



Bologna på svenska

The Implementation of the Bologna objectives at Örebro University and Mälardalen University

**Thesis for Bachelor Degree in European Studies
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FOREWORD

"Heat a genuine wood burning oven." That is how a recipe for a Bologna pizza would start, if it would exist. In fact, some recipes for approximately such a pizza can be found in different countries¹, but the heating of the oven might be about the only exact similarity. Whereas the British recipe starts with the basic pizza dough, the Swedish recipe starts with the onions and meat and the Dutch recipe starts with ready made pizza marguerites. The preparation time differs as well, as do many of the instructions, ingredients and utensils used. But the product is the same, or bears the same name at least. Just as there are many roads that lead to Rome, there are many roads that lead to Bologna.

Thus, there are many roads that lead from Bologna as well. In fact, the Bologna process and the new pizza Bolognese have a lot in common: they are interpreted in different ways in different countries, but the idea is that it leads to the same output. The Bologna objectives are the different stages in the recipe. The different organisational structures and the networks that the universities are engaged in equal the kitchen utensils, providing those tools necessary to make the project a success. The case studies of Örebro and Mälardalen universities presented in this report can be said to be two of the numerous kitchens in Europe. The ingredients that are at disposal in the different kitchens are teachers, students, and resources for instance. These will differ due to the different local situations, but in the end a well balanced whole should be prepared according to the Bologna recipe. But there is more to it: what is the starting point for the preparation? What priorities do the people involved have?

Higher education has very important implications for democracy, diversity and the construction of citizenship. The relationship between globalisation and local identity is an important issue. Different philosophical items are of importance as well: education as Bildung and the way of examination for instance. These concepts play an important role within the Bologna process and formation of a Europe of knowledge by constructing the European Higher Education Area.

Some things are certain: just as is the case with the pizza Bolognese, the output will differ locally; it can be enjoyed with different side dishes and drinks; and it can be enjoyed alone, but it is more fun in company. However, since the recipe is based on the same foundation, it will lead to unity in diversity. With its origin in Italy, the pizza is now seen as a universally enjoyed, colourful and quite tasty substance. Will that be the same in the case of the restructuring of higher education in Europe through the Bologna process?

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Spring 2006

¹ In Great Britain: <http://www.thatsmyhome.com/venettos/pizza/bolognese-pizza.htm>
in Sweden: <http://www.knorr.se/5ideas/se/recept.asp?ID=48>
in The Netherlands:
<http://www.ah.nl/allerhande/recepten/recipe.jsp?ingredient=rundergehaakt&id=146576&offset=0>



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“Tell me and I will forget,
Show me and I may remember,
Involve me and I will understand”

Chinese proverb

² <http://www.obo.se>

³ <http://lexikon.nada.kth.se/cgi-bin/swe-eng>

⁴ <http://www.sj.se>



SUMMARY

With the globalisation process and the accompanying loss of sovereignty of the nation states in mind, I take a closer look at Higher Education Policy in a European perspective. The theoretical framework is constructed by Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson and Wedlin, researchers at Uppsala University. They state that universities around the world are becoming increasingly similar in appearance, but also clearly differentiated in terms of power. This statement is based on research considering business schools, but the researchers claim that it is true for all Institutes of Higher Education (IHE). That is why I test the statement on two case studies: Örebro University (ORU) and Mälardalen Högskola (MdH).

The thematic framework is the Bologna process, which has reached half time in its implementation. According to a report by ESIB, this provides a good starting point for taking stock of how and how far the implementation process has come in different countries. The starting point of countries is different and countries have their own priorities, as argued in the report. I look at the situation in Sweden and the case studies in particular, with the following central question: *How are the objectives of the Bologna process implemented at ORU and MdH and to what extent has this implementation been put into practice?*

I use five research questions, based on the Bologna objectives. The research questions investigate how and how far the objectives have been put into practice concerning: readable and comparable degrees, the three cycle system, the ECTS credits and grades, staff and student mobility and the European Dimension. The 'how' part of the question is investigated by participative observation, while the 'to what extent' part is researched by interviews with key persons.

The research approach used is induction, since I aim at gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events, collect qualitative data, need a close understanding of the research context, use a more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses, realise that I am part of the research process through my internship and have less concern with the need to generalise.

An introduction of Örebro University and Mälardalen Högskola, the developments going on and the organisation of their implementation strategy is offered in Chapter 3. It is important to realise that ORU and MdH are considering a close cooperation in the near future. Moreover, their geographical location in Central Sweden has important implications for collaboration with other universities in Sweden. Neither of the case studies is a traditional university, with Örebro only reaching university status in 1999 and Mälardalen officially being a University of Professional Education (Högskola).

The Bologna process, its objectives and its origins are described in Chapter 4. The Bologna process was initiated in Bologna in 1999, and the journey towards the realisation of the objectives in 2010 continues through biannual meetings in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005) and London (2007). Sweden has signed the Bologna declaration in 1999 and has thus been implementing its objectives from the beginning of the process.

In 2005, a government bill called "new world – new university" was presented. However, important objections to this proposition were made by the parties in opposition. They were joined on some issues by the Green party. 2006 is an election year, which means that the decision might be postponed to after the elections. This does not make things easier for Örebro University and Mälardalen Högskola, since they have been waiting for national guidelines for much longer than anticipated.

In the final paragraph of Chapter 5, I present a short overview of the pedagogic background on which Swedish education is developed. John Dewey and the term *Bildung* are an important base to today's Swedish educational system. It describes the role of education in the mental development of citizens in a democratic society. It involves the difference between teaching and learning and the mode of examination. This philosophy explains why Swedish pedagogues have difficulties implementing some parts of the Bologna process.

Chapter 6 gives an overview and analysis of the interviews, while aiming at answering the research questions. Readable and comparable degrees at undergraduate and graduate level are issued and both ORU and MdH have received the Diploma Supplement Label from the European Commission. However, the Diploma Supplement does not accompany the Certificates at PhD level yet and awareness of the Diploma Supplement in general needs to be raised.

The second objective, implementing the three cycle system, generated more problems. A second cycle as such has never existed in the Swedish higher education system. The Swedish Magister degree can be said to be in between the undergraduate and graduate levels and it is unclear what the importance of this degree will be, now that a Master level is introduced. The entrance requirements for a study at PhD level are not clear either: should it be the Magister or the Master degree?

An important reason for this uncertainty is the financial question: who pays for the 'extra' fifth year, the student or the state? A possibility is to give the Master degree a more general character, preparing the student for the labour market. The Magister degree could be more academic, preparing for PhD studies.

Another underlying reason is the future status of högskolor in Sweden. If they don't have the academic competence to offer Master programs, but Master degrees are the entry requirements for PhD studies, then much of the importance of högskolor is lost. And especially the Green party wants to keep högskolor as an important incentive for regional development.

The third research question concerns the ECTS credits and grades. Neither of these is officially part of the implementation policy at the case studies yet, as other objectives are prioritised. However, when exchange students are concerned, they should be offered both credits and grades according to the ECTS. For credits, this does not pose any problems. At the moment, one Swedish credit is simply multiplied by 1.5 in order to construct ECTS credits.

Much more debate is going on about the implementation of ECTS grades. At Örebro, three grades are presently in use: not-passed (UG), passed (G) and passed with distinction (VG). At Mälardalens Högskola, this is usually a system from 1 to 5. There is not much opposition to transferring the grades to the ECTS seven grade scale at MdH. At ORU however, the Student Union and a number of lecturers are fiercely against it. They argue that it interrupts with the present mode of learning and the examination system. How can a student that takes part in a discussion be awarded any other grade than pass or not pass? Either you know something or you don't. It is not about facts, but about constructing your thoughts and communicating knowledge. These arguments are used by many of the interviewed persons at ORU.

There is an interesting difference between relative ECTS grades and absolute (goal oriented) ECTS grades. Only a few persons, both at MdH and ORU, named this difference. The relative way is that a scale is made where only 10 % of the students can be awarded the highest grade. Absolute is that in theory all students can be awarded an A, as long as they prove to have enough knowledge. It seems that the relative version will be implemented, whereas the persons that know the difference prefer the absolute version.

Considering staff mobility, recognition and valorisation are important incentives to increasing mobility. Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus are important facilitating programs organised by the EU. However, practical obstacles such as sepsis, time and money constraints obstruct development in this area. Most exchange is based on personal networks and personal contacts.

Student mobility is the largest part of the mobility project. Both ORU and MdH are in a process of rationalising their contacts: deepening instead of broadening. Exchange students at the case studies have equal access to facilities such as computer labs, the library and accommodation. However, much more students are incoming than outgoing. Swedish students are not so eager to travel abroad for their studies. This gives rise to the use of ICT for Distance Learning and the concept of internationalisation at the home ground.



The fifth and final research question concerns the European Dimension. This is rather an umbrella objective than an individual part of the process such as the other objectives. Curriculum development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated programs of study, training and research are constructed and implemented as an integral part of the other objectives. These issues are largely the result of existing networks that developed over the years due to exchange projects and conferences.

The main particular differences in the implementation of the Bologna process that I found in the case studies at Örebro and Mälardalen are: the official status of a university vs. högskola; national vs. regional orientation; decentralised vs. centralised organisation structure; reactive vs. proactive attitude; and quality vs. quantity.

The **overall conclusion** and the answer to the research question, considering the 'how' part of the question is that both institutes have constructed a consultative but determined leadership at the top level and communication across the institutes. Moreover, the support from the leadership to the process is strong and positive, which makes progress smoother. A guideline and time table for implementation of the Bologna process is constructed at the central level and adapted to the latest developments and decisions in the Parliament.

However, considering the 'to what extent' part, due to the slow decision taking process at the national level and several simultaneous internal reforms at the institutes, the Bologna process has by far not been implemented completely. Three limitations are particularly named: legal structures, resources and real commitment.

In the last section, I make recommendations for further research. The elections in September 2006 will play a decisive role in the development of the implementation of the Bologna process in Sweden. The orientation of the Magister and Master degree will be of importance, as well as the question who will pay the tuition fee for the fifth year of studies, the student or the state? Moreover, the use of ICT for E-learning and Distance courses, as well as for LLL is significant for the future development of international cooperation within the EHEA. It will set the conditions for joint degrees and joint programs to an increasing extent. Some efforts are already made and although it is a large and complex process, the Bologna process suits very well to reforms already going on at Örebro University and Mälardalen Högskola. Much progress is made over the past years, as Lazaro Moreno tells, *"if you would have had this interview with me three years ago, I would have said "I don't really know where they want to go". But, yeah, things have been changing and in a very positive way. So I hope this will continue."*⁵

⁵ Interview with Lazaro Moreno, 14 March 2006



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List of Acronyms

DS	Diploma Supplement
DSL	Diploma Supplement Label
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ESIB	National Unions of Students in Europe
EUA	European University Association
EURASHE	European Association of Institutes of Higher Education
GRUS	Swedish: Grund Utbildnings Strategi Strategy for Education at Undergraduate level
IHE	Institute of Higher Education
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MIMA	Mälardalen International Master Academy
MdH	Mälardalen Högskola
ORU	Örebro University
VET	Vocational Education and Training



1. INTRODUCTION

In their book *New Public Management*, Christensen and Lægheid describe the political component of the globalisation process in general terms and state that the flow of ideas around the world may just as easily lead to increased variation and difference as to greater uniformity⁶. From the globalisation process in general terms to the globalisation of higher education policy is in fact just a small step. Three researchers⁷ at Uppsala University use the above statement about the flow of ideas as a red line in their paper *Is a global organizational field of higher education emerging?*

Their study of higher management education as a particular and early example for recent developments in higher education states that universities around the world are becoming increasingly similar. They present the following conclusion:

“Recent developments, including the Bologna process [...] and the many local reform and reorganization efforts that have ensued, clearly indicate that a global organizational field – and market – of higher education is in the making. We can expect that with the emergence of such a field universities will become increasingly similar in their appearance, but also clearly differentiated in terms of status and power.”⁸

This conclusion serves as the theoretical base from which I will conduct further research. In order to do so, I study the Bologna process and its implementation in Sweden. More precisely: the local reform and reorganisation efforts at Örebro University (ORU) in Örebro and Mälardalen University (MdH) in Västerås and Eskilstuna.

The implementation of the Bologna process is an important issue that will certainly gain even more importance in the coming years. Reason for this are the consequences it has for the development of higher education within the EU and beyond. This becomes clear from the main aim of the Bologna process: to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010 that should be competitive with other higher education systems in the world.

Moreover, the topic forms a good combination of my main interests – Public Administration on a European level and the practical functioning as well as the philosophical background of higher education. Finally, the *objective of this research* is to gain insight in the implementation of European Higher Education Policy at the national (Swedish) and institutional level. I.e. the strategy and practice of implementing the Bologna objectives by staff of ORU and MdH, against the background of the Swedish and European guidelines.

By signing the declaration, the European ministers of Education committed themselves to realising those objectives, as the following quote shows:

“We hereby undertake to attain these objectives – within the framework of our institutional competencies and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of university autonomy – to consolidate the European area of higher education. To that end, we will pursue the ways of intergovernmental co-operation, together with those of non governmental European organisations with competence on higher education. We expect universities to again respond promptly and positively and to contribute actively to the success of our endeavour.”⁹

As stated in the final line of the above quote, universities should contribute to the realisation of the Bologna objectives by 2010. By using the objectives as the basis for the research questions, I investigate to what extent ORU and MdH actually contribute to this realisation.

⁶ As quoted in Hedmo, T., K. Sahlin-Andersson & L. Wedlin, p. 3

⁷ Tina Hedmo, Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson and Linda Wedlin

⁸ Hedmo, T., K. Sahlin-Andersson & L. Wedlin, p. 25

⁹ Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education, Bologna, 19 June 1999



A very interesting text that fits particularly well as a thematic basis for this research is the executive summary of ESIB's ¹⁰ Bologna Analysis 2005 – *Bologna with Student Eyes*. The following quote describes the starting point of my own analysis:

“The Bologna process has reached half time. This provides a good framework for taking stock of how and how far the implementation of the various action lines has reached the national and institutional level. Since the Bologna process does only provide the framework for reforms, sometimes more and sometimes less detailed, there is no homogenous situation throughout Europe regarding the implementation. But also other factors lead to differences in the implementation. Firstly, the starting point of countries was different. [...] Another factor is that countries have their own priorities.” ¹¹

Just what the starting point of Sweden is and what the priorities of this country are, is investigated in this research. **The central question for this research is:**

How are the objectives of the Bologna process implemented at ORU and MdH and to what extent has this implementation been put into practice?

The research questions¹² are:

1. How and to what extent do ORU and MdH produce easily readable and comparable degrees? (e.g. through the Diploma Supplement).
2. How and to what extent is the three cycle system implemented at ORU and MdH?
3. How and to what extent are the ECTS and the accompanying grading system constructed at ORU and MdH?
4. How and to what extent is mobility of students and staff – incoming and outgoing – promoted at ORU and MdH?
5. How and to what extent is the European Dimension promoted at ORU and MdH?

The sub aspects, which the research focuses on, are:

- Readable and comparable degrees
- The three cycle system (Bachelor, Master and Doctor/PhD)
- The ECTS credit and grading system
- Mobility of Students and Staff
- The European Dimension within Higher Education

Whereas the ‘how’ part of the central question can be answered by participative observation, the ‘to what extent’ part will be investigated through interviews. This is the reason why the research questions all start with how and to what extent, while the interview questions start with ‘to what extent’. More information can be found in Chapter 2 about the Research Method and in Appendix A – Interview Questions.

The design of this report is logical. After this first introductory chapter, the research method is described in the second chapter. The necessary background information on both ORU and MdH can be read in the third chapter. In that chapter, an interesting insight into the latest developments concerning the alliance between these two institutes is offered. Just how the Bologna process was initiated and how it proceeds is demonstrated in the fourth chapter.

¹⁰ The National Unions of Students in Europe

¹¹ Baumann, B., Bielecki, A., N. Heerens & P. Lazetic, 2005, p. 5

¹² These are based on the Bologna objectives, see Chapter 4



The latter part of this research report presents the empirical material. The results of the research are presented in chapter 5, with the national Swedish political framework as the base. Also in this chapter, I draw a philosophical background in order to provide insight into the tensions that exist in the local reform and reorganisation efforts at ORU and MdH. Findings concerning the implementation policy at Örebro and Mälardalen University in general and particularities in Örebro and Mälardalen are discussed in chapter 6. In this chapter, the answers per research question are provided in the first paragraph. In the second paragraph the answers are compared and particular dissimilarities between ORU and MdH are described. Chapter 7 draws a conclusion on the complete research. From this conclusion, it is only a small step to the recommendations made in chapter 8.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 The organisational problem

"There is so much going on at the same time!" is a phrase that I have often heard during my internship at Örebro University. One can think of the GRUS project, the introduction of new Master programs and the Forum for Alliance¹³. And of course, the implementation of the Bologna process is a very important project that yet has to reach its full impact. This mosaic of projects leads to both exciting and uncertain times for everyone involved.

The organisational problem that forms the background of this research, then, is formed by the mosaic of reform projects that take place at the same time as the Bologna objectives are implemented. Logically, this is mostly described from the perspective of ORU as most of my time during internship and research is spent here. However, it is useful to compare the developments at ORU with the ones at MdH, in order to be able to put them in perspective. The situation at Mälardalen University forms an excellent possibility for reflection as MdH is in a comparable situation – geographically and organisationally – to that of ORU.

2.2 The research approach

Table 2.1 Major differences between deductive and inductive approaches to research

Deduction emphasises	Induction emphasises
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scientific principles• Moving from theory to data• The need to explain causal relationships between variables• The collection of quantitative data• The application of controls to ensure validity of data• The operationalisation of concepts to ensure clarity of definition• A highly structured approach• Researcher independence of what is being researched• The necessity to select samples of sufficient size in order to generalise conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events• A close understanding of the research context• The collection of qualitative data• A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses• A realisation that the researcher is part of the research process• Less concern with the need to generalise

Source: adapted from table 4.1 in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2000. p. 8 in the reader – Research Skills.

