To What extend are Early Career Researchers (ECRs) the Harbingers of Change?

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A long-term research

- Follow Up of the European study « *Reputations Mechanisms* »
  - Funded by the European Commission (2015)

- A specific category

  *« Researchers who are generally **not older than 35**, who either have received their doctorate and are currently in a research position or have been in research positions but are currently doing a doctorate. In **neither case are they researchers in established or tenured positions**. In the case of academics, they are non-faculty research employees of the university »* *(Poli, 2016).*

- Digital native behaviours

- Trajectories at the heart of stakeholders attention: publishers, funding agencies, social media platforms

- A specific position, in between many and different spheres

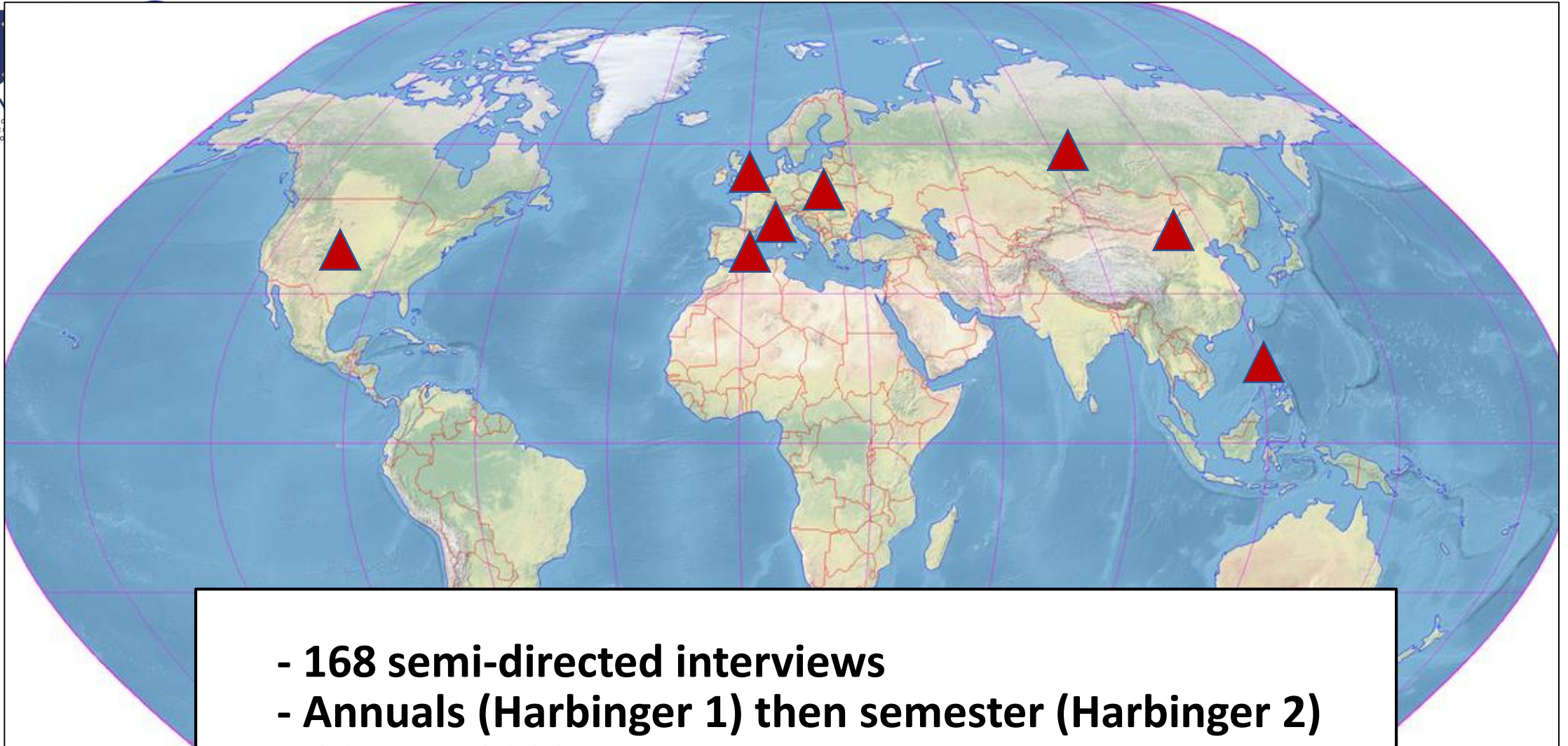# Harbinger Project: an Observatory 2016 - 2022

