Social Sciences Research
LUND UNIVERSITY
DEAR READER,

Most of the challenges of our time are the result of human activity and must be solved through societal processes. Scientists provide important contributions to identifying and explaining environmental problems, for example. Engineering and medicine can create solutions for these problems. But implementing new ideas requires a combination of knowledge about and questioning of human behaviour and our social and political institutions.

Our researchers’ task is to make the functioning and dynamics of society comprehensible, thereby creating the opportunity to change and, in the best case, prevent the occurrence of problems. Research in the social and behavioural sciences generates knowledge and solutions that contribute to efficient social organisation, economic competitiveness and socially sustainable development.

The following pages present a selection of our most prominent research fields.
Since 1978, the Department of Gender Studies has been asking questions about how the lives and day to day conditions of men and women are affected by local and global circumstances. Researchers investigate how notions of gender interact with sexuality, ethnicity, class, disability and age.

Gender relations are complex and varied. They can be a source of oppression, but also of pleasure, and they affect all aspects of our lives. This is why gender studies is an interdisciplinary subject. There is a continuous dialogue at the department between experts in gender studies, history, anthropology, cultural sciences, sociology and theory of science. Their research covers seven thematic fields:

**Gender Studies**

**Feminist theory and methodology:** Researchers at the department develop feminist models of thought and methods to achieve a deeper understanding of how complex power structures and relations collaborate in the creation of social inequality. The department’s researchers also investigate how resistance and solidarity are expressed in the struggle of social movements for justice.

**Global studies:** Through studies of global power structures, the department’s researchers investigate how colonial and post-colonial relations are upheld and reproduced, with research within themes such as work, citizenship, migration, violence, sexuality, human rights and anti-racism.

**Inequality studies:** What do gender, ethnicity, sexuality and class entail for the creation of different opportunities for different groups of people within the private and public spheres? Focusing on power relations both between states and between people, the department’s researchers investigate the construction of unequal living conditions and marginalised subjects.

**Queer studies:** In studies of how sexual norms influence society, democracy and equality, researchers at the department investigate what normative notions of sexuality mean for individuals and groups. How are trans people treated, and how can discrimination against HBTQ people be avoided – in healthcare, schools, working life, family, friendships or within politics?

**Critical disability studies:** The department’s researchers investigate disability taking a critical approach to norms; they analyse how society’s demands for normality create obstacles. The research highlights how people with functional disabilities feature as agents in history, literature, politics and in the urban context and they problematise attitudes to bodies and normality.

**Feminist science studies:** Researchers at the department analyse how gender issues affect our attitudes to scientific knowledge and practice. The research is conducted in a critical dialogue with science and medicine, with the aim of producing knowledge in which men are not used as the norm.

**Feminist education studies and pedagogy:** Who occupies space in education and on what conditions? How is knowledge communicated and managed? The department’s researchers investigate how racism and sexism, and notions of ability and class, uphold and reproduce power relations and norms within education, in primary and secondary school and at university, and what this means for our learning.

www.genus.lu.se/research
Media buzz was strong even before the advent of the internet. Today, it is almost deafening. How does this affect our society at the local and global level and how does it affect us? Through research into media, we get the opportunity to analyse, explain and understand the conditions of various media and their impact on individuals and organisations.

The research at the Department of Communication and Media specialises in the study of media, society and culture. Our research deals with structures and processes for communication and media in modern society. Among other things, we investigate TV, films, books, newspapers and magazines, advertising, social media and mobile technology in relation to politics, society and culture.

The department has international expertise within four areas:
- Democracy, influence and social media
- Gender roles, health and society
- Audiences and popular culture
- Children and digital media

Research projects at the department are funded by the Swedish Research Council and the EU, among others. We take part in networks and collaborations in the Nordic area, Europe and the rest of the world. Our researchers work with public and commercial media, with media policy and media production, as well as with NGOs. Our courses are offered in Swedish and English within a broad range of specialisations for students at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and PhD levels. The research environment is lively, with a well-established research studies programme, visiting researchers, recurring international seminar series, conferences and events.

www.kom.lu.se/en/research

EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH FIELDS
- Media and citizenship
- Democracy and participation
- Gender
- Sensationalist journalism
- Audience studies
- Genre studies
- Popular culture
- Celebrities
- News
- Media and health
- Consumption
- Advertising
- Children and the internet
- Social activism and social media
- Media representations of animals as food
Human Geography

How the world’s human and material resources are developed within different societies is the classic core issue of human geography. The Department of Human Geography currently specialises in the research fields of economic geography, human ecology, cities, environments, landscapes and development geography.

