International student recruitment and institutional governance: a comparative study of two Nordic universities

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the ways in which Lund University (Lund) and the University of Oslo (UiO) employ their respective institutional websites for international student recruitment, both at the institutional level and at the level of individual degree programs, as well as how it relates to the modes of institutional governance at these two universities. Following a comprehensive review of literature on relevant topics, an analytical framework was developed by drawing on some well-established theories in the fields of higher education governance and international student recruitment. Thereafter, a qualitative content and discourse analysis was carried out on Lund's and UiO's institutional websites, and the findings revealed some interesting similarities and differences between these two universities. With a relatively large degree of institutional autonomy from external forces, UiO recruits international students based on predominately academic rationales. This is demonstrated by the university's institutional website, through which UiO promotes its institutional identity as a primarily academic institution dedicated to education and scientific research and views prospective international students as academic novices to be integrated into their respective disciplinary communities. In comparison, institutional governance at Lund is subject to stronger influence of external forces and there is an important economic rationale behind the recruitment of international students. While constructing its institutional identity as a service enterprise embedded in the competitive higher education market, Lund also addresses prospective international students as rational and calculative consumers with the power of choice. This is demonstrated by the adoption of a wide range of modern corporate marketing and communication techniques on its institutional website in order to create a distinctive brand image, appeal to the perceived needs of student consumers and place the university in a favorable position against its competitors. That being said, there is a certain degree of decentralization at both Lund and UiO, where individual faculties and disciplines have retained the autonomy to construct and promote their respective sub-identities. Once again, this corresponds well to findings from the institutional website analysis for both universities, where considerable differences were observed not only between the faculty-level and university-level webpages, but also among the faculty-level webpages of the four individual degree programs.

This study shed light on some rather interesting aspects of institutional governance in the context of international student recruitment. First, for universities that have adopted a more market-oriented approach at the institutional level (as is the case of Lund), the implementation

of modern corporate marketing and communication techniques could be limited at the faculty and disciplinary level. Second, when it comes to universities that have remained committed to the Humboldtian principle of freedom of teaching and learning at the institutional level (as is to a large extent the case of UiO), some faculties and disciplines (e.g. Economics and Social Anthropology) could take advantage of their individual autonomy to adopt modern corporate marketing and communication techniques and participate more actively in the competitive markets of higher education. In addition, this study confirmed the potential of institutional website analysis as a viable research method in the study of higher education institutions and presented a sound analytical framework that could be used to guide the empirical investigation process. That being said, in order to achieve a better understanding of the relationships between the institutional website, international student recruitment and the mode of institutional governance, it would be helpful in future research to combine institutional website analysis with some other research methods such as surveys, focus-group discussions and semi-structured interviews with relevant personnel from the central administration as well as individual faculties and disciplines.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the turn of the 21st century, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of students pursuing higher education outside their country of origin, from 2.1 million in 2000 to 5 million in 2016 (OECD, 2018). While the massification of higher education systems around the world may tell part of the story, it is also important to note that a large number of students are actively choosing to pursue higher education overseas, due to a combination of "push" and "pull" factors (Caruso & de Wit, 2015; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Study abroad has become a key differentiating factor, whereby students are assumed to gain access to quality education, learn new languages, acquire important skills and enhance their career prospects in an increasingly globalized world. Even though a significant percentage of these international students are concentrated in the English-speaking countries of United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia (OECD, 2018), some non-traditional destinations have emerged on the horizon. For example, Norway, a relatively small nation located on the Northern fringe of continental Europe, saw its number of international students increase to more than 25,000 in 2015, which accounted for approximately 10% of the total student population in higher education that year (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). In Sweden, there were over 35,000 international students enrolled in its universities and colleges in the academic year of 2016/2017, which also corresponded to about 10% of its total student population in higher education (Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2018). These mobility trends in part resulted from the accelerating processes of globalization taking place around the world but are also closely related to national and institutional responses to globalization. Due to a wide range of academic, political, economic, social and cultural considerations, the national governments in both Norway and Sweden have developed a series of policies aimed at the internationalization of higher education, while at the institutional level internationalization is increasingly being featured as an integral part of the institutional strategy among universities and colleges in the two Nordic countries (Ahola et al., 2014; Migrationsverket, 2019; Wiers-Jenssen, 2019).

Concurrent with the deliberate internationalization efforts at both the national level and the institutional level, prospective students are also gaining better access to information about the range of study programs and educational opportunities offered by universities around the world. Evidence shows that prospective students (and their parents) are increasingly relying on the institutional website as a prominent resource to gather important information about potential universities for higher education (Anctil, 2008; Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). In addition to the

ability of communicating a significant amount of information to a large audience in a prompt manner, the institutional website also enables the university to promote a specific version of institutional identity that is appealing, memorable and at the same time differentiates itself from the other players (i.e. universities) in the global competition for students. The construction of a distinctive institutional identity and the specific discursive strategies adopted by a university to communicate with prospective students to a certain extent depend on cultural norms in terms of public communication and website design (Callahan, 2005; Hite & Railsback, 2010), but are also deeply rooted in the university's mode of institutional governance. Lažetić (2019, p. 1011), for example, noted that the way a university is governed, financed and organized plays an important role in determining how it employs the institutional website to promote a distinctive institutional identity as well as an idealized identity of prospective students.

Traditionally, both Norway and Sweden have been characterized under the egalitarian Nordic model of the welfare state, where higher education is considered as a public good and provided for free through state-funded universities and colleges. For a long time, there have been deliberate policies at the national level to keep higher education accessible and free for all students, regardless of their social, economic and cultural backgrounds (Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2004). However, Geschwind et al. (2019) argued that the transition of the world economy into a knowledge society over the past few decades has profoundly transformed the social function of higher education from welfare state social engineering to one that increasingly corresponds to the needs and requirements of the global capitalist market. Recent higher education reforms have led to decentralization in both Norway and Sweden whereby the state prefers to steer the universities and colleges at a distance through a variety of management techniques that are more focused on output and performance (Ahola et al., 2014). Within the universities and colleges, a series of rationalization processes (Geschwind et al., 2019) have been carried out, resulting in the establishment of professional management and administration structures both at the central institutional level and at the faculty and departmental level. That said, due to a combination of factors related to national filters (Gornitzka et al., 2017), a higher education sector-specific filter (Gornitzka et al., 2017; March & Olsen, 1989) as well as historical development and path dependencies (Krücken, 2003), distinct modes of institutional governance have emerged across different universities and colleges in the two Nordic countries.

The above-mentioned higher education reforms at the national level as well as recent developments in university governance at the institutional level are believed to have had a

rather significant impact on how individual universities in Norway and Sweden construct a distinctive institutional identity and rationality (de Boer et al, 2007), establish their legitimacy and communicate with prospective students through the institutional website. In view of recent trends in social science research methodologies, Lažetić (2020) argued that institutional website analysis could be an effective tool for studying higher education institutions. While a number of studies have been carried out on university organization and governance across the Nordic countries (Ahola et al., 2014; Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2019; Christensen et al., 2014; Elken et al., 2016; Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2004; Geschwind et al., 2019, Gornitzka et al., 2017), and on the role of the institutional website in international student recruitment (Else & Crookes, 2015; Gottschall & Saltmarsh, 2017; Lažetić, 2019; Saichaie, 2011, Saichaie & Morphew, 2014; Svendsen & Svendsen, 2018), there is little research that connects these two branches of studies (Lažetić, 2020). Therefore, the present study intends to bridge the gap by examining the institutional websites of two Nordic universities, namely Lund University (Lund) in Sweden and the University of Oslo (UiO) in Norway. The primary focus is on the ways in which Lund and UiO employ their respective institutional websites (the English language webpages) for international student recruitment, both at the institutional level and at the level of individual degree programs, as well as how it relates to the modes of institutional governance at these two universities.

Established in 1666, Lund is a public and comprehensive university enrolling approximately 40,000 students in a wide range of study programs. UiO, which is also a public university, was established in 1811 and enrolls approximately 28,000 students in its eight faculties and schools. Both universities are widely considered among the most prestigious in the Nordic countries, and rank among the world's top 100 universities. In addition, both Lund and UiO have a strong international outlook and offer English-taught programs and courses to between 3,000 and 5,000 international students. That being said, when it comes to international student recruitment, there are notable differences between the two Nordic universities, where distinct modes of institutional governance have evolved over the years. For example, education at Lund is free of charge for Swedish and other EU/EEA nationals, while students from non-EU/EEA countries are required to pay tuition fees that correspond to the cost of education (Migrationsverket, 2019). In comparison, UiO offers free education to all students regardless of their nationality or country of origin, that is to say, including international students from non-EU/EEA countries. This is believed to have an impact on the way in which Lund and UiO view, recruit and communicate with prospective international students. While universities in

Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and United States are known to hire recruitment agents, participate in international education fairs and engage in professional marketing campaigns, both Lund and UiO are believed to mainly rely on their respective institutional websites for the recruitment of international students, although there are also some marketing efforts carried out by the Swedish Institute to promote Lund and other Swedish universities as destinations of higher education (Migrationsverket, 2019). This makes the institutional website an appropriate tool for analyzing how the two universities recruit international students both at the institutional level and at the level of individual degree programs, and more specifically how they promote a distinctive institutional identity and an idealized identity of prospective international students. The English language webpages of the institutional websites have been selected as the basis of analysis and comparison in this study, as it is assumed that they are first and foremost targeted at prospective international students (and their parents), the majority of whom are not proficient in Swedish/Norwegian.

