Nordic journal of working life studies Volume 15 ▪ Number 4 ▪ December 2025

Changing Workplace Relations and Sites of Belonging in Swedish University Administration[1]

David Regin Öborn[2]
PhD, Karlstad University, Working Life Science, Sweden

ABSTRACT

Based on a mixed-methods case study, this article explores the impact of formal affiliations and informal associations in professional organizations, relating these questions of belonging to workplace dynamics and collectives. Using the experience of departmental administrators within a Swedish university as an ideal case to investigate the formal and informal connections at work, this article argues that a multiplicity of belongings within organizations brings strain and opportunities, altering the relations at work. The study contributes to discussions on belonging and social relationships at the workplace level by applying the concept of belonging to different sites in the organization. It suggests that sites of belongings within organizations can serve as a discrete concept, useful for adding insights into the dynamics of work organizations.

KEYWORDS

loyalty / new public management / Nordic academia / occupational identity / organization of work / sites of belonging / university administration / workplace collectives / workplace relations

Introduction

Questions of belongings (Yuval-Davis 2006), identities (MacKenzie & Marks 2019; Salaman 1974), work-based collectives (Korczynski 2003; Lysgaard 2003; Skorstad & Karlsson 2020), loyalties (Alvesson 2000; Guillon & Cezanne 2014), and the impact of informal social relations in work organizations (Glover 2011) has for a long time garnered significant attention and sparked intense debates among social scientists interested with workplace relations and issues regarding the organization of work. Much attention has been given to the relations between management and workers, bringing a range of conceptualizations of the various collectives, work groups, and loyalties fundamental to many workplace dynamics. At the same time, some aspects central to the question of belonging – where the various actors formally and experience wise belong in an organization – often seem to be overlooked or taken for granted when the social relations in work organizations are explored. While not arguing against the relevance and importance of the dynamics of power between, for example, management and workers or professionals and managers, this study adds to the debates of workplace dynamics by making visible the influence of multiple sites of belongings in the organization and the process enabling the emergence of additional such belongings.

The type of administrative workforce – departmental administrators – that constitutes the case in this exploration has been argued as being increasingly a resource at

[1] You can find this text and its DOI at https://tidsskrift.dk/njwls/index.
[2] Corresponding author: David Regin Öborn. E-mail: david.oborn@kau.se.

the side of management rather than as support for the academic professions (Agevall & Olofsson 2020). Although there is a uniqueness to the academic organization in its combination of collegial and line management (Wall 2020), autonomy (Lynch & Ivancheva 2015), and independence (Ese 2019), the changed role and relations of administrative support is to be found in other professional organizations as well, where everyday support staff are being moved further from the professions (Forssell & Westberg 2014; Hall 2012). Research in this field has mainly focused on the relationship between management and professions and the emergence of a 'third space' inhabited by academic administrators and strategic actors closer to management (Collinson 2006; Karlsson & Ryttberg 2016; Whitchurch 2008), rather than the administrative support staff located closer to the professions. This has left a blank spot where some aspects might have gone unnoticed – not least regarding the changed relations and division of labor between professional and administrative staff (Bach et al. 2007). This study contributes to filling that gap by providing insights from a group in the margin of the power centers of management and professionals that often are in focus, contributing additional perspectives on the workplace dynamics in professional organizations.

One such insight is the dynamics of multiple belongings in organizations. The findings in this study suggest that while the administrators are being organized in, and therefore formally belonging to, a centralized administrative department, they, to some extent, remain included in the academic departments where they perform their work. However, as a consequence of their formal site of belonging to the administrative department, the administrators in this study experienced a sense of mistrust from the academics regarding their involvement and position in, for example, debated managerial decisions or new routines and processes of work, making them more of 'peripheral partners'. As such, the administrators experienced the need to meet the expectations of the academics to remain included, which created difficulties in drawing a line in terms of workload and job content.

Another insight is the opportunity the departmental administrators' multiple sites of belonging bring. As the administrative manager makes the formal decisions regarding the administrator's job content, the individual administrator could refer to these decisions as a way of rebalancing the demands and expectations of the academics. The multiple belongings, therefore, enable increased agency in the hands of the administrators, making it possible to play out the conflicting expectations from management and academics against one another, giving the administrators more influence over some parts of their jobs. This also has an impact on the discretion and work content of the academics.

The nature of the administrators' relations and positions provides a third key insight. Rather than moving away from academics and becoming closer to management, the administrators have created informal routines of coordination and job sharing, shaping a shared understanding and idea of their role and function. This could be seen as a part of the process of emergence of the departmental administrators as a group in themselves, with their own norms, collective identification, and organizational site of belonging, which has an impact on the dynamics between the different actors within the organization.

In exploring formal and informal belongings at an organizational level, this study introduces the concept of sites of belonging, uncovering two central features of belonging in organizations that are important to recognize.

1) There is a difference between formal and experienced sites of belonging in terms of the formal affiliation and individual experiences of 'home' in the organization. These belongings are not statical as establishing and developing a formal site of belonging alter the reception and potentially the thresholds for membership at experienced sites of belonging.
2) The sites of belonging in organizations are not mutually exclusive. One individual could at the same time have multiple formal sites of belonging – being formally affiliated with different parts of the organization – as well as multiple experienced sites of belonging – feeling a sense of home with multiple groups that all influence actions and experiences of work.

This exploration of belongings, leading up to the suggestion of using sites of belonging as a way of analyzing workplace dynamics, is informed by a range of debates regarding the organization of work and organizational relations. Issues regarding identities (MacKenzie & Marks 2019; Salaman 1974), collectives (Korczynski 2003; Skorstad & Karlsson 2020), and loyalties (Alvesson 2000; Guillon & Cezanne 2014), as well as the importance of informal social relations (Glover 2011), are central in analyzing work. By adding aspects of these frameworks to explore belonging in organizations, this study contributes to our understanding of the social organization of work at the workplace level.

The article is based on a sequential integrated mixed-methods case study of departmental administrators at a Swedish university, exploring the impact of formal affiliations and informal associations in a professional organization. It demonstrates how these formal and informal relations create a multiplicity of belongings that bring strain and opportunities, fueling a process of emerging collectivization. This study contributes to the debates on belongings and the social organization of work by exploring the influence of simultaneous existing belongings, ultimately suggesting the notion of sites of belonging as a tool to analyze work organizations.

