

**Best for the Job?**  
**Factors and strategies governing the hiring process of academics**  
**in Swedish higher education**

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A proposal for a dissertation project

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## ***What is behind getting a job in the academy?***

### Introduction

This proposal for a dissertation project questions the last step of recruitment in Swedish higher education. When somebody applies for a position at a university or college experts and members of appointment boards use the notions excellence in teaching and research when judging applicants' CV: s and publications. The law states that the same care shall be given to the scrutiny of the two notions. I want to study how and why different participants' view teaching and research differently. What do they really build their judgement on?

The academic hiring process is strictly regulated. To begin with an employment profile has to be used for advertisement. This profile is former decided by a faculty board. This first step means that a department board and administrators at a faculty office together describe requirements such as discipline area and work assignment. After the position is advertised candidates can send applications' to the faculty office. The next step is the departments suggestion on whom should be appointed as experts/referees (two or three depending on position) to be decided by a faculty board. Only professors from other universities of the scientific area can be chosen for this mission. This process usually takes several months. Experts write separate judgements ranking applicants' qualifications in science, teaching and other activities. All judgements are made public. My research deals with the confrontation between research and teaching articulated in academic hiring. Teaching merits must be taken into account with equal and the same precision as scientific merits. The appointment board is called to a meeting. This board usually has four members holding a teaching position at the university (chosen by the faculty board) and two student members (chosen by the local student union). The head of the department and experts take part in the meeting on who to recommend but are not part in the final decision sometimes followed by interviews with top candidates. The appointment board makes a final recommendation. The faculty board, department head or the president of the university decides depending on position.

Historically the idea of teaching at university level was built on scholarly knowledge. The large increase in the number of students at the universities started a chain reaction in the organization of higher education. These factors have effects on the procedure of selecting applicants for teaching positions. Recently it was made possible for an instructor to apply for

promotion as an assistant professor and an assistant professor for full professor on bachelor's degree in addition to excellent teaching merits.

My theoretical standpoint builds on results from an earlier study when I examined 32 positions as associate professor with 162 applicants. I analyzed 62 written judgements and documents from 12 appointment boards at six faculties at Uppsala University. This study uncovered the tension between members in appointment boards and experts. Board members underline the combination of excellence in teaching and research and experts underline excellence in science. This shows a struggle within the academic field and made me interested in the field analyzes of French sociologist P. Bourdieu. A field is seen as 'a system of relations between agents or institutions that fight over something they find valuable'. In 'Homo Academicus' (1996a) Bourdieu focuses on reproduction and socialization within an academic system.

Do the participants in the hiring process really know what they are talking about? There seems to be no consensus on who are the best ones or on the valuation of the criteria used to rank top candidates. What justifies a decision? Are social factors decisive in competition? I do not believe it is possible to establish criteria for the notions, as every appointment is unique. I will not try answering the question how can excellence in teaching and research be judged in the very best way. I will instead search for investments and strategies in this struggle through documents and interviews. What 'symbolic capital' is necessary for getting a job in the academic world? Experts involved in the struggle above will be asked for new judgements written during different appointment procedures. Chairmen of the appointment boards, main decision-makers in the hiring process, will have my attention. Case studies on 'confrontation cases' will follow. I want to clarify the academic hiring and find out what is hidden in the mixture of social and scientific factors. This is not trivial. The hiring process affects science. If this impact on academic world is explained and understood I believe this will benefit education, research and society in the future.

This introduction is meant to describe my point of departure for the project. The following text is my proposal for a dissertation project.

Background

My interest in the hiring process of academic teachers began a few years back when I carried out a survey (Gunvik Grönbladh & Giertz, 1998). 32 positions as senior lecturer with 162 applicants, 62 written assessments, documents from 12 appointment boards at six faculties at Uppsala University were examined. The aim of the survey was to map how teaching qualifications had been documented among applicants' CV: s, in advertisement and what experts and appointment boards had judged as teaching qualifications. The main result showed that in 1995/96 was little documentation of teaching skills. Teaching hours standing in front of students dominates the applicants' documentation. Experts focused on breadth<sup>1</sup> and quantitative experience in their written assessments on excellence in teaching. An important result concerning this proposal, is that the survey points out a tension between members of appointment boards and experts in judging applicants' qualification. Table 1 shows this difference between them in judging the notions excellence in teaching and research:

Table 1. Comparison between experts and appointment boards decision in appointment procedure for 28 positions as senior lecturers in fall semester 1995 and spring semester 1996 at Uppsala University. Percentage.

Stressing excellence in	Experts decision (%) 1995/96*	Appointment boards decision (%) 1995/96
Teaching and research	45	70
Teaching	24	20
Research	31	10
Total	100	100

I find this sign of struggle interesting. Why do the experts and board members come to different conclusions on who should be appointed to an academic position. What hides behind this circumstance? Maybe there could be a clue to an explanation in the way that Becher (1989) describes universities? The academic world is a geographical territory occupied by tribes with loyalty to the discipline in uneasy coexistence with management and administration. Becher states that this causes a ceaseless process of negotiation: trading and dealing, invasion and attrition as different forces wrestle over freedom, accountability and control. Bechers way of describing the academy as a tribal system, to me underlines the word

<sup>1</sup> A matrix with different attributes such as breadth, depth, originality, creativity/pioneering, methodological stringency and many-sidedness was used in data collection (created by Lindberg, 1997).

struggle in the hiring process. The anthropologist Sahlins (1968) has written the book *Tribesmen*, where he uses the notion 'Warre' as he describes struggle within a tribal system:

Warre exists, but mainly in the form of an underlying circumstance. In fact, tribesmen live in kin groupings and communities within which feuding is usually suppressed, and they have benefit too of economic, ritual and social institutions conducive to good order. To speak of Warre, then is to uncover by analysis tendencies ordinarily concealed by powerful impositions of the cultural system. Primitive anarchy is not the appearance of things. It is the unconscious of the system."(p.7)

Is there something conscious and unconscious in the strategies behind the sign of struggle in the process of hiring an academic teacher? It seems to me that it must be worth a try asking questions about similar processes in the academic field.