1.1. Research questions

The research questions of this study are formulated as follows:

1. ***How do Lund and UiO employ their respective institutional websites for international student recruitment at the institutional level?***

   Through this question, the study will address how the two universities communicate with prospective international students and promote a distinctive institutional identity as well as an idealized identity of prospective international students through the university-level webpages on their respective institutional websites.

2. ***How do individual faculties and disciplines at Lund and UiO employ the institutional website for international student recruitment at the program level?***

   Through this question, the study will compare the webpages of four individual degree programs at Lund and UiO with the university-level webpages on their respective institutional websites, examine the similarities, differences and extent of alignment, and explore the issues of individual autonomy and institutional governance.

3. How does Lund's and UiO's use of the institutional website for international student recruitment relate to their respective modes of institutional governance?

Through this question, the study will assess the relationship between the ways in which Lund and UiO employ the institutional website for international student recruitment, both at the institutional level and at the level of individual degree programs, and their respective modes of institutional governance. It will address such issues as how important decisions (such as those related to international student recruitment) are made, the involvement of internal and external actors in the decision-making process as well as the degree of centralization (or decentralization) within the university.

1.2. Clarification of key terms

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines the term "international students" as those students "who received their prior education in another country and are not residents of their current country of study" (OECD, 2020). While this definition takes into account foreign students who move to Norway and Sweden specifically to pursue higher education, it excludes a significant number of foreign nationals who have already been living in Norway or Sweden when they enroll in a Norwegian or Swedish university (or college). For example, immigrants and refugees who have previously moved to Norway or Sweden for reasons that are not directly related to higher education but at a later stage decide to pursue higher education at a Norwegian or Swedish university (or college) would not be counted as "international students" by OECD's strict definition. Furthermore, it may be necessary to differentiate between two distinct groups of international students, namely full-time degree-seeking international students and exchange students. Full-time degree-seeking international students refer to those students pursuing their full higher education degree at a university overseas, while exchange students, which also includes Erasmus+ students, refer to those students who spend a limited period of time, for example, one semester or one academic year, at a university overseas as part of a bilateral or multilateral mobility agreement. Given the focus of the present study, the term international students refers to all foreign students pursuing their full higher education degree in Norway or Sweden, whether they must travel to the host country specifically for the purpose of higher education or have already been living there at the time of application.

In 2011, Sweden introduced tuition fees for degree-seeking international students from countries outside the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, while Norway continues to offer free higher education to all students (in public universities and colleges) regardless of their nationality or country of origin. It is believed that whether tuition fees are charged or not has a significant impact on how universities view, recruit and communicate with prospective international students. For the purpose of this study, the term "EU/EEA students" is adopted to refer to international students from countries within the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, while the term "non-EU/EEA students" refers to international students from countries outside the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, who are generally required to pay tuition fees in order to pursue full-degree higher education in Sweden. In addition, it is assumed that as far as international student recruitment is concerned, the English language webpages of Lund's and UiO's institutional websites are first and foremost targeted at full-time degree-seeking international students (the majority of whom are not proficient in Norwegian or Swedish), which may include both EU/EEA students and non-EU/EEA students.

1.3. Significance of study

Along with recent developments in higher education governance and the popularization of the Internet in the digital age, universities around the world are increasingly employing the institutional website, which has emerged as a prominent resource for prospective international students and their parents to gather important information about higher education opportunities overseas (Anctil, 2008; Saichaie & Morphew, 2014), to enhance their reputation and recruit international students. However, despite its potential in comparative higher education research, there have been a rather limited number of studies that adopt institutional websites analysis as a research method to investigate similarities and differences across different higher education institutions (Lažetić, 2020). Furthermore, the few studies that did adopt institutional website analysis as the research methodology are overwhelmingly focused on issues related to the institutional identity and the representations of different types of students. Instead of adopting a proper theoretical framework to guide the empirical investigation process, Lažetić (2020) noted that the majority of these studies tend to follow a linear casual explanation logic in the analysis. Therefore, the present study intends to bridge these gaps and connect the mode of institutional governance with international student recruitment, the construction of a distinctive institutional identity and the promotion of an idealized identity of prospective international

students, through an empirical examination of the institutional websites of two Nordic universities. It draws on well-established theories in university governance and international student recruitment to develop a sound analytical framework in order to guide the empirical investigation process, and deliberately provides rich accounts of the details of the two case universities' institutional websites as well as the different political, economic, social and cultural contexts they are situated in so as to achieve a better understanding of the topics of interest. Through this study, the researcher intends to test out institutional website analysis as a valid and effective methodological approach in comparative higher education research, and encourage further research in this direction, potentially on a larger scale and in a more comprehensive manner.

1.4. Limitations

The present study is primarily based on the analysis of the design features and information available on two institutional websites (e.g. language, images and videos), which represent only a relatively isolated snapshot of the current state of the two case universities. Consequently, it would be difficult to interpret any correlation between the institutional website, international student recruitment and the mode of institutional governance in simple causal terms. That is why this study intentionally provides rich accounts of the details of the institutional websites as well as the larger political, economic, social and cultural contexts where the two universities are situated in order to allow for a better interpretation and understanding. Furthermore, the nature of the research design in this study also limits any interpretation in terms of how changes in the mode of institutional governance could potentially impact the use of the institutional website for international student recruitment. That being said, this could potentially be achieved in future research by conducting a longitudinal analysis of the evolution of the institutional website over a sufficiently long period of time.

Given the focus on the recruitment of international students, the majority of whom are not proficient in Norwegian/Swedish, this study examines the English language webpages of the institutional websites. However, international students (including both EU/EEA students and non-EU/EEA students) account for merely 10% of the total student population in Norway and Sweden, and the percentage of non-EU/EEA students who are actually required to pay tuition fees in Sweden (i.e. without any scholarship) is even smaller. Furthermore, following recent national reforms in higher education both Lund and UiO have adopted practices from New

Public Management, albeit to different degrees, including the establishment of relevant administrative units with dedicated marketing and communication professionals that are responsible for the design and maintenance of the institutional website. It could therefore be questioned whether and how much an analysis of the institutional website alone could reveal about the modes of institutional governance at Lund and UiO. While this study intends to go beyond the surface to analyze the language use and discourse on the institutional website and examine the not-so-evident similarities and differences between university-level and faculty-level webpages, future research could consider combining institutional website analysis with some other relevant research methods, for example, surveys, focus-group discussions and semi-structured interviews with relevant personnel from the central administration as well as academics from individual faculties and disciplines. In addition, although beyond the scope of the present study, it could be interesting to examine the institutional website in its original language (i.e. the Swedish language webpages for Lund and the Norwegian language webpages for UiO) and explore how changes in the mode of institutional governance impact the way the institutional website is employed to recruit national students.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

The present thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter offers some important background information and states the purpose, the significance and the limitations of this study, as well as the primary research questions that guide the empirical investigation process. The second chapter presents a review of literature on topics relevant to this study and comprises seven sections. The first two sections discuss the rationales behind international student recruitment and the determinants for international students' choice of destination. The next three sections deal with the institutional website and its role in international student recruitment, with a focus on the construction of a distinctive institutional identity and the promotion of an idealized identity of prospective students. The final two sections relate the institutional website to the mode of institutional governance as well as recent reforms and developments in Norwegian and Swedish higher education. Chapter 3 draws on some well-established theories in higher education governance and international student recruitment to develop an analytical framework, while Chapter 4 presents the methodology adopted in this study covering such issues as research strategy, research design, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity and reliability. Chapter 5 presents and discusses the primary findings of this study, while the sixth and final chapter concludes the thesis with a brief summary of the

study, attempted responses to the three research questions, contributions to the field as well as recommendations for further research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is focused on the ways in which Lund and UiO employ the institutional website for international student recruitment and how it relates to the modes of institutional governance at these two universities. Consequently, this chapter starts with a review of literature around the topic of student mobility and discusses the rationales behind international student recruitment (Section 2.1) as well as the determinants for international students' choice of destination (Section 2.2). The next three sections (2.3, 2.4 and 2.5) explore the role of the institutional website in international student recruitment, with a focus on the construction of a distinctive institutional identity and the promotion of an idealized identity of prospective students. In the final two sections (2.6 and 2.7), the institutional website is related to the mode of institutional governance as well as recent developments in Norwegian and Swedish higher education.

2.1. Rationales behind international student recruitment

Student mobility is widely considered as the most frequent and visible form of internationalization of higher education (Sin et al., 2019; Sursock, 2015; Wiers-Jenssen, 2019), and a survey conducted by the European University Association (2013) in 38 European countries reported that when it comes to internationalization, the utmost priority is to attract international students. It could therefore be argued that the major drivers for international student recruitment generally overlap with the rationales behind the internationalization of higher education (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019), which are often categorized into four different but interconnected groups: academic rationales, social and cultural rationales, economic rationales, and political rationales (Sin et al., 2019; van der Wende, 1997). Academic rationales are based on the belief that the presence of international students enhances the quality of both education and research at the host university and helps achieve international academic standards. This is related to the aims and functions of higher education and assumes that internationalization is central to the mission of the university rather than being a marginalized endeavor. Social and cultural rationales emphasize the respect for cultural diversity, the promotion of the country's own language, history and culture, as well as the understanding of foreign cultures. In this regard, the recruitment of international students could potentially contribute to the development of cross-cultural competencies among local students, lecturers and administrative staff members. Economic rationales are related to either short-term direct revenues generated by the recruitment of international students such as tuition fees and living expenses, or long-term

economic benefits whereby international students are perceived as prospective highly skilled workers required for survival and prosperity in the age of knowledge economy. Political rationales, in comparison, are related to issues concerning the country's position and role in the world, such as security, stability, peace and ideological influence, and are therefore highly relevant from a national perspective. For example, specific scholarships could be awarded to foreign students who are perceived as promising future leaders in their home countries as a form of diplomatic investment for future political and economic relations.

