The Expansion of the University Sector, the Emerging Professions and the New Professional Landscape

The Case of Sweden

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of the university sector has channelled many students into study programs that lead to employment in new kinds of jobs, occupations and professional groups. There are three main reasons why more and more occupations get their training within the university system:

(a) The qualification and competence level of the labour force has been raised, due to changes in the economy and to decisions by the State to increase the formal training for an increasing number of occupations and semi-professions.

(b) In the context of increasing student enrolment in higher education, universities, especially among the newer universities, construct new study programmes in order to link the content and profile of the programs to specific occupational niches or categories in the labour market.

(c) Some occupational groups and associations strive to enhance their social standing by seeking to transfer their training to formal study programs in the universities in order to attain professional status.

(d) Categories b) and c) together make up the category of pre-professions.

This paper argues that the rapidly growing numbers of students in new vocational study programmes changes the relation between the higher education system and the occupational-professional categories in a number of ways. This is done with the concept of “a professional landscape” that encompass three waves of professions – the classical professions, the semi-professions and the now emerging “pre-professions”:

–Traditional semi-professions are becoming more and more academically oriented. Their training is permeated by abstract, scientific thought. New scientific disciplines have developed out of their professional training and practice – nursing studies, social work, leisure studies, etc.

–A number of occupations are becoming more and more professionalized. They are trained at universities; the jobs and occupational niches where they are destined to work are transformed by being linked to scientific bodies of thought. They can be conceptualised as pre-professions.

–The pre-professions bring with them the fruits and teachings of science, theories, methods into new social arenas and work settings, impregnat-
ing ever wider areas of society with the applied versions of different sciences.

We now have a much more complex “professional landscape”, where the relations between the university system and the occupational–professional field have been reconfigured.

This paper gives a synthetic picture of these developments in Sweden, where the combined processes of expansion and reconfiguration are played out in a common and unified institutional form. Other countries follow partly different trajectories and they therefore get partly different “professional landscapes”.
1. The Problem: Old and New Professional groups within the expanding University system

Once upon a time the category “profession” was a simple but central concept in social theory (Parsons 1939, 1954). This concept pointed to some common features of a limited number of prestigious occupations. These were trained in universities, played key roles in linking scientific thought to social practice and were characterised by specific organizational forms and codes of ethic. Physicians were the professional group par preference and the professions were, in Parsons’ theory, carriers of the key value-systems of modern society.

At the same time British historians listed an arresting array of “qualifying associations” of the most diverse kinds existing in the British labour market (Millerson 1957), spanning from the late Middle Ages up to the mid 20th Century, with a peak in their growth during the late 19th Century.

A number of important studies were published from the 1960’s onwards. For our purpose the contributions of Wilensky (1964), Etzioni (1969), Perkin 1969, 1990), Freidson (2001, 1994), Abbott (1988, 1991), Collins (1979), Burrage and Torstendahl (1990, 1991) have been important. As has the rebirth and refocused contributions to the literature on the professions from the 1990s onwards (e.g. Powell 1997, Evetts 1999, 2003, 2009, Svensson 2001, 2003). If the first group of authors focused on the traditional understanding of the professions, the refocusing by the later group led to studies dealing with specific occupational groups, often outside the classical professions.

Today we have an arresting array of occupations that are viewed as “professions” by themselves and by scholars. The number of candidates is increasing as a consequence of the expansion of the enrolment in vocational programs at the university level. The critical point is to understand how the expansion of the university system, led to an increase of academically trained specialists in different occupations. We need to grasp how the relation between the different waves of professions have been reconfigured as an effect of this expansion of the number of university graduates, many of whom in applied and “professional” fields.

One way to handle the expansion of the number of “professions” is to simply accept all newcomers to this field as bona fide profession as long as they meet at least a few of the criteria that characterise a “profession”, such as having a three-year university training, have clients, sport a code
of ethics etc. It is enough to behave and act “professionally” to be accepted as a “profession”.

We have suggested a way out of these muddy definitional waters by introducing the concept of “the professional landscape” (Brante & Olofsson 2010). (See table 1 below). This concept is in a basic sense also classificatory. This concept is built up as a conceptual scheme, where we combine the fields and domains where professions perform their tasks and combine with a categorization of occupations into three waves - or generations - of “professions”.

The horizontal axis is built up by the main domains of society. With a mix of theoretical considerations and empirical subdivisions we suggest the following nine key fields: technology, economy, social control, social reproduction, education- knowledge transfer – aesthetics, communication, the academy. The underlying file of science & research is a key to all the others – there new knowledge is created and learnt by all other professions. This is of course a preliminary list of domains to be elaborated.

The vertical axis contains three main categories of occupations that we can classify as being “professional” to some degree and which therefore should be conceptualised as “professions”.