Another motive for my interest in the hiring process of academics comes from a personal experience. After publishing the survey (Gunvik Grönbladh & Giertz, 1998) persons that I earlier had a professional relationship within the academy and who used to greet me stopped doing that. After reading Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* (1996a) I found a good enough explanation to this new experience. I learned that investigating close surroundings, 'ones holy ground' can be viewed as giving away the rules of the game. Bourdieu himself had had the same experience after publishing *Homo Academicus* and he uses the expression 'a book for burning'. I also got comments on the survey such as wrong method, wrong results, wrong applicants' and 'a student is not capable to carry through a study of the academic hiring process'. This reaction made me think twice before I decided to choose this area as a subject for a dissertation project. First I wondered if it was worth the hassle to continue to find out more about the hiring process. I came to the conclusion that this reaction on a simple survey must hide something very interesting to be revealed. Today I see a challenge in researching the academic hiring process.

This leads to a third motive for my project, which can be simplified as 'times are in changing'. I will use an historical example to try to explain why I find this important.

A retrospective on appointing someone to a position in the academic world

Writings of Max Weber (1864 – 1920) from early 1900's show how recruitment to an academic position troubled him. Weber states:

No professor likes to recall discussions on appointing somebody to an academic position, as they are very seldom pleasant. And likewise I have to say that in those many cases I know about, there was without exception good will to let pure reasons determine the outcome. (1991, p.13) [My own translation]

Weber is worried about the bureaucratization and state capitalism, which he believes, threatens the old German university. In one of his lectures in Munich in 1919 (1991, p.11) he describes how the old university is threatened by the market economy and capitalistic production and that this already has been established in the medical and natural sciences faculties. He stresses that individual creativity will be lost when the statues of the old university change. I find his example similar to changes today expressed in commission work after commission work and reorganization after reorganization in Swedish Higher Education resulting in new statues. This must effect the struggle between experts and members of appointment boards.

Most of all Weber worries about that the quality in research will be lost when the appointment system turns bureaucratic. He defends what he finds to be the very last outpost to warrant quality in science – the appointment procedure for "Privatdozent". It is the loss of the collective process in the academy compared to the novelty to hire young researchers as assistants that worries him. Weber means that a position as assistant is an American invention. This turns the researcher into a common wage earner. In "Essays in Sociology" Weber argues:

In the field of scientific research and instruction, the bureaucratization of the always existing research institutes of the universities is a function of the increasing demand for material means of management. ... Through the concentration of such means in the hands of the privileged head of the institute, the mass of researchers and docents are separated from their 'means of production' in the same way as capitalist enterprise has separated the workers from theirs. (Zeitlin, 1968, pp. 223-24)

To me Webers arguments seem very up to date. This discussion, the threats from the outside world causing changes in the academic system is still debated. Take for instance 'The New Production of Knowledge' (Gibbons et al, 1994, p.3). The authors argue that knowledge no longer is produced as collective process in a scientific society but mainly in context of

application turning from mono- and multidisciplinary to transdisciplinary. Changes like this must also effect recruitment to a position in the academy? Will hiring an academic teacher still be built on scholarly knowledge or will a wider set of criteria take control? Will the next step in due to changes be that the academic department decides to turn to a business consultant in hiring an academic teacher? Or is the old system with experts judging applicant's qualifications still going strong? These questions are crucial in the struggle in the hiring process. Writing judgements is part in an ongoing struggle over specific assets in an academic field. Both in Lund and Uppsala in 1903<sup>2</sup> the boards of the university state that teacher's ability to engage in academic teaching has to be regarded as a part of scientific excellence. This cannot be separated. This means that it is the academic teacher's skill in using *subject content*, that is to be judged. I have found that judging an academics teaching skill is nothing new. It has been discussed for a long time. This means that this discussion is not simply caused by today's masseducation. Already in reorganization of higher education in Sweden in 1852<sup>3</sup> the statues expresses that 'proved skill in communicating science' connected to the discipline shall be judged. In 1876 the statues establishes the procedure where judgement by experts must take place before the members of the faculty ranked and proposed to the university board who should be appointed as academic teacher. Followed by the members of the university board's judgement of applicants' qualifications before the Chancellor and through Royal Regulation finally a decision was made. Teaching excellence has been an important aspect of the hiring process at the university in Sweden for over 150 years. During all these years this ability has been regarded as one aspect of the ability to do research.

Will it in the future be common to judge aspects of qualifications as aspects outside the ability to do research? The result of the 1989 Commission of Higher Education recommended that the equal and same care have to be taken in account when judging teaching and research qualifications and other activities. But today there are more aspects of the grounds for judging such as administrative skill, clinical skill or skill in co-operation with surrounding society. This is to be connected to 'other necessary qualifications' and goals of equality and diversity. This means that it is no longer only a matter of scientific skill and teaching skill. 'The same care 'also concerns other activities. This is not an easy judgement. In this short retrospective I tried to explain what I mean by 'times are in changing' in connection to the hiring process. To sum up I want to return to Webers comments on the matter:

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<sup>2</sup> Rovio-Johansson & Tingbjörn (2001).



I hardly know any career on earth that mere chance plays such a big part in. (1991, p.13) [My own translation]

He strengthens his picture of recruitment using the word hazard and states that mostly mediocre persons succeed in getting a permanent position at the university. He explains it with collaboration between different groups (i.e. faculty proposals) and the state department of education. The outcome is based on political grounds. He also describes how he himself follows a different principle. Those who have been his students are sent to another university to pass judgment. He did not want to favor his own students. Unfortunately this private procedure caused a situation where one of his best students failed to qualify for a permanent position. Weber is disappointed and states that becoming a full professor is more of game – hazard – than rational decision processes. Is it a hazard? My question is what is behind getting a job in the academy?