This is achieved via the exploration of the influence the multitude of sites of belonging has on behaviors in organizations by addressing the questions of

- *Where do the departmental administrators see themselves belonging in the organization?*
- *What is the foundation of these belongings?*
- *How does organizational practices inform belongings?*

A review of debates related to the concept of sites of belonging, such as belongings, identity, collectives, and loyalty, now follows. After this, the methods used are presented. The findings are then presented under the headings 'Belonging at the academic department?', 'Belonging with the administrative management?' and 'Emergence of an additional site of belonging.' In the final section, the main argument – the relevance of organizational sites of belonging – is discussed.

Sites of belonging, loyalty, and identification

As a general concept, 'belonging' has a long history of usage in sociological theory, containing aspects such as social locations, identification, emotional attachments, and

values (Yuval-Davis 2006). While belongings could be seen as the individual experience of feeling as a part of a surrounding system, belongings are also dependent on the individual's capability and opportunity to act according to social norms conditioning others' perception of whether an individual belongs or not (Allen et al. 2021). These belongings are formed in our everyday practices and play a part in shaping identification and social relations. Rather than static, belongings are changing over time as the world around us changes (May 2011; 372). A sense of belonging is an important aspect of engagement in collective actions at the organizational level (Dufour-Poirier & Hennebert 2015). However, as demonstrated in this study, there are a multitude of sites in an organization to belong to in different ways, each with its norms for inclusion, expectations of actions, and rewarding resources.

The notion of different groups of actors with different demands within work organizations could be conceptualized in terms of competing systems. In those terms, the 'workers collective' and the manager's 'techno-economic system' (Axelsson et al. 2019; Lysgaard 2001; Skorstad & Karlsson 2020) each have their demands regarding the performance of actions to display loyalty. However, while the antagonistic relation between workers' collective and management's techno-economic system is the primary concern for Lysgaard, in this study, organizations are understood to contain a multitude of belongings in terms of attachments and loyalties (Fox 1969) that inform the actions of the organization members (March & Simon 1993: 13–14). As this study is inspired by a behavioral understanding of loyalty (Hart & Thompson 2007) rather than the more universal philosophical aspects (Keller 2007; Kleinig 2014; Royce 1995), loyalty is understood as something that informs actions (Connor 2007) and is manifested via actions (Guillon & Cezanne 2014; Oglensky 2008) in response to expectations (Lysgaard 2001). Loyal actions, therefore, are understood as actions establishing or maintaining a belonging to a group by living up to their expectations (Regin et al. 2020).

The understanding of different types of belongings draws on various debates regarding worker collectives, making a clear distinction between occupational and organizational belonging. The study draws from Van Maanen and Barley's (1984) differentiation between an organizational perspective on belonging and an occupational perspective, where the former focuses on hierarchical movement, prestige, power, and rewards within an organization, whereas the latter emphasizes the social, moral, physical, and intellectual character of the work itself. In addition to that, one can argue that organizational belonging is foremost a construct of management, tying the worker closer to the organization, whereas occupational belonging is controlled and established by the workers as part of keeping their autonomy and control over work practices (Salaman 1971b; Van Maanen & Berlys 1984). In practice, the occupational and organizational belongings are intertwined as members of occupational communities often have dual loyalties to their occupation and their employing organization (Van Maanen & Barley 1984), while at the same time occupations transcend work organizations, making individuals subject to multiple reference points of identification (Ashforth et al. 2008).

As work and employment relations remain central in the formation of identities and the perception of others (MacKenzie et al. 2006), the distinction between identification with an occupational belonging and an organizational belonging, and how the function and meaning of those identifications might shift over time (MacKenzie & Marks 2019), is an important inspiration to the understanding of sites of belonging, as it displays the dialectic relations between different belongings. Furthermore, the understanding of the

process of emerging sites of belonging is influenced by debates on occupational identities, such as the importance of shared history, norms and values, the role of spatial closeness and shared experiences (MacKenzie et al. 2017; Salaman 1971), and the function of the collective as a resource to draw upon (see MacKenzie et al. 2006). Forming such work identities is an ongoing project and part of a contested terrain where different actors might mobilize different identities to legitimize or resist changes (McDonald et al. 2006). The content and implication of the identification might alter and shift over time (MacKenzie & Marks 2019). A vital prerequisite of forming occupational identities is the perceived similarities with each other and differences from others (Jenkins 2014; Salaman 1974) in the line of work. The shared values and perceptions of distinct attributes tied to the members of the occupational communities are strengthening the collective identity (Bechky 2006), as communities are 'among the most important sources of collective identification' (Jenkins 2014: 135). These occupational communities are rooted in work practices (Bechky 2006), where factors such as physical proximity, the experience of work, requirements of specific technical skills, and informal mentoring might strengthen the sense of community (Orr 2006; Salaman 1971).

While the departmental administrators in this study share some work processes with the academics, the administrative and academic work are fundamentally different, meaning that the administrators and academics do not share the same experiences of the labor process. However, as suggested by Salaman (1974), an occupational community is not solely determined by direct experience of the work but also by the social conditions surrounding the occupation. Drawing on the idea of marginality in terms of an individual who has strong links to two groups without fully being a member of either, Salaman (1971a, 1971b, 1974) discusses marginality in relation to occupational groups, described as situations where members of an occupation aspire to be included among a higher status group but are denied full access (Salaman 1971). This marginality might foster the development of other belongings, as individuals seek validation and support from peers within their occupation when excluded from higher-status groups (Salaman 1971b). However, the marginal position of an individual in relation to an established occupational group might also lead to a situation of peripheral inclusion. The tendency of workers outside of a dominant occupation to be included as members within an occupational community via shared history and experiences is further developed by McLachlan et al. (2019), finding that a community of fate based on, for example, shared experiences of restructuring and changes in the organization can create a strong sense of belonging to an occupational community, opening up the possibility of 'peripheral membership' to workers outside the dominant group. Thus, a marginal position might enable a peripheral membership but also spur the development of other communities.

The idea of external pressure as the foundation for self-organization also aligns with Lysgaard's (2001) concept of workers' collective as a protective buffer, emerging as a response to the pressure from the techno-economic system, and Korczynski's (2003) concept of 'communities of coping'. Korczynskis (2003) argues that service personnel and front-line workers tend to create informal communities of coping where they turn to one another for support as a way of coping with abusive customers. The emergence of additional sites of belonging might be considered both a result of similarities and shared identification (Jenkin, 2014) – a pull toward each other – but also as a result of being questioned or challenged by other groups (Korczynski 2003; Lysgaard 2001) – a push away from others.

