

Evaluation of the Research and Professional Activity of the Institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) for the period 2010–2014

Final Report on the Evaluation of the Institute

Name of the Institute: Institute of Sociology of the CAS, v. v. i.

Fields, in which the Institute registered its teams:

Political science, Sociology

Observer representing the Academy Council of the CAS: Pavel Janoušek

Observer representing the Institute: Marcela Linková, substitute observer Jindřich Krejčí

Commission No. 10: Social sciences

Chair: doc. JUDr., PhD., LL.M. Kristian Csach

Date(s) of the visit of the Institute: October 19 - October 23, 2015

Programme of the visit of the Institute: see attached Minutes from the visit

Evaluated research teams:

No. 1 - Public Opinion Research Centre; No. 2 - Economic Sociology; No. 3 - Gender & Sociology; No. 4 - Value Orientations in Society; No. 5 - Local and regional studies; No. 6 - Socioeconomics of Housing; No. 7 - Political Sociology

A. Evaluation of the Institute as a whole

1. Introduction

This is a large institute with seven teams and multiplied number of research topics of high sociological and social relevance. The institute's achievement during the investigated period is good, with some outstanding achievements. We think they have a solid basis for further improvements.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

One of the greatest strengths of the institute is its intellectual and technical capacity of pursuing theoretically informed empirical research on a wide variety of socially relevant issues.

Increasingly well engaged in international, especially European research collaborations.

The Institute provides and transfers vital research-based knowledge to the Czech society.

Professional and transparent research career advancement.

Good gender balance among research staff.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

A potential threat is lack of adequate resources of basic research and the over-exposure to applied research grants. A threat of not guaranteeing adequate resources to support internationalization.

4. Recommendations

The institute may consider establishing an international advisory council to be used for regular advice, oversight and review of the institute's activities. The model is the Beirat of the Wissenschaftszentrum in Berlin, which is known to the institute.

The institute should identify strong areas from its research and support and design grant applications to the ERC.

Widen, broaden and institutionalise the network of international connections. In addition to being involved in International Political Science Association activities, the Institute researchers should get actively engaged in International Sociological Association (ISA) Research Committee activities. Increase the international profile of publication, by strengthening and supporting the capacity of staff for international publishing.

To increase the number of publications in top rank journals and publishers within the

international profile. The institute publishes four peer reviewed journals. It is reasonable to review the resources of these publications. It is advised to increase the proportion of international issues of the journals and broaden the scope towards a (Central) European profile.

Enhance participation in higher education. Provide internships for empirical methods in practice. Take part more intensively in supervision of M.A. and Ph.D. students. Provide regular courses in the respective field of expertise.

Continue to cultivate the topics of history of science, sociology of religion, panel, comparative and deliberative research.

Continue and deepen the practice of providing access to international and panel data for a wider circle of researchers and students.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The Institute of sociology combines several scientific functions. It is an academic institute devoted to basic and applied research, relying upon a wide variety of methods: among others surveys, interviews, focus groups, content analysis etc.. It has a public poll research center with its own network of interviewers, methodological experts and technical staff. It serves as national contact point of comparative international surveys (ESS, ISSP), the Czech household panel survey and an EU/National contact point on gender in science. It recently accomplished a comprehensive volume on the history of Czech sociology.

Declaration on societal relevance

The Institute has a relevant impact on the accumulation of scientific knowledge, policy making and public opinion formation via both research results, policy advice at national, regional and in some case also European level, and services. The Institute participates in a joint PhD program with the Charles University, its researchers are active in lecturing and taking part in scientific boards. The Institute's data archive and library serve wide circles of professionals. Applied research is especially accented in the activity of the public poll center. Policy advising is also connected to most of the topics of the Institute. Outreach activities are mostly present in the form of public sociology among the activities of the Institute. In the case of gender and science, the outreach activities target in addition to Czech Republic the larger CEE area.

The Commission agrees with the Institute Director who stressed that in sociology, diversity of publishing channels and languages is important (books, chapters, journal articles). There is a definite effort on behalf of the Institute to improve the quality of

publications and increase the proportion of publications with impact factor. Citation statistics - like in most of the visited institutes – need further improvement.