However, there have been notable changes in the rationales behind internationalization and the recruitment of international students, both within and between the four groups (Knight, 2004). At the national level, there is an increasing interest in attracting the best students from overseas in order to increase the country's own scientific, technological and economic competitiveness in the global knowledge society. Furthermore, international student recruitment has proved to be an effective means of strengthening political and economic ties with strategic partner countries. At the institutional level, the rationales behind international student recruitment depend on a wide range of factors, including the university's mission, student population, faculty profile, geographic location, funding, and orientation to local, national and international interests. For example, there has been a very strong drive among universities around the world to cultivate an international reputation and name brand in order to compete with other players in the increasingly competitive markets of higher education. In addition, Knight (2004) noted that due to a combination of factors related to reduced public funding and increased operational costs, more universities have been actively looking to international student recruitment as a viable alternative source of income, be it for profit generation or cost recovery. The recent and ongoing international crisis associated with the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), however, threatens to have a potentially devastating impact on universities that have become overly dependent on the revenues generated from international student recruitment.

According to Sin et al. (2019), the recruitment of international students has been a topic for discussion in the Norwegian national politics since the late 1980s, and student mobility was considered as an effective strategy for the internationalization of higher education. That being said, there has been a shift from a more spontaneous "traditional internationalization" (Gornitzka et al., 2003) to a more institutionalized "new internationalization" with explicit goals (including the recruitment of international students) as well as the necessary administrative support required (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). In addition to its prominence in higher

education policies at the national level, internationalization is also increasingly being featured as an integral part of the institutional strategy across Norwegian universities and colleges. These policies and strategies are generally based on academic rationales, whereby the recruitment of international students is perceived as a strategic tool for enhancing academic quality and promoting internationalization at home (Maassen et al., 2005). Furthermore, the Quality Reform in 2003 introduced significant changes in the funding structure of public universities and colleges, whereby the allocation of government funding becomes dependent, to a certain extent, on the total number of credits awarded every year, and this has served as an incentive for universities and colleges to attract more students, both from within Norway and from abroad. In comparison, political rationales such as international solidarity and capacity building have been deemphasized in institutional strategies on internationalization (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019), which is in line with the claims made by de Wit (2013) that the internationalization of higher education has gone from aid to trade.

Due to increasing challenges in the labor market, Sweden, along with many other countries in Europe, has been looking to immigration as a possible solution for the ageing population, and this includes the recruitment of international students who are perceived as prospective highly skilled workers required for survival and prosperity in the age of knowledge economy. In 2005, the Swedish government developed a strategy named "New world, new university" (*Ny värld, ny högskola*), which expressed its ambition for Sweden to become an attractive destination of higher education for international students (Migrationsverket, 2019). Recently there were also plans to extend the period of time allowed for international students to seek employment in Sweden upon successful completion of their studies (Migrationsverket, 2019). Furthermore, the Swedish national government has been working on a new internationalization strategy for higher education, which among other things aims to further increase the attractiveness of Sweden as a destination for higher education and research and create better conditions for international students and staff. One important rationale behind this new development is the firm belief that internationalization contributes to improving the quality of education and research and to "the sustainable development that higher education institutions are meant to foster" (Migrationsverket, 2019, p.12). In addition, it is believed that the internationalization of higher education could further raise Sweden's profile on the world stage, cultivate affiliation and goodwill among other nations, and enhance the international understanding and intercultural competences of Swedish universities as well as their staff and students (Migrationsverket, 2019).

2.2. Determinants for international students' choice of destination

The reasons why prospective students choose to pursue higher education abroad and the factors influencing their choice of destination are usually categorized into "push" and "pull" factors (Caruso & de Wit, 2015; Maringe & Carter, 2007; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). The "Push" factors operate within the students' country of origin and typically include the insufficient capacity of the national higher education system to accommodate all students who want to pursue higher education, poor or unequal access to universities and educational programs of quality, political instability, linguistic isolation, lack of academic freedom, as well as low employment prospects after graduation. In comparison, the "pull" factors are related to the host country and may include colonial and cultural ties, immigration policies, high standard of living, the quality of education, academic freedom, employment opportunities during and after study, as well as active recruitment policy and initiatives at both the national and institutional level. For many prospective international students from low-income countries, the push factors are often stronger than the pull factors in their decision to pursue higher education overseas. However, once the decision to study abroad has been made, the pull factors assume a more important role in the choice of the destination country and university (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), and a number of additional pull factors could make one university more attractive than another, such as the academic reputation, language of instruction, availability of courses, tuition fees, infrastructure and resources (both academic and non-academic), as well as active promotion and marketing efforts by the university (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Through a survey of more than 3,000 international students in Norway, Wiers-Jenssen (2019) reported that the two most important reasons why international students choose Norway as the destination of higher education are the availability of English-taught courses and the absence of tuition fees, both of which could be attributed to deliberate political decisions at the national level. Furthermore, a large number of international students seem to be motivated by career prospects in Norway upon graduation, even though skilled immigration does not feature explicitly in the internationalization agenda of national policies. In addition, Wiers-Jenssen (2019) noted that while it depends on the subject of study and the students' country of origin, by and large academic reputation and the quality of study programs seem to play a relatively minor role in international students' decision to pursue higher education in Norway.

Migrationsverket (2019) noted that the quality of Swedish universities and the wide range of English-taught degree programs available play an instrumental role in the recruitment of international students to Sweden. In contrast to its western neighbor (Norway) where higher education is free of charge for all students regardless of their nationality, Sweden introduced tuition fees for international students from countries outside of the EU/EEA in 2011. However, there are a large number of scholarships, bursaries and financial aid schemes at both the national level and the institutional level. Lund, for example, offers a "*Lund University Global Scholarship*", a competitive, merit-based scholarship scheme (totaled SEK 15 million per year) targeted at non-EU/EEA students with the best academic results (Lund University, 2020a). According to Migrationsverket (2019), the main idea behind the Swedish government's move to impose tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students and offer scholarships is to promote competition among Swedish universities and colleges, and to be more selective in admissions in order to attract the right kind of international students who are talented and committed to contributing to the Swedish economy by staying on after graduation (i.e. rather than targetlessly attracting international students through tuition-free education). Furthermore, Migrationsverket (2019) noted that most Swedish universities have developed specific institutional strategies aimed at recruiting international students from overseas. In addition to active promotional efforts by the Swedish Institute at the national level, it has become common practices for some universities to participate in education fairs overseas, engage consultants and recruitment agents and organize campus visits for prospective international students. In extreme cases, several universities have even established offices overseas, such as Uppsala University in Hanoi and Karolinska Institute in Hong Kong (Migrationsverket, 2019).

2.3. International student recruitment and the institutional website

Along with the popularization of the Internet in the digital age, the institutional website is seen to be playing an instrumental role in universities' corporate branding and marketing efforts. It often serves as the first impression of the university for prospective students, when they visit the institutional website and are greeted by a digital handshake (Anctil, 2008; Lažetić, 2019; Saichaie, 2011). Furthermore, international students and their parents are increasingly relying on institutional websites as a prominent resource to gather information about the universities and the range of study programs and educational opportunities available (Anctil, 2008; Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). In addition to the ability of communicating a significant amount of information to a large audience in a prompt manner, the institutional website also enables the

university to construct an appealing institutional identity that differentiates itself from the other universities in the competition for international students. However, higher education is a rather abstract concept, and it is very difficult to measure its quality or value. In trying to promote a distinctive institutional identity, universities are compelled to be creative and come up with more tangible evidences that support their claims. To this end, universities around the world have developed different discursive strategies whereby a wide range of textual and audio-visual elements, design features and language genres are employed on the institutional website in order to communicate with prospective students in an effective and convincing manner (Saichaie, 2011). For example, the extensive use of institutional logos and slogans helps generate awareness and relevancy; the reference to a university's performance in national and international rankings enhances its creditability and legitimacy; and textual and video testimonials from successful alumni are often prominently featured on the institutional website in order to build trust with prospective students (Saichaie, 2011). There are, however, notable differences in the discursive strategies adopted by universities around the world, for example, in the way they construct a distinctive institutional identity and promote an idealized identity of prospective students, as will be discussed in more detail in the next two sections.