Table 2.1 offers a clear overview of the differences between the two main research approaches, deduction and induction. The objective of this research, as stated in chapter 1, coincides very well with the two first points under "induction emphasises". Therefore, the appropriate approach is induction. This implies that theory will follow data: after collection and analysis of the data about the implementation of the Bologna process, I will form a theory on how this implementation actually takes place (in the conclusion). Theories presented in books about e.g. European Union Higher Education Policy or the philosophical background of education¹⁴ will form the base in this regard.

¹³ these three projects will be discussed more specifically in chapter 3

¹⁴ e.g. by John Dewey

As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill argue¹⁵, “researchers in this tradition [of the inductive approach] are more likely to work with qualitative data and to use a variety of methods to collect these data in order to establish different views of phenomena.” As demonstrated in the following paragraph, this research forms no exception to that statement.

2.3 The research strategy

Apart from the above named connections with the inductive research approach, there are more connections. As an intern, I am part of the research process and the concern with the need for generalising in this research is not large. In the light of these points, qualitative research is the most logical strategy. This involves desk research, observation and interviews.

Desk research mostly concerns basic information about the Bologna process, Swedish national higher education policy, Örebro and Mälardalen University and the alliance between those two IHE. The aim of this desk research is to form a solid base for primary data collection in this research. Observation of how matters are conducted during meetings and “in the lobby” contributes to this base. Much information can be obtained from these meetings and especially the ‘how’ part of the central question (see Chapter 1) will be addressed during this participative observation.

The most significant sources for this research however, are the interviews with key persons. First a pilot interview is conducted with a member of the steering committee for the Bologna process at Örebro University. Following a pre-planned scheme that is adapted according to the information offered by the pilot interview, other key persons at both ORU and MdH are interviewed. These key persons are considered to represent the main players within the implementation of the Bologna objectives at both colleges: members of the respective steering committees, employees at the respective departments of Marketing and Communication and Examination, student representatives and those responsible for the contemporary Master programs at ORU and MdH.

The Master programs are a spear point in the internationalisation process of both colleges, as they gained an important place in the GRUS Rapport for instance. These Master programs are seen as a good opportunity for marketing the University both nationally and internationally and to recruit students for the graduate level. It is for these reasons that this research focuses much of its attention on the Master programs and that the better part of the interviews is conducted with persons working in this field.

The best way to describe the research is by the term of exploratory research. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill point out,

“it is a particularly useful approach if you wish to clarify your understanding of a problem. [...] Exploratory research can be likened to the activities of the traveller or explorer. [...] What it does mean is that the focus is initially broad and becomes progressively narrower as the research progresses.”¹⁶

It is quite obvious, as I concentrate this research on Örebro and Mälardalen University only, that the strategy for this research, apart from being exploratory, can be categorised under the name case study. It fits well in the objective of gaining a rich understanding of the context of the research and the particular processes taking place at the IHE.

¹⁵ p. 6 of Reader – Research Skills

¹⁶ p. 6 of Reader – Research Skills

Constraints that should be kept in mind and that form an important reason for choices in the way the research is conducted are most of all costs and time. As the budget for this research is low, the travelling expenses would have become too large if more than two IHE would be considered. The same goes for the time aspect, where a project bigger than this research would certainly cost more than half a year to accomplish. In fact, this is not such a bad situation, as it is very interesting to compare Örebro and Mälardalen universities in terms of the Bologna process, in the light of their plans for alliance. Moreover, the travelling distance¹⁷ between Västerås and Örebro is relatively small: 101 km. This keeps the travelling expenses – both regarding time and money – relatively low.

As far as access to data and location is concerned, there are no problems as much data can be obtained from the internet, the different libraries and the employees at ORU and MdH. The location of my office is at and near the research objects and thus one of the most practical of all possible locations. Ethical issues however, are very important and should not be forgotten. While conducting this research I ought to be aware of the fact that I am both participating in and observing the process that I describe. This means that I can not take a complete unbiased view of the situation as I am part of the processes that I research. It also means that certain information is given in the confidence that I will not misuse it.



Photographer: Marco Eimermann



Source: www.mdh.se

¹⁷ For a table of distances between cities within Sweden, see <http://www.lundberg-lagerstedt.se/distance/>



3. CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS AT ORU and MdH

3.1 Örebro University (ORU)

“The future lies open before us, brimming with opportunities and challenges. The two really big processes that epitomise our future are globalisation and the shift to knowledge-based society. What these processes have in common for us is that the universities are destined to play a key role.”¹⁸

Under the heading “Journeying together”, this quote from ORU’s information brochure shows the engagement of Örebro University in the ongoing processes on a world-level. The words that are at the centre of attention are *future*, *globalisation* and *knowledge*. These words are also at the centre of the projects named in paragraph 2.1: the GRUS project, the introduction of new Master programs and the Forum for Alliance.

The GRUS project started before the Bologna objectives were introduced at Örebro University, but has now – in the light of these objectives – gained importance against this new Bologna background. By outlining a strategy, the project stipulates the future organisational ‘design’ of Örebro University. The strategy concentrates on reorganisation of courses, programs and subjects at undergraduate level that are not as competitive as they should be; installation of new, attractive programs at graduate level and the basic reorganisation of the departments¹⁹ at the university. This process started in December 2004 and its centre of gravity shifted somewhat over the past period. Originally an independent project, it fairly rapidly became linked with the Bologna process and the competition among and cooperation with other universities within Sweden and abroad.

The introduction of new Master programs at ORU is another project²⁰. This deserves much attention, as it is necessarily done within the framework of the Bologna process. The duration of the programs is two years and they are taught in English. Five such programs are planned to be launched in the autumn of 2006. These are:

- Economics and Econometrics, at the department of Business, Economics, Statistics and Informatics;
- Education in Democracy and Social Justice, at the department of Education;
(During the research it became clear that the start of this program is postponed to 2007)
- Electronic Government, at the department of Business, Economics, Statistics and Informatics;
- Global Journalism, at the department of Humanities, and
- Robotics and Intelligent Systems, at the department of Technology.

The third project, the Forum for Alliance, will be discussed in more detail in paragraph 3.2.

Brief description of the organisation

Whereas plans for higher education in Örebro started to take shape right after the Second World War, it was not before 1999 that the institute was inaugurated as a university. In the past seven years, the number of students in Örebro has expanded rapidly. At present, Örebro University is organised into 11 Departments (see figure 3.1), of which the Department of Social and Political Sciences (SAM) is one. SAM is divided into five sub-departments: Gender Studies, Human Geography, Political Science, Social Science and Sociology. My internship takes place at the Human Geography sub-department.

¹⁸ Lindman & Eriksson, 2004, p.3

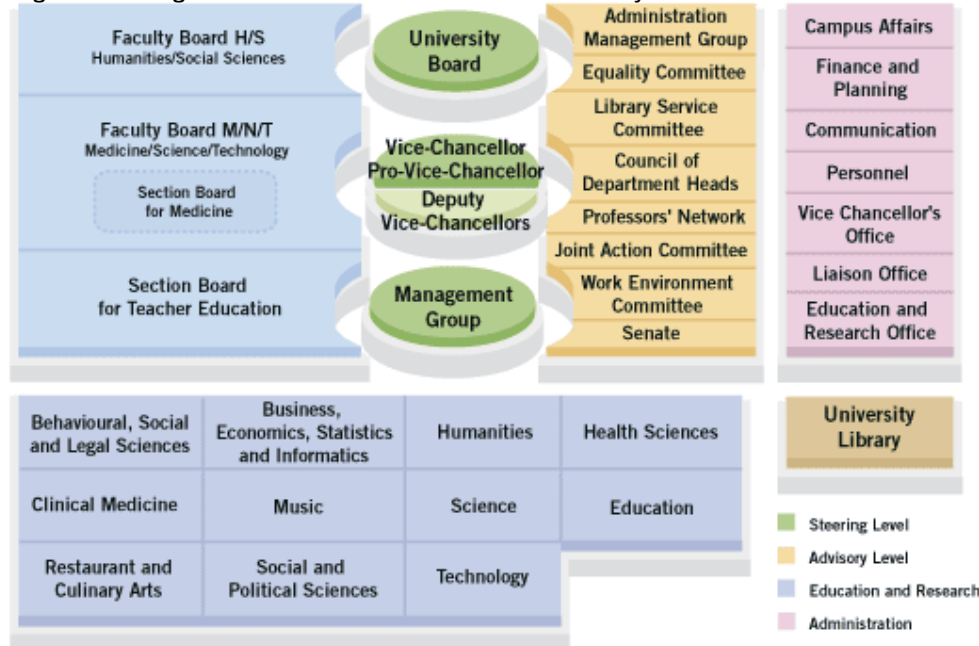
¹⁹ The nomenclature for this subject is not completely clear at this moment. In Swedish, one speaks of *Institutioner*, but in English this is translated to *departments*. Other possibilities for future names are *Schools* or *Faculties*. A definitive name will be decided upon in a later stage. In this research report, *departments* is used, but occasionally another term can be found. All above named possibilities are considered synonym to each other.

²⁰ See ORU’s website for more information: <http://www.oru.se/education/master>

Out of a total of approximately 80 employees at SAM, eight work within the field of Human Geography. These employees are lecturers/researchers and PhD students. The department has links with the Research School for Urban Studies at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CUREs).

Through the Department of Social and Political Studies, Human Geography in Örebro maintains good contact with other disciplines. A good example for this is the meeting about the implementation of Master programs that I attended in the first week of my internship. On this meeting, all departments of the university were present and many gave a presentation of the situation concerning Master programs at their department.

Figure 3.1 Organisational Chart of Örebro University



Source: ORU's website - http://www.oru.se/templates/oruExtNormal____6928.aspx

The mission statement of Örebro University as presented in the textbox below reflects the general assignment for Swedish universities. This statement demonstrates the concern for high quality education and research, as well as a high estimation for the surrounding society. The keywords *quality*, *creativity*, *openness* and *enterprise* can be seen as the tools that guide the university through the coming ten years.

The young university

OUR MISSION

The general assignment for the Swedish universities consists of three parts: to provide high quality education and research, also in collaboration with the surrounding society. As a young seat of learning in an old world, Örebro University sees a fourth assignment in the renewal of the academic landscape and our society.

Being young is for us quite simply the way we are, with new ways of thinking and the urge to experiment that at the same time are based on the classical university concepts of academic freedom and critical thought. We will never settle into a rut, but will continually break new ground.

The keywords for this young university are quality, creativity, openness and enterprise.

Source: Lindman & Eriksson, 2004, p. 5

3.2 Forum for Alliance

Forum för allians Örebro-Mälardalssamarbetet

“A question for the future of the western part of the Mälaren is if there is space for two fully adequate universities, under the conditions of the 21st Century, on a distance of 100 km to each other with a local population of about 750,000 inhabitants?

If the answer to this question would be yes, the discussions about a merger between Örebro and Mälardalen universities would be completely unnecessary. From the extensive material that has been sent to the government for referral and in which I have discussed actively, however, a clear NO appears – even if both seats of learning would rather see a trustworthy yes .”

Source: Translated from an editorial by
Örebro University’s Rector Magnificus,
Jonerik Gidlund,
Fogelström, U, 2005, ORU-magasinet # 16,

The third and final project that cannot be ignored in this study is the Forum for Alliance between ORU and MdH. The background of the possible alliance between the two IHE is formed by the common interests of Örebro and Mälardalen universities. Just how alike they are, is shown in Table 3.2, displaying facts about ORU and MdH. From the alliance, certain advantages can be obtained both for ORU and for MdH in an environment of growing competition for financial research resources. These resources are more and more often based on the size of the research area.²¹ On that criterion, a relatively small university located in Central Sweden – such as Örebro or Mälardalen University – is bound to loose against the traditional institutes of Uppsala, Stockholm or Lund. Joining forces simply is the only way to survive.

There are, however, differing opinions on what forms the cooperation between Örebro and Mälardalen University should take: a merger, entering into a bigger network²², or keeping it limited to some programs or courses offered in partnership? A decision on this issue will not be taken before the autumn of 2007. Adding even more facets to the mosaic, different partnerships on certain matters are being considered

simultaneously: Campus Europae²³ and many courses that are possibly offered together with other universities in Sweden e.g..

A heated discussion on this subject is going on at the moment. One idea of what the future cooperation could look like is that ORU would look after the quality of the education, while MdH would take care of the quantity. Since Mälardalen officially does not have the status of university in Sweden and Örebro does, it is suggested that MdH emphasises on the programs at Bachelor level, while ORU’s biggest emphasis would be put on the Master and Doctoral levels. But this is one of many options. The exact direction, in which the development will take place, is not clear by the end of this research. Fact is, however, that the Forum for Alliance plays a significant role in the mosaic of projects at ORU and MdH.

Table 3.2 Facts about MdH and ORU, 2005

	MdH	ORU
Number of students	15,000	15,000
Number of Academic Programs	60	80
Number of individual courses	600	800
Number of employees	1,022	1,042

Source: Forum for Alliance²⁴

²¹ Translated from *Forum for Alliance* – <http://www.mdhoru.se>

²² e.g. *Penta Plus*, a network of 5 Swedish Universities – <http://www.pentaplus.se/?page=english>

²³ See <http://www.campuseuropae.org>

²⁴ http://www.mdhoru.se/templates/KampanjNormal____23863.aspx

Figure 3.3 Stockholm – Mälaren Region



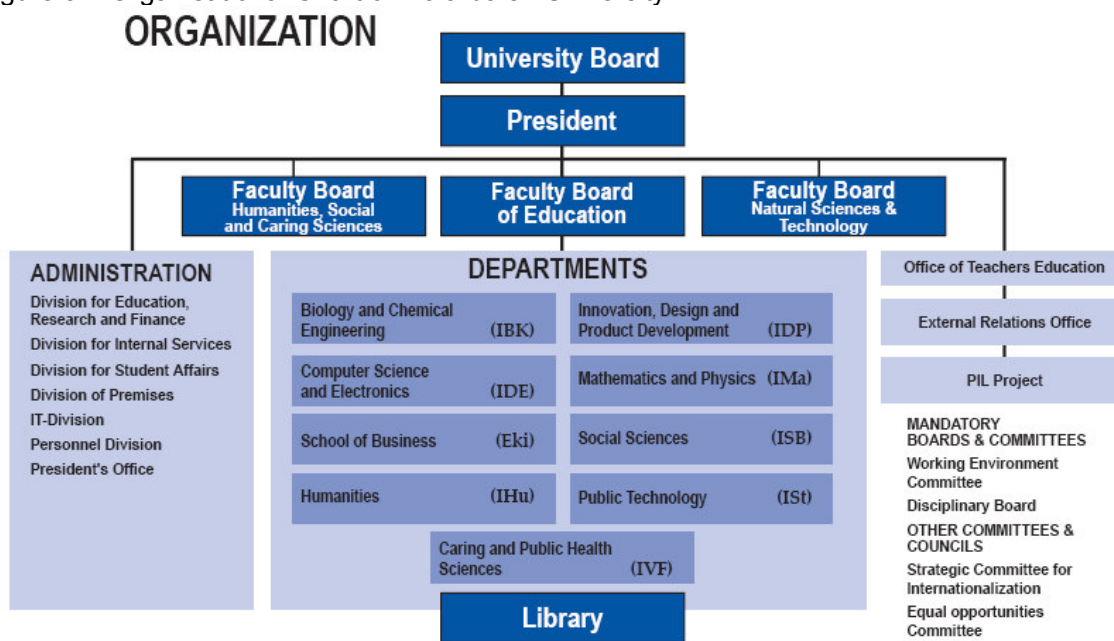
The yellow coloured region is the Stockholm – Mälaren region. The location of Västerås and Eskilstuna, at the centre of the map and within an hour's travel distance from Stockholm, is important. This way the two cities, located at lake Mälaren are in the economic hinterland of Stockholm. Örebro is located in the Western part of the region, at lake Hjälmaren.

Source: website of the council for the Stockholm - Mälaren region - <http://www.malardalsradet.se>

3.3 Mälardalen University (MdH)

Mälardalen is the name of a region that lies west of Stockholm, around lake Mälaren. Mälardalen University, with campuses in Västerås and Eskilstuna, lies at the centre of the region Mälardalen. As stated earlier, the distance between Västerås and Örebro is just over 100 km (see figure 3.3). MdH is divided into nine Departments. Västerås is the main of the two campuses, as this is the location of the central building, housing the International Office e.g. and most of the administrative part of the larger processes, such as the Bologna process.

Figure 3.4 Organisational Chart of Mälardalen University



Source: MdH's website - http://www.mdh.se/organisation/oversikt_en.pdf



Mälardalen University operates with a vision for 2008, existing of six guiding stars. These are presented in the folder Facts 2005²⁵: Education and research of high international quality for the development of the Mälardalen region; Cutting-edge research competence with a wealth of perspectives to provide a platform for development of a sustainable community; Multi-disciplinary cooperation in education and research contexts; Active interaction between education and research; Active interaction between the academic, commercial and public sector; Pioneering educational methods with close links between students, teachers and researchers.

In Swedish, Mälardalen University is called Mälardalens Högskola (MdH), which means University of Professional Education. The main areas taught at MdH are Computer Science and Technical Science. In these areas, the IHE has research competences and PhD studies as any university has. In the areas of Humanities and Social Studies however, MdH does not have research competence. This implies that every degree and program on Master and PhD level in these areas has to be approved by the Swedish Parliament first.