Among the important achievements of the Institute are studies on post-socialist social transformation, the history of Czech sociology, population ecology, elite and electoral studies, gender inequalities, gender and science, regional studies, social housing and identity. Sociological security studies might be of increasing interest. It is a significant achievement that the Institute could keep the level of basic research in spite of the decreasing financial support. The Institute has proven outstanding organizational skills while being the host of the latest European Sociological Association conference in 2015.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

Doctoral students are typically involved in research, this practice could be extended. The training of BA and MA students in empirical research is a good practice which could be extended as well.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

Like most institutes in Europe's (semi)periphery it can't be directly compared to the leading international centers in terms of tradition, material conditions and achievement. However it is comparable in terms of ambition, engagement in sociological issues of key international contemporary concern, inclination for improvement and innovation. Its role in international cooperations is balanced, it does avoid the threat of becoming a service unit of larger international research centers. Examples of active international engagements include the small unit of gender and science with high international visibility and impact. Overall, strengthening international cooperation is a realistic aim on behalf of the Institute.

The Institute has limited capacity to attract foreign scholars included in the permanent staff. Their proportion was 7% at the end of the investigated period and half of these scholars were Slovaks. It is a step ahead that the Institute advertises the vacant positions internationally. Improving possibilities to invite and host international short term visiting senior and junior scholars is a more realistic way to include foreign researchers in research activities.

In the national context the Institute was and remained the flagship of Czech sociology. There are good examples of horizontal cooperation with colleagues from other disciplines and this practice could be encouraged.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

The Institute has a promisingly young age structure, mostly with talented and qualified researchers. The engagement in international collaborations is on the increase and enhances sustainability and vitality. The bottleneck is the lack of experienced older scholars with wide international networks and experience. The career system appears professionally managed and transparent. The gender distribution in some teams is biased, but it is balanced on the average of the Institute. At one team the leadership should be strengthened.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

The outlined strategy of the institute seems to be realistic, most of the research topics are relevant and should be supported. For the sake of further improvement the human resource capacity could be extended, especially in the form of internships and regular involvement of doctoral students into research. The Institute should safeguard the support and resources for basic research and the decrease of the proportion of basic research funding should be avoided. For this reason perhaps international grant application activity could be more accentuated.

B. Evaluation of the individual teams

Evaluation of the Team No. 1: Public Opinion Research Centre

1. Introduction

The Department combines the functions of an empirical research centre, a methodological centre and a team of substantive analysis.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

A major strength of the team is that it can combine empirical research with substantive analytical efforts.

Accumulated methodological knowledge and empirical research skills are of great importance.

The Department is able to provide fresh information on social issues on a monthly base. Data are accessible for researchers after two months of the fieldwork.

The members of the team are innovative in many respects, among others in developing new methods for the measurement of subjective well-being in comparative perspective.

The department is well-embedded in a Central- and East-European international network.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

Team leadership is ambitious and professional, but due to the lack of scientific qualification it deserves strong support from other departments and from the management.

A potential threat could be that the achievements of the team are underscored in terms of IF publications due to the nature of activities.

Isolation from higher education might be another potential threat.

The department is especially vulnerable due to the frequently changing needs of applied research.

4. Recommendations

Strengthen scientific qualification of the team leadership.

Continue the traditions of the department, strengthen the position of basic research.

Strengthen the efforts for high quality publications in outstanding international journals.

Decrease the proportion of in-house publications.

Broaden the scope of international cooperation, join to the most relevant international networks of the field.

Continue the efforts to become a centre of traineeship for sociology students.

Keep the high quality of the website and the archive, broaden the scope of international visibility and access of the latter.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The Department is responsible for the service function concerning organizing nationwide representative researches, 10 times a year. It handles the data archive of the institute as well. Besides of these, members of the team are responsible for methodological and substantive research. The team consist of 4 senior researchers with Ph.D., 2 Ph.D. students, who are experienced in public opinion research and 7 members of the technical staff responsible for practicalities of empirical research and data management. For the sake of empirical fieldwork the department maintains a network of 450 trained interviewers. In this capacity it does continue the research tradition established by the late Pavel Machonin and his colleagues.

