



2013 Evaluation of FCT Research and Development Units

Review process - Stage 1

Panel: 05

ESF internal Project Ref Number: 14-FCT-145

Reviewer ID: 93317

Title: Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology (CIES-IUL)

P.I.: Dr. Fernando Luís Lopes Machado

FCT Ref: 3126

Total Score: 13 / 20

A. Productivity and contribution to the National Scientific and Technological System (NSTS): 4 / 5

- i.) Research outputs; knowledge and technology transfer activities, when applicable, giving particular importance to the registration and value of patents, models or other relevant innovation indicators;
- ii.) Contribution to the accumulation of knowledge and skills of the National Science and Technology System (expected effects and results); contribution to the advanced training of researchers; contribution to the promotion and dissemination of scientific and technological research; dissemination of results and actions to promote scientific culture, as well as participation in activities designed to promote public understanding of science, technology, art and culture; relationship between available past funding and output;
- iii.) Degree of multidisciplinary and of internationalization, when relevant.

The Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology (ISCTE) forms part of the University of Lisbon and focuses on the Social Sciences. Having its basis in sociology, it also covers a range of other disciplines which are integrated into the various research groups. As the institute is also in charge for teaching on the basic levels of BA and MA, it is not a plain research unit.

Nevertheless, the Centre's research output is quite impressive, given that the 110 integrated researchers produced almost a hundred reviewed papers a year and quite a number of other publications (However, I must add that there are some awkward references in the literature quoted as "peer reviewed"). The unit contributes a large number of other publications, and it teaches up to 100 PhD students in four PhD programs. It becomes clear that the ISCTE exerts an attraction to foreign researchers; it is very active in its PhD program with 56 theses defended in the last three years. It also acquired a number of research projects, with funding amounting to 1.5 to 2.1 million Euros. This is quite an impressive sum; yet one has to note that the sum did not increase although the number of integrated researchers almost doubled and is quite large compared to the funding.

The strength of the institute seems to lie in it being a centre of sociology in the country, but as an institute it also integrates a number of other disciplines which form part of the research group. The research groups are constituted by a range of different disciplines which seem to fit quite well, as e.g. in the urban anthropologists in the research group on migration. The only group which seems far from integration is the Group on Contemporary History, yet this Group obviously just joined the ISCTE so that the task is set. The various Research Groups address highly diversified topics in itself: Thus the quite successful group on migration also addresses environment and cultural values. The group on knowledge society is mainly oriented towards sociology of education and educational research; the publication record of the politics and citizenship group is particularly impressive, with 60 papers in international journals.

B. Scientific and technological merit of the research team: 3 / 5

- i.) Scientific productivity and merit of the results of the Unit's research, taking into account the relevance of both current and planned research, as well as the level of internationalization of scientific activities, including publications and citations of published works or other relevant aspects;
- ii.) Skills and composition of the research team to adequately execute the proposed program;
- iii.) Ability to successfully compete for national and international research grants and contracts, including contracts with companies.

It is difficult to assess such a varied research team; the information provided however, gives some clue as to the quality of the different groups (as the funding is not related to the Research Groups, this aspect cannot be considered): The research group on migration seems strong, both in the international publications as well as in their methodology, so that I assume that they will be in charge for one of the observatories planned; the research group on families etc., on the other hand, has comparatively few publications in English. Thus, the quality varies across the groups (which is not surprising) but it appears to be generally quite good in average. The acquisition of a Marie Curie grant testifies to the quality of the research group. The research teams seem to be very well equipped to pursue the tasks which are set in



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the future, and they seem to be well prepared to compete on the national level, some of them on the international level.

C. Scientific merit and innovative nature of the strategic programme:**2 /5**

- i.) Relevance, originality and impact of the proposed strategic programme;
ii.) Contribution of the scientific, technological, artistic or cultural activities of the proposed programme for a smart specialization strategy of the region in which the RD Unit is incorporated;
iii.) Degree of multidisciplinary and of internationalization, when relevant.
** The score must be based on C.i and C.iii only. However, comments on C.ii are welcome.**

As opposed to the other proposal I have read, the strategic program does hardly change. In reading, one has the impression that the strategic elements are often quite formulatic.

