



Italian SSH journals in Journal Citation Reports (JCR) and in SCImago Journal Rank (SJR): data and first analysis

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Introduction

Upon the publication of the announcement for the participation (7th November 2011) in the Framework for Research Quality Assessment 2004-2010 (VQR 2004-2010), published by Agenzia di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca (ANVUR), it began to operate a complex organisational process which aim is to assess a representative sample of the scientific production of Italian Universities within the last 10 years.¹ The importance of research assessment exercise (RAE according to the English definition) in the area of scientific research products (articles, books, patents, etc.) has increased consistently in the first decade of the new century (an introduction

¹The organisation and the management of the assessment framework are detailed in the founding decree of ANVUR (DPR n. 76 of the February the 1st 2010) and in DM of July the 12th (<http://www.anvur.org>). The text announcing the participation call is available at: http://www.anvur.org/sites/anvur-miur/files/bando_vqr_def_07_11.pdf.



to the topic can be found in Baccini, p. 11-35; De Robbio). Recently, in addition to the Research Quality Assessment 2004-2010 launched in Italy, the English Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2009-2014² and the Excellence in Research for Australia initiative (ERA)³ launched in 2010 have to be mentioned. The governments became ever more careful in establishing precise criteria for awarding funds for research, thus making the scientific institutions more functional, stimulating a greater efficiency of research, allocating resources on the basis of merit, and demonstrating that investments produce a common good (Abramo, D'Angelo, and Di Costa, p. 929-941). The most debated issue is, of course, what the evaluation criteria are. Unique criteria or different criteria for different areas? Qualitative criteria (peer review) or quantitative criteria (Impact Factor, etc)? Bibliography concerning this topic increased exponentially in the last decades (for a historical reconstruction of bibliometrics and current debate see De Bellis). In the following pages we mean to provide a paper analyzing the space reserved to Italian journals in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences within the main bibliographic tools used for the evaluation of research (for more information on the topic see Graziosi, p. 31). We will concentrate on bibliographic databases such as Web of Science and Scopus.⁴ We believe it is important to deepen the knowledge on these topics that is not currently developed, through a basic presentation of the main aspects of the issue. Data on Italian journals, drawn from the chosen databases, are going to be entirely presented and subjected to critical examination. Web of Science (WoS), created by Thomson Reuters (already

²<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/>.

³<http://www.arc.gov.au/era/>.

⁴ANVUR explicitly indicates the two databases in its document "Criteri e parametri di valutazione dei candidati e dei commissari dell'abilitazione scientifica nazionale", 22nd June 2011, http://www.anvur.org/sites/anvur-miur/files/documento01_11.pdf

part of the Institute for Scientific Information ISI), is an online bibliographic commercial database (it contains full text articles and abstracts) accessible through the Web of Knowledge portal,⁵ and it is articulated in three sections (*Science Citation Index*, *Social Science Citation Index*, *Arts & Humanities Citation Index*). WoS aims to select journals from different disciplines with rigorous criteria.⁶ Related to WoS is the *Journal Citations Reports* (JCR) which gathers more than 10,000 journals belonging to more than 230 disciplinary areas, published by more than 2,000 publishers. JCR is used as a tool to compare and evaluate journals. JCR uses bibliometric indicators, some traditional like Impact Factor (IF) and Five-year IF, to others that are considered new metrics such as the Eigenfactor, etc. The annual edition contains data related to the publications of the previous year. JCR is available in two editions: *JCR Science Edition* covering more than 8,073 journals, and *JCR Social Science Edition* with 2,731 journals.⁷ The other data source considered for this study is Scopus, an initiative launched by Elsevier in 2004.⁸ Scopus is a bibliographic commercial list that - compared to WoS - is more extensive when it deals with languages and countries of publication of the journals scope of this study. Furthermore, it contains a larger number of journals belonging to the SSH (Social Sciences and the Humanities) area (see table 1).⁹ Our analyses are based on the free access database Scimago, created in collaboration between some Spanish universities and the publisher Elsevier in 2007. The bibliometric indicator developed by Scimago is the Journal Rank Indicator (SJR), whose

⁵<http://wokinfo.com/125>

⁶http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/multidisciplinary/webofscience/.