Declaration on societal relevance

Due to the complex functions of the Department it has vital impact on reflexive social knowledge. Both collected empirical data and analysis serve social cognition and provide relevant information for public policy decisions. Data are accessible free of charge for the broad community of researchers after two months of the fieldwork since 2010 (see: <http://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/en/documents/release-term-for-primary-data-files-from-the-research-project-our-society>) . It may multiply the social impact of primary research.

The Department contributed significantly to the improvement of methodological skills of Czech sociologists and development of new methods.

The Department is already a centre for traineeship for sociology students and this activity could be broaden.

As to applied research, among the topics is a public opinion research concerning nuclear waste strategy which is of high societal relevance and there are less relevant

issues. The Department's applied research can be illustrated by regular omnibus surveys where at least part of the questions are of applied character. The legal and financial conditions of participation in omnibus surveys were properly clarified during the visit.

Although scientific efforts of the team are much stronger than those of a simple service department, the results are not properly represented in the quality of publications and citations. To what extent is this a measurement problem - it can't be decided from the available information.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

The Department did provide 5 internships in the investigated period in one of its projects. Two team members supervised 4 PhD theses. These numbers are modest, but the number of defended MA and BA thesis was significantly higher. The qualified department members were very active in lecturing in higher education. Due to the profile of the Department it could become a centre of traineeship for empirical social research.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

Since the Department has a combined function it could be compared to a public opinion company, to a methodology workshop and to a scientific team as well. Its achievement as a public poll service and methodology centre is highly professional and is comparable to the most Central European ones. In terms of substantive results there is room for improvement in the international visibility of scientific efforts.

The Department participates in Central European cooperations of public opinion research and in this capacity its role is very positive.

The team is able to go behind the simple public poll routine and provide methodological and analytical contributions. This is probably its most important value added, since this is usually neglected (or minimized) in profit driven public poll institutes.

The Department has had limited ability so far to attract foreign researchers in terms of jobs. Its services and data however might be rich source of information for professionals from abroad. Efforts for taking part in international mobility and traineeship grant applications might be useful. It could contribute to the enrichment of research directions as well. In the national context the team has a unique position.

Connections with teams of parallel international activity (ESS, ISSP) exist but could be mutually strengthened.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

The team is relatively young and highly professional in terms of skills (acquired partly in private business). Scientific qualifications of the management and the team should be improved accordingly. With little support the research profile of the team could be highly attractive for young people. The team and the institute could have an effort to strengthen the financial conditions of the team especially with strengthening the position of basic research.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

The research plans of the team are clear and could be supported. Making safer the position of the team could involve the following:

- enhancing the proportion of basic research,
- strengthening the scientific qualification of the management and the team,
- boost international grant application activity
- expanding connections with international surveys within the institute
- extending higher education empirical training research activity.

Evaluation of the Team No. 2: Economic Sociology

1. Introduction

This is a small department in the institute with an outstanding agenda of important research and output in two main areas: trends in social structure and inequality and the history of Czech sociology.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

The strengths of the department lies in the competence, experience, dedication and plans of the present members.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

The weakness is that the agenda of the department is that of the small present staff.

4. Recommendations

Our recommendations for the department are similar to those for the institute as a whole: to work according to existing research plans, the increase the international profile of publications, and in that profile to produce more publications for top level journals and publishers, and to strengthen and institutionalise international links of collaboration.

Out of the work on the history of Czech sociology has come a plan for the establishment within the Academy of a unit (of unspecified kind) for the study of religion. We recommend that plan to be taken forward and implemented.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The results of the department's research are entirely due to the department itself. These results are outstanding by any standards and of national and international importance.

Declaration on societal relevance

The department has produced research of national importance in its both two main areas of research. The publications from the program on social trends represent a social history of the Czech Republic since the restoration of democracy. This is an outstanding contribution to the nation's self-understanding with few, if any, parallels internationally, and certainly in the region. The program on the history of Czech sociology is invaluable for the future strengthening of social sciences in the Czech Republic.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

The department's activities in these areas are satisfactory. The students are involved in the research the same way and in the same extent as in the other teams of the Institute,

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

The department has strong international links and a record of important contributions within international research programmes. The research results are very well known and broadly referred to internationally. There is a good basis to build on for stronger and broader international links of collaboration.

