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Summary

Kriterium has been run as a pilot project for peer review and open access publication of academic books with a Swedish tie since 2015. A launch directed at researchers and publication series took place in autumn 2015. The first six books in the series were published in 2016 and were also made available through Kriterium’s website. Additional titles can be found in various stages of the review and publication process.

Three cornerstones can be identified in the description of Kriterium’s purpose and objectives, namely to ensure that Sweden continues to have vibrant academic book publishing in the humanities and social sciences, that the status and quality of the publishing, and thereby its future existence, can be strengthened by the books being peer reviewed in a systematic and transparent manner, and that this peer review can also function as a mark of quality for books that are published as open access. Open access publication has been identified as a way to increase distribution of and visibility for Swedish academic books and as a way to make it possible for authors to meet future requirements on open access to books.

In addition, it is mentioned as an important function for Kriterium to constitute an expertise network for issues concerning academic books in Sweden. A strength in the role as an expertise network is the cooperation between various actors that takes place in the scope of Kriterium and which includes researchers, universities and their libraries, Acta series and other university-based publication, research funding bodies and publishers.

This report describes the activities conducted in the pilot project and places the work in a broader international context. Based on this description, a closing discussion is conducted regarding Kriterium’s future, which is summarised here:

The Kriterium pilot project

- Kriterium is in many ways a unique activity for the peer review of academic books by being organised as an infrastructure available to all Swedish publishers and publication series and for books in different languages.
- In its years as a pilot project, Kriterium has achieved the objectives set for the project by having 18 peer-reviewed books either published or in the peer-review process. Kriterium has also been accepted as a publication series in the Norwegian list.
- In interviews with individuals involved in Kriterium, it comes forth that the books peer-reviewed within Kriterium as a result of the process have achieved a higher quality (Hammar, 2017).

Need for development of Kriterium’s activities and organisation

- In its future organisation, Kriterium needs to highlight duties, costs and revenues and develop a clear division of roles and responsibilities between all of those involved.
The experiences that have grown forth during the pilot project constitute a god basis for this.

- Kriterium needs to ensure that necessary human resources are in place to conduct the activities. This requires that what in the pilot project in many cases was invisible time and effort is highlighted and that members of both the steering committee and the editorial board (academic review board), as well as staff in support functions such as accounting, communication, IT and HR have time in their positions and/or clearly formulated responsibility for the activities.

- The financing of Kriterium needs to be secured and the costs for Kriterium need to be documented in a coordinated manner. It is reasonable for the universities and funding bodies for research and research infrastructure to take a joint responsibility. This may also entail an expansion of the number of universities and funding bodies that support Kriterium.

- Kriterium needs a well-functioning publication system that can also handle that the number of titles that are handled in Kriterium will be scaled up. The publication system is deemed to not function satisfactorily at present.

- Kriterium has improved and clarified its communication towards involved actors in the course of the pilot project. If clearer assignments and human resources are secured in Kriterium’s next phase, there are possibilities for Kriterium to become a stronger voice outwards as well, in issues that concern publication in the humanities and social sciences in Sweden and internationally.

- Kriterium should in its future operations investigate possibilities for expanded cooperation with more universities, publishers, open access initiatives and funding bodies of research and open access publication.

Potential for Kriterium in the future

- Kriterium’s activities increase the possibilities for researchers at Swedish universities to have their books published with peer review, which can have benefits in various resource distribution models. The books are also openly available on Kriterium’s website and in databases at OAPEN.

- Peer review under Kriterium’s direction can also contribute to greater legitimacy for Swedish academic books among researchers and professionals not familiar with Swedish publishers and publication series, or who have little trust for open access books.

- The experiences that the work with Kriterium has resulted in should be taken advantage of in the continued work at a national level to promote open access to academic books. The activities can also constitute grounds for further studies of open access to academic books in Sweden.

- The variable costs for peer review and open access publication that were established during the pilot project’s final years are reasonable in relation to the costs for APCs for journal articles. However, other costs are also additional in the publication of
academic books, for example production support. In addition to this are the fixed costs for Kriterium.

• Internationally, there are plenty of examples of projects with innovative solutions that aim to create greater access to and sustainable publication models for academic books in the humanities and social sciences. Kriterium constitutes a contribution to this international movement. Kriterium is especially interesting in that the pilot project works with several different strategies to legitimise academic books with particular focus on the monograph. A focus on high quality in peer reviews and in the resulting product, combined with awareness of how the importance of peer review and open access are interpreted in research policy contexts and active visibility in these issues means that Kriterium has good potential to constitute a strong infrastructure for humanistic and social science research.
Introduction and background

Kriterium’s idea and objectives

Kriterium has been run as a pilot project for peer review and open access publication of academic books with a Swedish tie since 2015. A launch directed at researchers and publication series took place in autumn 2015. The first six books in the series were published in 2016 and were also made available through Kriterium’s website. Additional titles can be found in various stages of the peer review and publication process.

Organisationally, Kriterium is run as a project with the University of Gothenburg as the principal, after a decision by the Vice-Chancellor, and with placement at the Gothenburg University Library. The other actors in the project are Lund University and Uppsala University, the publishers Makadam and Nordic Academic Press as well as the National Library of Sweden, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and the Swedish Research Council. The activities are run by a steering committee with a chairperson and a convening university librarian placed at the University of Gothenburg. A ways into the work, an editorial board was also established to handle the process around peer reviews. For a further review of how Kriterium’s work has been organised to-date, see the separate heading on p. 22.

In various texts, Kriterium is called a platform that serves in part as an infrastructure for the quality labelling of the process of peer review and with it also the peer reviewed product, and in part as a series in which books are published and made available. In practical terms, access is provided over Kriterium’s website. Kriterium is, however, never a publisher of the books in the series; rather they are published by a publishing company or by publication series at Swedish universities.

Three cornerstones can be identified in the description of Kriterium’s purpose and objectives, namely to ensure that Sweden continues to have vibrant academic book publishing in the humanities and social sciences, that the status and quality of the publishing, and thereby its future existence, can be strengthened by the books being peer reviewed in a systematic and transparent manner, and that this peer review can also function as a mark of quality for books that are published as open access. Open access publication has been identified as a way to increase distribution of and visibility for Swedish academic books and as a way to make it possible for authors to meet the requirements on open access also to books that one expects to be formulated by research funding bodies and in national guidelines on open access to publications.

In the descriptions of what needs and challenges Kriterium is intended to address, a perception emerges that the academic book, with a focus on the monograph, is threatened in Sweden. This threat originates partly from a greater focus on the evaluation of research that

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1 Acta committee meeting minutes 28 November 2013
2 This is highlighted on the website and in the interviews, as well as in texts on agreements between the parties in Kriterium.
is often expressed through the use of quantitative bibliometric measurements based on lists and citations. This is applied in evaluations and in the next step as a basis for resource allocation and qualifications. A great deal of focus has come to be placed on journal articles and, in the discussions, competition from publication in other (faster) genres emerges, as well as the view that the debate on articles has also led to the importance of peer review receiving attention. In this, expectations are also noted that the research must be communicated internationally. Primarily from an Anglo-Saxon perspective, peer review of monographs appears as a given, particularly for prestigious university publishers. A similar system for books issued in Sweden is projected as a way to quality label Swedish academic book production and thereby increase its legitimacy and prestige in both the academic community and the rest of society. Another purpose that emerges primarily in the early meeting minutes is the importance of there also in the future being Swedish publishers that publish academic books. An important reason for this is the continued possibility for researchers in the humanities and social sciences to publish in Swedish, even if books in other languages are also peer reviewed within Kriterium. In this context, one can also take into account the formulations that emerge in meeting minutes, on the website and in interviews about countering an excessively commercially controlled publishing system. Most of the Swedish publishers of academic books are small or are run on a non-commercial basis (e.g. the universities’ Acta series). The importance of the power over development in academic publishing resting with the academic community is emphasised.

The role of humanistic and to some extent social science research in social and cultural debate, as well as in knowledge production that takes place outside the academic community has been noted as challenged in an increasingly digital media landscape and by a changed public space (see e.g. Östling, et al., 2016). Discussions on how Kriterium should relate to this diversity of audiences appear in passing in the meeting minutes, where it appears to be important that the books reviewed within Kriterium “convince people in one’s own subject that it can be classified as academic work”. So focus is on the books contributing new academic knowledge at the same time that the humanistic tradition of writing in a way that make the book “accessible for reading outside the university world” is safeguarded.

In addition, it is mentioned as an important function for Kriterium to constitute an expertise network for issues concerning academic books in Sweden. A strength in the role as an expertise network is the cooperation between various actors that takes place in the scope of Kriterium: researchers, universities and their libraries, Acta series and other university-based publication, research funding bodies and publishers. The ambition is described for example on the website as constituting national infrastructure for academic publication, with the

3 Other threats that are often mentioned in international literature concern a larger number of researchers and thereby a larger number of manuscripts that are looking for their publisher, as well as the research libraries’ strained budget, which are a consequence of the publishers’ so-called ‘big deals’, that licences to journals are sold in packages rather than for individual titles, which leads to a lower budget for the purchase of books (e.g. Research Information Network, 2008; Suber, 2012).
4 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 4 October 2016
5 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 26 January 2016
6 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 27 February 2015
practical and visionary expertise that this entails. In this context, Kriterium is also mentioned as a voice in the debate, something that is brought up in various contexts.

For natural reasons, a breadth and to some extent branching of visions, objectives and purposes emerge when one goes through material that came forth in the various phases of the project. In the interviews as well as in meeting minutes, it also comes forth that there are a number of different ambitions, objectives and strategies that come to expression in Kriterium’s activities. Hammar describes the picture of the activities as if it has “arisen out of a ‘conglomerate of ideas’ partly originating from different contexts and frustrations” (2017, p. 5). Possibly as a result of this, the information on the website, which is also re-used elsewhere, appears to the critical eye as somewhat inconsistent in terms of what is a vision, a policy, a guideline, an objective or a strategy for achieving the objective. Objectives and strategies are also at somewhat different levels and demonstrate some redundancy. A revision with the purpose of avoiding redundancy and clarifying designations on the website could contribute to clarifying objectives and strategies, not least for the researcher or reader who temporarily becomes interested in Kriterium’s activities.

Production with Kriterium

Up to the end of September 2017, six titles have been published that have been made available through Kriterium’s website. Another title has been published by the publisher, but not yet become available on the website; this is expected to take place at the beginning of October. Of these seven titles, four are anthologies, two monographs and one is an academic edition. Four of the books are published by Nordic Academic Press, which publishes them in the special Checkpoint series. One book is from Makadam and the other two are published in series at the University of Gothenburg. The monograph authors and anthology editors are from the University of Gothenburg and Stockholm University in three cases each. The seventh title’s editor is active at Lund University and Malmö University. Two of the books are in English and one is in Latin; the other four are in Swedish. So the books demonstrate a breadth in both academic publication types, with a preponderance of anthologies, and in language, as well as where the author is active.