RESEARCH FIELDS:

Economic geography is a central research field at the department. The optimal localisation of industry and services has generated important research questions. Current research focuses on innovation, competitiveness and regional development and makes important contributions to the understanding of how growth and welfare are produced. Economic geography is an internationally successful environment which, in cooperation with CIRCLE (Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy) conducts research into technology-driven growth patterns and crises, among other things. Other research specialisations seek to explain what makes regions specialise and how so-called clusters arise and fade. The research is put to practical use through the analysis of the possibilities of growth policy and of how individuals renew trades and regions through mobility on the labour market.

Human ecology studies how people’s cultural attitudes to nature affect and are affected by their society and means of subsistence. This requires an integrated approach which spans traditional boundaries between humanities, social sciences, natural science and engineering. Human ecology research in Lund has two main specialisations: global perspectives on how environmental problems and technological development are distributed, and cultural analysis perspectives on the use of resources and subsistence systems. The work has a strong international focus and is conducted in international research programmes on several continents.

Cities, environment, landscape focuses on research into the social, political, cultural and economic driving forces behind urbanisation, the spatial transformation of cities and change in the cultural landscape. The intensive urbanisation and an increasingly violent struggle for space within and around cities is an obvious focus for the department’s research and education. Political ecology and sustainability issues constitute an integral part of the research, in cooperation with LUCID (Centre for Integration of Social and Natural Dimensions of Sustainability), among others. The research into urban and rural development reaches across levels of scale from the local to the global and is therefore conducted within research teams in the Nordic area, the EU and around the world, mainly in Asia and in the USA.

Development geography has been a unique research profile for the department for decades. In close cooperation with sociologists, economic historians, agricultural economists and statisticians, agricultural and rural development have been the object of many studies and development projects, mainly in Africa, but also in Asia and Latin America. The central issues deal mainly with the opportunities for smallholders to grow their income through higher productivity and improved market conditions, while increasing their country’s food supply. Studies that were started in 2001 regularly follow the development of 4000 farming households in nine African countries. Other research within the profile is aimed at the food supply in African cities. Issues of distribution and spatial perspectives constitute the central framework for the research conducted at the department.

www.keg.lu.se/en/research
Psychology

Research within psychology covers everything from basic issues about human memory, perception, consciousness, personality and emotional life to how the surrounding world affects development, attitudes and behaviour.

The Department of Psychology studies both mental well-being and mental illness and the effects of various psychotherapeutic methods. Experimental methods, observational studies and clinical research are common, but also so-called intervention research – that is research which is to lead to changes through psychotherapy or the development of new habits, for example.

**RESEARCH FIELDS:**

- **Occupational and organisational psychologists** focus on rapid change in working life. What consequences do continuous changes have on organisations and individuals? A good workplace is beneficial to both health and well-being as well as to creativity and productivity. This is why researchers develop methods to improve work environments and leadership.

- **Clinical psychology** is aimed at research into mental illness and psychotherapy. The results are often transferred directly into public healthcare. The department has a training clinic where students practise psychotherapy and research is conducted into the effects of psychotherapy. Other areas of study at the department are performance in sports, hypnosis, paranormal experiences, eating disorders, social phobia, psychological treatment via the internet, depressive personality traits and the treatment of severely traumatised refugees.

- **Cognitive psychologists** deal with issues which are connected to human memory, speech, emotions, attention, perception and problem-solving. ADHD, mathematical models for understanding psychological phenomena, witness psychology and how we make moral judgements are some areas in which research teams are active.

