

Swedish Higher Education: Financing, Organisation, Enrolment, Outcomes, 1950-2020

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with

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Summary

Although there is a consensus that higher education and research are crucial pillars in the knowledge society, there remain fundamental gaps in our understanding of basic demographic, social, economic, and organisational conditions that impact the development of Swedish higher education over a longer time span.

To fill these gaps, we propose a multidisciplinary project that includes a historical perspective to analyse the major transformations of higher education from 1950–2020. This project traces transformations across various fields (social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, etc.) and at different levels (basic, advanced and doctoral education). Using statistical data on students and university teachers, in combination with interviews, archival records and policy documents, we propose four studies that address our four basic dimensions of higher education: its organisation, financial conditions, enrolment patterns, and outcomes in terms of relations to the labour market.

The project assembles researchers from four different research milieus: Sociology of Education and Culture (SEC), Uppsala University, Forum for Research on Profession (FPF), Linnaeus University, Stockholm centre for organizational research (SCORE), and Nordisk institutt for studier av innovasjon, forskning og utdanning (NIFU), Oslo, and is associated with the European research program INTERnational COoperation in the SSH: Comparative Socio-Historical Perspectives and Future Possibilities (INTERCO-SSH).

INTRODUCTION: EXPANSION AND DIFFERENTIATION OF SWEDISH HIGHER EDUCATION

Since the mid-twentieth century, Western countries have expanded their systems of higher education tremendously. Sweden is no exception – today, more than 5 per cent of the national budget is invested in higher education and research. Well over 40 per cent of an age cohort enters higher education, as compared to less than 5 per cent in 1950. The aim and the function of higher education have shifted drastically: for long an institution oriented primarily towards the training of a few professionals and civil servants, it is now perceived as one of the most crucial actors in the global knowledge economy, where the systems of knowledge production are continuously shaped in an international context (Nowotny et al. 2001, Manicas and Odin 2002, Gornitzka 2008). Paradoxically, amidst today's consensus that higher education is crucially important for the knowledge provision of society we note some fundamental and urgent gaps in our understanding of basic demographic, economic, social, organisational, and intellectual conditions for the development of the higher education over a longer time span.

Our starting point is that the expansion of the system producing experts on knowledge has profound effects on the structure and organisation of the system itself. Scientific fields, disciplines, and orientations or traditions all have become more differentiated. Also the institutional landscape has become more complex. The links to the wider society have multiplied and increased collaboration between universities, the industry and public organisations is a prioritised goal. In sum: a more complex system of higher education is to a larger extent involved in the more complex social web of knowledge production.

This project scrutinises this historical development by focusing on both the transformations of the higher education sector and its links to the wider society. We will provide, from a relational and comparative perspective, detailed analyses on 1) the organisation and financing of this production site of expert knowledge, 2) the enrolment and production of experts, and 3) the outlet of these knowledge experts in terms of their labour market positions.

An added dimension of the project concerns its overall international comparative approach, where it will make extensive use of existing international connections and resources (cf. International Collaboration and Comparison below). Comparisons extend to leading European countries, such as France, Germany and Great Britain as well as other Nordic countries.

SURVEY OF THE FIELD: SPECIALISED RESEARCH

We have identified four dimensions of higher education research of relevance for our study: organisation, financing, enrolment, and outcomes, and will in this section present the current state of the research within these areas on an international and national level.

Organisation

Institutions of higher education are rather complex organisations. Their activities need to be coordinated between institutional, administrative, and scientific hierarchies, together with differences of organisation between professional subjects and disciplines, creating a high level of organisational complexity and tension (Clark 1983).

In Sweden, the level of complexity has increased, not only as a function of the general expansion, but also by a process of increasing decentralisation, deregulation and reregulation. Once tightly controlled by the state, Swedish universities have gained a more autonomous status – in which, to an increasing extent, they are expected to operate as strategic actors in a market. The introduction of management-inspired techniques in the governance of higher education institutions is in line with international trends (Ferlie et al 2008, Fumasoli et al 2014). As such, new modes of steering are imposed upon the former, more democratic, modes; hence the steering models of Swedish higher education become even more complex and hybrid as well as highly debated (Hedmo et al 2014).