A very interesting development for this research is the creation of the Mälardalen International Master Academy - MIMA²⁶. This is a collection of twelve to fourteen Master programs – the number shifting from year to year. They are in fact not Master programs as we know them in the British or American tradition²⁷. Rather, the level corresponds to the Swedish Magister, which means that a Bachelor is needed in order to apply for a Master's program and that a Master Degree can give access to a Doctoral program inside Sweden. More detailed information about this is offered in the answer to research question 2, in paragraph 6.1.

MIMA operates as an individual academy, having its proper Student Union and alumni network. As the name indicates, the programs offered at MIMA are internationally oriented and all are taught in English. Some of the programs have a workload of 120 ECTS, whereas others have a workload of 60 or 90 ECTS. Most are taught in Västerås, with the exception of the Masters in Production and Logistics Management, which is taught in Eskilstuna.

The Master programs included in this research are:

- Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence, at the department of Computer Science and Electronics;
- Inland Water Quality Assessment, at the department of Public Technology;
- Robotics, at the department of Computer Science and Electronics;
- Analytical Finance, at the department of Mathematics and Physics and the School of Business at Mälardalen University;
- Electronics with Biomedical Engineering Profile, at the department of Computer Science and Electronics.

These are the largest Master programs offered at MdH and have somewhat more of an academic profile. Moreover, the Master in Robotics is offered at ORU as well, which offers an interesting framework of comparison. As can be seen in the above list, most of the Masters offered at MdH are in Computer Science. This indicates part of the profile of Mälardalen University and simultaneously makes it impossible to draw direct parallels to the Master programs offered at ORU. However, the choice to focus on the Master programs offered at both ORU and MdH is deliberately made in order to find comparable variables. Variables closely interlinked with the implementation of the Bologna objectives.

Now that we have gathered the ingredients and kitchen utensils for making the Bologna pizza, or the basic information about the case studies, it is time to take a closer look at the recipe for the pizza Bolognese. This is done in the next chapter, which provides theoretical information about the Bologna process.

²⁵ Facts 2005, Mälardalen University, your first hand choice for the future and <http://www.mdh.se/fakta/vision/>

²⁶ see MIMA's website: <http://www.mdh.se/studera/mima/>

²⁷ see Degrees Awarded: <http://www.mdh.se/studera/mima/degrees.shtml>



4. THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

“A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognized as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.”²⁸

The overall aim of the Bologna process is to create a common European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. This aim is formulated on the background of the Lisbon strategy,²⁹ which covers a number of measures in different fields: economic reforms, research and development, employment, social cohesion and the environment. Together, these measures aim at making Europe the world's most competitive region.

Until 2005, the number of countries that take part in the Bologna process has risen to 45. In practice, this process has become a driving force for reform of the higher education systems in the member countries, even over the original objectives. The Bologna process is named after the Bologna Declaration, signed by European ministers of education in 1999. The three comprehensive aims are:

- to promote mobility;
- to promote employability;
- to promote Europe's competitiveness as a Continent of Education.

4.1 The Bologna objectives

These aims can be specified into six operative objectives, called the Bologna objectives, as written in the Bologna Declaration³⁰:

1. Production of easily readable and comparable degrees, (e.g. through the Diploma Supplement), in order to promote European citizens' employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.
2. Implementation of a two cycle system (Bachelor-Master) or a three cycle system (adding Doctor). Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctor degree as in many European countries.
3. Establishment of a system of credits – such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the accompanying Grading System (7 grades ranging from A to F) – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by receiving universities concerned.
4. Promotion of mobility, by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:
 - a. for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services;
 - b. for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.

²⁸ Text from the Bologna Declaration, as quoted in Sedgwick, R., 2001

²⁹ Refocused and Re-launched in early 2005, see *Common Actions for Growth and Employment*

³⁰ Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education, Bologna, 19 June 1999



5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.
6. Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

By signing the declaration, the ministers committed themselves to realising those objectives. Later, at the meeting in Prague in 2001, the ministers explicitly emphasised the following points, that have become known as three additional objectives³¹:

7. Lifelong Learning; Lifelong learning is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area. In the future Europe, built upon a knowledge-based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies and to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and the quality of life.
8. Higher Education Institutions and Students; Ministers stressed that the involvement of universities and other higher education institutions and of students in the establishment and shaping of a European Higher Education Area is needed and welcomed.
9. Promotion of the Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA); ministers agreed on the importance of enhancing the attractiveness of European higher education to students from non-European Union countries.

Universities in Sweden have put into practice certain of these Bologna objectives, be it in view of the Bologna process or by own initiative. Examples of this can be found in the implementation of a first cycle (Bachelor) degree, the (partly) introduction of the ECTS and production of the Diploma Supplement. Considering other components, Swedish universities can be said to lag behind, e.g. when the construction of the second cycle (Master-level), the ECTS grading system and the learning outcomes are concerned.³²

Thus, certain objectives are “sleeping” in Sweden, while others are “hot potatoes”. That is the main reason why I made the particular selection of five out of the above nine objectives as the basis for the research questions³³. Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are dealt with actively in today’s Sweden and it is very well possible to research their implementation on the level of individual universities. Objective number 5 aims more at a national, or even European, framework for quality assurance and considering the time and money constraints, this objective is excluded from the research.

The final three objectives are formulated in Prague in 2001 against the background of the existing ones and are already incorporated in the first six. Therefore, they are not separately taken into consideration in the form of research questions. Lifelong learning, e.g., is considered in the use of ICT and internationalisation at the home ground. Involvement of universities and other IHE is in fact measured by the extent of realisation of all objectives together. The promotion and attractiveness of the EHEA is mainly concerned with the external dimension; regions outside Europe, particularly the USA and Asia. All five objectives that I will take into consideration focus on the internal dimension of the Bologna process. Considering the time and money constraints, the external dimension is deliberately left outside the scope of this research. However, as the “Prague objectives” overlap partially with the first six Bologna objectives, they are part of the process and as such indirectly considered in this research.

³¹ *Towards the European Higher Education Area*, Prague, 19 May 2001.

³² Information based on and translated from *vad innebär Bologna processen?*

³³ See Chapter 1



4.2 Bergen and beyond: achieving the goals

The Bologna process has thus started in Bologna in 1999, and the journey towards the realisation of the objectives in 2010 continues through biannual meetings in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005) and London (2007). The latest situation considering the EHEA is stated in the Bergen Communiqué³⁴ and focuses on two subjects: the degree system on the one hand and recognition of degrees and study periods on the other.

The two cycle degree system is being implemented on a large scale, meaning more than 50% of the students are enrolled in this system in most countries. Obstacles lay in the access between the cycles and a need for higher employability among the students that have obtained a Bachelor degree. Within a national context, it is possible to have intermediate qualifications between the Bologna degrees Bachelor, Master and Doctor. This is relevant for the Swedish cases, as is asserted later in this report.

Learning outcomes, competences and credit ranges in the first and second cycles are seen as important components of the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA. The national frameworks, it is stated in the Bergen Communiqué, should be compatible with this overarching framework by 2010. Work on this should be started by 2007.

Sweden is one of 36 out of 45 member states that have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention³⁵. Recognition of degrees obtained during study periods abroad forms part of the objectives to overcome obstacles to mobility (objective nr. 4) and to promote the European dimension within higher education (objective nr. 6). Other issues that can be put under the same heading are the recognition of joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA and embedding lifelong learning in higher education.

Furthermore, a number of challenges and priorities for the future are indicated in the Bergen Communiqué: higher education and research, the social dimension and mobility.

The cooperation of higher education and research is seen as very important. According to the ministers of education, the synergy between the higher education sector and other research sectors in the Bologna member states, as well as between the EHEA and the European Research Area, needs to be improved. Concerning the doctoral level, the following is stated in the Bergen Communiqué:

“...doctoral level qualifications need to be fully aligned with the EHEA overarching framework for qualifications using the [learning] outcomes-based approach. [...] We urge universities to ensure that their doctoral programmes promote interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills, thus meeting the needs of the wider employment market. Overregulation of doctoral programmes must be avoided.”³⁶

The social dimension (of mobility) of the Bologna process is seen as a necessary condition for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. Therefore, obstacles related to social and economic background should be minimised. Somewhat ideally stated, quality higher education should be equally accessible to all.

Mobility of students and staff of all member countries remains a key objective of the Bologna process. By encouraging participation in mobility programs and facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits, mobility within the EHEA should become a reality. Full recognition of study periods abroad within mobility programs are of importance in realising this objective.

³⁴ *The European Higher Education Area - Achieving the Goals*, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005.

³⁵ *Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region*

³⁶ *The European Higher Education Area - Achieving the Goals*, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005



An interesting and important side factor in the implementation of the Bologna process is the active involvement of certain actors. The European University Association (EUA³⁷) wrote a report – Trends IV Report³⁸ – before the conference in Bergen. This report sheds an interesting light on particular developments. Another actor, the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB³⁹) pointed at the social dimension of mobility in their report – Bologna with student eyes. Also the European Association of Institutions of Higher Education (EURASHE⁴⁰) is consulted.

The next meeting will be in London in 2007. This period, spring 2006, seems a very good time for having a look at the progress made in the case of Örebro and Mälardalen. Not in the least because four biannual meetings have passed and less than four years remain until 2010. In other words: a whole deal should have been done, while still enough time remains to implement the remaining part. Moreover, the Swedish Parliament is expected to take a decision on the implementation of the remaining issues in 2006. This year however, is also an election year for the national government, and – as can be read in the following chapters – the decision on this matter can be postponed until after the elections in September 2006.

³⁷ see <http://www.eua.be>

³⁸ Reichert & Tauch, 2005

³⁹ see <http://www.esib.org>

⁴⁰ see <http://www.eurashe.be>

5. THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

In the first four chapters of this report, I offer an insight in the theoretical and thematic background of this research. As described in the first introductory chapter, globalisation and its impact on IHE forms the starting point of this thesis. In the second chapter, I describe the research approach: induction. In chapter 3, I present the basic facts and the contemporary state of the art considering the organisational structure of the case studies Örebro University and Mälardalens Högskola. The aims and development of the Bologna process are discussed in Chapter 4.

In this chapter, chapter 5, I describe part of the results from the research. I provide an overview of higher education politics at the Swedish national level in paragraph 5.1. In paragraph 5.2, I shortly describe the local reform and reorganisation processes at the case studies. Finally, in paragraph 5.3 I offer an insight in the background of education by introducing the concept of *Bildung* and John Dewey's theory about Democracy and Education.

5.1 Contemporary issues in Swedish higher education policy

Figure 5.1 Cover of *Ny värld – ny högskola*



“Ny värld – ny högskola” (new world – new university) is the title of the government bill presented to the Swedish *Riksdag* in June 2005. It is written in the name of Prime Minister Persson and Minister of Higher Education and Culture Pagrotsky, both Social Democrats. This 252 page document describes Sweden's aim of being a leading knowledge nation characterised by high quality education and life long learning for growth and justice, as well as a strategy for internationalisation.

As far as internationalisation is concerned, this strategy includes the strengthening of the legal position of exchange students and the formulation of the Diploma Supplement by the National Agency for Higher Education.

Furthermore, the government bill – also called proposition – describes changes in the degree system as a result of the division of higher education into three cycles. The formulation of course objectives (learning outcomes) and a new system of credits are also important aspects.

However, the timing is quite unlucky, as 2006 is an election year and the parties in opposition disagreed with many proposals in the government bill.

Source: Website of the Swedish Ministry of Education and Culture⁴¹

⁴¹ <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/04/60/69/459fdf70.jpg>



At present, as for the better part of the past six decades the Social Democrats are governing Sweden. They do this in coalition with the Left party and the Green party. A very interesting development however, is the formation of an alliance – called *Borgerliga Alliansen* – between the four biggest opposition parties. These parties are the Moderates, the Liberals, the Christian Democrats and the Centre party. This centre-right alliance forms a serious threat to the hegemony of the Social Democrats. It is even more interesting when the reactions of the parties to the government bill are concerned. In the months after the publication of new world – new university, the *Borgerliga Alliansen* was joined by the Green Party in five objections made in the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education.

These objections will be discussed in more detail further on in this research report, but I name them here in order to provide a complete overview. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education suggests:

1. Keeping today's requirement of specialisation in the major subject (*krav på fördjupning*) of 60 and 80 Swedish study points respectively in the so-called *kandidat* and *magister* degrees⁴².
2. Keeping competences in areas of study at the gymnasium level as reasonable starting point for special admission requirements in higher education.
3. Stopping the proposal that students with a Master's degree will be eligible to get an exemption for one year of their PhD studies.
4. Introducing specially merited areas of study at gymnasium level.
5. That the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education will develop new entrance examinations (*Högskoleprov*) for different fields of study.

Apart from the general issues, there are some other issues that arise every now and then in the interviews and policy documents. They concern a special category of degrees for specific programs, such as artistic programs, teacher programs, civil engineer and architect programs and the business school programs. The civil engineer and architect programs for example, have had a special status of completely independent programs of 4½ years in duration. These programs will be extended to 5 years, which is more in accordance with the Bologna recipe. Since these programs are completely independent from the general courses and programs offered at Swedish universities, they are outside the scope of this research. They are, however, complicating the debate about “new world – new university” and thus forming an extra obstacle in the implementation of the Bologna process in Sweden.

This situation leads to uncertainty around the implementation of the Bologna objectives at the level of the case studies. The steering committees at both ORU and MdH are basically waiting until the government has taken a definitive decision. However, although the intention is to take this definitive decision in the summer of 2006, it can very well be postponed until after the elections in September 2006. This increases the pressure, as some parts of the Bologna process (such as the new higher education structure with three cycles) are supposed to be implemented in autumn 2007.

When I asked Ingrid Åberg, a member of the steering committee for the implementation of the Bologna process at Örebro University whether this was an exciting time, she replied, laughing: “Yeees! A bit too exciting! Because everyone asks me, you see, “when will it come” and “what shall we do” and “how to behave” and and...But we don't know yet!” She explains:

“We thought that there would be a decision in October, but it hasn't come yet. And now, they promised us a decision in February, but now it's quite, eh.....you don't know actually what will happen [...]. If there will be a compromise, there will be a decision in March, I think. But if not.....you never know.”⁴³

⁴² See chapter 6 for an explanation

⁴³ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

Lazaro Moreno⁴⁴, former international coordinator at the department of education at Örebro University, described the situation in the same way: *"The government has to make a decision and the situation around this is still quite blurry."*

At Mälardalen, the information I gathered also pointed at the delay in the government decision. However, the way of looking at this seems to be a bit different from the way in Örebro:

"We have always worked proactively. That means that we read the proposition, make our own judgement of the proposition and formulate a decision on the direction in which we work (Swedish: *inriktningsbeslut*). How will we act at this university in connection to the educational structure? That is what we have done now. We have done this before the actual ordinance is accepted. But we see no problem in that, as the *inriktningsbeslut* that we have now can be adjusted where needed." ⁴⁵

5.2 Local reform and reorganisation

However the Bologna steering committees implement the Bologna objectives, it is clear that they both see this process as a good engine for local reform and reorganisation of the higher education system:

"Because the whole Bologna project gives fantastic possibilities to have pedagogic discussions in order to improve the education, if you take the chance. And then you have to take the chance. It should not become just an automatic, technical translation project. [...] And I know, I visited a couple of universities, in the Netherlands; Maastricht and Eindhoven e.g.. And there is a big difference in how different organisations have implemented it. Part has seen it as a possibility for change, whereas others have thought of squeezing it into the existing structure. And that is not something that I believe in; I believe that the time is ripe for seeing the possibility for change. I don't believe in the other variant." ⁴⁶

Throughout the interviews, I noticed interesting contrasting points of view between the above (pedagogical) arguments on the one hand and the more Europe-enthusiastic, action driven arguments on the other hand. These are best represented by the reasoning of Karl-Otto Waara, senior lecturer at the department of public technology and coordinator for the international MSc program Inland Water Quality Assessment:

"I think we are protecting our Swedish territory too much, instead of establishing a European Higher Education Area. The guidelines are already there, why do they have to be reinvented? It was the administrative boss of the former Minister of Higher Education, Mr Östlund, that signed the Bologna Agreement, saying that we should go on with the implementation of it. That is quite some years ago, but not much has happened since. It is the same at our university; the pedagogues are formulating guidelines that already exist." ⁴⁷

Many interviewed persons, and not only the lecturers, stressed the pedagogic background of education. In this era of globalisation, education and its importance for the construction of citizenship and democracy are important for many social and political developments.

5.3 Democracy and Education

The philosopher John Dewey has been, and still is, a source of inspiration for many pedagogues in the 20th and 21st centuries. His book *Democracy and Education* addresses the challenge of providing quality public education in a democratic society. This classical

⁴⁴ Interview with Lazaro Moreno, 14 March 2006

⁴⁵ Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

⁴⁶ Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

⁴⁷ Interview with Karl-Otto Waara, 25 April 2006



work from 1916 is still cited by many authors writing about the philosophical background of today's educational systems. Dewey makes the following statement about democracy:

"A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity."⁴⁸

In fact, the breaking down of barriers such as national territory that Dewey speaks about is realised by globalisation and the weakening of sovereignty of nation states. This way, the number of 'individuals' working in the same process, in this case the reform of higher education through the Bologna process, can be extended in space. However, with the breaking of (national) barriers, concern about local tradition and identity rises.

Guy Karnung, senior lecturer in education at Örebro University, shared some interesting thoughts with me:

"I am not just positive, just like that. No, I can see a problem here. Because there is a reason why we have different lines of development within higher education. So, what will happen? Interesting question. Of course we are citizens in Europe, but Europe is very different – a mosaic."⁴⁹

Guy Karnung talked about the meaning of education in forming citizenship and democracy in a diverse society. This coincides with what Richard S. Ruch⁵⁰ writes about Dewey's philosophy: *"Education must prepare persons to be good citizens, to exercise sound judgement about economic and social principles, to be adaptable in the face of rapid changes, to be flexible thinkers, and to participate in the transformation of social rules and norms."* Guy Karnung mentioned the international perspective:

"I wrote my dissertation about the North-American context and you can see some similarities between the developments [in North-America and Europe]. But it is not identical, no, no, no. So, from that point of view it will be very interesting to see what will happen now. Because they have quite another level there.