The first category is the classical professions (physicians, lawyers, civil engineers, etc.

The second category contains those occupations that in the 1960’s (Etzioni 1969) were defined as semi-professions (teachers, nurses, social workers etc).

The third category contains those occupations now being trained in the rapidly expanding universities and university colleges in programs combining a basic university degree with a vocational profile. We suggest that this motley group of “professions-in-the-making“ should be defined as pre-professions. Below we will give a more precise description of the two latter categories.

This combinatory exercise gives us basic classificatory scheme for ordering and linking all major professions and profession-seeking occupations within a common framework. This we have in the study of today’s professional landscape, a table that has a formal and visual similarity with Dmitri Mendeleev’s periodic table of chemical elements.
# The Professional Landscape

## Types of Professions and Professional Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classical professions</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Aesthetics</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Social Control</th>
<th>Education</th>
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<td>Semi-professions</td>
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Scientific Research and Education
This scheme should be seen as a first approximation for a more precise definition of the “field of professions”. We should note that the point of an all-inclusive concept of the domains where professions are performing their tasks and defining their contributions to society is that it does not privilege ephemeral traits that are put forward in order to single out the specific traits of professions (code of ethic, having clients, being independent etc), traits that are shared by many other occupations. Instead this scheme points in the direction of understanding professions as occupational categories that are carriers of specific knowledge and expertise for solving specific tasks in modern society, whether in constructing a bridge, teaching children to read, analysing the stock market or helping the poor and destitute to a decent life.

The major point about the vertical axis is that it takes the stratification of the whole professional fields seriously. There are many aspects of the stratified and stratifying character of the professional categories. We focus on two aspects. First, on the kinds and degrees of science-based knowledge used by the different occupational groups as their knowledge basis for their practical intervention in society. The second aspect that we focus upon is the location in the social division and technical of labour (see Rueschemeyer 1986). How important is their knowledge-based role and authority in society and in the organisations where their work is performed?

The three layers - or generations - of professions, are suggested as the key element in the stratification within the professional categories. But the relative positions and location of specific occupational groups are not given once and for all. Occupations and professions have different trajectories over time and they will probably have different positions in different national configurations. To take an illustrative case, the social position and the societal role of the military is clearly dependent upon which nation-state they are serving and the position of that state in its relevant state-system.¹

2. Three different educational trajectories

Where have the three categories of professions been trained? What is the historical background in terms of the institutions where their training began and has been located?

¹ The role and status of the military and the officer corps is very different in Greece or Turkey than in Sweden, in the US versus the small European countries, between countries where borders are contested or not.
The classical professions have traditionally been trained and steeped into the form of knowledge transmitted by the classical universities. In Sweden the three “higher faculties” trained the key professional groups in jurisprudence (lawyers), medicine (physicians) and theology (priests), while the fourth, philosophical faculty eventually gave birth to the “key professions” (Perkin 1969) of professors and other university teachers and researchers.

The occupations that made up the bulk of the semi-professions emerged outside the universities. They were trained in special schools and institutes – in teachers colleges, in schools of social work, in nursing schools etc. Gradually, over the last 10 to 30 years these institutions have been gradually incorporated into the institutionally unified Swedish university system.

The third generation of occupations that strive for professional stratus, the pre-professions, have emerged as a consequence of the rapid growth of mass tertiary education – in the university colleges, in the new universities but also as part of the expansion of older universities.

The national configurations of higher education are far from identical. In most European countries, the occupations included in the category of semi-professions, are usually trained and educated in extra-university settings – in professional schools, in teachers colleges, in the German Fachhochschulen, and earlier in the British polytechnics. This is the case in most western European countries, e.g. in Germany and Denmark.

The institutional differentiation has a partly different form in the US since the structure of the US of higher education is divided into three separate systems – the full universities, the 51 systems of state universities and the even more numerous community colleges. There are of course overlaps between these three levels in the programs and courses they give, the subjects they teach etc. But as a rule the classical professions are trained at special schools within the traditional universities (e.g. the Medical and Law schools), the semi-professions are usually trained at the state universities. The pre-professions are mainly seen at the state university level and, in their early stages of becoming, within the community colleges (e.g. the police academies). These three public systems are partly parallel with private colleges and private universities, usually located at the higher end of the scale, such as the Ivy league universities on the East coast, Stanford University, California institute of Technology on the West coast, as well as the many liberal arts colleges,

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2 See e.g. Brint 1985, OECD 1990.
preparing for a later entrance to professional schools or highly ranked universities, private or public.

The structure of higher education in Sweden is different, especially in institutional terms. Today, the Swedish system has a formally unified structure. Almost all universities and university colleges is governed by the same public authority.\(^3\) This is the consequence of a long historical process where all forms of higher education have been integrated into a common institutional framework.

