2. Geographical location of editorial members.

The US overwhelming dominance of membership is clear. García-Carpintero et al. (2010) reminded most science publishing houses are US-based. Europe and India host a significant number of editors. With exception of Australia, nations from the South represent a negligible role in this editorial process with very few editors involved.

Gender balance

With the purpose of understanding gender balance, we matched gender proportion in ten countries with higher numbers of editors as illustrated in Figure 3.

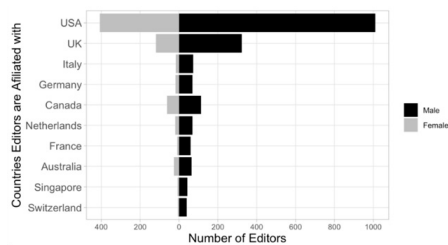


Figure 3: Number of editors affiliated to the top 10 countries, by gender.

US number of editors is by far different from the other countries with around 1,000 men and 400 women editors. However, US are not gender-balanced. Actually, all countries show a higher frequency of memberships held by men editors than women. Metz & Harzing (2009) pointed women's presence in academia is not long enough to reach levels of seniority which are associated with Board membership.

Conclusions

The present study is an attempt to understand the demographic structure of innovation EB members which showed to be diverse quantitative and qualitatively. Despite of being an eclectic topic, a low diversity for gender (male predominance) and country affiliation (high representation of US and UK editors) is perceived. A greater diversity is important for EB meet their missions (Jagsi et al., 2008) and a key driver in academia for knowledge development by applying different methodologies and paradigms (Robinson & Dechant, 1997).

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