



FCT – Periodical Evaluation of R&D Units – 2013

Rebuttal Form – Stage 2

FCT Project ref n°: 3126

R&D Unit: Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology (CIES-IUL)

Coordinator: Fernando Luís Lopes Machado

Panel: 05 – Social Sciences

ESF Project n°: 14-FCT-145

Applicant's comments on External reviews

Note to Applicants:

The purpose of the Rebuttal or "right to reply" step is not to amend or elaborate the initially submitted proposal or to change it in any way. It is only meant to allow the applicant to comment on factual errors or misunderstandings that may have been made by the referees while assessing the proposal.

Two of the three assessments on CIES (Reviewers 93317 and 1585) reveal quality, validity and ethical issues that cause serious biases in their evaluations:

1. The reviewer RW93317 confuses CIES-IUL (the research centre) with ISCTE-IUL (the university to which it belongs), also believing that it is part of Lisbon University (another university) – two serious factual errors that provoke misunderstandings;
2. The reviewer RW93317 believes that CIES is responsible for basic education/training (BA and MA programmes), which is also factually incorrect; the Centre's mission is scientific research and, within this remit, it coordinates four PhD programmes and postdoctoral researchers.
3. RW93317 reflects ethical failings that breach both ESF principles and those of good professional practice, thus rendering his/her evaluation unacceptable. Specifically: a) the reviewer reveals the identity of another institution that s/he has evaluated (Instituto de Ciências Sociais); b) s/he makes direct comparisons between the two institutions, exhibiting unjustifiable a priori attitudes that are unfavourable to CIES; c) s/he seems to suppose, unwarrantedly, that CIES plans to create observatories overlapping those of ICS, when, in truth, CIES observatories have existed for several years, have different objectives and thematic fields, and present innovative and international development plans.
4. RW1585 produces a highly negative commentary on the resources that CIES provides to researchers, though it in no way corresponds to the facts and reality. CIES is known for offering conditions rated among the best in the Portuguese scientific and university system – conditions guaranteed, furthermore, by the university to which it belongs (ISCTE-IUL). More precisely, its researchers and grant-holders are supplied with: workstations with computers, internet access, data analysis software, b-on access to the largest databases for scientific publications, a central library with tens of thousands of titles, and support staff.
5. RW93317 makes factually incorrect observations on the research groups: for example, among various others, communication sciences are supposedly not integrated into the knowledge society group, though this integration is clearly documented.
6. RW 3317 and RW1585 make negative observations about the maintenance of high scientific quality research on main stream topics with high social relevance (e.g. inequality and migration). These observations are beyond comprehension in that: a) the existence at CIES of lines of research in the key issues of sociology represents a fundamental condition for its scientific development and increased international integration– not the reverse; b) each research group's proposals are clearly innovative but, equally, are underpinned by robust scientific accumulation. c) continuity and greater depth in the Centre's areas of excellence also mean a commitment to important areas in the present social and economic situation;
7. RW1585's assessment of the Centre's publishing record is biased, given the growing quantity and quality of work published in indexed international journals. It is not acceptable to use the absence of articles in the American Journal of Sociology as a criterion – the journal is well known for publishing, almost exclusively, American authors.
8. RW93317 makes a factually incorrect assessment of the Centre's dominant methodological orientation, since it clearly uses a 'mixed-method' approach, as can easily be confirmed by consultation of the research groups' projects and publications.
9. Contrary to RW1585's comment, CIES contains a large number of PhD students. In its main field (sociology), the annual average for completed PhD theses is the highest of all Portuguese institutions.
10. RW93317 and RW1585's evaluations conflict with all earlier CIES evaluations, with its importance in the scientific community, and with its performance over the years
11. Otherwise in the Rw93735 evaluation, this kind of factual errors, misunderstandings and ethical problems are not present proving that a rigorous evaluation was possible with the information available