### *Earlier research*

Illustration of the notion excellence in teaching in earlier research

As a starting point I believe it to be a good idea to indicate the diversity of the meaning of - excellence in teaching. It seems to be far from a univocal notion among academic participants in the procedure of appointment. One way of indicating this is by taking a simple investigation on the web as an example. A search<sup>4</sup> in Digital Dissertations on the web covering the period 1980 – 2000 showed 46 hits on "excellence in teaching". The references mainly covered research during the 1990's concerning evaluation and social psychology. Testing the notion "teaching skill" gave as result 55 hits concerning behavior models and "computer training development". Taking the notion "teaching proficiency" instead give as search result seven hits with research based in ethnography, evaluation and test instruments. Searching for the notion "effective teaching" showed 872 hits. Defined only as "effective teaching in higher education" gave 23 hits. These 23 dissertations were published during the period 1980 – 1998. Behaviorist models, cognitive approaches, constructivist approaches and human resource development models in this example represent different aspects of the history of learning.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

One view on “excellence in teaching “ is Dahllöf (1991; 1995; 1997). His work describes screening and selection of academic teachers effected by frame factors such as subject, level, goal etc..<sup>5</sup> Dahllöf (1997, p.49) also points out that Mc Keachie (1963) has shown that it is senseless to search for a standardized method that in all situations leads to the best result in recruitment of teachers. Dahllöf would instead like to see several different ways of handling what he chooses to express as ”teacher suitability”:

To summarize, this means

- that the present emphasis on selection procedure, general teacher training courses, and staffing policies focused on individually directed incentives ...
  - should be exchanged for ...
  - much stronger emphasis on a consultancy model for an interactive process-centered evaluation.
- ...(Dahllöf, 1991 p.150)

Dahllöf (1997) also states<sup>6</sup> that the only thing that good teachers have in common is that they care about the students and that they can inspire the students through enthusiasm. He also argues that enthusiasm for scientific problems can be created in many different ways.

A meta study made by Feldman (1987) reviews the research that has been done on the connection between research productivity or scholarly accomplishment of faculty members and their teaching effectiveness (as assessed by their students). On average, there is a very small positive association between the two variables. Berglund (1987) discusses this study and asks the question “Excellence in research and teaching – is there a connection? “ Berglund concludes that there is no negative connection but there is a tendency for excellence in research to have a good effect on excellence in teaching. Berglund states that this shows that all academic teachers should participate in research. The lack of connection between the notions support that both notions have to be assessed before appointing someone to an academic position. If there had been a full connection (positive or negative) it would be enough to judge just one of them.

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<sup>4</sup> The search was done in May 2001.

<sup>5</sup> In Swedish: Den fråga man bör ställa är, sammanfattar Dahllöf, *dels* vilka undervisningsstrategier som är mest effektiva – för vilka mål, för vilka studenter, och under vilka förhållanden; *dels* i vilken utsträckning enskilda lärare är i stånd att tillämpa dessa strategier – för vilka utbildningar, och under vilka ramvillkor. (SOU 1992:1, s.186)

<sup>6</sup> Dahllöf builds his statement on a research review by Trent & Cohen, 1973.

Illustrating the notion "excellence in teaching" in this paper, I wish to return to the historical aspect and the report<sup>7</sup> written by Rovio-Johansson & Tingbjörn (2001). I find that it gives a solid contribution to the matter. The authors covers the history and recruitment procedure of four notions; teacher & teaching skill, excellence in teaching and pedagogical qualifications, in official documents in Sweden during the period 1852 – 2000. The authors explain that they have chosen to study the notions from a phenomenographic perspective<sup>8</sup>. Rovio-Johansson & Tingbjörn (2001) report points out that it is necessary to define excellence in teaching in connection with subject contents and concrete teaching situations (ibid., p.63). This is argued for as a consequence of the Higher Education Ordinance from 1852; expressed in the Higher Education Ordinance from 1916 in § 53.1 "proved excellence in communicating scientific teaching"<sup>9</sup>. They conclude that this also means that the character and outcome in evaluation of excellence in teaching in higher education may vary due to subject and situation. The frame factor theory<sup>10</sup> and theories about the society and education provide a historical perspective on the recruitment process in higher education. I find that Rovio-Johansson & Tingbjörns work and several other supportive actions regarding educational development<sup>11</sup> at universities and colleges in Sweden demonstrates that the struggle between excellence in research and excellence in teaching in the academic field continues.

But Rovio-Johansson & Tingbjörn in contrast to Dahllöf's conclusion cited above point out that criteria used in assessment of applicants' pedagogical qualifications are obscure. They consider the criteria to be the root of the matter. They suggest that criteria have to be focused on and developed for future use (p.123).

I view this somewhat differently. I find that it is necessary to find out what is behind this? Lindberg (2001) discusses the history of the documentation on excellence in teaching in a paper titled 'Documentation on pedagogical qualifications – something has happened, but what ...?' He ends his paper by focusing on the prevailing form of culture and asks if the users of criteria for excellence in teaching and research really understand what the criteria

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<sup>7</sup> National Agency for Higher Education.

<sup>8</sup> Rovio-Johansson & Tingbjörn refer to Bowden & Marton 1998; Marton 1998.

<sup>9</sup> In Swedish: "till ådagalagd skicklighet att meddela vetenskaplig undervisning".

<sup>10</sup> A general sequence Actors – Frames – Process – Outcome with interaction between framework and process. For a full description see Dahllöf 1991, pp 130.

<sup>11</sup> See SOU 2001:13 Nya villkor för lärandet i den högre utbildningen (New conditions for learning and teaching in higher education); SOU 1996: 166. Lärare för högskola i utveckling (Teachers for higher education in development); SOU 1992:1 Frihet, Ansvar, Kompetens (Freedom, Responsibility, Competence); Gunvik-Grönbladh, I & Giertz, B. 1998. Pedagogisk och vetenskaplig skicklighet i lika mån? (Teaching and scientific excellence to the same extent?).

mean. Lindbergs earlier research (1988, 1996, 1997) is focused on expert's judgement on excellence in teaching and research. His argument above strengthens my view that a cultural frame is suitable for the data collection and analyzes in my project. A cultural approach would be a new angle in studying the struggle of the hiring process. A cultural approach inspired by Bourdieu is used when studying recruitment to academic positions in a gender study "Creative trajectories of female intellectuals" (Häyrynen, Y-P, 1994) in *Gender and Education in a Life Perspective*.