In addition to these published titles, there are ten titles in various stages of peer review and one more where the publication decision has been made. These 11 books include other publishers, including an Acta series in Uppsala and a series at another university, a foundation’s publication series, a general literature publisher and several books from Makadam and Nordic Academic Press.

Before Kriterium

The pilot project has its background in a study, *A national consortium for open access academic books in Sweden*, which issued its final report in June 2013 and was funded by the three funding bodies involved in Kriterium (Bernhardsson, et al., 2013). Consultations and meetings were

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7 Personal communication with Maja Pelling, 25 September 2017, as well as the Nordic Academic Press website.
The study established the importance of using existing structures and working together with publishers, researchers and funding bodies to create a platform for quality review and open access publication that works together with the publishers’ current services. The report also sketches an organisational structure with a steering committee, editorial committee and advisory board, which to some extent can be said to have been realised in Kriterium's pilot project, although with a crucial difference in the practical structure of the organisation. This important difference concerns the principal for Kriterium, where the study recommends that the responsibility for the activities be placed with the Swedish Research Council. However, while awaiting a decision from the Swedish Research Council, three of the universities that were included in the study initiated the pilot project that came to be called Kriterium.8

Evaluation assignment
This report has originated on behalf of Kriterium’s steering committee and was financed by the National Library of Sweden, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and the Swedish Research Council. The work was conducted in August and September 2017. Extensive preparatory work for evaluation in the form of an interview study was conducted by Isak Hammar in the spring and summer of 2017. This has been reported in a separate text: “Kriterium – experiences from the pilot phase”. Documentation for this report is comprised of Hammar’s report and materials in the form of convening notices, meeting minutes and certain appendices from the steering committees and editorial board meetings (beginning in May 2015), manuals and author instructions, as well as agreements with Ubiquity Press. These were made available to the author by the convening university librarian in Kriterium’s steering committee. Another few documents and meeting minutes from the ACTA Committee at the University of Gothenburg were added in a late phase. In addition, information on the website and from the report in the previous project (Bernhardsson, et al., 2013) was used in the evaluation. Prior to and in the course of the work, a few meetings were held by Skype and on-site with Kriterium’s chairperson and convening university librarian, as well as with the convening university librarian and controller at the Gothenburg University Library. The report was also discussed in the final phase with Kriterium’s steering committee, which provided some opinions that were taken into account in the final version of the report.

The analysis work was structured based on an introductory read through of the material, which together with conversations with representatives for Kriterium led to the headings used in the report. Thereafter, repeated readings led to a categorisation of the material guided by these headings. The content of the categories was summarised and analysed in this text. The report also endeavours to provide an overview of how the questions that the pilot project Kriterium addresses, such as monograph publication within the humanities and social sciences, open access publication of books, peer review and academic books’ status in the

8 Swedish University Peer Review: a pilot project on the quality review of academic monographs. Proposal on a pilot project. Documentation for the ACTA Committee, University of Gothenburg, 19 September 2014
system for resource distribution, are treated in selected parts of international practice and research.

The report aims to provide a description and review of Kriterium’s pilot project phase as it is expressed in the documents that have been available. Moreover, there is an ambition to reflect Kriterium as an idea and activity in the light of some international initiatives and existing research. Based on this, conclusions are drawn on Kriterium’s potential and what needs to be taken into account prior to Kriterium’s next phase. This is done to a large extent based on problems that have been identified in Kriterium’s organisation.

**Publication patterns in HS**

One of the clearest motives identified for why Kriterium is needed is that there is a need to safeguard the book, and above all the monograph, in Swedish academic publishing. For this reason, there is cause to take a little closer look at various publication formats within the humanities and social sciences, with particular focus on the book’s role.

In his classical book on what characterises various academic fields, Whitley (2000) proceeds based on how these fields are organised intellectually and socially. Knowledge production in academia takes place in relation to other researchers and to the rest of society. In various academic fields, the researchers, according to Whitney, are in varying degrees of agreement on what problems are important to study and how the studies should be done. Many areas of the humanities and social sciences are distinguished by them having a low degree of agreement on what research questions are the most relevant, how the studies are best implemented and how the results should be interpreted. This is expressed in, for example, several simultaneously occurring, competing theoretical focuses and in a broad range of study objects. The breadth of the research questions and study objects is often combined with the researchers to a lower degree than in other fields closely building further on existing research in the subject or having a common strategy for the field. As a result of this, the researcher then also needs to convince his or her readers of the reasonableness of their own research interest, method and interpretation. Altogether, this approach to knowledge production has consequences on how the researchers in these areas publish their work (Fry & Talja, 2007; Hammarfelt, 2012). The need to justify choices and interpretations, as well as the fact that the research does not build on other texts that can effectively be cited without the relationship to earlier research having to be discussed, is well-suited to longer texts, such as those in book form. The audience is often varied and the same text can be directed at research colleagues, professionals and what is usually called an interested public. This mixed audience affects both style and publication channels, as well as other factors that influence how one creates a good reputation within the academic community and outside it. (Hammarfelt, 2012; Fry & Talja, 2007; Svedjedal, 2017)

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9 For example, in the interviews (Hammar, 2017) and on the website.
In line with this, Crossick (2016) maintains in his report on monographs and open access to the British funding body HEFCE that the monograph is important in the humanities and social sciences because it permits longer and more in-depth, complex reasoning to be presented. Crossick confirms that this is also of importance to identity creation among researchers, not least among those who are at the beginning of their careers. Many researchers in the humanities and parts of social sciences identify strongly with their books, which allow them to express their own voice. At the same time that the monograph often has an important role in the career development in the humanities and social sciences, it does not appear to be entirely crucial in applications for grants and services in the UK (Crossick, 2016; he suggests that the case may be different in the U.S.). In Sweden, the monograph has been central to qualifications in several areas of humanities and social sciences, such as in docent qualifications.

At the same time, it is important to point out that there are large differences in publication traditions between different humanities and social sciences subjects both in Sweden and internationally. Even if the book is important within some subjects, peer-reviewed journal articles are dominant in others. In addition to this are book chapters and conference submissions that may be more or less reworked. Moreover, researchers publish in less common publication types and academic editions, as well as in books with a target audience, such as textbooks or commemorative texts.

The important role that the book chapter, as well as the monograph, plays for knowledge dissemination in the humanities and social sciences becomes apparent in a study of Norwegian researchers’ publication in history, linguistics, sociology and economics in the early 2010s (Sivertsen, 2016b). Sivertsen confirms that there are indeed large differences between the four subject areas, but that book chapters constitute 40 per cent of the publications in the two humanities subjects and nearly one third in the social sciences subjects. Even though monographs constitute a small percentage, an analysis indicates on an individual level that most researchers publish several genres and that around 15 per cent of the researchers in the humanities subjects and 8 per cent in the social sciences have published books and more than half have published book chapters. Publishing in more than one genre is especially common in the humanities subjects. Sivertsen (2016b) draws the conclusion that publication in various genres is seen as a complement for each other. He also notes that, even if there are small changes, it is not possible to see crucial differences on an overall level in terms of book publication or publication in Norwegian among Norwegian researchers during the certainly relatively short period 2005-2011.

A questionnaire study conducted by five of the major Swedish research funding bodies showed that between one fifth and one third of the researchers who received funding from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (RJ) and the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies in the beginning of the 2010s published in book form and, if one believes the report, in forms that are open access (Report on open access publication…, 2017). This is despite the fact that monographs and book chapters are not covered by any of the five funding bodies OA mandates even if RJ and the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies encourage
open access publication for these genres as well and the Swedish Research Council announces that open access requirements for books are impending (Report on open access publication…, 2017). In most cases, it was stated that in addition to the printing cost, no special costs were additional for monographs or book chapters to be able to be made open access.

An interpretation of the academic monograph as being on the decline is expressed, however, in an analysis of applications to RJ for production support. This support makes it possible for researchers with project funding from RJ to receive financial support for book publication. Judging from the number of applications for production support (or the equivalent) during the period since 2000, interest in publishing academic monographs has declined (Björkman, 2015, p. 577), which contradicts Sivertsen’s (2016b) Norwegian study, although based on a significantly smaller basis. Björkman interprets the reasons for the decline as relate to a perception that the book had become less valuable in the different systems that researchers relate to, such as for resource allocation, and that there is a shortage of time to write a monograph. A crucial reason for the shortage of time is probably that the researchers instead write articles. That a growing number of articles have been published in international peer-reviewed journals by Swedish researchers in the first decade of the 21st century was also identified in the Research and Innovation Bill 2012 (Bill 2012/13:30). The number of articles in international academic journals has doubled within the social sciences according to the analysis and increased by more than 60 per cent in the humanities, although from a low level.

**Publisher and audience**

Publishers of academic books in Sweden have different natures. A few are publishing companies that specifically focus on academic publishing while others are general literature publishers or societies/associations with book publication (Bernhardsson, 2011). Most of the publishers that focus solely on academic publication, and do not also have a comprehensive publication of teaching aids, are small or medium sized. Moreover, several of the universities have a collective publication series operation (often called ACTA or University Press), in some cases organisationally placed at the university’s library, but with researchers at the university’s departments as editors. This joint operation sometimes coordinates production and distribution of works that are published in the included series (Bernhardsson, 2011).

However, Sweden does not have the same tradition of university press operations as the Anglo-Saxon world, which in spite of this is of interest to compare with. The Anglo-Saxon university press operations also live with very different conditions. Some have financial support from their parent university, others lack such support and some are even expected to make a profit that goes back to the university (Schonfeld, 2016). The larger and more commercially run publishers often have both book and journal publication. Success mainly with regard to book publication varies, however, between the publishers. Schonfeld identifies the ‘independent success stories’, publishers with internal assets and strong positions in the market and among authors, as continuing to be successful in their book production. A trend is that the university presses are integrated in some form with the library organisation (also refer to Tsoukala, 2015), so-called ‘integrated presses’, and Schonfeld appears to read in a
greater potential for initiating operations that work outside the established system in some such cases, such as through open access publication. Tsoukala (2015) points out the libraries' expertise in technical issues, open access, metadata and indexation as important in such mergers, while the publishers contribute the legitimacy that comes from peer review and in some cases a long tradition of book production. The group of publishers that Schonfeld calls ‘newcomers’ is also investing a great deal in innovative solutions regarding open access publication. We can see several Swedish initiatives in recent years that have features of both integrated presses and newcomers, such as Stockholm University Press and Linköping University Electronic Press (LiU E-Press).