Context and Method

The case

This study is set in a Swedish university, one among about 50 institutes for higher education universities that employ about 79,000 individuals (65,500 full-time equivalence). The institutes for higher education, mainly universities, are the largest employer in the Swedish state sector, facilitating about 26% of all employees employed by the state. Of these 79,000 individuals, about 33,000 are active in teaching or research. The group in the focus of this case study, departmental administrators, is a significant workforce, as part of the category 'administrative staff', consisting of just under 1400 full-time equivalents (UKÄ 2022). While named 'departmental administrators' in this study, they hold different titles in different organizations. Until about 20 years ago, they were called secretaries, with different prefixes such as departmental secretary, project secretary, or course secretary. More recently, they have been called administrators (with different prefixes), such as course administrator, research administrator, student administrator, and departmental administrator, as part of the process of changing the organizational function and job content of the occupation. There has been a redistribution of work between professional and administrative staff (Agevall & Olofsson 2020: 29–30; Forssell & Westerberg Ivarsson 2014), where more and more administration in terms of reports and the provision of key figures are expected to be produced by different professions. This development has altered the roles and relations between professionals and support staff, where administrative staff is considered to increasingly be a resource at the side of management rather than a support function for the professionals (Angevall & Olofsson 2020), which makes issues of belonging and workplace dynamics relevant to explore from the perspective of this group, to complement the studies made on more specialized administrative functions (Karlsson & Ryttberg 2016).

As argued by Wall (2020), Swedish universities are an interesting topic of exploration, partly due to their size as a workplace but also to the combination of collegiate leadership and administrative organization that sometimes creates conflicts (Lynch & Ivancheva 2015; Wall 2020). Besides that, Nordic universities have been found to share some similarities that perhaps set them apart in an international context (Dahllöf 1996). These differences consist of, among other things, the dominance of public funding, a privileged position in the national budget, and a shared belief that higher education and research are 'public goods of national economic and cultural significance' (Karran et al. 2023: 4). This has been part of establishing the narrative of 'Nordic exceptionalism' (Browning 2007: 27), with a particular Nordic university model (Rinne 2021). However, this model seems to have been declining and challenged, not least due to the process where European education systems are being integrated to operate in a common market (Allvin & Movitz 2011; European Commission 2022). The management structure and logic of Swedish universities have changed, with an increased customer focus (Friberg 2015), as the governance of higher education takes a more market-like form. This influence of 'academic entrepreneurship' (Keisu et al. 2015) and increased market governance in Swedish academia has been argued to undermine the collegial autonomy and core values of academia, making the workplace dynamics within academia relevant to explore from different perspectives.

The changes in management and administration in Swedish universities are part of a larger trend where public administration in Sweden is leaning toward marketization and corporatization (Hall 2012), connected to the perhaps vague notion of new public management (NPM). While debated in its content (Hood 1991, 1995), the general trend could be described as going from the professional's discretion to make decisions in a bureaucratic organization toward an adaption of universal management concepts carried out by professional managers as the old professions have been challenged by new (Hasenfeld 2009). The growth of an 'audit society' in terms of increased focus on accountability and provision of key figure indicators (Power 1997), and the influence of managerialism in academia (Trow 1994) has for a long time been a topic of debate, inside as well as outside of the Swedish academia (SOU2018:38). While this study focuses on a Swedish university, the changes toward increased 'managerialism' within professional organizations are not unique to Sweden, nor universities (De Coster & Zanoni 2019; Ese 2019; Leišytė 2016; Steinþórsdóttir et al. 2019). As a similar transformation of organizational and managerial logics has broadly taken place in other public professional organizations within and outside of the Swedish context (Forssell & Westberg 2014; Hall 2012; Thomas & Davies 2002), such as in the healthcare sector (Karlsson 2011; McDonald et al. 2006), human service organizations (Hasenfeld 2009), and public administration (Ackroyd et al. 2007; Bach et al. 2007), the findings in this study might be relevant for understanding the dynamics in academic and professional organizations beyond the Nordic context.

Methods

The article is based on a case study, in terms of an intensive study of a single setting (Gerring 2004; Hamel et al. 1993), using a sequential integration of methods (Plano Clark & Ivankova 2016), including two rounds of interviews, participant workshops, and an organization-wide survey to achieve depth and breadth (Mason 2002: 33, Nowell et al. 2017). The initial interviews raised questions that the survey could modify and verify. The workshops explored some early assumptions and nuanced others. The concluding interviews added more depth to the surfacing narratives. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Field notes were taken from the workshops. In total, the data consists of 13 interviews with administrators, two interviews with academics, two interviews with persons in managerial positions, a survey among administrative staff (total survey, 57% response rate), workshops with a total of 40 administrators, a group discussion with seven managers, and a group discussion with 11 HR personnel. The illustrative quotes presented are from individual interviews with departmental administrators, presented in Table 1.

The initial data generation stage consisted of four semi-structured interviews with departmental administrators of varying backgrounds. They were asked questions regarding their experience of work, their relations to academic and non-academic colleagues, their formal roles, and others' expectations of their performances. These hour-long interviews were supplemented with four individual interviews with two academics and two managers to add to the organizational context. The participants were almost exclusively female, which reflects the gender balance of the occupation in general. Some were employed within the last five years; others had been in their jobs for more than 20 years.

Table 1 Participants.

Name	Gender	Located within	Employment time, years
Alex	Female	SS	–5
Mia	Female	SS	–5
Jenny	Female	SS	–5
Emma	Female	ST	–5
Lisa	Female	SS	5–10
Karin	Female	SS	5–10
Beatrice	Female	ST	5–10
Eva	Female	ST	10–15
Vendela	Female	ST	10–15
Kim	Male	ST	15–20
Pia	Female	SS	15–20
Ina	Female	SS	20+
Ingela	Female	ST & SS	20+
Kristine	Female	ST & SS	20+

The classification of departments is analytical categories that do not fully match the actual departments.
SS, social sciences; ST, science and technology.

The data from the interviews was used to develop a questionnaire aiming at providing a broad picture of the job and social relations experienced in the organization. The questionnaire was sent to all employees within the administrative departments (n = 101), of whom 57% responded. While not generalizable to administrative workers in society, the survey provides reliable data on this organization, as 57% of the population responded (Baruch & Holtom 2008), and no visible patterns emerged among non-respondents. To develop the interpretations of the survey, the results and initial analysis were discussed in workshops with departmental administrators (eight groups consisting of five administrators each), as well as employees in managerial positions and HR representatives. These workshops provided insights into the administrative role and the potential tensions and benefits that came from vague job descriptions and multiple affiliations.

