

increased from 198 in 2010 to 508 in 2020. Poland's rates are comparable to those of Latvia and higher than Bulgaria and Romania (figure 2) but it is clear that these countries lag behind the EU average.

There continue to be many individual and organizational challenges that must be overcome. The primary focus of researchers on teaching diminished their research skills—especially those needed to write journal articles—as well as their knowledge of broad scholarly literature. This is coupled with the lack of knowledge of methodologies and a poor command of the English language. Compared to Western European countries, the teaching load is high and the wages of faculty members are low, which are important factors that discourage academics from engaging in more research activity. For example, in Poland, the average number of obligatory teaching hours for research-and-teaching faculty members that hold the position of professor is 180 class hours (i.e., six courses per academic year), whereas for non-professor research-and-teaching staff the average is 240 class hours (i.e., eight courses per academic year). The minimum monthly wage of full-professor academic faculty in Poland is €1,490 and in the Czech Republic, it is €3,337 (average pay); whereas in Germany, it is €6,000 EUR and higher (European Commission, Eurydice 2021).

Overall, the important challenges for universities and researchers in CEE countries are to increase research output and to make their research more visible internationally. Institutional barriers, however, still remain, including a shortage of public funding for social science research (Kutsar and Kovács 2010), the limited ability of universities to offer grants, and professional training and research support for individual scholars. Universities—especially those enjoying the status of research institutions—are currently in the process of adopting new strategies that prioritize internationalization of research and channel funding. This will allow both early-career and senior scholars to develop their research skills, and we remain hopeful for these positive trends. ■

The important challenges for universities and researchers in CEE countries are to increase research output and to make their research more visible internationally.

NOTE

1. See European Innovation Scoreboard (2021) and Innovation Union Scoreboard (2012).

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FOSTERING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: INSIGHTS FROM THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH COUNCIL GRANTS

Rafał Szymanowski, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

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The discipline of political science in CEE countries¹ has traveled a long way during the post-communist transition, having shifted—not unlike the famous Polanyi pendulum (2001)—from the political subordination to the state authorities to the increasing reliance on the market forces. The recent establishment of the grant system, with its inherent market-oriented logic in the CEE region,

is arguably the primary gamechanger in the academic world since the early 1990s. It disrupted traditional norms and values as well as work patterns of the university community. The deeply entrenched set of customs regarding political science academic work—including the preference for single authorship instead of collaborative work, long monographs rather than journal articles, and locally oriented publications instead of internationally recognizable contributions—has been decimated by the grant system and third-party funding.

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The growing pressure to obtain external funding for research has resulted in many benefits for political science. Grant funding—now perceived as an essential element of a competitive track record—helped scholars to learn how to raise interest among nonacademic stakeholders, explore a studied topic from different angles, and better identify policy-relevant aspects of their research. Disconcerting to many people, the rampant competition for external funding put an end to the sheltered local circle of knowledge production, forcing scholars to care about international visibility of their work and to compare their academic record with their colleagues in other countries. Among the EU member states and associated countries, this competition is fostered by the European Research Council (ERC), a leading research agency established by the European Commission in 2007.

The ERC's self-declared mission is to provide "attractive long-term funding, awarded on the sole criterion of excellence, to support excellent investigators and their research teams to pursue groundbreaking, high-risk/high-gain research" (European Research Council 2020a). As in many other granting institutions, the percentage of the ERC budget allocated to social sciences and humanities is the lowest of all funds distributed (i.e., about 17%). Nonetheless, the availability of such attractive and long-term funding for political science projects (i.e., as much as €1.5 million to €2.5 million for a period of five years) is the envy of many scholars outside of the EU, who often complain about continuous cutbacks in academia.

How are political scientists in the CEE faring in the continent-wide competition for the most prestigious grants? To determine what ERC-funded projects indicate about the state of political science in the region, we must break down the ERC data by research domains (European Research Council 2020a). Political science projects are in the second research domain within social science and humanities—that is, institutions, governance, and legal systems (SH2).² What captures our attention first is that political scientists from CEE countries rarely apply. Reviewing only the most popular scheme (i.e., Consolidator) between 2013 and 2020, the Czech Republic submitted a total of nine applications, whereas the United Kingdom submitted 229, the Netherlands 117, and Germany 66. Among the CEE countries, the highest number of applications evaluated by the ERC were from Hungary (11) and Poland (10). Consequently, new EU members from CEE also receive a much lower number of awards. Reviewing 485 ERC-funded grants in the three most popular categories (i.e., Starting,

Consolidator, and Advanced)³ in SH2 from 2007 until 2020,⁴ CEE countries received only six grants (i.e., 1.2%). The Czech Republic and Estonia were awarded two grants; Poland and Hungary each received one. Compared to all of the disciplines classified as social sciences and humanities (SH), political scientists seem to be less successful than representatives of related fields. In the SH panel, CEE countries received a total of 49 grants of 2,354 (i.e., 2.1%). Combining all of the academic disciplines, CEE countries received 190 grants of 10,785 (i.e., 1.8%).

