

Influential Mathematicians: Where do they come and where do they go?

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Abstract

Research output and impact is currently the focus of serious debate worldwide. Quantitative analyses based on a wide spectrum of indices indicate a clear advantage of US institutions as compared to institutions in Europe and the rest of the world. However the measures used to quantify research performance are mostly static: Even though research output is the result of a process that extends in time as well as in space, indices often only take into account the current affiliation when assigning influential research to institutions. In this paper, we focus on the field of mathematics and investigate whether the image that emerges from static indices persists when bringing in more dynamic information, through the study of the "trajectories" of highly cited mathematicians: birthplace, country of first degree, country of PhD and current affiliation. While the dominance of the US remains apparent, some interesting patterns -that perhaps explain this dominance - emerge.

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