David Nicholas (UK)

CIBER Research and University of Tennessee

Suzie Allard (USA), Chérifa Boukacem-Zeghmouri (France), Abrizah Abdullah (Malaysia), Eti Herman (Israël), Hamid Jamali (Australia), Blanca Rodriguez-Bravo (Spain), Marzena Swigon (Poland), Carol Tenopir (USA), Galina Serbina (Russia), David Sims (USA), Anthony Watkinson (UK), Jie Xi (China).

Harbinger 1: **http://ciber-research.com/harbingers.html**
Harbinger 2: **http://ciber-research.com/harbingers-2**

- 168 semi-directed interviews
- Annuals (Harbinger 1) then semester (Harbinger 2)
- 2016 to 2022
- 23 themes explored
- *Curriculum Vitae* and social media accounts
- STM and Social Sciences

Research assessment, converging results

Cult and production culture

- **Early and rapid acculturation to "Publish or Perish" rule**
  - From the Master's level, trained by peers
  - A sign of "distinction" for research programs

- **Impact Factor "culture"**
  - From the first publishing experience
  - Strategies (higher, riskier VS. lower, safer)
  - Databases: levers of injunction

- **A common and unified culture**
  - Common terminology, similar configurations, shared normative principles
  - All disciplinary fields investigated
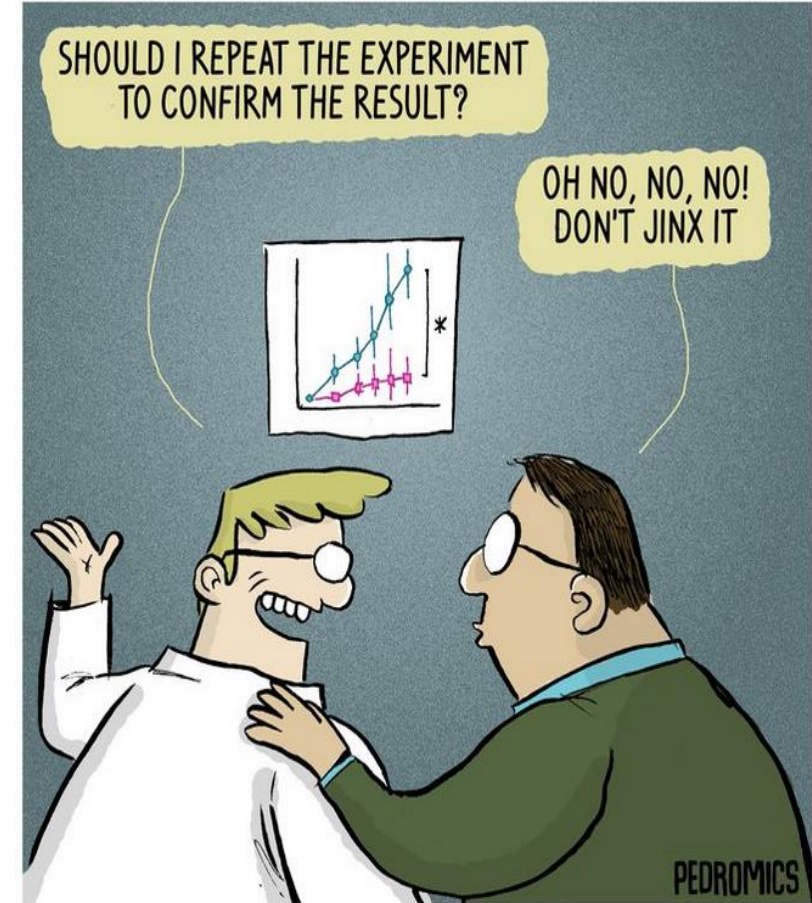
« *We are what we publish* »

The paper, a quest
- Collaborations
- Visits and mobilities
- Methods and protocols

The "zombie" paper
- Collaborations
- Despite the new grant

"Publish and be wrong"
- Targeting "easy"
- Publish "too" fast

SHOULD I REPEAT THE EXPERIMENT TO CONFIRM THE RESULT?

