

Influential Mathematicians: Birth, Education and Affiliation

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Abstract

Research output and impact is currently the focus of serious debate both in the US as well as in Europe. Quantitative analyses based on a wide spectrum of indices indicate a clear advantage of US institutions as compared to institutions in the EU 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, standard indices only take into account 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 still remains apparent, it becomes much less pronounced, and some interesting patterns emerge that provide new insights and give rise yet to further questions.

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