The department has a clear direction for its research. It works in strong links with other national research units. It has a central position nationally, with high visibility academically and more broadly socially.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

The vitality of work within the department is impressive. The department is however fully dependent on the agenda of the present small staff. This functions well presently, but in a not too distant future, there will be a need to review the continuation of the department's agenda.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

In the near future, the department should continue its important research on social trends and the history of Czech sociology. The plans for a unit for the study of religion should be given serious and positive consideration.

The department produces high quality research which should be a basis for more international and high level publications.

Evaluation of the Team No. 3: Gender & Sociology

1. Introduction

The Department of Gender and Sociology is conducting basic and applied research into gender relations and inequalities nationally and internationally, and advances sociology of gender theoretically as well by conducting quantitative and qualitative empirical studies.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

The research areas of the team are of high interest and engagement in contemporary international sociological and gender research, and also areas of high societal and policy relevance in European societies, including Czech Republic, as well as globally.

This is a young, dynamic, ambitious team that is well networked internationally.

The team has been very successful in attracting external funding from international and national sources, and participates in high quality international collaborative projects.

The publishing strategy combining publishing in English in high-quality international journals, and in Czech in national publishing venues to contribute to development of national higher education and research is feasible.

Outreach and knowledge transfer activities, including advice for policy at national and European level are commendable.

The department hosts a National Centre of Gender and Science, a highly valued and active partner and expert in European activities on gender equality in science; a national EC contact point. It also has strong regional impact in Central Eastern Europe.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

Basic research funding on key research topics should be secured, since external funding is frequently geared to applied research and pre-fixed topics.

Balance between the efforts for research vs. outreach activities should be continuously monitored.

Gender balance of the team could be improved.

4. Recommendations

Increasing systematically the team engagement in high-level international comparative studies within the research areas of the Institute is recommended since

it would further enhance international networking supporting the Centre's research activities and international publishing in high-level journals and publishing venues.

Promotion of the National Centre of Gender and Science into a department of its own appears to be a promising development, given the dynamic research and knowledge transfer activities of the Centre and its highly esteemed national, regional, European and international standing.

Active engagement in the International Sociological Association (ISA) relevant research committees (e.g. Research Committee 32 Women in Society and RC 23 Sociology of Science and Technology) would further enhance the internationalization of the department.

The Institute accomplishes much with a relatively limited base of resources compared to its international competitors, and would be highly likely to use any increase in support in an efficient and effective manner.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The main research topics comprise gender and the labour market, including: working time policies, flexibility at work, precarious work, gender relations in the labour market, organisations, entrepreneurship, management and decision-making positions; politics and practices of care: including childcare, elderly care, combining care and paid work; gender inequalities and feminist critique thereof: including gendered impacts of the financial crisis, and social and bodily citizenship; sociology of private life; and sociology of science and knowledge production. These are areas of high interest and engagement in contemporary international sociological and gender research, and also areas of high societal relevance in European societies, including Czech Republic, as well as globally. The department includes the National Contact Centre for Gender and Science (NKC), which is a unique centre nationally and in the region, focusing on research and knowledge transfer on gender equality in research in Czech Republic and the broader Central and Eastern European region and also functioning as a national contact node for EU activities on gender and science.

The research staff is comprised of eight researchers (7.15 FTE) and 3 administrative/other staff members (2.15 FTE). This is a young and dynamic department, with age structure that is skewed to generations under 45, as is the case in several CAS institutes the Commission visited. Currently the department only employs female staff but has made consistent efforts to improve the gender balance of the staff in new recruitments.

The department has been very successful in obtaining support for its research from grants awarded by European and national funds, either as primary investigators or as collaborating teams/researchers. They obtained all in all 21 international and national grants in the evaluated period, and were engaged in several major European research collaborations. The members have received several awards nationally (e.g. Wichterle Prize) and internationally, and prestigious scholarships abroad (e.g. Fulbright).