### 3. A bipolar configuration: Classical professions versus semi-professions

At the beginning of the first major wave of the expansion of enrolment in higher education, i.e. the early 1960’s and the next few years Sweden had two separate systems of higher education.

#### 3.1 Classical professions in the University system

The first was the existing major universities (Uppsala, Lund, Stockholm, Gothenburg) and two technical universities (Stockholm and Gothenburg\(^4\)) where the classical professions were educated. Here we should add the important agricultural and natural science based schools, training key professional groups in agronomy (Uppsala), forestry (Stockholm), veterinary science (Uppsala), pharmacy (Uppsala) and finally also dentistry (Stockholm and Malmö).

The universities and all the special schools recruited all their students from the gymnasiums (high schools) and all had a limited number of places and thus recruitment was limited. Since the gymnasium at this time was socially selective, most of the students came from middle and upper class backgrounds. The occupational destiny was leading them into the upper professional class, belonging to Social category 1 (“socialgrupp 1”) in the Swedish social and occupational classification system, used by Statistics Sweden and social scientists in Sweden.

At this time certain combinations of subjects in the social and natural sciences began to be packaged in strictly structured programs in order to prepare for specific careers. The program for educating specialists in psy-

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\(^3\) A few establishments are governed in and run by formally independent foundation.

\(^4\) That is, the Royal technical college in Stockholm and Chalmers Technical University in Gothenburg, where all varieties of civil engineers were trained as well as architects and land surveyors.
Psychology came about at this time, with its basis of psychology, but also including a year of pedagogy and sociology. Psychologist was in one sense the last category to become a more or less classical profession, created within the university system.

Insurance mathematicians were trained in a specific combination of scientific subjects, and built up as a program. A large group of social science students were channelled into a program preparing them for an administrative career (a public administration exam). This program combined bits of law and statistics with larger chunks of economics and/or political science, with optional choices of sociology, history or geography. This type of vocationally oriented programs was signalling the future in the Swedish university system.

3.2 Training establishments for the semi-proessions – Outside the university system

At the end of the 1950s all the major occupations, commonly considered to be part of the semi-professional category were trained in schools outside the formal university system, in establishments not on equal footing with the universities and the professional mentioned above.

Nurses
Nurses were trained in separate schools, closely linked to the hospitals and the counties that run the hospitals in Sweden. Nurses learnt some basic medical science in the form of existing knowledge and results. They were trained to apply existing techniques and instruments and had a basic knowledge of medicine and a practical knowledge and experience of how to care for the patients. It was not yet necessary to have gone through a gymnasium in order to enter a nurse school. The education lasted only for two years and had a large amount of practical elements, incl. periods of practical care work in hospitals.

Social workers
Social workers were trained in special schools of social work. The program was built upon a combination of subjects such as psychology, sociology, economics, political science and (social) law with the hands-on and more vocationally oriented part of practical social work. The first group of subjects was taught by teachers with a university background in the relevant disciplines. The vocational part of the training, including preparation for the long periods of practice that was an integral part of the program, was taught by experienced social workers. Many of the students coming to the schools of social work had an educational background not from the gymnasium but from the people’s high schools.
(folkhögskolor). The schools of social work in this period prepared for a career in social work or for an administrative career in the local authorities.

**Teachers**

Teachers were the most numerous among the semi-professional categories at this time. They were trained in the teachers colleges, institutions that had grown out from the seminaries. Originally these training establishments were developed in order to train the mass of teachers that was needed to fill the positions of the obligatory schools system (*Volksschule*) that was passed as a law in 1842, Female teachers for the youngest age group (age 7-9), male and female teachers for the somewhat older pupils (aged 9-13) were all educated in three institutionally separate types of establishments, seminaries. The seminaries were established all around the country – in the administrative centres of the small counties and more than one in the larger counties). The teachers were trained with specific objectives in mind – they were expected to teach their pupils the basics of how to read, write, arithmetic, i.e. reproduction of basic acknowledge, as well citizenship and national values.

The emphasis was preparation for teaching basic knowledge to children of the popular classes. Entrance into teachers colleges did not demand a high schools diploma (*baccalaureate*). Those who became teachers had not only a different educational but also a more modest social background than those who became students of at the universities.

**The social specificity of the semi-proessions**

Their background, their function as well as their social trajectory in their working life was clearly different from the routes that characterised the classical professions.

These three occupational groups, as well as other occupational groups that were seen as semi-proessions, were defined as being part of the social category 2 (the employed part of the middle class, on the same level but slightly different form the self-employed part of the middle class – farmers, shopkeepers, small entrepreneurs that sociologist sometimes put the into category.)

