

Written Exam at the Department of Economics summer 2017

**Philosophy of Science**

Final Exam

August 18, 2017

(3-hour closed book exam)

**This exam question consists of 2 pages in total, including this one.**

*NB: If you fall ill during the actual examination at Peter Bangsvej, you must contact an invigilator in order to be registered as having fallen ill. Then you submit a blank exam paper and leave the examination. When you arrive home, you must contact your GP and submit a medical report to the Faculty of Social Sciences no later than seven (7) days from the date of the exam.*

**Question 1**

- a) During the course we discussed the movement of the logical positivists as well as the philosophy of Karl Popper. Please describe and discuss in your own words similarities and differences between the philosophical approach of the logical positivists and Karl Poppers' ideas regarding science.
- b) Contrast the philosophies discussed/described in your answer above with the philosophy of Thomas Kuhn. Please explain Kuhn's 'incommensurability thesis'. Please also give an example of a paradigm in economics and explain your answer.
- c) What does 'methodological individualism' mean in the context of the science of economics?

## Question 2

According to Dani Rodrik, the famous debate between, on the one side, Harvard professors Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff and, on the other side, a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Thomas Herndon, about coding and conceptual errors in the well-known Reinhart-Rogoff empirical study on public-debt levels illustrates that economics as a discipline can *progress by the rules of science*. Please explain what Rodrik means by this.

## Question 3

An important trend in economic research during the past decades has been the development of "Behavioral Economics".

- a) Sketch how the typical research agenda in behavioral economics has looked like. Discuss, in particular, the interplay between theoretical and empirical research in the development of behavioral economics. You can (but don't need to) illustrate your response with an example from a particular subfield of behavioral economics.
- b) What is the role that experimental methods have played in this process?
- c) Which concern do behavioral economic theories potentially raise from a "Popperian" perspective?