It is sometimes asserted that book publication, and especially monographs, in the humanities and social sciences is an expression of a turn towards a national audience. Sivertsen (2016b) argues that academic publication in the humanities and social sciences has historically been international, and that a nationalisation of publication practices took place in the 20th century in connection with education as well as cultural and social debate was broadened to concern a larger part of the population. Social relevance, he asserts, has become a central aspect of research in the humanities and social sciences and something that is at risk of being lost if research findings are only presented and discussed in international academic journals (compare Östling et al., 2016). That the intended audience, and the language of publication, can be crucial to which books are peer-reviewed and which are not became apparent in a comparative study of Flemish books published by Dutch or foreign publishers (Verleysen & Engels, 2014). Especially within social sciences, a clear division emerged between internationally published, peer-reviewed books in English directed at researchers in their own subject area, and nationally published, non-peer-reviewed books in Dutch with a domestic audience of decision makers, interest groups and the public.

**Peer review**

An often cited motive for peer review is that it is an effective way to determine the quality of a work or an application, or to in any case identify what appears to be purely incorrect. There are also, satisfyingly enough, studies that show that the quality of published research is improved with peer review even if much of the research concerns review of journal articles and research applications and significantly less is written about monographs or book chapters (Bornmann, 2011). At the same time, the procedure is well rooted in most of the academic fields. From an Anglo-Saxon perspective, peer review of monographs is common and sometimes takes place based on a finished manuscript, even if it may sometimes be a structure and a few chapters that are initially judged (Adema & Rutten, 2010). In a Swedish context, peer review of monographs has, however, been significantly less common, at least in the formal and transparent form that is often referred to (Bernhardsson, 2015; Björkman, 2015). This is one of the perceived needs that Kriterium intends to fill.

In conjunction with this need, it should be noted that criticism was also raised of peer review as a phenomenon and, above all, of how it is done. Such criticism is based among other
things on disagreements between reviewers (low reliability), that bias in the review can occur, which can also result in innovative research being stopped or delayed, and that the review process does not always have the result that the published works will subsequently be used (in this case understood as being cited). In addition, peer review is expensive and time consuming, which can lead to delayed publication (Bornmann, 2011; also refer to Langfeldt & Kyvik, 2015). So the selection of experts, as well as how their statements are treated, communicated and followed up appear to be crucial to a well-functioning review process. Reviewers not being in agreement does not necessarily have to be negative if it is clear wherein the disagreement lies and what it is due to, such as whether it concerns different expectations in different subject areas. In this case, it is important that somebody who also has special knowledge in the area helps the author to interpret the statements, make decisions on how they shall be addressed and how they shall affect the final assessment of the manuscript.10

The peer review of monographs and anthologies, as well as conference submissions, is less formalised than that of journal articles, even internationally. In terms of books, it is also not usually just their academic quality and language formulation that are assessed, but also their potential to be commercially viable (Verleysen & Engels, 2013; Watson, 2016). How much of the book is reviewed can vary and can comprise the book proposal, a selection of chapters or the entire manuscript. Book chapters in anthologies are often reviewed by other authors in the anthology. However, it appears less common that anthologies are peer reviewed as a whole, as is the case in Kriterium. The lack of a comprehensive perspective on the anthology is deplored by Davis and Blossey, for example, who begin a submission on the subject with the following reflection: “How many times have you read a review of an edited book that included a statement like the following: ‘As is the case with most edited volumes, the chapters differed greatly in quality and the book lacked consistency and continuity’? Quite a few times, we suspect.” (2011, p. 247) Kriterium’s steering committee also reflects over experts having judged anthologies as “sprawling” and this evokes a principle question of how an anthology should be structured.11

International outlooks

A few international models for quality labelling of peer-reviewed academic books in the humanities and social sciences are worth describing a little more in-depth before we move on to how Kriterium handles the review. One model was created by the publishing association in Flanders in 2010. GPRC (Guaranteed Peer Reviewed Content) aims to review and certify that the review process has taken place in accordance with internationally accepted approaches. It is the publisher that applies for the label and that must show that the peer review took place correctly, but the actual label is on a book level (monographs and anthologies), not on a series or publisher level. The label differs from how Kriterium functions in that GPRC only assesses the review process afterwards. They are not as involved in various phases of the work as Kriterium’s editorial board is.

10 In Kriterium’s case, the academic coordinators (book editors) fill this role.
11 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 21 August 2015
Borghart (2013) ties the development of GPRC closely to the local Flemish conditions, particularly the Flemish system for performance-based research funding that to some extent is similar to the Swedish, but takes consideration of more sources of data (Sivertsen, 2016a). Since the citation databases that are usually used in these evaluations (in this case mainly Clarivate Analytics Web of Science) have deficient coverage of monographs and book chapters, which are common in the humanities and social sciences, a need was perceived in Flanders for a supplemental database for these publications. The early use of the so-called Norwegian list meant that local publishers were incorrectly represented. In connection with the introduction of GPRC, books that receive the GPRC label are included in a local database (VABB-SHW) and thereby included in the research evaluation.

According to Borghart (2013), a consequence of the label is that there was a shift in status and confidence from the individual publisher’s reputation, based on for example earlier publication and author experience of good editorial work, to a more standardised process linked to the label and the peer review process. In turn, this led to greater competition between the publishers, according to Borghart. He also identifies a greater interest from authors in having their publications peer reviewed (and thereby giving them more weight in qualification and evaluation contexts), even when it concerns genres that do not usually undergo such review internationally (such as popular science books and course literature). He also sees a danger that publishers will look more to the financial considerations than to quality when they are faced with the choice of sending a publication that is not suitable for GPRC labelling for review or losing the title. The latter can be the case in the genres that are big sellers for the publishers and where a GPRC label is important for the author. Borghart recommends clearer rules on which genres could be included in the evaluation system and a stricter delimitation that the GPRC label may only be awarded to books published at publishers that have extensive academic publishing.

Within the scope of the study that preceded Kriterium (Bernhardsson et al., 2013), a study visit was made to the Austrian research funding body, the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), which also arranges peer review of books in some cases. This takes place in the scope of their programme for ‘Stand-Alone Publications’ that finance high-quality publication, language review and translation of books and so-called ‘innovative publication forms’ given that they are make openly accessible. The programme has a strong character of wanting to make Austrian research internationally accessible and FWF is responsible for international peer review if the publisher does not offer it. The review statements, arranged either by FWF or the publisher, subsequently form the basis of the allocation of publication funding. FWF also has requirements on what is considered an acceptable review process on the part of the publisher and thereby in some cases conducts a kind of assessment of the review process as well. (FWF Der Wissenschaftsfonds, 2016)

**Peer review within Kriterium**

The peer review process in Kriterium begins with an application for a book to be peer reviewed being submitted by a publisher or a publication series to Kriterium’s editorial board. The proposal should include a synopsis and a proposal on an academic coordinator who is
the person who handles the actual review process. The academic coordinator can possibly be compared with an assistant editor at a journal in that he or she proposes reviewers, arranges the contact with the reviewer and author/anthology editors, works with the authors to ensure that relevant comments are observed and writes a recommendation on publication based on how well this work has gone. However, it is not the academic coordinator who is responsible for the decision to accept the manuscript. This task rests with the editorial board (academic review board). This board makes the initial decision to go further with a manuscript proposal with an appointed academic coordinator and also makes a decision at the end of the process to accept a manuscript within the scope of Kriterium’s series.

The process for peer review within Kriterium has been developed in the course of the project, in part with regard to instructions to the academic coordinators12 and in part by the handling of the review process since spring 2016 having been taken over by an editorial board, the chief task of which is to quality assure the review process and the members of which partly differ from the steering committee’s academic representatives, who previously formed an assessment panel with similar duties. The expansion of the editorial board also means that more research domains can be represented in the board.

Initially, some concern was expressed that it would be difficult to recruit academic coordinators and experts since these are not assignments that are particularly rewarded for qualifications.13 A few cases have also arisen where it proved difficult to recruit experts, which has resulted in the process taking more time and becoming more expensive than planned.14 However, in general, the recruitment seems to have gone smoothly.

In the interviews, it comes forth that the communication on the peer review process has sometimes been deficient, mainly in the project’s initial phase and in relation to the authors/anthology editors (Hammar, 2017). The vast majority who were involved express satisfaction, however, with the review statements that have been received and both publisher representatives and authors and academic coordinators express the opinion that the review and the revision based on comments received have resulted in books of higher quality (Hammar, 2017). The meeting minutes from the steering committee meeting on 26 January 2016 speaks of “a clear bite in the reviews” of the first books that underwent the process.

Guidelines for the formulation of both the initial application and of the reviewer’s statement are available on Kriterium’s website. The guidelines ask the reviewer to describe quality and reasonableness in the work’s academic prowess and structure, but also to formulate how the work contributes new knowledge. No difference is made in the guidelines based on what type of publication it is that is to be reviewed. The guidelines contain a number of questions and one can presume that the formulations of the guidelines have arisen through negotiations and have potentially been added to afterwards in relation to various subject areas.

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12 Initially, consultation talks were held with the steering committee chairperson, but instructions to both academic coordinators and expert reviewers were subsequently formulated and discussed in several rounds in the steering committee.
13 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 28 November 2014
14 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 26 January 2016
Some tension emerges in the interviews in the view of what role peer review of academic books fills in a Swedish context (Hammar, 2017). The opinion is expressed that there are deficiencies in the quality of some of the publication and that this could be improved through peer review. Others seem satisfied with the current quality and see peer review mainly as a means to increase legitimacy of the academic book in the current research policy and research funding landscape. Despite the varying opinions regarding the quality of Swedish academic books, peer review contributes, from both perspectives, to achieving the objective of safeguarding Swedish academic book publication. Authors, academic coordinators and publisher representatives say that the quality of the books that have undergone review has improved. This matches with international research of the outcome of peer review, which admittedly is highly focused on journal articles (see e.g. Bornmann, 2011). Considering the work done, it is of course desirable that the end result is improved. At the same time, it is also possible that researchers and publishers already use informal review functions with the result that the quality is adequate among published, non-peer-reviewed books. If this is the case, a formal peer review that ascribes to Anglo-Saxon practices, can nonetheless contribute to improving the academic book’s legitimacy, both in sectors of the humanities and social sciences that have not traditionally applied peer review, and in the sectors that notice possible competition from peer-reviewed journal articles.

