

# Go West!

## Swedish higher education and transnational markets

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In the 1960s, Sweden witnessed a dramatic increase of the demand for higher education. The subsequent expansion of this part of the educational field made it a concern for the reformatory ambitions of the Social Democracy. On the one hand, higher education was to be made more easily accessed by the less privileged social classes through study grants, the recognition of previous professional experience for entering into higher studies, and the geographical expansion of higher education institutions throughout the country. On the other hand, it should be adapted to the needs of the labour market through the establishment of uniform study programmes leading to diploma with a professional orientation and through reducing the traditional autonomy of the universities in favour of stakeholders such as labour unions and the industrial associations.

In the 1980s and 1990s, this previous emphasis on equality and on state-controlled uniformity gradually gave way to a growing diversity. Among the most visible changes during recent years is the increased importance given to transnational strategies by both social groups (skills in foreign languages, study sojourns or trainee periods abroad, social contacts and acquaintances in other countries, etc) and educational institutions (course content directed towards the European Common Market, student or staff exchange programmes, courses given in English, adaptation to American models etc).

The sociological exploration of such transformations of the field of higher education provides an opportunity to approach the question of how the Swedish social space is structured. This paper is divided into two sections. The first section will briefly resume previous empirical studies<sup>1</sup> of the structure of the fields of secondary and higher education from the 1980s onwards, and discuss some of the methodological problems inherent in these studies. The second section is devoted to some results from ongoing studies on transnational strategies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed accounts, see Donald Broady and Mikael Palme, "Le champ des formations de l'enseignement supérieur en Suède—bilan de recherche," pp. 1–19 in Monique de Saint Martin and Mihai D. Gheorghiu (eds.): *Les institutions de formation des cadres dirigeants. Étude comparée*. Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, Centre de sociologie européenne, Centre de sociologie de l'éducation et de la culture, Nov. 1992; Donald Broady, Barbro Berg and Mikael Palme, "L'enseignement secondaire et l'enseignement supérieur en Suède face à l'internationalisation," pp. 148–163 in Donald Broady, Monique de Saint Martin and Mikael Palme (eds.): *Les élites : formation, reconversion, internationalisation*. Paris: CSEC, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales / Stockholm: FUKS, Lärarhögskolan, 1995; Ingrid Heyman and Mikael Palme "Le capital culturel contesté? Étude de quatre lycées de Stockholm," pp. 175–211 in *Formation des élites et culture transnationale Colloque de Moscou 27-29 avril 1996* (eds. D. Broady, N. Chmatko, M. de Saint Martin). Paris/Uppsala: CSEC, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales/SEC, ILU, Université d'Uppsala, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mikael Börjesson, *Kampen om det "internationella."* En kartläggning av transnationella strategier vid högskolor och universitet i Stockholm, SEC Research Reports, No 15, 1998; Donald Broady and Mikael Börjesson, *Transnational strategies in Swedish higher education*. Paper read at the conference "Europe Researched," Prague 17-19 Oct 1997.

# 1. The field of educational institutions

## *1.1 The method*

In exploring the structure of the field of higher education institutions, three inter-related perspectives appeared at first glance to be appropriate, each one of which also represented a somewhat different methodological approach.

Firstly, the various institutions and study programmes seemed to be characterised by their relative importance in the educational strategies of the social groups that attended them. Differences between institutions in this respect could be approached as differences between their recruitment profiles, in so far as these profiles were seen as unveiling educational strategies among social groups with different assets and dispositions, i.e. the interest students with various social origin showed for making use of the institutions, on the one hand, and the use they were actually capable of making, on the other. If we momentarily leave aside the question of the definition of social groups, such an analysis would ideally require information on the probability for students with a given social origin to study at the various institutions for higher education. As we shall see, the up to now probably unique Swedish public statistics, accessible at Statistics Sweden, do provide a possibility to make such calculations, at least if we limit ourselves to taking the student population in the country at a given time as point of departure.

Second, the institutions and study programmes appeared to have distinctive institutional traits in so far as that they were bearers of different traditions, had different study orientations and were subject to different social mechanisms for the selection of lecturers and other staff. In addition, they were characterised by the kind of students they received and by the positions they occupied in a socially structured geographical space. Aspects such as these appeared to be part of the common image of the “culture” associated with the various institutions and study programmes. The analysis of this kind of differences between institutions and study programmes seemed to encourage an ethnographic and historical approach.

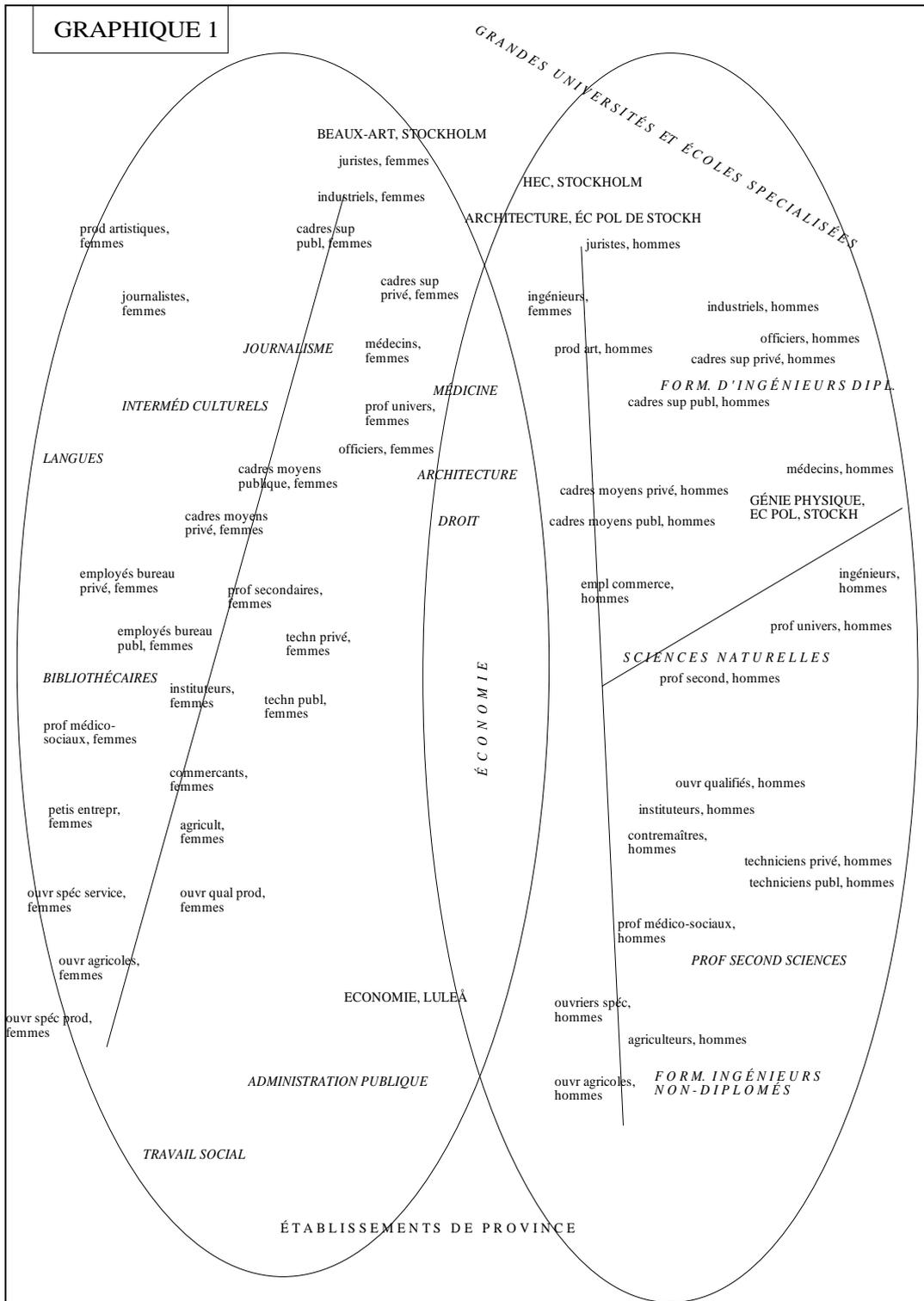
Finally, the institutions for higher education seemed to be differentiated by the positions they held in relation to the structure of the social fields towards which they were oriented. A typical example was the central position in relation to both big business and the high state administration maintained by the Stockholm School of Economics, as compared to the study programmes in economics at the universities and university colleges. The assessment of such links between social fields, on the one hand, and the academic institutions, on the other, would imply looking upon the field of institutions from the perspective of the structure of the field of power and various social fields, focusing on the importance of the educational and social capital conferred by the institutions for co-optation into and careers within these fields. This could be done for example through tracing the educational trajectories of persons occupying dominant positions in the various fields, even though such an approach would be likely to assess an earlier state of the competition between higher institutions.

In the empirical studies on higher education, the first and second of these approaches were opted for and the third one left aside, mainly for pragmatic and economic reasons. Data at Statistics Sweden provided accessible and yearly renewed information at individual level on all students registered in higher education, comprising information on the choice of academic institution and study programme. For all registered students, information could also be collected on the family of origin, namely from the then still existing national census that was refreshed every fifth year and included data on the professional activity of all household members. A database was created comprising information on all students in higher education in the academic years 1979 and 1984, on the basis of which recruitment profiles regarding students’ sex, age and social origin could be created for all higher education study programmes and institutions in the country. Using the study programmes at specific universities or university colleges as the focus of the study (“individuals”), and the sex and social origin of the students who attended them as their distinctive characteristics (“variables” and “modalities”), correspondence analysis was employed as the principal instrument of analysis. However, since these characteristics in fact comprised information on the study choice of all students