2.4. Institutional website and the construction of institutional identity

It has been argued that universities actively employ the institutional website to construct a distinctive institutional identity and to promote it to prospective students. From the standpoint of prospective students, the institutional website also serves as a primary means to gather information about universities and get a sense of what higher education constitutes. While reflecting on the transition from mass to universal higher education, Trow (1970) highlighted the rising tension between the "autonomous functions" and the "popular functions" of the university. The autonomous functions, which are intrinsic to the conception of the university, refer to the purposes and activities that the university defines for itself, such as the creation of knowledge, the transmission of the high culture, the selection, formation and certification of elite groups. These autonomous functions have evolved in Europe and the United States since the early 19th century and are now shared with universities across the globe. The popular functions, in comparison, had most broadly developed in the United States, and are related to the purposes and activities that the university takes on in response to external needs and demands, such as providing mass higher education to the population and providing knowledge and service to individuals, groups and organizations in the society. In view of the indefinitely

expanding popular functions in the United States (and the same could be said today for many other countries around the world), Trow (1970) asked whether it would impact or endanger the survival of the university's autonomous functions. Another American scholar, Labaree (1997), identified three competing purposes of higher education (in the US context), namely democratic equality, social efficiency and social mobility. Both democratic equality, which refers to the cultivation of well-informed and engaged citizens, and social efficiency, which focuses on the training of skilled workers for the economy, are aligned with the notion of education for the public good. Social mobility, in comparison, emphasizes the economic and social benefits of higher education for individual students and is therefore more aligned with the notion of education for private good. Castells (2001), in comparison, viewed the university as a dynamic system of four contradictory functions, namely the generation and transmission of ideology, the selection and formation of dominant elites, the production and application of knowledge, and the training of skilled labour force. In addition, he noted a fifth function of the university in surplus labour absorption, whereby potentially restive young students are "absorbed" into higher education and transformed into idle labour for the economy.

Whether different functions of the university are presented on the institutional website and how they are presented could reveal much about the perceived value and importance of these functions, the university's identity construction as well as its mode of institutional governance. Through a systematic analysis of the institutional websites of 39 universities in Australia, Else and Crookes (2015) noted a severe lack of visibility for teaching and learning, which they argued are being side-lined or overshadowed by research. While teaching and learning have long struggled for recognition in universities, this study highlighted the low level of importance that Australian universities attribute to teaching and learning in their mission, vision and identity construction. The institutional website communicates what the university (and higher education) is about, and this could potentially mislead prospective students into choosing a university based on its research reputation as presented on its institutional website rather than based on its quality of teaching and learning.

Through a content analysis of the institutional websites of 12 universities and colleges in the United States, Saichaie and Morphew (2014) revealed that the sampled universities, which vary significantly in type, control, size and selectivity, utilize a common promotional discourse en masse to promote rather similar and systematic representations of higher education to prospective students. Much of what appears on the institutional website seems to be a generic

representation of the lifestyle associated with attending higher education, rather than a scholarly journey of intellectual and spiritual development. Emphasis is placed on the economic and social benefits of higher education for individual students such as skill acquisition, career preparation and social network, while there is little reference to democratic equality, social efficacy or the notion of higher education as a public good. Saichaie and Morphew (2014) cautioned that the identity of (American) higher education and consequently that of the (American) university has been destabilized whereby the core has become peripheral and the periphery has become core.

2.5. Institutional website and the promotion of an idealized student identity

Gottschall and Saltmarsh (2017) examined promotional videos featured on the institutional websites of Australian universities and noted that a range of discursive strategies and multimedia elements are systematically employed by these universities in order to construct an idealized university experience and promote an idealized student identity. In constructing the student identity, universities tend to emphasize leisure, pleasure, happiness and a good social life in order to appeal to the perceived desires of student consumers. Learning and scholarship, in comparison, tend to be relegated to the background as secondary activities. This type of discourse on the institutional website in turn influences how students see themselves, for example, as consumers of an educational product/service or as clients in a contract with the university. In Denmark, Svendsen and Svendsen (2018) noted the emergence (since the early 2010s) of "Student Life" webpages on the institutional websites of all eight Danish universities, through which these universities actively promote an idealized student identity and portray an idealized life as a university student. Despite the fact that higher education in Denmark is free of charge for students from Denmark and other EU/EEA countries, there is nonetheless a strong incentive for universities to attract and retain more students as firstly the funding from the government depends in part on the total number of credits awarded each year, and secondly students from non-EU/EEA countries must pay tuition fees. Through a critical discourse analysis of the content and style of the "Student Life" webpages, Svendsen and Svendsen (2018) argued that universities tend to adopt a promotional discourse en masse and portray higher education as an exciting and fun social experience coupled with a friendly atmosphere, superb facilities and beautiful surroundings, while deemphasizing the scholarly pursuit of knowledge, intellectual development and other academic aspects of higher education. A wide range of promotional genres and persuasive rhetorical modes, such as pronouns, metaphors and positive

evaluation, are employed in a systematic manner in order to commodify higher education, highlight the social life and deemphasize the academic and more essential aspects of being a student. Prospective students are positioned as consumers who make calculative choices based on how well universities meet their needs for a great student life, while universities are reduced from an academic institution for scholarly pursuit of knowledge to a physical campus for fun and exciting social experiences.

2.6. Institutional website and institutional governance

In an increasingly digitalized world, the institutional website has become an indispensable medium of communication, through which the university actively promotes a distinctive institutional identity and an idealized identity of prospective students. The differences observed in institutional websites are, to a certain extent, the result of distinct cultural norms in terms of public communication and website design (Callahan, 2005; Hite & Railsback, 2010), but are also deeply rooted in the universities' modes of institutional governance (Lažetić, 2019) and the extent to which New Public Management (NPM) ideas have been implemented. Lažetić (2019) studied the institutional websites of 150 higher education institutions across six European countries, namely England and Ireland, where there is significant inter-institutional competition for students, staff and funding and the institutions usually feature a strong and professional central administration; Spain and Poland, which have retained much of the more traditional model of academic self-governance; and Germany and Denmark, which are characterized by a weakened academic collegial governance model, the absence of tuition fees (for students from EU/EEA countries) and limited competition for resources.

Lažetić (2019) identified two idealized higher education institution types, each with its own set of website features (see Table 2.1), namely "the university as a corporate brand" and "the university as a public service provider and primarily an academic institution focused on teaching and learning". Thereafter, he conducted a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to analyze the presence of these features on 150 institutional websites and observed significant differences across the six countries. For example, the institutional websites in England, Ireland, Denmark and Germany are characterized by a large degree of visual homogeneity, an important corporate branding feature whereby the institutional logo and a consistent set of layout, colors and fonts are present across different sub-units of the institution. In comparison, the faculties and disciplines in Spanish and Polish institutions are observed to

have generally retained their individual sub-identities on the subpages of the institutional website. In England and Ireland, institutions tend to position students as calculative consumers with the power of choice and promote primarily the institution itself as a corporate brand. Conversely, more emphasis is placed on individual study programs in Germany and Spain, as students are regarded as academic novices or recipients of public service who are expected to follow bureaucratic instructions in order to enroll in publicly funded study programs and integrate into their respective disciplinary communities.

Table 2.1: Website features of two idealized institutional types (Lažetić, 2019)

Website features	University as a corporate brand	University as a public service provider
University name and logo (1)	Present on all subpages of the university website	Not present on all subpages of the university website
Layout, colour theme, font (2)	Same across all subunits of the university	Different across subunits of the university
Home page main menu structure (3)	Structured based on type of users (students, applicants, staff, media, companies)	Structured based on departments, units or functions (research, study…)
Themes of the "About us" section	Vision and mission statement (4)	Historical overview (6)
	Position of university in the rankings and awards (5)	Famous staff and students (7)
		General academic achievements (8)
Focus of the applicant page(s)	Emphasis on the importance of institutional choice, providing reasons for studying at a particular institution (9)	Emphasis on the right choice of study area (10)
		Elaborates administrative, admission and enrolment procedures. (11)
Language of the applicant page(s) (12)	Applicants are addressed directly with the use of the pronoun "you" and "your" empowering them by giving them impression of consumer choice	Passive voice and/or with active voice assigned only the institution through use of collective "we" and "our"
Elements on the applicant pages	Testimonials of student experience (13)	No student testimonials
	Reference to student charters and similar semi contractual documents (14)	No reference to contractual arrangements;

2.7.   Institutional governance in Norway and Sweden

Clark (1986) introduced a triangle of coordination where the governance of higher education systems is depicted as the dynamic interplay of three primary forces, namely, the state, the market and the academic oligarchy. Olsen (2007), on the other hand, made a distinction between viewing the university as an institution or as an instrument. In the former view, the university is a relatively independent organization with a set of inherent rules and organized practices that are embedded in structures of meaning. In the latter view, the university becomes an organizational tool used to achieve certain pre-determined objectives and therefore is the result of the interplay of different internal or external actors that exert pressure on university governance. Based on assumptions about what the university is for and under what circumstances it will work well, Olsen (2007) developed four idealized visions or stylized

models for the (European) university (see Table 2.2), namely "The university is a rule-governed community of scholars", "The university is an instrument for national political agendas", "The university is a representative democracy" and "The university is a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets" (p. 29). The first vision adopts the institutional view and portrays the university as a rule-governed community of scholars, while the other three visions consider the university as a rational instrument for either internal actors, namely, different individuals and groups within the university, or external actors, namely, national governments with shifting political agendas and customers (stakeholders) in the competitive markets of higher education.