The accumulated data from the initial interviews, the survey, and workshops informed nine additional interviews with departmental administrators. The respondents for these hour-long semi-structured interviews were selected to provide a range of employment time and organizational background. The participants were asked about their experience working in the organization and the changes and transformations they experienced during their current positions. The aim was not to get data on how it used to be but to get richer data on how they experience their current everyday situation in relation to a remembered past. These kinds of work-life biographical questions are one way to access the participant's 'personal reflexivity' (MacKenzie et al. 2017) and get deeper insights into complex social processes. The narrative of how it 'used to be' is the current frame of reference for how the current position is lived and understood – the understanding of the current nowadays is achieved with the background of reconstructed yesterday.

The qualitative data was coded thematically (Braun & Clarke 2006) using NVivo. The coding and thematization were made in different stages, focusing on identified themes of expectations, social relations, and belongings. This thematization occurred throughout the research process, with recoding and refinement at each step (Saldaña 2016). The coding of the interviews was closer to inductive coding (Braun & Clarke 2006) than theoretical or conceptual-driven coding (Saldaña 2016). This type of coding decided by an 'emergent conceptual framework' (Saldaña 2016: 71) resonates with the idea of constructing concepts from the point of experience (Smith 2004).

There are always ethical issues to address when researching areas close to the researcher. In this case, even more so, the researcher has experienced both administrative and academic roles. In many ways, this background has been helpful in designing the study (see Corbin & Strauss 2008) and conducting the interviews. The experience of talking about work with someone who, to some degree, shares a similar experience from work as oneself might provide a sense of similarity between the researcher and participants, creating a more comfortable and trustful atmosphere that leads to a richer or more honest interview (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002). At the same time, this pre-understanding also increases the need for vigilance and transparency, as well as manufactured distance and reflexivity to limit the risk of bias. This was achieved by analyzing the data after each step of data generation and testing those analyses in interactions with participants in interviews, focus groups, and workshops. In that way, a reflexive approach was built into the analysis process. The research project has undergone an ethical review and has been approved by an ethics committee at the university level.

Findings

Belonging at the academic department?

> I have always preferred to see myself as part of the discipline. I will not say that it has been difficult to come to terms with the outcome of the reorganization, but… I think that applies to quite a few of us; we belong to the department, psychologically and mentally – we belong to the department. 'Eva'

Despite being formally employed at a centralized administrative unit, the experienced site of belonging among the departmental administrators was with the academic department where they were placed. At least, that was the standard answer given to a direct question regarding their sense of belonging. The physical proximity, joint objectives, and a sense of shared understanding of the academic departments' aims, goals, and history strengthened these departments as their experienced site of belonging. While the departmental administrators were highly aware of their formal site of belonging in the administrative units, they sensed a belonging within the academic departments. One interviewee, Lisa, explained that 'those who work at [the academic department] know what I do'. However, that narrative became more complex when discussed further in the interviews.

The work of the departmental administrators consisted mainly of handling ongoing requests and expectations from students, academics, other administrative departments, and stakeholders outside of the organization. These requests and expectations were not

always easy to combine. As the departmental administrators encountered multiple, sometimes conflicting, expectations and demands, the experienced belonging played a part in prioritizing. While the departmental administrators had a sense of belonging with the academics within the various disciplines, their inclusion was based on actions and manifestations – what they could do – rather than in formal memberships based on a shared occupation – what they were. This belonging was, in a sense, peripheral and conditional in demonstrating loyal actions, making them more vulnerable to exclusion as they needed to reconfirm their position continuously. They were included based on what they had done and could do for the group rather than being considered a natural insider as one of the academics. This led to a fear, expressed by some of the participants, of damaging their relations and jeopardizing their positions as members of that group if they failed to live up to the academics' expectations. They also mentioned the difficulties in knowing the amount of work needed to meet the expectations, as no clear line was drawn.

> You absolutely have to say no sometimes. But if I don't do the task, it will not be done, and then it feels like you let them [the academics at their department] down in some way. You still have good contact with your colleagues. That is what makes it difficult when you are close to each other. 'Kim'

The administrator's peripheral membership strengthened the sense of need to meet the expectations of the academics in order to remain included. This created a risk of taking on too much work and difficulties in drawing a line. These difficulties were further reinforced by the vague job descriptions given by the organization. The majority of respondents in the survey stated that they had no formal job description and experienced a great deal of discretion in deciding how and in what order to carry out their tasks within set time frames. While there was an ongoing process of streamlining the administrative routines in the organization, which led to decreased discretion for the academic departments to form local routines, the details and everyday tasks of the departmental administrators were vaguely defined, creating uncertainties.

> It can be hard to know, should I really do this, is it part of my job? It is not clear, but we are loyal. We are a loyal group of workers. We do a lot, as much as we can. 'Vendela'

The quote above not only expresses the vagueness of the job but also how the performance of work is connected to social bonds, in this case, expressed as the display of loyalty by 'do as much as we can' in terms of work. This is understood as a part of their peripheral membership with the academics. However, the administrations also faced the expectations and tasks given by the managers at the administrative department – the administrator's formal site of belonging. This separate formal site of belonging also influences their experience of work as well as their relation to academics. The implications of this are discussed in the following section.

Belonging with the administrative management?

While the administrators had the academic department as their experienced site of belonging, considering themselves a part of the academic departments, their formal

belonging to a different department in the organization created tensions. As they formally belonged to a different department than the academics, they had responsibilities and expectations to live up to outside of the academic department where they were located. There was an increasing number of shared documents and policies provided within the administrative department and the university, aiming at creating a more uniform work process and formalizing the division of labor between administrative and academic staff more coherently. The formal and uniform procedures that management expected the administrators to follow sometimes collided with the expectations of the academics regarding what was to be done and who was going to do it. The departmental administrators, therefore, faced additional demands and tasks connected to their formal site of belonging that interfered with the wishes of their colleagues in the academic departments in their experienced site of belonging. Some of the participants experienced that their belonging to another department in the organization affected how members of the academic department considered them and expressed an occasional lack of understanding regarding their situation from the academics.

Due to their formal site of belonging to the administrative department, the administrators sometimes experienced a sense of mistrust from the academics regarding their involvement in, for example, debated managerial decisions. Via their affiliation to the administrative and managerial structure, the departmental administrators were often the first to receive information about new routines and processes and were expected to work accordingly. The fact that they had prior knowledge of managerial decisions was often confused with them having any influence over the decision, leading up to situations where the departmental administrators were the ones being the target of protests and resistance from the academics regarding decisions made by the management. The administrators interviewed stated that they often had to explain themselves and their actions, making clear that, for example, new processes or routines that the academics were to follow were not created by the departmental administrators but that it was their job as administrators to implement and work according to the rules.

