

## Introductory Remarks about the Theme *Social Science Productivity and Visibility*

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This thematic block of the current issue of *Sociology and Space* has been prepared for two interrelated reasons. The first concerns the growing relevance of publication productivity in social sciences as a topic of science studies. The second reason is connected with the professional organisation of science studies in Europe.

Publication productivity in social sciences (SS) has been recently drawing the attention of many science analysts. The extensive use of quantitative, especially bibliometric indicators and methods in the evaluation procedures in social sciences has shown its shortcomings when applied mechanically to the research output in this scientific area, that is, whenever the specificities of social science knowledge production and its output are not fully taken into consideration in the assessment of publications' quantity, structure and impact. This was the very reason for the increasing interest in the topic among the main science policy actors – policy-makers and the scientific community. This interest has been reflected in various activities and forms, such as research projects and productivity analyses, workshops and policy recommendations dedicated to improving social science monitoring and evaluation.

This was also the very reason for the initiative to organise a joint thematic session of the two European associations engaged in science studies – EASST (The European Association for the Study of Science and Technology) and SSTNET (Sociology of Science and Technology Network) which is a research network of ESA (European Sociological Association). The EASST conference held in Trento, Italy September 2-4, 2010 offered an opportunity to organise an EASST-SSTNET session on the topic. Three contributions selected for publication in this thematic block were accepted for (and two of them also presented at) the session *Research productivity in social sciences* held within the *Open track* of the EASST conference.

The concept of presenting the theme *Social Science Productivity and Visibility* to the international and Croatian (social) science community followed the concept of the EASST-SSTNET session and was based on two ideas. Firstly, the idea of funnel-like levels of productivity analysis starting from the broadest European level of SS research output, then presenting the productivity specificities on the somewhat analytically neglected level of the European post-socialist region/countries and finally descending to a national, one-country level, namely the analysis of Croatian social scientists' productivity. Secondly, essentially important in this presentation, has also been a theoretical and hypothetical approach to social science productivi-

ty that relies on socio-cognitive differentiation among the various groups of similar disciplines, but also within these broad scientific areas.

Consequently, the first contribution to this thematic block is *The Relationship between S&T Development and (Social) Science Productivity in the Europe* by Luísa Oliveira and Helena Carvalho from Lisbon University Institute (ISCTE). The authors examine the relationship between techno-scientific development and (social) science publication productivity in European (EU) countries in a comparative empirical analysis. Using multivariate statistical procedures, they compare the stratification of the European science and technology space shown by the two most relevant S&T indicators and the position of each country's productivity in all the sciences and the social sciences, as indicated by publications in journals covered by the Web of Science (WoS) database. The findings are very important for (inter) national science policies.

Franc Mali from the University of Ljubljana is the author of the second paper: *Policy issues of the international productivity and visibility of the social sciences in Central and Eastern European countries*. As suggested by its title, this is a study of SS international publication productivity (both its quantity and impact) in European post-socialist countries which have already become EU members and a future member, Croatia. Moreover, the internationalisation of social science output – empirically analysed by using the relevant comparative data on journals, journal articles and citations they received – has been interpretatively linked with national science policies. The latter play a crucial role in CEE countries' lagging behind the developed European regions in social science production and impact.

The third text: *Croatian Social Scientists' Productivity and a Bibliometric Study of Sociologists' Output* was written by Katarina Prpić and Nikola Petrović from the Institute for Social Research – Zagreb. It is composed of two different yet complementary parts – an overview of the findings of Croatian investigations into social science output and a presentation of a most recent bibliometric research of sociologists' publication productivity. The former offers a more detailed picture of social science production than could be given at an international level and, at the same time, presents the broader scientific and socio-cultural framework of sociologists' productivity analysis. The findings of this analysis, including the impact types and predictors of sociological output, could be helpful for improving SS evaluation system.

Finally, the focus of these studies on the bibliometric indicators of social science publications and their visibility derived from the aim to examine critically the adequacy of the most popular quantitative sources and methods of evaluation procedures in this scientific area. In spite of the expansion of these methods and necessary improvements of the current and the establishment of new bibliographic and citation databases for social sciences, qualitative assessment (peer review) still remains indispensable.

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