

# An International Network for Research on Doctoral Education in Educational Research

Introduction to a Network Meeting

26th February 2025

Sverker Lindblad

University of Gothenburg

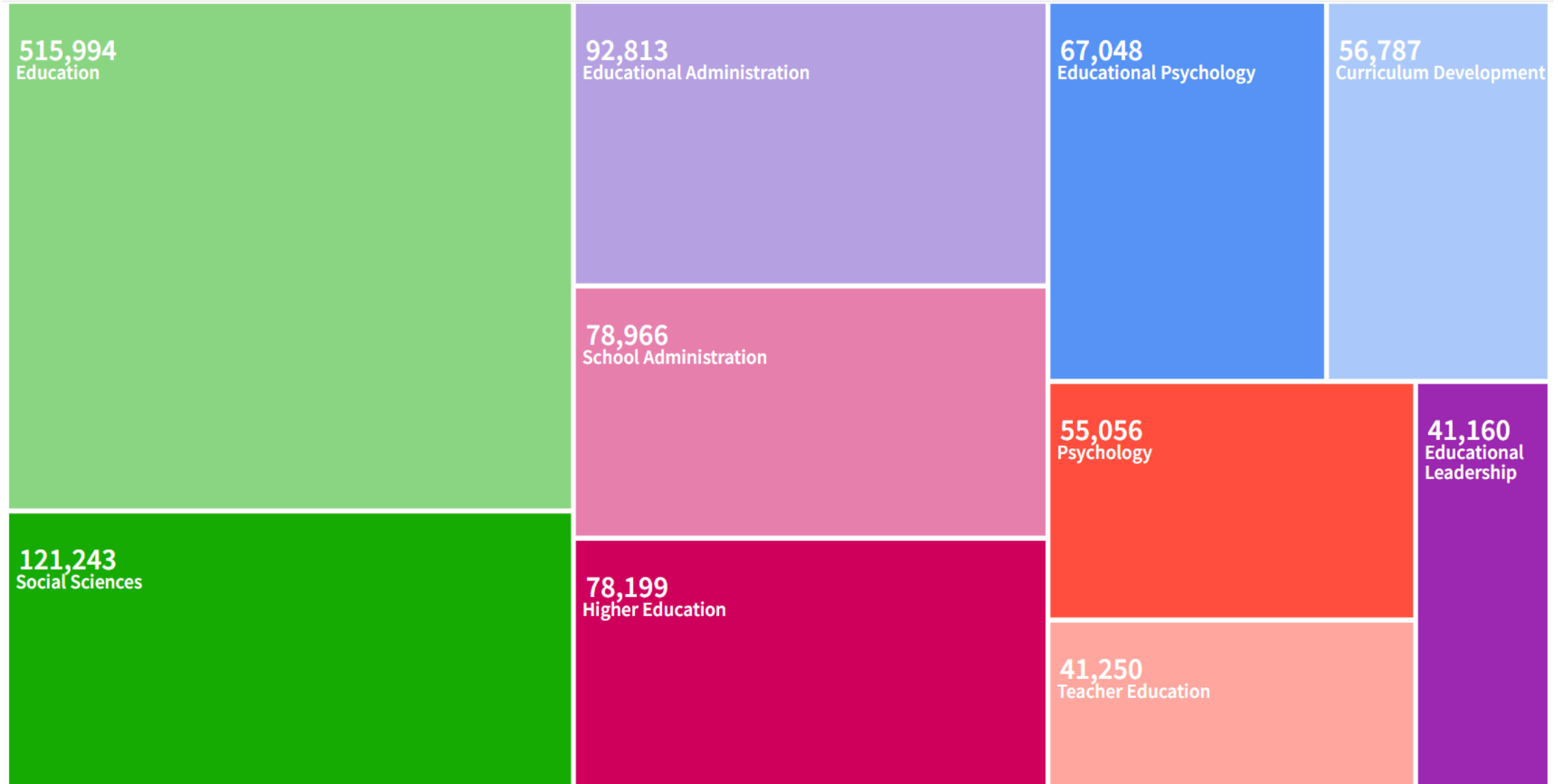
Sweden

# Welcome!

- Most welcome to our first meeting for the WERA International Research Network for Research on Doctoral Education in Educational Research. We who are welcoming are
  - Britt-Marie Apelgren
  - Pam Denicolo, who is chairing this session
  - Alebachew Kemisso
  - Tom Popkewitz
  - Gun-Britt Wärvik
  - Sverker Lindblad

I will here give a very short introduction to our network – as a start for our discussions and work.