My viewpoint is that Bourdieu can be said to be an important theorist on the modern university. Not in the sense that university is a producer of knowledge but seeing knowledge as power causing cultural classification. Bourdieu wish to reveal these contexts in order that knowledge might be reflexively reconstituted. Different kinds of power is created, circulated and reproduced within the university through social practices and in my case the focus is on the hiring process in the academy.

#### More research

In improving professorial evaluations a report (Hemlin & Montgomery, 1991) covers the aspect of judging scientific quality. This in the form of a cross-disciplinary investigation of professional evaluation documents concerning applicants for 32 professorships in two Swedish universities. The result shows that there are differences between 'soft' sciences and 'hard' sciences in the level of detail the evaluations, soft scientists go more into details. Often arguments supporting a recommended candidate formed a dominance structure with no disadvantages of the recommended candidate and some clear advantages.

Struggles in the academic world are often said to be a well-known fact. A brief search in the database Libris shows that it is not uncommon. I found in Libris several experts' judgements beginning with the year 1898. I intend to go on searching for a struggle in hiring an academic through concepts like excellence, recruitment, occupation and academic career. I would like to underline that this section is work in progress. Finding relevant research connected to the academic hiring process will be continued through out the project.

I mentioned earlier that there more aspects of the grounds for judging such as administrative skill, clinical skill or skill in co-operation with surrounding society. This is to be connected to 'other necessary qualifications' and goals of equality and diversity. In this area of recruitment

in the academy a bibliography by Lindberg & Riis (1996) that covers earlier research on judging men and women's qualifications in academic hiring is being followed by work in progress (Kyndel, Lindberg & Riis, 2002) focused on equality and recruitment to a position as an academic teacher.

Earlier research in the domain of Bourdieu is Heyman's (1995) doctoral dissertation on the emergence of nursing research in Sweden. The concept fields, habitus, symbolic and cultural capital as used by Bourdieu, constitute the theoretical frame of reference. The analyze of development of Bourdieu's methods and key concepts (symbolic capital, cultural capital, habitus and field) have earlier (Broady, 1990) been traced back to problems in research practice. A conclusion in this work (ibid.) is that Bourdieu's sociology can be regarded as a theory of knowledge not a theory of society. Recently I have found two dissertations Gunneriussons (2002) and Gustavsson (2002) that are important for my future research on the hiring process in the academy. Gunneriusson dissertation in the historical field during 1920 – 1957 deals with the confrontation between the logic of fields and the logic of social networks. The social network logic dominated the outcome of appointment. Gunnerissson explains that it had sabotaged the struggle over symbolic capital. Gustavssons dissertation deals with the relationship between actors on the Swedish art market during the period 1920 –1960 with the use of Bourdieu's analytical framework. Relationships between social groups are investigated through registers of sold art items.

### ***Theoretical point of departure***

#### Bourdieu's logic of fields

As mentioned in the introduction to this text I view the academy as a social field characterized by competing systems of norms and values<sup>12</sup>. In my project this changeable field in society is a space where experts compete with board members in judging the applicants' qualifications. Below I will argue why I find Bourdieu's logic of fields a suitable conceptual and methodological device.

Bourdieu (1996a, pp.225; Broady 1998; Delanty 2001, p.89) uses the notion symbolic capital in his studies. Symbolic capital is used to capture what a social group acknowledges as valuable. Cultural capital is part in symbolic capital. Bourdieu states that the struggle in the

academic field is a struggle between different kinds of symbolic capital<sup>13</sup> such as academic capital, scientific capital and intellectual capital. Academic capital is power of control over the administration of academic resources and means of career influence. Scientific capital is the power that comes from research reputation. Intellectual capital is a form of capital to influence public opinion<sup>14</sup>. In *Homo Academicus* (1996a) indicators of cultural capital inherited or acquired and capital of political or economic power belong to an academics symbolic capital. The academic field holds a dynamic of two antagonistic principles of hierarchization:

...the social hierarchy, corresponding to the capital inherited and the economic and political capital actually held, is in opposition to the specific, properly cultural hierarchy, corresponding to the capital of scientific authority or intellectual renown. (1996a, p.75)

Writing judgements is part in an ongoing struggle over specific assets in an academic field. This is also the case in judgement by board members. The recruitment process can be regarded as a reproduction process inside an academic system (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Berner, B., Callewaert, S. & Silberbrandt, H., 1977). A reproduction strategy try to keep and improve own or a research groups position in the field. I find a foundation for this in Bourdieu's studies of universities in the State Nobility published in 1989 (1996b). Bourdieu presents empirical works on reproductive strategies in higher educational institutions in France. This work also includes hypotheses for categories tacitly implemented in professorial judgments (p.30 pp.)

In *Homo Academicus*, first published in 1984, Bourdieu thoroughly explores the academic world, which he finds not just a realm of dialogue and debate but also a social field in where careers are formed. In *Homo Academicus* (1996a) Bourdieu<sup>15</sup> argues that 'practical knowledge is an operation of construction which sets up systems of classifications (taxonomies) in terms of practical functions.' In resemblance with Becher (1989) Bourdieu

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<sup>12</sup> Tony Becher (1989) has described universities as a geographical territory occupied by tribes.

<sup>13</sup> Symbolic capital is something that a social group recognizes as valuable. It is necessary for the definition that the social group acknowledges this symbolic value (Broady, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> A discussion on how the academic field can be used the way Bourdieu and also Broady (1998) explains it is discussed in an unpublished paper (Gunvik Grönbladh, 1999). The conceptual framework in *Homo Academicus* (1996a) is used to explain the struggle around pedagogical qualifications and pedagogical skill at Uppsala University.

<sup>15</sup> Bourdieu refers to Durkheim and Mauss (1963) and their text about primitive forms of classification as a contribution the study of collective representations. See also Mauss (1972).

compares academic forms of classification with primitive forms of classification (as in Durkheim & Mauss, 1963). He states that the classification systems are similar in primitive societies and in the academic field. The form that keeps it together is the attraction of similar beliefs or knowledge. All together he explains that in professorial judgement when the objective is to evaluate documents for an academic career is transmitted in and through practice.