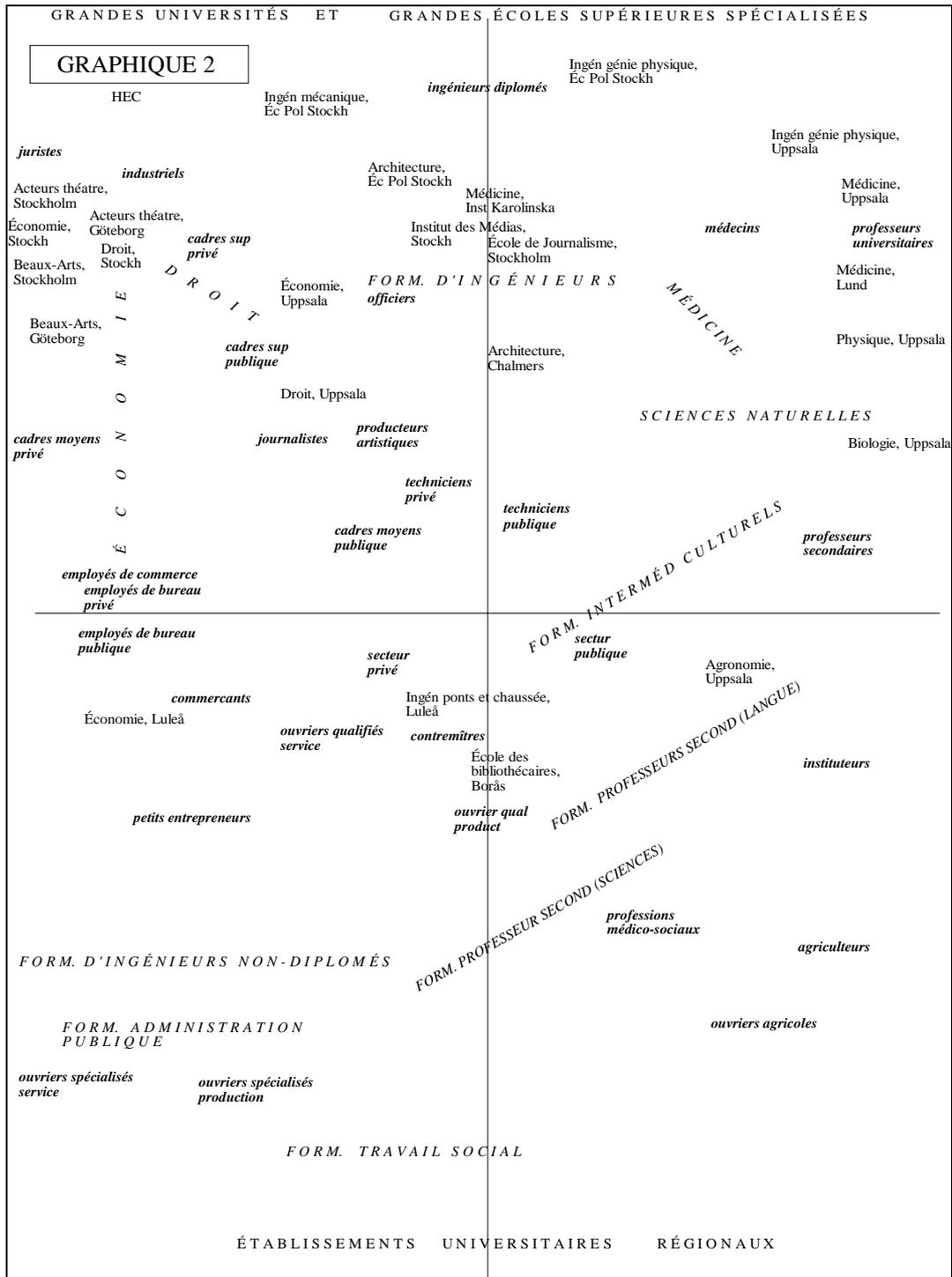
in higher education, the analysis simultaneously provided a satisfactory picture of the educational strategies that tended to exist among their social groups of origin. The variable expressing social origin was divided into 111 modalities representing various social groups and constructed on the basis of the classificatory systems used in the national census for categorising socio-economic status, professions and type of employment. (In the analyses presented below the 111 modalities were aggregated to 32.) The statistical approach was combined with a qualitative one, comprising interviews with students and questionnaire surveys at selected academic institutions, as well as ethnographic observation.

A similar approach was opted for in the analysis of secondary education. Information on all Grade 9-leavers is available through an individual-based register a Statistics Sweden which is renewed annually and provides information on where the studies were completed and what marks the student obtained in various subjects. To this information, data can be added at individual level from the corresponding database of secondary school students, providing information on the choice of secondary school and study programme. Finally, additional information on students' social origin can be obtained from the national census. Again, correspondence analysis was used for analysing both the relationships between secondary study programmes as such at an accumulated national level, and the field of secondary schools and study programmes at these schools in the city of Stockholm. The quantitative analysis was supplemented by interviews, questionnaires and ethnographic observation at selected secondary schools believed to occupy interesting positions in the field.

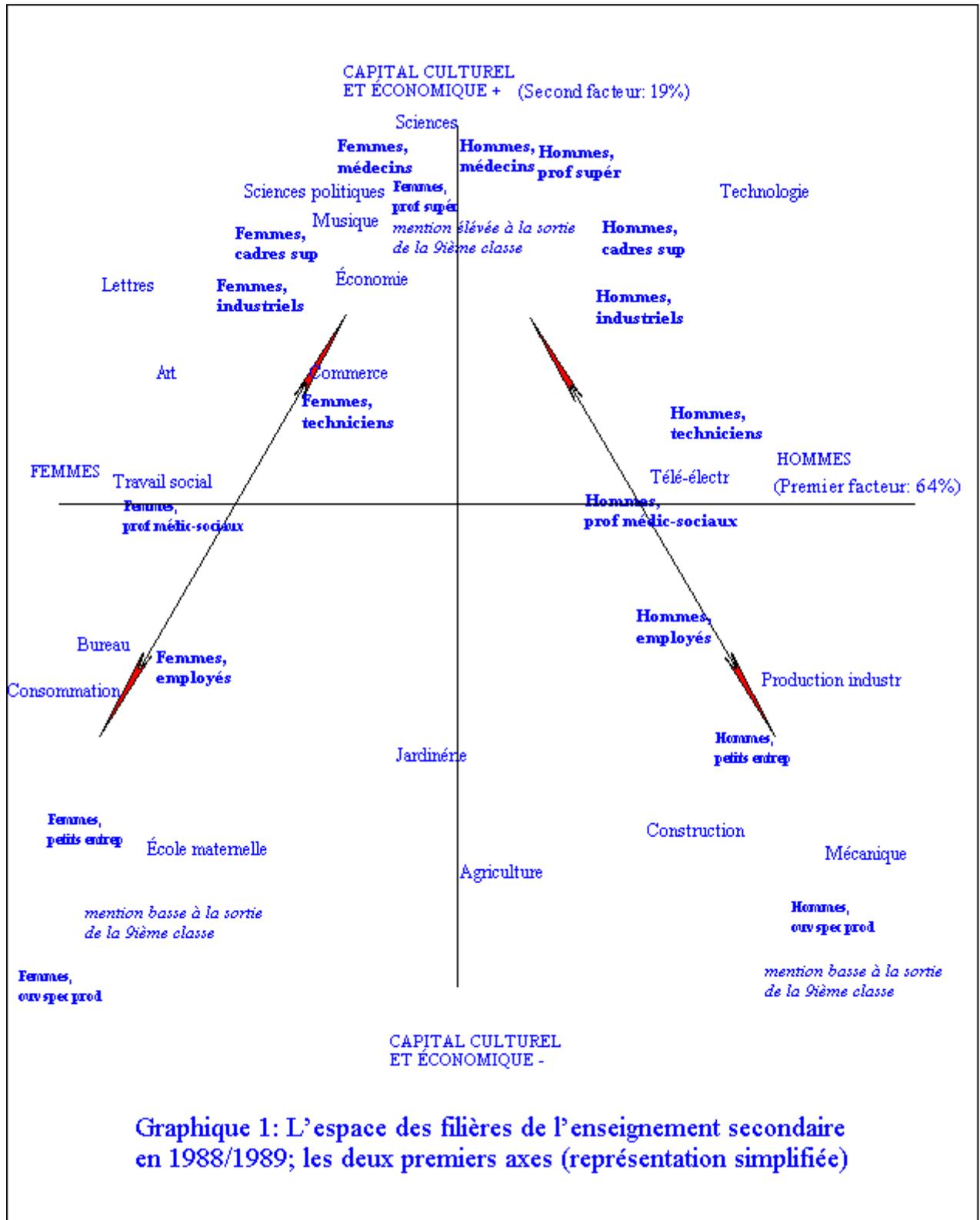
Graph 1. The Swedish field of higher educational institutions. Correspondence analysis of data on the social origin and sex of the total student population in 1984.



Graph 2. The Swedish field of higher educational institutions. Correspondence analysis of data on the social origin of the total student population in 1984.



Graph 3. Correspondence analysis of recruitment profiles (total number of girls and boys from 32 social groups) for secondary school study programmes in 1988/1989 at national level.



## 1.2 Recruitment profiles

The statistical analysis of the field of higher educational institutions focused, then, on one single pertinent characteristic, namely their recruitment profile. This profile was described by two principal variables, the sex and social origin of the students, the latter one being represented by 32 modalities or social groups. The main analytical tool, correspondence analysis, produced after a laborious step-wise process of utilisation, a multi-dimensional representation of the field of higher academic institutions. The three most important of these dimensions will be briefly presented in the following.

Firstly, if we consider the sex of the students along with their social origin, i.e. if we distinguish between daughters and sons of medical doctors, university professors, industry managers, employees, skilled and unskilled industry workers, etc., the analysis opposes, in the first dimension, study programmes and academic institutions inhabited mainly by female students to the ones dominated by male students. This opposition, constituting the first axis, goes along with a second one—represented by the second axis contrasting on the one hand programmes and institutions characterised by receiving many students from families with a large total volume of capital (considering both economic and cultural capital), ranging from industry managers to university lecturers, and, on the other hand, institutions inhabited by students of modest social origin. In the upper left corner of the graph illustrating these two dimensions, we find in particular study programmes oriented towards the fields for cultural production and transmission, such as the Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm or the School of Journalism, both characterised by the high percentage of female students who come from families that are rich in cultural capital, whereas the lower left corner of the graph bring together study programmes with an alignment towards the less prestigious professional fields of caring and social work. In the opposite, male-dominated part of the field of higher education, a corresponding opposition can be found between study programmes and institutions distinguished by their heavy recruitment of male students with an origin in families with strong cultural and economic assets, in particular training programmes for masters of engineering and the highly prestigious Stockholm School of Economics. These study programmes are opposed to especially the ones for secondary teachers in science and for low-level engineers. As manifested by Graph 1 the analysis makes clear that female and male students in higher education basically meet in four specific areas, namely medicine, architecture, law and the generally less prestigious study programmes in economics. In the first three instances, the encounter between students of the two sexes is by large reserved for students from well-situated social groups, whereas in the low-prestigious areas of higher education the separation between female and male-dominated study programmes tends to be sharper.