**First:** a global picture of numbers of doctoral thesis 2024 in Pro Quest  
Almost 700 000 these were categorized over subjects and disciplines  
– here numbers of the ten most frequent subjects, given by ProQuest!



# Second: a few words on doctoral education

- Doctoral education – the making of research professionals – is an expanding field, developed from classic research apprenticeship into educating students in a structured and tightly governed doctoral education system. How come and why? What does this do to research professionals
- A way to see this system is to look at the sheer number of doctoral theses as shown previously. Here I used the Web of Science Pro Quest as a data source. By means of this I identified 692 000 doctoral theses categorized in different subjects and disciplines. How can we know this field?
- The number of theses per year expanded from 10 000 a year at the year of 2000 to 25 000 in 2024. What has happened? How come?
- According to preliminary research mapping most research publications are dealing with very valuable contributions considering supervision, doctoral student stress or identity formation, career development, but there seems to be little of research on doctoral education in the making and remaking of research professionals, science and expertise.
- Thus, one task for this research network could be to identify and analyse research dealing with doctoral education in such a making and re-making of research models or research paradigms. What can we learn from this?
- Another possible task for us is to describe and analyse our cases of doctoral education over time and place, and eventually to co-operate in doing a joint research program on doctoral education.

# Two points of departure for the network

- ONE: Our network is proposed to put forwards to analyse and discuss doctoral education in educational research or sciences over time and place to understand how doctoral education is created intellectually and structurally. The work of Thomas Kuhn on the Structure of Scientific Revolutions is *a first point of departure in two ways*:
  - Scientific paradigms are created by scientific practices as well as by societal pre-conditions and interests
  - Doctoral education is an arena where such paradigms are formulated and re-formulated in the making of research professionals.
- TWO: A *second point of departure* is based on the work of Richard Whitley, Lars Engwall, and others on differences in the ways the Academy is organised – from centralized bureaucracies like the sciences (what Kuhn deals with) to fragmented adhocracies, where a number of research problems and different approaches are at work at the same time. Such a fragmentation is due to different and perhaps conflicting interests and different addresses that are having an impact. Examples of such adhocracies are business studies or – to my understanding – educational sciences..
- Thus, our research on doctoral education seems to me to be different from the one Kuhn put forwards:
  - An important task could be to understand doctoral education in the making and remaking of the field of educational research as a fragmented adhocracy.
  - Our point is not to homogenize doctoral education nor educational research. Instead it seems to be important to understand its fragmentation as a social fact and what this does to doctoral education and perhaps how and why different agents (actors as well as things) are influencing the making of educational research and doctoral education.

# What to do in the International research network

- The purpose stated in the IRN proposal is;
  - To map, analyse and discuss the programmatic and intellectual organisation of doctoral education in educational science(s) in different global contexts. Questions are for instance:
    - How are doctoral education programmes designed and for what reasons?
    - Which intellectual traditions and epistemic virtues are at work, with what preconditions for doctoral students and the (re-) making of doctoral education?
  - To answer such questions is important per se, but also intend to improve, for instance:
    - a joint understanding of the international educational research field, and
    - how this field is developed or counteracted in interaction with social and cultural preconditions and epistemic virtues.
  - To improve international research cooperation and exchange as well as reflexivity in the making of doctoral education and educational research.
  - Eventually to develop international projects for research on doctoral education and the making of research professionals in educational research.