I don't know if it [the Bologna model] is a copy, but I am not so little afraid that we are copying the idea or the culture, or use North American culture concerning higher education. We often speak about the German tradition and the US tradition. The German tradition in terms of *Bildung*. And in the US we talk just about Education. For me, it represents a kind of industrial view of higher education. I think higher education should aim at *Bildung*."⁵¹

Bildung can best be described as character formation. The term has its origins in the German Enlightenment, and it was a group of philosophers with the German philosopher Hegel at the forefront, that introduced this term in early 19th century. In large, the Swedish education tradition is based on this German system. As stated in a report on the website of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, *"Simply put, it means that the individual in a Bildungs-process can complete something as fundamental as his or her human existence."*⁵²

⁴⁸ Dewey, J. (1916), p.87

⁴⁹ Interview with Guy Karnung, 2 May 2006

⁵⁰ p. 101 in Odin, J.K. & P.T. Manicas, 2004

⁵¹ Interview with Guy Karnung, 2 May 2006

⁵² Translated from Sà Cavalante Schuback, M. & H. Ruin, 2006, p. 9



Another interesting feature of Education and *Bildung* is the difference between teaching and learning, respectively. As described in the reader *Globalization and Higher Education*⁵³, “[...] following John Dewey, good pedagogy is student- and not teacher oriented, and learning involves a continual reorganisation, reconstruction, and transformation of experience.” Being able to structure thoughts and communicating them with other students really does add to the evolution of the mind.

Guy Karnung is sincerely concerned about the place of the Swedish tradition that is based on *Bildung*, when the Bologna process is fully implemented:

“It is a kind of, maybe you could call it a technocratic view of higher education. And I don’t like that at all. [...] We can talk about the value of democracy. We risk, I think, to overlook a value system that is very important for the coming citizens so to speak. The students within higher education in the future. And I am a little bit afraid of that.”⁵⁴

Moreover, the way of learning is connected to the way of examination. Here, it also becomes clear what Guy Karnung means with a ‘technocratic view of higher education’: “*We don’t have this multiple choice or examinations in these larger rooms in the cellar or something. No, no, no. Students always write papers, or essays, or a thesis and so on. And of course acting in seminars, communication is a very important part of the institution here.*”

An important question is thus whether the implementation of the Bologna process will lead the higher education system at Örebro and Mälardalen universities away from *Bildung* towards Education?

It is interesting to keep this question in mind when I take a closer look at the implementation process at both case studies in the following chapter. A chapter that takes a look in the kitchens at Örebro and Mälardalen. It will be interesting to see what ingredients they have at their disposal and how they use the kitchen utensils. For, as John Dewey writes, “*to cook is to utilize heat and moisture to change the chemical relations of food materials; it has bearing upon the assimilation of food and the growth of the body.*”⁵⁵

⁵³ Odin, J.K. & P.T. Manicas, 2004, p.128

⁵⁴ Interview with Guy Karnung, 2 May 2006

⁵⁵ Dewey, J., 1916, p. 209

6 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter, I discuss the implementation of the Bologna process at both case studies. I do this by describing the answers to the interview questions for ORU and MdH. In the first paragraph, I give the answers for both universities simultaneously. I concentrate on the general similarities. In the second paragraph, I will concentrate more on the differences between the case studies and the analysis of particular results in detail. This is important in order to provide a comparative analysis of the differences between both case studies.

6.1 The research questions answered

1. Answering the first research question did not cause many problems; *How and to what extent do ORU and MdH produce easily readable and comparable degrees?* (e.g. through the Diploma Supplement).

In fact, for both universities, the answer is presented on their websites⁵⁶. They use the exact same text, describing that from 2003 onwards all public universities in Sweden are obliged to accompany the degrees with a Diploma Supplement. All students receiving their degree after 1 January 2003 will automatically receive this Diploma Supplement.

Furthermore, the European Commission rewards a Diploma Supplement Label (DSL)⁵⁷ to those universities that fulfil all requirements that the EC has set for Diploma Supplements. The requirements are that the Diploma Supplement should be issued to all graduates in all first and second cycle degree programs in a widely spoken European language and free of charge. This way, the DSL indicates transparency and international recognition of the Degree certificate.

This DSL is awarded for a period of three academic years. Mälardalen University is one of three universities in Sweden that is awarded the DSL for the period up until the academic year 2006/07, whereas Örebro University is awarded the DSL up until the year 2007/08. The majority of universities that are awarded the DSL are from Finland and Norway.

The same information is gathered from the interviews, with one extra point of interest. Christina Molin⁵⁸, official responsible for degrees at Örebro University, admitted that a Diploma Supplement is not attached to Licentiate and Doctoral degrees. Examination officer at StudentCentrum in Västerås, Anneli Mossberg, provided the exact same information. When I asked her when the Licentiate and Doctoral degree certificate would be accompanied by a Diploma Supplement, she answered *"in accordance with the Bologna process."*⁵⁹

This rather vague answer demonstrates that there is no clear implementation schedule for the DS, but that it will be implemented along the line. I have no reasons to doubt this, as both universities have already proven their willingness to implement the first Bologna objective so far. Easily readable and comparable degrees are produced at both universities by the issuing of Diploma Supplements. Administration and Examination Offices do this centrally.

However, not everybody knows about this Diploma Supplement. For instance, Mohsin Qasim, President at Mälardalen International Master's Academy's (MIMA) Student Union, said: *"I don't know if I have ever heard of that. Is it like a transcript of records? A transcript of records is what I have seen before, but the name Diploma Supplement does not ring any bell."*⁶⁰ Moreover, some interviewed program coordinators looked quite puzzled when the DS was mentioned. Lars Asplund at Mälardalen replied *"I haven't really heard of these readable and comparable degrees or a Diploma Supplement"*⁶¹. However, as Karin Hedström at ORU

⁵⁶ see http://www.oru.se/templates/oruExtNormal____8139.aspx and <http://www.mdh.se/utbildning/examen/ds.shtml>

⁵⁷ see http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/label_en.html

⁵⁸ e-mail communication in April 2006

⁵⁹ e-mail communication, 24 and 25 April 2006

⁶⁰ Interview with Mohsin Qasim, 17 March 2006

⁶¹ Interview with Lars Asplund, 28 March 2006

indicates, “I would assume that the examination department are the ones attaching the Diploma Supplement. So I can’t answer that question. You should ask them about that.”⁶² This is clearly a question of awareness amongst staff and students that is not raised fully yet.

In this case, Niklas Sandman, officer for the Bologna process and the quality of education at the Student Union in Örebro, has an interesting and positive point of view: “From a Student Union point of view, we are very happy with the Diploma Supplement. [...] Hopefully this will mean that the students can be compared easier and that it will increase the movement rate amongst students, to visit other European universities.”⁶³

Thus, both Mälardalen and Örebro University have fully implemented the first objective of the Bologna process. They have done this at the level of the central administration. However, the implementation of other objectives can cause more difficulties.

2. The second research question is *How and to what extent is the three cycle system implemented at ORU and MdH?*

The Swedish higher education system traditionally exists of two cycles. The middle level in the Bologna process, the Master level, is completely new to Sweden. A special working group at the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science was appointed in April 2002. Their task is to review certain issues related to degrees awarded by higher education institutions. The information published by this working group in a fact sheet is shown below⁶⁴. This is very useful for an understanding of the situation within Swedish higher education before the introduction of the Bologna process:

The present Swedish degree structure

Swedish higher education is formally divided into two parts: *grundläggande högskoleutbildning* and *forskarutbildning*. *Grundläggande högskoleutbildning* roughly corresponds to the concepts of undergraduate and graduate studies and *forskarutbildning* corresponds to postgraduate or doctoral studies. The Swedish degree system is divided into general degrees and professional degrees. The general degrees are:

within *grundläggande högskoleutbildning*

- *högskoleexamen*, at least two years of full-time study (120 ECTS credit points),
- *kandidatexamen* (the equivalent of a bachelor degree), at least three years of full-time study (180 ECTS points),
- *magisterexamen* (the equivalent of a master degree), at least four years of full-time study (240 ECTS credit points),

within *forskarutbildning*

- *licentiatexamen*, normally two years of full-time study,
- and
- *doktorsexamen* (the equivalent of a PhD degree), normally four years of full-time study.

In addition, there are more than fifty professional degrees (in medicine, teaching, engineering etc.) organised according to a somewhat different structure and varying in duration.

⁶² Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006

⁶³ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006

⁶⁴ Further Development of Higher Education – The Bologna Process in a Swedish Perspective, March 2004

The above textbox shows that it is a large step from this Swedish system to the Bologna objective of implementing the three cycle system. It is not surprising then, that in the government bill “new world – new university”, the government suggests altering the Swedish system into one that is more compatible with the Bologna process. The suggested alteration that is most important for answering the second research question is the introduction of a new degree to Sweden: the Master degree.

However, many questions arise around this subject. What about the Bachelor and the Magister degree? Is either Master or Magister supposed to be a professional degree, and the other one a general degree? How about the admission requirement for entering PhD studies; will a Master be needed? What are the links between the degrees? Who pays for the extra year of studies?

The purpose of the Bachelor degree

What Ingrid Åberg somewhat dramatically calls “the death of the Bachelor” is in fact the development that a Bachelor will not have so much meaning within the curriculum anymore, other than that it is a requirement for the next level. A very remarkable situation is that in Sweden the Bachelor has served as entry requirement for starting a study at PhD level. As Ingrid Åberg puts it: “*You see, in the Bologna process, you would need a Master degree to start the PhD program. In Sweden, the general admission requirement is Bachelor! This is very remarkable!*”⁶⁵ With the new Bologna structure, this will no longer be possible. Then, what is the purpose of the Bachelor degree?

Mikael Ekström, coordinator for the MSc program Electronics with Biomedical Engineering Profile at the department of computer science and electronics, MdH, states:

“I think that we are going to make more and more generic Bachelor programs, which means that we will give very few different types of Bachelor programs. There are some Bachelor programs that will be connected to the industry. The local industry. In that sense being more generic so that being a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering, you should have quite a big opportunity to choose different Master programs.”⁶⁶

At Örebro University, Silvia Coradeschi, coordinator of the MSc Program Robotics and Intelligent Systems, used the same words: “*we currently have a quite generic Bachelor, that is a Computer Science Bachelor, in Electrical Engineering. So, we’re not directly connected with the Master [of Robotics].*”⁶⁷ The Bachelor degree in Sweden has lost important parts of its purpose as possible entrance into the PhD level of studies. But the purpose of the Bachelor degree is clearer now: it should prepare for the second cycle of studies. This is in fact in accordance with the second objective of the Bologna process. Moreover, the duration of three years is also in accordance with this second objective.

A typical Swedish feature remains however: the large amount of freedom that a student has in choosing the contents of the Bachelor program. For a Bachelor in Sociology for example, 90 ECTS credits in the subject of Sociology are needed. The other 90 credits can basically be earned in whatever other field of study: 60 credits in Political Science and 30 credits in Human Geography for example. This is what is called the requirement of specialisation (*krav på fördjupning*) in the major subject as written in the Swedish law of higher education. In the proposition “new world – new university”, the suggestion is made to remove this requirement from the degree descriptions and replace it by requirements that express specialisation in qualitative terms. The suggestion to keep this demand in place is also the first objection made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee in reaction to “new world – new university”.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

⁶⁶ Interview with Mikael Ekström, 17 March 2006

⁶⁷ Interview with Silvia Coradeschi, 10 March 2006

⁶⁸ See paragraph 5.1



The difference between the Swedish Magister and the Bologna Master degree

"Duration is still an issue in some countries. The most frequent type of Master program is a [post]graduate Master, building on a Bachelor program and requiring between 60 and 120 ECTS credits. Universities in Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden consider their 60 ECTS Masters, following a 180 ECTS Bachelor, as too short and not internationally competitive."⁶⁹

The above quote shows that even in this case, the implementation of the second Bologna objective is interpreted differently in different countries. Underlying these different interpretations are the education systems before the start of the Bologna process, as well as international competition and the market. The costs of the Master degree determine the desirable length to a higher extent than EU bureaucracy. However, in some countries, Bachelor degrees require four years of study, which makes one year Master programs more acceptable. In Sweden, the Master programs are considered graduate studies after the three year Bachelor program and are – mostly in view of international competition – supposed to be two years of length. As Peter Funk states:

"Because many students want to read one and a half or two years, because then, even if it is a Swedish Master or *Magister* degree, it is more comparable with the current American system, which is two years there, so they can at least say "okay, it's not compatible, but we studied two years." Companies are looking at the total study time and the amount of courses."⁷⁰

When I asked Karin Hedström, coordinator of the MSc Program Electronic Government at ORU, what the difference was between the Magister and the Bologna Master degree, she answered, laughing, *"I know yeah, it's a whole legal... It's been tricky."*⁷¹ Indeed, one important aspect of the difference between the degrees is legal. Elvy Westlund at Mälardalen explains:

"Because we cannot today give Master degrees in Sweden. It is like that, de facto. This makes that we can get into problems, if we don't watch out, with students from abroad that think that they earn something that they do not earn, from a purely juridical point of view. This is very important to realise. So that the students don't feel deceived."⁷²

But what the exact differences – because there are more than one – between the two degrees are, is hard to tell. Different persons give different answers, but a good summary of those answers is provided by Silvia Coradeschi:

"Yeah, the Swedish *Magister* is just one year, as is my understanding. This Master program first of all is a two year program. Then, it is quite research oriented and more self-study and more projects and larger thesis work of six months. So, in that sense I think it's more a longer and deeper program than the traditional *Magister* that was before."⁷³

So, the duration, self study, length of the thesis and depth of studies together constitute the most significant differences. The Magister degree is in fact typically Swedish and also for that reason not internationally compatible. Ingrid Åberg illustrates: *"Our Swedish Magister, now it's looked upon as an undergraduate exam, because it doesn't quite fulfil the criteria for a Master, but rather something very specially Swedish. And it doesn't count when you come abroad. No one knows what it is. Very bad!"*⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p. 14

⁷⁰ Interview with Peter Funk, 28 March 2006

⁷¹ Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006

⁷² Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

⁷³ Interview with Silvia Coradeschi, 10 March 2006

⁷⁴ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006



However, a flexible solution seems to be on its way, in which students can start a program after the Bachelor degree and decide along the studies whether they want to stop after the first year (Magister) or continue another year (Master). This is especially attractive for students from abroad studying at an International Master program, such as Global Journalism at Örebro University:

"It has been a one year program up until now and we're not really sure actually if students are prepared... because they travel from countries far far away, and they have to stay here for two years. And if they don't stay for two years, then we have an option for them, so that they wouldn't come here, spend a year or a year and a half and then go back with nothing. So if they choose to terminate the program after a year and a half, then they will get the Swedish *Magister* exam. But if they stay for two years they will get the full Master's degree." ⁷⁵

Mikael Ekström at Mälardalen University foresees the same development:

"I think, we will still have the possibility to take a degree as a Swedish *Magister*, but I think the tendency is to promote the Bologna Master programs. When they come, I think this is what is going to be promoted. Saying we have a Bachelor program, we have a Master program. But students who will not finish for a Master, could take a Swedish *Magister*. But don't promote them as program, but still having the possibility to take the degree." ⁷⁶

The orientation of the second cycle

Thus, there are differences between the Swedish *Magister* and the Bologna Master degree. Moreover, students have the opportunity to choose between the two degrees. The question rises: on what grounds would the student make this choice? The most important answer to this question is that one degree is more broadly oriented and focuses on the labour market, while the other is more specifically academic and prepares for PhD studies.

One would expect that the *Magister*, being a broader one year program, prepares for the labour market and that the Master, including more in depth studies, would prepare for PhD studies. The opposite is true: *"The latest I have heard is that the Magister is supposed to prepare the student for research, for post graduate studies. And the Master is supposed to prepare the student for work."* ⁷⁷ The main reason for this remarkable turn around is the issue of study grants. If a student wants to complete a Master program, who pays the fifth year; the student or the state? This is connected to the third objection to "new world – new university" by the Parliamentary Standing Committee ⁷⁸. Johan Lönnholm, President at the Student Union of Mälardalen University:

"About this last year of Masters, if this gets calculated as an exemption for a year of your PhD program, then that would imply that you as a student have to finance one year of PhD studies yourself. That is not okay, according to us, because the school is obligated to finance the PhD with money from the school. And they have to finance all four years. If they say we don't need you anymore after one year, then you have financed your PhD for one year with study grants. That's why we want to have the PhD as an independent four year course." ⁷⁹

This is a big issue that has raised many eyebrows in Sweden, making it impossible for the Swedish government to take a firm decision. Ingrid Åberg comments: *"I think if they [the government] had taken just a Master as entrance requirement for PhD studies, it would have been more difficult to argue for not increasing the study grants."* ⁸⁰ And thus, evidence shows

⁷⁵ Interview with Maria Ljunggren, 7 March 2006

⁷⁶ Interview with Mikael Ekström, 17 March 2006

⁷⁷ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006

⁷⁸ See paragraph 5.1

⁷⁹ Interview with Johan Lönnholm, 25 April 2006

⁸⁰ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006



that both the Magister and the Bologna Master degree will exist, with the Magister degree as preparing for the PhD studies, and the Master degree preparing for the labour market:

"Now, the state wants to "swing the boat" a little and let the Magister – this is possible, it is being discussed at the moment – that the Magister will be the most usual way for the students in order to get accepted to PhD studies. Out of financial reasons for the students. And that implies that it is also discussed to make the Master's degree more aimed at employability. In a way; somewhat more aimed at professions, broader and so on. That's what's discussed today."⁸¹

This would not coincide with the 3-2-3 system, as it is called in Sweden: 3 years of Bachelor, 2 years of Advanced (be it an upgraded Magister or – more probably – a Master degree) and 3 years of PhD studies. Rather, this would result in a 3-1-4 system. The question is if such a local deviation of the standard Bologna recipe is allowed. On the other hand, as indicated above, there is quite some overlap in the last year of the Master program and the first year of the PhD program. It is possible that technically the 3-2-3 system is applied in order to organise the Swedish higher education system in accordance with the second Bologna objective, while the fifth year will be paid from research grants. A difficulty in this case is that it is not always possible to tell beforehand whether a student that is in his fifth year will find a place to continue his or her studies at PhD level.