- **Neuropsychologists** are specialised in the connection between the brain and the mental functions. Memory processes, cognitive control functions and speech processes are studied with neurophysiological and brain imaging methods, such as EEG and MR cameras. Within their clinical research, neuropsychologists are particularly interested in patients with dementia and frontal lobe injuries.

- **Personality and social psychology** is the study of that which shapes our individual traits. The differences are highlighted but the discipline also strives to create a coherent image of the individual and the psychological processes.

- **Social psychologists** conduct research into how our thoughts, emotions and behaviours are affected by the presence of other people. Phenomena such as discrimination, altruism, prejudice and moral judgements are studied, along with practical areas of application such as marketing and human resources recruitment. The department also conducts research into creativity and the conditions required in order for our creativity to flow.

- **Development psychologists** deal with the influence of heredity and environment on the development of the individual. How is the interaction between the child and its parents affected by innate properties such as temperament, for example?

www.psy.lu.se/research
Sociology of Law

What function do norms and laws have in the family, at school, in the workplace and in society? What leads to new laws being passed or existing laws being rewritten? Do laws have the intended effect? And how can norms and laws contribute to sustainable social development?

Since 1972, when the social sciences subject of sociology of law was inaugurated at Lund University, research has been conducted on issues that deal with how social norms influence the law. We are the only higher education institution in Europe to offer a complete programme in sociology of law from the Bachelor’s degree to the PhD level.

The sociology of law division is recognised both nationally and internationally. The researchers have a well-developed network of colleagues both in the neighbouring city of Malmö and in higher education institutions in the Nordic area, Asia, Africa and North and Latin America. The unit also cooperates closely with the interdisciplinary environment at the Centre for Work, Technology and Social Change at Lund University, and with the International Renato Treves PhD Programme in Law and Society at the Università degli Studi di Milano.

Currently, work is underway to gather social sciences research on norms in a norm centre. The idea is to coordinate research on social norms from this centre and to make it more usable and accessible via a data base. Systematic information on society’s norms is of great importance to understand the consequences of laws but also to understand how law should be organised in order to be effective and positive.

RESEARCH FIELDS:
Sociology of law as a research discipline often builds on multidisciplinary cooperation in order to solve societal problems. The research and education in Lund is also characterised by a close cooperation with different public authorities, organisations, associations and individual companies. Currently, researchers in sociology of law are mainly engaged in the following research areas:

- Welfare
- Social media and the digitalisation of society
- Courts and law enforcement
- Families and children
- Education and leadership
- Environment and sustainable development
- Law and migration
- Legal profession and legal education
- Legal cultures
- Human rights
- Socio-legal theory

www.soclaw.lu.se/research
Service Studies

The subject of Service Studies is an interdisciplinary research field which studies both public and private provision of services. At Lund University, the subject is based at the Department of Service Management and Service Studies at Campus Helsingborg.

In the world’s developed economies, the production of goods has increasingly given way to the production of services. There is a growing need to understand and explain the complex service society which makes research into service studies all the more important. The overarching question is what are the economic, social and environmental consequences of the growing production and consumption of services?

Service studies touches on many other subject areas; the department’s lecturers and researchers therefore come from a range of different disciplines. Business administration, ethnology, human geography, sociology and history are the cornerstones of this interdisciplinary research profile. The research is often linked to the department’s degree programs in tourism, retail, health, food and logistics services. Leadership, control, organisation and practice within different service industries are central to the research.

RESEARCH FIELDS:
The researchers study a number of different issues; from welfare research and innovation to sustainability issues, human-oriented services, cooperation processes and the professionalisation of services. Different perspectives are applied to the design and conditions of services and to the communication and interaction that takes place in connection with different service encounters. The research breadth is manifested in several major projects studying shopping, welfare, waste management, tourism, cultural heritage, urban and regional development, public transport, sustainable fishing and coastal development. Part of the research also focuses on the current changes taking place in the immediate vicinity of the city of Helsingborg such as the urban renewal project H+.

www.ism.lu.se/in_english
The School of Social Work conducts research into social work in a broad sense. Several researchers are studying the meaning and consequences of poverty, exclusion, homelessness, mental illness, unemployment and substance abuse.