> I sort of become an intermediary; sometimes it feels like they [the academics] think it's me who's troublesome, who wants it a certain way (…). Then I have to show them that there is an administrative routine that the managers have decided. 'Elisabeth'

At the same time, while the difference between the administrator's formal and experienced site of belonging arguably was a source of tensions, their separate formal site of belonging also provided resources to handle conflicting expectations and difficulties of delimitations. As the administrative manager made the formal decisions regarding the administrator's job content, the individual administrator could refer to decisions made by the managers within their formal site of belonging as a way of rebalancing demands and expectations from the academics at their experienced site of belonging. By referring to the manager or decisions made at the administrative department, the departmental administrators did not need to 'take the heat' from the academics in their surroundings, as one participant expressed the dynamic. This was a way for the departmental administrators to attempt to regulate the job content to a manageable level without facing the social consequences of directly saying no, as in the incident described below where the administrator was asked by an academic to take on extra tasks to cover up for a person on sick leave:

> I said that I couldn't decide, so you had to go to the administrative manager and ask if I could help you. But I couldn't sit at two jobs, it's not possible! No, no, nothing came of it. And then, in that situation, it was extremely helpful to have another manager I could refer to. 'Ina'

The manager's involvement, as illustrated above, was a way of resolving or redirecting conflicts. By involving the administrative manager in the discussion, it became a conflict between the academics and management rather than between the academics and the specific departmental administrator. Drawing on resources from their formal site of belonging – in this case the authority of their managers – could therefore buffer the departmental administrators from the demanded actions expected by the academics within their experienced site of belonging.

The possibility of using their separate formal site of belonging as a resource was used on an individual level as well as on an organizational level. As the departmental administrators, located in different disciplines, faced similar situations in their daily work, their shared formal site of belonging in the administrative department created the possibility to share common problems and address them collectively. The departmental administrators participating in this study experienced an increased number of joint meetings within the administrative department where they came together to exchange information and discuss common matters.

> Today, the organization is much better in that we administrators have our own manager because [the manager] recognizes our issues in a different way. (…) If we bring it up in the group, it will also carry more weight, as [the manager] then can point this out as a problem that concerns the whole university. 'Kristina'

With common grounds to meet, they could draw attention to problematic job conditions and treat them as structural problems to handle in the organization rather than individual problems to address in the different academic departments. These meetings and documents also provided an arena to discuss their shared experiences of work, develop their own values, and develop a distinction between themselves and other groups within the organization.

However, while the formal separation in terms of organizational affiliations between administrators and academics seems to have strained the experienced site of belonging within the academic departments, that does not mean that the departmental administrators were brought closer to the management. Instead, their separate formal site of belonging provided the grounds to develop the departmental administrators as a group, with the emergence of an experienced site of belonging among themselves as departmental administrators, with their own norms, identification, and expectations of loyalty. The defining aspects of this belonging are further discussed in the following sections.

Emergence of an additional site of belonging

There were several aspects underpinning the emergence of this experienced site of belonging for departmental administrators, existing parallel with the experienced and formal belongings with the academics and administrative management. As the group

of departmental administrators was somewhat peripheral in relation to the academics as well as to the management, where neither their manager nor the academics had the overview of what the administrators' day-to-day jobs consist of, they turned toward each other for reference and support. The survey indicates that it was common practice to confer with each other regarding their job content to compare what are seen as reasonable expectations and what to contest (by, e.g., referring to the manager or formal routines). The departmental administrators also turned to one another before making decisions in problematic situations:

> It can be challenging for an administrator [to turn down the academics] if it is the case that you do not have time and feel very hesitant about how to act. But then we administrators must try to be a bit of a sounding board and support each other as much as we can … luckily, we are our own college. [1][Kollegium]… 'Vendela'

While the jobs of the departmental administrators were quite individualized and seldom performed in cooperation with other administrators, these informal routines of coordination and job sharing were used to help each other out if needed and tied the group as a whole together. The administrators were also developing closer collaborations with smaller groups of administrative colleagues that could step in and 'do each other's stuff' if needs be, tying them even closer together in this emerging site of belonging.

The departmental administrators' organizational position 'in the middle', facing and balancing different expectations and logics, was a recurring narrative in the interviews, on different levels. Regarding formal organization and everyday jobs, the administrators were located between the academics and the managerial structure, often becoming the intermediators between the two groups. One reoccurring theme, often presented as a defining skill of a good administrator, was the balancing act regarding to what extent to follow the formal processes and flows in the administrative systems and to what extent to follow the informal local practices developed at the various departments. While upholding proper procedures was one shared value connected to the administrator's role, there were, at the same time, more pragmatic considerations regarding what was needed for things to run smoothly.

> I mean, I'm careful about them [the rules], but it also has to be smooth. We have to ensure we do not bother about it too much either, as long as it works and no one is getting into trouble. 'Pia'

The balance between doing things right and the knowledge of how to get things done in a functional way was treated as somewhat of a trade specialty and a crucial aspect of their occupational role. This tacit knowledge of the formal and informal processes, relations, and activities in the organization was a recurring theme in the interviews regarding the prominent qualities of a departmental administrator. Arguably, it could be seen as a part of shaping a collective identifying feature of their role. The perception of being the backbone of the organization and the ones who knew how things are done, both correctly and pragmatically, was an important part of the identification as a group, distinguished from management as well as academics. They viewed their role as something broader than a resource at the hand of management or academics, as additional groups such as students and the general public were also considered important actors.

> We [the departmental administrators] are a service function. We provide service to students, teachers, and the general public. That is what we are here for, and what that entails depends on what comes in and ends up on the desk. 'Ina'

The participants frequently mentioned students as a primary source of consideration. While there had been quite a significant reduction in the amount of contact with the students, the interactions with them were emphasized as one of the most rewarding and essential aspects of the job. How much effort they should put in on behalf of the students was a contested issue in relation to the administrative management and the academics. The issue of how much time and effort was spent on the students was not a case of conflicting expectations from management and academics but rather between the administrators and management as well as academics. Sometimes, the conflicts were regarding the time spent helping students and, on other occasions, what it meant to do right by them.

> My manager says you must not have so much contact with students because it takes too much time. But what if they have problems? We live for the students – if we have no students, then we have nothing, then we have no jobs. 'Ann'

The relation to, and consideration of, the students was a crucial aspect of the occupation and viewed as a prominent feature of the group, distinguishing them from other groups. This shared idea of what it meant to do right by the students was sometimes contradicted by other groups, which could result in actions such as challenging the manager's wish for them to spend less time helping students or going against requests from academics to cut some corners regarding grading an examination: Mia explains that 'It is a matter of compliance with the rule of law as well as ethical issues. It must be fair towards the student'.

