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A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF SWEDISH STRATEGY RESEARCH AND THE RIGOUR–RELEVANCE GAP

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Abstract: There are many explanations to the so-called rigour–relevance gap in academic research on strategic management. In this Element we review existing literature on the matter and argue that we have to go beyond the typical explanations of knowledge and language differences and look at more fundamental, societal and cultural explanations.

The empirical focus of this Element is the history and the possible particularities of strategic management research in Sweden where we show how almost 300 years of relevance-centred research has undergone significant changes over the last 30 years, and that the historical development is based very much on societal pressure, academic culture and shifting perspectives on the role of academic research. We conclude by offering a couple of examples of how Swedish research, close to its traditional approaches, still can contribute to relevance and thus help balance the rigour–relevance divide.

Keywords: strategy, Sweden, rigour, relevance, industry–academy collaboration

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