In principle, the ISCTE wants to improve on all levels of achievement; I gather that also the attempt to achieve the status of an FCT Associate Laboratory tends into this direction. In addition, it wants to enforce its activities in applied research on public policies. The plan to set up two observatories seems to be promising, although I cannot assess to what degree they differ from the ICS's observatories. Also internationalization is a goal worth while pursuing, although the specification of objectives remains very general and featureless.

The measures for implementing this strategy cannot be assessed easily since they are formulated in very general terms (6.6.); the same holds for the general objectives (6.5.); unluckily, the same lack of specificity also holds for the research groups some of which use many similar formulation for defining their objectives (e.g. RG on migration and RG politics and citizenship); I will only address those who have specified their objectives: thus it would seem profitable if the group on knowledge did really address general issue of knowledge and the sociology of knowledge and integrate Communication Science also in their research. The Research Group on Families does in fact re-orient towards a new topic, i.e. the extended life span, the aging population and new life styles, and the Research Group on Work etc. orients towards promising research in innovation studies, social construction of markets and financial markets. The objectives for the integration of the historical Research Group could be, indeed, more specific.

In general, one has to applaud that many research groups will try to integrate students into research as early as possible.

Multidisciplinary will be increased by the integration of the history research group; it also forms part of the other research groups' internal structure; there seems, however, no general strategy for the different research groups which are expected to continue along the same lines as they did research before. Some of the topics, such as territories, are addressed by different research groups (Inequalities, Migrations, and Territories, as well as Modern and Contemporary History) without further comment.

D. Feasibility of the work plan and reasonability of the requested budget:**4 /5**

- i.) Organisation of the programme in terms of the proposed objectives and resources (budget, duration, infrastructures); organisation and work environment, with special focus on the adequacy of the research team's critical mass to perform the proposed objectives and on the management of resources directed to research activities, which includes supervision of postgraduate students and post-doctoral involvement in RD activities;
ii.) Adequacy of proposed budget to accomplish the proposed strategic programme;
iii.) Institutional resources (technical, scientific, organisational and managerial) of the participating entities. The commitment of the host institution in providing the manpower and material resources to implement the proposed programme is especially valued.

The work plan and the objectives are, as I said, mostly very general; as far as it is specified, it seems very fair, although I have to repeat that it would be helpful if it was more specified. Some of the Research Groups are very promising and very good. Given that most research is continued on the same paths, the work plan is feasible.

It is difficult for an outsider to assess an overall budget of such a huge institutions, given the difficult economic environment in Portugal. Thus, the absolute numbers of PhD students funded by some



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institution is quite low, so that one would like to see more money invested into this area (particularly since the ISCTE intends to integrate students' early in research). For this reason, it might also be recommendable that the various Research Groups do acquire more funding internationally which may allow to compensate for the reduction of local and national resources.

Overall Comment:

Please provide a comment to substantiate the overall grading achieved, specifying key strengths and weaknesses (if any) of the research plan

The institute is, in general, quite successful given the fact that it also is in charge of teaching. Among the applications I was asked to assess is the Instituto de Ciências Sociais: I am surprised about the high degree of overlap between these institutes, both, in terms of research topics as well as in terms of research methodology which is predominantly quantitative in both. This pattern of similarity between the institutes seems to be continued by the inclusion of historians who are not strongly integrated into the rest of the institute's work. Also new topics, such as the orientation on life spans, seem to repeat similar orientations in the other institute. On the basis of the observation that the ISCTE does not have a very specific agenda for the next years, one would strongly suggest to either orient towards synergetic effects of the ICS or to clearly differentiate and to look for a more different profile. There are some initiatives by the research group which exhibit such traits. Also, the institute seems not to address the issue of methods and the variety of methodology (except for the historical research group).



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Total Score: 18 / 20

A. Productivity and contribution to the National Scientific and Technological System (NSTS): 5 / 5

- i.) Research outputs; knowledge and technology transfer activities, when applicable, giving particular importance to the registration and value of patents, models or other relevant innovation indicators;
- ii.) Contribution to the accumulation of knowledge and skills of the National Science and Technology System (expected effects and results); contribution to the advanced training of researchers; contribution to the promotion and dissemination of scientific and technological research; dissemination of results and actions to promote scientific culture, as well as participation in activities designed to promote public understanding of science, technology, art and culture; relationship between available past funding and output;
- iii.) Degree of multidisciplinary and of internationalization, when relevant.