In these scenarios, the administrators' considerations of the students were not informed by their formal site of belonging in terms of managerial decisions made at the administrative department, nor expectations from the academics at their experienced site of belonging to the academic department. Instead, the acts were informed by the departmental administrators' behavioral norms as a group of peers in an emerging site of belonging, illustrating how multiple sites of belonging, sometimes beyond the dichotomy of management and professions, inform actions and considerations within organizations.

Concluding remarks

This study explores how formal affiliations and informal associations foster sites of belonging and how these belongings create strains and provide opportunities as they influence the social organizing of work at the workplace level. This is achieved via a case study of departmental administrators in a Swedish university, exploring the influence of a multitude of sites of belonging in an organization.

The findings suggest that the multiple sites of belonging have brought tensions as well as increased the discretion of the departmental administrators. The multiple belongings provide resources to play expectant parties against each other by referring

to managerial decisions or local practices to balance their workload without directly antagonizing either side. The different sites of belonging of departmental administrators are occasionally used to buffer demands from academics and management (see Axelsson et al. 2019; Lysgaard 2001) by, for example, referring them to one another. Therefore, the different sites of belonging inspire and enable different sets of actions besides siding with either management or professions, adding additional layers of dynamics that need to be recognized.

The tendency of ongoing separation between the academics and departmental administrators might be considered a way to increase managerial control by ensuring that administrative groups act on the management's behalf rather than the academics (Agevall & Olofsson 2020) by breaking up any sense of a shared identity with the academics (cf. MacKenzie & Marks 2019), thus linking the departmental administrators closer to management. At the same time, the formal site of belonging with an administrative department has provided the arenas to share experiences, coordinate work, and discuss shared values, which gives the potential ground to develop an occupational identity (MacKenzie et al. 2017; Salaman 1971a, 1971b) or, as argued in this case, a site of belonging distinguished from academics as well as management. Rather than being located in a two-sided struggle between management and academics, there are more aspects to consider.

The departmental administrators to some extent consider themselves as belonging to the academic departments. However, they are sometimes challenged and mistrusted by the academics, creating a reinforced marginality (Salaman 1971b). While Salaman (1971a, 1971b) discusses the dynamic of marginality in terms of occupational groups of lower status that aspire to engage with higher status groups, and McLachlan et al. (2019) develop the notion of 'peripheral membership' as referring to the inclusions of workers outside the dominant group, the process in this case is rather that of individuals peripheral to an occupational group that begins to form as a collective, rather than remaining as peripheral members. Their peripheral membership in the academic departments, combined with the increased opportunities to shape their own identity within their occupational group, creates the ground for a separate experienced site of belonging among peers. The emergence of a new site of belonging might be seen as a result of the combination of external pressure – inspired by Korczynski's (2003) notion of a community of cooping – and collectively identified similarities (Jenkins 2014). The findings in this study indicate the emergence of departmental administrators as a group in themselves, contributing insights to such a process and the debates regarding the potential effects of marginality.

This study uses the concept of belonging and relates these belongings to different formal and informal social relations and affiliations within an organization, which are formulated as sites of belonging in organizations. The formal site of belonging mirrors the organizational affiliation, the unit the individual is employed in and formally belongs to, which is related to an organizational perspective of belonging (Van Maanen & Barley 1984). The experienced site of belonging is the unit the individual sees themselves as a part of in their everyday activities, their subjective 'home' in the organization, related to an occupational perspective of belonging (Van Maanen & Barley 1984). As both these aspects in practice are intertwined (Ashforth et al. 2008), the notion of sites of belonging in organizations might be a helpful way of capturing additional layers of dynamics in organizations as a multitude of belongings simultaneously informs

actions and the organization of work. These sites of belonging, experienced and formal, are not mutually exclusive. One individual could have several formal belongings and multiple coexisting experience sites of belongings, sometimes overlapping, sometimes separated, as a part of the organization dynamics, similar to how occupational and organizational belongings are intertwined, as members of occupational communities often have dual loyalties to their occupation and their employing organization (Ashforth et al. 2008; Van Maanen & Barley 1984), being subject to multiple reference points of identification.

Central aspects from a range of debates such as the role of practical conditions, shared values, and demarcations for an occupational identity (MacKenzie et al. 2006), the understanding of loyalties as a multiplicity (Grodzins 1956; Marsh & Simon 1993), and the role of expectations on visible actions (Oglensky 2008) have inspired the formulation of sites of belonging as a way of uncovering additional layers of dynamics in the organization of work. While informed by these ongoing debates, the usage of the concept sites of belonging emerges from the investigation of social relations at the workplace level (Smith 2005), tracing the question of belonging from subjective individual experiences (Allen et al. 2021; May 2011) through the formal structure of the organization (Glover 2011) and the shifting power dynamics between academics and managers (Agevall & Olofsson 2020; Ese 2019; Trow 1994).

Rather than a priori considering employees or occupational groups as having one site of belonging or another, this study argues that by seeing organizational positions as one of multiple sites of belonging and involvement in several sometimes-conflicting relations of expected loyalties, we reach a broader understanding of actions in organizations and the impact – expected or unexpected – changing power dynamics has on the opportunities to exercise agency and influence in the line of work. By combining the data in this study with aspects from ongoing debates on belongings, worker collectives, and loyalties, this study introduces the concept of sites of belonging to gain additional insights regarding the multiplicity of belongings in organizations and the process of their emergence. It demonstrates the existence of a multiplicity of belongings in an organization and the structural conditions that enable the emergence of additional sites of belonging. In doing so, it contributes to our understanding of the organization of work by illustrating how different sites of belonging are important in understanding the social dynamics in organizations by putting the light on actors beyond the dominant categories of professionals and management.

While universities are a special type of organization with its mix of collegial and line management (Wall 2020), historically autonomous professions (Lynch & Ivancheva 2015), and strong independence (Ese 2019), there are also similarities to other professional organizations in sectors such as health care, social services, law enforcement, education, and public administration, in terms of the influence of NPM, tensions between professionals and management, and reworked division of labor regarding administrative work (Ackroyd et al. 2007; Forssell & Westberg 2014; Hall 2012; SOU2018:38) making the dynamics discussed in this study relevant to explore in other settings within and beyond the Nordic context. As this is a case study of one occupational group, the impact of sites of belonging and their emergence in different settings is an empirical issue for further investigation. Hopefully, the insights brought in this study could be of use for such further exploration.