# A tentative plan for three years to be discussed

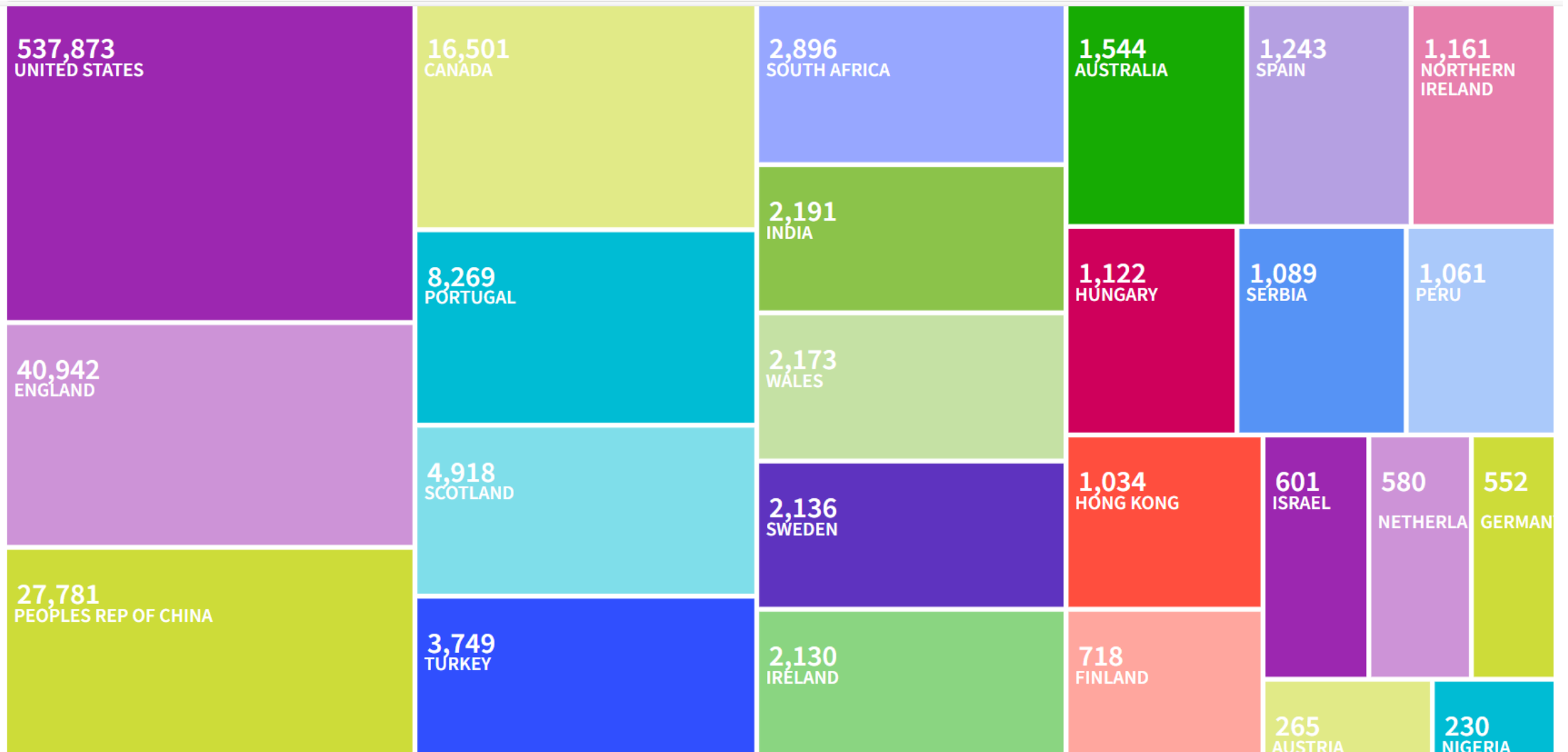
1. It seems reasonable to start with a *first* phase with reviewing research on doctoral education with a focus on how different publications are organising this research field indicating boundaries and co-operation over the world.
2. Such a review can be used in a *second* phase as an object for international conversations and for identifying and conceptualizing research problems and specific cases of doctoral education to be presented at international symposia.
3. A *third* phase is to summarize and publish work done in our IRN, for example, in a book “International Perspectives on Doctoral Education in the Making of Educational Sciences”.
4. This phase will perhaps deal with matters of international research cooperation engaging in problems and tasks developed in the IRN, and eventually outlining research proposals.

- So here we could discuss:

What do we know so far about doctoral education?

How is doctoral education made and re-made over time and place?

What does this tell us about educational research – science and society? And so on?



# Thanks for listening!

## Now time to talk!

- References:

- Engwall, L. (1995). Management research: A fragmented adhocracy?. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 11(3), 225-235.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1997/1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (Vol. 962). Chicago: University of Chicago press.
- Whitley, R. (2000). *The intellectual and social organization of the sciences*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- <https://weraonline.org/international-research-networks-irns/>