ERC-Advanced Grants Conference

Round Table discussion

Istanbul, March 13, 2009

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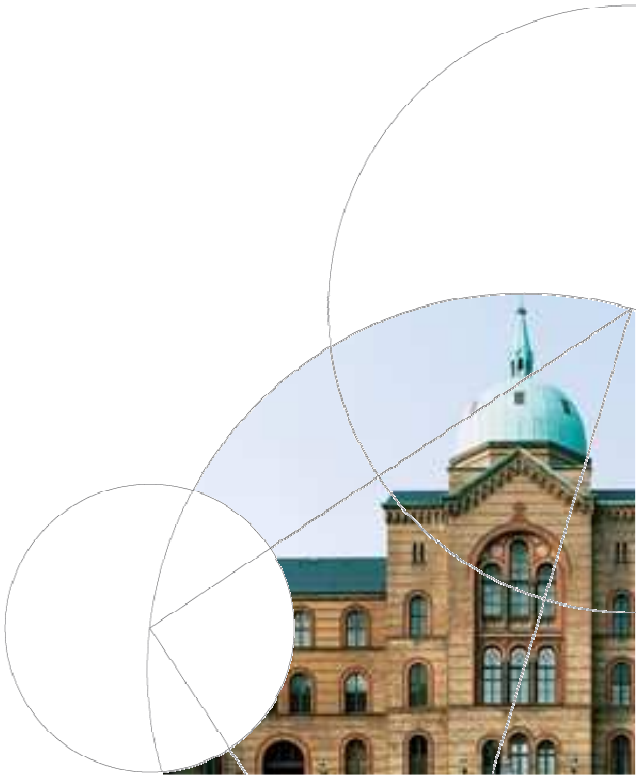

Panel structure for Starting Grants 2007:
Special Focus on the Humanities and Social Sciences

SH1: Individuals and organisations: economics, management, demography, geography, urban and environmental studies

SH2: Institutions, behaviour, values and beliefs: anthropology, sociology, political science, law, communication, social studies of science and technology

SH3: The human mind and its complexity: cognition, linguistics,psychology, philosophy and education

SH4: Cultures and cultural diversity: literature, visual and performin**SH1: Individuals and organisations**: economics, management, demography, geography, urban and environmental studies

SH2: Institutions, behaviour, values and beliefs: anthropology, sociology, political science, law, communication, social studies of science and technology

SH3: The human mind and its complexity: cognition, linguistics,psychology, philosophy and education

SH4: Cultures and cultural diversity: literature, visual and performing arts, music and cultural studies

SH5: The study of the past and of cultural artefacts: memory, history and archeologyarts, music and cultural studies

Succes rates 2007

We started with 9167 applications, **1163** in the Humanities and Social Sciences

559 projects were selected after the first evaluation (**102** in the SHS.

300 projekter were finally supported (**55** in SHS)

How does one come down from 9 167 to 559?
Or from 320 to 26?

. ***Criteria regarding the project:***

-originality,
-the adequacy of the proposed method to answer the presented question,
-solidity of the application (knowledge of the literature,
- balanced self presentation),
- the track-record of the applicant and of the collaborators, including senior advisors.
-the feasibility of the project within the given time and economic constraints

How does one come down…. (2)

Criteria regarding the applicants

Peer recognition:

- degrees, awards
- position in international networks of science
- presence in various committees/boards

Classical bibliometric performance measures:

- production,
- productivity,
- citation visibility

Previous funding from research councils

TROUBLING CONSIDERATIONS

- Bibliometrics are not sufficiently refined (e.g. large sales of a book or a high index of citation do not necessarily indicate research of high standard

- Frequency of citation vary with the size of the community and the field

- Research income can be an indication of the cost of research rather than its quality

- The Mathew-principle: there is a strong feedback in the system, the rich become richer

Impact factors are controlling the scientific enterprise

Impact factors are threatening to skew the course of scientific research

They influence the direction that research is taking

Evaluators rate a paper more highly if it appears in a high impact journal, regardless of what the paper actually says.

Monatersky, R. Research and Publishing, 2004, 52/8, A12

How good are we at evaluating excellence?

Excellence is recognisable – you know it when you see it – but it is fundamentally elusive, and therefore not quantifiable.

The candidates we select are brilliant, but so are at least 40% of the ones we do not select

Hoolingworth's criteria

Scientific progress can be of various type:

- discoveries of phenomena,
- theoretical explanations or syntheses,
- tests of theories or hypotheses,
- acceptance or rejection of hypotheses or theories by the relevant scientific communities,
- development of new measurement or analytic techniques,
- application of general theory to specific theoretical or practical problems,
- development of technologies or useful interventions to improve human health and well-being from scientific efforts,

Rogers Hollingsworth. Scientific Discoveries: An Institutionalist and Path-Dependent Perspective*, 2002*

http://history.wisc.edu/hollingsworth/documents

Hollingworth's facilitating factors

Characteristics of research organizations which repeatedly make major discoveries across time:

- Organizational flexibility

- Scientific diversity and integration: (scientists in diverse fields must have intense and frequent professional as well as social interactions with one another.)

Leadership: (**providing a nurturing environment** - an environment in which there is rigorous criticism, with a high degree of sensitivity).

Organizational autonomy.

(Hollingsworth, 2002)

Hoolingworth's hampering factors

Differentiation. (too sharp boundaries among scientific areas)

(2) **Hierarchical authority and bureaucratic coordination**.
(e.g. centralized budget controls, decision-making about research programs, centralized decision-making about number of personnel, standardization of rules/procedures)

(3) **Hyperdiversity**. (no effective communication among actors across diverse fields of science)

A good research environment?

The Turkish scholar Arzu Öztürkmen from Bogazici University has analysed the impact of European and American research traditions on Turkish academic life:

”In its contemporary stance, Turkish academic life still carries traces of its European tradition in terms of its authoritarian and hierarchical interrelationship model, and the American tradition in terms of its research and publication strategies.”

J of Women’s History, 2007, 18, 1, 173-179

Collectivistic and individualistic cultures

The enormous emphasis on grades, marks, competitions and tests in Turkish education

Are young researchers under too much pressure?

An excellent researcher is good

An excellent team is better!