The members of the department published research in national journals and internationally in *Politics & Gender*, *European Sociological Review*, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *Theory & Psychology*, *Science and Public Policy*, *Science Technology & Human Values*, and in books published by international publishers (e.g. *Palgrave Macmillan*, *Berghahn Books*).

The evaluation of the outputs in Phase I found that the quality of the publications of this Department was very high, with majority (11 out of 12 evaluated publications) at least at recognized international level; 1 publication receiving a rating of “1” (world-leading), 5 publications receiving a rating of “2” (internationally excellent), 5 publications receiving a rating of “3” (recognized internationally), 1 publication receiving a rating of “4” (recognized nationally), and none being rated below standard, or not meeting the definition of published research (“5”). Department publications include articles published in top ranked journals and the output has received citations in top ranked journals.

The Department publishes twice yearly a peer reviewed open access transdisciplinary journal *Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research* both in Czech and English, both as a paper and electronic version. It has an international editorial board. The journal is the only peer reviewed Czech academic journal in the field of gender research, and serves not only academic research and higher education but also users of gender research in broader society. The department is also actively engaged in numerous other activities transferring research-based knowledge to wider society.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

A significant number of doctoral students, six in total, currently actively involved in research in the department has successfully completed their doctoral studies during the evaluation period, and several students who participate in 2015 in research activities are Ph.D. candidates.

Declaration on societal relevance

The basic research topics of this department are fundamentally important for society. The research of the department is highly relevant to major societal challenges and concerns in Czech Republic, taking into the account the fact that the societal gender gap in the Czech Republic is among the largest in the EU according to the World Economic Forum 2015 Global Gender Gap report, and globally there are 95 countries with smaller societal gender gap.

The members actively contribute with their research to advising and formulating social and gender equality policies in the Czech Republic. Knowledge transfer activities to relevant state, regional and municipal stakeholders are impressive: department members provide expertise and gender analyses on various social aspects for the Governmental Council for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, municipal and regional authorities and other similar bodies. The National Contact Centre Gender and Science provides valuable expertise for national R&D authorities on gender equality integration into research policy development, based, among other things, on the position of the National Contact Centre as the national node for the EU research policy gender equality activities.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

Without question, the department is a key institution in gender sociology and gender research within the Czech Republic. On the international stage, the department has an increasingly strong presence and visibility. Its basic research addresses fundamental issues of widespread interest to sociology of gender and gender research in many countries. The international engagement is evidenced by frequent international invitations of department staff, hosting of and initiatives to international research events, hosting foreign visiting scholars, presentations and attendance in major conferences, and key positions (Vice Chair) in some major research networks such as European COST-network GenderSTE (science, technology and innovation), and as host for the first conference of RINGS, the new global network of centres of advanced gender research late 2015.

The department has successfully obtained grants for research projects both nationally and internationally: *Norway Grants* – 3 grants; *European Commission* – 4 grants; *Czech Science Foundation* – 7 grants; *Grant Agency of the Czech Academy of Sciences* – 1 grant; *Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs* – 1 grant; *Ministry of Education* – 4 grants; *Technology Agency of the Czech Republic* – 1 grant.

Ability to attract foreign researchers

Due to its research activities that are well in line with international research focus, the department attracts regularly foreign visiting researchers. It also engages an international editorial board for its journal.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

The team is young and dynamic, well engaged and recognized in key international networks and collaborations, impacting sustainability of its research and knowledge transfer activities. Given the relatively young career age of the staff the accomplishments of this department are remarkable. The high scientific and social relevance of the research topics enhances sustainability. The division of the department into two units appears sustainable, given the increasing focus on gender equality issues in the European Research Area.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

The strategy and plans for the future are feasible and realistic.

Evaluation of the Team No. 4: Value Orientations in Society

1. Introduction

This team deals with issues of high social relevance, like attitudes toward family, health, well-being, voting, social identity, migration etc.. Its age structure is promisingly young, while gender composition is slightly biased.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

The team's major strength is the study of relevant social issues while relying upon solid international comparative database.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

A potential threat could be that the department becomes a service partner of international surveys without strengthening theoretical coherence of the investigated topics and taking greater part in comparative analysis.