⁷http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science_products/a-z/journal_citation_reports/.

⁸<http://www.scopus.com>.

⁹Tables are available as a separate file at <http://leo.cilea.it/index.php/jlis/article/downloadSuppFile/4787/180>.

sources are the journals indexed by Scopus starting from 1996. SJR is the main competitor of IF used by the Journal Citation Report (WoS). SJR is developed with the algorithm Google PageRank and, besides calculating the impact by journal, it calculates the impact by Country using the function Country Rank. SJR was developed by Félix de Moya from the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spain) and by Vicente Guerrero Bote from the Universidad de Extremadura (Spain) (for further readings see Gonzalez-Pereira, Guerrero-Bote, and Moya-Anegón, p. 379-391). The results of the analyses are available free of charge on the SCImago Website.¹⁰

Methodology

This paper examines the journals (excluding books, reports, etc.), part of the two above-mentioned indexes, responding to the following characteristics. They have: a) to be published in Italy (not exclusively in Italian language); b) to belong to SSH area. For a better identification of the journals in the list we referred to the ISSN of the review. Data are taken from three sources: a) the *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR) of WoS with reference to *JCR Social Sciences edition* for the year 2010. The examination of JCR was carried out using the online access made available by the Library Services Center of the Università degli Studi di Perugia; b) the *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* (A&HCI) of WoS for the year 2010. WoS does not calculate the IF of the journals. The examination of this bibliographic database will serve to enrich the information on the consistency of the presence of Italian journals in WoS, provided that it cannot be used for evaluation purposes. The examination of the A&HCI was carried out using the online access made available by the Library Service Center of the Università degli Studi di Perugia; c) SCImago Journal

¹⁰<http://www.scimagojr.com/>.

& Country Rank (SJR). Searches on SJR was restricted to subject areas: *Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences* for the year 2010. SJR shows bibliometric indicators even for Humanities journals. The last examination of SJR was made through the portal SCImago Journal & Country Rank in January 2012. We took into account also the information available on the official websites of the two bibliographic databases and the most important bibliographic papers on the topic. For the differences between JCR and SJR we take as a reference a selection from the vast literature on the subject (there are many papers suggesting a comparative analysis between the two data bases, among which we indicate: Deis and Goodman, p. 5-21; Jacsò, "ISI Web of Science, Scopus, and SPORTDiscus", p. 51-54; p. 1537-1547; La Guardia; Tarantino, p. 23-32; Anegòn et al., p. 53-78).

The data

In this section we will present the collected data and their critical analysis. We consider appropriate to show in full the data obtained from the research on the bibliographic databases. The presentation of data should be considered as an integral part of the paper and aims to promote a better understanding of the proposed analysis, in order to help understanding the functioning of the databases and the bibliometric indicators which are being used, and finally to allow those who are interested (scientists, evaluators, librarians, etc.) to study in depth the issue. Data are summarized in tables 2 to 12. Table 2 shows, in alphabetic order, the Italian journals present in JCR Social Science Edition 2010.¹¹ The Italian journals in the section Arts

¹¹JCR is available in two editions: JCR Science Edition and JCR Social Science Edition. Each annual edition contains data related to the publications of the previous year, and shows connection between the journals with citations and citing journals in a simple and easy to use way