Several discussion threads can be followed through the steering committee’s and editorial board’s (including its predecessor the academic assessment panel’s) meeting minutes. This concerns issues of achieving a coherent and consistent communication with and clarity towards authors and academic coordinators, as well as which requirements are to be placed on the application, manuscript and the academic coordinator’s recommendation. Discussions are also held about who is suitable as an academic coordinator; when can it becomes an issue that an intended academic coordinator is too close to the author and what specialist expertise is required of the academic coordinator. In the issue of disqualification, the decision was made to follow the Swedish Research Council’s guidelines,¹⁵ and there are also examples of the editorial board requiring that the person proposed by the publisher or publication series being replaced due to the risk of disqualification.¹⁶ The issue of the academic coordinator’s specialist expertise mainly applies for editors of publication series, who are not always specialists in the book’s field in the same manner as the academic coordinators proposed specifically based on the book’s subject. The steering committee decides that the editors’ despite this may be considered to have the expertise in academic publication and the networks required of an academic coordinator.¹⁷

Another consistent theme mainly in the early meeting minutes concerns where the bar should be set for what an adequately good book and review process are for the book should be able to be included in Kriterium’s series. Here, the perception emerges that there should be a quality level that included manuscripts must achieve.¹⁸ It is not about picking out the best of a

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¹⁵ Steering committee’s meeting minutes 9 June 2015
¹⁶ Editorial board’s meeting minutes 20 April 2017
¹⁷ Steering committee’s meeting minutes 28 November 2014
¹⁸ Steering committee’s meeting minutes 9 June 2015
certain number of works, but rather including all that achieve adequate quality. That this level is achieved is ensured in part through an adequately well revised documentation in the proposal and in part through good and convincing documentation of how the process of peer review and revision of the manuscript took place. In connection with this theme, the possibility is also discussed of a manuscript undergoing more than one review round, something that is highlighted as not uncommon internationally\(^\text{19}\) and which is also clarified on Kriterium’s website. The sensitive question of when a manuscript that has undergone peer review shall be refused to be included in Kriterium’s series is also touched upon, but is deemed to be something that may be decided case by case. It is clarified on several occasions that a rejection does not prevent publication by the publisher or in the publication series that submitted the application.\(^\text{20}\)

The publishers’ commercial interests are a source of concern among several of those who write about the peer review of monographs (e.g. Berggren, 2016; Borghart, 2013; Verleysen & Engels, 2013). The logic behind this is that if the publisher deems that the manuscript evokes interest among the circle of buyers, the commercial interests will weigh more heavily than the reviewers’ statements. Considering the relatively small market for academic books in Sweden, especially monographs in Swedish, combined with the subsidisation of the publication costs in the form of a printing grant that is often offered by research funding bodies, scholarship funds or universities, this risk is possibly less than in countries and for languages with a larger potential audience and thereby greater sales potential. A consideration of the book's commercial potential is reasonably done by, for example, the general literature publishers, which however do not usually conduct peer review as described here. But publishers that publish books with a printing grant can also have financial interests in taking in more titles to pay for their own operations. Then the task of guaranteeing quality is handed over to the body that pays the printing grant. The ambition strongly expressed on the website and in interviews that Kriterium shall “be governed by academic ideals” and that it should be “the research’s own requirements and conditions that lead the work” (Hammar, 2017, p. 9) can, however, be read in the light of such potential competing interests between financial gain and academic quality.

**Evaluation and models for resource allocation**

The question about peer review is not only about quality and legitimacy, as the example from Flanders showed. Given a greater focus in Swedish research policy on Swedish researchers publishing internationally and through a model for research evaluation that has shifted a great deal of focus toward publication of journal articles by measuring citations (Bill 2012/13:30),

\(^{19}\) Steering committee’s meeting minutes 21 August 2015

\(^{20}\) For example on Kriterium’s website in the description of how the review takes place (20 September 2017).
peer review has also come to receive attention in areas and publication types where it was not previously crucial.

The model used at a national level today for the allocation of parts of the resource allocation (Bill 2008/09:50; Bill 2012/13:30) and from which the current Government to some extent has backed down from in recent years (Bill 2016/2017:50) focuses mainly on academic articles. However, this is not the case in Sweden’s Nordic neighbours, where Norway, Denmark and Finland apply models that also reward the publication of monographs and book chapters. The so-called Norwegian list, Register of academic publication channels, became the first, and most influential. Here, journals, book series and publishers are listed based on being present in Clarivate Analytic’s database *Web of Science* but also based on assessments done by special Expert Councils. The included channels are placed into two levels, where level 2 is to correspond to the highest prestige.

The Norwegian list is of interest in this context mainly for two reasons. To begin with, it has come to be used locally at the universities, faculties and departments in Sweden as well. A study by Hammarfelt, Nelhans, Eklund and Åström (2016) shows that 24 out of the 26 Swedish universities in their study applied some form of bibliometric model for resource allocation within the university, at a faculty level or to reward individual researchers. Which models are used differ widely, both between and within the universities, but several are based in one way or other on the Norwegian list, such as at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Gothenburg, Linnaeus University, the School of Economics and Management at Lund University, the Faculty of Social Sciences at Stockholm University and Uppsala University (Nelhans & Eklund, 2015).

The other reason that the Norwegian list is interesting has to do with there being plans of developing a Nordic list. The work has been under way since 2013 and it is still unclear how such a list may be used in Sweden, but Sweden participates in the development work.

In the report from the study that led to Kriterium, it is mentioned that it is important to not tie strategies and structure for a national consortium for peer review too closely to specific models for research evaluation and models for resource allocation based on such (Bernhardsson, et al., 2013). The reasonableness in this is illustrated well by the account above and by the fact that the report also refers to the FOKUS proposal with assessment panels that was presented, but not implemented in Sweden (Swedish Research Council, 2014). The formulation of these kinds of models can accordingly relatively quickly change even if there is of course a lot invested in a model like the Norwegian list.

In light of the Norwegian list actually being used in resource allocation at Swedish universities, it is, however, important that Kriterium has been taken up as a publication channel at level 1 on the list. This was reported at the steering committee meeting on 14

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21 https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/Forside
22 It should be noted that the models for resource allocation change and that the information can quickly become dated.
23 See e.g. https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/Forside
March 2017. At the same meeting, it was considered whether Kriterium should have the ambition to also apply to be moved up to level 2. Based on Kriterium’s strive to include all works that achieve an adequately high level of academic quality and given the existing resources, the members chose to not continue to try to achieve the criteria for level 2.

It may be interesting in this context to take note of the interpretation that Borghart (2013) makes of the development since the GPRC system’s introduction in Flanders, where he believes that the publishers also send in books in genres that are not commonly peer reviewed, such as popular science and teaching aids. He also identifies a greater competition between the publishers and an expectation from authors that the publisher will have the book peer reviewed so that it can be GPRC labelled. To some extent, this has also been noticed within Kriterium, where authors have had requests to peer review textbooks, translations and conference volumes. What genres will be able to be reviewed in the scope of Kriterium’s series has been discussed at the steering committee meetings, editorial meetings and informally between the members and the aforementioned publication types have been refused thus far, but a potential future change of the system for resource allocation at a national level can may such a discussion even more important and require a clarification of the delimitations in the guidelines. It has been announced that the Government is investigating changes in the resource allocation model in the two latest research bills (Bill 2012/13:30; Bill 2016/17:50).

**Kriterium’s role and legitimacy**

Within the scope of this report, there has not been space to implement a study of what status Kriterium as an organisation has and how prestigious inclusion in the Kriterium series is perceived to be. In the interview report, it comes forth that those interviewed perceive that the need for a system for peer review of books in the humanities and social sciences is extensive and that there has been a pent up need. Some of those interviewed say that they have “perceived a collegial appreciation and acceptance” (Hammar, 2017, p. 9) while others have no direct perception of the label’s status.

Based on existing documentation, it is difficult to assess what role Kriterium can play in, for example, qualification contexts. A starting point for a discussion on a general level may be Karpik’s (2010) description of how people use ‘judgment devices’ to assess unique entities (singularities). The use of judgment devices may for example mean that instead of assessing the actual unit’s (in this case the book’s) quality, assessment criteria are used at a higher level about which one has a perception, such as a label or origin (journal/publisher) or a certification (Kriterium, *Web of Science*) (Hammarfelt & Rushforth, 2017). Here, Kriterium could accordingly contribute to and supplement the perception of quality and legitimacy that is already associated with a publisher or a publication series.

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24 Personal communication with Åke Ingerman, 28 September 2017; also e.g. Steering committee meeting minutes 27 February 2015, 26 January 2016

So publication in Kriterium’s series can be viewed as a mark of quality in itself. The extent to which this will become a widespread perception will largely be dependent on how well-known and acknowledged Kriterium is, meaning how well marketing and legitimisation has succeeded. Not all reviewers who assess applications for promotion, docent qualification, employments or research projects have their base in the Swedish research world. For reviewers who come from countries where peer review of monographs is common, a Kriterium labelling may be important, on condition that the author can describe what it entails. In international contexts, such a labelling can also be of significance because Swedish publishers and publication series are unknown and cannot inherently serve as judgement devices. In the cases where the reviewer not only assesses a publication list, but actually reads the selected texts, one can also presume that the higher quality of the end product that several interviewees speak of as a result of the peer review will be of use for the applicant (Hammar, 2017).

Open access to research publications

Among the strategies to reach Kriterium’s objectives, it is mentioned that the platform shall “drive greater open access publication of high-quality academic books and stand for a clear mark of quality within open access publication of academic works”. In the meeting minutes for the steering committee, an ambition is expressed to be clear that open access publication is a requirement for a book to be included in Kriterium and that access provision through Kriterium’s website shall take place without embargo. A Creative Commons licence is required, but it is left up to authors and editors to agree on which of the licences shall be used for the book. At the meetings, the question of the role of the publishers in relation to open access is also brought up a few times, partly based on the perspective that the publishers have an important role to play for enabling access, together with researchers and universities, partly that Kriterium must be clear about its requirement since not all publishers are positive to open access publication.

Hammar identifies open access publication as the issue about which there appears to be the least agreement on even if he draws the conclusion that most are mainly positive to it. Among the arguments for open access to academic books, “dissemination, public access to research and collaboration” are mentioned (2017, p. 4) and that the work that lies behind it is financed by taxes. Among potentially problematic factors, the financing issue is mentioned and that it can affect the conditions for the commercial book market, which can in turn have consequences for the research’s spread and voice in the public discourse. The interview report, however, does not delve deeper into the latter issue.  

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26 See e.g. Kriterium’s website, https://www.kriterium.se/site/about/ (19 September 2017)
27 E.g. steering committee meeting minutes 9 June 2015
28 See Creative Commons, http://creativecommons.org
29 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 14 March 2017
30 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 26 January 2016
31 For a more detailed discussion of the role of the humanities and the social sciences in the public space, see Östling, et al. (2016).
The arguments for and against open access to books that are mentioned in the interviews reflect arguments that often occur in texts and discussions about open access (see e.g. European Commission, 2017; Swedish Research Council, 2015; Svedjedal, 2017; Suber, 2012). A crucial issue in the discussion about open access as a threat to the book market and the author’s possibility for incomes through royalties lies in the view of whether the digital version is a competitor or a complement to the printed book. Does open access in the form of a PDF with a generous CC licence lead to lower sales of the printed book or vice versa, to greater sales? This can be studied in various ways. A small interview study with readers of e-books done at the University of Michigan indicated that the digital and the printed book filled different functions (Watkinson, et al., 2017).