4. Recommendations

Plans are realistic; comparative analytical results - based on ESS - could be strengthened.

An effort to increase theoretical cohesion of the investigated topics could be useful.

The Commission acknowledges and welcomes the already existing cross-disciplinary connections of team but broadening connections with fellow-researchers (psychologists, human geographers) even more may lead to further synergies.

Strengthening horizontal connections with public opinion and ISSP teams within the institute is also recommended.

Popularizing ESS among researchers and students, facilitating access to these international comparative data could be one of the important aims of the team.

An effort toward more equal distribution of prestigious publications according to research topics could be useful.

Keep and enhance participation in higher education, provide courses in value sociology and international comparative analysis.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The team of value sociology does highly relevant social research: Among others values and attitudes toward well-being, family, health, voting behaviour, social identity and crime are of great importance.

Declaration on societal relevance

The potential impact of this type of research largely depends on the quality of comparative analysis. The team is well embedded in the international European Social Survey project, the team leader takes part in the international coordinating board. It may be a guarantee for access to high quality data and analysis.

Educational activity does exist, but could be enhanced by providing a wider variety of courses and providing more internships for students.

The team doesn't report significant applied research. Efforts to establish collaboration with the application sphere may have a positive impact both in financial and substantive terms.

Outputs may provide background information relevant for public policy decisions.

Services for research are not discussed in detail in the report. How the team makes ESS data available for other researchers might be of crucial importance.

Popularization activities include news concerning fresh results of the comparative survey.

Taking into account the results of Phase I, the number and international visibility of publications are satisfactory and may be improved.

The main achievements of the team have been values concerning health and family issues. The current and planned topics seem to be fragmented sub-domains of value sociology. Theoretically driven efforts for greater consistence and coherence of analysis may strengthen the team's international position.

Quality profile of publications shows normal distribution, but citation information is insufficient (like in most of the teams in any visited institutes).

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

Two members of the team offered courses and lectures on ESS and value sociology problems.

There were 2 defended PhD theses supervised by the members of the team. Greater involvement of MA and PhD students into the exploitation of ESS data and into value sociology in general would be useful.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

The team actively takes part in international comparative sociology networks (like European Social Survey and CESSDA).

In terms of comparison with the international leading teams in the field as far as the results and their impact are concerned, up to now the results are relatively moderate. It is however rare in CEE countries that a team participates in the management of the network. Looking from this perspective the active participation itself is an achievement.

Ability to attract foreign researchers

The ability to attract foreign researchers up to now is limited. It could be improved by broadening the scope of relevant topics (for example values and attitudes concerning social integration, marginal and elite groups, transnationalisation, relevance of postmaterialist values).

Position of the team in the national context could be strengthened by collaboration with other teams of the institute (for example public opinion research, political sociology, economic sociology).

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

The age structure of the team is promisingly young, while gender composition is slightly biased. Attraction of the research programme for young people and foreign scholars could be improved. Funding seems to be satisfactory, but attempts to attract the attention of applied research end users may add to the safety of funding.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

The outlined strategy and research plans of the team for the future seem to be feasible. Deepening theoretical insights and coherence of the investigated sub-domains could help to attract wider international professional attention.

Available human resources for realization of the plans could be expanded by involvement more PhD and MA students into the researches of the team.

Evaluation of the Team No. 5: Local and regional studies

1. Introduction

The department of local and regional studies comprises a multidisciplinary research team in the intersection between sociology, geography and political science. Its research has two main focuses: Socio-spatial differentiation and dynamics, and local and regional government and policies. The department is engaged both in basic and applied research, nationally and internationally.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

Strong societal and academic relevance of the research topics nationally and internationally;

Fruitful multidisciplinary research approaches;

Team demographic structure, with experienced senior researchers and high number of postdocs and PhD candidates, and good gender balance;

Strong international research collaborations, both empirical comparative research projects and cooperative actions, including international mobility of staff;

Successful in obtaining national external funding;

Established institutional collaborations internationally and nationally;

Applied research used by public authorities (local, regional, governmental);

Collaboration with universities in teaching.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

Important to secure that international collaborations result in joint publications in high-level venues;

Necessary to secure robust research leadership skills geared to international research projects.