There is a vivid stream of research on organisational changes in the Nordic countries relating to certain reforms such as the implementation of the Bologna process, to the enhancement of “quality” in higher education, followed by systems of quality assurance, and attempts to change traditional modes of teaching and evaluation of students (for Sweden see for example Rider et al. 2013), or nation specific reforms such as the reform in 1993 (for instance Bauer et al 1999), but there is a general lack of more systematic accounts of longer historical transformations and broader perspectives where the organisational aspects are related to other dimensions such as recruitment and financing.

Financing

Economics of education has established itself as a field of research covering a broad range of topics, such as education and economic growth, rates of return, school finance and, more importantly, funding higher education (cf. Johnes & Johnes (eds) 2004, Tsang 2000, Psacharopoulos (ed) 1987). Because of the enormous expansion of higher education in recent decades, the financing of the system has become a key concern in most OECD countries. Consequently, much scholarly debate on the topic has been concerned with different models of funding and the relation between public and private funds (Greenaway & Haynes 2004). Some derive optimal models for education policies from purely theoretical experiments (De Fraja 2002), while others do empirical studies on the actual structures and outcomes of various funding schemes on a system (Williams 1992) or investigate the question of why the cost of higher education is rising (Archibald & Feldman 2011). But even when the outcomes have been studied, they have rarely been broken down on institutions, departments and disciplines. Recent transformations of funding schemes in Sweden do, however, suggest that the effects of different resource allocation schemes play out at the level of departments and disciplines, rather than on a system or institutions level.

Enrolment, expansion and fields

There is a substantial literature on recruitment to higher education in terms of educational attainment and social mobility (see Breen & Jonsson 2005 for an overview). A central tradition is focusing on inequality of access as regards class, gender and ethnicity, which comprises both studies of individual countries (e.g. Mare 1979; Erikson & Jonsson 1996; Modood 2004) and comparative approaches (e.g. Shavit & Blossfeld 1993; Heath, Rothon & Kilpi 2008). Yet another area of research relates to the expansion of higher education. The work of Martin Trow in the early 1970s, on the transition of higher education from an elite system to a mass and consequently a universal system (1972), is canonical.

A parallel tradition perceives higher education as a field with polarities, oppositions and power relations. Based on Swedish official individual data on all registered students and information on students’ gender and their parents’ occupation, a structured space which main dimensions have remained stable over time has been detected (Broady & Palme, 1992; Börjesson & Broady, 2006; 2016). The first axis opposes men and women and separates education in technology and natural sciences from education aiming at professions in health, education and caring. The second axis displays a social hierarchical dimension with social groups rich in economic, social and cultural assets in contrast to groups with small such quantities. This latter dimension also differentiates the traditional universities along with prestigious professional schools and long and selective professional programmes at the pole of students from well-to-do homes from regional university colleges and colleges of health science and shorter non-selective professional programmes at the other pole.

However, we can identify apparent lacunas in the literature. Studies of enrolment tend to focus on short time-spans. If longer periods are covered, the data referred to predominantly cover only certain aspects of the enrolment, such as the total enrolment or the share of a cohort that enters higher education, but more seldom more exhaustive analyses. When social recruitment is examined rather crude measures of social origin are used and finer, often at

least as important, differences as between groups with different kinds of assets are invisible. Finally, for field analysis, the results relate to the 1990s and 2000s and there is a need for analyses of both more recent and older states of the field. Furthermore, there is a lack of a more specialised analysis of certain institutions and fields of study, which would enhance our understanding of specific higher education institutions and disciplines.

Higher education to labour market transitions

Often considered part of the field of economics of education, school-to-work transitions is usually constructed as an individual investment decision in line with human capital framework (for a review of the field, see Bradley & Nguyen 2004), i.e. whether to stay on in higher education or enter the labour market. Other recurring perspectives are signalling theory and social closure. As higher education – or education at any level, for that matter – expands, several authors argue that field of study becomes more significant in allocating individuals to jobs (see Klein 2011 for an overview of fairly recent literature). Further, there are results from comparative studies of European data suggesting that there are systematic differences between fields of study in how they affect unemployment and labour market status, with degree-holders from the humanities having a lower occupational status (Reimer & al 2008). Our approach, where we start from the structural outcome of the social usage of the educational system (see Theoretical framework below) and study the labour market transitions as a continuation of the various social and educational trajectories, has no immediate counterpart in recent research.