To study in a controlled manner if a book’s sales figures are improved or impeded by it being openly accessible is difficult, as Suber (2012) pointed out. The same book cannot at the same time be made openly accessible and not openly accessible. However, attempts have been made to study the outcome of open access publication, among other things within the OAPEN project. Studies done of both OAPEN-UK (the UK) and OAPEN-NL (the Netherlands) that built on publishers matching books two and two based on similarity. The one book in the pair was made openly accessible. OAPEN-UK is cautious in its conclusions, but confirms that open access does not appear to affect the sale of the printed book, at least not at present when so few books are available (Collins & Milloy, 2016). The OAPEN-NL study’s conclusion is that open access did not affect the sales of the books, but however led to greater use of the digital version and that it was more likely that the book was found by potential readers (Ferwerda, Snijder & Adema, 2013). What this means for the Swedish market is not entirely easy to predict, especially for the books published with publication support and where the commercial potential is limited. Will public and research libraries be satisfied to include the digital version of the book in their catalogues, or will they continue to purchase the printed book? Will researchers, students and the public rely on the digital edition? Without it entailing unreasonable risks for the publishers, the books that are published within Kriterium can here constitute input to study what is happening in a Swedish context, with a focus on publication series and some kinds of publishers. In this context, Kriterium, like the databases of open access books that Kriterium cooperates with, constitutes a platform for collective access to the digital editions, which may otherwise be problematic to locate (Eve, 2014; Bernhardsson, 2015). The publishers and publication series, however, also continue to have an incredibly important role to play for marketing and visibility so that the public notes the books in both printed and digital formats.

A copyright challenge for open access publication of books within the humanities and social sciences concerns the fact that there is often a need to reproduce material to which third parties have the rights, such as pictures, notes or choreographic notation (Crossick, 2016; also compare with Glimstedt, 2014). Obtaining permission to reproduce such copyrighted material can entail higher costs or even be refused when it comes to digital publication and/or open access publication, which can also be limited in time. This is a question for publishers and publication series, as well as Kriterium to be attentive to as a whole. Also associated with the issue of rights is the fact that many researchers within the humanities and
social sciences perceive excessively open licences as potentially problematic. Crossick suggests that one does not make the open access concept too restrictive, such as by requiring CC-BY licences in all contexts. In this context, it is notable that the six titles available via Kriterium's website at the writing of this report have all chosen the most restrictive CC-licence, Creative Commons Attribution + Noncommercial + NoDerivatives 4.0.

**Kriterium’s role in relation to policies for open access**

There are today requirements on open access publication from several funding bodies and a few universities. An effort to formulate national guidelines for Sweden, in accordance with the European Commission's recommendations, was initiated by the Government in 2013 and a proposal was presented by the Swedish Research Council in January 2015. This proposal describes the overall objective such “that all academic publication, which is a result of research that received public grants, be published as open access by 2025” (Swedish Research Council, 2015, p. 10). The ambition is for open access publication to take place immediately with a CC licence. Books are included together with articles and conference submissions, but while sub-targets are set up for the latter types of publication as early as 2015, the objectives for books published by Swedish publishers are not set until 2020. In the proposal for national guidelines, it is proposed that a number of issues be investigated further, including open access to books. Several of these investigations have been initiated by the National Library of Sweden, which in the appropriation letter for 2017 was commissioned by the Government to coordinate the work on national guidelines for open access to publications. One of the investigations will focus on the open access to books during the period 2017-2019. Here, Kriterium, which is expressly mentioned as an initiative the results of which are worth monitoring (Swedish Research Council, 2015), can have an important role to play based on the experiences that have been made and are summarised in, for example, Hammar (2017) and this report.

Multiple Swedish research financiers require open access in the publication of results from the projects they support. A difference is made, however, between different publication types, and none of the major research funding bodies currently has requirements that apply to monographs or book chapters. RJ and the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies encourage open access publication of these types of publications, but it is not a requirement. The Swedish Research Council mentions plans to expand its requirements to books. (Report on open access publication…, 2017) Within the European research programme Horizon 2020, researchers with approved projects are strongly encouraged to also make monographs and book chapters openly accessible (European Commission, 2017).

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32 Considering the delay that occurred before clear directives from the Government had come regarding the continued work, too much attention might not be attached to the years.

33 The following funding bodies' policies have been investigated: Forte, Formas, the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, the Swedish Research Council and the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies. It can be noted that the formulation on the Marcus and Amalia Wallenberg Foundation website is ambiguous in terms of publication formats that are included.
By presenting a model for open access publication of peer-reviewed books in a Swedish context, Kriterium can serve as a good example of such publication being possible to achieve – and thereby that it in the future can be possible to also require open access to books both nationally and on the part of the research funding bodies, possibly with a chance to have an exemption approved. There are, however, a few things that could contribute to strengthening Kriterium as a convincing argument. First, it is necessary that more commercial publishers adopt the idea so that Swedish researchers also continue to have an opportunity to turn to several different publishers to investigate the publication possibilities with an offer of open access to the published book. One way of approaching this issue can of course be to force researchers to follow requirements set by funding bodies and the Government, but in a small market with actors who do not have the same strength as the large multinational publishers, consultation would be preferable. Secondly, it is necessary that Kriterium can establish an organisation that can be scaled up to a relatively large extent, which also includes being able to find expert reviewers, something which has been identified as a problem in earlier research. Thirdly, funding is of course an important issue. This applies to being able to fund an expanded operation for Kriterium, but also that authors will be able to pay the extra cost that peer review through Kriterium entails. As long as it is not higher than SEK 10,000, it should, however, be able to be viewed as a modest cost for open access publication. There is also a solution for books that fall outside the humanities and social sciences, if not within the scope for Kriterium then on a national level, even if the main part of the academic books can be expected to be produced within these subject areas.

**Organisation and mission**

**Division of responsibility and roles**

Kriterium has been run as a pilot project with its primary organisational home at the Gothenburg University Library since 2014. Hammar (2017) identifies three features as characteristic for the development phase of the project based on how they are described in the interviews with Kriterium’s steering committee. The first two concern ambiguity and changeability in the mission and division of work. The positive aspect of this, the third feature, has however been that the development is characterised by “enthusiasm, creativity and a long list of different perspectives of opportunities and challenges of publication within the humanities and social sciences” (p. 5). Based on the interviews, it comes forth that the nature of the pilot project has been prominent: “It thereby also appears as if the extensive work with Kriterium during the pilot phase has been to end up in an assignment description, a structure and a division of roles” (p. 5).

The consortium has brought together a number of different competencies and activities in its steering committee. Three universities, the University of Gothenburg, Lund University and Uppsala University, have an academic representative, a representative from either their library
or their publishing operations in the steering committee. There are also representatives for three national actors: The National Library of Sweden, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and the Swedish Research Council. The consortium also includes two publishers, Nordic Academic Press and Makadam, the representatives of which are co-opted into the steering committee. The strength of combining these different perspectives is highlighted repeatedly in the interviews and in the steering committee’s meeting minutes. Even if there had been differing opinions in certain issues, the experiences represented in the group are highlighted as an asset and something that has made Kriterium stronger (Hammar, 2017). The importance is emphasised of this combination of actors for legitimacy, horizon scanning and national support, as well as the publishers’ contributions of expertise and perspectives in finances and the publishing trade. Based on the documentation that has been available for analysis, the cooperation appears to be creative and intensive and it appears as if the group has strived to make use of the various competencies that exist in the group.

The steering committee has had the main responsibility for the consortium throughout the pilot project. In the course of the pilot project, a continuous discussion has been held, however, regarding how Kriterium should be organised and the organisation has also been changed in crucial way during the period. The change that appears to be the most important is the decision to expand the academic assessment panel that has been responsible for a decision on manuscripts, from consisting of the steering committee’s university representatives to including another representative per university. The advantages of this include that it provides a greater subject breadth in the group and that the organisation becomes less dependent on everyone being able participate in every meeting. At the steering committee meeting on 26 January 2016, it was also decided to change the name to the editorial board and to make this board more independent of the steering committee. The editorial board received a new chairperson who was also elected into the steering committee. This chairperson is the Chief Editor for Kriterium. Through this division, a division of responsibility has been introduced between the steering committee and its chairperson and the editorial board and its chairperson, which seems reasonable to be able to handle several manuscripts at a time.

The editorial board has the task of deciding on manuscripts in the two stages, and handling the issue of where the quality level should be and how guidelines to authors and, above all, academic coordinators should be formulated in order for the documentation that comes to the board will be as good as possible. Decisions are then made by the steering committee. The steering committee is responsible for the consortium as a whole and has devoted a great deal of time during the start-up phase to creating frameworks and policies for the operations.

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34 It was not until just before the launch in autumn 2015 before Uppsala University had a permanent academic representative in place.
35 Hammar, 2017; Steering committee meeting minutes 4 October 2016
36 I.e. the professors that represent research (Steering committee’s meeting minutes, 21 August 2015). The universities’ publication representatives also include have included PhDs.
37 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 04/10/2016
38 The decision that a manuscript will be accepted to the review process and the decision to accept it in the scope of the Kriterium series.
and their future development, as well as setting up the practical conditions in the form of a publication platform, accounting and remuneration as well as communication.

It came forth in the interviews and the steering committee’s meeting minutes that a large part of the practical work took place at the University of Gothenburg, by the chairperson and convening university librarian who were also members of a working group at the university library, which was also included in a working group at the university library for the handling of the publication platform. The university library stands as the principal for Kriterium and has also initially stood for a large part of the funding. With the help of above all one of the publisher representatives, the university library has handled the main part of the work of negotiating and setting up the publication platform via Ubiquity Press. They have also handled both accounting and administration. Some of the representatives from the other universities, mainly Lund University, have also taken responsibility for several tasks. The representatives for the national actors have forwarded issues to their respective organisations and have conducted horizon scanning. So how much time the various involved parties spent on Kriterium differs. The confidence in the competence and support in the activities that exist at the university library have led to the steering committee deciding to also in the future propose the University of Gothenburg as the principal for the consortium.³⁹

Another discussion that was taken up in the steering committee, primarily initially is the question of whether representatives for the publishers should be included in the steering committee. During the course of the pilot project, representatives for the two publishers that participated in the pilot project were co-opted to the steering committee. They have thereby not had any formal responsibility, but have nonetheless actively participated in the work, not least in terms of the publication platform. Already relatively early,⁴⁰ the idea was evoked of having a publishing group that among its members elects a representative to the steering committee, when more publishers have become members. This is an idea that has been used as the premise of the permanent organisation structure.⁴¹

During 2017, significant work was done with the aim of creating an organisation with clearer formats.⁴² Proposals on statutes for the national consortium and an administration plan were drafted and discussed, as well as a plan for Kriterium’s publisher group. Financial support for 2017 has also been received from the Swedish Research Council, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and the National Library of Sweden. Through the formulation of clearer frameworks for the organisation, significantly better conditions are created for clarity on the organisation and finances, as well as an opportunity to formalise the included members’ duties and responsibilities.