References

Ackroyd S, Kirkpatrick, I., & Walker, R. (2007). Public management reform in the UK and its consequences for professional organization: A comparative analysis, Public Administration 85(1): 9–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2007.00631.x

Allen, K. A., Kern, M. L., Rozek, C. S., McInerney, D. M., & Slavich, G. M. (2021). Belonging: A review of conceptual issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research, Australian Journal of Psychology 73(1): 87–102. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2021.1883409

Allvin, M., & Movitz, F. (2011). 'Självständiga lärosäten': Om de förändrade villkoren för högre utbildning och universitetens normalisering. ['Independent institutions for higher education': On the changing conditions of higher education and the normalization of universities], Arbetsmarknad och arbetsliv 17(2): 59–73.

Alvesson, M. (2000). Social identity and the problem of loyalty in knowledge-intensive companies, Journal of Management Studies 37(8): 1101–1124. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00218

Agevall, O., & Olofsson, G. (2020). Administratörerna: Administration, kontroll och styrning vid svenska universitet och högskolor. [Administratörerna: Administration, kontroll och styrning vid svenska universitet och högskolor.] Arkiv. Tidskrift för samhällsanalys (12): 7–59. https://doi.org/10.13068/2000-6217.12.1

Ashforth, B. E., Harrison, S. H., & Corley, K. G. (2008). Identification in organizations: An examination of four fundamental questions, Journal of Management 34(3): 325–374. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206308316059

Axelsson, J., Karlsson, J. C., & Skorstad, E. J. (2019). Collective Mobilization in Changing Conditions: Worker Collectivity in a Turbulent Age, Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19190-0

Bach, S., Kessler, I., & Heron, P. (2007). The consequences of assistant roles in the public services: Degradation or empowerment? Human Relations 60(9): 1267–1292. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726707082848

Baruch, Y., & Holtom, B. C. (2008). Survey response rate levels and trends in organizational research, Human Relations 61(8): 1139–1160. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708094863

Bechky, B. A. (2006). Talking about machines, Thick description, and knowledge work, Organization Studies 27(12): 1757–1768. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606071894

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, Qualitative Research in Psychology 3(2): 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Browning, C. S. (2007). Branding Nordicity: Models, identity and the decline of exceptionalism, Cooperation and Conflict 42(1): 27–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836707073475

Connor, J. (2007). The Sociology of Loyalty, Springer Science & Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-71368-7

Collinson, J. A. (2006). Just 'non-academics'? Research administrators and contested occupational identity, Work, Employment and Society 20(2): 267–288. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017006064114

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). Basics of Qualitative Research, London: Sage Publications.

Dahllöf, U. (1996). Comparative conclusions in a Scandinavian comparative perspective. In: Dahllöf, U., & Selander, S. (Eds.). Expanding Colleges and New Universities. Selected Case Studies from Non-metropolitan Areas in Australia, Scotland, and Australia, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsalienses: 197–218.

De Coster, M., & Zanoni, P. (2019). Governing through accountability: Gendered moral selves and the (im) possibilities of resistance in the neoliberal university, Gender, Work & Organization 26(4): 411–429. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12304

Dufour-Poirier, M., & Hennebert, M.-A. (2015). The transnationalization of trade union action within multinational corporations: A comparative perspective, Economic and Industrial Democracy 36(1): 73–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X13495743
Ese, J. (2019). Defending the University? Academics' Reactions to Managerialism in Norwegian Higher Education, Karlstads universitet.
European Commission. (2022). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions on a European strategy for universities, Brussels, Belgium: European Commission
Evans, M. K. (1987). Department secretaries: Unsung heroines in the resolution of professional-organizational conflict, Human Organization 46(1): 62–69. https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.46.1.t745746v11w84785
Forssell, A., & Westerberg, A. I. (2014). *Administrationssamhället* [The administrative society], Lund: Studentlitteratur
Fox, A. (1969). Management's frame of reference. In: Flandes, A. (ed.), Collective Bargaining, Middlesex: Penguin Modern Management Reading.
Friberg, G. T. (2015). Universitetslärare i förändring: en antropologisk studie av profession, utbildning och makt. [University Teachers in Change: an Anthropological Study of Profession, Education and Power.], Universus Academic Press.
Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for? American Political Science Review 98(2): 341–354. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404001182
Glover, L. (2011). Can informal social relations help explain workers' reactions to managerial interventions? Some case evidence from a study of quality management, Economic and Industrial Democracy 32(3): 357–378. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831x10377810
Grodzins, M. (1956). The Loyal and the Disloyal: Social Boundaries of Patriotism and Treason, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Guetzkow, H. S. (1955). Multiple Loyalties: Theoretical Approach to a Problem in International Organization, Princeton University.
Guillon, O., & Cezanne, C. (2014). Employee loyalty and organizational performance: A critical survey, Journal of Organizational Change Management 27(5): 839–850. https://doi.org/10.1108/jocm-02-2014-0025
Hall, P. (2012). Managementbyråkrati: organisationspolitisk makt i svensk offentlig förvaltning. [Management bureaucracy: organizational political power in Swedish public administration.] Liber.
Hamel, J., Dufour, S., & Fortin, D. (1993). Case Study Methods, Sage Publications.
Hart, D. W., & Thompson, J. A. (2007). Untangling employee loyalty: A psychological contract perspective, Business Ethics Quarterly 297–323. https://doi.org/10.5840/beq200717233
Hart, R. J., & McKinnon, A. (2010). Sociological epistemology: Durkheim's paradox and Dorothy E. Smith's actuality, Sociology 44(6): 1038–1054. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510381609
Hasenfeld, Y. (2009). Human Services as Complex Organizations, Thousand Oaks California: SAGE Publications.
Hirschman, A. O. (1970). Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states, Harvard University Press.
Hood, C. (1991). A public management for all seasons? Public Administration 69(1): 3–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x
Hood, C. (1995). The 'new public management' in the 1980s: Variations on a theme, Accounting, Organizations and Society 20(2): 93–109. https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682(93)e0001-w

