

RESEARCH QUALITY ASSURANCE  
FOR THE FUTURE

RQ<sub>08</sub>

A Quality Review of Research  
at Lund University 2007/08

Co-operation with the other departments at the faculty should be strengthened on the one hand. There tends to be a lack of balance in research output between the different sections, particularly between Cultural Science and the three others and this imbalance should be taken care of. The planned initiatives to promote joint research at departmental level will probably be important in this respect.

Cooperation with other departments at the university should be strengthened and one should also take steps to counteract the obvious imbalance between the different disciplines and their research output.

The department should utilize its open-minded culture in full strength in research and transform the interdisciplinary to an asset. Joint publications in esteemed forums could be a good aim. Initiatives should be taken to utilize the openness and the multidisciplinary of the department even not efficiently as an asset.

#### **4.8 Gender and equal opportunity**

There is a gender bias in the sense that only 18 per cent of the academic staff are women. The percentage of women has been reduced with three per cent between 2003 and 2007.

### **5. DEPARTMENT OF EUROPEAN ETHNOLOGY**

#### **5.1 Overall assessment**

The Department of European Ethnology at Lund is one of the foremost departments of its kind by reputation in Europe, responsible for establishing what is known worldwide as the Lund school of ethnology. This reputation rests on research published in the 1980s and 1990s, with the volumes *The Culture Builders* (Löfgren/Frykman) and, to a lesser degree, *Body Time* (eds. Lundin/Åkesson) being particularly important. The period of assessment has seen a decline in staff numbers from 42 FTE to 26 FTE, of whom only 14 FTE are professors, lecturers and researchers. Of these, 3.22 FTE is attached to the more recently established division of Human Ecology, which comprises a distinct sub-unit within the Department. Whilst these two divisions share a common heritage in anthropological research and methods, there is no connection between the two, even at the level of internal

management.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that the submission has been prepared by two distinct sub-units; no attempt has been made to bring these together as an integrated statement.

The unit of assessment has experienced considerable financial contraction in the evaluation period, from €2.97m (2003) to €2.5m (2006) and €2m (2007); a decline in income from teaching, and a substantial decline in income from research. In such circumstances, European Ethnology is to be commended for its continued productivity; for the continued relevance of its research; and for its high professional service profile in Scandinavia. It is important to recognise, nonetheless, that this part of the Department has a 'top heavy' and ageing profile; that its international reputation rests on a very few key figures, many of whom are approaching retirement age; and that it faces major challenges in relation to generational renewal and sustainability. It is to be hoped that the stated merger with Art History, Musicology and Cultural Sciences will provide the necessary reinvigoration. Human Ecology performs consistently above its weight in FTE terms. It has a very strong international publication record; a strong track record in grant earning; and is producing work at the forefront of the trans-disciplinary field of human-environment relations. In no small part this is down to the energy of its senior professor (Hornborg).

The submission shows a lack of leadership at a Departmental level and a responsive, rather than proactive, attitude to change. This is evidenced particularly by the absence of future planning, as well as by apparent internal management difficulties. Although the response to future planning is perhaps explained by the forthcoming merger, strong leadership will be required in order to effect the planned reorganisation and to ensure that the Lund tradition in ethnology is maintained.

## 5.2 Research infrastructure

Human Ecology operates as a clearly focused research group within the Department. The benefits are evidenced in publications. Within European Ethnology there are nine research themes. This is too many for

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5. Since Human Ecology operates as a distinct division within the Department and does not appear to be included in the 2009 merger, it is discussed separately from European Ethnology, and in so far as possible given the databases, according to the same assessment criteria.

a Department of this size, and suggests that Ethnology, up to now, has followed a pattern of ‘lone scholar’ research. There is clear evidence of a rather different model provided by HEX (Section 2.4). This should be encouraged: it is the way in which humanities scholarship is developing elsewhere, and for Lund to be competitive in securing interdisciplinary research funds in the future this structure will be essential.