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³⁹ Steering committee’s meeting minutes 14 March 2017
⁴⁰ At the steering committee meeting on 21 August 2015
⁴¹ A proposal on structure and membership in Kriterium’s publisher group, 12 September 2017, appendix to the Steering committee meeting 10 October 2017
⁴² Kriterium’s future organisation: discussion documentation for the steering committee meeting in March 2017, Appendix to the steering committee meeting 14 March 2017
What problems have arisen and why?

Among the problems that Kriterium has struggled with during the pilot phase, some can be viewed as transient while others still need others to find solutions. The previous category includes initial problems with communication, of Kriterium’s idea and purpose, of how the review process is structured and of what costs were current for authors and publishers. Communication problems can partly be assigned to idea and process not being adequately well formulated when the first manuscripts were accepted for review, which took place before the launch of Kriterium. What speaks for the communication, mainly in the review process, becoming clearer is that authors of and the academic coordinator for the books published somewhat later in the project when they are interviewed express greater satisfaction with the information they received than those who were involved in the first two books (Hammar, 2017). In addition, extensive work took place during the period in the steering committee and editorial board to clarify guidelines on the peer review, assignment descriptions to academic coordinators and reviewers, and to clarify the costs for the peer review in communication with the authors/publishers. The Gothenburg University Library has also worked to clarify the review process through the digital platform, including by working out detailed manuals targeted at editors and authors.

The work on the publication system has been characterised by repeated problems that struck everyone involved in the review process, as well as the staff at the Gothenburg University Library and also the communication outwards by Kriterium. This is discussed further under a separate heading. The various steps involved in the review process also mean that an overview has been proposed over when the publishers do what in the process, for the purpose of facilitating their work.

As mentioned above, a great deal was periodically unclear also internally within the consortium. In the interview study, it comes forth that “The division of responsibility in both idea work and organisation was unclear and in some cases unsatisfactory” and that the University of Gothenburg “has borne a large part of the burden” (Hammar, 2017, p. 5); this also applies during certain periods to the representatives for Lund University. The working hours for the project have been paid by the representatives own organisations and it has not always been easy to root the task with the employer (Hammar, 2017). How much time was devoted by the people who have worked most intensively with the pilot project has thereby been at risk of becoming invisible. The same applies to work conducted by support functions, such as the accounting, IT, communications and HR departments. One lesson that is drawn is that there is a large risk that the work with Kriterium is down prioritised if it is to take place within the scope of the ordinary service or, worse, during leisure time. It has been difficult to make visible how much time has been devoted to Kriterium and thereby how much human resources were to be needed (Hammar, 2017). However, it is clear that clearly formulated duties and working hours need to be formulated when the project is to transition into a permanent operation.

43 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 14 March 2017
Costs and funding

The costs for Kriterium and what expenses cover have to some extent varied over time and quite a bit of the costs are hidden, such as in the form of working hours that take place in the scope of the respective representative’s or academic coordinator’s/reviewer’s position, as a part of the regular duties done by support functions and the library at the universities, alternatively voluntarily (see above). In one of the steering committee’s meeting minutes, Kriterium’s costs are lined up in fixed and variable expenses. The fixed expenses include:

- Publication system and website
- Administration (often included in the ordinary service or operation)
- The steering committee’s and editorial board’s work (mainly included in the ordinary position)
- Marketing, including printed materials
- Travel and meetings for the steering committee
- Fee for participation in the OAPEN Library

The fixed expenses were initially covered to a large extent by the Gothenburg University Library, but prior to 2016, Lund University and Uppsala University also requested funding from faculties and their respective university libraries. During the time for the pilot project, all universities have paid their own travel and other meeting expenses, which further impedes the possibilities of an overview over the pilot project’s costs. Since 2017, Gothenburg University Library also invoices the other universities and publishers/publication series for remuneration expenses.

The variable expenses concern what is associated with each manuscript. This mainly involves *ad honoram* to the academic coordinator and expert reviewers as well as a fee for each manuscript that goes through the Ubiquity Press publication system. How the remuneration for the academic coordinator and reviewers has been handled has changed in the course of the pilot project. Initially, Kriterium recommended that an *ad honoram* be paid to the academic coordinator and reviewers, but that this be handled by, and left up to, the publisher and author/editors. At the steering committee meeting in October 2016, a decision was made for Kriterium to take over the handling of the remuneration for those involved as of 2017 and that a fixed cost of SEK 10,000 per manuscript be introduced. Other variable costs for Kriterium, which in total are estimated at SEK 25,000 per manuscript, are subsidised by the

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44 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 9 June 2015
45 Steering committee meeting minutes 28 November 2014, 27 February 2015, 9 June 2015
46 Personal communication with Maja Pelling, 12 October 2017
47 Which is around SEK 30,000 including overhead. Personal communication with Katarina Gustafsson, 25 September 2017
consortium until further notice.48 To cover the costs for this, special funding was applied for and granted by the three national actors in the consortium.49

In addition to variable expenses related to the peer review and Kriterium, there are costs for publication that the publisher and/or author/editors are responsible for. This includes costs for production (including “editorial processing, typography and graphic design”50 as well as language review), marketing of the book and printing expenses. Much of the publication of academic books in Sweden is paid with printing grants from the universities, scholarships or research funding bodies (Bernhardsson, 2011). This has been identified as a situation that may facilitate open access to academic books in Sweden and distinguishes Sweden from many other countries. However, Svedjedal (2017) pointed out that the academic books published at general literature publishers do not have support from printing grants and therefore for commercial reasons can be less interested in offering open access for their production.

As comes forth above, the funding of Kriterium’s operations was uncertain during the pilot project and a great deal has been arranged through the steering committee members and the Gothenburg University Library having taken responsibility for arranging situations arising. The question of the remuneration to steering committee members is also something that is mentioned in the interviews and that some consider is reasonable while others consider that it is included in the regular duties. The risk that has been pointed out above that other tasks are prioritised also appears substantial even with remuneration unless this takes place so that a specific part of the service can be devoted to the assignment. It appears reasonable that at least the chairperson of the steering committee and editorial board and the convening university librarian has an especially allocated percentage in their employment and that this, to guarantee continuity, is paid by the project rather than by the chairperson’s department.51

**Financing of open access publication**

Kriterium does not pay any extra fee to the publisher for the book being made openly accessible via Kriterium’s website. The commercial publishers have thus far chosen to fulfil Kriterium’s minimum requirements by making a PDF available, while the publication series have made the books available in PDF, ePub and Mobi format. In the vast majority of cases, the book is sold in printed format. This model can this way be viewed as a so-called ‘freemium’ model where the digital file can attract purchases of the printed book, or of a digital version with greater functionality (see e.g. Tsoukala, 2015; Eve, 2014).

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48 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 4 October 2016
49 Letter to the Swedish Research Council, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and the National Library of Sweden, February 2017, Ref. no. E2017/98. The letter also includes a request for support to pay for this evaluation.
50 A proposal on structure and membership in Kriterium’s publisher group, 12 September 2017, appendix to the Steering committee meeting 10 October 2017
51 A certain percentage of the service for the editorial board’s chairperson is currently paid by his or her department, according to information in personal communication with Katarina Gustafsson and Maja Pelling, 25 September 2017
The fees associated with the book’s inclusion in Kriterium can be seen as if they pay for open access publication, through the part that concerns a fee to Ubiquity Press. Publication with open access is to be viewed as a prerequisite for Kriterium to handle the review. Authors should accordingly be able to apply for subsidisation of the Kriterium fee from the publication funds that pay Article (and Book) Processing Charges (A/BPC), such as at the universities or with funding bodies. In practice, the Kriterium fee entails a guarantee that the book is made openly accessible and peer reviewed, and also at an extra cost that is somewhere around half of the average APC for an article (Shamash, 2016; Solomon & Björk, 2016).

**Challenges of costs and funding**

Since the beginning of 2017, Kriterium has taken over the responsibility for paying *ad honosorarium* to reviewers and academic coordinators. This entails a greater clarity towards authors/editors and publishers. It is also important from a legitimacy perspective since it can otherwise appear as if it is the author/editor who pays for the review of their own work. Resistance to such a process has also been perceived to come from the authors. That authors/editors or publishers contribute to the costs that Kriterium has for each manuscript (which also includes costs for the publication platform) appears reasonable, but the financial agreement with reviewers and academic coordinators is best negotiated directly with Kriterium. In order for it to be possible for authors/editors to pay the fee to Kriterium through scholarships, research funding or department funding, it should also be kept low. This means, however, that Kriterium accepts variable costs that must be covered within the project.

A challenge regarding accounting that is clearly apparent from the above description is the need for acquiring a uniform perception of all costs that are associated with Kriterium, both direct and indirect. In addition, costs and revenues need to be understood in relation to the budget process at the universities so that advance planning can be improved. Clarity and predictability are important guide words, as well as the possibility of follow-up.

Based on an improved cost picture, the other challenge is to find a sustainable and long-term model for the financing of the operations. This can be achieved through clearer regulations regarding member fees for the universities included in the consortium, which is in the midst of being prepared. In that Kriterium takes over certain variable expenses for review and

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52 The actual costs for peer review are naturally very much higher if one looks at the working hours devoted by reviewers. This time is often included in other duties and takes place *pro bono*, as a service to the academic community. That this is an extensive and commonly invisible effort is apparent e.g. from an attempt to calculate the costs for unpaid peer review of journal articles globally that concluded in the estimate that if the work would have been paid, it would cost on an order of SEK 21 billion per year (Research Information Network, 2008).

53 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 4 October 2016

54 Personal communication with Katarina Gustafsson and Maja Pelling, 25 September 2017

55 Proposals on statutes for Kriterium, 12 September 2017, appendix to the steering committee meeting 10 October 2017
platform, as well as based on the need for strengthening the organisation so that it can handle a larger number of manuscripts, a predictable and long-term support from national funding bodies appears necessary, however, for the operations to be able to continue to be conducted and developed in consultation and with shared responsibility between universities and research funding bodies. This should also involve reviewing future collaboration with more universities and publishers.