Conclusions

Although higher education research is a vital field, it is highly specialised and fragmented. Few studies take longer time-spans into account. There is a lack of research that integrates relationships between organisation, financing, enrolment and outcomes. Studies of the interplay between national and local levels, as well as more structural approaches in general are rarely found in the literature.

AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DESIGN

The overall aim of the project is to provide a *synthetic* modern history of Swedish higher education, in the context of the transitional period from elite over mass to universal access to higher education (Trow 1972).

We will accomplish this by differentiating four major *analytical* areas, which will be studied independently and then put together in the larger synthesis. These four areas are: 1) *organisation*, 2) *financing*, 3) *enrolment* and 4) *outcomes* in terms of labour market transition. For each area we will investigate both *structural* and *temporal* aspects. We will also include different analytical levels, distinguishing a *national*, an *institutional* and a *disciplinary* level. Yet a further ambition is to include all *levels* of higher education, from basic, over advanced to doctoral level, as well as *types* of higher education, comprising both professional programmes and general courses and programmes.

For the four major analytical areas we pose specific research questions:

- **Organisation.** For the national level, what are the conditions inherent in the different major reforms of Swedish higher education (especially 1955, 1977, 1993 and 2007) for educational and institutional differentiation and autonomy, for expansion and consolidation of student and staff volumes, as well as for selection procedures? For the local level, how do the institutions and disciplines handle the changing conditions in order to prosper and expand? How does the interface between disciplines and the organisational structure develop?
- **Financing.** On the national level: What major financing schemes and systems are applied to higher education? How does the actual financing develop over time? On the local level:

How is the financing of higher education organised at the institutional, faculty and department level? What is the balance between different financial posts? How does the ratio between education and research, and between public and private funding, develop over time?

- **Enrolment:** How is the field of higher education socially structured and to what extent is it transformed over time, especially when the system expands rapidly? Which are the social characteristics of various fields of study, disciplines and institutions and how do they change over time?
- **Outcomes:** Did the transformations of higher education affect the relations between supply and demand of academic labour, and if so, how did this play out in graduate population in general, among those who pursued post-graduate studies, and within the professional landscape, how did academisation affect the professional landscape?

These four major analytical areas and the related research questions have been operationalised into four studies that correspond to and address these four basic dimensions of higher education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FIELDS, CAPITAL, PROFESSIONS

Our basic understanding of Swedish higher education is that it can be viewed as a field in Bourdieu's terms, where on the one hand students endowed with different resources are engaged in a struggle for scarce educational goods, and on the other hand institutions, faculties, departments and disciplines with different traditions, resources, and positions compete to attract students, staff, and research grants (Bourdieu 1989; Broady 1990). Such fields are largely structured by the distribution of various forms of 'capital': assets or resources recognized as valuable in relevant social settings (for France, see Bourdieu 1989; for Sweden, see Börjesson & Broady 2006; 2016; Lidegran 2009). The field approach will also be applied to research education, following the paradigmatic example laid out in *Homo Academicus* by Bourdieu (1984), and we will empirically test if there exist oppositions between autonomous and heteronomous research; internal and external funding; "soft" and "hard" sciences; or nationally and internationally-oriented sciences in research training. We will also draw from related studies on scientific organisation, such as Randall Collins (1975, 1998), Richard Whitley (1984), Burton Clark (1983) and Tony Becher (1989), in order to provide a wider understanding of the field of higher education and research as a relatively autonomous social sphere.

In addition to field theory, theory of the professions is adequate for analysing the changing intersection between the occupational structure and the educational setting. Training credentials are perceived here as "the hinge between two major institutional complexes – those organising the performance of work and those organising training for that performance" (Freidson 2001). In the period covered in the project, credentials and training for professional practice have shifted from being primarily outside the university to being exclusively university-based. Measured in terms of students, their study programmes and their teachers, professional and vocational education comprise an increasing share of higher education (Brint et al. 2005). Profession theory – highlighting social closure, jurisdictional conflicts in the systems of professions, and the role of a scientific knowledge base in safeguarding jurisdiction (Abbott 1988, Abbott 2005) – presents a descriptive grid that allows us to capture crucial aspects of the transformations of higher education and research.

STUDIES

The project comprises four studies relating to the four themes of the project: organisation, financing, enrolment, and outcomes. For each area both a national and a local level will be

examined. The separate studies will all contribute to the synthesis of the modern history of Swedish higher education.