& Humanities Citation Index 2010 are listed in table 3, in alphabetic order as well. Table 4 shows Italian journals in SJR Social Sciences 2010 and table 5 contains Italian journals in SJR Arts & Humanities 2010. The three following tables show Italian position (in terms of number of publications) in the world rankings (2010) calculated by SJR, respectively in the area of Humanities (table 6), in the area of Social Sciences (table 7), and in all disciplines (table 8). Table 9 outlines the position of Italy in terms of number of publications, as listed in WoS (data are related to the year 2010). The Venn's diagram (fig. 1 on page 9) represents the total number of Italian journals belonging to all the disciplines listed in Scopus and WoS. The last two tables (10, 11) compare Italian journals of the Humanities area and those of Social Sciences present both in JCR and SJR (2010). Scopus includes not only a large collection of journals (18.854 compared to 10.804) but also a great number of represented countries (231 compared to 84) and a great (50 compared to 45) language variety (see table 1). The journals published in languages other than English are actually underrepresented in both databases. Chronological coverage of Scopus is less extensive than the one of WoS. Concerning to bibliometric indexes, the two databases use different tools. SJR indicator, for instance, assumes that not all the citations are equal, therefore it introduces a careful consideration based on the prestige of the citing journal and excludes self-citation. In the 2010 JCR Social Science edition, 13 Italian journals were indexed: they represent 0.47% of the total number of the listed reviews (2,731). The percentage of the journals published in the United States and England, indexed by JCR, is respectively 45% and 26.3%. Therefore the journals of those geographical areas represent 71.3% of the total. Furthermore the presence of Italian journals turns out to be reduced compared to other European nations. For instance, there are 52 Spanish journals which equals to 1.90% of the total number of journals in JCR Social

Sciences, and 25 French journals corresponding to 0.91%. We should keep in mind that JCR adopts its own criterion of disciplinary classification which includes medical journals among Social Sciences publications (table 2). We are going to take into account now the Impact Factor (IF) and the *five-year* IF of some Italian journals which are present in the table 2.¹² The Impact Factor of the Journal of Anthropological Sciences of the Italian Anthropological Institute (Istituto Italiano di Antropologia) equals to 2.000 and guarantees to the journal the seventh place (of 76) among the journals belonging to this area and indexed by JCR. The journal with the highest IF in this category is Evolutionary Anthropology with the value 4.531. Cadmo, Italian journal of experimental pedagogy, is positioned 166 (of 184) in the category Education & Educational research with IF equal to 0.160. The journal with the highest IF in the same category is Educational Research (USA) with IF 3.774. Economia Politica records an IF equal to 0.610, not a very high level in the area of Economics. The Journal of Economic Literature (USA) is positioned first with an IF equal to 7.432. Nuncius. Journal of the History of Science (category of History and Philosophy of Science) has an IF value of 0.080, while the highest value (3.986) in this category was attributed to the US journal American Journal of Bioethics. The journal belonging to the Social Science Edition 2010 with the absolute highest IF is the English Behavioural and Brain Sciences (21.952). We underline that History and Philosophy of the Life sciences, edited by Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn from Naples, published by an Italian pub-

¹²The authors remind readers that annual IF (in this case the 2010) is calculated by dividing the number of citations received by journals in 2010 on the articles published in 2008 and 2009 by the overall number of articles published during those two years. The *five-year* IF (for a five-year period) corresponds instead to the average number of times the articles of the journals published in the last five years were cited in JCR year, in our case 2010. This measuring parameter, available only from JCR 2007, is used to better analyse the impact of the journals in the areas where the influence of public research is developed for a greater period of time.