The third dimension pointed to in this first correspondence analysis—invisible in the first two-dimensional graph (Graph 1)—becomes manifest if the variable “sex” is omitted or made inactive, and displays an opposition between, on the one hand, study programmes and institutions characterised by the fact that they receive many students from social groups where cultural capital is the dominating component of the total volume of capital and with a normally close and long-lasting relationship to the education system, in particular teachers at various levels, medical doctors and civil servants, and, on the other hand, study programmes and institutions where social groups pre-dominate that stand close to the economic and private sectors of society. As can be seen in Graph 2, the pole that can be characterised as a “cultural” one (right hand side of graph 2) is clearly hierarchically structured. In the dominating positions, we find above all the most prestigious schools of medicine and the most intellectually prestigious of the higher engineering study programmes, Engineering Physics (Teknisk Fysik), receiving a high percentage of children to university teachers and medical doctors. Generally, children with an origin in families that are rich in cultural capital tend to give priority to comparatively heavy but secure educational investments in especially natural sciences and related areas. A typical investment of this kind is the study programmes in biology and physics at the traditional Uppsala University. In the area of the field of higher education dominated by groups with

a strong component of cultural capital, intermediary positions are occupied by study programmes oriented towards cultural transmission and by secondary teacher training programmes, which typically receive many students from social groups such as secondary and primary school teachers, health-care professions and lower civil servants.

The opposite pole (to the left in Graph 2) of the field of higher education, dominated by students from social groups that stand close to the economic and private sectors of society (industry and business executives, civil servants in the private sector, lawyers, businessmen, etc.), consists mainly of study programmes in economics, law and less prestigious engineering training programmes. In dominating positions, we find the School of Economics in Stockholm, as well as certain industry-oriented study programmes for engineers at the most prestigious schools of technology, whereas lower positions are occupied by similar training programmes at regional university colleges.

Interesting enough, close to the same pole of the field - considering only the two dimensions represented by Graph 2 - we also find certain of the most well-established institutions in the area of culture, namely the two leading academies of art in Stockholm and Gothenburg and the most important training programmes for actors. A closer analysis of the recruitment profiles at these institutions indicate two main explanations: firstly, students from social groups that hold a particularly stable cultural capital with a strong educational component tend to avoid unpredictable investments in study programmes oriented towards cultural production, and, secondly, the academies of art are a particular concern for especially daughters to industry leaders and managers. Both of these statistically indicated circumstances are strongly supported by interviews made within the various studies.

The first dimension in the analysis of the recruitment to higher education where the variable sex is omitted (Graph 2) is identical to the second one in the previous analysis (Graph 1) that comprises this variable. As we can see, in this dimension the established, major universities (Uppsala, Lund, Stockholm, Gothenburg) and the most prestigious autonomous university schools, like the Stockholm School of Economics and the Royal Institute of Technology, oppose the university of Umeå in the north, regional university colleges and academic institutions oriented towards teacher training and social work. Further, intermediary positions between the cultural (right) and economic or private (left) poles among the dominating institutions are occupied by the schools of architecture and journalism and, in particular, various study programmes for masters of engineering at the most well-established institutes of technology.

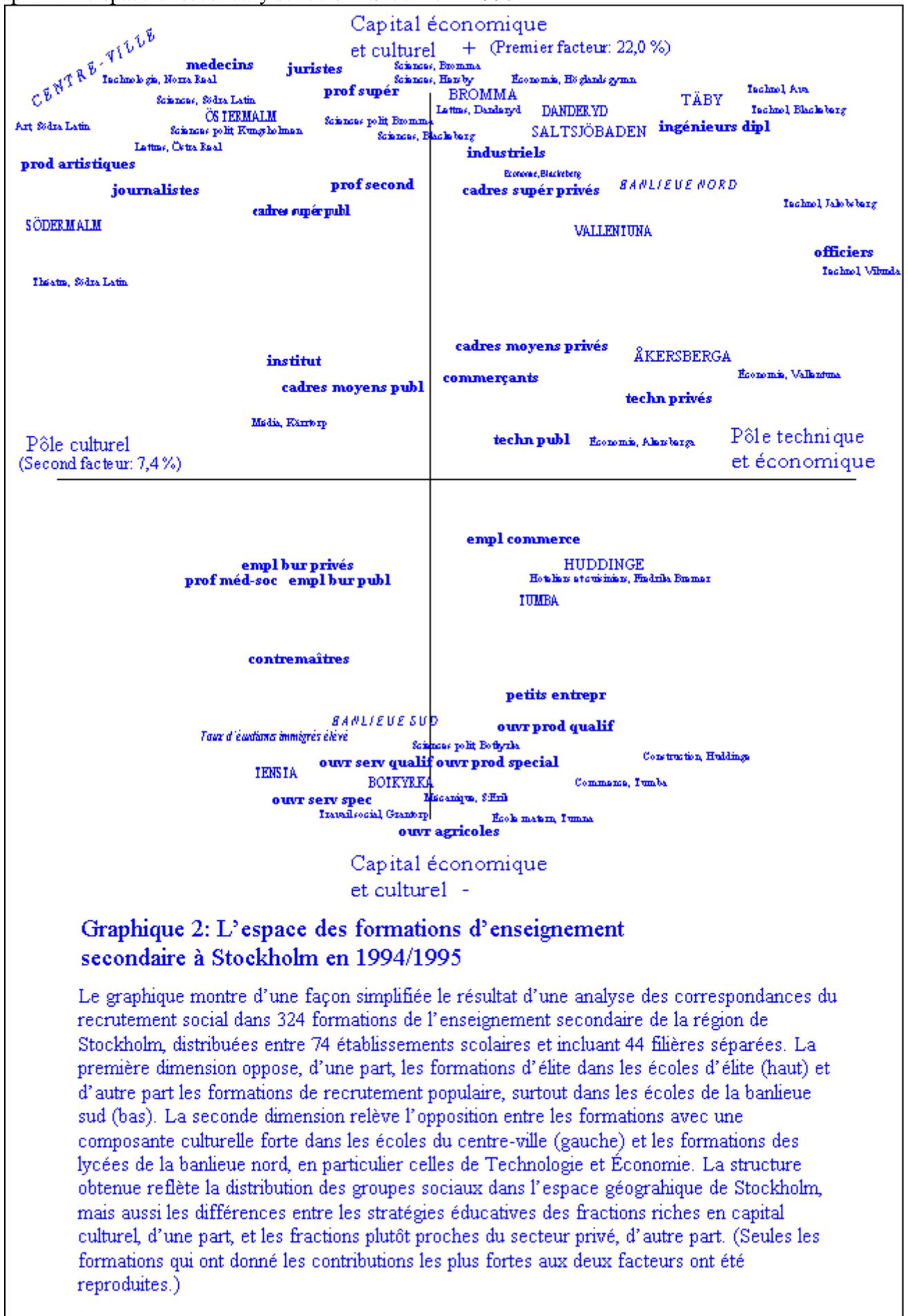
Graphs 1 and 2 picture the social landscape of higher education in 1984. A similar analysis of the field for 1979 gave an almost identical result, which seems to confirm that the relations between academic institutions and study programmes, or rather, the uses made of these institutions and programmes by the social groups, were stable. Further, the purely statistical analysis described here was by large confirmed and enriched by the qualitative data obtained through interviews and closed questionnaires at selected institutions. In short, then, the mapping out of the field of higher education in Sweden by means of correspondence analysis, made on the single basis of the recruitment profiles of all included study programmes and institutions, pointed to three major dimensions in the multi-dimensional universe that the field constitutes. Firstly, it suggested that higher education to a large extent was divided into two separate universes, one dominated by female students and the other one by male students, and secondly that both these universes had a similar hierarchical structure. Thirdly, it showed that the field of higher education comprised a distinctive opposition between a "cultural," "public" or "intellectual" pole and an "economic" or "private" one.

The analyses of the field of secondary education brought to light the same kind of oppositions between social classes and groups as regards their educational investments. Graph 3 summarises the first two dimensions in a correspondence analysis of recruitment profiles to study programmes in 1988/89, before the reform of secondary education in 1991, at an accumulated national level which considered the total number of boys and girls at these programmes from 32 social groups. The graphic representation of the axes displays an almost identical structure to the one found in higher education, opposing two equally hierarchical educational worlds, dominated by female and male students respectively, and makes manifest that girls and boys in secondary education above all met at the most prestigious and socially distinctive of the then existing study programmes, namely the one

for Science. In the area of vocational study programmes in secondary education to which students from dominated social classes were referred (bottom of the graph), girls and boys are to a large degree to be found at different programmes.

The structural opposition in the field of higher education between a “cultural” and an “economic” pole re-appeared in analysis of the field of secondary education. Graph 4 depicts the structure of the field of secondary education in Stockholm in 1994/95. One observes a first, major opposition between, on the one hand, the university-oriented study programmes in Science, Social sciences, Economics and Technology at the traditional *lycées*, secondary grammar schools, in the city centre (Södra Latin, Östra Real, Kungsholmen) and the secondary schools in the well-established suburbs in the north of Stockholm (Bromma, Danderyd) and, on the other hand, most study programmes, but in particular the vocationally-oriented ones, in the southern suburbs. The second structural dimension opposes, on the left hand side, schools and study programmes in the inner city with a particularly strong recruitment of students from social groups with a strong cultural and educational capital (medical doctors, university teachers, high civil servants in the public sector, artists and journalists), to schools and study programmes in mainly the northern suburbs (the right hand side) characterised by their strong recruitment of students from social groups that stand close to the private sector and the economic field (industry and business executives, high civil servants in the private sector, engineers, businessmen, etc.).

Graph 4. The space of secondary schools in Stockholm 1995.