The CIES Report sent to FCT on January 28th which is our main source of information clearly shows that the scholars who are in charge of the CIES fully understand what is at stake in a sociology Centre financed at least partly by public funds. Generally speaking, what is at stake is whether the collective work of this Centre's members and affiliates (not only publications but also interviews with journalists, conferences...) contributes to raising the degree of reflexivity of the society that supports it through public funding. The reflexivity may be increased in at least two different ways: through policy-oriented applied research helping decision-makers to design the 'right' policies ('right' according to the results they are aiming to reach); and through communicating to the general public the results of empirical investigations in a way to make it more reflexive and more inclined to support reforms that need to be done. Both orientations are clearly present on the CIES agenda. There is a clear focus on public policies. Also, as shown in the list of publications, CIES scholars do write books for the educated Portuguese public; books that aim at informing it on Portuguese society, its social realities and their trends.

□

The CIES also contributes to the advanced training of researchers: the Report indicates a "considerable growth in the number of researchers with PhDs, from 56 in 2008 to 110 in 2012". Every one of its six components has quite a large number of doctoral students, and the CIES seems very active in getting FCT scholarships for its doctoral students.

While the CIES label is about sociology, its development clearly shows opening to other social sciences such as political science (especially for studying public policies, one of its strong points), science of education, anthropology, and more recently history. Hence multi-disciplinarity is obviously on the agenda of its leaders and researchers. As for the will to internationalize, it is shown already in the list of publications, as a sizable number of them have appeared in well-known Anglo-Saxon journals. The report says this push towards internationalization will be enhanced and the years to come. Indeed the fact that the CIES main journal *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas* is already publishing in four languages and is part of the Web-of-Science network, thus being recognized and included in the data base of SSCI, is a sure sign – among many others – of an efficient will to internationalize the CIES.

B. Scientific and technological merit of the research team: 4 / 5

- i.) Scientific productivity and merit of the results of the Unit's research, taking into account the relevance of both current and planned research, as well as the level of internationalization of scientific activities, including publications and citations of published works or other relevant aspects;
- ii.) Skills and composition of the research team to adequately execute the proposed program;
- iii.) Ability to successfully compete for national and international research grants and contracts, including contracts with companies.

i.) The CIES leaders are clearly highly committed to internationalize as much as they can the rising



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generation of researchers and PhD students. For instance they encourage them to participate in international conferences, provided they commit themselves to write a paper for an international journal; and they keep funds for translation in English. Indeed these efforts do pay: one may see that CIES members have already published quite a number of articles in Anglo-Saxon journals, which is not an easy task. The Report also indicates their acute awareness of how participating in international conferences offers new opportunities to create or deepen contacts with foreign scholars from other European countries, to join preexisting scientific networks and get recognition from their members, and eventually to join Project proposals to the EU Commission and thus to eventually get access to European research funds. The journal *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas*, now indexed in Scopus, publishes articles in four languages; and while printed on paper and circulated as such, it also makes its contents available directly on the web, without delay and without having to go through Cairn, Jstor or similar clusters of limited access (thus this evaluator has been able to access and print several articles of high interest, including one just published by D. Dorling, a University of Oxford British scholar, about the general world trend towards growing inequalities, so manifest e. g. in the USA and the U.K. where it is taken for granted and unavoidable, while in some Nordic and continental European countries governments have succeeded slowed it down through political choices. A very relevant topic in any case).

ii.) The research team has obviously the skills, but also the will and energies to push its program forward; it has done so very successfully during the last five-years period. In Portugal the historical generation now coming close to retirement age has had to build social sciences from scratch, and succeeded doing so quite remarkably. Have they been also able to pass on their spirit of 'institutional entrepreneurship' to the next generations? This evaluator believes that as far as the CIES is concerned, the answer is positive. It is shown in the continuing increase of CIES general indicators in the past five years (e.g. the number of articles published in peer-reviewed journals jumped from 39 in 2008 to 84 in 2012, which shows collective mobilization) in spite of a context of deep economic recession. The CIES Report hardly mentions this hampering context, as if CIES leaders were determined to keep moving forward whatever the difficulties.

iii.) As for the ability to compete for research grants and contracts, CIES is obviously very successful in Portugal itself. What is more disappointing, given the number of CIES researchers, is the relatively small amount of funding coming from European Commission-funded projects and other international projects. However the trend is obviously in the right direction: for instance, funds the CIES got from EU-funded projects moved from 17 k€ in 2008 to 237 k€ in 2012; and from other international projects, from 0 to 79 k€.