lisher (F. Giannini, Napoli), was not included among the thirteen Italian journals, but among the English journals. This inconsistency, although rare, reveals the need for an examination of the use of classification criteria adopted by databases. *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* (A&HCI) of WoS analyses the humanities related publications (with abstracts and bibliographic information), but does not offer instruments for bibliometric measurement. A&HCI 2010 indexed 1679 journals out of which 63 Italian equal to 3.75% of the total (table 3). We underline a considerable percentage rise of the relevance of Italian journals in A&HCI compared to JCR Social Sciences. During 2010, SJR Social Sciences (Scopus) indexed 2,958 journals in the social sciences area, out of which 1.14% (34) are Italian (table 4); while 1,638 are journals belonging to the area of humanities out of which 55 are Italian, equal to 3.35% (table 5). The total of Italian journals (and other kinds of material) in the database is 323, that is 1.71% of the total number of indexed documents (18,854). It should be noted that, unlike WoS, Scopus began indexing also monographs and series as a recent insertion in its database of the titles belonging to the European Reference Index for Humanities (ERIH) of European Science Foundation shows.¹³ The tables 4 and 5 show the list of Italian journals included in humanistic and social sciences area of SJR Social Sciences even in order to facilitate their identification. The title of a single journal was flanked by ISSN and the values of the following indicators: total cites,¹⁴ SJR, h-Index,¹⁵ In the 2010

¹³Scopus works with European Science Foundation to expand Arts and Humanities coverage, http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/authored_newsitem.cws_home/companynews05_01241.

¹⁴Scimago total cites is an indicator which gathers the total of citations received in other articles published in a journal in the last three years.

¹⁵H-index is an index elaborated by Jorge E. Hirsch (University of California) in order to measure both productivity and impact of the work of the scientists, on the basis of the number of their publications and the number of citations they have received in other publications. Hirsch's definition is as follows: a scholar has an h-

ranking drawn up by SJR, Italy holds eighth position (of 146 countries) regarding publication of documents (articles etc.) belonging to the area of humanities, preceded by the United States, United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, Australia and Spain¹⁶ (table 6). In the social sciences area, our country takes eleventh position out of 195 (table 7). Regarding all the areas, it is positioned eighth among 231 countries (table 8). In order to make the comparison easier, we have shown in table 9 the level of Italian journals presence within WoS regarding the disciplinary areas which are subject matter of this paper. The following tables, as specified, have a comparative purpose. The diagram of Venn (fig. 1) represents the total number of Italian journals, which belong to all disciplinary areas, in the Scopus database (323) and in WoS (197). In reality, the total number of jour-

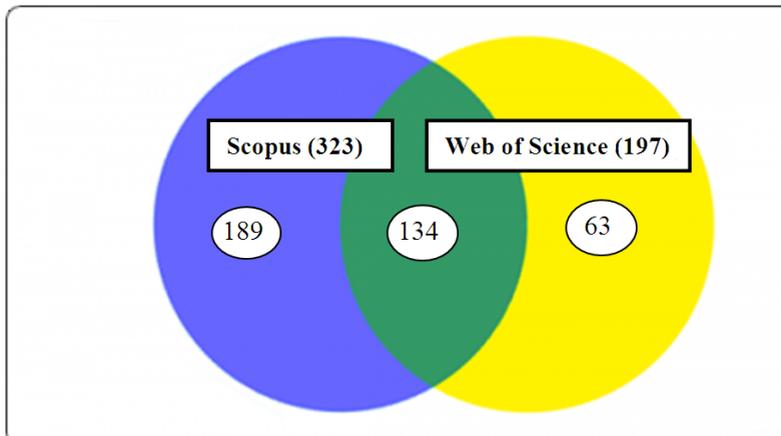


Figure 1: Italian journals present in Scopus and WoS

nals represented in the two databases, as the following data show,

index 50 if he has 50 articles with at least 50 citations each.

¹⁶www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php

is 386. The results in detail: shared journals, (those present in both databases) are 134; the journals present exclusively in one database are respectively 189 in Scopus and 63 in WoS. These data confirm a greater coverage of the Italian production by Elsevier (Scopus). The table 10 compares the bibliometric values of the 13 journals that can be found in both databases, even if they are placed in different disciplinary areas. While in WoS all journals are classified in the area of Social Sciences, in Scopus the same journals are collocated in different areas: nine journals are placed in medical area, the remaining four are inserted into the Social Sciences one (Cadmio, *Economia Politica*, *International Journal of Transport Economics*, *Journal of Anthropological Sciences*). Finally, the table 11 shows the journals present both in Arts & Humanities Citation Index (bibliometric value not calculated by the producer) and in SJR Arts & Humanities 2010 (with bibliometric value).

