

**Pierre Lienard, Associate
Professor**

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To the members of the Promotion Committee,
Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing on behalf of Dr. Martin Kanovsky who is applying for promotion at the rank of Full professor. I readily support Dr. Kanovsky's application, as I consider him a deserving, gifted and outstanding scholar.

I met Dr. Kanovsky for the first time at an interdisciplinary conference a decade ago. Since that first meeting, I have met Dr. Kanovsky professionally on a regular basis, either at international meetings or at Comenius University. Through those years of sustained interaction, I have had the opportunity to be exposed to Dr. Kanovsky's sharp mind, great wit, intellectual originality and stamina, undying scientific drive, and, last but certainly not least, remarkable dedication to the edification of his students. Simply stated, Dr. Kanovsky's achievements, from his intellectual production and grantsmanship to his present position as Director of the Institute of Social Anthropology, deserve much praise. The combination of the demanding and immediately competing investments involved in the administration of a program, teaching and scientific production is a feat that many are hardly capable of performing.

Three of Dr. Kanovsky's works have particularly struck me as major productions of great import and significance for the social sciences and, more specifically, anthropology: his

research on essentialism and folk sociology, his cross-cultural research on morality and his newly published book on *Robust Statistical Methods in the Social Sciences*.

Dr. Kanovsky's work on essentialism was a timely contribution to a vigorous scientific debate on social categorization, innateness and essentialism. In that work, Dr. Kanovsky proposes a rigorous critical analysis of the most influential theories, models and hypotheses found in the existing literature, while assessing their respective validity with the help of fieldwork data from Western Ukraine. The work accomplishes what is typically not done systematically elsewhere: the combination of fieldwork observations, theoretical modeling and falsification. Much of the data available on which many a theoretical model of the social sciences are based are gathered in Western population, which happen to be typically highly educated, generally affluent and lacking in cultural diversity, all features that do not appear prominent in the rest of the world. Hence, Dr. Kanovsky's contribution opens up a window on a humanity that has not been systematically taken into account in modern-day theories and models of the social sciences.

Regarding Dr. Kanovsky's second highlighted major contribution, on morality, similar arguments to the ones made for his work on essentialism in Ukraine can be advanced. The work is outstanding and constitutes a landmark contribution to the study of morality in a cross-cultural perspective. Dr. Kanovsky is among a handful of researchers who have contributed data from non-western populations. This makes his contribution immensely invaluable for the study of morality. As evidence of how important the work is, one has to simply look at the metrics of the article. The article has been read online or downloaded more than 7000 times (*full* and *Pdf* combined) since its publication (April 2015) and has been repeatedly shared on digital outlets (e.g., Mendeley, Physorg, tweeters). The work shows also how capable Dr. Kanovsky is to efficiently collaborate with others in a large team of researchers and to contribute to the production of meaningful scientific advances. This bears witness to the great skills and abilities of Dr. Kanovski when it comes to choosing strategically his international collaboration and endeavoring in relevant scientific research.

The last major contribution highlighted here is once again perfectly timed. Dr. Kanovsky contributes to a growing field of social scientists who have rediscovered the power of rigorous statistical analysis. For several decades now many of the social sciences have been through a crisis of sort. We are seeing the tail end of schools of thought, e.g., Post-modernism, Critical and Gender Theories, that have had a devastating impact in various fields of research belonging to, among others, anthropology and sociology. With his new book, Dr. Kanovsky is in a position to significantly help reinvigorating a more positivistic stance on traditional research questions that were mainstays of the social sciences until sometime in the last quarter of the past century. *Robust Statistical Methods in Social Sciences* is a welcome and much needed addition to the literature on methods in the social sciences.

Dr. Kanovsky's three single-out works put together constitute a significant contribution to the social sciences and, more specifically, to anthropology. Dr. Kanovsky is working at the interface of various disciplines, hence, positioning himself where he can have the greatest impact. In his publications, Dr. Kanovsky has displayed an impressive mastery of the research trends in, and theoretical fundamentals of, among others, cognitive anthropology, social sciences working within an evolutionary framework, traditional ethnography and ethnology, and psychology and sociology. With such a skill set, I have no doubt that Dr. Kanovsky will contribute greatly to the development of well-grounded, more integrative, interdisciplinary and synthetic social sciences in the coming future. That is why I have absolutely no concern to recommend Dr. Kanovsky for promotion at the rank of Full professor. Dr. Kanovsky's accomplishments, including his administrative investments, his grantsmanship, and his publications, make him a perfect candidate for promotion. Based on his extant body of work, we can expect more groundbreaking scientific contributions to come.

I wish to thank the promotion committee members for their time and dedication. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any additional inquiry.

Sincerely,

Pierre Lienard, PhD.