...transmitted in and through practice, beyond any specifically pedagogical intention. These forms of thought, expression and appreciation owe their specific logic to the fact that, being produced of the transformation imposed by the specific logic of the university field on the forms which organize the dominant thought and expression. (Bourdieu, 1996a, p.197)

My project focuses on the process when someone applies for a position in the academy. I find that research tools that allow mapping of positions can be useful.

Homo Academicus charts the distribution of cultural capital within the French university system. The Bourdieu tools applicability in our National university system can be questioned. I find that this is not the case.

Weber and Durkheim in this struggle in hiring an academic

According to Weber so called meaningful oriented acts did not take place when he tested his 'private procedure' in hiring an academic which I mentioned earlier. His best student did not succeed in being appointed to an academic position. Weber<sup>16</sup> is known for 'methodological individualism' used as a methodological tool. According to his tool the recruitment process would only be a mental construction 'a formation for organization of individuals acts to be understood as meaningful oriented acts.'<sup>17</sup> It seems to me that his student met a 'collective phenomenon something more than an individual mental construction built on rational acts'. I find that what really happened can be better explained by Durkheim's social representations (1991, p.28).

To be able to answer some of the questions mentioned above I need a conceptual framework. Above I have pointed out that I intend to use the framework of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology.

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<sup>16</sup> Weber, M. 1983. Sociologiska grundbegrepp. I Ekonomi och Samhälle. Förståelsesociologins grunder. Del 1. Sociologiska begrepp och definitioner. Lund: Argos.

This means that the theoretical points of departure; Durkheim's social representations have to be modified. Bourdieu writes (1987; 1990) 'social science cannot treat social facts as things' in accordance to the Durkheimian precept". Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) points out that objectivism and subjectivism, mechanicalism and finalism, structural necessity and individual agency are false antinomies. Individual and society are to be combined both in theory and method. They describe a double reality of the social world. In habitus and field (or disposition and positions) the combination of theory and method deletes the micro/macro and agency /structure dilemmas.

...Bourdieu was led to jettison two other dichotomies that recently claimed center stage in the theoretical forum, those of structure and agency on the one hand, and of micro- and macro analysis on the other, by honing a set of conceptual and methodological devices capable of dissolving these very distinctions. (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992).

By this combination of conceptual and methodological devices I intend to get closer to factors and strategies in the academic hiring process.<sup>18</sup> .

When the Higher Education Ordinance states that 'the same care shall be given to the scrutiny of excellence in teaching as to that of excellence in research' the Swedish word pedagogical skill is used. Using the word pedagogical instead of teacher or teaching skill might at first sight seem trivial. But putting it the way Durkheim (1956, p.94) did when he stated that education<sup>19</sup> and pedagogy often are confused with each other makes the meaning of words in the recruitment process specifically interesting. The difference between them according to Durkheim is that educational science should express reality and that pedagogy judge reality. He states that pedagogy is not science but instead theoretical practice built on reflection on the teacher's actions:

... it is evident that the theories that are called pedagogical are speculations of quite another sort. ...They do not tell us this is what exists and what is the reason why, but tell us this is what must be done. (ibid.,p.99)

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<sup>17</sup> Weber (1983, p.10).

<sup>18</sup> I "Outline of A Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1977) Bourdieu argues when speaking of class-habitus that the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction. Present and past positions in the social structure is carried with the biological individuals at all times, places in the form of dispositions. This is what social psychology and interactions or ethno methodology forgets when reducing the objective structure of the relationship between the assembled individuals to the conjuncture structure of their interaction in a particular situation and group. (p.81)



He argues for a difference between educational science, practical theory and art. Art should be seen as ‘pure practice without theory’ (ibid. p.106). Pedagogy is defined as practical theory (théories pratiques) and Durkheim compares it with medicine and politics. Pedagogic is meant to answer the question how and it involves reflection upon action. Pedagogy as practical theory is built on reflections on the teacher’s conduct and teaching experiences. Durkheim states in *Education and Sociology* (1956) that practical theory is not the same as knowledge, understanding or explanation. It is guidance of action and evaluation of the line of conduct as to; if it is what it should be, or if it would be useful to modify it, in that case how, or if it should be replaced completely with a new line of conduct. Pedagogy means reflection and opposes routine and routine impedes necessary progress.

Durkheim (1956; p.105) states that pedagogic can be seen as useful tool in periods of turmoil and uncertainty to get the educational system back in harmony, in line with the needs of society. Today’s recent expansion of higher education, a greater number of students and efforts to improve the educational competence among academic teachers give me the same impression<sup>20</sup>.

My reason to describe Durkheim’s different forms of knowledge above where pedagogic is defined as practical theory<sup>21</sup> that answers the question *how to do*, is to point out the value of developmental work trying to grasp ‘what is excellence in teaching’. The question to be answered writing and judgement from this point of view then ‘How should I judge applicants pedagogical qualifications in the very best way to find the best teacher’?<sup>22</sup> But this is not the aim of my project. I want to study this process from another angle. I want to focus on the struggle in hiring an academic teacher. I find it possible to use the Bourdieu ‘toolkit’ in my work on this subject. I do not know so far where this will lead. I believe that results of my dissertation project are hard to fore tell. I hope that to question and explain what is behind the struggle when hiring academic teacher opens up for reflexivity and possibility of critical interventions.

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<sup>19</sup> In French the word is *Éducation*, which has more dimensions than the Swedish *utbildning*, *undervisning*, *uppfostran* according to Broady in *Kunskapens villkor* (Selander, Ed. 1986).

<sup>20</sup> See also Abrahamsson, Lund & Wahlén (*Högskoleverket* 2002:2R).

<sup>21</sup> A system of ideas where advice and criterias for now, then and later, based on reflection and as rules or recommendations (normative guidance).

***'Key concepts'***

## The field and it's rules

A field is seen as 'a system of relations between agents or institutions that fight over something that they find valuable'. The field according to Bourdieu (in my project this would be the academic field) is a patterned system of objective forces. According to Bourdieu this field is comparable with a magnetic field:

a relational configuration endowed with a specific gravity, which imposes on all the objects, and agents, which enter in it. (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992).