4. Recommendations

Continue the two major research domains, with the planned increased focus on spatial aspects of poverty and disadvantage;

Continue and strengthen further international networks and collaboration;

Increase the international profile of publications, and aim to produce more publications for top level journals and publishers;

Provide systematic training in research leadership for postdocs;

Encourage ambitious applications of European and international research funding, including ERC starting grants, and provide systematic support for applications.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The department is mainly conducting basic research but is also engaged in several applied research projects. The research profile is multidisciplinary and addresses key sociological/political science issues, such as institutions and forms of governance, social and socio-spatial inequalities, regional dynamics of social change, social capital, political participation, cultural development, in a multifaceted and innovative way.

According to Phase 1 evaluation, the majority of the evaluated publications (7 out of 8) were assessed to be at least of international quality, one world-leading and four at internationally excellent level. The publications have received citations in top level journals.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

In the evaluation period four department members completed their PhDs.

Declaration on societal relevance

The research of the department has high social relevance both in Czech Republic, in the CEE region and addresses internationally shared social and policy challenges. The topics of high social relevance are numerous, including influence of Metropolitan governance on socio-spatial inequalities, comparing Czech republic to metropolitan areas in North America, Western and Central Eastern Europe; regional and municipal governance, addressing the development potential, partnerships and participation; basic research addressing how social capital influences regional development and disparities; migratory patterns of foreigners in Czechia; and applied comparative study on new innovative solutions to adapt governance and management of public infrastructure and services to demographic change in shrinking cities and regions of Central Europe.

Ability to attract foreign researchers

The evaluation data did not include information on this issue, but the research profile of Department would undoubtedly be attractive for foreign researchers to come for short research stays.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

The department is actively and well networked internationally, and was engaged during the evaluation period in six international research projects or collaborative actions, including a European COST Action Local Public Sector Reforms, several EU funded research projects, and UK ESRC funded International Network of Generational Transfers research. The team has long-term co-operation with departments abroad, resulting in co-publications on shared interest topics. The staff has had research stays in partner universities in Switzerland, UK and Hungary.

The domestic research collaboration comprises joint projects and publications, with two Faculties of Charles University (Science, Education), and Palacky University.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

This is a dynamic multidisciplinary research team with socially relevant and scientifically sustainable research agenda. Sustainability of the department is strengthened by its active engagement in international research collaborations.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

The current strategy and plans for the future are feasible in terms of research directions. The department is actively engaged in several promising consortia applying European funding. More systematic attention and training of staff on how to strengthen the international publishing profile would be useful.

Evaluation of the Team No. 6: Socioeconomics of Housing

1. Introduction

This young and ambitious team investigates relevant problems of housing during the post-socialist transformation from a socioeconomic perspective.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

One of the major strengths of the team is the ability of combining a variety of empirical research methods with strong theoretical insights.

Its double focus is both on basic and applied research. Relying upon these the team is able form policy recommendations and contribute to international scholarly debates.

It does participate in a well-embedded, strong international network. It works together with fellow-researchers from other institutes of CAS, like CERGE-EI.

The team leader has a strong publication record, including a co-edited book at Routledge and several articles in journals of high impact (like Urban Studies, ESR, JESP, etc.).

3. Weaknesses and Threats

One weakness is the small size of the group.

Another one is that although the team works with several Ph.D. students, the leader formally is not involved in supervisory tasks yet.

A potential threat might be the over-exposure to short term applied research grants.

4. Recommendations

Keep and strengthen international and cross-disciplinary research cooperation.

Strengthen connections with higher education, especially through supervision of graduate and postgraduate students in sociology and social policy.

Application for a prestigious international grant devoted to young researchers is advisable in order to consolidate the team's position in basic research.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The team investigates the problems of housing in the post-socialist period, including affordability, inequalities, housing careers and mobility, social housing, homelessness and other highly relevant social issues. It does both basic and applied research and

combines a wide variety of empirical research methods in a Central- and East European comparative perspective.