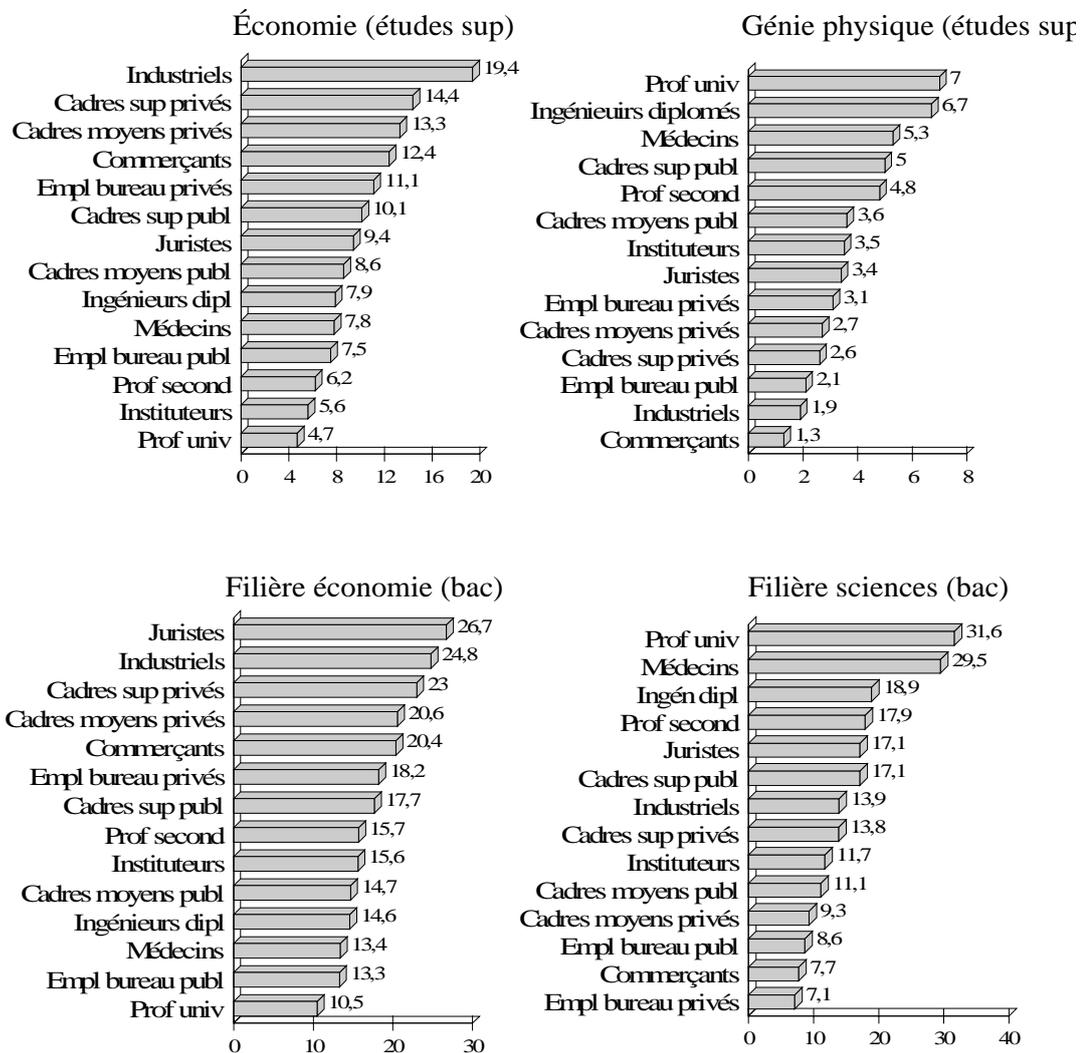


Graph 5. Percentages of all students in secondary and higher education from various social groups who studied at the study programmes of Economics and Science (secondary education in 1988/89), and Economics and Engineering Physics (higher education, 1984/85). Percentage of the group.

GRAPHIQUE 3

Pôle économique et pôle intellectuel. La valorisation des formations

Pourcents de tous les étudiants dans l'enseignement supérieur (1984) et dans l'enseignement secondaire (1988) de 15 groupes sociaux qui faisaient des études d'économie et de génie physique ou qui ont fait le choix de la filière économie ou la filière sciences pour le bac



### 1.3 Some method problems

The description of the main findings from the use of correspondence analysis for describing the structure of the fields of secondary and higher education should be supplemented by a brief discussion of some of the problems inherent in these analyses.

Firstly, a difficulty of simultaneously technical, methodological and theoretical nature should be mentioned. The opposition between what was analytically described as a “cultural” pole and an “economic” one in the fields of secondary and higher education appears repeatedly in the various analyses made of statistical data on student recruitment and in interviews and ethnographic observations of various kinds. Graph 5 illustrates a clear statistical manifestation of this opposition, in showing the percentage of *all* students in higher and secondary education, respectively, with a specific social origin who had chosen, in higher education (1985), one of the two study programmes in economics and theoretical physics, and, in secondary education (1988), one of the two study programmes in economics and science. As is manifested in Graph 5, science in secondary education and theoretical physics in higher education represent the perhaps most typical educational investments from students with an origin in social groups with a particularly strong cultural capital (university teachers, medical doctors, civil servants in the public sector, secondary school teachers, etc.). The order of educational preferences among social groups is almost totally reversed when we turn to the study programmes in economics in both secondary and higher education that above all attract children to industry and business executives, civil servants in private sector, businessmen, merchants, etc.

However, in the correspondence analyses presented above, the factor or dimension expressing this oppositions is comparatively weak and in certain attempts of analysis fall below the level that the methodology books regard as reasonable (Eigenvalue below 0,1). At the same time, the opposition is stable and reappears in analyses of various kinds of data, including data collected through survey questionnaires. This difficulty of analysis is most probably related to the methodological problems related to the classification of especially certain groups in the structure of the social space. For example the historically rather clear distinction between public and private civil servants is possibly becoming increasingly blurred. Also, the historically rather recent but quickly expanding group of “consultants,” acting as academically well-trained free entrepreneurs who move in and out of various sectors, add to the uncertainties of statistical classifications and, subsequently, analyses. In relation to the ongoing studies on the transnationalisation of higher education in Sweden, a similar key questions has become to what extent indicators on the specific forms of capital accumulated by the groups (and individuals), that are particularly in focus in the process of globalisation, are available in for example public statistics.

A second difficulty with both methodological and theoretical implications that should be emphasised is related to the question of what is the focus of analysis in examining the structure of the fields of secondary and higher education. The previous studies outlined above focused mainly on the students, their educational strategies and investments. The purely statistical data referred to above, taken from the national public statistics, were supplemented with at times extensive data of more qualitative kind, such as interviews, survey questionnaires, etc., but still remained focused on the students. However, it is clear that the structure of the fields of secondary and higher education are constituted and transformed both by the uses made of the institutions by the social groups and by the strategies that the institutions themselves develop in their struggle for recognition. The recent transformations of secondary education hinted to in Graph 4 is a good example. In the 1990s, Swedish regulations for the establishment of private secondary schools became increasingly free and, further, students were allowed to freely choose in what school, private or public, they wanted to carry through their secondary school studies. Parallel to this development and through the reform of secondary education in 1991, secondary schools were given a high degree of freedom to establish, within the national curriculum, study programmes with specific study orientations—so called “profile” study programmes—and to compete for students through offering these programmes on the educational market. These changes in the legal and administrative system regulating secondary education rapidly led to a dramatic expansion of “profile” study programmes, many of which were

oriented towards a supposedly international market for higher education and professional careers and competed for students from the upper classes. The analysis of the transformations of the field of secondary education in Stockholm that followed on these changes suggests that the previously dominating position of the study programme in Science, that favoured the definition of cultural capital on which the traditional reproduction of the positions of the culturally well-established social groups depended, was threatened by competing new definitions of legitimate cultural capital advanced in particular by various “profile” study programmes in Social sciences with an international orientation. To simplify, the traditional emphasis, typical for the study programme in Science, on the combination of mathematics, science and legitimate culture such as Swedish literature, constituting the traditional definition of excellency, was challenged by a competing new emphasis on languages, social studies, economics and, above all, the European common market. These struggles on the definition of legitimate cultural capital were to a high degree advanced by the secondary schools themselves as part of their strategies to establish a competitive “profile.” The analysis suggests that the launching by some secondary schools of study programmes oriented towards the European common market and a supposedly internationally oriented cultural capital in particular attracted students from up-rising middle class families who had previously been disfavoured by the advantage of the culturally well-established social groups in the educational competition. In a climate of increasing institutional competition between secondary schools, the previously dominating schools, in turn, could make use of their superiority in terms of contacts and credibility in developing their own “profile” study programmes that incorporated both new and old demands on cultural proficiency from the side of the dominating social groups that attended them. The point to be made, then, is that the struggle in the area of secondary education between social groups with a varying volume and composition of capital is also dependent on the institutional strategies developed by the secondary schools in which these groups make their educational investments, and that the analysis of the field of secondary education must incorporate an analysis of the struggles between the secondary schools themselves and the investments that are part of these strategies.

In the following we shall return to the field of higher education and discuss the impact on this field of the investments made in transnational assets by both the educational institutions themselves and by the students attending them. First, however, a glance on the recent development of the field of higher education.

## 2. Current transnational strategies

### 2.1 Current transformations in higher Education

In the last decade, the Swedish higher education system has been transformed in a number of significant ways. First, we have seen a growth of the number of students, comparable to the expansion in the late 1960s. The number of students enrolled in higher education increased from 180,700 in 1986/87<sup>3</sup> to 285,800 in 1995/96—an enlargement by almost 60 per cent.<sup>4</sup> However, the increased number of students in higher education does not correspond to the higher demand for higher education mainly due to rising unemployment. A consequence of this is that the required grades for admission have become extremely high to most educational programmes. Second, the growth of students has to a large extent gained the university colleges, accounting for 18 per cent of the whole student body in 1986/87<sup>6</sup> and 28 per cent in 1995/96<sup>7</sup>. In absolute terms, the university colleges have more than doubled their number of students from 32,000 students to 81,200 students. Furthermore, five new university colleges have been established during the last decade (although the main expansion occurred in 1977 when a reform for decentralisation of the higher education came into force).<sup>8</sup> Another feature of the expansion of the higher education system is that three university colleges have obtained the status of university, thus increasing the number of universities and university colleges with permanent research resources to sixteen. Third, new disciplines, new pedagogic methods and new organisation forms have emerged much as a result of innovations by the university colleges. For example, the Södertörn University College (University College of South Stockholm), founded in 1996 and located in the southern suburbs of Stockholm where the educational level is among the lowest in all of Sweden and the number of immigrants extraordinarily high, has chosen a “multi-cultural” profile, and pedagogical principles—problem-based learning, project organisation, no fixed disciplines, all teachers functioning as researchers and all researchers as teachers, etc.—which contradict the old discipline-based university. Fourth, on a policy level interesting shifts in emphasis have occurred as a result of changes in the political field. Between 1991 and 1994 a right wing government led the country for the first time since 1982 and during this period large amounts were devoted to research. The policy was to invest in applicable research, especially in technology, medicine and natural science, and part of the former employee funds were transformed into foundations with targeted missions, as for example to support information technology development and research. The social democrats came into power in 1994 and have since changed the policy from a strong emphasis on research to mass education by establishing and supporting university colleges. There are strong regional and employment oriented objectives for the policy. Despite the differences between the political governance, during the last decade there has been a general tendency towards a more “economised” discourse regarding higher education. On the one hand, neo-liberal arguments, such as the importance of privatisation of public institutions,

<sup>3</sup> SCB, *Utbildningsstatistisk årsbok 1995*, SCB 1995, p. 300.

<sup>4</sup> Höskoleverket, *Årsrapport för universitet och högskolor 1995/96*, Höskoleverkets rapportserie 1997:17 R, Höskoleverket, Stockholm 1997, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Höskoleverket, *Årsrapport för universitet och högskolor 1995/96*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>6</sup> SCB, *Utbildningsstatistisk årsbok 1995*, SCB 1995, p. 300.

<sup>7</sup> Höskoleverket, *Årsrapport för universitet och högskolor 1995/96*, p. 114.