One central theme is the organisation of social work and the organisations within which social workers operate – both voluntary and public. Why do people do as they do and how are social workers affected by the organisational structure and culture that surrounds them? What distinguishes the expertise of social workers and how do they relate to other professions? Another important area is the study of how social problems are construed over time and what welfare policy strategies have been developed to solve them. Issues of citizenship and rights are also studied.

Methods and approaches are investigated from different perspectives – both that of the social worker and that of the user. This can mean how the exercise of authority is expressed, when and how interventions are carried out, and not least: how can one know which working methods are successful? There is great focus on the groups to which social work is addressed. What is their experience of the intervention of social workers and what opportunities for influence do they have? Swedish conditions are studied as well as international contexts. Currently, more than a third of the research projects have international cooperation partners or research focus, within the Nordic area and the EU but also in the USA and Japan. There are also research projects in Canada, India, Pakistan and Singapore.

**RESEARCH FIELDS:**
Social policy and welfare development in Sweden, the Nordic area and the EU. Different social policy models and welfare policy solutions, including social insurance, and their consequences are studied and compared.

Civil society: Research into the not-for-profit sector and NGOs and into social innovations and user participation. Children, youth and families. Research into family relations, children’s welfare and rights, children and families in vulnerable situations, social childcare and the outcome of interventions aimed at families and children.

Profession and organisation. Social work as a profession, the social worker’s career paths, their working methods, expertise and production of knowledge. The opportunities for action within the organisations in which social workers operate are also studied.


The elderly and their everyday care and conditions, care of the elderly as an organisation.

Substance abuse and abusers. Substance abuse and health, institutionalised care of substance abusers, individualised treatment, family issues.

Crime and victims of crime. Studies of correctional facilities and their employees, of victims of crime and victim support and on the relationship between social and criminal law. Migrants and migration. The welfare and conditions of migrants both in Sweden and in other countries.

www.soch.lu.se/research
Education, Social Anthropology and Sociology

Educational researchers study upbringing, culture, education, learning and teaching. Social anthropologists study human beings in a cultural context to understand how people themselves experience and organise their world. Sociologists study how people relate to and interact with one another as individuals and as groups.

At Lund University, these three classic social sciences disciplines are included in the same department – the Department of Sociology. Common to all three is that they all seek to understand and explain how people organise themselves in social, cultural and historical contexts.

The department’s research reaches from empirical studies of central contemporary issues, over critical social analysis to the development of social sciences theory and methodology. Researchers carry out detailed studies in which groups, organisations, nations, cultures, religions, generations, epochs and traditions are compared and contrasted.

Part of the research is funded by external research grants, but the researchers are also often commissioned by private and public principals to shed light on a problem or evaluate various initiatives. The department’s collective expertise covers environmental and development issues, learning processes, schools and education, political leadership and control, criminology, social policy and knowledge creation, among others.

The research has a strong international profile. The department cooperates with many leading universities in Scandinavia, Europe, Asia and the USA, but also has intensive collaboration with colleagues at Swedish higher education institutions.

RESEARCH FIELDS:
Research into the philosophy and theory of social sciences, development studies, the sociology of science and qualitative methodology is nationally leading. There are also strong research teams empirically and theoretically studying social deviance and criminality, welfare policy, family life, working life and organisation, professions and culture.

Lund University has one of the few Swedish environments in which basic research in social anthropology is conducted, including visual anthropology. The department also contributes new perspectives on the philosophy and theory of education and has a particular focus on adult learning, adult education, higher education, working life and professionalisation.

Power relations and social dividing lines, in particular on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexuality and social class are the focus of much of the research at the department.

Some examples of research issues are:
How does everyday life change when traditional norms and institutions are dissolved and replaced by new ones?
How are meaning, knowledge, order and cohesiveness generated in a society where large groups are excluded from the labour market?
How to manage the conflicts which arise when economic, social and political resources are unevenly distributed, both regionally and globally?

www.soc.lu.se/in_english
Political Science

War and peace, national and international politics, democracy, political ideologies and public administration. The research at the Department of Political Science at Lund University is broad and varied. The classic fields are studied in depth but research also transcends subject boundaries.