At this time there was in significant difference between the teachers in the gymnasium and the selective middle schools and the teachers in the obligatory c school system. The teachers in the gymnasiums were graduates from the universities, who were given an additional period of training at the teachers colleges to learn them e how to teach, handle the pu-
pils and to plan their lessons. This group of teachers had a more typical middle and upper class background, were shaped by their three to four years of university undergraduate education in their subjects, their marriage patterns etc. They belonged to a different trade union than the teachers trained at the teachers colleges.5

There were also other special schools that trained for specific occupations - physiotherapists, physical education teachers, schools for training preschool teachers, recreation leaders and pedagogues, . In the medical, nursing and caring fields there were specialist training for dental nurses, midwives, X-ray nurses and many other specialists

4. Sweden today - an institutionally unified but internally differentiated and stratified landscape of professional training

Still there is large difference between the traditional, established universities with a heavy emphasis on research. The classical professions – physicians, lawyers, civil engineers – are trained in these establishments. The full universities can devise their own research institutes and create new ph.D. programs in the areas the want. At the other end of spectrum we have recently establish university colleges, where undergraduate training and education of teachers and nurses are dominant features.

The two professional categories that 50 years ago had different institutional backgrounds for their training, as well as different social and educational background for their students, as well as distinct occupational and social destinations still exist. But the professional landscape today is much more diverse and multifaceted. New types of knowledge, new types of occupations have emerged and reshaped the occupational system as well as the system of higher education.

4.1. Technological and social change and the emergence of pre-professions

Wholly new arenas of society as well as new continents of knowledge have opened up, demanding new forms of specialist knowledge. Thus the terrain and the race for new professional projects from both new and older occupational groups have opened up.

5 These two different social as well as pedagogical roots of the Swedish school system has been the object for a successive number of reforms in the school system and also the teacher’s education since the 1950s and is still an active force within the Swedish school system.
The demand for new types of academic programs on the undergraduate level have their roots in societal changes, changes that are driven by scientific and technological inventions of the one hand and by the increasingly complex and multifaceted character of new social problems.

On the one hand we find the emergence of new technologies and specialised bodies of thought in medical and natural and technological sciences. This goes all the way from an explosive growth of computer scientists, system analyst and web designers to the emergence of new categories of specialised biomedical analysts. This group has been rapidly transformed recently. The retooling of the former laboratory assistants evolved into the new medical/natural B.Sc. program leading to the licensed occupation of biomedical analysts.

On the other hand we find new forms of social and organisational problems that demands new combinations of knowledge to be handled effectively. New forms of multidisciplinary programs have been developed by in combing different disciplines within the social sciences (to deal with integration and refugees problems) or by combining elements from the natural/technological fields with the social and economic sciences (to deal with environmental problems). These types of new specialists have been trained and educated so as to be able and competent to handle complex problems that makes their competence to master different sciences, theories and methods a central feature of their job.

These two major forces transform both the occupational system and the division of labour in society. At the same time these transformations have had a major role in reshaping the system of higher education.

Another force of transformation, with important effects for the system of higher education is the demands for a higher level of both general and specific knowledge for many key occupations in society. A typical case is that in the Swedish hospitals the number of nurse aides has decreased while the number of nurses (registered nurses) has increased. This should be seen as the combined effect of hospital managements wanting a higher level of competence among their staff and the activities of the nurses union for a larger role for the nurses.6

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6 The union of the nurses belong the white-collar national federation (TCO) while the nurse assistants were part of the Local government union within the Confederation of manual workers union (LO).
Two of the largest undergraduate programs in Sweden are now the programs that train students in engineering and Business administration on the B.A. and B.Sc. level. If we go back in time to the 1980’s engineers were either on the high professional level of civil engineers or had a three (or four) education in the gymnasium. This type of education training was successively upgraded to university programs. Today this type of program for educating engineers that have a longer training period than before has become one the largest in terms of number of students in Swedish higher education today. These engineers are heading for the private sector, increasing the level of technical competence in many manufacturing and building firms.

At the same time the number of students in business administration, marketing etc has increased dramatically. Earlier in many companies and public administrative bodies there was an occupational bifurcation of competence in economic matters. On the one hand there were a restricted number of MBA’s from the key business schools while on the other hand the mass of routine administrative and accounting positions were filled by persons who had specialised in business administration and accounting procedures in their high school (gymnasium) education. The number of Business administration programs has multiplied during the last twenty-five years in Sweden, in line with the expansion of the university colleges.

5. The emergence of new professional groups – the pre-professions

In order to present the full complexity of the Swedish professional landscape today we begin with a discussion of the third wave, generation and category of professional groups that we mentioned above, the pre-professions.

We use the category “pre-profession” as a catch-all category for a number of occupations that are now engaged in some form of professionalization project. They have at least four different points of origin.