In fact, as stated in the Trends IV report, Sweden is one of the very few countries where IHE are *"still waiting for more detailed governmental regulations regarding the operational aspects of the system"*.⁸² In Finland, the system has been introduced in August 2005, while Hungary aims at introducing it at the start of the Academic year 2006-'07. The governments of the Netherlands and Italy are considering some adjustments to the system that has already been implemented.

Furthermore, the report states that *"no European consensus exists with regard to the question of whether Master programs should be differentiated systematically between more applied/professional on the one hand, and more research oriented on the other."*⁸³ Such a differentiation is obviously considered useful in Sweden, while IHE in Austria, Belgium and Poland for example do not agree with this point of view. The evidence shows that the Swedes are strictly implementing the Bologna objectives, whereas institutes in other countries are more likely to mould the requirements to their own wishes. The statement of Corbett in her book *Universities and the Europe of Knowledge*, that implementation is always a process of interpretation is valid even here. Even so, *"it would be astonishing if there is not a very wide spectrum of outcomes"*.⁸⁴

The link between the Bachelor and Master degree

There are usually no problems for undergraduate students to continue their studies at Graduate level. To Mohsin Qasim, this link was familiar: *"For us International students it is most visible in the form of prerequisites. For instance, in order to be accepted for the Master programs here at MIMA, you have to fulfil certain prerequisites such as having completed a Bachelor degree."*⁸⁵

At Örebro University the same link between Bachelor and Master degree is present. However, some of the International Master programs are launched independently from undergraduate programs, such as the MSc program in Global Journalism:

⁸¹ Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

⁸² Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p. 11

⁸³ Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p. 14

⁸⁴ Corbett, 2005, p. 194

⁸⁵ Interview with Mohsin Qasim, 17 March 2006



“On a university level we are trying to implement this three level system. So we are reorganising both the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate level. We don’t have journalism as a subject here. So it doesn’t really fit in to the undergraduate courses. It’s more that we aim towards research and PhD. And that’s our intention to develop it in that way.”⁸⁶

This difference between ORU and MdH in the orientation of the Master programs may not be so surprising considering the binary system that exists in Sweden. This is discussed further below, in the concluding answer to research question number 2. The next point is to consider the link between the Master and the PhD level at both case studies.

The link between the Master and PhD degree

The link between the Master and PhD degree is definitely present at both universities, but it is less structured at Mälardalen than at Örebro University. Mikael Ekström, considering the biggest department at MdH, the computer science and electronics department, comments: *“We don’t have any PhD program, if you call it that, but it’s an individual program for each student, depending on what field of studies he or she comes from.”*⁸⁷

Lars Asplund shows the possibilities for PhD students coming to Sweden, while at the same time pointing at the financial drawbacks: *“As far as the link between Master and PhD is concerned; this is less easy. Funding is needed. For example the Turkish student that has finished his Master’s degree here is ‘waiting’ until there is enough money for him to get a job as a PhD researcher.”*⁸⁸

Naturally, a relative small number of Master students continue their studies at a PhD level. But Peter Funk, coordinator for the MSc program Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence, provides information about the close link with the industry and foundations that are funding the PhD researchers:

“I mean, intuitively I would say that 10 % of the students are interested in doing a PhD, but we at Mälardalen University, we have very little faculty money from the government. So, basically all our PhD students are industrial PhD students; half funded by industry, half funded by *KK stiftelsen*⁸⁹ or *Stiftelsen för Strategisk Forskning*⁹⁰ or similar. So, which makes it very hard for us to accept many PhD students.”⁹¹

Karin Hedström, at the MSc program in eGovernment in Örebro, paints another picture. At the same time, she points at the importance of personal influences and networks established by the ones involved:

“It’s particularly linked with the PhD program, as we have a professor who is heavily involved with eGovernment research in Europe specifically; he has lots of contacts. That’s one of the reasons we wanted to have this Master program, because he has lots of contacts and he has been working in the area for about ten years. He was one of the first who started with eGovernments in Sweden. And we got a European PhD school attached to this.”⁹²

At least six such research schools are housed at Örebro University. This is not to say that Örebro has much financial resources at its disposal. Even here, the PhD students search for funding from outside. There has even been a letter written by the committee for PhD students, in which they ask for better pay from the university.

⁸⁶ Interview with Maria Ljunggren, 7 March 2006

⁸⁷ Interview with Mikael Ekström, 17 March 2006

⁸⁸ Interview with Lars Asplund, 28 March 2006

⁸⁹ The Knowledge Foundation, see <http://www.kks.se/>

⁹⁰ Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research <http://www.stratresearch.se/>

⁹¹ Interview with Peter Funk, 28 March 2006

⁹² Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006

Concluding answer to research question 2

As far as the implementation of the three cycle system at ORU and MdH is concerned, we have to keep in mind that this is one of the biggest restructuring projects within Swedish higher education. The second cycle is completely new to Sweden and has caused many challenges. An important ingredient to the implementation of the Bologna process in Sweden is the status of the IHE: ORU officially has university status, whereas MdH does not have research competences in all fields of study. This is why there are different interests in both case studies concerning the implementation of the three cycle system. Ingrid Åberg explains:

“Here is a conflict between universities and universities of professional education (*högskolor*). Because the proposition said that just the universities could decide to have a Master program and not *högskolor*. And that’s why *högskolor* are very keen on keeping the Magister and on keeping Magister as a general admission requirement for doctoral studies.”⁹³

She continues, connecting this explanation to the national debate in the Parliament, and the position of the Green party in particular:

“It’s the *miljö*-party that it depends on. Because they usually vote with the Social Democrats, but they vote in this issue with the non-socialist parties, as they want the change that the non-socialist parties want. They are very keen on the regional development you see, talking for the smaller *högskolor*. So, I think they want to strengthen the Magister-exam.”⁹⁴

The final conclusion then, is that nothing is completely sure yet, and that the national government leaves much open to be decided at the level of the individual universities or even departments at the universities. This implies that variations throughout Sweden emerge. The three cycle system is not implemented yet at ORU and MdH. Rather, they will have their own local version of this second Bologna objective:

“But every university, faculty, subject can make its own requirements. So they have a lot of freedom. And I think that is going to remain the same. Differences throughout the whole of Sweden.”⁹⁵

3. The third research question is *How and to what extent are the ECTS and the accompanying grading system constructed at ORU and MdH?*

Even though it is not explicitly stated in the Bologna declaration that the credit transfer system should be the ECTS, I focus on this system as there are few serious alternatives. The question with the ECTS can be divided into two parts: the credits and the grades.

ECTS credits

When it comes to the implementation of the ECTS credits, both universities have chosen to give this lower priority than other objectives, as it is not certain yet to what extent the ECTS system will be implemented. Lena Nordström at the International Office in Örebro says:

“There is even this ECTS label. But we have decided to wait with applying for that. There have been many Swedish universities that applied and didn’t get it, as it is very hard to get. Our strategy is to first concentrate on the broader Bologna objectives, since the ECTS system is not even specifically a Bologna objective. It’s rather stated that there should be a system such as the ECTS system.”⁹⁶

⁹³ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

⁹⁴ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

⁹⁵ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

⁹⁶ Interview at International Office, ORU, 2 March 2006



Elvy Westlund at Mälardalen University has the same reasoning:

"We will at the moment just transfer the Swedish points with a factor 1.5 to form ECTS. That's what we do. One has to do one thing first before one can start with the next. Later on, we will discuss what these credits actually include, related to the workload for students. We don't do that right now, as we have too much work with the other parts, but it will be done after this."⁹⁷

However, for international comparison in the courses and programs followed by international students, the ECTS credits are already in use. For her Master program in Global Journalism, Maria Ljunggren explains why: *"We've actually constructed our different modules only using the ECTS credit system. Because what we've seen is that we can't really use the Swedish system if we want to collaborate with Norway and Finland, it doesn't really work out."*⁹⁸

Niklas Sandman, guarding the quality of education, has some objections to this situation:

"I think that the ECTS is supposed to be something too. It's not just a translation key for us to take 'well, this is 10 weeks, we just multiply that with 1.5 and then we have it.' I think it is much more. It is supposed to be about work load and stuff like that. And I am afraid that the university has not really realised that yet. I have asked about it three times and I haven't yet got a proper answer. It's just "well, we'll have to see. For now, just multiply it."⁹⁹

Although he clearly has a point, he might be a bit ahead of his time. It is true that the universities have not implemented the ECTS. Evidence has led me to conclude that they will do this in the near future. During the process, workload and the like are also considered.

Most people involved do not see a problem in using both the Swedish system and the ECTS. Johan Lönnholm puts it this way: *"It is simply that one term is 30 ECTS and this equals 20 Swedish points, so it is a factor of 1.5. I don't see a big difference in this. It is really what the name indicates: a transfer system."*¹⁰⁰ Peter Funk agrees with Lönnholm: *"I think it is related to the workload because you measure what is one week of full time studies – that is one Swedish point. And at the ECTS it is less work for one point [28 hours], so I think the translation works well. There is nothing strange in the translation of the ECTS credits."*¹⁰¹

ECTS grades

Niklas Sandman is just as critical of the grading system as he is of the implementation of credits: *"I think it is difficult now when we have three grades. And to actually add four more grades to that, would be catastrophic."*¹⁰² He refers to the Swedish grading system at universities, existing of the grades not pass, pass and pass with distinction. From this three grade scale, it would be a very big step to implement the seven grade ECTS grading scale.

As with the credits, the same dilemma arises with the ECTS grades: both Sandman and Westlund argue that it is the official policy of the universities not to implement the ECTS grading scale yet, but that it has to be done in the case of international students. The *inriktningsbeslut* that Elvy Westlund talked about is summarised by Henrik Jönsson, vice-coordinator for the MSc program Analytical Finance at the department of mathematics and physics at MdH:

"It's difficult, because on the one hand the university says we will wait with the ECTS system, but on the other hand we have international students. And then you need to implement it actually, because we have some kind of responsibility to give them ECTS if they ask for it. But we do it automatically in our courses; we give them both the Swedish and the ECTS

⁹⁷ Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

⁹⁸ Interview with Maria Ljunggren, 7 March 2006

⁹⁹ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Johan Lönnholm, 25 April 2006

¹⁰¹ Interview with Peter Funk, 28 March 2006

¹⁰² Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006



grades. But I believe it is very standardised. If you pass the course, I believe you will get a C. It's not a very detailed scale. And then if you pass with distinction, you get an A. So, I think we use it, but we use it very roughly. This is pass, and this is pass with distinction.”¹⁰³

Differing from the format at ORU, the grading scale that is mostly used at MdH is a five grade scale. Grades range from 1 to 5, where a 1 and a 2 indicate different forms of 'not passed' and the other grades indicate passed. This makes it easier to translate into ECTS, as Mikael Ekström points out: *“Yes, the seven scales. Not using the Fx. So we use A to F. But I mean that is coexisting with the Swedish 1 - 5 system.”*¹⁰⁴ Elvy Westlund indicates: *“when we look through our examination forms and the grading scales that we will have; the closer they will get to the seven grades, the closer it will become to transfer.”*¹⁰⁵

At the MSc program Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence at MdH, the ECTS grades get more attention: *“No, we don't do an automatic transfer there. We have to do an individual one. I mean, like now, if a student wants an ECTS grading, it goes back to the teacher and the teacher has to look up the work and make a grading.”*¹⁰⁶

Jonas Ekebacke, president for the International Fadderiet at ORU and responsible for the incoming exchange students, argues that *“the ECTS system as a whole is a good idea. But it needs some adjustments to make it work.”*¹⁰⁷ Karl Otto Waara agrees with Ekebacke, and – when talking about the MSc program of Inland Water Quality Assessment, offered at MdH and thirteen other universities in Europe – explains what adjustments are meant:

“I think it's a very good scale actually. But there are two different kinds and I know the UK or Ireland has one that I don't like. Because they are saying that you have a certain percentage that can get an A, and not a single percentage more than that. Yes, that is the relative way. The old traditional Swedish way. But I prefer this knowledge based system. So in theory, the whole class could get an A. That is more relevant. Otherwise you can be unlucky to follow the course one year with extremely good students and the next year they are very bad, but you get a C because you have those colleagues.”¹⁰⁸

Connection to the grades: Pedagogy

What kind of grading is appropriate? What mode of examination is appropriate? What is called the knowledge based system by Karl Otto Waara, is called goal oriented by Niklas Sandman. The alternative is the relative grade, but apparently many are unaware of this:

“The original ECTS grade is supposed to be **relative**, as in only ten percent of this class can get an A. And we think that this is really unjust because here we have, if a whole class aces at an exam, they all get the best grade. And that's how it is supposed to be, but in the relative grade it is like “O, I'm sorry, you would have earned an A, but you can only get a B, because we have already given away all the A's.”

[**Absolute** is:] If you want the top grade, you should know this, this and this. And if you do, then you have the grade. It is what you have done, what you have earned. And I think that on the long run, if you have a goal oriented grade, as we have now, it will anyway be some sort of a curve. But I don't think that we should have that decided from the beginning.

I think that is the problem because in the decision that the principle [Jonerik Gidlund] had taken that international students should get an ECTS grade and a Swedish one, it doesn't say that it is goal oriented or that it is relative. And the original ECTS grade is relative. And I don't think that the institutions and the teachers know that.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Interview with Henrik Jönsson, 28 March 2006

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Mikael Ekström, 17 March 2006

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Peter Funk, 28 March 2006

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Jonas Ekebacke, 12 April 2006

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Karl-Otto Waara, 25 April 2006

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006

The evidence before me has led me to conclude that indeed the original ECTS grade is the relative variant.¹¹⁰ On this point, I agree with Sandman, Waara, Åberg and all those who argue in favour of the absolute grade (goal oriented, knowledge based) as otherwise the standard of 'A's would vary from year to year and across universities.

Not only do grades vary from institute to institute, even two colleagues grade totally differently on the same subject. A very interesting question is if grades are needed at all. Niklas Sandman argues that it should suffice when a student has passed a course or program and has obtained a DS, stating what his or her knowledge and abilities are:

"Personally, I have greater expectations of the learning outcomes and the Diploma Supplement, where actually the other universities in Europe can see exactly "this student knows this and this. And this is what we want of the students that are going to study here and he [or she] fulfils it." Nothing about the grade or the course. If you have a degree where it says that "I know this and this and this", then I think it's enough."¹¹¹

Learning outcomes are a very important component of the development of the EHEA. According to the Bologna objectives, they are to be included in the course plans and aim at giving a better idea of what the student will have gained from a course after successfully completing it. They are a product of education seen from the student's – or learner's – point of view. They are meant to lead to increased transparency and employability.¹¹²

There is a clear interconnection with the Diploma Supplement, as the learning outcomes ought to be indicated on this document, "*to provide information on the knowledge, skills and competences of the award-holder*".¹¹³ At the base of the learning outcomes are the Dublin descriptors¹¹⁴. These indicate what a student at each of the three cycles should be able to accomplish in five areas: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgements, communication and learning skills.

During my period as a trainee, I have taken part in a number of conferences and workshops about learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are the minimum amount of knowledge, competence and skills that a student should have in order to pass a course. But in the case of a seven grade scale, what level should a student reach for the other (A,B,C,D) grades? It causes many difficulties to construct a just and consistent system for the grading. In this debate, it seems more appropriate to abandon grading and replace it by the Diploma Supplement and learning outcomes, as Niklas Sandman suggested.

Ingrid Åberg also points at the mode of constructing the grades. The connection to John Dewey¹¹⁵ and pedagogy is clear: how does a student structure his or her thoughts and how can this be examined?

"It's a question of pedagogy. It's very difficult to grade. And I think it depends very much on how you look upon examination. The more grades you have, the more does it influence examination, and the more the students have to concentrate on facts. And if you want the students to talk and to discuss, and to change their way of thinking, the grades are not the right way to do that. I think that's the background. And if you have quite small courses you see, lasting for five weeks, it's not possible to grade. I think it's just this question about what sort of knowledge is important for a university. Is it facts or is it the way to learn how to structure, how to think. That's quite important here."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ See also EU's website: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html

¹¹¹ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006

¹¹² See also EU's website: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/tuning/tuning_en.html

¹¹³ Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p. 25

¹¹⁴ As can be found on a link at MdH's website: <http://www.mdh.se/namnder/bologna/lastips.shtml>

¹¹⁵ See paragraph 5.3 and the book *Education and Democracy* by John Dewey

¹¹⁶ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

Niklas Sandman adds:

"I think that it would be a disaster to have seven grades. Because first of all I think that will lead to a higher anxiety amongst students such as "O I hope I get an A". Or you get disappointed if you only get a B, but you know the stuff that you have to know to get your degree.

And secondly, I think that it would be a pedagogic failure because if the teacher has to set up seven different criteria for what a student needs to know to get an A, or a B, C, D and so on, then I think it would be a lot more of unpedagogic examinations like exams in a large room. It is all superficial learning. You can't really discuss it. Because if you are going to have examinations, maybe a seminar at which you discuss, how the hell can a teacher see that "well he deserves a B" or any other grade on the seven grade scale?!

