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Has academic freedom survived? : an interview study of the conditions for researchers in an era of paradigmatic change

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Abstract

European universities are being shaken by two revolutions. One is a radical change in the way research is funded, the other is the increased emphasis on the teaching role of the universities. This interview study examines what effects these radical institutional changes have had on academic freedom. Based on a small number of in-depth interviews with Swedish researchers in various disciplines, different posts, active either at an ancient or a new university, the study explores the concept and content of academic freedom, the current prospects for its survival and the effect of changes in funding on the content of research and research process as such. The results suggest that the institutional changes, not least in the way the funding system is organised, are having a determinate impact on the behaviour of academics, while academic freedom as a norm still thrives in the research community as a whole. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)