C. Scientific merit and innovative nature of the strategic programme:

4 /5

i.) Relevance, originality and impact of the proposed strategic programme;

ii.) Contribution of the scientific, technological, artistic or cultural activities of the proposed programme for a smart specialization strategy of the region in which the RD Unit is incorporated;

iii.) Degree of multidisciplinary and of internationalization, when relevant.

** The score must be based on C.i and C.iii only. However, comments on C.ii are welcome.**

As for the Strategic Programme, what is particularly commanding is the will and ability of the CIES' direction to have this large Centre 'walk on two legs', so to speak: on one hand, to develop high quality research and to join the (international) pioneer front of sociology and other social sciences; and on the other, through applied studies, to contribute fully and usefully to design good public policies for a Portuguese society that is in dire need of them (a third 'leg' being its cooperation with *Ciencia Viva*, an institution which is trying to promote among Portuguese high school youths an interest for and orientation towards science and research).

Novelties are ceaseless. What is for instance impressing is the creation, during the past five years, of not



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one but two Observatories by the CIES (perhaps as an answer to request by the government): one on Inequalities, the other on Portuguese emigration diaspora. These are data banks on topics that are relevant to social policies. Emigrants send back remittances to the home country; and in the last years, as known from the press, new forms of emigration from Portugal have appeared, oriented towards Brazil and Angola where development is much more dynamic than in Portugal. As for inequalities, it seems – although the topic is hotly contested – that too much of them hampers not only the human development of a given country, but also its economic one.

In the same vein, the growing investment of the CIES in Social Work appears particularly relevant in the present times.

As for the degrees of multidisciplinary and internationalization, we have already mentioned that not only are they part and parcel of the Programme, but that they are both well under way already. CIES direction mentions it wants to improve communication between research groups (and disciplines?) through ‘instituting group meetings’.

D. Feasibility of the work plan and reasonability of the requested budget:

5 /5

i.) Organisation of the programme in terms of the proposed objectives and resources (budget, duration, infrastructures); organisation and work environment, with special focus on the adequacy of the research team's critical mass to perform the proposed objectives and on the management of resources directed to research activities, which includes supervision of postgraduate students and post-doctoral involvement in RD activities;

ii.) Adequacy of proposed budget to accomplish the proposed strategic programme;

iii.) Institutional resources (technical, scientific, organisational and managerial) of the participating entities. The commitment of the host institution in providing the manpower and material resources to implement the proposed programme is especially valued.

The Work Plan appears perfectly feasible, and even conservative given past growth and the dynamic spirit of the CIES. Perhaps the expectation for Portugal's economic situation to deteriorate further have led CIES direction to propose growth at a slower pace than during the previous five years: see 7. Expected Indicators. The CIES has all it takes to implement its Work Plan: the critical mass, an apparently efficient technical staff, a new generation of well-trained young scholars, a well-tested organization based on encouraging participation by decentralizing initiatives, and above all the right pioneer spirit.

Remarkable achievements during the past five years could have led the CIES direction to ask for a much higher budget, and set up for itself more ambitious targets for 2020 in terms of publications in peer-review journals, books, chapters in books, research contracts. It is to be noticed that fixed public resources, which CIES does not expect to grow much (given, one may surmise, the economic situation of Portugal) are mostly used to maintain the technical staff of about ten persons which makes for the smooth functioning of the whole Centre. New resources for growth will therefore have to be looked for elsewhere, e.g. by joining some of the best European consortiums designing Projects in answer to the Commission's Calls. But perhaps the CIES direction, knowing that success in such matters is unpredictable given the harsh competition, has voluntarily limited its ambitions. They are not expecting the fixed part of the CIES budget to grow much.