It's impossible, and it will take so much time for the teacher, so I think this will lead to the teacher constructing a test, probably a Multiple Choice test. It is easy to correct it; you can even do it in a computer, with these key cards. And then it is nothing about constructive thinking or exchanging opinions or the like."¹¹⁷

This is where the concept of *Bildung* shows to have large importance still, and where the difference between learning and teaching is named by Ingrid Åberg: *"For the teachers it's about the way of learning. Of making the difference between teaching and learning. When you teach, then you can have a grading system. It is about learning and with the learning outcomes that come now..."*¹¹⁸

Concluding answer to research question 3

The conclusion of the answer to the third research question is in fact similar to the second research question. The ECTS or a similar system is not fully implemented at Mh or ORU. The debate between grades on the one hand and learning outcomes plus the DS on the other hand is very interesting in this case. The ECTS credits and grades are partially in use, as this is unavoidable in the internationalisation process, but the policy is to prioritise other, broader projects within the Bologna process. Again, no definitive decision is made on national level. The universities have a large amount of freedom to make individual decisions at a local level. Ingrid Åberg comments:

"The point is that you can have different systems at the same time in Sweden. We think it's a shame that the proposal didn't make a strong decision. They didn't dare, you see. But just now, here in Örebro, we say it's not time to change the system."¹¹⁹

The last word is for Niklas Sandman: *"I don't think they dare to make a decision in this field because it is such a hot potato, as we say."*¹²⁰ And hot potatoes are not to be found in a recipe for a pizza Bolognese...

4. The fourth research question is *How and to what extent is mobility of students and staff – incoming and outgoing – promoted at ORU and Mh?*

This question is clearly closely related to EU mobility programs such as Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus. But from the interviews it became clear that personal contacts and networks are at least equally important, even though the general intention is to give this a more formal structure. I will start describing the state of the art in the case of the staff.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006

¹¹⁸ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

¹¹⁹ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

¹²⁰ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006



Recognition and Valorisation

An important question about mobility of staff is how this mobility is perceived. If one wants to promote mobility, then there ought to be certain incentives for the people involved. During some interviews, I learned that some staff can judge other's projects abroad as holidays on the expenses of the departmental budget. Fortunately, it was seen as something positive in many other cases. Karin Hedström put it short but clearly: *"Well, you get praise, but you don't get more pay!"*¹²¹ She describes the environment towards teacher mobility as supportive. So does Maria Ljunggren, describing travelling abroad for work as a merit:

"I mean you get a lot of new influences and experiences and knowledge that you bring back with you and I definitely think that that should be recognised and also that it should be used much more in our normal activities. Not only in the Master's program but also in the other activities."¹²²

Lars Asplund makes an interesting comment, talking about the relative proximity of Europe: *"it is more recognised and valorised if you go to Australia, or India or Japan than to Düsseldorf e.g. Europe is not considered special anymore. It is the same continent."*¹²³ Mikael Ekström¹²⁴ adds that even though it is supported and valued, this is more done in forms of respect than in credit points or pay. However, Peter Funk talks of a different system, in which mobility can be an important indicator in an employee's salary:

"Every teacher has a development plan. With a record of their achievements and what they want to develop themselves in. That document is evaluated when getting salary and salary increase every year. So, it has a natural place to get into the discussions about salary."¹²⁵

So it is clear that there is not one single system for recognition and valorisation of staff mobility. But is mobility promoted and practiced in reality?

Staff Mobility

It is best to put researchers and teachers under the same heading, as in fact at universities *"every teacher should be a researcher"*¹²⁶. There are important practical obstacles to mobility, such as the tight schedules that lecturers have. When they do have time to travel, travel costs can form a real obstacle for outgoing staff. Very practical issues of having to pay first and get your money back later can be decisive. Is it the department that pays, is it the university or is it the EU? This is where the Erasmus program for lecturers is involved, and Karin Hedström tells about some modest success:

"I have spoken a lot with the teaching staff and told them that we have got Erasmus exchange programs for staff, with 8 different universities. So, I have tried to promote it for them to apply for going somewhere. Not for a long period of time, but for a short period of time, to teach somewhere. Two people have said yes, to do it. And I think that's important for the Master program."¹²⁷

However, most lecturer exchange is organised through channels of existing personal or interdepartmental networks, such as the collaboration that the department of economics, statistics and informatics has with Shanghai University:

¹²¹ Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006

¹²² Interview with Maria Ljunggren, 7 March 2006

¹²³ Interview with Lars Asplund, 28 March 2006

¹²⁴ Interview with Mikael Ekström, 17 March 2006

¹²⁵ Interview with Peter Funk, 28 March 2006

¹²⁶ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

¹²⁷ Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006



"We don't have a regular exchange of teachers, except for this cooperation with Shanghai University. That is mostly one-sided exchange. Two of our staff regularly teach a basic course at Shanghai and we have some research cooperation with them as well. But we don't have any foreign teachers that lecture in our program or courses this far." ¹²⁸

Another option is obviously when staff has an international background that can serve as a basis for contacts, as is the case at the MSc in Analytical Finance, at MdH: *"The professor is coming from Ukraine, from the beginning but now he has been in Sweden for 12, 14 years, so he has a very extensive international collaboration in different projects."* ¹²⁹

It is useful to make a distinction between lecturing staff and administrative staff, as Elvy Westlund points out: *"it concerns more lecturers and students, not administrative staff. This might come in the future, that's what I think."* ¹³⁰ Ingrid Åberg points to the ever existing financial obstacle: *"We don't have many resources, especially not for the administrative staff. Yes, for the International Office of course, but not as we ought to have."* ¹³¹ Christer Håkansson, at the department of education at Örebro University, agrees, while at the same time showing optimism about the future: *"Well, the finances of the institution have not been the best during the past few years, so it has been a bit hard to put money on those projects. But that situation has improved now. And the prefekt has taken a positive position when it comes to expanding this work."* ¹³²

Student Mobility

This mobility is usually arranged through multi- and bilateral agreements and the Erasmus program, but as Hanna Forsgårde at Örebro University indicates, *"the Board has decided that the number of agreements that we have, should be diminished so that we can have more in depth cooperation with less partners in stead of broad cooperation with many."* ¹³³

This is not unusual, considering that student mobility is by far the largest part of the mobility project. For the past few years in September, some 175 students arrived to start studying at MIMA in Västerås and Eskilstuna. In January, this number is only around 15, as there is but one program starting at this time of the year. ¹³⁴ Next to MIMA, at MdH, different initiatives are taken when it comes to increasing student exchange, not in the least built upon personal contacts: *"It is promoted for our students to go on Erasmus, or to go abroad. I had a student going to Spain for his Master thesis last year and it worked very well, I was in contact with the department and I know one of the professors well."* ¹³⁵ Henrik Jönsson ¹³⁶ indicates that maybe most Swedish students that travel abroad for a study period are second cycle students going to England or the United States.

"But", as Jonas Ekebacke states for the situation in Örebro, *"there's no balance between incoming and outgoing. I think there is maybe around 100 students per year going out and 300 students coming in."* ¹³⁷ Most students that come to Mälardalen are graduate students, whereas most incoming exchange students at present in Örebro are undergraduate students. With the new Master programs to start, a larger part of incoming students will obviously be Master students.

Even here, practical obstacles to promoting mobility exist. Karin Hedström indicates time as a limiting factor in this process: *"We were supposed to have exchange programs with Edinburgh and Copenhagen, but we didn't have enough time to make it work fully formally."*

¹²⁸ Interview with Lars Hultkrantz, 1 March 2006

¹²⁹ Interview with Henrik Jönsson, 28 March 2006

¹³⁰ Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

¹³¹ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

¹³² Interview with Christer Håkansson, 7 April 2006

¹³³ Interview at the International Office, ORU, 2 March 2006

¹³⁴ Interview with Mohsim Qasim, 17 March 2006

¹³⁵ Interview with Peter Funk, 28 March 2006

¹³⁶ Interview with Henrik Jönsson, 28 March 2006

¹³⁷ Interview with Jonas Ekebacke, 12 April 2006



*But we're discussing it and trying to include that more in formal ways."*¹³⁸ Considering the program of eGovernment, she points at the option to accept incoming exchange students at some courses of the program, in order to create a flexible environment of which as many as possible can benefit. The prerequisites for the Master program are not specific, as some of the courses in the program can be followed by anyone that has a Bachelor degree.

At the Economics and Econometrics program in Örebro, the cooperation with Shanghai University constitutes a big part of the international exchange. Lars Hultkrantz¹³⁹ indicates that about 10 students from China come to Örebro each year, while the same number of Swedish students travels to China, mostly to study Chinese. This does not concern inter-European exchange, but it is an important part of the Bologna process nevertheless, since it does increase the contacts with third countries.

Another important aspect of exchange is the accommodation. In Örebro and Västerås, incoming students are guaranteed a student room, which obviously is a very good service. However, some problems may arise, for example with the incoming students at the department of education in Örebro:

"This is partly due to what has been decided at the level of the university, that incoming students are supposed to rent student accommodation for at least five months instead of the three months that it has been before. And the students within teacher education often come for three months, because the teacher educations are very much culturally bound."¹⁴⁰

Another aspect in the accommodation is put forward by Niklas Sandman, when he tries to put himself in the position of the Master students from abroad:

"I can be a bit worried about the potential Master students that come here. They have a different background. Most of them, I think, have studied three or four years at home and then, maybe they're older, maybe they have families that they want to bring with them. I am not sure that you can take a Master student and just put him in a student apartment."¹⁴¹

Mikael Ekström¹⁴² foresees a possible problem when the number of exchange students increases, but the number of accommodations stays the same. This of course is a problem that other, bigger student cities already have. If such a problem comes up, that would be a good incentive to deepen the collaboration in the Bologna network and learn from other student cities how they cope with these circumstances.

Another possible obstacle is the case to case basis on which students exchanges at MdH sometimes are based. Not much considering this is formally arranged. Peter Funk states *"taking students here from other universities just for a Master thesis is difficult because we don't get credits for it. So, it's difficult to handle the economical factors there. If it's not a research project where you have funding for doing this specific work."*¹⁴³

Considering research, or the third cycle, this has some overlap with staff exchange. PhD students in Sweden are paid salary after all and they are often involved in lecturing at the first or second cycle. Karin Hedström signals the advantages in this, as one can make use of the existing networks, for example within the program of eGovernment: *"We're here working with student exchange programs for PhD students. So, it's very much linked to the Master's program. Same topic, same people."*¹⁴⁴ This contributes to an international part of PhD education, which can help solving a possible problem that Niklas Sandman rightfully names:

¹³⁸ Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006

¹³⁹ Interview with Lars Hultkrantz, 1 March 2006

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Christer Håkansson, 7 April 2006

¹⁴¹ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006

¹⁴² Interview with Mikael Ekström, 17 March 2006

¹⁴³ Interview with Peter Funk, 28 March 2006

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006



"I think it is a very big thing that has to be under consideration, that if you are going to have international Master education, there have to be international teachers as well, and Professors. Not only a Swedish teacher that has had this course for 30 years in Swedish and then – 'can you take this in English?' Because that has nothing to do with international studies. It is just that it is in English. But that doesn't mean anything." ¹⁴⁵

Equal Access

Part of the fourth Bologna objective is that the visiting students should have equal access to facilities as the domestic students. The facilities under consideration are the library, laboratories, computer rooms etc. This seems no issue at all at Mälardalen and Örebro universities, as it is taken for granted that this equal access should be established. In almost every interview where I posed this question, the answer was a somewhat surprised "of course! Why not?"

Johan Lönnholm at MdH's Student Union is to the point on this subject: *"If you are a student at MdH, you're a student. Wherever you're from, you have the same rights and duties. Everybody has access to everything equally."* ¹⁴⁶ Mohsim Qasim agrees:

"Yes. The access is good. The labs and computer rooms are open from 8 am to 11 pm and we have access cards, with which we can enter those rooms. There is a big and good library in which they provide services such as distance loaning." ¹⁴⁷

One important drawback however, that has been named in almost every interview as well, is the fact that almost all information provided on the websites of the universities is in Swedish. Jonas Ekebacke says: *"Let's take the home page for instance. Maybe 5 % of the text is translated to English, which is not so much at all if you want to be an international university, which is the ambition."* Micael Jonsborg adds: *"I think there is a great need to have more information in English."*

This would certainly make any university more international and it can form a good starting point for a very interesting phenomenon, called "internationalisation at the home ground".

Internationalisation at the home ground

As indicated above, the issue of the low number of Swedish students travelling abroad is somewhat problematic. Many interviewees took a deep breath before talking about this subject. A good illustration of this is the answer that Silvia Coradeschi gave:

"Well, (sighs) ..we have tried quite hard with respect to having our students getting out. There was a period in which we were informing them a lot about that and tried to encourage them. I must say the result has not been so positive. Our students are not so willing to go out." ¹⁴⁸

At the central university level in Örebro, an international day is organised in November, in order to promote going on an exchange period. Monica Wettler at the international office indicates, that *"For some unclear reason, Swedish students are quite hesitant to go on exchange. This is a phenomenon that occurs in the whole of Sweden, not just in Örebro. We try to make them enthusiastic for a period abroad, but it does not always turn out as we would like to."* ¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Niklas Sandman, 12 April 2006

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Johan Lönnholm, 25 April 2006

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Mohsim Qasim, 17 March 2006

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Silvia Coradeschi, 10 March 2006

¹⁴⁹ Interview at the International Office, 2 March 2006



Elvy Westlund gives a very good explanation for this, while at the same time pointing at the possibilities this offers to take an alternative approach towards internationalisation:

“One reason is that Swedish youth in many cases already spend one year abroad while studying at gymnasium level. They travel to the USA, Australia, mostly the English speaking countries. And that makes that one might not be so tempted to travel abroad when one comes to study at higher education level. One has already done it. That is one reason.

Another reason is that Swedish youth travel much anyway, next to their studies. They take a year off and travel around the world and... they have a lot of reasons to travel. Some of the students would spend a study period abroad if they can be offered very good circumstances in the education itself. And that's what we do in certain education, but not in all. We will improve this.

And then we speak about *internationalisation at the home ground*, which is a new concept. Just because we cannot make the students travel abroad. It is about much more than just travelling away and being abroad. It is about culture, about intercultural communication; how do I communicate with other cultures? What do I accept? How do I relate to other cultures? What is important in the business world? Those sorts of questions, that we call *internationalisation at the home ground*.

Both for the Swedish students and for the international students. They can be in the same group. And that is important as well, because we have many older students in Sweden. Those have already travelled. They have started a family. It's not as easy for them to travel abroad. Then it becomes very important with internationalisation at the home ground.

Moreover, we have started to work a lot with ICT. So that we can get in courses from all over the world, basically. In learning centres, and so on, so that people get support there. That is also a form of internationalisation. And it's actually the same with the lecturers.”¹⁵⁰

Other interviewed persons, such as Karin Hedström and Karl Otto Waara, have also spoken about the possibility of including a number of E-learning or distance courses in their program. Being part of the Bologna process, this is most explicitly considered in the seventh objective of the Bologna process, as indicated in the Prague Communiqué¹⁵¹. In a report¹⁵² about the use of ICT in vocational education and training (VET), Sweden is classified in the so called front runner group. This implies that the country is “*typically characterised by a high degree of e-readiness, specific strategies concerning use of e-learning, and many institutions that are co-operating with private partners or other institutions.*”¹⁵³

The use of ICT clearly facilitates virtual internationalisation, a concept closely linked to internationalisation at the home ground. One of the reasons why Sweden is in the front runner group is the existence of a general strategy considering e-learning in the education system and that internationalisation and the use of ICT in higher education is extensively funded by the Swedish government. An important component of the strategy is the focus on infrastructure and equipment, which is of good standard and readily available to the students at MdH and ORU. Another important factor that contributes to the high performance of virtual internationalisation in Sweden is the efforts put on the training of teachers¹⁵⁴.

Moreover, the use of ICT in higher education increases employability, as students that have been trained in using ICT in their education are meeting the requirements of the labour market to a higher degree. The Netuniversity¹⁵⁵, “*a collection of IT supported higher education distance courses, offered by 35 institutions of higher education in Sweden*”, is an icon of internationalisation through ICT. It offers students from Sweden and all over the world the opportunity to study at a Swedish university and take part in group work with students of many different nationalities and ethnical backgrounds.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

¹⁵¹ See paragraph 4.1

¹⁵² The use of ICT in iVET, 2005

¹⁵³ The use of ICT in iVET, 2005, p. vii

¹⁵⁴ The use of ICT in iVET, 2005, p. 28

¹⁵⁵ see <http://www.netuniversity.se>

Concluding answer to research question 4

Certainly, a lot is done at both universities in order to promote both incoming and outgoing mobility of staff and students. A process of rationalisation is going on at Örebro University, where the network of contacts that the university has is deepened instead of broadened, or "*fewer, but better contacts*", as Lars Hultkrantz¹⁵⁶ puts it.

However, at both IHE many exchange projects are based on personal contacts and not much is formalised. Ingrid Åberg gives her opinion about the situation for ORU:

"Because it's a very decentralised university, the departments have the resources. But it depends on them what they spend it on. Some of them use it for those things, but I'm not sure that everyone does. There is a directive on what they should spend their resources on, but you can't be sure. It can be a small or a large amount, it's not decided from the top." ¹⁵⁷

Obstacles to further developing mobility at staff level are time and money. At the level of the students, there is no lack of incoming exchange students at any of the three cycles. The number of outgoing Swedish students however, is not as high as wished. A good alternative is provided by the process of internationalisation at the home ground and the use of ICT for E-learning and distance courses.