The driving forces behind the striving for professional status are

1. Already existing occupational groups want to enhance their professional character and status by transferring the education of their members to a university setting.
2. Occupational groups that are already being trained within the university or university college system seek an upgrading to the basic...
level of three years training, enough to qualify for an basic exam on the B.A. or the B.Sc.-level.

3. The initiative can rest within the state, e.g. coming from within the public agency itself. The striving to academically upgrade the police academy is a typical case, where some key players within the police force wanted such an upgrading while others, including the minister of justice did not. In other cases there was a consensus in the relevant leading public bodies that supported and carried through the upgrading of the level of qualifications for certain occupations within the medical, social or caring sectors.

4. The group of teachers affiliated to a vocational academic program can also be a key actor. Upgrading the education, by prolonging the years of studies, demanding higher academic level of in the program etc can be in the interest of teachers as a collective by making demand for a more academically based education the precondition for demanding resources for (their own) research in this field.

When we look into a specific professionalization project we will find that more than one actor must be involved for such a project to succeed. And sometimes they fail. The list above is useful for locating the context (point) where the initiative is taken. A number of cases will be presented below to give examples of two/three major routes for a pre-profession to emerge.

This must be seen in the context of the set of reforms that during that from the late 1970’s until today has made the basic minimal structure of all academic programs similar in their format and structure. There are two formal aspects here that set the criteria and structured the level of aspiration for newcomers to the academy.

A) The length of the every program should be at least three years of fulltime studies

B) Each program with a vocational bent should confirm to the common structure of all three year academic programs in Sweden – that, is there must be main subject comprising one –and a half year of studies, including as a key element an exam paper that comprises a least ten weeks, where the student is expected to fulfil some basic demands of academic wiring and mastery of research techniques, theory or methodology.
These two demands make up the formal requirement to qualify for further studies and up till now this includes the minimal requirements demanded for an application for Ph.D. training in the subject in question.

6. Are all professions equal? On the principle of stratification among professional groups

Many scholars of professions emphasize what is common to the many different occupations that are now bundled together under the concept of “professional groups”. By making formal aspects such as having a three-year training at the university level, having an occupational organisation, following a code of ethics, dealing with clients, being oriented towards solving practical problem by using systematic knowledge, a growing number of occupations have come to be defined as “professions”. There are good reasons to have this pragmatic approach to the definition of what constitutes professions or rather professional modes and types of actions. But how far should this pragmatism extend? Many occupational groups want to be acknowledged the status of a profession when their work, education and conduct have acquired some of the traits mentioned above.

One response to this situation is to take Freidson’s rhetorical trick (Freidson 2001:xx) seriously – let those who wants to give their occupation the name of a profession take it. Another is to apply stricter criteria in some of definitional aspects in order to label a certain occupation as a “profession”. This raises the question of which of many criteria that are put forward as characterising a “profession” or “professionalism” that are to be seen as necessary and foundational and not only supplementary or enhancing aspects of these concepts.

Historically there was clear conception of the professions as making up an elite group in society whose social standing and societal role was determined by its long university training and their unique and highly valued expertise, rooted in their mastery of key forms of systematic thought – theology, jurisprudence and science to name three of them. In the 1950s to the 1970s sociologists grappled with the problem how to analytically treat occupational groups that shared some of the attributes of the classical professions, or having them to lesser degree. Harold Wilensky

7 Many of the established academic programs leading to professional degrees are in fact longer. They take from 3,5 years up to six years. Increasingly the road from the B.A./B.Sc. level to a research degree has to pass through the intermediary Masters level for one or two years.
saw the expansion of the American university system and the rising educational level for many occupations and asked if we were on the road to the “professionalization of everyone” (Wilensky 1964). In an influential collection of articles, edited by Amitai Etzioni, the concept of “semi-professions” was launched as a way of handling the differences between the occupational groups in the classical professions and the expanding, increasingly more educated groups of teachers, nurses, social workers etc. (Etzioni 1969).

The concept of “semi-profession” met increasing resistance. Not primarily for being analytically dubious or problematic but on moral or identity grounds. Is not our occupation as good and valuable as yours? The question “Who wants be a semi?” was asked. The anti-female bias in the concept was emphasized. This was an understandable reaction because a majority of the key occupations in the category of semi-professions was dominated by women (Witz 1992).

But all kinds and varieties professions are not equal. They are internally stratified within each social domain of society at the same as they cooperate and complement each other in solving their tasks. Physicians do their work in relation to nurses, midwives, physiotherapists and many more occupations – in co-operation but also with conflicts of power and demarcation struggles. Professional groups are also competing for power and influence across the domain borders. Professionals in the domain of social control have complex relations to those in social integration, education etc. How can we understand the outcomes of such conflicts? In order analyse professional cooperation as well as conflict, dominance and subordination we should have a differentiated concept of “professions” that makes this analytical task possible. The concept of “professional landscape” is helpful in this endeavour, since it makes all froms of “vertical” (within each professional domain) as well as horizontal (and transversal) – that is, across the domain borders.