Conclusion

The issue of the space reserved to the scientific production of Humanities and Social Sciences areas in bibliographic databases has two main aspects: a general level related to the bibliometric topics and to the evaluation policies, and a more specific one which deepens the adequacy of bibliographic instruments (databases, journal classifications and indexes, etc.) used at present in evaluating processes. In the first case, during the last few years there has been a criticism regarding the use of unique criteria of evaluation for both Hard sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences. In this way the claim of superiority of the former sciences over the latter ones actually fails, since the comparison is done with non adequate parameters. In a recent paper, Andrea Bonaccorsi (of the Executive Council of ANVUR) explained how the literature on the subject

has now become aware of a differentiated use of evaluating criteria (Bonaccorsi). It is high time for us to support the search for criteria capable of understanding with a greater coherence the values expressed by scientific production of Humanistic and Social area. An clear example is the debate on the typologies of scientific products, in particular on monographs. Bibliographic databases pay very little attention to monographs, and we could notice it even with the products considered for this article. The main databases involved in the evaluation activity tend to overestimate the role of the article, supporting instead those disciplinary areas, particularly ones belonging to hard sciences, that now have ceased to resort to the monographic studies. Paradoxically, Bonaccorsi continues, every bibliometric activity achieved with the present criteria would result "futile, because it would measure a marginal part of Humanities production (articles in journals), leaving completely unchanged the monographic production". During a recent seminar entitled University Research and its Evaluation organized by Università Cattolica (Milano, 28 settembre 2011), Edoardo Barbieri and Giovanni Solimine presented a decalogue on research evaluation in the area of Humanities (Barbieri). Talking about monographs, the two scholars pointed out that "for Humanities and Social Sciences, the scientific journal - on which impact indicators are traditionally based - is not the most popular type of publication, or however it is not the only one. Alongside papers on scientific journals, these disciplines commonly use the specialized monograph, which is the most common type of publication and which does not coincide with the production of manuals. Among the different types of monographs, some sectors privilege the editions of tests (accompanied by an adequate philological apparatus and/or a comment), the editing of inventories and catalogues, the records of conventions and symposia" (, p. 34). The evaluation activities of Humanities and Social disciplines shall

therefore take into account some specific elements, and particularly the extensive use of the monograph format. There are, as mentioned in the paper, positive signs of change in trends which give us hope. A cautious opening by the bibliographic databases producers towards monographs, especially Elsevier (Scopus), can be noted, too. The producers of databases follow the debate on the scientific production evaluation, and they have realised that the competition is getting keener. Until the beginning of the new century, WoS was almost the sole bibliographic tool used in evaluation processes, but with the introduction of Scopus (2004) this supremacy was reduced. We should take into account that during the last decade, National authorities in charge of research policy increased the demand for more reliable evaluation tools. The current crisis has made urgent a selection of worthy academic and research institutions in order to take the maximum advantage of an ever reduced funding. These are the main reasons that urged bibliographic databases producers to consider the enlargement of the number of analyzed products. The studies that intend to analyse the compliance of single databases with the requirements of evaluative activities are placed on a more specific level. From the data and the analyses exposed in the previous paragraph a substantial confirmation of a general condition of poor interest towards Humanities and Social Sciences emerges, as well as the presence of some less negative signals. In WoS, Humanities make up 15.2% of the entire database and in Scopus 8.68%. Nevertheless, we can note that Italian journals which belong to the area of Humanities and Social Sciences are in a satisfactory position. In SJR Social Sciences, Italian scientific production takes eighth place (table 6) in country ranking, confirming the same position that Italian scientific production holds as a whole (all the disciplines) within the same database (table 8). A better result is registered in WoS. Table 9 shows how Italian Humanities journals, again in