All in all, it is quite clear that much effort is put in the promotion of all aspects of mobility at both universities. A good example of this is the international day that is organised on a yearly basis at Örebro University.

5. The fifth and final research question is *How and to what extent is the European Dimension promoted at ORU and MdH?*

The term European Dimension proved to be quite vague and few interviewees knew what it included. After I explained that it concerned curriculum development, inter institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated programs of study, training and research, the most natural reaction was that we in fact had already talked about those subjects while discussing the other Bologna objectives. Nevertheless, the European Dimension plays an important role in the internationalisation process at both universities. The question is whether the promotion of the European Dimension in itself should be seen as an objective, just like the others. Could it be that it rather is an umbrella objective of the whole Bologna process?

An answer that the interviewees often gave during the interviews is that the European Dimension is promoted through the implementation of the Bologna process itself. Nedim Bahar, International Coordinator for MIMA, formulates his ideas as follows: "*I think the development is done through the Bologna process. And it will be very positive for us, because we are trying to implement more joint degree programs with other universities around Europe. And the Bologna process will help us through this very much.*" ¹⁵⁸

The European Dimension can be interpreted very broadly, as many possibilities to promote this dimension were named during the interviews: Joint programs, such as the one Karl Otto Waara is involved in, workshops, conferences and European Research Projects. Especially this last item is named many times, and it corresponds well with what Hanna Forsgårde states: "*As you might have read in this brochure with the vision for 2015, ORU wants to be a European Research University. The new International Master programs fit well in this vision and there are also plans for joint courses or even joint programs.*" ¹⁵⁹ Within this window of the European Dimension, cooperation on many stages and in many ways is practiced between different universities around the globe. This is still very much based on personal contacts and personal networks instead of on existing EU programs.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Lars Hultkrantz, 1 March 2006

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Ingrid Åberg, 13 February 2006

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Nedim Bahar, 24 April 2006

¹⁵⁹ Interview at International Office, 2 March 2006



An example of particular networks is given by Karin Hedström: *"We have this EU project called network of excellence in eGovernment. It is about citizen participation in democracy and eGovernments."*¹⁶⁰ She also talked about the possibilities for making more use of ICT for distance learning in the programs. ICT is important for the program of Global Journalism at ORU as well. Maria Ljunggren informed me about their strategy of promoting the Nordic profile as one particularly concerned with Democracy and Technology:

"What we've done is to develop a joint curriculum that we use both here and in the partner Universities. [in other Nordic countries] We market this program as a Nordic initiative, or Northern European if you want. We try to highlight the developments within democracy and the perspective of technology. It can be seen as the Northern European perspective that we try to promote."¹⁶¹

Here again, the biggest constraints are time and money. Many interviewed persons indicated that there are plans for developing courses or programs with other universities, but that these have not been realised yet due to a lack of time. Money, if possible, is an even bigger constraint: *"We have thought about organising courses together. That students could take some classes there and then here. But also that is a money thing. Who's gonna pay for the travels, you know. Do the students have money for that? Or funding from somewhere?"*¹⁶²

In the internationalisation process, a competition between universities is unavoidable. In order to survive, different cooperation strategies are possible. Lars Hultkrantz used the metaphor of farming teams, as used in the NHL ice hockey league:

"I live in Karlskoga and we have an ice hockey team that has a close cooperation with the ice hockey team in Karlstad which is one of Sweden's best. And our team is in the second division, so they cooperate. When our team gets very good players, they go to Karlstad. And in exchange, Karlstad borrows players that they don't need at that time. So, that's the kind of cooperation."¹⁶³

This strategy is however not always equally beneficial for both teams as the small team is kept small by the bigger team. In the case of Örebro University, they would be the small team and Uppsala University e.g. would be the big team. A very interesting alternative to this possibility is one that Elvy Westlund introduces. This project can bring mutual benefits for both (or all) 'teams' involved:

"What we do otherwise, together with Örebro University, that we are working on now, is that we want to build a network with young European Universities. Young, with the emphasis on young, where we will exchange experiences on the European market when it comes to education, administration, actually everything. We want to build that network. Do we survive as young university in the developments of today, than we can contribute as a young university in the European Education market."¹⁶⁴

Concluding answer to research question 5

The answer to this question can in fact not be whether or not this objective of the Bologna process is implemented. Rather, the conclusion should be that the European Dimension is omni-present and that much work is done to promote curriculum development, inter institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated programs of study, training and research within the window of the European Dimension. It is very likely however, that even

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006

¹⁶¹ Interview with Maria Ljunggren, 7 March 2006

¹⁶² Interview with Karin Hedström, 14 March 2006

¹⁶³ Interview with Lars Hultkrantz, 1 March 2006

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Elvy Westlund, 17 March 2006

more work will be conducted in this field within the next few years. The Bologna process, with its Diploma Supplement, three cycle system throughout Europe, ECTS credits and grades and Mobility programs such as Erasmus for staff and students, is in fact the promotion of the European Dimension. That is the reason that this sixth objective should rather be seen as an umbrella objective than as an individual objective such as the others.

6.2 Particularities in the results: ORU and MdH compared

One of the most important differences between ORU and MdH is their official status: Örebro is a university and Mälardalen is a university of professional education (*Högskola*). MdH does not have research competence in the field of Humanities and Social Studies. Mälardalen has a strong profile in Computer and Technical Sciences, while Örebro basically comprises all fields of study.

The Bachelor level is still a very important part of higher education, at both ORU and MdH. This has important consequences for the orientation of recruitment of students and cooperation with “the field” or the industry. For the undergraduate level, MdH mainly recruits students from the Mälardalen region, whereas ORU recruits more nationwide. Mikael Ekström illustrates this for the situation at MdH: *“For students who will only do their Bachelor, they are most probably coming from the vicinity of the universities, going to the industry, in the vicinity of the universities. They are not recruited all over Sweden or Europe.”*¹⁶⁵

For the Master level, Mälardalen International Masters Academy (MIMA) is a product of MdH’s international orientation, with students from the entire globe studying at one of the twelve to fourteen Master programs. These Master programs however, are not yet fully compatible with the Bologna format. The same goes for the Master programs offered at Örebro University: they are not fulfilling all criteria set out in the second objective of the Bologna process. A total of five international Master programs were supposed to be launched at Örebro University in the autumn of 2006. Due to a low number of applicants, the start of the program Education in Democracy and Social Justice has been postponed until autumn 2007.

But with the introduction of the new Master’s level, the link with PhD and research has received more weight at ORU than at MdH. Moreover, the PhD level of studies at Örebro is more integrated in national and international networks, while PhD students at Mälardalen often follow their individual track. Naturally, research is always internationally integrated and students visit conferences abroad. But the research schools such as they exist at ORU, are not present at MdH.

The comparison between the organisation of the Master programs at both IHE, and the implementation of the Bologna process as a whole, leads us to the view that this process is conducted more centralised at Mälardalen and more decentralised at Örebro. From the interviews with Ingrid Åberg and Elvy Westlund for example, I noticed that the departments at ORU enjoy more freedom and the project at MdH is put in a more hierarchical format. Each strategy can have its advantages, but even though there are many similarities, the implementation at Örebro is somewhat less structured. This also became clear from the interviews with people at the departmental level at the different case studies: the general answer at Örebro was that the departments are responsible for the Master program themselves and the description of the implementation of the Bologna process was a little diffuse. At Mälardalen almost everyone gave literally the same answer when the implementation of ECTS grades was concerned, for instance. This indicates a more structured implementation at MdH.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Mikael Ekström, 17 March 2006



A reason for this is that Örebro is more reactive in its attitude, whereas Mälardalen is more proactive. At both IHE, clear guidelines and time schedules for the implementation process already exist, but MdH is a bit more progressive in its interpretation of the probable consequences of the decisions of the government when it comes to the document “Ny värld – ny högskola”.

A final difference is that Örebro chooses to focus more on the quality, whereas Mälardalen aims more at quantity, as Ingrid Åberg argues. If we take the example of the ECTS grades, no one was as concerned about the quality of education as Niklas Sandman at Örebro Student Union, when he fiercely argued in favour of a goal oriented ECTS, if there had to be an ECTS grade at all. Another item is the number of Master programs, four at ORU and fourteen at MdH. This, together with the fact that the Master programs at ORU are mostly started from scratch while the MIMA Masters are developed from existing Swedish *Magisters*, can lead us to agree with this argument by Ingrid Åberg.

These are the main particular differences in the implementation of the Bologna process that I found in the different kitchens in Örebro and Mälardalen: University vs. Högskola; National vs. regional orientation; decentralised vs. centralised organisation structure; reactive vs. proactive attitude; and quality vs. quantity.

Different ovens react differently, which can influence the process. Moreover, the ingredients (teachers, students, organisation structure and resources) and kitchen utensils (networks and organisational structures) vary between the case studies. Adding this to the differences between orientation of the education and preferences during the implementation process, this leads to a varying quality of the output.

7 CONCLUSION: Bologna på svenska - ÖRU and MdH towards the EHEA

The *objective of this research* is to gain insight in the implementation of European Higher Education Policy at the national (Swedish) and institutional level. I.e. the strategy and practice of implementing the Bologna objectives by staff of ÖRU and MdH, against the background of the Swedish and European guidelines.

The **central question for this research** is:

How are the objectives of the Bologna process implemented at ÖRU and MdH and to what extent has this implementation been put into practice?

By answering the five accompanying research questions, it is possible to formulate an answer to the central question. However, it is important to take the national context in which the ÖRU and MdH operate into consideration first. Swedish national higher education policy is still in the process of setting clear guidelines for the implementation of the Bologna objectives. A government bill, "new world – new universities", has been presented in 2005. Due to much opposition, this proposition is not yet ratified by the parliament. ÖRU and MdH are waiting for a final decision by the government.

In the meantime, the institutes undertake different local reforms and reorganisation projects. At ÖRU, the GRUS project is an important and large reorganisation project, as well as more effective administration and the introduction of new International Master programs. At MdH, the starting up of MIMA in 2004 is one of the most important local reforms. The future cooperation between both institutes – the Forum for Alliance – is an intensive and all-embracing project for both of them. As concluded in the Trends IV report, *"the nature and content of these major reforms that are simultaneously underway has an effect on institutional readiness to adopt the Bologna agenda as their own."*¹⁶⁶

However, at both institutes I perceived the leadership as consultative but determined and the communication across the institutes as strong. This is indicated in the Trends IV report as one of the success factors for implementing the Bologna objectives. The case studies comply with this success factor. Moreover, the leadership in the persons of Ingrid Åberg and Elvy Westlund and their steering groups is providing strong and positive support to the process, allowing enough space for internal deliberation, which makes progress smoother.¹⁶⁷

The main particular differences in the implementation of the Bologna process that I found in the case studies at Örebro and Mälardalen are: the official status of a university vs. högskola; national vs. regional orientation; decentralised vs. centralised organisation structure; reactive vs. proactive attitude; and quality vs. quantity.

As a högskola, MdH does not have research competences in the Humanities and Social Sciences, whereas Örebro as a university does. This results in a somewhat more regional character of MdH, focusing more on the Bachelor level. Students are recruited from the region and cooperation with industries in the region is important.

While education on Bachelor level is certainly also important in Örebro, ÖRU recruits more students on a national level than MdH, especially considering the second cycle. The set up of the Master programs in Örebro is different from the one in Mälardalen. MIMA at MdH explicitly concentrates on recruiting students from abroad, whereas ÖRU recruits both from abroad and Sweden. The PhD level of studies is more formally developed at Örebro, which is shown by the research schools in Örebro for instance. This is not to say that PhD research is not conducted at MdH. However, at MdH it is more on an individual basis.

The organisational structure at MdH is more hierarchical than at ÖRU, where the departments have more autonomy. This results in a more centralised implementation structure at MdH, even though this does not mean that implementation at ÖRU is not coordinated centrally. This process shows clear links with another success factor indicated in

¹⁶⁶ Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p. 42

¹⁶⁷ Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p. 4

the Trends IV report: *"Institutional problem awareness: top-down directives as an opportunity for bottom-up review and reform"*.¹⁶⁸ By this, I mean that at both case studies, the staff involved in the implementation of the Bologna process are aware of the obstacles to implementing the Bologna objectives and follow the developments at national level closely.

The attitude in coping with the uncertainties however is different. MdH has a more proactive attitude, anticipating the probable developments in the national higher education policy. The *inriktningsbeslut* forms the guideline for implementing the Bologna process at MdH and can be adjusted when needed. ORU clearly has a time table for implementing the Bologna objectives, but in comparison to MdH, the attitude is more reactive at ORU.

A final aspect that forms a difference between the case studies is the focus on quality at ORU and quantity at MdH. This does obviously not mean that MdH is not concerned about quality. It simply indicates that considering the Master programs, the ones offered at MdH are larger in number but show more dissimilarities with the Bologna recipe than the ones at ORU do. The length and depth of the programs taught in Örebro are for the moment more in compliance with the Bologna format. However, when the implementation of the Bologna objectives is concerned, MdH is just as focused on quality as ORU is. This can be seen in the answers to the research questions.

The first research question is 'how and to what extent do ORU and MdH produce easily readable and comparable degrees?' (e.g. through the Diploma Supplement). The answer to this question is in fact not complicated. From January 2003 onwards, both institutes issue the DS at all programs at the first and second cycle. They have even been awarded the DSL. In due time, the DS will also be issued with the certificates for the third cycle. The only remaining critique is the lack of awareness of staff and students of the existence of the DS.

The second research question is 'how and to what extent is the three cycle system implemented at ORU and MdH?' This objective proves far more problematic to implement. A second cycle according to the Bologna model is completely new for Sweden. Much debate is going on about the difference between the Swedish Magister and the Bologna Master degree. This is closely connected to international competition and the higher education market. A Master degree would imply five years of studies, which is one year more than the Magister degree. The Swedish state is not willing to pay student grants for this fifth year and is thus likely to decide that the Master degree will prepare the student for the labour market, whereas the Magister degree will be the prerequisite for entering PhD studies.

Other countries have one year master programs and it is likely that national as well as local interpretations of this second objective will differ. The PhD studies of four years in length are not compatible with the second Bologna objective either. So far, this issue has not received full attention at the national level, but it tends to become important in the coming years. Will the 3-2-3 system strictly be implemented or will it rather be a 3-1-4 system? How will this be evaluated by the Bologna evaluation committees? The evidence suggests that local differences in the implementation of the second Bologna objective will exist.

The third research question is 'how and to what extent are the ECTS and the accompanying grading system constructed at ORU and MdH?' In fact, neither ORU nor MdH prioritise the implementation of this objective. The use of the ECTS credit system at ORU and MdH is simply a matter of multiplying Swedish credits with a factor of 1.5. Apart from the Student Union at ORU, not many people involved seem to have a problem with this. It is argued that at a later stage, a closer look will be taken at the work load of courses and programs in relation to the ECTS credits. In the meantime, the ECTS credits and grades are used for visiting international students that need them for their curricula.

Considering the ECTS grades, more resistance exists at ORU than at MdH. This is partly due to the grading scale used at MdH, which is already a five grade scale. The difference between relative and absolute ECTS grades is very interesting. Most staff involved is unaware that the grades proposed by the EC are relative. All interviewees aware of the difference showed concern about this. What form will be implemented: relative or absolute?

¹⁶⁸ Reichert & Tauch, 2005, p. 41

The question whether grades are necessary at all is also very interesting. It is argued that if Diploma Supplements and learning outcomes are correctly distributed, the employability objective is met. An employer does not need to know what grade a student received, but rather what he or she has studied and that the student met the criteria for passing the program. This is a very interesting discussion that has not reached its full potential yet. All in all, the third Bologna objective is not successfully implemented at ORU and MdH at present. Here as well, the evidence suggests that local differences in the implementation will exist.

The fourth research question is 'how and to what extent is mobility of students and staff – incoming and outgoing – promoted at ORU and MdH?' Both institutes undertake much and serious efforts to promote mobility. For staff, periods abroad are usually recognised and valorised by their respective departments. At one department at MdH, mobility is even considered in the yearly evaluation of the staff's individual development plans. However, staff mobility still occurs mainly through personal contacts and networks, built up at conferences and international meetings. At both institutes it was indicated that more can be done in order to reach higher staff mobility, but that time and money constraints are still forming an important obstacle. Mobility at the level of research programs and PhD students is quite high. This has a positive effect on the first and second cycle, as PhD students often are engaged in education on these levels.

Student mobility is by far the largest part of the Bologna mobility objective. A large number of students enter Örebro and Mälardalen universities each term and they have equal access to all facilities, as the Swedish students have. The only problem might be the language, but this is planned to be met by increasing information provision in English and language courses such as the Erasmus Intensive Language Courses and the courses provided by the institutes themselves.

However, for different reasons, Swedish students are not so interested in travelling abroad for a study period. Even though efforts are made by ORU and MdH to encourage Swedish student mobility, it seems that alternative forms of internationalisation should be found. These exist already in 'internationalisation at the home ground'. Internationalisation at the home ground is actually making use of the incoming exchange students and connecting them with Swedish students through different programs and projects. That way, Swedish students can experience intercultural collaboration without leaving the country.

Another option is virtual internationalisation. Thanks to the use of ICT in higher education, Sweden has reached a high level of E-learning and distance courses. These courses facilitate cooperation with students around the globe without travelling. As one of the results of the funding and efforts put in these programs by the Swedish government, the teachers are trained relatively well in using this new technology. Accordingly, at the end of their studies, the students are well prepared for entering the labour market as ICT is applied in a similar manner there (e.g. teleconferencing).

The fifth and final research question is 'how and to what extent is the European Dimension promoted at ORU and MdH?' In almost all interviews, it appeared that the answer to this question had already been provided through the answers to the earlier questions. Curricular development as a result of existing international contacts, inter institutional cooperation in the field of joint programs and joint research projects, mobility schemes for staff and students and integrated programs of study, training and research are already developed. To coordinate this under the same header would be an improvement. But the header European Dimension is rather vague to the interviewees.