The road to such a differentiated concept of types and levels of professions can start from the succinct list of the dimensions characterising and differentiating professions that Howsam put together (Howsam 1976). He and his co-authors discussed the teacher’s occupation and its candidature for being a profession. Building upon the work by Etzioni and his co-authors (Etzioni 1969) he came up with the following useful list of twelve dimensions. These dimensions were chosen in order to compare semi-professions with the classical professions. The point of this set of definitional attributes it that they so clearly take a stratification perspective. In all these dimensions occupations can have more or less, be more or less, act more or less etc. Therefore we can use it as a starting point for
a more general discussion of stratification within the whole of the professional landscape

6.1. Howsam’s list of the attributes of professions versus semi-professions

According to Howsam a **semi-profession**, as opposed to a classical (Howsam says “true”) profession, perform a type of work that in some respects is similar to those commonly regarded as professional. However, they are still different in many important aspects. Semi-professions, when compared with classical professions, have according, to Howsam the following characteristics.

**Table 2. The Semi-professions, according to Howsam:**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Are lower in occupational status</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Have shorter training periods</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Lack societal acceptance that the nature of their service and or their level of expertise should justify the autonomous decision-making powers that are granted to the classical (“true”) professions</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Have a less specialized and less highly developed body of knowledge and skills</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Have markedly less emphasis on theoretical and conceptual bases for profession</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Have a tendency for the individual to identify more with the employment institution and less with the profession</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Are more subject to administrative and supervisory surveillance and control</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Have less autonomy in professional decision making, with accountability to superiors rather than to the profession</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Are managed by persons who have themselves been prepared for and served in that semi-profession</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Have a preponderance of women</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Don't have the right of privileged communication between client and professional (loyalty – secrecy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Have shorter training periods</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This list elucidates the differences among professional groups within a stratified system. Some key elements that professional groups have in common - ethical codes, professional organisations etc. - are not included. Howsam’s list of attributes that are ascribed to professional groups by other authors they are vitally included so as to emphasize the common element. The introductory and conceptual chapters to the individual Norwegian handbook *Professionsstudier* (Molander & Terum 2008) is a good and useful definitional inventory from the perspective of finding the common and unifying elements among the different professional groups – their focus is on the “welfare professions”.

Howsam’s twelve attributes contain key elements that cause the differentiation between the classical (or “true”) professions from the semi-professions while other aspects follow from these foundational differences.
(1) The key differentiating aspects are number 4 and 5 – that is the scientific, or at least the systematic – basis of their knowledge and expertise. The knowledge base has to theoretical, systematic and applicable to the problems at hand for an occupational group to reach full professional stature.

(2) One of the dimensions can be seen as a practical precondition for obtaining the type of knowledge and expertise referred to in (1). This is length of study and training period. In the education this implies that more emphasis is placed upon dimension no 4 – that is theory and method.

(3) In a rationalist account dimensions 1 and 3 should be interpreted as a consequences of the scientific basis, its character as well as its explanatory power and problem-solving potential. But their roles are more complex than so. The traditional and historically given social standing of this or that occupational group do influence the credibility of the epistemic foundation of the occupational groups in question. Socially acknowledged credibility – think of theology – is a case in point. Skilful mastery of the esoteric and systematic rule-making codes in society – be it jurisprudence or accounting principles - can elevate a specific group and its monopolized knowledge base into a situation of being both undisputed and respected.

(4) What about the role of female dominance (no 10? If this should a problematic factor in terms of social respect and acceptance for the knowledge and work carried out by occupations and professions dominated by women, this should in such as case be interpreted as a case of status congruence. If women are subordinated to men in society, female-dominated occupations and their epistemic bases could thereby be accorded lower status than male-dominated occupations with other epistemic bases. (Tilly 1998) A test of how far this mechanism is (still) in play will be the future of the medical profession, which in Sweden now is rapidly becoming dominated by female entrants to the field as well as among its recent graduates. I will not deny that this dimension has causal role in differentiating the creditability and social acceptance of different professional groups and their epistemic bases and knowledge systems. However this dimension can be seen as at least partly a consequence of the historically rooted social division of labour between men and women and not to something intrinsic to the professional group in question.

(5) A number of the other dimensions and attributes are clearly consequences of the key causal differentiating aspects. These include the no 7, 8 and 9 and probably also no 6.
(6) Number (6) is an important aspect, but not only relevant for the semi-professions. The dimension between different employment regimes – e.g. private-public sectors, large-small organizations, being employed or self-employed, working on the international-national level etc. are important stratifying dimensions for all types of professional groups.