Table 2.2: Four visions of university organization and governance (Olsen, 2007)

Autonomy: / *Conflict:*	University operations and dynamics are governed by *internal* factors	University operations and dynamics are governed by *environmental* factors
Actors have *shared* norms and objectives	**The University is a rule-governed community of scholars** *Constitutive logic:* Identity based on free inquiry, truth finding, rationality and expertise. *Criteria of assessment:* Scientific quality. *Reasons for autonomy:* Constitutive principle of the University as an institution: authority to the best qualified. *Change:* Driven by the internal dynamics of science. Slow reinterpretation of institutional identity. Rapid and radical change only with performance crises.	**The University is an instrument for national political agendas** *Constitutive logic:* Administrative: Implementing predetermined political objectives. *Criteria of assessment:* Effective and efficient achievement of national purposes. *Reasons for autonomy:* Delegated and based on relative efficiency. *Change:* Political decisions, priorities, designs as a function of elections, coalition formation and breakdowns and changing political leadership.
Actors have *conflicting* norms and objectives	**The University is a representative democracy** *Constitutive logic:* Interest representation, elections, bargaining and majority decisions. *Criteria of assessment:* Who gets what: Accommodating internal interests. *Reasons for autonomy:* Mixed (work-place democracy, functional competence, *realpolitik*). *Change:* Depends on bargaining and conflict resolution and changes in power, interests, and alliances.	**The University is a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets** *Constitutive logic:* Community service. Part of a system of market exchange and price systems. *Criteria of assessment:* Meeting community demands. Economy, efficiency, flexibility, survival. *Reasons for autonomy:* Responsiveness to "stakeholders" and external exigencies, survival. *Change:* Competitive selection or rational learning. Entrepreneurship and adaptation to changing circumstances and sovereign customers.

Traditionally, both Norway and Sweden have been characterized under the egalitarian Nordic model of the welfare state, where higher education is considered as a public good and provided for free through state-funded universities and colleges. There have been deliberate policies at

the national level to keep higher education accessible and free of charge for all students, regardless of their social, economic and cultural backgrounds (Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2004). Along with the accelerating processes of globalization and the world transitioning into a knowledge economy, higher education has emerged as an important tool for socio-economic development and therefore a policy sector of strategic importance for the Nordic welfare states. In the 1970s, universities across Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden underwent significant democratization changes, where the academic oligarchy willingly gave up their privileges and agreed to a more democratic decision-making system that also involves junior faculty, administrative staff and students. Subsequently, two waves of New Public Management (NPM) reforms spread across Europe, first in the 1980s and then in the early 2000s, and governments in all four Nordic countries have moved towards steering universities at a distance, through a variety of mechanisms that are more focused on performance and output, such as contracts, agreements, formula funding, and quality assurance (Ahola et al., 2014; Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2019). At the institutional level, universities in the Nordic countries are increasingly expected to not only manage their internal operations in a cost-efficient manner, but also actively respond to the needs of external stakeholders and adapt to the changes in the globalized and competitive higher education landscape. Through a series of rationalization processes (Geschwind et al., 2019), professional management and administration structures have been established across different Nordic universities at the central institutional level as well as at the faculty and departmental level. It could be argued that the transition of the world economy into a knowledge society over the past few decades has profoundly transformed the social function of higher education from welfare state social engineering to one that increasingly corresponds to the needs and requirements of the global capitalist market (Geschwind et al., 2019). In addition, while universities may have been granted more institutional autonomy with regard to academic offerings, funding and internal organization, Geschwind et al. (2019) argued that power within the university has been gradually transferred from the academic community (or oligarchy) towards the institutional leadership and central administration. That being said, universities in the Nordic countries continue to receive a significant proportion of their annual budget from the state in the form of basic grants and the mode of institutional governance has retained relatively more of its democratic nature, as compared to universities in the Anglo-Saxon countries of Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The rationales behind these university reforms are rather similar across the four Nordic countries: expansion and democratization in the 1970s, integration of professional institutions

in the 1980s and the 1990s, strengthening leadership, management and stakeholder influence in the 1990s, the Bologna process and further managerial reforms since the millennium. However, rather than a global convergence in terms of university governance models, there are clear indications that higher education reforms have led to more diversity and heterogeneity among different countries and universities around the world (Christensen et al., 2014). It is believed that the enactment of generic public sector reform models is subject to a "national filter" (Gornitzka et al., 2017, p. 275), due to variations in the political and administrative traditions across different countries. For example, Bleiklie and Michelsen (2019) observe significant differences in the timing, emphasis and operationalization of higher education policies and strategies. While Sweden introduced university boards with external representation in 1977, it did not happen in Norway until 1995. When it comes to funding, Norwegian universities receive a slightly higher proportion of their annual budget as a basic public grant than their Danish and Swedish counterparts, whereas Swedish universities receive the highest share of competitive funding from the government. In Denmark and Sweden, competitive public research funding is organized based on specific sectors in an autonomous way, while Norway has developed one monolithic research funding agency, namely *Norges forskningsråd*, that is responsible for funding the different types of research and innovation projects (Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2019). In addition, over the years a sector-specific filter has evolved within the higher education sector in Europe, which serves to keep the established values, traditions, structures and arrangements in place (Gornitzka et al., 2017; March & Olsen, 1989). Therefore, individual universities, as strategic organizational actors (Krücken & Meier, 2006) with distinct identities and characteristics, are believed to have plenty of room to manoeuvre when it comes to adapting to national policies on higher education as well as to developments in the larger social and economic context. Due to a combination of factors related to national filters (Gornitzka et al., 2017), a higher education sector-specific filter (Gornitzka et al., 2017; March & Olsen, 1989) as well as historical development and path dependencies (Krücken, 2003), it could be argued that distinct modes of institutional governance have emerged across different universities in the Nordic countries.

Both Lund and UiO have established a University Board which is executive in nature and serves as the highest decision-making body within the university. The University Board at UiO is composed of eleven members: the Rector, three representatives elected from the academic community, one representative elected from the administrative staff, two representatives elected from the student body and four external members appointed by the Ministry of

Education and Science (University of Oslo, 2020). The Rector, who is internally and democratically elected by the university's staff and students, serves as the Chairperson of the University Board. Gornitzka et al. (2017) considered the composition of UiO's University Board as a great example of the democratic governance model that is deeply rooted in the Norwegian society, whereby all relevant actors and groups are represented but without anyone having the power to dominate. With the internally elected Rector as the Chairperson of the University Board and only four external members (out of eleven members), it could be argued that the university enjoys a large degree of institutional autonomy from external forces, at least on paper. It should be noted, however, that in practice UiO remains a public university that receives a significant proportion of its annual budget from the state, and consequently has limited room to manoeuvre especially when it comes to budget and personnel policies. Viewing knowledge as a public good, UiO offers tuition-free education to all students that meet the academic requirements, regardless of their nationality or social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The rationales behind international student recruitment at UiO are therefore pre-dominantly academic, i.e. the presence of international students enhances the quality of both education and research at the host university and helps achieve international academic standards.

In comparison, the University Board at Lund comprises 15 members: the Vice-Chancellor, eight external members appointed by the state (one of which also assumes the role of the Chairperson of the University Board), three academic staff members and three students (Lund University, 2020b). Considering the substantial representation of external members (eight out of 15, that is to say, more than 50%) on the University Board as well the fact that the role of the Chairperson is assumed by an external member appointed by the state, it is reasonable to argue that the institutional governance at Lund is subject to strong influence by the state and other external forces. Following the Swedish government's introduction of tuition fees for students from non-EU/EEA countries in 2011, there has been a more important economic rationale for Lund to recruit and retain international students in the globalized and competitive higher education market. Furthermore, through imposing tuition fees and offering scholarships, Lund is determined to be more selective in its admissions in order to attract the right kind of international students who are talented and committed to contributing to the Swedish economy by staying on after graduation (i.e. instead of targetlessly recruiting international students through offering tuition-free education).

While the University Board at UiO oversees the strategic development of the university's educational and research activities and ensures that it operates within the legal framework set by the Norwegian government, it is the Rector and the University Director that are responsible for the day-to-day management of the university (University of Oslo, 2019). The University Director is the highest-ranking administrative officer at UiO and serves as the head of university administration, which comprises such support units as the Department of Education Services, the Department of Research Administration, the Department of Administrative Support, the Department of Communications and External Relations, the Department of Personnel Support, the Internal Audit Unit and the Centre for Information Technology Services (University of Oslo, 2019). However, a significant proportion of duties have been delegated to the individual faculties and disciplines, where the Faculty Boards (which are composed of both internal and external members) are responsible for the academic and administrative activities of their respective faculties (Gornitzka et al., 2017).

The management team at Lund, which is responsible for achieving the goals set by the University Board, is composed of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, three Pro-Vice Chancellors, the University Director and the Senior Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor (Lund University, 2020b). The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the Swedish national government and serves as the university's chief executive officer, responsible for both academic and administrative aspects of the university's operations. Reporting to the Vice-Chancellor, the University Director heads a strong and professional central administration, which includes such sections as Corporate Communication, Estates, External Relations, Finance, Human Resources, Legal & Record Management, Research, Collaboration & Innovation, Student Affairs (Lund University, 2020b). The Corporate Communication Section comprises a team of dedicated full-time professionals who are responsible for corporate communication and marketing efforts at the university level. Within the section there is a dedicated Web Communications Department charged with the coordination, quality assurance and continuous improvement of the institutional website, as well as a Media and Branding Department that works closely with national and international press to enhance Lund's visibility and attractiveness (Lund University, 2020b). That said, it is the Faculty Boards that assume the responsibility of the day-to-date operations of their respective faculties, as delegated by the University Board and the Vice-Chancellor (Lund University, 2020b).