Declaration on societal relevance

The impacts of the team's research activities are socially relevant, attracts the attention of international professionals and policy makers as well.

It is part of the team's research strategy that it is open toward collaboration with policy makers and business actors in the form of applied research.

Outreach and popularization activities are not discussed in the report in details. During the visit we got the impression that the team addresses issues of public sociology properly.

The publication activity of the team is convincing. It produces internationally highly visible scientific books and articles and important policy papers as well. The team participates in a strong and highly prestigious international network of housing scholars.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

The team works with a sizeable group of PhD students (yearly 6 on the average), involving them into research, although the permanent fellows don't have supervisory task yet.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

The team leader has already won several prestigious awards and fellowships for young researchers at home and abroad. Our impression is that with concentrated efforts he might be considered as an expectant of further international recognition. The team cooperates with leading international teams on an equals' base which is reflected in coedited and co-authored publications.

Ability to attract foreign researchers

The ability to attract foreign scholars has been limited to scientific cooperation up to now. The team cooperates horizontally with scholars from other disciplines, like researchers of CERGE-EI in projects of mutual interest.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

This is a young, ambitious and efficient research team consisting of 8 participants (2 researchers + 6 Ph.D. students). The team leader has double degree (from Delft and Prague). The team's research programme attracts PhD students. Supervisory activities should be formalised.

Funding is secured on a low level at the moment. With the help of the management the team could compete for a prestigious international grant which could help to consolidate efforts in basic research.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

The outlined strategy is relevant and feasible. Enriching research with experiments and other innovative methods is especially supportable. Expanding the number of permanent fellows and taking greater part in international projects as well as in higher education are realistic aims.

Evaluation of the Team No. 7: Political Sociology

1. Introduction

This is a strong department in the institute with research in a wide range of relevant issues. The agenda of the department reflects, in part, the strange lack of an institute of political science within the Academy. Our assessment of the department closely mirrors our assessment of the institute as a whole.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

The prospects for the department are similar to that of the institute as a whole.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

The weaknesses are similar to those of the institute as a whole. In addition, it may be a problem that in the absence of an institute of political science too much is expected of the department. On the other hand, this is also an opportunity. The department has made use of that opportunity and established a broad research programme in political sociology/political science.

4. Recommendations

The department's activities are good in all areas of assessment and we have identified no faults in any of the areas or activities. The challenge for the department in its next phase is to build on its achievements so far and lift itself from being a very good research department to an internationally recognised centre of excellence.

Our recommendations for the department are similar to those for the institute as a whole: to work according to existing research plans, to increase the international profile of publications, and in that profile to produce more publications for top level journals and publishers, and to strengthen and institutionalise international links of collaboration. The department should identify a strong area from its research to design a grant application to the ERC.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The department produces high quality relevant research over a broad range of mainly empirical issues. The results are of high quality by international standards and should be a basis for more international and high level publications.

Declaration on societal relevance

The department's research profile is one of high relevance. It is active in societal collaboration and education. It should aim to increase its publication in top international journals.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

The department has a good record of involving (PhD) students in its research.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

The department is active in collaboration with other research units nationally, but can and should improve its profile of collaboration. Its research and results are of high standard by international comparison but can and should be lifted to a higher standard. It has some ability to attract foreign scholars, but this, as for the rest of the institute, is still a major challenge.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

The department's activities in these areas are satisfactory. If it is to lift itself to the level of an international centre of excellence, strong and determined leadership will be required. The whole of the department will need to accept the challenge of that ambition and to collaborate on its achievement.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

The department has the human and other resources that are necessary to achieve the ambition we have suggested. It should obviously aim to increase its grants revenue and its project portfolio, but the challenge ahead is qualitative more than quantitative. It has solid plans for its future activity. If anything could be said to be missing in those plans, it would be on the determination of ambition to see itself as an international centre of excellence.

Date: February 23, 2016

Commission Chair: doc. JUDr., PhD., LL.M. Kristian Csach