

HABILITATION BOARD DECISION ON THE NOMINATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Masaryk University	
Faculty	Faculty of Social Studies
Procedure field	Media Studies and Journalism
Applicant	PhDr. Lenka Vochocová, Ph.D.
Applicant's home unit, institution	Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University
Habilitation thesis	Gender aspects of online political expression and exclusion in the perspective of media studies and intersectionality

Board members

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prof. PhDr. David Šmahel, Ph.D. (FSS MU)

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doc. Mgr. Petr Szczepanik, Ph.D. (Faculty of Arts, Charles University)

doc. Mgr. Andrea Hanáčková, Ph.D. (Faculty of Arts, Palacký University Olomouc)

dr hab. Karolina Koc-Michalska, prof. UŚ (University of Silesia in Katowice)

Evaluation of the applicant's scholarly/artistic qualifications

The research focus of Lenka Vochocová lies primarily in the fields of media and journalism studies, and overlaps partly with sociology and political science. Her work concentrates on gender aspects of (online) political participation, while she has also published on topics such as media and climate change and the political engagement of youth.

In line with her research interests, Vochocová served as the principal investigator of a Czech Grant Agency (GAČR) project "Dynamics and forms of citizen online participation in the Czech Republic in response to the European migration crisis" (2017-2019). Currently, she leads a new GAČR project, "Gender aspects of disinformation dissemination and reception from the perspective of the theory of social media performativity and identity theory" (from 2025). She was also co-investigator of an interdisciplinary project "Re-articulation of a Totalitarian Past and Polarization of Society: Local Forms of International Emancipatory Movements and Their Reception Online", also funded by GACR. Additionally, she contributes as a researcher to the OP JAK project "Research on peripheries to strengthen the resilience of Czech society", where she coordinates the Communication research package.

Vochocová published so far 16 articles indexed in Web of Science, 10 of them as the first author, including in leading journals such as *Information, Communication & Society* (DEC1) and *Media, Culture & Society* (Q1). She has received 130 citations (excluding self-citations) in Web of Science and 442 in Google Scholar (as of September 2025). Her publication record and citation impact are evaluated as excellent for her career stage.

Furthermore, she authored one monograph (*Ženy a muži ve zpravodajských redakcích. Mediální instituce pohledem genderových mediálních studií*) and co-edited another volume (*Na moři, za plotem, na síti. Digitální média a debata o migraci v Česku*). Also, she wrote, as the first author, four book chapters and co-authored two additional chapters.

Notably, Lenka Vochocová has established strong international collaborations. She has been highly active within ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association), where she served as a co-chair of the CEE Network. She has cooperated with leading scholars from institutions such as Loughborough University, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the University of Gdańsk, among others. In addition, she participates in the ongoing COST Action “What Are Opinions? Integrating Theory and Methods for Automatically Analyzing Opinionated Communication (OPINION).” The committee evaluates her international cooperation and integration as very strong.

Conclusion: The applicant's scholarly/artistic capabilities **meet** the requirements expected of applicants participating in a habilitation procedure in the field of Media Studies and Journalism.

Evaluation of the applicant's pedagogical experience

Lenka Vochocová has been teaching at the Department of Media Studies, Charles University, since 2006. She has taught key courses in the field, including “Political Economy of Communication,” “Qualitative Media Research,” “Media and Gender,” “Qualitative Media Content Analysis,” and “Mass and Media Communication Theory.” In total, she has contributed to more than 15 different courses over the past 19 years. The committee evaluates her teaching involvement as very extensive.

The quality of her teaching also appears to be very high. Vochocová has twice received the award for best course—once for her Czech-language course “Political Economy of Communication,” and once for the same course taught in English. The award is based on students’ evaluations of the courses, specifically assessing the lecturer’s approach, teaching quality, and the relevance and difficulty of the course content.

She has also been a successful mentor of student theses. She has supervised seven successfully defended Bachelor’s theses and 121 successfully defended Master’s theses. In addition, she supervised one successful PhD dissertation “Europeanisation of Czech, Polish, and Slovak Media in the Context of Three Crises,” and is currently supervising four doctoral students whose work is in progress.

