

Department of Methodology  
COL.8.05, Columbia House, Houghton Street  
London WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom  
Telephone: +44 207 9557652  
Email: j.p.jackson@lse.ac.uk

**Professor Jonathan Jackson**

11 July 2016

**Re: 2016 Evaluation Report for the Research Center in Political Science (CICP, Centro de Investigação em Ciência Política)**

*Submitted by Jonathan Jackson, Ph.D.*

*Professor of Research Methodology at the London School of Economics & Political Science*

*Area of Expertise: Quantitative Methods, Criminology, Psychology & Law, Public Policy.*

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to summarise my thoughts and recommendations from a trip to CICP in February 2016. This was my first visit so my comments will necessarily be rather brief; no doubt I will have more to say as I get to know the Center in more detail; but I do hope that my evaluation report usefully builds on prior external assessments.

Let me start by detailing a number of CICP's strengths. First, many of the members have excellent training from – and excellent links to – leading international universities. From my talks with the director, one meeting with the remaining members, and extensive documents made available to me since then, I gather that at least a third of the members have been trained at Anglo-American and very good European universities. This background has instilled in these individuals the necessary ambition to actively seek out, integrate, and maintain some foothold in key international research groups. This is important. On the one hand, the work of a particular researcher improves when he or she is embedded in internationally excellent research priorities and networks, and collectively, the research that comes out of the Center benefits a good deal from this. On the other hand, the international flavour of the Center helps to sustain and enhance its influence. In this regard the Center has made successful attempts to secure itself in several of the most important research communities, both in Portugal and out, with all four research groups containing members who are highly active where contacts and collaboration is concerned. This helps to attract visitors to the Center and maintain its national and international profile and impact.

Second, the Center has sustained its high national ranking. Among other things, this is important for attracting government funding for themselves, as well as for PhD students wishing to continue their studies in Portugal and/or spending a brief period abroad with the University of Minho as a collaborating institution or partner.

Third, the Center is making innovative attempts to make their PhD programs more attractive to prospective students considering a Ph.D in Portugal. Although the University of Minho has been moving up in world rankings in the last couple of decades, students still need to consider existing financial opportunities and benefits before arriving at a final decision. While the Center is limited by legal restrictions in this regard – as I imagine all research units in Portuguese state universities – I believe the CICP has begun to make headway where Ph.D enrolment is concerned. All of their students are considered collaborating members, so as to have the Center as a solid reference when submitting an abstract to a major conference or applying for a grant. A significant sum of its first official budget as the merged former NEAPP and NICPRI has been set aside to secure aid to their students who have successfully attempted to participate in international annual meetings. These efforts merit an honourable mention. Moreover, members of some of the research groups seem to be collaborating well together, as evidenced by a fair amount of shared outputs. As is to be expected, this is an exceptional way to foster original outputs and promote a healthy work environment. It is my understanding that the CICP is adamant about this particular feature, and means only to foster more collaboration among members in, and especially between, all four research groups.

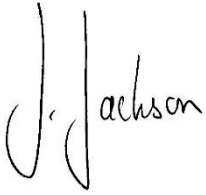
Turning now to a few of the Center's weaknesses, I see four main situations that need a little work. First, I concur with the comments of prior experts on the administrative burden that faculty face. Compared to my institution, faculty seem to be overburdened with tasks that administrators should be doing, and this surely limits research productivity and damages morale. Second, there is a lack of attractive research opportunities for international students. A third limitation has to do with national influence. In particular, the location far from Lisbon means that research seminars and other events are not immediately accessible. The fact that Braga (to the north) and Évora (to the rural interior) are geographically far from the power base may well limit the Center's outreach efforts where practical policy efforts are concerned. This may also be bad for morale and a sense of social utility.

Fourth, I wonder about the balance in the distribution of the research lines/groups. Besides being clearly the smallest group—I dare say too small to justify group status—the second group is arguably the group that could possibly bring about the most interdisciplinary collaborations, as it is already composed of members that belong to the other three groups. This suggests that these members do research in more than one particular subfield and would constitute a valuable pool of potential intergroup collaborators. Also regarding imbalance, it seems to me that groups 3 and 4 may have much overlap. A quick glance at the CVs

of these two last groups, particularly at the individuals' research interests, suggests a different picture. It seems to me that this mainstream political science group would benefit through attracting members from other groups.

Let me finish with a few recommendations. First and foremost, I wonder whether it is worth rethinking the scientific rationale behind the research groups/reorganizing research groups, including fostering more membership in the much smaller groups (2 and 3). Second, the Center needs to come up with ways to "move closer" to Lisbon. For instance, links to Lisbon could be improved through sponsoring or co-sponsoring research events at universities or conference centers in Lisbon. Third, more could be done to improve PhD student involvement. For instance, there could be CIGP sponsored Ph.D seminar events in each of the Center's research lines, not only at the two universities where the Center is represented, but at particular international meetings. This would be an excellent way to promote the Center; it would also improve students' knowledge, contacts, and experience with international events. Another suggestion is that students might be considered eligible to become effective members once they've finished their programs. Finally, although I referred to the Center as having done a lot in the name of teamwork, it would be helpful if the Center would consider emulating efforts in many European universities, including mine, to promote conscious awareness of one another outside the normal environment, for instance, holding an annual day with packed with day-long or weekend-long social events and activities.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first letter "J" is large and loops around the first part of the name. The last name "Jackson" is written in a more standard cursive script.

Jonathan Jackson