From this interpretation of the difference between full professions and semi-professions we can conclude how important the internal stratification of the professional groups is. The principal difference between the full professions and the semi-professions, the key factor, is the importance of the scientific and cognitive basis for the power and social standing of the professional groups.

By interpreting all the dimensions as variables and not as either-or categories Howsam’s discussion is not limited to the discussion of the relation between the “true” professions and the semi-professions. We can use his dimensions to conceptualise the key differentiating dimensions of the professional landscape as a whole, viewed as a stratified system of professional groups.

7. The professional landscape as an encompassing classification of professional groups

We have used the idea of three generations of professions to make sense of the expanding field of professional groups. These three types - the classical professions, the semi-professions and the now emerging pre-professions – are constructed from their emergence in a historical sequence. As was shown above the professions within each category share other important characteristics, such as their relation to the University system and their epistemic basis, their social position etc.

However, the societal position of a given occupation can and do change over time.

This can be the effect of changes in society – such as the decreasing role of religion in many European countries and the decline of the position, influence and credibility of the categories trained in theology.

On the other hand, the role of lawyers in Sweden become more important following then entry of Sweden into the European unions, with its more complex and socially important forms of legislation, making studies in law schools a more attractive (and lucrative) option.
The effects of a generalised and prolonged training for certain occupational groups, following from their inclusion into the basic three year program of the B.A./B.Sc. type of education of the universities and university colleges increase their knowledge and expertise and lead to an upgrading of their occupation to more professional level. The nurses, the occupational therapists and the new licensed occupation of biomedical analysts are examples of occupations that have benefited – in terms of professional status – from their prolonged and more academically oriented training period. Here we can observe a number of occupations that now have social and epistemic positions similar too the old semi-professions – and sometimes they aspire to even more advanced levels (such as establish research degrees in their own field – laboratory medicine/science to take one example

The increased general level of education and the increasing proportion of the population that have an academic education have had problematic effects for the social standing and influence of certain occupational groups. An interesting case is the social role of the teachers. Today they meet ever more children in their classes whose parents have a higher education than they have themselves. The knowledge authority of the teaching professions has been falling in relative terms due to the effect of rising numbers of those having an academic education in society. Combined with changing recruitment patterns as well as the reformed teachers education this has led to a falling social position of the category, not only in terms of falling relative salaries

The ever more increasing number of specialised study programs with a vocational bent, targeting specific occupational niches in the division of labour, is a major fact or the expansion of the higher education, in Sweden and elsewhere. The simultaneous prolonging of the training period AND the more precise targeting of specific knowledge elements in the programs has led to contradictory developments within the pre-professions.

7.1. Just a simple division of labour OR a competition for tasks and conflicts of jurisdiction?

A number of occupations have become pre-professions as a result of more academic training and a prolonged education period. This process is ongoing and the third category of professions, the pre-professions, is likely to grow in number and importance
The same processes of more academic training and a prolonged education period have affected the traditional semi-proessions. **Nurses** have seen their education being transformed becoming much more academic and scientific. Nursing science has rapidly become a key discipline within the education of nurses and has also grown rapidly as a research field, a discipline with quite a few professors and research units at Swedish universities and University colleges. Nurses are thereby in some ways coming closer to the classical professions. Bu they are still in a subordinate position within both the social and technical division of labour they play the second fiddle.

In **dental care** we find the classical profession of dentists but also occupations that are either service personnel to the dentist and the clinic (the dental assistant nurse) or specialists in the fields of dental technique (dental technicians) and for handling dental hygiene (dental hygienists). The latter group, with a clear female dominance, is now educated in a two-year program at a number of university colleges besides the schools of dentistry. Interestingly enough the national authority for higher education (UHÄ) suggested that this program should be prolonged to three years and thereby become more academic in its structure. The proposal was recently rejected by the Minister of Education. But now there are more teachers in this program with a doctoral degree. In the near future dental hygienists will probably enter the pre-professions, by having their education prolonged to three years.

Dental hygienists do not only perform tasks that have been delegated to them by the dentists. They have an independent role in the sphere of public health and they have also taken on some of the tasks that can as well be handled by the dental profession, such as treating tartar and the early stages of periodontoclasis (loss of teeth). In this area they, in the eyes of dentists, are perceived to push the limits of the technical division of labour and taking over some the tasks that dentists want to keep as part of their own work. They can and do offer cheaper treatment than the dentists. And therefore there is a zone of conflict and professional jurisdiction at stake.