3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

It could be questioned whether and to what extent recent higher education reforms as well as developments in institutional governance have impacted the way individual universities in Norway and Sweden recruit (both national and international) students, which could be reflected in the way the institutional website is employed in their communication with prospective students. The present study intends to examine the institutional websites (English language webpages) of two Nordic universities, namely Lund in Sweden and UiO in Norway, and to investigate how they employ their respective institutional websites for international student recruitment. The focus is on how these two universities construct a distinctive institutional identity and promote an idealized identity of prospective international students through the institutional website, both at the institutional level and at the level of individual degree programs, and this could in turn be related to the modes of institutional governance at Lund and UiO. Inspired by the works of Dobbins et al. (2011) and Lažetić (2019), this study draws on Olsen's (2007) four visions of university organization and governance (see Table 2.2) to identify three idealized university models, each of which comes with its own set of key characteristics (see Table 3.1) and is in turn marked by a distinctive set of website features (see Table 3.2).

"The Autonomous University" integrates two of Olsen's (2007) four visions of university organization and governance, namely "The University is a rule-governed community of scholars" and "The University is a representative democracy". Despite the fact that different individuals and groups within the university may have both shared and conflicting interests and objectives, it is assumed that institutional operations and dynamics within The Autonomous University are first and foremost governed by internal factors, that is to say, the principles, norms and traditions that are intrinsic to the conception of the university. In comparison, "The State University" and "The Corporate University", which correspond to "The University is an instrument for national political agendas" and "The University is a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets" respectively in Olsen's (2007) four visions of university organization and governance, adopt an instrumental view and assume that the university's institutional operations and dynamics are primarily governed by external or environmental factors, namely shifting national political agendas for The State University and mechanisms of the competitive higher education market for The Corporate University.

Table 3.1: Key characteristics of three idealized university models (based on Olsen (2007))

The Autonomous University	The State University	The Corporate University
Institutional identity: an autonomous and academic institution with a set of inherent rules and organizing principles, comprised of internal actors with both shared and conflicting interests. **Education and research**: knowledge is a public good; education is made free, open and accessible to all; research is based on free inquiry, regardless of immediate utility and applicability, political convenience or economic benefit. **Student identity**: academic novices to be integrated into their respective disciplinary communities. **International student recruitment**: predominantly based on academic rationales. **Institutional autonomy**: a large degree of autonomy from the state and external stakeholders. **Individual autonomy**: strong self-regulation; weak central administration; faculties and disciplines enjoy a large degree of autonomy despite being bound together by a shared vision of the university.	**Institutional identity**: a rational instrument for the implementation of national political agendas, as determined by the government of the day. **Education and research**: an apparatus to produce a skilled workforce, solve practical problems and thereby serving the economy and society at large. **Student identity**: recipients of public service expected to follow rules and instructions in order to be granted admission into the university. **International student recruitment**: based on a combination of academic, social and cultural, economic and political rationales. **Institutional autonomy**: limited autonomy from the state based on its effectiveness and efficiency in achieving pre-determined political agendas. **Individual autonomy**: a central administration with clear hierarchies and rules, limited autonomy is delegated to individual faculties and disciplines.	**Institutional identity**: a service enterprise embedded in the competitive higher education markets of students, funding and other resources. **Education and research**: knowledge is a private good; education and research are commodities that could be bought and sold in competitive (free or quasi) markets. **Student identity**: rational and calculative consumers with needs, demands, preferences and the power of choice. **International student recruitment**: predominantly based on economic rationales. **Institutional autonomy**: a large degree of autonomy but with dual accountability towards the state and the market (and its external stakeholders). **Individual autonomy**: strong and unitary university management, professional central administration, practices from New Public Management, little individual autonomy for faculties and disciplines.

3.1. The Autonomous University

Closely aligned with the Humboldtian principles of freedom of teaching and learning, The Autonomous University is a "Republic of Science", "a rule-governed community of scholars" and a "representative democracy", whose institutional identity is constructed on "a shared commitment to scholarship and learning, basic research and search for the truth, irrespective of immediate utility and applicability, political convenience or economic benefit" (Olsen, 2007, pp. 29-30). In other words, The Autonomous University is primarily focused on the autonomous functions (Trow, 1970) that are intrinsic to the conception of the university and positions itself as a principally academic institution dedicated to democratic equality and social efficiency (Labaree, 1997). Knowledge is considered as a public good and The Autonomous University is made open, accessible and free of charge for all students that meet the academic requirements, regardless of their nationality or social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The recruitment of international students, therefore, is primarily based on academic rationales, i.e. the presence of international students enhances the quality of both education and research at the host university and helps it achieve international academic standards. Furthermore, the focus of higher education at The Autonomous University is on "shaping individuals with character and integrity" and on "developing and transmitting a culture distinguished by humanistic *Bildung*, rationality, enlightenment and emancipation" (Olsen, 2007, p. 29). Viewing higher education as a scholarly pursuit of knowledge and a process of intellectual and spiritual development (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014), The Autonomous University promotes the identity of prospective international students as academic novices to be integrated into their respective disciplinary communities (Lažetić, 2019). In addition, The Autonomous University enjoys a large degree of institutional autonomy from both the state and other external forces, for example, in terms of academic offerings, research directions, quality assurance and student admission requirements. The institutional organization of The Autonomous University is characterized by a weak central administration and strong academic self-regulation, whereby a variety of internal individuals and groups with both shared and conflicting interests and objectives participate democratically in university governance. Individual faculties and disciplines enjoy a large degree of autonomy from the central administration and are able to construct and promote their respective sub-identities despite being bound together by a shared general vision of the university and constrained by the mechanisms of democratic governance.

3.1.1. Key website features of The Autonomous University

a) ***The "Home" webpage***: The Autonomous University constructs its identity as an autonomous and primarily academic institution with a set of inherent rules and organizing principles, and therefore structures the "Home" webpage of its institutional website based on the intrinsic functions of the university (e.g. Education/Study and Research) and the organization of the university (e.g. About Us and Faculties/Schools).

b) ***The "About Us" webpage***: The Autonomous University constructs its identity as an autonomous and primarily academic institution with an inherent set of rules and organizing principles, and therefore focuses the "About Us" webpage on its institutional history, staff, students and general academic and scientific achievements, but with no explicit mention of the immediate utility, applicability, political convenience or economic benefit of such achievements.

c) ***The "International Admissions" webpage***: International student recruitment at The Autonomous University is predominately based on academic rationales. Prospective international students are viewed as academic novices, and therefore the "International Admissions" webpage is focused on the academic system, study programs, courses, as well as the rules and instructions that international students are expected to follow in order to be successfully integrated into their respective disciplinary communities.

d) ***The "Student Life" webpage***: Viewing higher education as a scholarly pursuit of knowledge and a process of intellectual and spiritual development, The Autonomous University focuses the "Student Life" webpage on teaching, learning and other academic aspects of being a university student.

e) ***Individual program webpages***: The Autonomous University is characterized by a weak central administration and strong academic self-regulation, where individual faculties and disciplines have a large degree of autonomy to construct and communicate their respective sub-identities despite being bound together by a shared general vision of the university. As a result, one observes significant diversity on the institutional website of The Autonomous University, which is manifested by considerable differences not only between university-level webpages and faculty-level webpages, but also across the webpages of different degree programs.

f) ***Textual and audio-visual elements***: Education at The Autonomous University is made open, accessible and free of charge for all students that meet the academic requirements, regardless of their nationality or political, social, economic, cultural and religious

backgrounds. Communication is therefore carried out through predominantly textual elements as The Autonomous University does not see a need to employ audio-visual elements or special design features in order to entice prospective international students.

g) *Language*: The Autonomous University views prospective international students as academic novices to be integrated into their respective disciplinary communities and therefore adopts a more formal, passive and instructive voice in its use of language on the institutional website.

3.2.   The State University

The State University serves as a rational instrument for the implementation of national agendas, as determined by the government of the day (Olsen, 2007). The state assumes the role of a "guardian" and coordinates all or most aspects of higher education, such as academic offerings, research foci, quality assurance, student admission requirements as well as The State University's relationships with the industry and the society at large. Rather than a deep commitment to scholarship, free scientific inquiry and holistic learning, The State University instead constructs its institutional identity based on the shifting political priorities and the utility of its education and research to solve practical problems in the society. On the one hand, the freedom of scientific inquiry is replaced with the need to specialize in order to achieve excellence. On the other hand, individual disciplinary research is increasingly pressured to move towards application-oriented cross-disciplinary research (Olsen, 2007). The institutional organization of The State University is characterized by a central administration with clear hierarchies and rules, while limited autonomy is delegated to individual faculties and disciplines based on their effectiveness and efficiency in achieving pre-determined political agendas. Changes typically take place as a result of political decisions made at the national level. The recruitment of international students, which is based on a combination of academic, social and cultural, economic and political rationales, could be seen as a specific example of The State University's implementation of national policies on the internationalization of higher education aimed at meeting the needs of the industry, the economy and the society at large. Prospective international students are viewed as recipients of public service (Lažetić, 2019), who are expected to follow the relevant rules, instructions and administrative procedures in order to be granted admission into The State University.