There is much interdisciplinary cooperation here: together with psychologists, the research field of political psychology has been developed. Water conflicts in the Middle East are studied together with engineers, scientists and humanities researchers. Researchers in sustainable environmental policy cooperate with engineers and environmental experts. Welfare policy changes are analysed with researchers within sociology, social work and economics, while researchers of expertise and democracy cooperate with medical researchers in the study of genetic engineering.

The department strives to develop research projects alongside the courses and programmes offered. With committed researchers as lecturers the teaching is dynamic and up to date. And with engaging lecturers as researchers, the research becomes more comprehensible.

RESEARCH FIELDS:

One of the department’s strong fields is international relations – negotiations, diplomacy, international political theory, and peace and conflict research. Current projects deal with the role and power relations of transnational agents within world politics, international environmental policy, gender issues within international security, the EU’s foreign policy and identity, and the role played by nationalism and religion in politics.

Another field of research is comparative politics. Ongoing research compares and measures how well political systems function with particular focus on how the structure of political institutions affects politics. Several projects specialise in political economy and the functions of political parties.

A third specialisation is public administration in which research into governance, ethics, leadership, organisation and policy processes shapes different projects. The research develops in relation to different policy areas such as environmental policy, change in public authorities, privatisation, gender and diversity policy, urban policy, integration policy, etc.

Political theory constitutes an independent research specialisation which analyses norms and concepts, among other things. But the subject is also an important part of other fields of political science. At the department in Lund, this is most noticeable within research on democracy. Democracy beyond the nation state is linked to research on international relations and social movements. Democracy theory is an important basis for researchers analysing the influence of experts as well as public administration and public ethics. The democratisation of authoritarian political systems is also an important research field.

Democracy is one of the common key concepts within the subject and power is another. Questions are asked about how the resources of power can be distributed, about the authority of institutions, opportunities for self-determination and how power is created and reproduced.

www.svet.lu.se/english
Strategic Communication

There is a greater range of information on offer today than ever before. Organisations and companies fight for attention and the media landscape has radically changed, through digital media becoming part of everyday life, among other things. This makes strategic communication increasingly important – politically, economically and culturally.

Ever since rhetoric, - “the art of speaking well” - emerged in antiquity, people have discussed how to succeed in communicating strategically. Strategic communication was previously a specialisation within media and communication studies, but it has long been a separate, fast-growing field in both education and research. The field has developed its own theories rooted in both social sciences, such as sociology, social psychology and political science, and in humanities – such as rhetoric and linguistics.

Research in strategic communication deals with the formal and informal communication initiatives which an organisation conducts in order to realise a particular objective. This could involve anything from marketing and communication aimed at reinforcing relationships with external groups to how the internal communication affects the organisation.

A holistic view of organisational communication is unique to research within strategic communication. Communication processes affect the balance of power and relationships internally, between management and employees, but also externally – for example with customers. What a company or a public authority communicates is crucial to the trust and legitimacy that the organisation achieves both internally and within wider society.

RESEARCH FIELDS:
An integrated approach is required to understand the communication of organisations. It is not possible to draw a clear boundary between internal and external communication; they affect each other. The research therefore covers three areas: public relations, organisational communication and marketing communication.

Examples of research areas at the department:

Internal communication. How does the leader’s communication affect the internal processes of a company?

Crisis communication. What and how does an organisation communicate in order to be prepared for and to manage a crisis?

Marketing communication and branding. How do companies use communication to strengthen their position on the market?

New media and modern democracy. What role do social media play – and how do organisations manage them – in a democratic society?

Organisations and society. What is the connection between the communication of organisations and social phenomena?

Professionalism, expertise and ethics. What is the current situation like for communicators and what are the trends for the future?

www.isk.lu.se/english
Lund University was founded in 1666. Today, the University is ranked as one of the world’s top 100 and is Sweden’s most international higher education institution. The University has 47,000 students and 7,200 staff based in Lund, Helsingborg and Malmö. We are united in our efforts to understand, explain and improve our world and the human condition.