Two conclusions can be drawn considering this fifth objective. On the one hand, the term European Dimension should be clarified to a higher degree. It should be illustrated by clear examples set by either the Ministers involved in the Bologna process, the EUA, ESIB or institutional initiatives. On the other hand, the promotion of the European Dimension seems to be more of an umbrella objective embracing the whole Bologna process, rather than an individual objective such as the others.

The **overall conclusion** and the answer to the research question, considering the 'how' part of the question is that both institutes have constructed a consultative but determined leadership at the top level and communication across the institutes. Moreover, the support from the leadership to the process is strong and positive, which makes progress smoother. A guideline and time table for implementation of the Bologna process is constructed at the central level and adapted to the latest developments and decisions in the Parliament. Certain objectives, such as the implementation of the ECTS and accompanying grading system, have lower priority than others.

Seminars and conferences are organised, partly in order to inform the staff of the Bologna process and its implications, partly in order to receive feedback from the staff at the departmental level towards the central level. Master programs are set up and many offices, such as the international office, the examination office and the marketing and communication office are involved. This results in a mosaic of contacts and developments, that is not easily manageable. Particularly at ORU, it seems that coordination could be somewhat more centralised, but from my observations I can conclude that this will be the case once the government has made a final decision and the Bologna process can really be implemented.

However, considering the 'to what extent' part, due to the slow decision taking process at the national level and several simultaneous internal reforms at the institutes, **the Bologna process has by far not been implemented completely**. Out of the five objectives that are included in this research, only the first one – the implementation of the DS – has been implemented. The second objective poses many obstacles and uncertainties and it will take a long time – maybe until 2010 – before the new three cycle system is completely introduced and the old system phased out. The third objective, implementation of the ECTS and accompanying grading system, is only implemented in case of necessity for incoming exchange students, and even then not always thoroughly. However, in this case the road to full implementation might be shorter than in the case of the second objective. Important issues remain the relation between workload and ECTS credits, the difference between relative and absolute grades and the question whether ECTS grading should be replaced by the DS and the learning outcomes.

The fourth objective seems to be implemented partly as a Swedish variant, since Swedish students are not eager to travel abroad for a study period. Rather internationalisation at the home ground and virtual internationalisation are hot items. The Swedish expertise and tradition in ICT usage provides a good basis for this. The fifth objective, promoting the European Dimension, is rather an umbrella objective embracing the other objectives, than an individual objective as the others.

Three limitations lay behind this slow progress, as named by Lazaro Moreno:

"What I see as a big limitation is legal structures, you have all this with what will the parliament decide and what will happen with this and that? And then you have also the limitation of resources, which is a big one. The third limitation is real commitment, it's the human factor. I mean how ambitious the people are."¹⁶⁹

These limitations appeared in almost every interview and are not unique for Örebro University. These are severe limitations that are not easily overcome. It will take time and effort to address them. However, concerning the legal structures a start is made with the recognition of the Bachelor and Master degrees. Financial and human resources obviously are permanently problematic and this may in fact constitute the biggest limitation. As far as commitment is concerned, this may grow once the successes of the process become apparent. Considering real commitment, this is absolutely present with a number of people, for instance considering pedagogic issues, such as examination, grading and the concept of *Bildung*.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Lazaro Moreno, 14 March 2006



In chapter 5, the question was posed whether the implementation of the Bologna process will lead the higher education system at Örebro and Mälardalen universities away from *Bildung* towards Education. My conclusion is that at least at ORU, where the pedagogic concern is quite big, higher education based on the principles of *Bildung* will not disappear. Staff involved in the implementation of the Bologna process is eager to defend the existing modes of examination and to see to it that alternatives to the ECTS grades, such as the DS and the learning outcomes, are prioritised. Depending on the design of programs, the lengths of courses and the number of students studying in a course, less pedagogic modes of examination such as exams using multiple choice questions may increase. This is subject to local differences and choices made by the individual institutions.

In the foreword, I posed the question whether the restructuring of higher education in Europe through the Bologna process will be universally enjoyed, colourful and quite tasty, just like the pizza. I have taken a look in two kitchens where a pizza Bolognese is prepared. They follow the same recipe, but use slightly different ovens, ingredients and tools. Moreover, the local circumstances differ. This will most probably result in two different kinds of pizzas Bolognese. That may actually be the richness of the Bologna process, since with the increasingly similar conditions at the different institutes, it will be easier to eat out at the different sites. Enjoying the pizza in differing company and with different customs makes it easier to compare the outputs and learn from each other's experiences. *Buon appetito!*

8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Staff involved with implementing the Bologna process at ORU and MdH sees this process as a good incentive for reviewing the present higher education system. It is a good opportunity for rationalisation and reform. Another advantage occurring in line with the implementation of the Bologna process is the increased possibility to recruit foreign (mainly Asian) students in the competition with the American continent.

The results from this research lead me to point at the following three aspects as very important in the future development of the Bologna process from a Swedish perspective: the developments considering joint degrees / double degrees; the use and development of ICT within higher education; and the question concerning the study grants for the fifth year related to the orientation of the second cycle.

Karl Otto Waara¹⁷⁰ indicated that for a student graduating from the MSc program in Inland Water Quality Assessment to earn a certified degree in Sweden, the parts studied abroad need to be ratified by the Swedish National Education for Higher Education. In other words, only double degrees are distributed in Sweden, not joint degrees. In other countries, such a strict rule does not exist and it is possible to earn a joint degree without intervention of a national agency. In relation to the development of the Bologna process, it is an interesting subject for further research to investigate the attitude of the Swedish government towards the joint degree.

As stated before, Sweden is considered one of the front runner countries in using ICT in higher education and this will certainly raise the position of Swedish IHE in international competition. E-learning, Distance courses, LLL and the Netuniversity will be hot topics within the globalisation of higher education in the coming years. I would be especially interested in further exploring the issue of Lifelong Learning.

As usual, the economical issue is of great importance. Increasing the study time with one year without losing the market is a difficult step. It will be most interesting to learn what decision the Swedish government will take about the orientation of the second cycle. What character will the Magister degree have? Which degree prepares for the PhD studies? How does this relate to other Bologna Member states? Will the four year PhD studies be shortened to three years as prescribed by the Bologna model?

An answer to these questions is expected either at the day of writing this text or after the summer of this year. This last scenario means that the elections of September 2006 are decisive. After these elections, it will be clear how the seats in Parliament are divided and which parties will govern. Hopefully, final decisions will then be taken, forming a clear national framework for the implementation of the Bologna process.

Anticipating the future developments, Örebro University and especially Mats Lindberg, *prefekt* at the Department of Social and Political Sciences, has issued a referral to the present state of art concerning the implementation of the Bologna process. This referral states that with the upcoming Bologna process, not only a “new speak”, but also a “new think” will have to be created. The organisation of higher education will increasingly develop along the lines of a *Lingua Bologna*. This will be seen in marketing and communication, particularly in the course catalogue, course plans and other information material.

The referral argues furthermore that instead of increased transparency, so far one can rather speak of increased complexity: at present, five degrees exist in Swedish higher education: kandidat, magister, master, licentiate and PhD. Since such an eclectic system can not have any stability, this should be reduced to three: Bachelor, Master and PhD. This is in line with the background of the ambition of ORU becoming a European Research University in the era of Europeanization and internationalisation within higher education.

Clearly, much needs to be accomplished within the years before 2010, but at the same time much has yet been realised. As Lazaro Moreno enthusiastically points out:

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Karl Otto Waara, 25 April 2006



“If you look back from where we are today with the discussions at the department level and the university, to what it was three years ago, it is a huge gap. [...] I’m sitting in meetings and I think “my goodness!” Who could have thought in 2002 that I would be sitting in 2006 listening to this kind of discussions? [...] I’ll tell you, if you would have had this interview with me three years ago, I would have said “I don’t really know where they want to go”. But, yeah, things have been changing and in a very positive way. So I hope this will continue.”¹⁷¹

I hope this will continue as well, and in fact, I have no reason to doubt it will. What are needed are positive examples of implementation of the Bologna objectives, a new and open mental setting of academics and staff, younger generations with more international experience and willingness to make it work. Through the Bologna objectives, that is exactly what is created. However, we should not forget the three limitations – legal structures, resources and real commitment as described in the conclusion.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Lazaro Moreno, 14 March 2006



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Documents communicating the development of the Bologna process:

(All can be found at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/> - under button "main documents")

- *Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education*, Bologna, 19 June 1999.
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- *From Berlin tot Bergen, the EU contribution*, European Commission Progress Report, Brussels, 7 April 2005.
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Information about Örebro and Mälardalen Universities:

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- http://www.mdh.se/namnder/bologna/Bilaga_till_inriktningsbeslut.pdf
- European University Foundation Campus Europae - <http://www.campuseuropae.org>
- Facts 2005, Mälardalen University your first hand choice for the future. A folder presenting Mälardalen University and its vision for 2008. - <http://www.mdh.se/fakta/vision/>
- Five Master Programs to be launched in autumn 2006
- <http://www.oru.se/education/master>
- Forum for Alliance – <http://www.mdh.oru.se>
- MIMA: Mälardalen International Master Academy - <http://www.mdh.se/studera/mima/>



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Political Parties in Sweden:

- The Green party – Miljöpartiet – <http://www.mp.se>
- The Left party – Vänsterpartiet – <http://www.vansterpartiet.se>
- The Social Democrats – Socialdemokraterna – <http://www.socialdemokraterna.se>
- The Christian Democrats – Kristdemokraterna – <http://www.kristdemokraterna.se>
- The Moderates – Moderaterna – <http://www.moderaterna.se>
- The Liberals – Folkpartiet – <http://www.folkpartiet.se>
- The Centre party – Centerpartiet – <http://www.centerpartiet.se>

Other websites:

- Table of distances between places in Sweden
- <http://www.lundberg-lagerstedt.se/distance/>
- Council of the Stockholm – Mälär Region – <http://www.malardalsradet.se>
- EU's Website about tuning Educational Structures in Europe:
- http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/tuning/tuning_en.html
- EU's website about the ECTS:
- http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html



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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- could you explain just what your position is within your department and how that relates to the Bologna Process?

1. To what extent does the Master program produce easily readable and comparable degrees? (e.g. through the Diploma Supplement).
 - Does the Master program accompany the degrees with a Diploma Supplement?
2. To what extent is the three cycle system implemented at your Department?
 - How is the Master program linked to the other cycles (Undergraduate and Post-graduate)?
 - Would you describe this Master program as leading to a typical Bologna Master's degree (i.e. 2 years of study after the Bachelor level), or rather to the Swedish *Magister* (since there is a difference)?
 - Can you give an implication of your resources?
 - How is the Master program marketed? How are students recruited?
3. To what extent is the ECTS-system and the accompanying grading system constructed at the Master program?
4. To what extent is mobility of students and staff – both incoming and outgoing – promoted at the Master program?
 - What are the recent developments considering contacts with other universities, both in Sweden and abroad?
 - Do students from abroad have equal access to study and training opportunities and to related services?
 - For teachers, researchers and administrative staff, are periods spent "in a European context" recognised and valorised by your department?
5. To what extent is the European Dimension promoted through the Master program at your department?
e.g. with regard to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.
6. Which developments within the window of the Bologna objectives are foreseen at your department within the near future?

Is there anything that you would like to add?

**APPENDIX B1 – LIST WITH INTERVIEWED PERSONS at Örebro University**

Name	Function / Department	At	Date of Interview
Ingrid Åberg ♀	Member of the Steering Committee for the Bologna process at ORU	ORU	Mon 13 Feb '06
Lars Hultkrantz ♂	Professor at Dpt of Economics, Statistics and Informatics – Coordinator MSc Program Economics and Econometrics	ORU	Wed 01 March '06
Hanna Forsgårde ♀	International Office	ORU	Thu 02 March '06
Monica Wettler ♀			
Lena Nordström ♀			
Maria Ljunggren ♀	Lecturer Media and Communication Studies – Coordinator MSc Program Global Journalism	ORU	Tue 07 March '06
Silvia Coradeschi ♀	Associate Professor, Dpt of Technology – Coordinator MSc Program Robotics and Intelligent Systems	ORU	Fri 10 March '06
Karin Hedström ♀	Lecturer / Associate Professor at Dpt of Economics, Statistics and Informatics – Coordinator MSc Program Electronic Government	ORU	Tue 14 March '06
Lazaro Moreno ♂	Former departmental international coordinator – Content Coordinator MSc Program Education in Democracy and Social Justice	ORU	Tue 14 March '06
Christer Håkansson ♂	International coordinator at the Department of Education	ORU	Fri 7 April '06
Jonas Ekebacke ♂	President of Fadderiet	ORU	Wed 12 April '06
Niklas Sandman ♂	Student representative and officer for the Bologna process at Student Union	ORU	Wed 12 April '06
Micael Jonsborg ♂	Communication Department	ORU	Wed 12 April '06
Christina Molin ♀	Examinations Office	ORU	Email comm. April '06
Guy Karnung ♂	Former Bologna Responsible at the Department of Education	ORU	Tue 2 May '06

**APPENDIX B2 – LIST WITH INTERVIEWED PERSONS at Mälardalen University**

Name	Function / Department	At	Date of Interview
Karin Spets ♀	Lecturer at the Department of Public Technology, Coordinator MSc program in Sustainable Energy Systems	MdH	Fri 17 March '06
Elvy Westlund ♀	Member of the Steering Committee for the Bologna process at MdH	MdH	Fri 17 March '06
Mikael Ekström ♂	Coordinator MSc Program Electronics with Biomedical Engineering Profile	MdH	Fri 17 March '06
Mohsin Qasim ♂	President of the MIMA Student Union	MdH	Fri 17 March '06
Lars Asplund ♂	Coordinator MSc Program Robotics	MdH	Tue 28 March '06
Henrik Jönsson ♂	Coordinator MSc Program Analytical Finance	MdH	Tue 28 March '06
Peter Funk ♂	Coordinator MSc Program Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence	MdH	Tue 28 March '06
Nehim Bahar ♂	Communication Department	MdH	Mon 24 April '06
Karl-Otto Waara ♂	Coordinator MSc Program Inland Water Quality Assessment Cooperation	MdH	Tue 25 April '06
Johan Lönholm ♂	President of the Student Union	MdH	Tue 25 April '06
Gudrun Paulsdottir ♀	International Office	MdH	Email comm. April '06
Anneli Mossberg ♀	Examinations Office	MdH	Email comm. April '06

APPENDIX C – TEXTBOX BOLOGNA - A NEW PIZZA?

Bologna -en pizza?

This short article (278 words) informs the students at MdH about the Bologna process and its implications for the students. The body of the text describes the Bologna objectives and is the same as the information presented in Chapter 1. Four articles were planned, but the one responsible for the quality of education at Mälardalen Student Union quit her job after this first article, as she was offered a job in Stockholm.

“Student Union’s Bologna School – part 1

Anyone heard about the Bologna process? What is it about? Does it have any meaning to you? This is the first of four parts in *Kåranen* describing what the process is about. Check this out!

The Bologna project within the Student Union

At Mälardalen University, the Education Committee is the main responsible for the students’ influence in the Bologna process. The students have representatives at MdH at those levels working with the process. In November [2005], the principal will take a decision about what direction MdH will take. The Bologna School will present the answer in the next *Kåran*...”

Source: Translated from an article by Anna Olsson, ”Kårens Bolognaskola – del 1”, p. 25 in: *Kåranen*, 2005, # 5, Eskilstuna: Mälardalens Studentkår.

APPENDIX D – TEXTBOX: BOLOGNA – MORE THAN JUST A CITY**”Bologna – more than just a city**

Anyone heard about Bologna? Correct, Bologna is an Italian city that without a doubt is impressively picturesque. It is also correct that our good old player in the national football team, Kennet Andersson, has played for Bologna’s Football team.

But it is also the case that Bologna has gotten a new meaning in the academic world. Sure, Bologna is still a city, we can’t do anything about that, but the term “Bologna” implies also an incredibly big reform of Europe’s Higher Education. The reason why we chose to write about this reform is that things start to happen now in Sweden, and particularly within Örebro University.

After many and long referral procedures with a local suggestion of how we could implement the Bologna process in the best way here at Örebro University, it now seems that both faculties have reached an agreement. A proposal for a decision is sent to the University Board for a final decision.

How does the Bologna process affect you? Well, that depends. If you are at the end of your education, it does not affect you so incredibly much personally. If you have just started, you will see a whole lot of changes. Amongst other things, the Education will be divided into three levels: Ground level (120 points of Kandidat/Bachelor Degree), Advanced level (40 points of Magister Degree and 80 points of Master Degree), and Research level (160 points of Doctoral/PhD Degree).

The new thing is the “Master Degree”, this has been in place abroad for a while and will be introduced to Sweden as well. Another change is that a Magister degree will be required in order to be competent for a research level instead of the Kandidat degree as it was before. This change is made in order to harmonise Higher Education with the rest of Europe.

In the future course plans, there have to be so called learning outcomes, which means that it will be clear what the student will have acquired after finishing the course. This offers the student bigger possibilities to plan his or her studies in a better way than today, while we think that it can at the same time lead to new exciting ways of examination.

Have you even heard about the ECTS grade? The terrible seven-grade scale where you can get two forms of ‘not passed’? Luckily, this grade seems not to have had impact here at Örebro University. Stockholm University, on the other hand, has decided to introduce this grade. Good luck, students in Stockholm...”

Source: translated from an article by Niklas Sandman,
”Bologna – mer än bara en stad”, p. 21 in: Lösnummer, 2006, #3, Örebro: Örebro Studentkår.