<sup>8</sup> In 1977, twelve new university colleges were established in Borås, Eskilstuna/Västerås, Falun/Borlänge, Gävle/Sandviken, Jönköping, Kalmar, Karlstad, Kristianstad, Sundsvall/Härnösand, Växjö, Örebro och Östersund. After 1977, university colleges has been established in Halmstad (1983), Skövde (1983), Karlskrona/Ronneby (1988), Högskolan i Trollhättan/Uddevalla (1990) and Southern Stockholm (1997) and the university colleges in Östersund and Sundsvall/Härnösand have merged into Mid Sweden University (a university college despite the name) (1993). Höskoleverket, *De första 20 åren. Utvecklingen vid de mindre och medelstora högskolorna sedan 1977*, Höskoleverkets rapportserie 1998:2 R, Höskoleverket, Stockholm 1998, p. 12.

decentralisation, free schools, free choices for students and parents considering secondary education, have flourished in the discourse and to some extent also been implemented. On the other hand, cost/benefit calculations have become more important in policymaking. One example of this is the changed conditions for the finance of the higher education. The support to the educational institutions was before based on the number of students enrolled, but is now based on the number of students who succeed in fulfilling their exams. Similar trends are visible in the doctoral education where the recruitment now is determined by the possibility to financially support the doctoral students. Somewhat bluntly, one can say that the universities and university colleges have been transformed into educational and research “factories” producing students, and applicable, profitable knowledge.

The transformations of the Swedish higher education can be summarised as a decline of the “Swedish model,” i.e. a homogeneous and egalitarian system with influences from the German model initiated by Humboldt. Although some parts of the Swedish higher education for a long time have been very oriented towards dominant Anglo Saxon countries, as for example medicine, technology, natural science and economy, there is now a more general Anglo Saxon influence. The former close link between education and research is today challenged by the American models where research and education is separated. On the one hand, specific strategic research milieus and centres without any basic higher education are established. On the other hand, the development and enlargement of the university colleges is not met by similar investments in research and the result is thus the emergence of mass education institutions. Furthermore, the relative autonomy of the scientific fields is being eroded, the social sciences and the humanities due to the weakened financial support from national funds, the natural sciences, medicine and technology by the increased influence from the private sphere and the industry. Important here is also that research now to a larger extent is financed by EU means, where the applicability of the research is a central criterion.

The current expansion of the Swedish higher education is comparable to the one that occurred in the latter half of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. There are definitely similarities: a rapid increase of the number of students, establishment of new university colleges and new disciplines, an inflation of grades and diplomas, and the entrance of new social groups. Nevertheless, there are important differences. The two phases of expansion have had different impact on the disciplines; while sociology was the subject that in particular attracted the new students in the 1960s, economy fulfils this function today. The recent decline of the Swedish model did not have its counterpart in the late 1960s. Furthermore, significant for the latter phase is the increased importance of transnational phenomena in the Swedish higher education. During the last decade, the “internationalisation” of higher education has become one of the most considerable features of higher education, not only in Sweden, but also in an almost worldwide perspective. In the following, we will discuss some transnational phenomena in Swedish higher education, and relate these to the expansion of a transnational educational market. Finally, we will discuss some methodological implications of the “internationalisation” of higher education.

## 2.2 *Transnational Assets at Stake*

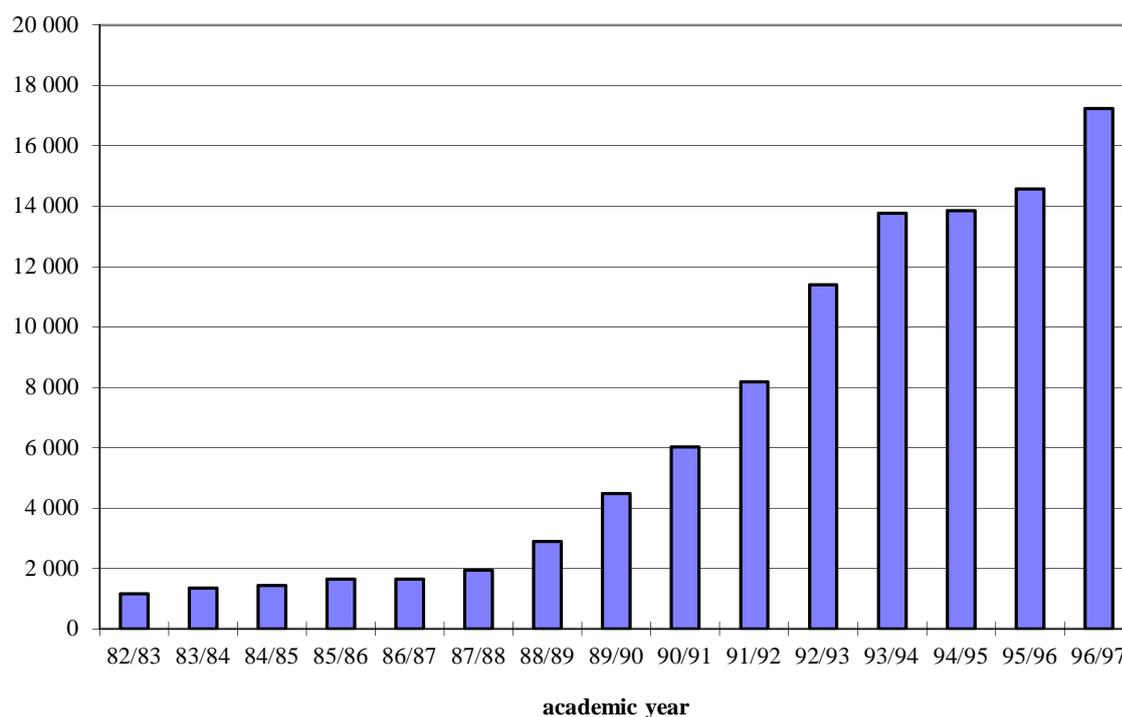
Transnational assets and transnational phenomena are of various sorts. Among the dominant features, we find the following activities:

- 1) student and staff mobility;
- 2) courses at Swedish institutions given in foreign languages;
- 3) adjustment of the organisational aspects of education to international standards;
- 4) adjustment of the curriculum content;
- 5) research networks and co-operation with foreign research milieus.

In an overall perspective, the most obvious example of the “internationalisation” is the vivid expansion of the flow of students from Sweden out in the world, see Diagram 1. On January 1, 1989, a new regulation for financial aid for studies abroad came into force. It now became possible to

obtain financial support for almost every foreign education as long as it had an acceptable standard as defined by the National Agency for Higher Education (HSV). The earlier regulation had only permitted support for educations for scarce professions as physiotherapists, dentists and medical doctors, together with unique educations that Swedish higher education was unable to offer. While during the 1970s and the 1980s the number of Swedes were negligible, only slowly increasing from 1,000 to 2,000 Swedish students studying abroad, the number rose dramatically after the new reform to reach the impressive number of 25,000 students today, i.e. accounting for almost 10 per cent of the total student population at a given moment. The major part of the foreign studying population have organised their studies on their own (so-called "free movers"), representing ca 80 per cent, or 20,000 students. However, the significance of exchange programmes between Swedish universities and university colleges and their foreign partners should not be underestimated. The total number of these students could today be estimated to at least 6,000 and there have been a rising trend, much as a result of the possibility for Swedish universities to be part of the EU exchange programmes in higher education (opened already in 1992/93 by the ESS-agreement and in full scale after Sweden entered EU Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 1995). Considering the research, an indicator of an extended collaboration with foreign research partners can be found in the increased number of articles co-written with foreign researchers. In 1990, 40% of all Swedish articles found in the Science Citation Index were written together with foreign researcher and in 1995/96 the percentage had increased to 60.<sup>9</sup> Among the recently established research foundations mentioned above, one is explicit designed to support the "internationalisation" of research in higher education (STINT, The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education).

**Diagram 1. Number of Swedes studying abroad in higher education with financial aid (only "free movers") 1982/83–1996/97**



Source: Unpublished statistics from CSN International (the International Department at the Swedish National Board of Student Aid).

It is without doubt an impressive increase of transnational phenomena. These general indicators, however, disguise important transformations and differentiating processes. Considering the social groups' educational strategies, transnational educational investments have become highly diversified. Before the reform of the financial support for studies abroad, transnational educational investments

<sup>9</sup> Högskoleverket, *Årsrapport för universitet och högskolor 1995/96*, pp. 78–82.

were almost exclusively a matter for the dominating classes. This is mainly explained by two factors, first that the financial support was concentrated towards high prestigious education, e.g. in medicine and dental care, where the dominating classes were highly over-represented and second that the alternative, to finance the studies abroad by oneself, requires substantial economic means. The reform in 1989 with its drastically changed conditions for financial support and the increased possibilities for students to study abroad within the framework of exchange programmes have led to the entrance of new categories of students studying abroad. The dominating classes still is over-represented in terms of transnational educational investments, although their share has decreased in favour for the middle and popular classes. More significant is however the differentiation that has occurred. While the students studying abroad in the beginning of the 1990s predominantly had good educational credentials, in the last years the studies abroad have become a second hand choice strategy for those students who do not have sufficient grades to be accepted by Swedish institutions of higher education. Therefore, while the studies abroad for some social groups functions as a mean for avoiding unemployment, studies abroad have a very different meaning for the elites. For these groups, Swedish higher education is not sufficient for a transnational professional career.

Regarding the institutions of higher education one important aspect of transnational investments is the exchange programmes. In a general perspective, there seems to be only small differences. If we compare different types of educational institutions and sorts of programmes, see table 1, we can note that there is no significant differences between the universities, the university colleges and the art colleges with regard to percentage of total outgoing students, while the colleges for health sciences (the most dominated institutions) do not reach the same level. There are some differences between the sorts of programmes. The Nordplus programme, an exchange programme between the Nordic countries, is most important for the art colleges. Noteworthy is that the bilateral agreements has the highest percentage at the university colleges.