country ranking, gain a better position (sixth position) compared to the Social Sciences journals (eleventh position) and to the journals of all disciplinary areas (eleventh position). In a recent paper Emanuela Reale, revising the data of Erawatch-Metris, confirmed the conflicting signals regarding Italian scientific production in the area of Humanities and Social Sciences (Reale, p. 21-22). Reale emphasized the increase of the total number of Italian publications in the area of social sciences and humanities: from 32547 works in 2000 we moved to 43758 in 2006. The number of publications records an average increase of 7.2% (compared to 1.5% of France, 5.9% of Germany, 3% of Great Britain, only Spain has a better performance with 11%).¹⁷ The scholar also emphasized a satisfactory affirmation of the overall Italian production which for the 2006 reached 10% of the sector's total, against 19.4% of Great Britain, 18% of Germany, 12.4% of France. The overall Italian production "in SS indexed journals" turns out to be still low and inferior in absolute values compared to other European countries results. This is also confirmed by the fact that the "quota of Italian SS publications compared to the total of the database ISI-Thompson is 3%, against a value EU27 of 5%" (, p. 21). Even recent researches of Cinzia Daraio, dedicated to Italian scientific production as a whole and calculated over a longer period of time (1980-2007, sources WoS and EUROSTAT), confirm that the annual growth rate has a tendency to be higher compared to the main European countries (except Spain). However after 2007, "when the global percentage of Italian journals was 3.5%, a slight decrease in Italian scientific production was noted, with 3.4% in 2008 and 3.3% in 2009" (Daraio, p. 38; Daraio and Moed p. 1380-1392). According to Daraio, "in the year 2000 Italy reached the world average in terms of quality of its scientific production, measured by normalized relative

¹⁷For more information about Spanish situation see González-Alcaide ("Anàlisi del proceso de internacionalización de la investigación española en ciencia y tecnología (1980-2007)").

impact of citations; however its level is lower than the one of the main European countries (Switzerland, Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, France)" (Daraio, p. 39). In view of the foregoing, it is evident how bibliometric instruments, particularly those taken in consideration on this occasion, do not represent Humanities and Social Sciences disciplinary areas in an adequate way. Alberto Baccini, summarizing the results of Henk F. Moed's research put together in a study dedicated to the analysis of the adequacy of databases for scientific evaluation (Moed), showed that the level of coverage of ISI for Humanities and Social Sciences should be considered "moderate", that is the lowest among all the disciplines (Baccini, p. 88-97, in part. 97). The Italian Agency of Evaluation (ANVUR) takes these limits into account, and in a recent document it limit the recourse to bibliometric analysis to few disciplinary sectors of Humanities and Social area (ANVUR; ANVUR, GEV 11). The validity of criticism towards the application of bibliometric methods to Humanities and Social disciplines cannot justify the avoidance, by many scientific sectors, of evaluation activities. The last observation highlights another aspect: the inadequacy of cultural approach of the majority of professors when it comes to evaluation issues. Baccini points the finger at the poor attention by the Italian university environment when it comes to these problems, and at the poor interest by editorial committees in seeing their own journals included in international bibliographic databases (Baccini, p. 92).

What are the suggestions for the future? On a general level we believe it is a priority to increase the commitment to improve bibliometric instruments, making them more responsive to the characteristics of the Humanistic and Social area products. In this sense, precious indications can be found on the already cited documents elaborated by the Groups of evaluation experts (GEV) of ANVUR, which describe the criteria used for evaluation of research products