**Publication platform**

Contacts with Ubiquity Press on the possibility of using their system and services show up already at the beginning of the pilot project. The impression is initially very positive and Ubiquity Press is perceived at a few meetings in Gothenburg as sharing Kriterium’s desire to be able to have an academic book market with both high quality and good accessibility. After an agreement was signed, Ubiquity Press’ platform has been used to handle the review process, with the handling of manuscripts and review statements in various phases, and to provide Kriterium’s website. Other services that Ubiquity Press offers have either been left as a possibility for authors/editors (e.g. handling of the publication process) or not used at all (e.g. access to a reviewer pool).

The practical work with the publication platform has temporarily worked less well. The platform is perceived as difficult to control, support does not function satisfactorily, the platform has bugs, there has been concern that it would not permit an unlimited number of manuscripts in the process simultaneously, and it has been difficult to predict expenses. For various reasons, obstacles have arisen to making the PDF file of the published book accessible on Kriterium’s website in connection with the publication of the printed book. A new version of the system was released during the period and proved to be more user friendly, and there are hopes that this will facilitate some of the problems. However, it comes forth that quite a few difficulties remain.

The following appear to be central aspects among the needs that Kriterium has in terms of publication systems:

- A well-functioning and easy-to-use system for managing the various stages of the review process

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56 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 28 November 2014
57 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 27 February 2015
58 Hammar (2017)
59 Hammar (2017)
60 Hammar (2017)
61 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 14 March 2017
62 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 4 October 2016
63 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 26 January 2016, Personal communication with Maja Pelling, 25 September 2017
64 Steering committee’s meeting minutes 4 October 2016
○ That can handle at least 30 simultaneous processes
○ That permits both single blind and double blind review
○ Rapid support for the various actor groups that are involved in administration, review and providing accessibility

- A website for information and providing accessibility to the books including metadata, etc.
- A possibility to create ePub and Mobi files
- A possibility to export metadata to other databases, e.g. DOAB and OAPEN Library.
- Secure storage of the materials and preparations for long-term storage of files

Ubiquity Press offers on paper the majority of these functions, but all have, as noted above, not always been available or satisfactory.

### Communication on Kriterium

Already early in the work, a communication plan was prepared to use as a support in the launch of Kriterium and in the future. The launch was viewed as something that needed to be spread out over time, since it needed to take place at times and in contexts that suited the respective university. Among the groups mentioned as target groups for the launch are primarily researchers at affected faculties at the included universities and the universities' management. Secondarily, one also turns to researchers of other universities, to funding bodies (for some reason limited to the funding bodies included in the steering committee), and to those who administratively meet the researchers at the universities in connection with publication, namely researcher service and library personnel.\(^6\) The objectives of the communication are partly to recruit authors and publishers with books that may be suitable for Kriterium, and partly to contribute to “The public discussion on peer review, open access, the book as a publication format, and to establish Kriterium as an actor in the discussion.”\(^6\)\(^6\)

It is primarily actors nationally that appear as recipients of the launch.

At the launch, mainly the universities' and the affected faculties’ communication channels were used, such as newsletters, e-mail, social media and meetings with different groups, both management and employees. A press release was prepared. Another effort with marketing locally was planned for when the first books had been published, preferably with a possibility to build attention around local authors.\(^6\)\(^7\) However, the extent to which this occurred is not clear from the documentation. Also some marketing on a national level was done, such as a presentation of Kriterium at the Open Access Meeting Place 2016 and the project was also later presented at international conferences.\(^6\)\(^8\) A well-attended breakfast meeting was also held

\(^{6}\) Kriterium communication plan, 21 January 2016, Ref. no. F 2015/62
\(^{6}6\) Kriterium communication plan, 21 January 2016, Ref. no. F 2015/62 p. 2
\(^{6}7\) Steering committee’s meeting minutes 26 January 2016
\(^{6}8\) Personal communication with Maja Pelling, 25 September 2017
for interested publishers that publish academic books in the humanities and social sciences in connection with the Göteborg Book Fair 2016. The objective was to call their attention to the possibility of applying for peer review through Kriterium and to begin building a foundation for a larger publisher network in Kriterium’s next phase.

Steps have also been taken to make the Kriterium books visible on other established platforms for peer-reviewed academic open access books, more specifically the OAPEN-driven Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) and OAPEN Library where Kriterium’s books are searchable since July 2017. In a study from University of Michigan Press, DOAB is identified as a source important in the context in order for the users to find their way to e-books (Watkinson, et al., 2017). The same study also showed that social media are important for readers to find their way to the books, which is a lesson that publication series, publishers and not least authors can benefit from.

It is reasonable to assume that Kriterium’s ambition to be a driver in the debate on academic book publishing in Sweden and on open access to these works would be easier to fulfil if there were resources in the form of more people who could specifically devote themselves to the operation to an adequate extent. The interest in driving the overall issues and visions for how it can be done come forth in both the steering committee’s meeting minutes and in the interview report, but it also comes forth that the most of the time out of necessity has been devoted to the practical work that is required to get Kriterium to work as an organisation and to start up and run its peer review and website. Here, there are good possibilities to better reach out with Kriterium’s activities and services, as well as being a voice in the debate if only adequate human resources are secured. Kriterium has also used the universities’ and libraries’ communication officers, but a part of a communication officer position and/or a distinct assignment could contribute further to the visibility of various contexts, as well as towards potential authors that in the debate about the role and future of the academic book within the humanities and social sciences.

Future and reflections

Kriterium and the future of publication within HS

In its three years as a pilot project, Kriterium has achieved the objectives set up prior to the first steering committee meeting in October 2014. The most important among these objectives was at the end of the pilot project having gotten started with the peer review of academic books that could also be made accessible through Kriterium. This is stated with a measurable objective of “at least 5, but preferably 10-20 titles” to be under publication. With seven published books and another 11 in various phases of peer review already before

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69 According to news on the website 18 July 2017
70 Swedish University Peer Review: a pilot project on the quality review of academic monographs. Proposal on a pilot project. Documentation for the ACTA Committee, University of Gothenburg, 19 September 2014, p. 3.
the pilot project is at an end at year-end 2017, Kriterium meets this objective by a wide margin. Another important objective is that the books’ status as peer reviewed should be visible in infrastructure that is relevant to resource allocation. This is achieved in concrete terms by Kriterium having been included as a publication series on the Norwegian list. In addition, it is stated that the pilot project shall be evaluated, which is done among other things in connection with this report, and plans shall have been developed on how the pilot project can be converted into a permanent operation. This work also takes place in autumn 2017.

Kriterium has been developed as an activity unique in many ways. Kriterium offers a solution to how a functioning system for peer review of academic books can be organised within it despite the relatively small Swedish market for academic literature and in cooperation between multiple parties. By structuring itself as infrastructure that is available to all publishers and publication series and for books in various languages, Kriterium enables the expertise required to maintain good quality in the review process to be ensured for all involved actors, even those that rarely have a need to offer peer review.

A gain of peer review, when it works well, is higher quality in the research that is published. This is an advantage not just for the individual author or editor, but also for readers and for research at large. Several voices in the interviews express that the peer review within Kriterium has provided such a result (Hammar, 2017). Peer review of academic books is, however, also an issue that has political and financial potential. By publishing in a series or at a publisher that is included in e.g. the Norwegian list, the book becomes visible in the resource distribution system at several faculties and departments at Swedish universities. Even if some Swedish publishers are on the list, Kriterium means an opportunity for authors who are published by smaller publishers and publication series, which have more irregular publication, to make their book visible in the systems used for research evaluation.

Another research policy issue that Kriterium relates to is that about open access to academic books. Here, one joins a number of international initiatives that aim to find formats for spreading new books in digital format without expense to the reader. For books published at well-known publishers, the publisher usually serves as a guarantor for legitimacy and quality; the company becomes a so-called judgement device. If the publisher is unknown (for example outside the country’s borders) or the reader is doubtful about open access material, Kriterium can, however, serve as such a judgement device by there being a well-described and transparent model for peer review (which often has a high intradisciplinary status), well-established researchers in the steering committee and editorial board, support from national actors, such as Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, the Swedish Research Council and the National Library of Sweden and a history of making open access books available.

The experiences obtained through the work with the pilot project Kriterium should be utilised in the continued work at a national level to promote open access to academic

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71 For example, Daidalos, LiU ePress, Makadam, Nordic Academic Press, Ordfront, Stockholm University Press and Symposion.
books/monographs.72 There are also interesting issues that can be investigated based on Kriterium’s operations and that could form the basis of data collection, but that have not had room within the assignment of this report. An example is following up the relationship between visibility, use and sale by studying download statistics, altmetrics and sales figures.73 Another example is to map how well researchers within the humanities and social sciences are aware of Kriterium and how one views the relationship between peer review and legitimacy.

Kriterium is one of a few initiatives in Sweden to promote open access to academic books. Other examples are Stockholm University Press and, to some extent, Linköping University Electronic Press. These different operations have different focuses and this is a strength that there on a national basis exists in a number of different initiatives around open access. Here, however, there should also be possibilities for future cooperation that can further strengthen Swedish researchers’ possibilities of publishing with open access at the same time that one uses the strengths of the respective initiatives.

An important driver that came forth in the documentation on the development of Kriterium is the cooperation between several different actors with interest in academic book publication and research in the humanities and social sciences. The cooperation between researchers, university libraries, the universities’ publication series work, national actors (KB and funding bodies) and publishers have meant that the steering committee possesses broad knowledge, which in various ways has been able to contribute to developing a sustainable model for Kriterium. At the same time, this broad group of actors can offer legitimacy for Kriterium towards various stakeholders within both the research and publishing world. How well this legitimacy is rooted needs to be investigated further, however.

A future opportunity for Kriterium is to also extend the legitimacy that peer review and involved actors provide to a work by encouraging publication of academic books that are not suitable for printing, but rather utilise the digital media’s affordances. Digital academic editions are an example that is close at hand, but works that include other modalities than text or seek to include research material and examples that are not suitable for printing may become current.74

**Improvement potentials**

Kriterium has good potential to contribute to greater quality, legitimacy, access to and visibility in important research policy systems for academic books in the humanities and social sciences. Those who have been involved in the pilot project have contributed many lessons and conducted some changes in the course of the project. There are however important problems that need to be solved in order for Kriterium to be able to become a

72 An investigation on this is in the start-up phase in the National Library of Sweden’s direction (“Open access to books”) and will be under way during 2017-2019, http://openaccess.blogg.kb.se/samordningsuppdrag/.
73 This is similar to studies that have been conducted by OAPEN-UK, OAPEN-NL and Michigan University Press, even if the documentation from Kriterium is less.
74 Also compare with FWF’s support of ‘innovative publishing forms’.
well-functioning permanent operation. The first challenges organisationally are in making the various tasks visible, developing a clear role distribution and ensure human resources for implementing them; to ensure long-term funding; and to obtain a functioning publication system for handling the review process and making the titles available on the website.

