What times do we live in and how should we get through them? To address this question I suggest using Latour’s notion of The Modern as a departure point for an expedition through the devices of ‘neoliberalism’ (a term that loses as much as it gains through usage). From emissions trading to social impact bonds, we will explore how these devices anticipate a pure and linear time of progress, only to be overwhelmed by hybridity and plurality. Our final destination on the expedition will be a device in which UK academics are reflexively complicit: the Research Excellence Framework. I will suggest that here a time of progress is sustained, but only through a curious form of relativism.

Coincidentally, the REF research features today in the Times Higher: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/old-and-male-ref-panels-fail-reward-innovation-study-says

For more information: Steve Woolgar, steve.woolgar@liu.se, 013-28 56 17
Department of Thematic studies – Technology and Social Change