Hughes, K. D. (1996). Transformed by technology? The changing nature of women's 'Traditional' and 'Non-Traditional' white-collar work, Work, Employment and Society 10(2): 227–250. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017096010002003
Jenkins, R. (2014). Social Identity, Routledge.
Karlsson, A. (2011). Occupational identity in administrative service work: The aspect of carefulness, Gender, Work & Organization 18: e132–e156. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2009.00472.x
Karlsson, S., & Ryttberg, M. (2016). Those who walk the talk: the role of administrative professionals in transforming universities into strategic actors, Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy 2016(2–3). https://doi.org/10.3402/nstep.v2.31537
Karran, T., Beiter, K., & Mallinson, L. (2023). Academic freedom in Scandinavia: Has the Nordic model survived? Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy 9(1): 4–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2023.2180795
Keller, S. (2007). The Limits of Loyalty, Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511487590
Keisu, B-I., Abrahamsson, L., & Malin, R. (2015). Entrepreneurship and gender equality in academia? A complex combination in practice, Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies 5(1): 69–92. https://doi.org/10.19154/njwls.v5i1.4766
Kleinig, J. (2014). On Loyalty and Loyalties: the Contours of a Problematic Virtue, Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199371259.001.0001
Korczynski, M. (2003). Communities of coping: Collective emotional labor in service work, Organization 10(1): 55–79. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508403010001479
Leišytė, L. (2016). New public management and research productivity: A precarious state of affairs of academic work in the Netherlands, Studies in Higher Education 41(5): 828–846. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1147721
Lynch, K., & Ivancheva, M. (2015). Academic freedom and the commercialization of universities: a critical ethical analysis, Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics 15(1): 71–85. https://doi.org/10.3354/esep00160
Lysgaard, S. (2001). Arbeiderkollektivet [Workers collective], Oslo: Universitetsforlaget AS.
MacKenzie, R., & Marks, A. (2019). Older workers and occupational identity in the telecommunications industry: Navigating employment transitions through the life course, Work, Employment and Society 33(1): 39–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017018760212
MacKenzie, R., Marks, A., & Morgan, K. (2017). Technology, affordances and occupational identity amongst older telecommunications engineers: From living machines to black-boxes, Sociology 51(4): 732–748. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038515616352
MacKenzie, R., Stuart, M., Forde, C., Greenwood, I., Gardiner, J., & Perrett, R. (2006). 'All that is solid?': Class, identity and the maintenance of a collective orientation amongst redundant steelworkers, Sociology 40(5): 833–852. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038506067509
March, J. G., & Simon, H. A. (1993). Organizations, John Wiley & Sons.
Mason, J. (2002). Qualitative Researching, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
May, V. (2011). Self, belonging and social change, Sociology 45(3): 363–378. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038511399624
McDonald, R., Waring, J., & Harrison, S. (2006). At the cutting edge? Modernization and nostalgia in a hospital operating theatre department, Sociology 40(6): 1097–1115. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038506069851
McLachlan, C. J., MacKenzie, R., & Greenwood, I. (2019). The role of the steelworker occupational community in the internalization of industrial restructuring: The 'layering up' of collective proximal and distal experiences, Sociology 53(5): 916–930. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038519836850

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., et al. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria, International Journal of Qualitative Methods 16(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847
Oglensky, B. D. (2008). The ambivalent dynamics of loyalty in mentorship, Human Relations 61(3): 419–448. https://doi.org/10.1108/dlo.2008.08122ead.006
Orr, J. E. (2006). Ten years of talking about machines, Organization Studies 27(12): 1805–1820. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606071933
Plano Clark, V. L., & Ivankova, N. V. (2016). Mixed Methods Research: A Guide to the Field, Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483398341
Power, M. (1997). The Audit Society, Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198296034.001.0001
Ramazanoglu, C., & Holland, J. (2002). Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices, Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849209144.
Regin, D. Ö., Axelsson, J., & Arvidsson, M. (2020). Tidslojalitet. [Time-loyalty], Sociologisk forskning 57(1): 25–42. https://doi.org/10.37062/sf.57.20575
Rinne, R. (2021). The Nordic social democratic regime in education colliding with the global neo-liberal regime. In Krejsler, J. B., & Moos, L. (Eds.), What Works in Nordic School Policies? Mapping Approaches to Evidence, Social Technologies, and Transnational Influences, Educational Governance Research 15: 153–172.
Royce, J. (1995). The Philosophy of Loyalty, Vanderbilt University Press.
Salaman, G. (1971a). Two occupational communities: Examples of a remarkable convergence of work and non-work, The Sociological Review 19(3): 389–407. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954x.1971.tb00638.x
Salaman, G. (1971b). Some sociological determinants of occupational communities, The Sociological Review 19(1): 53–77. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1971.tb00619.x
Salaman, G. (1974). Community and Occupation: An Exploration of Work/Leisure Relationships, CUP Archive.
Saldaña, J. (2016). The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers, London: Sage.
Skorstad, E. J., & Karlsson, J. C. (2020). The worker collectivity and Anglo-Saxon theories of collectivity, Economic and Industrial Democracy 41(2): 397–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831x17713115
Smith, D. E. (2004). Ideology, science and social relations: A reinterpretation of Marx's epistemology, European Journal of Social Theory 7(4): 445–462. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431004046702
Smith, D. E. (2005). Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People, Rowman Altamira.
SOU 2018:38. Styra och leda med tillit: Forskning och praktik. [Governing and leading with trust: Research and practice.]. Stockholm: Elanders Sverige AB.
Steinþórsdóttir, F. S., Brorsen Smidt, T., Pétursdóttir, G. M., et al. (2019). New managerialism in the academy: Gender bias and precarity, Gender, Work & Organization 26(2): 124–139. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12286
Thomas, R., & Davies, A. (2002). Gender and new public management: Reconstituting academic subjectivities, Gender, Work & Organization 9(4): 372–397. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0432.00165
Trow, M. (1994). Managerialism and the academic profession: The case of England, Higher education policy-london-kogan 7: 11. Working Paper 93-15, UCLA Berkeley.
UKÄ (2022). Universitet och Högskolor. Personal vid universitet och högskolor 2022. [Higher Education. Employees in Higher Education 2022]. *Sveriges Officiella statistik*. *Statistiska Meddelanden*, Stockholm: Statistics Sweden.
Van Maanen, J., & Barley, S. R. (1984). Occupational communities: Culture and control in organizations, Research in Organizational Behavior 6: 287–365.

Wall, E. (2020). The invisible civil servant: How female senior lecturers in Sweden narrate work, Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies 10(4): 85–101. https://doi.org/10.18291/njwls.122194

Whitchurch, C. (2008). Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education, Higher Education Quarterly 62(4): 377–396.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging, Patterns of Prejudice 40:3: 197–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331

Note

[1]Translated from the Swedish word 'Kollegium', which directly translates to 'college'. My interpretation is that it is used by the participant similar to 'occupational group' or 'group of coworkers sharing position, tasks, and circumstances loosely tied to one another'.