Bourdieu's sociology on cultural and education links micro and macro models through fields and habitus. In this project the hiring of academics is resembled with an academic field inhabited by tribes inhabited by members from different disciplines in an academic world. The academic field has its own appointment methods and the academy also has the legitimate right to judge science. Every autonomous field is built on it's specific capital and the field concept is used to study the distribution of capital. All the rules (of the game) are to be accepted by the participants to become a member in an autonomous field like the academic field. In the academic field the game is considered worth playing and investments are worth fighting for among members. Someone outside this field might think it is not worth the effort. The game might even seem ridiculous and worthless. If one has the right habitus one also has a natural feeling for the future game. Being born into the field where 'the game' is taking place means that one has a habitus and thinking in line with the structures of this game of which one participates in. This means that one is not aware of the game and does not even have to make up goals for playing. One never asks if it is worth playing. One forgets that it is a game an 'illusio'.<sup>23</sup> Appointing someone to a position in the academic field is part of this 'game'. The field is not static. A process called co-optation takes place. Maybe figure 1 below can help explaining this.

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<sup>22</sup> See also the discussion about what is a good teacher in Gustafsson, 2001. "Rekrytering av akademiska lärare – en balansgång mellan olika intressenters kvalitetskriterier.

<sup>23</sup> Bourdieu refers to Homo Ludens and Huizinga to be in the game, to invest and take it seriously.

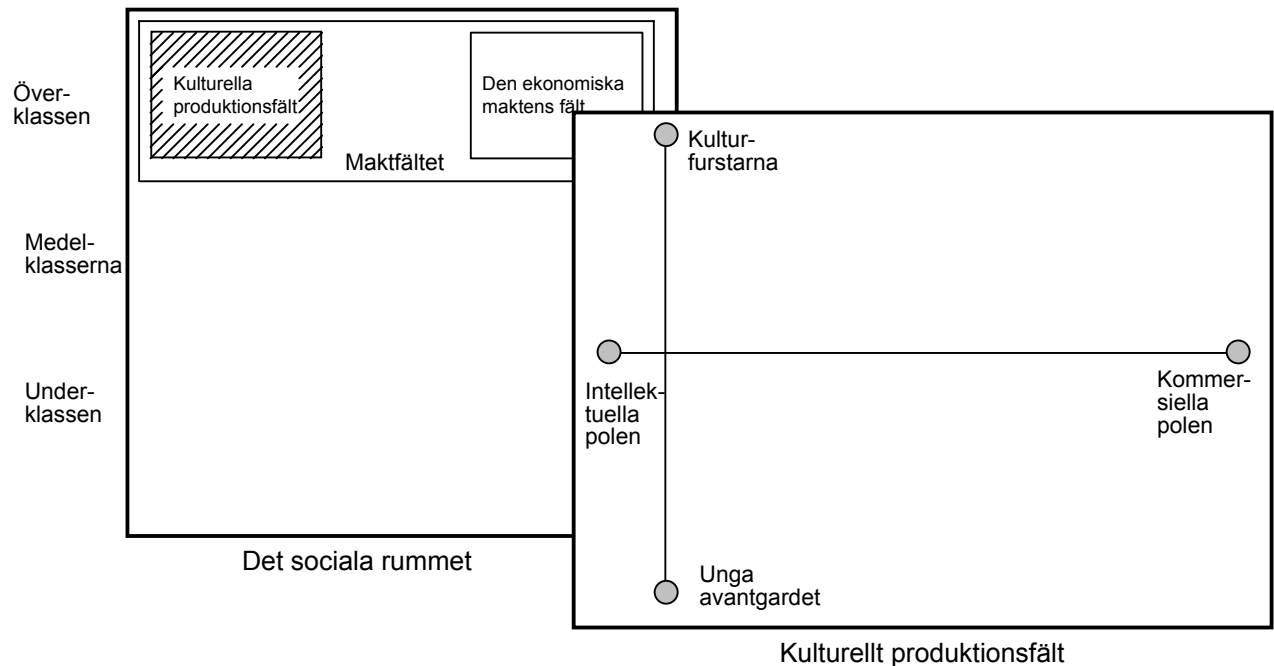


Figure 1. Donald Broady, Introduction in Pierre Bourdieu, *Konstens regler*, Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, Stockholm/Stehag 1999. (Swedish translation of P. Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Seuil, Paris 1992).

The struggle I aim to study belongs in the cultural production field on the left-hand side in the social space. In *Homo Academicus* (1996a, p 195) this process is described as a strategy of succession in the selection procedures through a hierarchy of properties being reproduced.<sup>24</sup> To better understand the discussion of polarization of the cultural production field where ‘science for the sake of science only’ is to be found in a left-hand pole and the success in, e.g., the commercial, political and administrative world, at the right-hand pole, I will use the scenario I mentioned earlier. In the very left-hand side the hiring process is controlled by experts judgement and on the right hand side a business consultant, or representatives of political forces or administrative apparatus would be handling the hiring.

A cultural field is connected to a space of possibilities. This holds points of orientation and alternative ways of acting. Is there a space of possibilities in writing judgements as the scientific tradition, techniques, genre, perspectives etc. in the academic field where the experts and institutions occupy their positions? In the field there are positions but in the space of possibilities there are ideals that everyone in the field has to take in account. Riis &

<sup>24</sup> In research in gender and recruitment a Lindgren, G. (1996) presents a theory with a “confirming ritual” as co-optation among men.

Lindberg (1996, p.100) states that after reading 250 written experts judgments, that the internal consistency is very high and that it is a special “genre”.