OH NO, NO, NO! DON'T JINX IT

PEDROMICS

Curriculum Vitae mythologies

- **Normalising strategies**
  - *"How do you single out yourself when you all come with the same CV? (ECR 7, Phys)*
  - *"There are things I don't add to the CV because they don't count" (ECR 12, Bio)*

- **Specific profiles**
  - Inter, multi, - disciplinary
  - Epistemic inequalities

- **Matthew effect**
  - Playing, optimizing, making profit
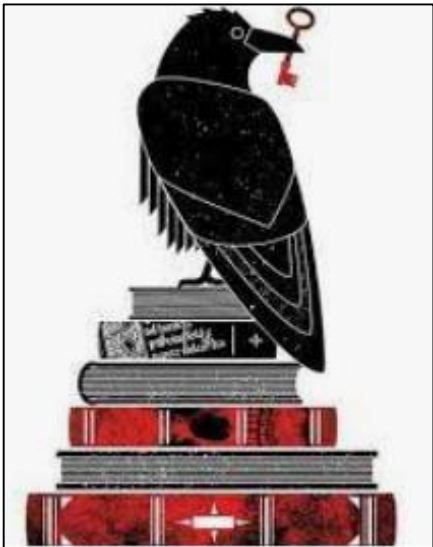 - Benefit from the effects ... without naming it

Game rules

- **Connected climbers**
  - Publications and grants
  - A solidarity chain

- **Guardian of the flame**
  - Maintain tradition and prestige
  - Reproduce the solidarity chain

- **A revolution, without the peers**
  - Taking risks, taking chances (preprints)
  - Research Data workload

Carl von Carlsberg oder über das menschliche Elend, von Christian Gotthilf Salzmann. Zweyter Theil. Mit allerhöchst-gnädigst Kayserl. Privilegio. Carlsruhe, bey Christian Gottlieb Schmieder. 1787.

Confusions and misunderstandings

- **« Platforms » effect**
  - Lost in confusion
- **Academic social media**
  - Observe, decipher, understand, adjust
  - Visibility, reputation, networks and sharing (Nicholas, 2015)
  - Leverage for social capital (Desrochers, 2018)
- **Sci-Hub phenomenon** (Nicholas et al., 2018)
  - Confusions and cacophony
  - Usage implications
- **Obstacles to legitimate models of openness**

« Opening » the game and its rules

Metrics and Indicators

- **Layers and distortions**
  - The individual, the team and the community
  - The unthinking of "value"
- **A fool's game**
  - *"Gamers know how to rig the system" (ECR 1 Maths)*
  - *"Indicators are for evaluators. We have our own criteria" (ECR 19, Soc)*
- **DORA, without naming**
  - *"Peers did not have the courage to say Stop, or did not want to go to conflict" (RCT 14, Chemistry)*
  - *"We want to enter the system but not to reproduce it" (ECR 20, Bio)*
  - *"We need less not more: less metrics, less indicators, less articles" (ECR 7, Phys)*

What ECRs owe to the pandemic

- **Researchers social responsibility « activated »**
  - New trajectories are emerging and being confirmed (Harbinger 2)
  - *"The citizen has been abandoned and is lost. He needs us" (ECR 3, Info)*
  - *"Mistrust of science is also a consequence of a system that has not reacted to the many transformations of society" (ECR 2 Bio)*

- **Redesigning the profession**
  - Having the right and the possibility to "fail"
  - Recreate spaces for "scientific debate"

- **Adapting to the world**
  - Room for new forms of knowledge production and scientific know-how
  - Acknowledge and value forms of contributions that reflect the complexity of contemporary science

Game Over

« The pandemic is a life-size experiment that reminded us that the ultimate goal is to advance knowledge, not egos, not numbers »
(ECR 2, Bio)