### **5.3 Research quality, including quality, productivity, relevance and vitality**

The Department (Ethnology + Human Ecology) has maintained a strong record of productivity throughout the period, with a total of 298 academic publications from 2002.<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding the reduction in FTE, productivity per FTE across the full Department (including Human Ecology) in the assessment period increased from 1.3 outputs/FTE in 2003 to 2.2 outputs/FTE in 2007. Of the  $\approx$  300 publications roughly half are book chapters. The Department might perhaps consider whether this is the best publication strategy for research evaluations based increasingly on metrics.

Scrutiny of the research publications database for European Ethnology showed 251 outputs in total; 41 ( $\approx$  10%) are in English and of these only 7 are in refereed journal articles/ books.<sup>7</sup> Whilst European Ethnology has published its research in the major Scandinavian and European ethnology journals, its reputation internationally rests (for better or worse) on its publication in the English-speaking world. A key issue in maintaining an international profile is to ensure that current research is disseminated beyond Scandinavia and particularly within the English-speaking world.

Scrutiny of the research publications database for Human Ecology showed 110 outputs in total, 70 of which ( $\approx$  65%) are in English. Human Ecology is therefore responsible for  $\approx$  33% of the total publication output

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6. There are considerable inconsistencies between the data in Form 1.3 and the full list of publications by Department, supplied as additional information. The combined publication list from European Ethnology and Human Ecology gives a total of 361 publications; Form 1.3 gives a combined total of 492. Productivity has been calculated on the basis of the information supplied in Form 1.1 and 1.3.

7. Consultation of Web of Knowledge suggests that the publication database for European Ethnology is incomplete, particularly with regard to some English language publications.

of the Department (from  $\approx 20\%$  of the FTE). Hornborg is responsible for 53 ( $\approx 50\%$ ) of these outputs (31 in English).

The combined Department has produced a total of 17 PhDs in the assessment period (1.2/FTE). The text commentary suggests that the majority of these are from Human Ecology. However, further clarification confirms exact figures as follows: European Ethnology 11 (8 female: 3 male), Human Ecology 6 (3 female: 3 male).

**Research quality:** it is striking that European Ethnology chose to flag two books published well before the evaluation period. Beyond the flagged texts, it is difficult to make an assessment of the international/national quality of published research for European Ethnology, for this part of the Department does not provide an answer to the questions asked in Section 2.3, limiting its response to a list of input measures. The full publications database shows clear evidence of national and international (within Scandinavia) quality publication for a majority of staff in European Ethnology, including younger staff on promising trajectories. Web of Knowledge shows modest levels of citation for work in the health, medicine and biotech field and for work in cultural economy. On a stricter interpretation, however, only Löfgren has an international reputation. His work on new economies is now being cited by key international figures within the field, and adds to his earlier reputation from the 1980s, gained principally in anthropology and material culture.

The output from Human Ecology is more impressive in terms of citation impact. In no small part this is down to publishing in the major English language journals in the field, listed in Section 2.3, although it is important to note that this has not been to the detriment of publication within Scandinavia. Hornborg is a major international figure in the field, whose work on unequal exchange and environmental load displacement has attracted much interest. The flagged texts are major international collections; the flagged journal publication is genuinely innovative in its attempts to combine anthropological perspectives with policy concerns. The quality of the research in this part of the Department is further evidenced by the volume of grant income that it is attracting ( $\approx \text{€}1\text{m}$  on an FTE of 3.22).

**Relevance:** European Ethnology's research interests are clearly of broad socio-economic and cultural significance within Scandinavia, and there

have been commendable efforts both to publicise results to broader audiences (ETN) and to engage with key stakeholders. Some of the most innovative of recent research involves collaborations with artists and film makers. Human Ecology's research is clearly of interest and significance to major political and international debates concerning sustainability and lifestyle, although there is less evidence here of engagement with research users than might be anticipated.