Conclusion: The applicant's pedagogical capabilities **meet** the requirements expected of applicants participating in a habilitation procedure in the field of Media Studies and Journalism.

Habilitation thesis evaluation

The habilitation thesis of Lenka Vochocová, entitled “Gender Aspects of Online Political Expression and Exclusion in the Perspective of Media Studies and Intersectionality,” was evaluated by three independent reviewers: Prof. Hajo Boomgaarden (University of Vienna), Dr. Emily Harmer (University of Liverpool), and Assoc. Prof. Alena Kluknavská (Masaryk University). The reviewers conclude that Dr. Lenka Vochocová’s habilitation thesis meets the requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Media Studies and Journalism.

Professor Boomgaarden stated that the habilitation thesis “constitutes an excellent scholarly achievement that engages with a topic of enduring relevance and societal significance. By focusing on gender and online political participation, it addresses central questions that

continue to shape academic and public debates in political communication and democratic theory.” He positively noted that the individual studies were published in reputable, internationally recognized journals, providing strong evidence of the consistently high quality of the research and the significant recognition it has already received within the academic community. He raised couple of questions, such as:

1. Limitations of the cumulative thesis: While specific limitations are addressed in the individual studies that comprise the habilitation thesis, I was missing a more general account of the limitations of the corpus of studies as a whole. Drawing also on the critique above I invite the author to reflect on possible shortcomings in conceptual or methodological approaches and what alternative approaches could have been suitable to alleviate existing limitations?
2. Future prospects: Looking ahead, what is the author’s position regarding the equalizing potential of online spaces as a remedy for persistent inequalities in political participation? How might an explicitly intersectional lens inform future research in this area? Which types of research could have the potential to inform policy recommendations for more equal participation?

Dr. Emily Harmer stated that the thesis “represents an impressive body of work that explores the gendered dynamics of online political expression across various online spaces.” She highlighted positively that the articles included in the thesis were published in highly regarded international journals. She concluded that the thesis “makes a strong and wide-reaching contribution to academic enquiry into the relationship between gender and political communication.” She also raised several questions, such as:

1. Why do you think it remains so difficult to correct for the gender gap in experiences of online political discussions?
2. What role do platforms play in the question of participation in terms of their rules and governance, as well as platform architecture?
3. To what extent does the broader political context shape or inhibit women's participation in political discussion?

Dr. Alena Kluknavská was also very positive and concluded that the habilitation thesis „presents a substantial and original body of research. Vochocová demonstrates a clear and sustained research profile situated at the intersection of gender studies, media studies, and political communication, a research agenda that is both timely and of lasting scholarly relevance, and the ability to produce high-quality, peer reviewed publications across a range of methods and topics.“ She had following questions:

1. Your thesis highlights the exclusionary dynamics of online incivility and anti-gender discourse. Looking ahead, how do you see these dynamics evolving with the rise of new platforms (e.g., AI-driven communication spaces), and what methodological approaches would you consider most promising for capturing these changes?
2. Your work convincingly demonstrates the persistence of gender as an exclusionary factor in online political expression. How do you envision translating these scholarly insights into interventions, whether through platform design or policy, that could help foster more inclusive digital political participation?

After reviewing the three evaluations and the thesis itself, the habilitation committee assessed the thesis positively. It presents original research that makes a valuable contribution to the current field of Media Studies and Journalism.

Conclusion: The applicant's habilitation thesis **meets** the requirements expected of habilitation theses in the field of Media Studies and Journalism.

Secret ballot results

Number of board members	5
Number of votes cast	5
Number of votes in favour	5

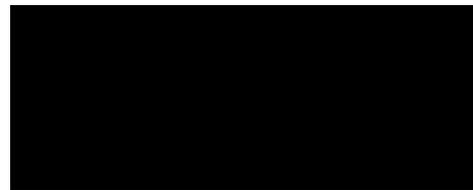
Board decision

Based on the outcome of the secret vote and following an evaluation of the applicant's scholarly or artistic qualifications, pedagogical experience and habilitation thesis, the board hereby submits a proposal to the scientific board of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University to

appoint the applicant associate professor of Media Studies and Journalism.

Date: 1st October 2025

prof. PhDr. David Šmahel, Ph.D.



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