Table 1. Out- and ingoing students per type of agreement and educational institution 1997

	Total outgoing stud./total stud.*	Total ingoing stud./total stud.*	Outgoing stud. bilateral agre./total stud.*	Outgoing stud. EU agre./total stud.*	Outgoing stud. Nordplus agre./total stud.*	Outgoing stud. other agre./total stud.*	Ingoing stud. bilateral agre./total stud.*	Ingoing stud. EU agre./total stud.*	Ingoing stud. Nordplus agre./total stud.*
Universities	<b>2,92%</b>	2,57%	0,81%	<b>1,64%</b>	0,21%	0,26%	<b>0,58%</b>	<b>1,64%</b>	0,34%
University Colleges	2,63%	1,88%	<b>0,90%</b>	1,37%	0,07%	0,28%	0,47%	1,32%	0,09%
Art Colleges	2,71%	<b>4,36%</b>	0,50%	0,70%	<b>1,20%</b>	<b>0,30%</b>	0,50%	1,15%	<b>2,71%</b>
Colleges of Health Science	1,66%	1,41%	0,26%	0,55%	0,62%	0,22%	0,15%	0,58%	0,69%
Total	2,74%	2,30%	0,80%	1,47%	0,21%	0,27%	0,52%	1,47%	0,31%

\* Total number of students = Full time equivalent student, based on the academic year 1996/97

Source: The National Agency of Higher Education, The NU-data base

These relatively undifferentiated results do however hide important differences within each category, see table 2. The category universities is constituted by different kinds of educational institutions. Here we find the two large traditional universities, Uppsala and Lund, the large universities in the main cities, Stockholm and Gothenburg and the more recently founded universities of Linköping and Umeå. Furthermore, the category also include professional schools and specialised universities such as the Stockholm School of Economics, the Karolinska Institute, the Royal Institute of Technology and the Swedish University for Agriculture Sciences. The latter group are the ones in the category that have the highest rates of students studying abroad, exemplified by Stockholm School of Economics with its outstanding position—7,9 per cent of their student studied abroad in 1997—and the Royal Institute of Technology (5,4 per cent). Among the large universities, the traditional universities in Uppsala and Lund have rather high rates of students studying abroad (3,5 and 3,3 per

cent), while Stockholm University and Göteborg University have more modest percentages, 2,0 respectively 1,6 per cent. Also among the university colleges there are differences. As number two, we find, despite the name, a university college, Växjö University, and Jönköping University College and the University of Skövde also have high percentages of students abroad. However, most of the university colleges are to be found in the middle of the list. The university colleges of health science, with the exception of a few, have the lowest percentages. If we analyse the differences between the educational institutions, it is evident that the most dominating institutions within each field, such as Stockholm School of Economics in economics, the Royal Institute of Technology in technology, the University College of Art, Crafts and Design to some extent within art education, Uppsala University and Lund University among the general universities, all defend their positions with regard to providing the students with possibilities to study abroad.

Table 2. Total number of out- and ingoing students per Swedish educational institution (only inst. over 500 students) 1997. Ranked by share of outgoing students per total number of students

University/University college	status	total numb. of stud.*	total numb. of outgoing stud.	share outgoing stud. per total numb. of stud.*	total numb. of ingoing stud.	share ingoing stud. per total numb. of stud.*
Stockholm School of Economics	Univ.	1,477	117	<b>7,9%</b>	102	6,9%
University of Växjö	Univ. Coll.	5,313	314	<b>5,9%</b>	299	5,6%
Royal Inst. of Technology	Univ.	9,053	490	<b>5,4%</b>	363	4,0%
Jönköping University College	Univ. Coll.	3,574	192	<b>5,4%</b>	135	3,8%
Univ. College for Art, Crafts, Design	Art Coll.	600	32	<b>5,3%</b>	29	4,8%
University of Skövde	Univ. Coll.	2,510	122	<b>4,9%</b>	47	1,9%
Umeå College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	1,331	64	<b>4,8%</b>	31	2,3%
Swedish Univ. of Agriculture Sciences	Univ.	2,339	87	<b>3,7%</b>	79	3,4%
Lund University	Univ.	27,768	980	<b>3,5%</b>	806	2,9%
Uppsala University	Univ.	19,797	661	<b>3,3%</b>	711	3,6%
Karolinska Institute	Univ.	2,953	95	<b>3,2%</b>	79	2,7%
Linköping University	Univ.	12,695	408	<b>3,2%</b>	396	3,1%
University College of Karlstad	Univ. Coll.	6,525	192	<b>2,9%</b>	99	1,5%
Luleå University of Technology	Univ.	5,953	175	<b>2,9%</b>	145	2,4%
Stockholm College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	2,303	65	<b>2,8%</b>	40	1,7%
Mid Sweden University	Univ. Coll.	8,351	235	<b>2,8%</b>	88	1,1%
Boden College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	569	16	<b>2,8%</b>	17	3,0%
Umeå University	Univ.	14,274	330	<b>2,3%</b>	196	1,4%
University College of Örebro	Univ. Coll.	6,981	156	<b>2,2%</b>	145	2,1%
Chalmers University of Technology	Univ.	6,951	154	<b>2,2%</b>	124	1,8%
Malmö College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	858	19	<b>2,2%</b>	13	1,5%
Uppsala College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	919	20	<b>2,2%</b>	6	0,7%
Halmstad University	Univ. Coll.	3,144	65	<b>2,1%</b>	73	2,3%
Univ. College of Karlskrona/Ronneby	Univ. Coll.	1,638	33	<b>2,0%</b>	25	1,5%
Stockholm University	Univ.	22,340	439	<b>2,0%</b>	446	2,0%
Dalarna University College	Univ. Coll.	3,704	71	<b>1,9%</b>	59	1,6%
University of Trollhättan/Uddevalla	Univ. Coll.	1,520	29	<b>1,9%</b>	33	2,2%
Mälardalen University	Univ. Coll.	5,320	95	<b>1,8%</b>	62	1,2%
University College of Borås	Univ. Coll.	2,943	51	<b>1,7%</b>	14	0,5%
Göteborg University	Univ.	22,455	356	<b>1,6%</b>	430	1,9%
University College of Kalmar	Univ. Coll.	3,093	49	<b>1,6%</b>	59	1,9%
Jönköping Univ. Coll. of Health Sci.	Coll. of HS	1,290	20	<b>1,6%</b>	38	2,9%
Royal University College of Music	Art Coll.	581	9	<b>1,5%</b>	37	6,4%
Gävle Univ. College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	714	11	<b>1,5%</b>	7	1,0%
Gävle/Sandviken University College	Univ. Coll.	3,475	46	<b>1,3%</b>	23	0,7%
University of Kristianstad	Univ. Coll.	2,651	34	<b>1,3%</b>	38	1,4%
Stockholm Institute of Education	Univ. Coll.	4,382	37	<b>0,8%</b>	38	0,9%
Univ. Coll. of Health Sci. Lund/Hels.	Coll. of HS	1,156	2	<b>0,2%</b>	**	0,0%
Skövde College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	592	1	<b>0,2%</b>	3	0,5%
Växjö College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	607	1	<b>0,2%</b>	10	1,6%
Göteborg College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	1,784	**	<b>0,0%</b>	2	0,1%
Falun College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	524	**	<b>0,0%</b>	**	0,0%
Vänersborg College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	583	**	<b>0,0%</b>	**	0,0%
Kristianstad College of Health Sciences	Coll. of HS	558	**	<b>0,0%</b>	**	0,0%

\* Total number of students = Full time equivalent student, based on the academic year 1995/96

\*\* No data reported

Source: The National Agency of Higher Education, The NU-data base

This dominance pattern becomes even more clear when broken down on the level of educational programmes. The numbers above do not differentiate the educational programmes within an institution with regard to type and length. The most prestigious educational programmes at the dominating institutions are long spanning from four and a half-year to five and a half-year which means that the rate of students that during their education will obtain the possibility to study abroad are higher than for the institutions with shorter programmes. For example, the medicine programme (5,5 years) at the Karolinska Institute sends over 50 per cent of their students abroad for studies during the education, the Stockholm School of Economics over 30 per cent of the students within the four year economic programme spend a semester abroad, and the corresponding rate at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design is between 20 to 30 per cent. There is furthermore a sharp difference between different programmes at each institution. While the Royal Institute of Technology send almost 25 per cent of students within the prestigious civil engineering programmes, only 1 per cent of the students in the shorter and less distinguished engineering programmes study abroad and at the Karolinska Institute, no programme is near the 50 per cent rate of the medical programme, in fact, no programme reaches more than 20 per cent.

Nevertheless, there are not merely quantitative differences between the dominating and the dominated educational institutions. Even more important are the qualitative differences that are most effective in widening the gap between the dominated and the dominating. Crucial for the strategies among the dominating institutions is to invest in agreements with the most prestigious foreign universities, especially in the U.S. This strategy is highlighted by the Stockholm School of Economics, where the students are offered approximately 30 exchange positions at some ten North American universities, of which a majority are considered to be top ranked. The contrast to other economic educational institutions is striking: the Dept. of Business at the Stockholm University only has agreements with two North American universities, none of which ranked among the élite universities, and the Dept. of Economics at Stockholm University lacks any agreements with American universities.

The quality of the exchange schools is a central feature of the exchange programme at the dominating institutions. A general policy at the Stockholm School of Economics is to not support "free movers" among their students, only foreign studies within the exchange programmes can be included in the diploma. The school is also moderate when it comes to adding new schools to its exchange programmes. The Royal Institute of Technology only collaborates with foreign educational institutions that have extensive research resources, and sometimes pays the substantial tuition fees for their students in order to be able to send them to the most prestigious universities in the U.S. Another strategy among the dominating educational institutions is to form a part of distinguished exchange networks. The Stockholm School of Economics is maybe the outstanding Swedish example. The Stockholm School of Economics is part of the CEMS consortium (Community of European Management Schools), constituted by twelve leading business schools in Europe. The elite perspective is underlined by the fact that only one school, and supposedly the "best" one, in each country is allowed to be part of this consortium: France is represented by *École des hautes études commerciales* (HEC), Great Britain by the London School of Economics, etc. The transnational aspects are central to the CEMS Master education. The students are supposed to speak three languages fluently and among the courses titles like International Marketing, Global Business Strategy in the European Context, and Selected Aspects of EU Law appear.

The transnational investments at the dominating institutions stand in sharp contrast to the investments at the dominated institutions. For the latter institutions, transnational investments are a primarily a matter of giving the students opportunities to study abroad. The concern is thus not to obtain exchange programmes with prestigious foreign institutions, rather to obtain as many agreements as possible with from the students' perspective popular countries to study in, such as Great Britain and the U.S. The crucial difference between the dominating and the dominated institutions are that while the former truly compete on a transnational educational market, transnational investments are for the latter group stakes in the national educational market and functions there as an important weapon in the struggle over the student recruitment.

To understand these different orientations we have to understand the different logics of the Swedish national market and the transnational market. An obvious difference is of course the size. A Swedish student aiming to study abroad can find over 3,000 universities and colleges only in the U.S. However, a more significant difference is the diversity of the transnational market. We cannot understand the transnational market as a unified system—it is composed of a number of different national educational systems with their specific structures. If we for example compare the Swedish educational system with the American counterpart, we find striking differences. Swedish higher education is despite the hierarchies and differentiating tendencies pointed out above a rather homogenous system, with general regulations, state centralised control of the quality, a centralised admission system with standardised application requirements. The American system on the contrary is extremely diversified and decentralised. For example, the control can be either private or state, county, municipal, each school has admission arrangements of their own, and the admission requirements and the dates for applications vary extensively between the schools. Even more significant in the case of the U.S. is the variation in (social, scholarly and professional) quality between schools. The most prominent private universities and a few large state universities are responsible for the major part of research conducted in the U.S., while the rest of the universities and colleges mainly functions as sites for mass-education. From the students' perspective, a diploma from a recognised MBA school or an Ivy League university gives the holder access to much coveted jobs on a worldwide labour market, while other diploma are probably not recognised in for example Sweden. In a sense is the American system comparable to the Swedish, of all the American universities and colleges it is just a minority—although impressive—who actually compete on a transnational market. It is among the most prestigious American universities that we find the highest numbers of foreign students and foreign scholars.