As for the commitment of the host institution – the ISCTE – in supporting CIES, we have no direct information about its intentions. However, ISCTE – now calling itself IUL – introduces itself on the web as a research university emphasizing scientific innovation. It has a strong Business and Economics component; and given the mood of the times, one might have thought that priority would have been given to attracting most ISCTE resources. But what may be found on the web about the intentions and philosophy of the ISCTE-IUL Rector and Board does not seem to go in this direction. There are other universities in Portugal

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(and many more abroad) offering training in business matters; but few if any are so well focused on social sciences research, both applied (e.g. on public policies) and academic (e. g. about changes in social patterns, consequences of economic depression, access to healthcare, new emerging phenomena...).

A last sign of the ISCTE-IUL commitment to the CIES is that, as one may see on ISCTE website, the Research Vice-Rector is presently Antonio Firmino Costa, who was previously heading the CIES. He has long been well known internationally as one of the most active members of CIES; as the very well-read Editor of the CIES journal Sociologia; and as the author of journal articles and books of high quality. That he was chosen as Research Vice-Rector of the ISCTE indicates recognition of the dynamism and efficiency of the previous CIES management.

Overall Comment:

Please provide a comment to substantiate the overall grading achieved, specifying key strengths and weaknesses (if any) of the research plan

This is an excellent Portuguese research centre which is efficiently managed, with the right amount of decentralisation, and which succeeds maintaining a balance between pursuing - and actually meeting more and more - the international standards of academic quality, while also addressing the demands of its own country for self-knowledge, reflexivity, and good design of public policies. In order to do this it is developing a multidisciplinary approach, and covering an ever larger number of research issues with the right mix of theoretical and empirical efforts. Several generations make up its personnel, and training the young ones through having them participate in research projects is a major preoccupation of the senior researchers.

Other sociology research centres in Europe, who benefit of much better conditions for developing research activities, may have better results. But relatively to the difficult context of Portugal, the achievements of CIES in the past five years are remarkable; and we have no doubt that it will continue producing excellent and relevant research findings in the years to come.



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Reviewer ID: 1585

Title: Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology (CIES-IUL)

P.I.: Dr. Fernando Luís Lopes Machado

FCT Ref: 3126

Total Score: 12 / 20

A. Productivity and contribution to the National Scientific and Technological System (NSTS): 3 / 5

- i.) Research outputs; knowledge and technology transfer activities, when applicable, giving particular importance to the registration and value of patents, models or other relevant innovation indicators;
- ii.) Contribution to the accumulation of knowledge and skills of the National Science and Technology System (expected effects and results); contribution to the advanced training of researchers; contribution to the promotion and dissemination of scientific and technological research; dissemination of results and actions to promote scientific culture, as well as participation in activities designed to promote public understanding of science, technology, art and culture; relationship between available past funding and output;
- iii.) Degree of multidisciplinary and of internationalization, when relevant.

The center's productivity is high, when seen from typical standards: publications, presentations, funding, training, and transfer. Although it focuses in sociology and close-kin disciplines, it is now becoming more interdisciplinary, thanks to the grounding of a contemporary history research group. In terms of sheer quantity, the center does very well. Looked up closely, however, one realizes that the center prioritizes volume over quality. Very few publications are in top journals or academic presses; very few projects are European projects; very few international projects, if any, are lead by an in-house researcher. Research is focused on central topics of interest, both socially and politically. I am unsure, however, about the originality of this research. There is clearly too much work already on migration and inequalities (or the family). While this work may help disseminate knowledge across society, it is unlikely to significantly contribute to the vast literature on these topics. The center trains a good number of researchers, but the number of annual PhD's per year seems small relative to the academic staff. We learn little too as to the type of training they receive and on how graduate students are integrated in the research and teaching activities at the center.

B. Scientific and technological merit of the research team: 3 / 5

- i.) Scientific productivity and merit of the results of the Unit's research, taking into account the relevance of both current and planned research, as well as the level of internationalization of scientific activities, including publications and citations of published works or other relevant aspects;
- ii.) Skills and composition of the research team to adequately execute the proposed program;
- iii.) Ability to successfully compete for national and international research grants and contracts, including contracts with companies.