subjected by Italian Universities to VQR 2004-2010 (29 February 2012) and the report of Andrea Bonaccorsi (7 March 2012). From the latter text we get an exhortation to experiment indicators which are not exclusively based on citations analysis, for example: indicators of utilization (*journal usage factor*), indicators of availability in catalogues, web based usage indicators, reviews of monographs. On the bibliographic databases specific level, we rather think it is important to act in two directions. Bibliographic instruments (databases, journals classifications and editorial series, etc.) oriented towards Humanities and Social Sciences production in European context should be identified and developed. Among the endeavours already in progress, the following deserve to be pointed out: the Spanish Clasificación integrada de revistas científicas (CIRC), with its second edition (2011/2012) edited by different institutions (CCHS-CSIC, le università di Navarra, Granada, Carlos III di Madrid, la Fundación Dialnet) and independent from national agencies of evaluation CNEAI and ANECA;¹⁸ and the French index, which is currently being adjusted, created by Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur (AERES).¹⁹ In the area of cooperation we point out the European reference index for the humanities (ERIH), whose aim is to increase the visibility of the journals in the area of humanities published in all the languages of European Union. ERIH index is run by European Science Foundation (ESF), an institution established in Strasbourg in 1974 with the aim to improve European cooperation in the area of research.²⁰

In this phase we should considerate counterproductive to foresee the abandonment of instruments such as WoS and Scopus. Even

¹⁸<http://epuc.cchs.csic.es/circ/categorias.html>

¹⁹<http://www.aeres-evaluation.fr/Publications/Methodologie-de-l-evaluation/Listes-de-revues-SHS-sciences-humaines-et-sociales>

²⁰<http://www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/erih-european-reference-index-for-the-humanities/erih-foreword.html>

with their limitations, they remain an international point of reference for evaluation activities. Actions of reinforcement of the position of Italian language journals are to be pursued, perhaps favouring weaker disciplinary sectors within databases. ANVUR, learning from some international experiences, announced some initiatives going in the right direction. We will examine some of them. The national agency of evaluation decided to organise activities to support “candidacy of a solid group of Italian language journals which satisfy editorial requirements accepted at international level for the purpose of indexation in ISI and Scopus” (Bonaccorsi). During the first phase will be systematically verified the requirements for the access to the databases of Italian journals already indicated in group A (and in some cases in group B) by GEV. ANVUR will take into consideration the experience of the Italian journals, in the humanities and social science area, which have already gained access to ISI and Scopus. For this purpose we point out that this essay, devised also as a cluster of data, can provide a better acquaintance with this reality. The same agency, once the list of the journals candidates will be established, will offer logistic and organisational support to handle the talks with the producers of databases. ANVUR will also commit itself to determine the right modality of monitoring the scientific quality of monographs (Bonaccorsi). A study group will be established, in collaboration with Italian Association of Editors (AIE), in order to elaborate “a grid of indicators aimed at affirming the modality with which the editors should manage the submission and the selection of manuscripts”. Even in this case the proposal is positive, and could be extended at the journals’ managements. The certification of the review (peer review) has now become an essential activity. It can be guaranteed through the traceability of all the stages of the evaluation activity: from a request for public funds to a transparent management of the lists of reviewers, to the care

for the anonymous nature of the review process. There are by now standardized procedures and authoritative guidelines, just think of recent *European Peer review Guide* (2011) of the European Research Foundation,²¹ which can be adopted or suggested as reference criteria.

²¹<http://www.esf.org/activities/mo-fora/peer-review.html>

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ABSTRACT: Aim of this paper is to give a contribution to the analysis of the visibility gave to the Italian Humanities journals from leading bibliographic databases used for national research assessment. In particular, we will focus on the bibliographic databases Web of Science (Thomson Reuters) and Scopus (Elsevier). We believe it is important to develop a deep understanding of the issues related to assessment. We would like to deal with these issues, not yet adequately discussed by Italian scholars, through an essential statement of the main aspects of the problem. Therefore, we propose an examination of detailed lists of Italian Humanities journals included in the selected databases to help the identification of titles. Then is given a critical analysis of the data.

KEYWORDS: Bibliographic databases; Bibliometrics; Research assessment; Scopus; Web of Science

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