**More specific vocational programs**

New specific programs can through their very specificity target certain job positions that earlier were filled by graduates from a more general vocational program. A recent example in Sweden is the expansion of programs with criminology as the defining subject. These programs are now given by a number of universities in Sweden. These programs target

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8 See Rueschemeyer 1986 for a discussion of this conceptual pair.
jobs in the area of criminal justice, in prisons and in the rehabilitation of former prisoners etc., jobs that used to filled by social workers

The same principle of differentiation and competition can be seen in the field of media and information. In the field of organizational communication – internally within the firm or the public sector administration – and externally, to potential and actual clients and customers and to the population at large, but also to key decision-makers in the political and administrative arena, there is a demand for specific educational programs. Whole new departments of “information” have been set up in the larger firms and public sector departments. These are usually filled by graduates form the media programs but increasingly this field has become specialized into different programs, increasingly more specialized and more differentiated between general media and communication programs, for journalism, as well as for information. We can now witness a new occupational specialty in information emerging. Information departments are not any longer being headed by retired journalists but increasingly by specialist in information. This group is now building a professional association of their own.

8. Some concluding remarks

8.1 Complex problems – multidisciplinary programs

Many new educational programs as well as many new research areas have started as a response to new kinds of social, economic and environment problems – climate changes, carbon dioxide, new forms of transport but also to problems of refugee immigration, integration, conflicts about multiculturalism etc. These educational programs are often constructed as multidisciplinary programs, comibing many disciplines, In this sense they are similar to the basic principle of the classical professional programs which ere built upon many small modules coming from many different and specialized disciplines – Medical schools are good examples as are the civil engineering programs.

There are two partly independent, partly also closely related structures that together define the possibilities for the emergence of a new professional landscape – the system of higher education and its institutional and organisational principles and mode of financing and the occupational stricture and the demand for – or least the openness – for new forms of competence and expertise.
The higher education sector and its dynamics is an important sense similar to the extraction sector – each university and on the even lower level of departments and schools are on the look for new fields to explore and exploit - finding and elaborating an occupational niche, designing a specific education program that will equip its graduates with those qualifications that is already in demand – or which will have a fit that later will be acknowledged as more or less self-evident. The Swedish HRM-program was constructed in the early 1980’s, in a cooperative effort involving many universities. It has been and is still taught at several universities and university colleges. It is now taken as the “natural” background for graduates seeking positions in the area of personnel administration. It is now an established pre-profession in a process of even more advanced professionalization. “Working life science” is now an established research subject with its own ph.D programs at a number of universities.

8.2. The advantage of non-traditional universities

University colleges as well as smaller, new universities can move faster than old established universities in this terrain – this makes it easier for them to detect and channel the ambitions of established occupational groups that want to upgrade their training.

This is also valid for the emergence of specialisation of occupational functions that earlier was taken for ranted that they rested within or at the fringes of an established occupational and academic vocational training. The focus on leisure and sports, including coaching and sports management, ethnicity and immigration, criminology, youth culture, childhood studies, culture administration, pop culture etc has given rise to many new and rapidly growing educational programs. This is a parallel within social science and the humanities to the extreme specialisation of technological and medical competences, still in motion. Ever more specific experts that can claim to have the relevant knowledge for handling specific problems.

8.3. The dynamics in the professional landscape

a) An important aspect of the concept of professional landscape is that helps us to observe, analyse and understand the significance of occupational and professional trajectories, where professions move upwards or downwards along the dimensions of what it means to be a profession.

b) We have expanding or shrinking occupations, old versus new techniques and modes of operation, changing modes of insertion into the power statures of firms, hospitals and public administrative bodies.
### Table 3. Distribution of professional education in the Swedish University System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of profession</th>
<th>Traditional universities</th>
<th>New universities</th>
<th>Recent University Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classical Professions</td>
<td>Almost all</td>
<td>A few&lt;sup&gt;9&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-professions</td>
<td>Several</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-professions</td>
<td>Very few</td>
<td>Several</td>
<td>Many</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This structure of professional education is mirrored in other countries, although the institutional lines of demarcation between the different kinds of establishments within higher education are drawn differently.

<sup>9</sup> Mainly the training of Ph.D. students.
## Table 4. Characteristics of the three major types of institutions within the Swedish system of Higher education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of University</th>
<th>Research and teacher's competence</th>
<th>Proportion research/education</th>
<th>Teachers with a Ph.D degree</th>
<th>Teachers also doing research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional universities</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Medium to Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New universities</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>A number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent University Colleges</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Few</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 5. Social characteristics for three kinds of Swedish Universities and University Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of University</th>
<th>Social background and social destination</th>
<th>Proportion with working class /lower middle class background</th>
<th>Destination: Upper middle class and professional class</th>
<th>Destination: Lower middle class position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional universities</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New universities</td>
<td>Moderate to High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent University Colleges</td>
<td>Quite High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Almost all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Sciulli, D. Peper to the 2008 RC 52 conference in Oslo