Furthermore, the transnational educational market has a hierarchical structure, working on different levels. First, there is a hierarchy of national educational system. An indicator of this dominance pattern can be found in the flows of students across national borders. According to the UNESCO statistics, the U.S. occupies the most dominating position with ca 450,000 foreign students studying within the country in 1991. Second was France with 140,000 foreign students, followed by Germany (116,000), Great Britain (96,000) and Russia (73,000). If we study the geographical origin of the foreign students we find that while the U.S. has a worldwide recruitment (where Asian countries are the most important consumers; 294,000 Asian students studied in the U.S.), the other countries have a more narrow recruitment. In France more than 50% of the foreign students come from African countries, especially North African, and for Russia, the former members of the Soviet Union account for almost all the foreign students.<sup>10</sup> The relations between national educational systems are not totally determined by the relations of economic and political powers between the countries. Seniority often is a valuable asset in itself and this is especially true in higher education and science. For example, an education in England or France is more recognised on the transnational and national professional markets than one should have expected considering these countries' overall positions in the hierarchy of nations. The accumulation of symbolic capital valid in a transnational educational market is a more time consuming project than raising economic capital to be used in the transnational business world—the rapid economic development of the New Industrialised Countries in Asia does not correspond to a similar growth of the higher education and the Asian countries are most dependent on the U.S. for supplying their need for higher education.

In sum, the UNESCO statistics gives for hand a sharp division between a group of a few countries, who are almost self-sufficient in terms of education, and the rest, where transnational educational investments are necessary or at least a serious challenge to the national educational system. To the former group, we can include the U.S., France, Great Britain, Germany, and Japan. The self-sufficient dominating countries have a high number of foreign students studying in country, but remarkable few of the domestic students chose to study abroad—in the U.S., the 450,000 foreign students shall be compared to the 25,000 Americans studying abroad. Transnational investments can in dominating countries be an uncertain investment. In France, as Anne Chaterine Wagner shows, skills in modern

<sup>10</sup> UNESCO, Statistical Yearbook 1995.

foreign languages or familiarity with foreign cultures are no prime concern in the typical educational trajectory—an élite lycée, les classes préparatoires, a Grande École, maybe École Nationale d'Administration in addition—preparing for dominant positions in the field of power. Instead, precedence is given to “domestic” French investments. While for many high-aspiring Swedish students a study or work sojourn abroad is an almost inevitable part of the *cursus*, for a French student to stay away from Paris where the real competition takes place might be a hazardous endeavour, a detour or even a dead-end.<sup>11</sup>

Second, there is within each country a hierarchy of educational institutions, probably most articulated in the U.S., with its extremely diversified system and the ranking systems, and in France with its centralised elite system, les grandes écoles. In contrast to financial markets—described as abstract market—the geographic location of the schools is important in a number of aspects. To be located in an area with a high concentration of scholarly capital like Boston, Oxford or Paris is of value to educational institutions in the region. This is also true for institutions located in important production sites (Los Angeles and its film industry, Paris and some cultural fields, Silicon Valley and information technology, New York as a cultural and financial centre, etc.) and in the capital or a major city because of the nearness to cultural, administrative or financial centres.

Third and finally, it is important to apprehend the transnational educational market not as a unified entity with fixed relations of power but as a battlefield where different traditions and models are competing. The U.S. models are no doubt dominant in many subdomains, as in economics, but not unchallenged. Despite its French label, the *Baccalauréat International*—a higher secondary education arranged in many countries with diplomas given in Geneva—represents in many respects an American model, which is challenged by the genuinely French international secondary education alternatives.<sup>12</sup> During the last decade, the struggle between larger entities than nations have become more important, especially the struggle between Europe and North America. Besides being vehicles for the integration of the inhabitants, the EU education and research programmes are also attempts to meet the challenge from the U.S. and an effort to break the U.S.'s dominance. In a world where education and research are described as the key factors for the wealth of nations,<sup>13</sup> we might in analogy with the trade blocks also speak about “educational blocks.”

To return to the case of Sweden we can ask what position Sweden have in the transnational educational market and what the implications this position have for a country like Sweden. Given that Sweden is a periphery country, that Swedish is a minor language and the relatively small size of the Swedish educational system, its education is not recognised as very valuable on the transnational educational market.<sup>14</sup> Sweden's position can thus best be described as a dominated country among the dominating Western countries. Many of the Swedish reforms in higher education aiming at increasing international co-operation, have to be understood in the light of a political awareness of the dominated position of Swedish higher education. Notably, Sweden already in the beginning of the 1970s established a special commission to develop a general strategy for the internationalisation of higher education and the reform 1989 makes Sweden one of the most generous nations in the world, when it comes to creating favourable conditions for students to study abroad.<sup>15</sup>

The dominated position among the dominating is manifested in the flows of students, where Sweden in total has a negative exchange balance. While approximately 20,000 Swedes studied abroad

<sup>11</sup> Ann-Catherine Wagner, *Le jeu du national et de l'international. Les cadres étrangers en France*, Diss., EHESS, Paris, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Anne-Catherine Wagner, *op.cit.*, 1997, pp. 15 ff.

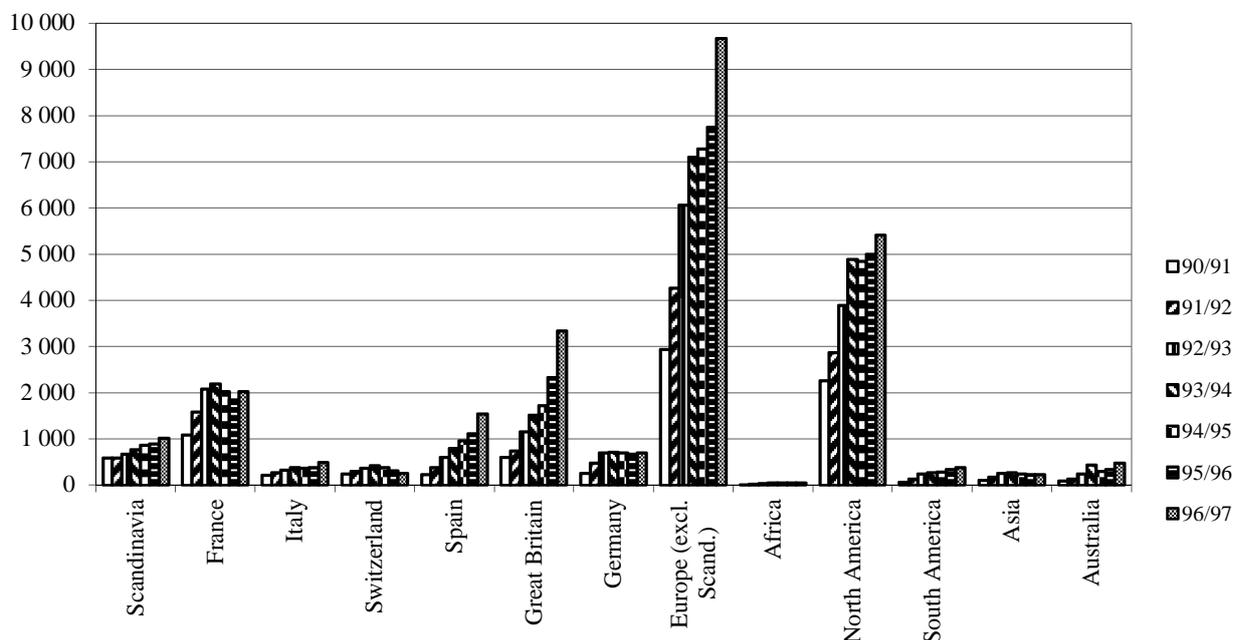
<sup>13</sup> See for example Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations. Preparing Ourselves for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Capitalism*, Vintage Books, New York 1992, and Manuel Castells, *The Information Age. Economy, Society and Culture. Volume I-III*, Blackwell, Oxford 1996–1998.

<sup>14</sup> Sweden has not been a colonial power and thus lacks the kind of position as a centre of higher education that for instance Great Britain and France hold.

<sup>15</sup> See Högskoleverket (National Agency for Higher Education), *National Policies for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe*, Högskoleverket Studies 1997:8 S, passim.

1992/93,<sup>16</sup> only some 11,000 foreign students studied in Sweden.<sup>17</sup> On a more detailed level, it becomes clear that the Swedish students are very selective in their choices, cf. Diagram 2. Most of them prefer English speaking countries. In 1996/97, the U.S. alone accounted for 30% of the Swedish “free movers” and the U.S. together with Great Britain and Australia host 53% of the students. On the other hand, this flow towards the West is not reciprocal. In fact, very few Anglo Saxon students prefer to study in Sweden (North America only accounted for 4 per cent) and the most of the foreign students came from Scandinavia, 42 per cent and countries outside Europe and North America 27 per cent. Sweden thus holds a dominating position among the Scandinavian countries in the sense that the exchange balance is in Sweden’s favour, and is in a dominated position compared to the European and especially North American countries.

**Diagram 2. Number of Swedes studying abroad with financial aid (only free movers) 1990/91–1996/97 per country/geographical domain**



Source: Unpublished statistics from CSN International (the International Department at the Swedish National Board of Student Aid).

For the Swedish educational institutions, Sweden’s position as a dominated country among the dominating has important consequences. The differentiation process can be understood as an outcome of Sweden’s position. In a small country of Sweden’s size, there are simply not sufficient resources for providing a large number of educational institutions with relevant transnational assets. The most crucial resource for competition in the transnational market is research. The dominating educational institutions within the Swedish field of higher education are the ones that possess the most extensive resources for research, which is most unevenly distributed. The dominating universities and professional schools account for 16,200 person year for R&D and their economical resources for

<sup>16</sup> Utbildningsdepartementet: *Utlandsstudier och internationella utbildningskontakter. Vad ska göras centralt, vem ska göra det och hur?* Ds 1993:76, pp. 15–16.