I Organisation

The higher education landscape has become increasingly more complex with regard to its organisation at both the national and the local level, and the objective of this study is to produce in-depth knowledge about these transformations at both levels as well as the interplay between the levels.

1) On a national level

a) **The general policy development.** We consider the major university commissions and corresponding reforms (especially 1977, 1993 and 2007), commissions on academics and the functions of university staff, commissions on doctoral student training, in order to, at a precise level, analyse the conditions inherent in these reforms for educational and institutional differentiation and autonomy, for expansion and consolidation of student and staff volumes, as well as for selection procedures. The main objective is to highlight changes in the overall organisational framework of higher education and research training.

b) **The transformation of the institutional landscape.** The study aims at depicting the transformation of institutional landscape of Swedish higher education, including the establishment of new institutions, changing status of institutions, mergers and terminations of institutions. We will relate this study to the subsequent studies of financing and enrolment and add information about financial resources and student recruitment in order to enrich our understanding of the institutional landscape.

c) **The disciplinary and educational structure and its changes.** In this study, we make administrative definitions of disciplines, fields of study, and subjects, our research object with the aim of capturing a disciplinary and educational structure and its transformations. To operationalise this, the study will analyse national official nomenclatures of education and research, developed by the national statistical agencies and other agents such as the national agencies for higher education. An important question here is to examine the diversification of the academia with increasing specialisation and the birth of new disciplines. A special interest will be devoted to multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary fields of study.

2) On the local level

a) By focusing a **set of different institutions**, the organisation at the level of institutions will be compared and analysed over time and in relation to the overall changes at the national level. We examine how the institutions handle the changing conditions at the national policy level in order to prosper and expand. Of special importance is to analyse how the disciplinary structure of each institution is organised. For instance, to what extent do departments correspond to disciplines and subjects and how does this change over time?

b) A study of the **institutionalisation and proliferation of disciplines** is motivated since a key feature of the post-war higher education in Sweden was the unification of training programmes, employment structures and reputational networks in line of disciplines and subjects (Whitley 1984; cf. Abbott 2001). As part of an international comparative study (INTERCOSSH), particular attention will be paid to the institutional development of anthropology, economics, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology.

II Financing

Although the question of financing the educational system have become a key concern in most OECD countries, knowledge on funding schemes and the distribution of funding in Swedish higher education is largely lacking, particularly in regard to the historical development of funding and the distribution of this funding between different institutions and disciplines. The international literature has mainly focused on the present and on aggregated categorisations (e.g. Williams 1992; Slaughter 1997). This study on government funding of higher education will focus on both the development of funding schemes over time and the outcomes

of these schemes. Different analytical levels are included in the investigation: (a) the entire sector, (b) the four largest universities in Sweden and various (c) faculties and (d) institutions at the selected universities.

The research period 1950–2020 includes many reforms that may have affected the economic maneuver for universities and institutions. We are particularly interested in the changes introduced in 1993, when universities were made “extremely sensitive to students’ wishes” as the resource allocation system was based on how many students that begin, and complete their courses, at a particular institution (SOU 2015:70, p. 233). From now on it could be economically disastrous to have few students and/or many students who could not handle the course objectives.

We will work with longitudinal comparisons of quantitative material at the more general level and with cross-sectional comparisons, of both quantitative and qualitative sources, at a departmental level. How has state funding changed over this 70-year period (level a and b)? To what degree are universities dependent on private money (level b)? How does the financing of the higher education develop at the faculty level (level c)? How do the funding patterns *within* faculties develop? Has the economic power balance between different institutions and disciplines changed over time (level d)? How has the resource allocation system influenced the course content before and after the reform 1993 (case studies of reading lists selected years in certain institutions at level d)?

Besides public budget plans and public databases on the financing of research and education, archival documents (financial statements, reading lists, etc.) from various faculties and departments will be central (cf. Andréén 2009a, b).

III Enrolment

This study focuses on student enrolment within Swedish higher education based on complete national individual-based statistics from Statistics Sweden and aims at both capturing changes over time using time-series analysis, and mapping the overall structure of the entire national field at different points in time with correspondence analysis (Le Roux & Rouanet, 2004, 2010). By this dual strategy we can trace both the structural and temporal aspects as well as temporal shifts in the structure. We will also apply a long time span, enabling studies of the crucial moments of the system: the expansion in the 1960s, the retraction in the 1970s and stability of the 1980s, the rapid expansion in the 1990s, and the circumstances before and after the 2007 Bologna reform.