There are advantages of conducting an operation like Kriterium with a small and relatively informal organisation in that the decision pathways become short and that the costs are distributed over many different items. The disadvantages appear large, however. It becomes difficult to demand accountability and to know that certain things are done. The operation is at risk of being down prioritised in the organisation in general. It also becomes difficult to make a collective estimate of what resources are required, and to re-prioritise resources. The pilot project has led to a well-tried model for peer review. Work is under way to make the various tasks in the operations visible by developing statutes and an administrative plan for the consortium.\footnote{Proposal on Statutes for Kriterium, 12 September 2017, appendix for the Steering committee meeting 10 October 2017. Personal communication with Maja Pelling, 25 September 2017} It is important that these clarify how the responsibility is distributed over the consortium’s members. It is likewise important that it is clarified which human resources are needed to run Kriterium and that the operation is visible in the form of clear assignments and position planning linked to this, also for the administrative functions, such as accounting, IT and communication. This time should not be linked too closely to a specific person. Responsibility for tasks in Kriterium cannot in the long term be too dependent on specific individuals running them, but rather human resources need to also be ensured when individuals receive new tasks, change workplaces or for some reason are temporarily away from work. This requires that the various roles have clear work descriptions and that anyone who is to perform a task has the time to do so.\footnote{The members in the steering committee and editorial board that primarily have a strategic role or participate in the review of the peer review process should be able to carry out these tasks without a special portion of their position. That this is considered to be acceptable is supported by the interviews (Hammar, 2017).} The pilot project offers a good ground for describing what tasks need to be carried out in order for the operation to function and to give an estimate of how much time will be spent.

To pay for the fixed and variable expenses associated with running Kriterium, long-term financing needs to be ensured. A model is introduced for this in the proposal on statutes.\footnote{Proposals on statutes for Kriterium, 12 September 2017, appendix to the steering committee meeting 10 October 2017} The model, which largely builds on member fees, takes consideration to more universities in the future being able to be invited to participate in Kriterium, which is important for the initiative to be able to be viewed as national. Here, solidarity responsibility is required among the universities with significant research in the humanities and social sciences. It is also in the interest of the universities to support an infrastructure for publication that promotes both open access to and a potentially increased visibility for all research in the humanities and social sciences in the evaluation model, including models that take into consideration communication and impact on the rest of society. If Kriterium can result in open access to a large number of academic books published at Swedish publishers or publication series, the
costs for this appear to be relatively modest in the context. This interest in promoting publication in the humanities and social sciences is also something that should be important for several of the research funding bodies. It is reasonable that a division of responsibility be brought about where the economic input, as well the possibility of influence, is shared between universities and national research funding bodies. This also means an opening for broadening not only the group of universities and publishers that can become active in the consortium, but to also invite more funding bodies.

Kriterium needs a well-functioning publication system. The cooperation with Ubiquity Press has had some teething problems. The problems that occurred need to be resolved so that Kriterium can offer good service to all actors involved and so that human resources at Kriterium do not need to be allocated to serving as support and identifying bugs unnecessarily. Unless the service can be made to work better, it may be worth considering changing providers. New providers of similar services regularly pop up, but they are naturally also untried and risk being associated with similar problems.

The publication system’s capacity is also relevant to Kriterium’s possibilities to scale up the operations to be able to handle more manuscripts in parallel. For this to function, the publication system needs to permit a significant number of simultaneous review processes. The editorial board may also need to be strengthened in the future if interest in peer review becomes large. For this to take place, more marketing of Kriterium as an idea is probably required.

Communication towards authors and academic coordinators has been maintained as one of the shortcomings in the work with Kriterium. Kriterium’s objectives mean that one needs to reach out to potential authors and publishers. It is also desired to be an actor that can influence future development of the academic book in the humanities and social sciences. In that the operations are consolidated and given a stronger financial base in the future, the resources can better suffice for a necessary visibility nationally in contexts where researchers in relevant subject areas conduct horizon scanning. This may include, for example, appearing in the editorial content in well-distributed publications such as *Curie* and *Universitetsläraren*, submissions in intra-subject and subject-wide discussions on publication, activity in social media, distribution of advertising material at conferences and meetings and reaching out to the universities through Acta series, author/editors and libraries. For this, time is needed from the steering committee’s and editorial board’s members, but also professional support from staff that are competent communication officers.

**Conflicting trends and policies in the surrounding world**

Internationally, there are plenty of examples of projects with innovative solutions that aim to create greater access to and sustainable publication models for academic books in the humanities and social sciences. Kriterium constitutes a contribution to this international movement. At the same time, Kriterium is interesting in that the pilot project works with several different strategies to legitimise academic books with particular focus on the monograph. This can partially be traced to the “conglomerate of ideas” that is mentioned as a
distinguishing factor for Kriterium’s initiation and development is the interviews with members in Kriterium’s steering committee (Hammar, 2017, p. 5). The peer review provides a basis for legitimacy for the books published with open access in Kriterium’s series, even if there is also a risk that the requirements on open access deter some publishers from engaging Kriterium for their books. The peer review is also central to strengthening the academic book’s role in research evaluation and in various models for resource allocation by tying into the legitimacy important in these contexts that is in the peer review process of journal articles and monographs internationally. Kriterium also ties into another international trend, namely greater cooperation between university presses and university libraries. The broader cooperation in Kriterium, which involves researchers, universities, research funding bodies and publishers, provides good potential for Kriterium to contribute legitimacy to the books the consortium makes available.

There is some tension in the argumentation on Kriterium, as expressed in the interviews, between the desire to safeguard publication traditions and the desire to find a system for handling prevailing research policy rules of the game (Hammar, 2017). On one hand, the value is highlighted of it being the conditions of the research that are the governing factor, which in several humanities and social science subjects entails a need for the longer text offered by a monograph and not rarely that the research is communicated in Swedish. In this context, Kriterium is perceived as a researcher-governed initiative that can serve as a “counterweight” (Hammar, 2017, p. 9) to commercial actors and probably also to political actors. At the same time, Kriterium is a reaction to political initiatives, but also to what is perceived as a publication landscape where the possibilities of having academic books published by commercial actors and thereby reaching out to a broad readership becoming increasingly limited.

My interpretation is that in the long term, the sights need to be set on Kriterium contributing to greater quality in and greater spread of Swedish research in the humanities and social sciences. The research policy landscape constitutes an important context and Kriterium has potential to contribute to strengthening academic books in the humanities and social sciences in relation to various research policy initiatives, as well as influencing how the research policy is formulated. The basis for the impact on these issues must, however, be the research published in Kriterium maintaining a high quality, which is the result of a well constructed peer review process.
Unpublished sources

Meeting minutes and documentation

Acta committee meeting minutes 28 November 2013

Swedish University Peer Review: a pilot project on the quality review of academic monographs. Proposal on a pilot project. Documentation for the ACTA Committee, University of Gothenburg, 19 September 2014

Editorial board’s meeting minutes 20 April 2017

Steering committee’s meeting minutes 28 November 2014

Steering committee’s meeting minutes 27 February 2015

Steering committee’s meeting minutes 9 June 2015

Steering committee’s meeting minutes 21 August 2015

Steering committee’s meeting minutes 26 January 2016

Steering committee’s meeting minutes 4 October 2016

Steering committee’s meeting minutes 14 March 2017

Kriterium’s future organisation: discussion documentation for the steering committee meeting in March 2017, Appendix to the steering committee meeting 14 March 2017

Proposal on Statutes for Kriterium, 12 September 2017, appendix for the Steering committee meeting 10 October 2017.

A proposal on structure and membership in Kriterium’s publisher group, 12 September 2017, appendix to the Steering committee meeting 10 October 2017

Other written material

Kriterium communication plan, 21 January 2016, Ref. no. F 2015/62


Personal communication

Personal communication with Katarina Gustafsson, 25 September 2017

Personal communication with Maja Pelling, 25 September 2017

Personal communication with Maja Pelling, 12 October 2017
References


Appendix 1: Active parties and their roles in the review process

Kriterium’s editorial (academic review) board

Kriterium’s academic review board consists of a number of academic representatives from various disciplines and institutions of higher education. As a first step, board members assess the synopsis and the proposed academic coordinator. Secondly, they determine whether a review has been carried out in a satisfactory manner, including the revisions of the manuscript based on the review. Structurally, the review board can be compared with an appointments board, whose members themselves are not experts within each subject area, but who, based on their academic expertise, can determine whether the review process has been carried out in a satisfactory manner.

Academic coordinator

Each manuscript is assigned an academic coordinator. This could be a series editor, which is often the case when a manuscript is published in a publication series. The coordinator might be an ad hoc editor, a subject expert who is assigned responsibility for a particular manuscript. This is usually the case when a publishing house is involved, or when a series editor is unable to serve as the coordinator for some reason. The academic coordinator plays a key role. The coordinator is responsible for selecting peer reviewers, for assessing these reviewers’ comments, and for communicating with the author about what needs to be done. The academic coordinator then presents a summary to the academic review board, about how the reviewers’ comments have been incorporated into the manuscript, and either recommends or advises against publication of the book by Kriterium.

The academic coordinator may delegate practical aspects of the process, such as actual contact with the reviewers, to someone else (e.g. the publishing house) but is ultimately responsible for the contents.

Reviewers

A minimum of two reviewers are assigned to each manuscript. They read the manuscript and provide comments within the Kriterium framework. The review is done as double blind when authors and reviewers are anonymous to each other or as single blind, which means that the reviewer is anonymous to the book’s author, but the author’s name is shown to the reviewer. Reviewers provide an assessment of the manuscript in Kriterium’s digital review platform, where they recommend either major or minor revisions to the manuscript, or indicate its unsuitability for publication. When necessary, there can be several rounds of review.

78 Downloaded from Kriterium’s website: https://www.kriterium.se/site/publish/ (2017-09-18)
**Publication series/publishing houses**

The publication series or publishing house is responsible for all practical work concerning publication of the book: layout, proofreading, printing (if the book is published in printed form), distribution and marketing. They initiate the first contact with Kriterium about having a manuscript reviewed. If a manuscript is not accepted by Kriterium, or if the author cannot implement major revisions required by the reviewers, the series or publishing house can still publish the book, but without the involvement of Kriterium.

**Authors**

The author (or the book editor, in case the book is an anthology) decides whether the manuscript should be submitted to Kriterium for review, in co-operation with the editor’s series or its publishing house. When reviews are completed, the author implements changes to the manuscript in consultation with the academic coordinator.