The most recent data for 2020 confirm that CEE countries continue to receive far fewer grants than other European countries. In 2020, the average number of grants⁵ allocated to CEE countries was only 1.5; the average among non-CEE ERC grant winners was 9.45 (European Research Council 2020a). In 2020, the leading grant receiver among CEE countries was the Czech Republic, with four grants. However, even the highest result in the region pales in comparison with the scores of ERC's main winners, including the United Kingdom (35 grants), the Netherlands (28), Germany (26), and Italy (15). If we rank all countries from the most to the least successful, then the CEE top performer, the Czech Republic, is only 13th—equal to Portugal—both with four grants. The list in table 1 of 32 top academic institutions hosting ERC principal investigators illustrates an even bleaker picture because not a single one is located in the CEE (European Research Council 2020a). Moreover, although the underrepresentation of CEE countries in ERC grants is a problem for all academic disciplines, political scientists—as evidenced by these data—are doing particularly poorly in the Europe-wide competition for research funding.

What are the structural reasons of such an asymmetrical distribution of research funds? Undoubtedly, government policies have a role in this situation. In the Czech Republic, which outperforms all other CEE countries in ERC grant schemes, subsequent governments have relentlessly incentivized researchers to obtain external support.⁶ A decade ago, the aim was already for the 60:40 ratio between competitive ("targeted") and institutional funding (Arnold 2011). Crucially, before implementing these measures, the Czech Republic had experienced between 2001 and 2011 the most substantial increase in R&D spending (as a share of GDP) in the region (i.e., from 1.1 to 1.54; it currently approaches 2%). In other countries, the spending barely budged; for example, in Poland, it increased from 0.62 to 0.75.

There also are discipline-specific factors that influence the development of political science; I suggest three possibilities. First, from the early 1990s until the late 2000s—a period of accession to NATO and the EU—many students in the region opted for a political science-related major, with their number increasing as much as sixfold. This affected researchers' time management, shifting their focus from research to teaching.

Second, political science—having been almost synonymous with the state propaganda during communist rule⁷—eagerly embraced its newly granted intellectual autonomy, severing even the most delicate connections to the policy-making community. A regional

Table 1
Top Organizations Hosting ERC Grants

Host Institution	Country	Number of Grants (FP7 2007–2013 ¹)	Number of Grants (Horizon 2020 Calls ²)	Principal Investigators in Synergy Grants
National Centre for Scientific Research	France	210	366	17c
University of Oxford	United Kingdom	126	150	6
University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	126	137	9
Max Planck Society	Germany	97	166	27
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich	Switzerland ³	79	122	9
University College, London	United Kingdom	92	106	2
Weizmann Institute	Israel ⁴	81	92	5
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne	Switzerland	83	71	4
Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres	Germany	54	120	13
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Israel	72	76	3
University of Edinburgh	United Kingdom	46	80	
University of Munich	Germany	40	80	2
Imperial College	United Kingdom	60	60	7
National Institute of Health and Medical Research	France	57	62	8
Tel Aviv University	Israel	29	86	1
University of Amsterdam	The Netherlands	36	75	
University of Copenhagen	Denmark	34	76	9
University of Leuven	Belgium	46	57	1
University of Zurich	Switzerland	37	56	2
Utrecht University	The Netherlands	29	63	2
Delft University of Technology	The Netherlands	26	65	3
Spanish National Research Council	Spain	34	56	6
Leiden University	The Netherlands	32	52	4
Radboud University, Nijmegen	The Netherlands	38	46	6
University of Helsinki	Finland	28	53	1
University of Bristol	United Kingdom	36	44	1
Technical University of Munich	Germany	28	52	2
Technion–Israel Institute of Technology	Israel	32	47	1
French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission	France	45	33	6
Ghent University	Belgium	23	51	
University of Vienna	Austria	25	48	2
Lund University	Sweden	25	47	2

Source: European Research Council (2020b).

Notes: ¹The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). Framework programmes are financial tools through which the EU supports research and development activities encompassing almost all scientific disciplines. They are proposed by the European Commission and adopted by the European Council and the European Parliament.

²Horizon 2020 is the framework programme for 2014–2020, which aimed to implement the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe’s global competitiveness.

^{3,4}Both Switzerland and Israel, although not EU members, have been eligible for ERC grants as associated countries that negotiated access to EU research programmes. However, this has changed recently. As a result of growing tensions in the EU–Swiss relations, Switzerland currently is treated as a nonassociated third country, which means that researchers based in Switzerland cannot submit proposals for ERC Starting, Consolidator, and Advanced Grants. Israel continues to participate in the Horizon programme, including the ERC, albeit with limited access to sensitive research areas (e.g., space projects).