We can build on existing analyses of the state of the field in 1986, 1998, 2006 and 2009, and complement these with more recent and more historical states of the field, in order to assess the stability of the structure. In addition to analyses of the entire field of higher education, we will develop more precise analyses of relatively autonomous areas sharing common distinctive features (sub-fields), such as teacher education, and science and technology education. These subfields will also be analysed over time.

In addition, the enrolment in research education will be investigated using individual-based data on enrolment in doctoral education from 1974 and onwards. Such analysis has never been carried out before and besides analysing the field of doctoral training and its transformation over time, we can relate it to the field of higher education and analyse differences and similarities between different levels of higher education.

These studies of the entire Swedish field of higher education and of doctoral training at different points in time will allow us to show the most profound divisions between programs, fields of study, and institutions, according to social origin, gender, age, national and regional origin, educational background and more. In this way we can establish if social divisions are similar, and similarly shaped or distributed, across time.

IV Outcomes

The labour market for trained academics has been a key concern since the 1920s, as evidenced by several government commissions (e.g. SOU 1935:52; SOU 1949:48; SOU 1966:67). Surprisingly, there are a lack of studies on long-term historical developments of the relations between supply, i.e. graduated students, and demand, i.e. the labour market. We hope to address this lack of knowledge through two investigations into the relations between higher education and labour market: one on the overall patterns, and one on professional training and the professional landscape.

1a. Supply and demand. Higher education and labour market 1970–2015

We use data from the graduated students register (1962–2011) and labour market information (1970–2015) to study the careers of graduates from 1962–2011. For the graduates, fields of study, subjects and institutions will be analysed in relation to occupations, sectors and positions in the labour market. What are the effects of a large supply of graduates in relation to the demand, such as in arts and media? When did the shortage of teachers occur and what effects has it had on the recruitment possibilities of schools?

1b. Careers of doctors 1973–2015

Apart from sporadic surveys, such as Blom & Pikwer (1976), there has been no Swedish study on the labour market of doctoral students over a long-term period. We use data on all doctoral students who graduated between 1973–2010 and labour market information (1970–2015) to find out whether a career within the higher education system ranks higher and attracts groups with the most resources or if such a career is more of a second choice solution. A comparison of labour market outcomes between different subjects are of particular interest since the previous refuge of humanities doctors – the upper secondary schools – no longer is an option. Are there patterns related to particular subject areas or disciplines? Are there any particular trends over time? How do the funding schemes (II Financing) feed into the labour market strategies of the doctors?

2. Professional training and the professional landscape

The training of professional groups has been transferred to the Swedish university system in successive waves: from the gradual integration of professions previously harboured at the 19th century institutes, to the formal inclusion of post-secondary education programs in 1977 – becoming the basis of the new regional university colleges –, to the new vocationalism emerging from the 1990s (Agevall & Olofsson 2013; 2014). How have these inclusion processes, crucial to the character of long-term educational expansion, shaped the university system? What new axes of differentiation have risen with each wave? And how has academisation affected the professional landscape, in terms of outcomes and in terms of the academic density of the labour market?

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COMPARISON

The project will be link to a number of international programmes and milieus.

One crucial international collaborator is the major research programme INTERCO-SSH that assembles research environments in France (managed by Gisèle Sapiro, CNRS/CESSP, EHESS), Great Britain (Patrick Baert, University of Cambridge), the Netherlands (Johan Heilbron, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam), Austria (Christian Fleck, Universität Graz) and others. See www.interco-ssh.eu. This programme, unique in its large-scale scope and the collection of massive amounts of fundamental data, explores the institutional development of seven disciplines from 1945 to today, in six European countries. Sweden is partially included as SEC has begun collaborating without EU funding in the INTERCO-SSH programme. As such SEC will be able to share methods for data collection and analyses and engage in cross-national comparisons and collaborative dissemination of results.

In 2011, SEC initiated the network Nordic Fields of Higher Education, which obtained funding from NordForsk, 2011–2014, and gathers around 50 researchers from Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway. The network is currently integrated within the project Nordic Fields of Higher Education, also directed by Mikael Börjesson and funded by NordForsk, 2013–2016. The project analyses the national fields of higher education in above mentioned countries and compares the structures and their transformation over time with regard to enrolment patterns and organisational structures. This will give us a solid ground for further comparisons with the Nordic countries. In addition, the Nordic network of profession research (NORDPRO) will be most valuable. Also NIFU plays an important role in this context providing a truly Nordic ground for the project with its vast experience of research on higher education.