The center's main researchers have long C.Vs., which shows that they are highly professional. Nonetheless, their targets are not ambitious enough. Too many publications, but most of them local or with little international impact. One sees the occasional article in West European Politics, Journal of European Integration, European societies. These are good specialized journals, but not the very best. One does not find articles in American Journal of Sociology, American Political Science Review, or books at Princeton University Press, just to give some examples. When one looks at research grants, one sees many projects funded by national agencies, but one does not see members of the Center coordinating international projects or benefitting from an ERC Grant. Undoubtedly, the academic personnel is not to blame. The system of expectations and rewards and its evolution over time has and probably constrains the researchers' strategies. It focus on meeting short-term volumen targets rather than path-breaking achievements. Having said that, the fit between research team members and the research groups' main research areas is very good. There is, however, a certain unevenness in the composition of research teams. Some strike me as very big compared to others (i.e. the one on Politics and Democracy).



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C. Scientific merit and innovative nature of the strategic programme:**3 /5**

- i.) *Relevance, originality and impact of the proposed strategic programme;*
ii.) *Contribution of the scientific, technological, artistic or cultural activities of the proposed programme for a smart specialization strategy of the region in which the RD Unit is incorporated;*
iii.) *Degree of multidisciplinary and of internationalization, when relevant.*

** The score must be based on C.i and C.iii only. However, comments on C.ii are welcome.**

The proposed strategic program simply continues previous trends. The main ambition consists in doing better what one has done in the recent past. This is fine, to the extent that the accomplishments of the past are to be comended. Another positive aspect of the strategic program is the goal of increasing transdisciplinarity, through the development of a research area in Contemporary History. It would be great if the proposed strategy would be clearer as to how one could develop synergies between this new research program and existing research areas. The focal topics in the Contemporary History research area and other research areas do not seem to overlap. I also like that the strategy balances quite well the local and the global. It would be good if the strategy reflected some critical reflection on achievements thus far. For instance, it would be a good idea to provide for a bifurcation of the expectations and incentive system to provide for the possibility that some top researchers may be offered the opportunity to invest in long-term risky projects, where the pay-off in terms of publications will only arrive after several years. This strategy would probably contribute to top publications and therefore to enhance the center's international visibility.

D. Feasibility of the work plan and reasonability of the requested budget:**3 /5**

- i.) *Organisation of the programme in terms of the proposed objectives and resources (budget, duration, infrastructures); organisation and work environment, with special focus on the adequacy of the research team's critical mass to perform the proposed objectives and on the management of resources directed to research activities, which includes supervision of postgraduate students and post-doctoral involvement in RD activities;*
ii.) *Adequacy of proposed budget to accomplish the proposed strategic programme;*
iii.) *Institutional resources (technical, scientific, organisational and managerial) of the participating entities. The commitment of the host institution in providing the manpower and material resources to implement the proposed programme is especially valued.*

The work plan seems feasible, given that it does not greatly change what was in place until now. There is a critical mass in all focal research areas. It is unclear, however, whether the center provides to the staff with a stable and renewed structure of documentation and computer support. More to the point, one does not see whether the center subscribes to the relevant databases and journals, as well as purchases enough books to satisfy the demands of its researchers. One does not see either, whether computer programs, such as statistical packages, are provided to the academic staff or whether they have to pay for them from their own funding resources. If the center wants to become a world referent it needs to strive for making the provision of bibliographic materials and computer/statistical infrastructure a given and not something that is contingent on the members' ability to secure funding.

Overall Comment:

Please provide a comment to substantiate the overall grading achieved, specifying key strengths and weaknesses (if any) of the research plan

The center stands at about the median of equivalent research institutions in Europe. Its staff publishes, gets funds, and disseminates its work. Furthermore, the center attracts international researchers and provides training to future researchers. The fact that the trend is upward in all dimensions, is a promising sign, in view of recent budgetary pressures in Portugal. The minuses are the relatively low visibility of the outlets where research publish. This has to do with the system of expectations and rewards, which needs some revision. Some mechanism ought to be put in place to facilitate ground-breaking theoretical and substantive work (i.e. books and articles that have long term impact, both nationally and internationally). The center's problems in this respect are similar to those other European institutions for research and higher education. Nonetheless, places like the WZB in Germany have already undertaken steps to

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incentivate not only good, but excellent work. There is no reason why this Center should not take this road also. Similarly, a negative aspect of the center's research agenda is its focus on topics that while important are over-crowded. There is simply too much people around the world studying inequality and migration. A greater effort should be made to carve a distinct research niche that may enhance the center's international visibility.