It seems to me that Bourdieu's toolkit can be a useful in my future project. I find in line with Bourdieu that the academic field with its hierarchy of values that everybody has to relate to fits well in with the struggle in hiring an academic teacher. The problem lays in crisis in the academic field when co-optation cannot cope with mass education. This is illuminated through a commercial pole in the cultural production field. This implies that that judging excellence in teaching separate from scientific excellence is a weapon in this struggle. The experts' judgements are examples of struggle in a cultural field:

Reality does not follow the logic's logic; if one uses the logic's logic on reality to understand it one risks to destroy the logic that one wants to reconstruct ... in the practical situation the social agents dispose over utterly complicated classification systems that are not defined as such – and to define them would demand a tremendous work. (Bourdieu, p.132)

A field is a tool. The academic field can be considered to be a separate field but viewed from another angle it is a subfield within a cultural and intellectual field. Within a field of power it is a pole to an economic field. The way the field is constructed and the way the borders are built within and between depend on the research object. In my case different faculties/research areas and disciplines will construct subfields investigating the struggle in the academic field.

### Habitus and capital

The participants in the academic field are influenced in their actions and thoughts by principals gathered earlier in life. The so-called habitus is a system of dispositions built on earlier experiences that lead the participants in the struggle to estimate future ways of action. Habitus can be seen as a kind embodied capital.

Capital is defined as symbolic or material assets and is relational to habitus. Symbolic capital is the kind of capital that social groups recognize and acknowledge as valuable. There has to be a ‘market’ for this form of capital. This means that there has to be persons willing to invest in this kind of capital that they also find it valuable.

There are different kinds of capital according to Bourdieu; cultural (use of refined language and familiarity with exquisite culture, in France acquired in élite schools), social (relations through relatives, friends, classmates, corps d'élite) and economic capital (material assets and knowledge of economic rules). Cultural capital is on different level than the more general symbolic capital. Cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1996a, p.109) symbolizes power relations in the French society as a whole and has been historically stored through the art of writing and educational institutions. This is manifested in titles, degrees, institutions, law and ordinances.

In the academic field there are special kinds of symbolic capital. Bourdieu analyzes in *Homo Academicus* (1996a) the form of capital and power and the lines of conflict, the patterns of change that characterizes the system of higher education in France. In *Homo Academicus* (1996a, pp. 227) Bourdieu uses indicators of cultural capital inherited or acquired, indicators of capital of university power, indicators of capital of scientific power and prestige, indicators of intellectual celebrity are in combination with capital of political or economic power, indicators of political dispositions and demographic indicators. To construct a map of the French academy all the mentioned capital are combined with indicators of economic and social capital inherited and acquired.

Heyman (1995) inspired by *Homo Academicus* in her research to better understand how a new domain of research in nursing was established in Sweden is a good example to explain what can be considered as symbolic capital in the academic field. Heyman (1995, p. 260) defines educational capital as earlier education and living /and or studying abroad. Capital of university power are memberships on examination boards, memberships in committees deciding on grants of money or admission to doctoral studies, service as opponents of field-specific doctoral studies, positions as professors, lecturer, etc. Capital of scientific power and prestige are qualities like membership in groups of researchers, the number of doctoral students, the number of scholarly conferences attended, the scientific production of articles, books and chapters, professional responsibilities such as function as reviewer of manuscripts submitted for publication, editor, chairman of distinguished conferences, etc.

Capital is used in strategies that are individual, group or institutional efforts to protect and improve different forms of assets of capital. This is also relational to habitus. I want to underline that Bourdieu uses this vocabulary differently than in daily language or economic vocabulary. In daily use it would refer to conscious and well-considered calculated actions

(Broady, 1998, p. 13). Used by Bourdieu these strategies, interests or investment do not have to be out spoken or conscious.

But sometimes field and capitals as research tools do not seem sufficient (Broady, 2002, pp.49-72). Earlier research shows that this is the case in Swedish Historical Science during 1920's to 1950's (Gunneriusson, 2002). A way of handling this is to combine a field analyzes with latest research concerning qualitative social networks

### Social networks

Gunneriusson (2002, p. 23) points out in competitions for professorships in the historical field that symbolic capital is necessary if social capital is to be used as a legitimate investment. In the competition for professorships there were no lack of formal competence but when the situation was one where many applicants are very competent, other factors than the formal ones comes into play (ibid., p.234) This fight for the right to decide what was good science was mainly led by social networks. Social networks are defined as personal relations between persons closely connected to each other. This means that personal relationships between individuals 'disturbs the struggle over different kind of capital in the field' (Broady, 2002). The logic in the field is more anonymous than the logic of the social networks. The difference between social networks and the research tool field is that networks consists of connections between persons while in the field it is a system of relations on a macro level. When viewing the relations between positions in a field the individual relations are not important. In studying social networks it is contrary. It is important to view the personal relationships. Latest research<sup>25</sup> concerning qualitative social networks points out that important factors and driving forces of social networks are trust, gifts and similar sets of values among the participants.

### *Aims of project and methodological considerations*

The aim of this project is to explore what driving forces are present in hiring an academic teacher. During the last decade judgement of excellence in teaching have been frequently discussed in the academic world while excellence in research has been on the agenda for hundreds of years. Today there are several aspects of the grounds for judging 'best for the job' outside the ability to do research such as administrative skill, clinical skill, skill in co-

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<sup>25</sup> Gunneriusson (2002b).

operation with surrounding society to be connected to ‘other necessary qualifications’ and goals of equality and diversity. What does this mean? What is behind the confrontation between experts and members of the appointment board? Is it possible that social networks could be of importance in a way that is not known today, when hiring an academic teacher? I would like to explore what is behind the struggle when hiring an academic teacher with Bourdieu’s theory as analytical framework in combination with social network theory.

The specific aim of this project can be told in the following questions:

- What conditions are behind the confrontations among experts and members of the appointment boards when judging teaching and research merits?
- What arguments are used by experts and members of the appointment boards when they come to different conclusions?

What standpoint does who hold in this process?

What is behind different standpoints?

More precise questions based on my theoretical point of departure are:

What is the focus of the experts and members of appointment boards?

Is it common to judge different aspects of qualifications as aspects outside the ability to do research?

What ideals and perspectives are at stake?

Who gets appointed and who do not get appointed from a field perspective?

Who gets appointed and who do not get appointed from a social network perspective?

What are the factors behind the struggle?

What is decisive for the decision?