3.2.1. Key website features of The State University

a) ***The "Home" webpage***: The State University constructs its institutional identity as a rational instrument for the implementation of pre-determined national agendas, and therefore structures the "Home" webpage of its institutional website based on the practical functions and services of the university that are relevant to the economy and the society at large, such as Education, Research, Innovation and Industry.

b) ***The "About Us" webpage***: The State University constructs its institutional identity as a rational instrument for the implementation of pre-determined national agendas, and therefore features explicit mission, vision and strategy statements on the "About Us" webpage and focuses the narrative on its institutional history, relevance to the industry as well as contributions to the economy, nation-building and the society at large.

c) ***The "International Admissions" webpage***: International student recruitment at The State University is based on a combination of academic, social and cultural, economic and political rationales. Prospective international students are viewed as recipients of public service and therefore the "International Admissions" webpage is focused on the rules, instructions and administrative procedures that students are required to follow in order to be granted admission into The State University.

d) ***The "Student Life" webpage***: Education at The State University is viewed as an apparatus to produce a skilled workforce for the economy, and therefore The State University focuses the "Student Life" webpage not only on teaching and learning, but also on the more practical aspects of higher education that are relevant to the industry and the society at large, such as internships, industry-related projects and political engagements.

e) ***Individual program webpages***: The State University is characterized by a strong central administration with clear hierarchies and rules, while a limited degree of autonomy is delegated to individual faculties and disciplines (based on their effectiveness and efficiency in achieving pre-determined political agendas). As a result, a certain degree of visual homogeneity is observed on the institutional website of The State University, where a consistent set of logos, layouts, colours and fonts are employed across the university-level and faculty-level webpages.

f) ***Textual and audio-visual elements***: The State University views prospective international students as recipients of public service that are expected to follow rules and instructions in order to be granted admission, and therefore employs principally textual elements (and some audio-visual elements) on its institutional website.

*g) **Language***: The State University views prospective international students as recipients of public service that are expected to follow rules and instructions in order to be granted admission, and therefore adopt a more formal, passive and authoritative voice in its use of language on the institutional website.

3.3. The Corporate University

The Corporate University is a service enterprise embedded in the competitive higher education markets of students, funding and other resources (Olsen, 2007). Research and education are no longer considered as public goods, but rather become commodities that could be bought and sold in competitive (free or quasi) markets, where students, donors and communities select from a range of providers (i.e. universities) based on how well they meet their individual needs and preferences. In other words, The Corporate University has taken on more popular functions (Trow, 1970) in response to external needs and demands. Academic offerings and research directions are no longer based on the Humboldtian principles of freedom of teaching, learning and scientific inquiry, nor determined by political priorities at the national level, but rather correspond to the needs and requirements of the capitalist markets. Prospective international students are viewed as rational and calculative consumers with needs, demands, preferences and the power of choice, and The Corporate University seeks to seduce them by portraying higher education as a fun and exciting social experience (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2018) and an effective means for social mobility (Labaree, 1997), rather than as a scholarly pursuit of knowledge or a process of intellectual and spiritual development (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). Change is governed by competitive selection and the survival of the fittest, that is to say, those who are able to adapt to the market and the constantly evolving needs of their external stakeholders. This is reflected, for example, by the capacity to introduce new fields of knowledge or discontinue existing programs and disciplines (Dobbins et al., 2011). The Corporate University enjoys a large degree of institutional autonomy from the state, which prefers to steer at a distance and utilize a variety of instruments to promote and regulate competition. As a result, The Corporate University finds itself in a delicate position of dual accountability towards the state on the one hand and towards the market and its external stakeholders on the other hand (Dobbins et al., 2011). The institutional organization of The Corporate University is marked by a strong central administration with corporate governance, professional leadership, standardized operating procedures, and other New Public Management practices. Democratic organization and individual autonomy, however, are viewed as

hinderances to timely decisions and rapid adaption to new challenges and opportunities (Olsen, 2007). When it comes to international student recruitment, economic rationales are the most important. There is a strong drive for The Corporate University to cultivate an international reputation and adopt modern corporate branding and marketing techniques in order to compete with other universities in the increasingly competitive markets of higher education.

3.3.1. Key website features of The Corporate University

a) ***The "Home" webpage***: The Corporate University constructs its institutional identity as a service enterprise embedded in the competitive higher education markets of students, funding and other resources, and therefore structures the "Home" webpage of its institutional website based on the different user/stakeholder groups and their needs and requirements, such as Undergraduate students, Postgraduate students, International students, Student life, Admission, Alumni and Industry.

b) ***The "About Us" webpage***: As a service enterprise embedded in the competitive higher education markets of students, funding and other resources, The Corporate University features its mission and vision statements prominently on the "About Us" webpage and highlights its performance in international and national rankings in order to position itself favourably against its competitors.

c) ***The "International Admissions" webpage***: The Corporate University addresses prospective international students as rational and calculative consumers with the power of choice on the "International Admissions" webpage, and places significant emphasis on the university itself as a corporate brand, the reasons why students should choose this particular university (over its competitors) and the potential benefits that would come with such a choice.

d) ***The "Student Life" webpage***: Viewing knowledge as a private good and education as a commodity that could be bought and sold in the competitive (free or quasi) market, The Corporate University features a dedicated "Student Life" webpage on its institutional website. Furthermore, with the objective of enticing prospective international students, The Corporate University adopts a strong promotional discourse and modern corporate marketing strategies in order to portray higher education as a fun and exciting social experience coupled with friendly atmosphere, superb facilities and beautiful surroundings.

e) ***Individual program webpages***: The Corporate University is characterized by a strong unitary leadership and a professional central administration, while the faculties and

disciplines are granted little autonomy as it is viewed as hinderances to timely decisions and rapid adaption to new challenges and opportunities. Modern practices associated with New Public Management and corporate branding and marketing are adopted, as manifested by a large degree of visual homogeneity on the institutional website, where a consistent set of logos, slogans, layouts, colours and fonts are employed across different webpages in an extensive and systematic manner. Furthermore, the same institutional identity is emphasized across the webpages of different programs in order to promote The Corporate University as a corporate brand, distinguish itself from competitors in the capitalist markets of higher education and attract prospective international students.

f) ***Textual and audio-visual elements***: In order to entice prospective international students, The Corporate University adopts modern corporate marketing and communication techniques and employs a wide range of audio-visual elements such as images and videos in a systematic way across different webpages on its institutional website.

g) ***Language***: The Corporate University positions prospective international students as rational and calculative consumers with needs, demands, preferences and the power of choice, and therefore adopts a strong promotional discourse on its institutional website, whereby a wide range of language genres such as pronouns, active voice, metaphors and positive evaluation are systematically employed in order to build good rapport with its potential customers and cultivate affinity with The Corporate University.

Table 3.2: Key website features of three idealized university models

	The Autonomous University	The State University	The Corporate University
The "Home" webpage	Structured based on the intrinsic functions of the university (e.g. Education/Study and Research) and the organization of the university (e.g. About Us and Faculties/Schools).	Structured based on the practical functions and services of the university, such as Education, Research, Innovation and Industry.	Structured based on the different user groups and their needs, such as Undergraduate students, Postgraduate students, International students, Student life, Admission, Alumni and Industry.
The "About Us" webpage	Emphasis on its institutional history, staff, students and general academic and scientific achievements, with no explicit mention of the immediate utility, political convenience or economic benefit of such achievements.	Emphasis on its institutional history, relevance to the industry as well as contributions to the economy, nation-building and the society at large.	Emphasis on mission and vision statements and its performance in international and national rankings.
The "International Admissions" webpage	Emphasis on the academic system, study programs as well as the rules and instructions that international students are expected to follow in order to be successfully integrated into their respective disciplinary communities.	Emphasis on the rules, instructions and administrative procedures that international students are required to follow in order to be granted admission into The State University.	Emphasis on the university itself as a brand, the reasons why international students should choose this particular university (over its competitors) and the potential benefits that would come with such a choice.
The "Student Life" webpage	Emphasis on teaching, learning and other academic aspects of being a university student.	Emphasis on the more practical aspects of higher education that are relevant to the industry and society at large.	Portrayal of student life as a fun and exciting social experience, coupled with friendly atmosphere, superb facilities and beautiful surroundings.
Individual program webpages	Significant differences between university-level and faculty-level webpages, and among webpages of individual degree programs; presence of distinctive sub-identities on faculty-level webpages.	A certain degree of visual homogeneity with the consistent use of logos, layouts, colours and fonts employed across different webpages.	A large degree of visual homogeneity; emphasis on the institutional identity and The Corporate University as a corporate brand across all university-level and faculty-level webpages.
Language	Adoption of a formal, passive and instructive voice.	Adoption of a formal, passive and authoritative voice.	Extensive use of pronouns, active voice, metaphors and positive evaluation.
Textual and audio-visual elements	Predominantly textual elements and rare use of audio-visual elements.	Primarily textual elements and some audio-visual elements.	Extensive and systematic use of images, sound and videos.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study investigates the ways in which the institutional website is employed by Lund and UiO for international student recruitment, both at the institutional level and at the level of individual degree programs, as well as how it relates to the modes of institutional governance at these two universities. The present chapter discusses the methodology employed in this study, with a focus on research strategy, research design, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity and reliability.