**Vitality:** European Ethnology remains an active, collaborative research environment, however, an absence of leadership has clearly made strategic decision making with respect to research initiatives difficult. Declining revenue together with a declining FTE will have impinged markedly on teaching loads, and further affected the ability to conduct research. Human Ecology is a small but strong and successful research environment, showing clearly the benefits of strong leadership at senior levels, and the links between input/output measures, international collaboration and networking. However, there is no indication in the submission of where this part of the Department sees its future within the internal organisation of Lund University.

Research in European Ethnology is *very good*; research in Human Ecology is *excellent*.

#### **5.4 Collaboration**

European Ethnology has a strong tradition of local collaborative working which is well evidenced in its publications, many of which showcase the collective work of Lund researchers. It has also been successful in conducting collaborative research within Scandinavia, with the Öresund project as a notable example. European Ethnology might perhaps reflect on the absence of co-publication collaborations with researchers based outside Scandinavia and on the opportunities for collaboration with researchers where there are possibilities through bi-lateral agreements. Human Ecology is more successful at international collaboration and networking, evidenced by its edited collections, which include authors from the US, UK, continental Europe and Scandinavia, as well as 'local' researchers.

In terms of collaboration the department is *very good*.

### 5.5 Research activity and teaching

European Ethnology states a strong commitment to integrating research and teaching, and this is evidenced by their use of co-authored books as teaching texts. It is clear that a 33% contraction in FTE (2003–7) will have had a major impact on capacity to deliver teaching programmes. Human Ecology's commitment to teaching is more clearly evidenced at the Master's level.

### 5.6 Evaluation of future plans

European Ethnology does not provide an answer to the questions listed in Section 2.4. There is no discussion of strategic vision and planning, nor possibilities and obstacles. No discussion is provided of a need for further recruitment. This is surprising given the reduction in staffing encountered during the evaluation period. The absence of any forethought as to how research might be repackaged is particularly surprising given the pending reorganisation of the Department within an amalgamated unit in the humanities, and is indicative of a responsive rather than proactive approach to change. By way of response, the Department lists two new interdisciplinary collaborations and a few more speculative possibilities. The response is at the level of individual plans for further research and/or collaboration. There is a need to think more strategically here.

Human Ecology provides a clear statement as to its future research priority areas. These are obvious developments from existing areas of expertise, and are likely to be able to attract considerable funding in the future.

The plans of European Ethnology are *poor*; the plans of Human Ecology are *very good*.

### 5.7 Potentials and possibilities

There will clearly be possibilities for collaboration consequent upon the merger with Art History, Musicology and Cultural Sciences. It is suggested that an early priority for the new unit should be to establish priority research themes for future research. Whilst there are clear synergies between these departments, it is important that the new critical mass generates related research agendas and not just individual research plans.

Human Ecology does not belong within the newly merged department: it has a very different approach to the primarily humanities scholarship of Ethnology, Art History, Musicology and the Cultural Sciences. It is suggested that an alternative 'home' be found within Lund University.

### **5.8 Gender and equal opportunity issues**

The Department has a strong record in gender equality, although it should be noted that there are no female researchers (7 employees). The age-profile of European Ethnology is overly 'top heavy', with 6 of 7.85 FTE in the professorial bracket > 64. This problem has been exacerbated by a decline in the number of PhD registrations. It is striking that no data is provided on ethnicity.

## **6. DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

### **6.1 Overall assessment**

Department of History is a very strong research environment. The department is one of the largest in the faculty. The number of academic staff is sufficient and the distribution of different categories of posts is even. The research practiced within the department has significant depth in themes and a vast knowledge of different time periods. The department also administrates a graduate school in history, which is a great asset to the department and also a concrete evidence of the reputation of research.

The department has recognized its important role as a discussant and an interpreter for the present day and for the society. History has always had a strong national significance and practically everywhere in the world the discipline is basically national. This national character of the whole field can not be used to department's disadvantage since the international comparability can be easily seen in research.

The department has a well formulated and motivated research profile. The focal research area today – the New Cultural History – is internationally and nationally interesting and important. The department has also very good evidence on results in these matters; the number of publications and the output of completed doctoral dissertations are excellent.