What are the strategies behind the appointment?

What is decisive for selection?

My aim with this project *is not* to build a system of ideas with advice and criteria for now, then and later, based on reflection and expressed as rules or recommendations (normative guidance). My aim is to express reality not judge reality.

Methodological considerations

As a research strategy the case study will be used including the use of surveys and interviews in line with the theoretical framework.

### Case selection

The selection of cases will represent a population of cases during 1995 - 2002 of appointment in Swedish Higher Education. The phenomenon struggle between experts and appointment boards must be observable in the selected cases and should represent the phenomenon generally. I will select cases where I believe I can learn the most. Each case must offer an opportunity to learn more about the struggle. My belief is that it is better to learn lots from 'a typical' case than a little from many. The Gerner case has been selected. Kristian Gerner has accepted. This case represents an extreme case showing a struggle for a professorship in Swedish higher education during spring 2002.

As soon as possible a typology will be set up with cases of appointment at one more university and two colleges covering the faculties/research areas showing a struggle in positions as professorships or senior lectures during the period 1995 – 2002. Three more cases will be chosen. I will choose cases if possible, within variety of different research areas such as medicine, law, natural and social science. The primary criterion is the opportunity to learn about the struggle but with typicality weighted by considerations of access. Attributes of interest in each case will be based on the struggle between the notions excellence in research and teaching or administrative skill, clinical skill, skill in co-operation with surrounding society to be connected to 'other necessary qualifications' and goals of equality and diversity. Finally one of the three cases will be selected representing the most extreme struggle to conduct the 2<sup>nd</sup> case study. This design can be revised or modified depending on information and the source material available. This means that a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> case could be considered. Under what conditions the sources can be reliable due to time and interest has to be considered.

### Source material

I will use source material such as official documents as recommendations and local regulatory systems; list of applicants, archival records from advertisement for a position, expert's public judgements and minutes from experts and appointment boards. If possible memoranda,



private letters and notes written in the process, e-mail letters and also news paper clippings, articles another documents concerning the case of appointment. In addition to this (when possible as this is usually not kept in the archives of the universities) use applicants' CV: s and documents of qualifications concerning the appointment. Source material will include results from data collection such as surveys on symbolic capital and interviews with experts, applicants, board members, department heads, faculty administrators and president of the universities.

I am aware that case study research might risk exposure and embarrassment to those who are portrayed even if the main parts of the source material rest on the principle of public access to official records. Limits of accessibility must rest on agreements for targeted persons to receive drafts of how they are presented and interpreted. Ethical aspect will be of great importance (HSFR, 1996).

The procedure in hiring an academic in Swedish higher Education has been described in detail by Rovio-Johansson & Tingbjörn (2001, pp. 71 – 96). A description of the procedure and reforms will be part of my future work on the hiring process.

#### Data collection

In constructing validity in line with recommendations (Yin, 1994) for case studies I wish to use multiple sources in data collection. Document analyzes will based on archival records, interviews and a survey. I will collect complementary background data necessary to view symbolic capital. A survey to explore symbolic capital will be constructed based on earlier research using Bourdieu's toolkit in the academic field (Heyman, 1995, p. 297). This is to be followed by interviews with the experts and chairmen of appointment boards, applicants, department heads, faculty administrators and presidents of the universities. I will also collect background data (covering symbolic capital and social networks) on the participants in the appointment procedure.

Case study protocol and a case study database will be developed within each case. This database will include case study notes, case study documents and tabular materials.

#### Analyzing data

To analyze the collected data the field perspective and the social network perspective will be of importance. The concern of case study analyzes is the overall pattern of results. Being an participant in the SEC (Sociology in Education and Culture<sup>26</sup> research group with focus on the fields of higher and secondary education and the UPP (Utbildning – Profession – Praktik<sup>27</sup>) will be of help to me in my analyzes of the case studies. Conclusions will be discussed in these two seminar groups.

The correspondence analyzes is a method to analyze field, symbolic capital and habitus developed by Jean-Paul Benzécri<sup>28</sup> in France. It is a statistical method in which qualitative data can be handled in a quantitative way. Correspondence analyze is a way of reconstructing multidimensional spaces of social comprehension's and line of action appearing from the relational network of positions in the field. Interpretations are not built into the data before the analyzes of collected data. Variables and modalities are composed of raw, factual information. Groups of variables summarized by single variable are thus avoided. The correspondence analyzes would then show a specific profile for every case. This would be presented graphically pointing out different 'clusters' at a certain distance from each other in the social field. The closer the components are in the graphical presentation the more characteristics they have in common and the opposite from the antipode means opposite set of modalities.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Preliminary plan for dissertation project***

Fall 2002	Data collection activities case 1 Continued literature review
Spring 2003	1 <sup>st</sup> analyze and individual case report 1 Course work on reforms in Higher Education
Fall 2003	Data collection case 2
Spring 2004	2 <sup>nd</sup> analyze and individual case report 2 Cross-case conclusions

<sup>26</sup> SEC is a research program with focus on field studies headed by Professor Donald Broady, Uppsala University. See <http://www.skeptron.ilu.uu.se/broady/sec/sec-pro.ntm>.

<sup>27</sup> UPP is a seminar-group focusing on Education, Profession and Practise, lead by senior lecturer Karin Anna Petersen at the department of Education, Uppsala university.

<sup>28</sup> Benzécri, J. O. 1977. Analyse discriminante et analyse factorielle, *Les Cahiers de l'Analyse des Données*, II, 4, 369 – 406

<sup>29</sup> Lebart, Salem and Berry (1998) in "Exploring Textual Data".

Fall 2004

Dissertation

***The never ending story of recruitment of academic teachers***

To sum up this paper and the proposal for my project I want return to Weber's discussion about recruitment that I described earlier. Weber has comments on "excellence in teaching":

To say that somebody is a bad teacher, that is often the same as pronouncing an academic teacher's death sentence, even if he is the world's most foremost scientist. (1991, p.14).

[My own translation]

He states instead that the most difficult pedagogical task is not communicating science to an untrained person. The difficulty is in making the person think independently over the problem.

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