DISSEMINATION

The project will disseminate results through several channels aiming at diverse, national and international, audiences. By adjoining the project to the European programme INTERCO-SSH, we will be able to present results continuously at international workshops, conferences and seminars. In addition, project members will regularly present results at international scientific conferences in sociology, the sociology of education, history of education. A website will be created for reporting project-related publications and events. Of crucial importance for the project will be interaction with stakeholders in the higher education sector, including the Swedish Higher Education Authority, the Ministry of Education, the Swedish Research Council, VINNOVA, the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences, private research foundations, the Association of Swedish Higher Education, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations. We will present and discuss our results from the project in order to improve our research and share a more in-depth knowledge of the social, economic and organisational conditions for knowledge provisions within the sector. The most important and long-lasting channel of dissemination, publications, will be presented below.

PUBLICATION PLAN

A variety of publications is planned. Articles in international journals will be prioritised. At least 8 articles are foreseen, 2 for each of the studies 1–4. One PhD dissertations will be produced during the project period. The major publication of the project will be a monograph in Swedish summarising the main results from the project, with a parallel publication in English. Such a monograph will be essential for bringing the different studies together in an overall conclusion of the project, thus creating a well-needed synthesis of the modern history of Swedish higher education. An additional advantage for the project is the link to the INTERCO-SSH programme which implies opportunities to participate in the publications that are planned in the INTERCO-SSH programme.

BUDGET, PERSONNEL AND RESEARCH ENVIRONMENTS

Given the complexity and the scope of the research task take on in the project, we propose a model of three more general studies in the beginning of the project, and subsequently an additional study, case studies and conclusions in the end of the project, justifying a timespan of four years, 2017–2020.

In order to meet the challenges of the research task, we have composed a research team that assembles five senior researchers from four different research milieus, each prominent in their field. Mikael Börjesson, professor in Sociology of Education, Uppsala University, will direct the project and be responsible for the study III (in total 50 per cent in the project, whereof 30 per cent supported by Uppsala University). Börjesson has a solid experience of directing large research project – also in a Nordic context – and is specialised in higher education, databases, and geometric data analysis. In collaboration with professor emeritus

Donald Broady and professor Marta Edling, Börjesson is directing the research unit Sociology of Education and Culture (SEC), Uppsala University, which will be the hosting milieu for the project. SEC, founded in 1990, is a node in Scandinavia for research in the vein of certain French traditions founded by Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Paul Benzécri and others. Today, SEC comprises around 50 scholars and runs 10 larger projects mainly funded by the Swedish Research Council (VR) including studies on cultural fields, history of education, formation of elites, students' trajectories, and transnational transformations of the educational and cultural fields.

Ida Lidegran, member of SEC and senior lecturer in Sociology of Education, Uppsala University, will be responsible for studies of the organisation of and enrolment to multi-disciplinary areas and the institutional landscape in study I. Lidegran has recently directed a larger project on education in sustainable development in higher education (funded by VR) and has published on educational research and elite education.

Ola Agevall, professor in sociology and, since 2010, research director of the Forum for Research on Profession (FPF), a multidisciplinary group of approximately 20 scholars, at Linnaeus University, will be responsible for study IV. Agevall is currently involved in the project Carriers of knowledge society (VR). With FPF the project gains access to in-depth knowledge on profession theory and studies of professional education and the professional landscape.

Martin Gustavsson, associate professor in Economic History, researcher at SCORE, Stockholm University and Stockholm School of Economics and member of SEC, will be in charge of the study of financing. Gustavsson currently runs a project on the financial situation of students in Swedish higher education, funded by VR. SCORE is the leading centre of research on organisations and contributes valuable expertise within this area to the project.

Agnete Vabø, sociologist and research professor at NIFU, Oslo, will be in charge of study 1 in collaboration with Börjesson. Vabø has published numerous reports, books and articles on change in higher education with particular focus on the academic disciplines and the academic profession. Among several projects she is directing a large international research project *Quality of Norwegian Higher Education, Pathways, Practices and Performances* (2014–2017), funded by the Research Council Norway.

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