

Questionnaire:

1) Quality of the project proposal

1a) Originality, scientific importance, prospects of the project and expected benefits of the project for research

Dr. Skopal's project studies Protectorate-era cinema culture, specifically through three objects of inquiry: production and representation, distribution and exhibition, and reception. His chief research questions seek to understand the nature of the cultural transfer that may or have not have taken place between NS-Germany and the Protectorate: 1) Focusing on the melodrama, crime films, and the 'village drama' he seeks to ascertain whether the new cultural politics affected the representations in genre cinema; 2) To determine, using the cinemas of Brno as a case study, to which extent the new regime resulted in changes in distribution and exhibition practices; 3) To understand the extent to which critical discourse and modes of reception (including audience preferences) were shaped by German/NS influence. The intended outputs are 2(-3?) conference papers, an organized conference panel, 3 articles, and two edited volumes (one book and one special journal issue).

The objectives and work programme are excellent and internationally significant. The proposed research is both timely and should be relevant not only to those working in Czech/German film history, but also the social history of 1930s/40s fascism, as well as exemplary for film scholars hoping to apply comprehensive methodologies and approaches to understand cinema and its culture.

1b) Preparation of the project proposal, aim of the project and proposed deliverables

The level of preparation of the project proposal was very good. It could have used a proof read as there were several typos, but the very fact that I mention such relative trivialities points to the overall strength of the proposal. Dr. Skopal has already done much of the pilot research through, for example his studies of Brno cinema culture, his coedited book on cultural transfer, his collaboration with the Hobbit project, as well as his lecturing and article-publications on related subjects to the proposed project: all which betrays his experience with not only the historical and theoretical context, but also with the latest and very appropriate and original methodologies and approaches in, for example, audience studies. This work and experience gives me great confidence that Dr. Skopal will be able to deliver on this project and not only that: deliver high-quality outputs of great relevance.

1c) Concept, methodology and timeline

Both the conception and the methodology of this project are appropriate and excellent. He has clearly defined his objectives and how he will achieve them using his methods.

Furthermore, the work programme is clear and logical.

It is difficult for me to evaluate the appropriateness of the proposed project duration in relation to its objectives and proposed outputs because I don't seem to have received any information from the CSF or the application about financials and how much of Dr. Skopal's time will be devoted to this project. If this is a three-year fellowship whereby Dr. Skopal's time is being bought out at 100% I would say that 3 articles and two edited volumes in three years is perhaps on the low side. If the grant is for less of Dr. Skopal's time or indeed only for consumables or light research assistance, than this amount of production would seem to be appropriate.

The overall quality of the project proposal can be rated as:

Excellent - A1

2) The applicant(s) and his/their publication level

Although I cannot read and thus assess the Czech-language publications, Dr. Skopal's work in English and German is rigorous and top-notch. He is a careful researcher as well as a thinker who is aware of complex methodological considerations. His previous work will provide an able springboard to undertake this more ambitious project. What he has published is very good for an early career researcher at assistant professor and bodes well for a promising and productive academic career.

Masaryk University, Brno has a lively research culture that is deeply embedded in international networks; in addition, it has the facilities that Dr. Skopal needs to host his research.

The qualification of the applicant(s), his/their publication level can be rated as:

Excellent - A1

Overall commentary on the project proposal:

a) Strengths of the project proposal:

- worthy and important topic with high relevance for the immediate discipline and wider cognate fields
- well-chosen and appropriate methodologies
- logical and appropriate work plan
- (as far as I can tell from the information provided): appropriate outputs
- excellent PI with the experience and ability to deliver on this project

b) Weaknesses of the project proposal:

- Could be more detail, especially regarding outputs: Precisely what will the articles deal with? Which journals does he hope to place them in? Which journal will he target to edit a special issue? Which conferences does the applicant hope to attend? There is a strategy to this and it would be good to have a sense of this already now.

c) General comments:

With the highest praise I recommend that this worthy and important project be funded.