

Handelshøgskolens prioriteringer av universitetsstipendiater med oppstart i 2023

Vi er bedt om å komme med en prioritert liste med universitetsstipendiatprosjekt med finansieringsstart i 2023. Nedenfor er listen med tematikk og veiledere. De to første prioriteringene har noe faglig til felles og begge er tenkt lokalisert og veiledet ved campus Alta. Vi anser det som viktig at det er minst to ved campusen for å få til et lite miljø av stipendiater da tidligere erfaringer med enkeltvis stipendiater ved campus Alta bruker lengre tid enn normert og ender opp ved campus Tromsø sist i stipendiatperioden.

1) Mobilities and security in a changing Arctic

Arctic is changing in multiple dimensions. Physical and environmental changes in the Arctic are coupled with social and cultural changes. Understanding the changes in the Arctic is essential for a sustainable life on this northern part of the world.

The changes occurring in various spheres (e.g., Earth, air and ocean environments), industry sectors, and societies within and beyond the Arctic have been the focus of research endeavours in both social and natural sciences.

Concurrently, the growing research attention highlights an urgent need for more comprehensive multi-disciplinary approaches.

This PhD project will contribute towards the multi-disciplinary research on the changing Arctic. The contribution is planned by investigating the changing Arctic and its related interactions with mobilities. Mobilities, in this sense, can be broadly approached where resources, goods, services, people, knowledge/ epistemic grounds, for example, are transiting, leaving, and arriving constantly. Mobilities in the Arctic is a relatively new topic for researchers, albeit its activities have been long in practice.

It is expected that a sufficiently refined focus will be attained within a short period of the PhD research commencement.

Focused attention may be given in the area including (but not limited to):

- Mobilities and secure business environments in a changing Arctic
- Mobilities and securing human capital in a changing Arctic
- Mobilities and national security in a changing Arctic
- Mobilities in international relations in a changing Arctic
- Mobilities and food security in a changing Arctic
- Mobilities and existential security in a changing Arctic.

Hovedveileder: Professor Young-Sook Lee

2) Entrepreneurship and innovation, with focus on sustainability in an Arctic context

More knowledge about sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation is essential to understand how to create viable solutions that can contribute to the sustainable development of Northern Norway. Such region is characterised by the presence of numerous small companies, and several challenges concerning the local multicultural heritage, demographical and geographical factors. Potentially, the entrepreneurs of the local companies can act as change agents towards a more sustainable future. Being embedded in the context, these entrepreneurs, if acting sustainably, can have a major impact on the local community contributing to the local livelihood and the protection of the natural environment. It is important to explore how entrepreneurs can practically have the role of change agents: what their perspectives on and motivations for sustainability are, to what extent and how they work to include sustainability in their business models and what factors act as barriers or facilitators. Despite the growing body of knowledge on entrepreneurship/innovation and sustainability, what we actually know about the practical case of small/micro companies in peripheral and vulnerable areas such as Northern Norway is still limited. To answer this “how” question concerning sustainable value creation and contribute to the development of policies and support systems for innovation, more research is needed.

REIS has its focus on entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainability. We a small group of 4 senior (Giovanna, Eva, Siri, Line) and 2 junior (Ukeje, Sara) active members. We believe that a research group should include researchers at different levels as this facilitates the PhD candidates' learning and constitutes an opportunity for senior members to collaborate closely.

Two REIS PhD candidates have just submitted their thesis (Samira and Hilde), and the contract of another PhD candidate (Ukeje) will expire in April 2023. This means that from next year, REIS will have only one active PhD candidate (Sara). The existing PhD candidate would benefit from the presence of another PhD candidate working within the same field of research.

A PhD position linked to the REIS would give us the opportunity to tailor the main aspects of the research project based on our common interests. The REIS would benefit immensely from such opportunity as it would help the us grow as a group. At the meeting 16.05.2022, we discussed the possibility to direct the PhD project in the direction of practice theories (Giddens, Bourdieu, Nicollini, Gherardi), more precisely entrepreneurship-as-practice (Johannisson), and qualitative approaches within interpretivism/constructivism/pragmatism (fieldwork, interviews, observation, workshops, action research).

All REIS members feel comfortable with the aforementioned theoretical and methodological directions profiling a possible PhD position and are interested in helping each other with the supervision of the PhD candidate. We suggest Alta as the main location for the position. This is due to the ongoing efforts of the Alta campus to build a solid research milieu and the location of 3 of the 4 senior REIS members.

Hovedveileder: Ikke avklart innad i forskningsgruppen på nåværende tidspunkt. Naturlig å inkludere veileder(-e) fra campus Alta i som hoved- eller biveileder.

3) Happier together?

The green transition refers to comprehensive, long-term solutions to ecological sustainability crises. The transition is not only about the environment and technology, but also about major societal and cultural changes, both locally and globally. With changes also come new opportunities. How we navigate the changes – whether by adapting to it, or by embracing it – is a question about resilience, the capability to adapt to external changes at individual, organisational, and community and regional levels. It is essential to reinforce the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions and society to adapt to changes, to recover from adversity and to discover new opportunities to safeguard the stability and functional capacity of society in changing circumstances.

In the face of these changes, should individuals, communities and regions resign themselves to a situation where borders are reduced to mere dividing lines? Or should they regard borders as shared territories that are sources of progress? For example, the northern parts of Sweden, Norway and Finland are and have always been a cultural and lingual mosaic, although united by historical common values, and these linguistic and cultural barriers in this region have hindered a continued effective exchange of information and business activities across borders, reducing its resilience. In this project, we will focus on those characteristics of a culture that are important determinants for behaviour in economically relevant situations, like solving collective action problems, taking decisions under risk, or respecting property rights using cross-cultural behavioural experiments

Experimental economics offers useful tools for cross-cultural research. Experimental games are well-defined environments characterized by a set of players, strategies and incentives. Thöni (2019) offers a review of cross-cultural behavioural experiments, discussing determinants like risk and time preferences, social preferences trust, co-operation and norm enforcement. There have been done many variations of different games to measure different determinants. One of Thöni's lessons is the importance of choosing experimental design carefully to account for methodological challenges in the non-randomised assignment of culture.

The current situation with a pandemic also highlights the need for rethinking how we do economic experiments. Gathering subjects in a laboratory has always required much work but is now more difficult than before. Travelling to collect data through field experiments may not be the most feasible solution either. The future will focus more on browser-based experiments done online, without participants having to meet up with the researcher and other participants. This project wishes not only to test hypotheses about cross-cultural co-operation, but also review and test newer methods in economic experimental design.

The economists at Handelshøyskolen have in the past as well as the present worked on research questions that are relevant as a basis for further research involving a PhD student in the direction suggested above.

Hovedveileder: professor Mikko Moilanen

References:

Thöni, C., 2019. Cross-Cultural Behavioral Experiments: Potential and Challenges. In: Schram, A. and Ule, A., eds. 2019. *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Experimental Economics*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. Ch. 18.