

## Response to the Panel Evaluation Report

The evaluation report on the PhD program in Economic History by Jane Humphreys, Jan Kok and Birgit Karlsson has been widely disseminated and discussed at the department. We discussed it thoroughly in a meeting for supervisors and in a board meeting. Mats Olsson (head of department) and Astrid Kander (study director of the PhD program) offered the PhD students to have a meeting if they wanted to discuss something with us, but this was not the case.

The following actions will be taken to improve the PhD program in response to the Panel Evaluation:

1. A new course on qualitative methods will be established and made compulsory in the PhD program. The course will include the following elements: archival knowledge and source criticism; comparative case method in history; text analysis. The course will comprise 4.5 credits (3 weeks full work) and together with the Ethics course, which will be mandatory at Lund University from 2021, it will form a full 7.5-credit module. These two courses will be mandatory already from the fall 2019.
2. We have discussed the option of allowing students to replace the two single authored papers by one more extensive job market paper, as was suggested by some of the doctoral students to the review panel. Among the supervisors there are diverging views on this point, many think it is important to stay with four papers not to weaken the PhD thesis. Besides, none of the other main centres of Economic History in Europe (in Holland, Spain and England) have gone in this direction. London School of Economics is the closest to the American economist model with a designated job market paper, but they require three sole-authored papers. We believe it is important to give the PhD students the opportunity of collaboration with other researchers, and this is one of the main reasons for keeping the current requirements with four papers of which two must be sole authored. The current thesis requirements are also well in line with what is required at other departments in Sweden.
3. The pedagogical training of supervisors is currently under review at the School of Economics and Management, with the aim to expand the opportunities for training beyond the basic requirements. The department welcomes these efforts as important to provide necessary training and a valuable exchange of ideas and experiences between supervisors from different programs at the School.
4. We have discussed the Foundations course with the involved instructors and they do not agree that there is too little free choice of readings for the students, or that they do not link up to current debates in Economic History. Nevertheless, to make sure that these aspects are secured for the future, one instructor will be given overall responsibility for the course and for coordination between the different modules.

5. The panel raised the concern that the PhD students could be too constrained by the research projects through which they are funded. We agree that there are some risks of limiting the free research development of the students, but we also believe that it is in many ways an advantage for students to work in research projects together with senior members as a way of learning the methods and conditions of research. It also lowers the risks that students get stuck in dead-end projects. Like the panel, we strongly believe that this model has been important for the high success rate of previous students, in terms of finishing on time, publishing their work and getting a relevant job. Nonetheless, it is important to give enough room for students to develop their own research ideas within the frame of the larger project. A large responsibility rests with the supervisor and principal investigator, but the department leadership will also increase their involvement in this issue by meeting by with PIs who are interested in recruiting PhD students for their projects to discuss the feasibility of the PhD project (research questions, data, methods) and how to ensure a reasonable autonomy of the PhD student. The study director also monitors this issue in the annual update of the Individual Study Plan and in the individual appraisal talks with the students.
  
6. We have discussed the risks of the program and the research becoming detached from the Swedish society and Swedish economic history, as a consequence of our internationalization. We do not think the risks are as large as suggested in the Panel evaluation report. The entire demography group deals almost exclusively with Sweden, we have a new large project on Swedish industrialization, and regional and environmental studies always have Sweden as one case in a comparative setting. The large group doing development studies are dealing with the least developed countries in the world, often Africa, and this has clear policy relevance for Swedish foreign aid. All the four PhD students accepted to the program in the fall 2018 are doing research on Sweden. We do however realize that there is a strong need to preserve these policy relevance aspects of the research conducted at our department for the future.

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Astrid Kander



Mats Olsson