<sup>17</sup> The figure on the foreign students refers to the autumn term of 1993 (cf. Högscoleverket [National Agency for Higher Education], *National Policies for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe*, Högscoleverket Studies 1997:8 S, p. 180). The number of students with foreign citizenship studying in Sweden in 1988 was approximately 9,000 (Utbildningsdepartementet, *Utlandsstudier och internationella utbildningskontakter. Vad ska göras centralt, vem ska göra det och hur?* Ds 1993:76, p. 16) and thus the trend is that the number of Swedes studying abroad increases more rapidly than the number of foreign students studying in Sweden.

research is in total 21,000 M SEK, while the dominated university colleges contribute with ca 450 person year for R&D and dispose only 600 M SEK for research.<sup>18</sup> There is also a finer hierarchy. For example among medicine faculties, the Karolinska Institute holds a the most dominant position, exemplified by the following figures: in 1992/93 the Karolinska Institute accounted for 55% of the research funds of the Swedish International Development Cooperation, 34% of the Swedish Medical Research Council's resources, and 39% of the Cancer Fund's means. Today visiting scholars represent 20% of the research capacity at the Karolinska Institute and 25% of the doctoral students hold a foreign diploma.

Research is important in two perspectives. First, a long tradition of extensive and esteemed research means that there exists a wide range of international contacts that makes it much easier to, for example, establish new student exchange agreements. The staff tells us that it is common that many agreements are simply formalisations of already existing collaborations with foreign universities. Second, extensive resources for research also to some extent correspond with an international reputation and, according to the informants from the institutions mentioned, the fact that their research is well known at other universities makes it easier to establish and cultivate contacts.

Nevertheless, there are other factors functioning as resources in the transnational competition. Investments in symbolic capital are important from the aspect of marketing. Due to the enormous size of the transnational market, it is crucial to possess a *name*, to be recognised as a distinguished seat of learning. Research is of course fundamental for the reputation, but other significant advantages have to be profited. For example, the Karolinska Institute markets itself as responsible for the selection of the Nobel Prize in Medicine and the Stockholm School of Economics emphasises its long tradition of co-operation with Swedish trade and industry and the fact that its alumni count many prominent top executives and civil servants. The symbolic dimension is also highlighted by the fact that a number of dominated university colleges prefer to market themselves in the transnational educational market as universities despite that they do not have this status, see table 2. Moreover, the geographic location is of importance. In the traditional university towns, Uppsala and Lund, all institutions have an advantage due to the fact that these towns are recognised as traditional seats of learning, which in the eyes of the students probably is taken as a warrant of quality. To be located in Stockholm with access to the centre of economic, political and cultural fields is in itself an advantage for the departments of the Stockholm University in comparison with other universities in Sweden, especially the more recently founded universities in Umeå and Linköping, and the university colleges located in the provinces.

One additional significant factor is the student body that the institutions dispose. The dominating institutions have well-selected student populations with good credentials and furthermore, which is especially important in this respect, with experiences or foreign countries and good linguistic skills in foreign languages. The staff at the Karolinska Institute for example mentioned that there never have been any problems with students lacking sufficient knowledge of the foreign language.

Finally, the international efforts might serve as resources in the competition between schools on the transnational market. This does not include basic investments as giving courses in English, which is a necessary condition of existence on the transnational market, but for example, partnership in selective exchange programmes. In their marketing the dominating schools extensively refer to international co-operation and networks of a kind that signify that the school is one of the selected few in higher education. It is likely that the foreign students are able to distinguish the elite schools in their own country and thus the mentioning of those schools heightens the value of the Swedish school and by this distinguishes it from its domestic competitors.

Taken together, most of the important assets valid on the transnational market are concentrated to the dominating institutions, who possesses outstandingly most resources for research, who are located in the major cities or traditional seats of learning, and who possesses the most distinguished and transnational oriented student bodies. It is in this perspective not surprising that the dominating institutions are the ones who profit most from the "internationalisation." Therefore, in fact, to be the highest ranked institution among Swedish competitors within the discipline almost functions as a

<sup>18</sup> Högskoleverket, *Årsrapport för universitet och högskolor 1995/96*, pp. 104–105, 148–149, 150–151.

criterion for being able to compete on the transnational educational market. Nevertheless, for most of the other institutions, transnational investments have clearly become crucial weapons in the national market. It is no coincidence that the university college that invests most extensively in exchange programmes, Växjö University, is the one that also has the most national spread recruitment of students among the university colleges. For the university colleges, transnational investments are perhaps the most efficient strategy to attract students since they are not as cost demanding as investments in prestigious research activities.

### 3. Concluding remarks

The transformations of the field of Swedish higher educational institutions during the last decade signify that the hitherto relatively stable structure of its hierarchies is changing, but not overthrown.

The expansion of transnational investments in Swedish higher education is a major change. The dominating institutions have, however, been able to defend their positions and even further increase the distance to the dominated institutions. It is in this context important to make a distinction between transnational investments that are aiming at a transnational educational market and to all appearances similar investments, which in fact instead function as weapons in the struggle with competitors within the national market. Although the dominating Stockholm School of Economics and the new Växjö University are number 1 and 2 in rank according to the portion of their student students that are sent abroad, their transnational investments are very different. The investments of the Stockholm School of Economics have to be inscribed in the realm of a transnational educational market, where leading business schools all over the Western World compete over the most talented students, teachers and researchers, as well as over financial resources and prestige. For Växjö University, however, the extensive exchange programmes function important assets in order to recruit Swedish students, and thereby as a weapon in the struggle with other university colleges, as well as an effective way to challenge the traditional universities.

Furthermore, the reconversion opportunities are not equivalent. For the dominated institutions, the transnational investments represent of value merely on the national market. The overall resources of the dominated schools are too insignificant to be valid on any transnational market. Especially their lack of academic capital is a major obstacle. For the Stockholm School of Economics and other Swedish institutions that are dominant within their national sub-field, transnational investments have a dual function. On the one hand, they function as assets on the transnational market (although of limited scope due to Sweden's dominated position). On the other hand, they also operate as assets on the national market in two respects: first in order to safeguard the dominant position against lower ranked institutions within the same sub-field, second in the competition between the other dominant Swedish institutions. Probably this latter aspect is the most crucial for an understanding of the emphasis the dominant schools put on transnational investments. Stockholm School of Economics has to keep its position in relation to the Royal Institute of Technology. This kind of competition might be sharpened as a consequence of the new regulation of financial support for studies abroad, which gives a larger number of the highest achievers among the students the possibility to carry through their entire higher education abroad. Those students might as an alternative consider an education at a Swedish institution if it offers the opportunity of a semester or a year abroad.

We will end this paper with a few methodological implications. One obvious problem when analysing transnational phenomena in higher education is to capture all relevant positions within the educational field. From the perspective of the students, the number of possibilities has increased dramatically with the new conditions for financial support for studies abroad. While Swedish elites always to some extent have been suspicious towards Swedish higher education and invested in foreign educational capital, today these possibilities have become options for almost all social groups, even if the quality of the foreign education sometimes is very dubious. It is now necessary to include the foreign educational institutions in the analysis of the Swedish field of higher education, which gives rise to certain problems. First, it is more problematic to obtain data on the Swedes studying abroad than for Swedes studying in Sweden. The Swedish National Board of Student Aid has information on the Swedes studying abroad with financial support, but some students have other financial arrangements. For example, it is not unusual that Swedish companies pay for their employees' continuing education, such as studies at prestigious MBA-schools in the U.S. Another and a more serious problem with the data is the wide range of foreign universities and schools that Swedes are studying at. Today, approximately 10,000 foreign educational institutions are approved

for financial support for Swedish students, and it is difficult to find objective indicators of the educational institutions and to classify them.

Furthermore, we have during the research on Swedish educational institutions' transnational strategies come to the conclusion that the list of central features presented above is far from exhaustive. In fact, the main bulk of the most substantial transnational investments in higher education are "extra-curricular," and far less discussed. The students (above all those originating from culturally well-to-do groups) inherit transnational resources, as language skills, familiarity with foreign cultures, and networks of friends, acquaintances or relatives abroad, etc., in their parental home, and later on during vacations and at many other occasions outside the seminar rooms. And the staff's ability to communicate with colleagues abroad or their chances to send their students to foreign prestigious institutions is determined by their own and their institutions' position in the hierarchies of the educational field. These combined resources of the students, the staff and the institutions constitute the stock that can form or be converted to transnational investments.

More general method problems concerns the relations between the field of higher educational institutions and the field of power. In France, Pierre Bourdieu and his collaborators—whose research has been the main source of inspiration for our own studies—have managed to demonstrate a strong homology between those two fields.<sup>19</sup> In Sweden, this seems to be somewhat less the case, for several reasons.

It is for example obvious that trajectories leading to the field of power in many cases are less underpinned by heavy educational investments than in France. One factor is the importance in Sweden of a kind of assets that we have chosen to label "organisational capital," that is assets accumulated within labour unions, political parties, and a diversity of organisations. The labour unions and the political parties (most obviously but not only the Social Democratic party) offer their members extra-mural educational alternatives to formal schooling. There has traditionally been, and still to some extent exists, an typical career ladder for blue collar workers, starting with short courses organised by the union, over more extensive sojourns at the union's schools, leading to top posts as union representative, in the political party, or in the state and regional administration. Formerly this background—comprising very little formal schooling—was not uncommon among top ranked politicians, civil servants, or directors of various important organisations or executives of state controlled corporations. Today also a large portion of the labour movements elites are recruited from the middle classes or the dominating class, but still educational capital per se is often of minor importance compared to investments outside formal schooling. Many amongst the top politicians and high officials in governmental or administrative bodies did never accomplish their university examination, but they acquired instead, during their student period, skills and social capital by intense participation in activities of student unions or political youth organisations. It does create technical problems that the investments of some significant future elites are of a kind that remains invisible in public statistical data on the student populations, and it is not easy to find good indicators on the possession of "organisational capital."

Yet another important difference when comparing France and Sweden is that the Swedish dominating class tends to distrust the national educational system. They seek to avoid that it exercises too large an influence on their offspring, by arranging all sorts of extra-curricular activities for their children music, sport, social events, travels abroad. Albeit much of the same might be said about the French bourgeoisie and aristocracy it seems anyway that the educational system in France, and especially *les grandes écoles*, is controlled by fractions of the dominating class, while the Swedish educational system to a greater extent is controlled by the middle classes. Among the supplementary actions that the Swedish dominating class thus is forced to take in order to reproduce itself are transnational investments, which have until rather recently been their privilege. Now the opportunities are available to almost anyone, even though of varying quality, which is one main reason for our current interest in the acquisition and use of transnational assets in education and in relation to conservation or transformation of the structure of the social space.

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<sup>19</sup> The most synthetic demonstration was presented in P. Bourdieu, *La noblesse d'État. Grandes écoles et esprit de corps*, Minuit, Paris 1989.

It might be that some ascending social groups in some respects will succeed in challenging the traditional elites by claiming that a study program in international relations or international law at Stockholm University or a sojourn at Collège d'Europe in Brügge is superior to what is offered by Stockholm School of Economics or the Royal Institute of Technology. Our prediction—supported by the data collected so far—is, however, that the traditional elites and the dominating schools will survive these attacks by including also new kinds of transnational strategies in their repertoire.