“Cult of the Irrelevant” (Desch 2019) spread in CEE political science, with an ever-larger proportion of researchers increasingly fascinated by arcane techniques and formal modeling while neglecting broader criteria of policy relevance.

Third, political scientists too easily accepted the self-congratulations of “democratic consolidation” and “the new golden era” in countries such as Poland and Hungary (*The Economist* 2014). This made them unable to investigate the harbingers of democratic backsliding in the region, including rising economic inequalities and growing sympathy for authoritarian rule. Looking to the future, we can only hope that the need to understand political reality and

tackle actual challenges continues. It is the responsibility of the next generation of political scientists to respond to this task. ■

NOTES

1. This article follows the standard understanding of the CEE region—that is, 11 new EU member states.
2. In the ERC database, it is impossible to generate data for only political science and international relations.
3. A Starting Grant is an award for early-career researchers, a Consolidator Grant is for experienced researchers, and an Advanced Grant is for well-established researchers.

4. For the Starting Grant, the missing data are for 2007; for the Advanced Grant, they are missing for 2007 and 2020. Data for the Consolidator Grant begin in 2013.
5. These data are only for the social sciences and humanities (i.e., the SH category).
6. I thank an anonymous reviewer for this helpful comment.
7. This is unlike other social science disciplines that enjoyed more academic freedom (e.g., sociology and philosophy).

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ENGLISH-TAUGHT DEGREE PROGRAMS AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN POLAND

Dorota Pietrzyk-Reeves, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland

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Poland, Lithuania, and Estonia are the only countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) that have adopted official strategies for internationalization in higher education (Crăciun 2018, 100). These strategies provide incentives for public universities and impact their specific development strategies. Understood as an intentional process of integrating an international and/or intercultural dimension into the goals, functions, and delivery of higher education, internationalization aims to improve the quality of national education and research and their global impact (De Wit and Altbach 2021, 29). More generally, it is a set of strategies that promote the idea of internationality in higher education. One strategy is the development of English-taught degree programs (ETDPs) in non-English-speaking countries. This Spotlight article illustrates that offering international ETDPs in the field of political science requires not only internationalization of the curriculum and student learning outcomes¹ but also may significantly strengthen the internationalization of research. Moreover, internationalization of research in political science may contribute to further development of international degree programs. This trend is visible in some CEE countries, especially Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, and

of one another. Thus, the development of ETDPs is designed to contribute to the quality of education and international visibility but it also enhances research potential in political science.

To examine this proposition, three political science departments—at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, the University of Warsaw, and the University of Wrocław—were selected for interviews. They are leading centers of political science that offer bachelor's, master's, and PhD ETDPs (including joint and double degrees as well as study-abroad programs) in politics and international relations for both Polish and international candidates. Additionally, all three universities were granted the designation of "research university" in 2019. They treat internationalization as a key process in their long-term strategies of development, which requires, for example, "creating strategic partnerships with prominent academic institutions from abroad, which will make it possible to work together in all the dimensions of the University's mission" (Jagiellonian University 2019). Such an intentional strategy of building partnerships contributes to the quality of both education and research (Kwiek 2020).

Nine structured interviews were conducted online with faculty from these institutions who have been involved in designing, managing, and teaching for ETDPs. Open-ended questions were intended to determine whether there is a positive correlation between running successful ETDPs and the internationalization of research in each department. The interviews suggested that two components of internationalization work especially well in political science and international relations departments as if in tandem: internationalization of research and internationalization through ETDPs. There is significant evidence from these departments and the statistics they provided that there are certain visible benefits to offering ETDPs in political science and international relations that contribute to expanding research potential and international visibility (tables 1 and 2). The trend of internationalization through ETDPs in social sciences has been practiced by many European universities, especially in Nordic countries and the Netherlands (Wächter and Maiworm 2014, 131). Strategies of CEE universities are similar in this respect, but the process also has another desirable effect: greater international research activity by those involved in teaching for ETDPs, prompted by their teaching experience and the opportunity that results for international collaboration. These statistics support the qualitative analysis presented in table 2.

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Hungary.² ETDPs usually are offered by leading public universities and private institutions to increase additional revenue and achieve better results of internationalization. Based on nine interviews conducted at three political science departments in Poland, we contend that the benefits of these education and research statistics and existing scholarship accrue when teaching and research in the area of internationalization are treated intentionally as supportive

Selected political science departments have increased their research potential and visibility due in part because they had established ETDPs and thus international collaboration. As indicated by interviewees, this increases the number of journal articles and books coauthored with partners from other countries.

The interviewees indicated that faculty's involvement in ETDPs, which attract mainly international students, resulted in