4.1. Research strategy

Given the nature of the research topic and research questions, a qualitative research strategy, which places more emphasis on documents, texts and words as opposed to numbers and quantification in the collection and analysis of data, is adopted in this study. In contrast to quantitative research which investigates natural phenomena through a positivist natural scientific model, qualitative research adopts a constructivist view of the social world whereby social constructs are the outcomes of interactions between social participants (Bryman, 2012). Social constructs (such as the institutional website in the present study) are constantly changing and evolving, both influenced by and influencing the actions of social participants (such as prospective international students and universities in the present study). It is therefore appropriate to adopt a qualitative research strategy in this study in order to interpret and understand not only the institutional website (i.e. the social construct), but also its role and significance in international student recruitment, and how it relates to institutional governance and the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts.

4.2. Research design

The present study adopts a cross-national comparative research design in order to investigate two contrasting cases (i.e. the institutional websites of two universities) using the same research methods and instruments. The rationale for this deliberate choice lies in the logic of comparison, where it is believed that social phenomena could be better understood when they are examined and contrasted in different contexts and situations (Bryman, 2012). A close examination of the similarities and differences between the institutional websites of the two case universities could provide the basis for an in-depth discussion on the role of the institutional website in

international student recruitment, and potentially allow for a better understanding of the modes of institutional governance at these two universities. Given the limited time available (as this study is carried out in partial fulfillment of a master's degree), the primary objectives are to identify a potential research topic, develop an analytical framework, familiarize the author with relevant research methodology, test it out with a relatively small number of case universities (i.e. two), and prepare for a possible larger and more comprehensive study in the future. Two Nordic universities, namely Lund in Sweden and UiO in Norway, have been selected as the case universities of this study due to their comparability in a number of factors (such as size, geographic location, reputation and international orientation) as well as notable differences in terms of institutional governance and international student recruitment.

4.3. Data collection

The primary data for this study were collected from selected English language webpages of the official institutional websites of Lund and UiO, from February to August 2020, with a focus on four university-level webpages, namely "Home", "About Us", "International Admissions" and "Student Life" (see Table 4.1). These are among the most visited webpages by prospective international students and their parents (Saichaie, 2011): the "Home" webpage generates a first impression of the university; the "About Us" webpage provides more information regarding the university; the "International Admissions" webpage contains information regarding the range of academic programs available, admission requirements and application procedures; while on the "Student Life" webpage prospective international students could get a sense of what it is like to be a student at the university.

Table 4.1: Data collection from the institutional websites

Lund	Home: https://lunduniversity.lu.se/home About Us: https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/about/about-lund-university International Admissions: https://lunduniversity.lu.se/international-admissions Student Life: https://lunduniversity.lu.se/student-life
UiO	Home: https://www.uio.no/english/ About Us: https://www.uio.no/english/about/ International Admissions: https://www.uio.no/english/studies/admission/ Student Life: https://www.uio.no/english/student-life/

In addition, data were collected from the webpages of four individual degree programs at these two universities, namely the master's programs in Economics, Mathematics, Physics and

Social Anthropology (see Table 4.2), during the same period. These four programs were chosen as they are offered at both Lund and UiO and represent a range of different subject areas (i.e. mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences). It is worth pointing out that when it comes to Lund, two distinct sets of webpages exist concurrently for the master's programs: the first set comprises university-level webpages directly linked to the list of master's programs on the "Home" and "International Admissions" webpages (hereafter referred to as "university-level webpages"), while the second set includes those published under the webpages of faculties and schools that offer these four master's programs (hereafter referred to as "faculty-level webpages"). This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5 "Presentation of findings".

Table 4.2: Data collection from the institutional websites

Lund	Master's Program in Economics (university-level webpage) https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lubas/i-uoh-lu-EAECO Master's Program in Mathematics (university-level webpage) https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lubas/i-uoh-lu-NAMAT Master's Program in Physics (university-level webpage) https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lubas/i-uoh-lu-NAFYK-ALLM Master's Program in Social Anthropology (university-level webpage) https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lubas/i-uoh-lu-SASAN
	Master's Program in Economics (faculty-level webpage) https://lusem.lu.se/study/masters/programmes/economics/overview Master's Program in Mathematics (faculty-level webpage) http://www.maths.lu.se/english/education/mathematics-masters-programme/ Master's Program in Physics (faculty-level webpage) http://www.fysik.lu.se/english/education/start-studying/masters-programme/ Master's Program in Social Anthropology (faculty-level webpage) https://www.soc.lu.se/en/education/masters-programmes/masters-programme-in-social-anthropology-sasan
UiO	Master's Program in Economics https://www.uio.no/english/studies/programmes/economics-master/index.html Master's Program in Mathematics https://www.uio.no/english/studies/programmes/mathematics-master/index.html Master's Program in Physics https://www.uio.no/english/studies/programmes/physics-master/index.html Master's Program in Social Anthropology https://www.uio.no/english/studies/programmes/social-anthropology/index.html

4.4. Data analysis

A qualitative content and discourse analysis was conducted in order to examine the two universities' institutional websites, guided by the three research questions (see Chapter 1) and

based on the analytical framework introduced in the previous chapter (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2). While content analysis is focused on the identification of underlying themes of interest, discourse analysis views language as constitutive of the social world (Bryman, 2012) and therefore allows for an examination of the specific discursive strategies employed by the universities in question. Language is constructive and serves as a means of accomplishing a certain goal, for example, to construct a distinctive institutional identity and promote an idealized identity of prospective international students. Furthermore, discourse is rhetorically organized and could be viewed as a way of deliberately devising one particular version of social reality and presenting it to others in the face of competing versions (Gill, 2000). The objective of the content and discourse analysis in this study is therefore to explore how Lund and UiO employ language, audio-visual elements, design features and discursive strategies in a systematic manner in order to construct one particular version of institutional identity and promote one particular idealized identity of prospective international students.

The content and discourses on the institutional website are deeply situated in the larger political, economic, social, cultural and institutional contexts. Through systematically describing, interpreting and explaining the properties, forms and meanings of the language, images, videos and design features present on the institutional website, it is possible to not only understand the discourse strategies of Lund and UiO, but also investigate the larger political, economic, social, cultural and institutional contexts that influence and are influenced by the discourses. A comparison is made between Lund and UiO, taking into account recent higher education reforms, developments in institutional governance as well as national policies on international student recruitment in Sweden and Norway. The differences in the institutional website could be partially attributed to distinct cultural norms in terms of public communication and website design (Callahan, 2005; Hite & Railsback, 2010), but are also deeply rooted in the ways universities are governed, financed and organized (Lažetić, 2019). An analysis of how Lund and UiO employ their respective institutional websites for international student recruitment, both at the institutional level and at the level of individual degree programs, could in turn allow this study to achieve a better understanding of the modes of institutional governance at these two universities, for example, how important decisions (such as those related to international student recruitment) are made, the involvement of internal and external actors in the decision-making process as well as the degree of centralization (or decentralization) within the university.

4.5. Ethical considerations

It is important to be aware of ethical issues, which could arise at various stages of the research investigation and relate directly to the integrity, quality and transparency of the study (Bryman, 2012). The present study is focused on the content and discourse analysis of institutional websites and does not involve any interviews, surveys or focus-group discussions. The absence of participants (and therefore absence of direct interactions between the researcher and participants) in this study make such ethical issues as potential harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception less relevant. Furthermore, the data used in this study are retrieved directly from the official institutional websites of Lund and UiO, which are readily available to the general public. The information is not sensitive in nature and there is no stated website policy that prohibits the use or analysis of the data.

That said, the nature of qualitative research as well as the research methodologies employed hold the researcher responsible for ensuring the integrity, quality and transparency of the study. Considering the researcher's role as the principal instrument for the formulation of research questions, the collection and analysis of data and the interpretation and presentation of findings, it is essential to critically evaluate, acknowledge and disclose any personal bias, assumptions or experiences that might affect the objectivity of the study.

The special interest in the research topics identified in this study stems from the researcher's personal and professional experiences over the past decade. As a program manager and advisor at a public university in Singapore, the researcher worked in close collaboration with individual faculties and departments to promote the university to prospective international students, including through the institutional website. He witnessed first-hand how particular discursive strategies were employed in order to deliberately construct an appealing and memorable institutional identity through the institutional website and distinguish the university from its competitors in the global market of international students. Even today the researcher could recall several occasions where he wondered why certain photos and videos were selected, why certain texts had to be written in particular ways and why it was so important to coordinate with colleagues at individual faculties and departments to roll out new design features across all webpages of the institutional website.

The researcher's professional experience working with international students ignited a desire to pursue a master's degree in higher education, and this time he himself had to go through the tedious process of navigating through the institutional websites of universities across a number of countries. He was surprised to observe how different universities structure their institutional websites as well as present themselves and the study programs they offer in very distinct ways. The eventual decision to apply to and accept the offer from the University of Oslo was partially due to the absence of tuition fees, despite the "old-school" and not-so-impressive look of the university's institutional website.

As an international master's student at the University of Oslo, the researcher was able to approach higher education from a broad range of disciplinary perspectives and gradually developed an interest in the modes of institutional governance at different universities. The present study therefore intends to bridge the researcher's two primary areas of interest, namely international student recruitment and institutional governance, through an examination of the institutional websites of two Nordic universities. While the researcher's personal and professional experiences as an administrative manager and student advisor, as a prospective international student and as a student of higher education have significantly enhanced his understanding of the research topics identified in the present study, he has also inevitably developed certain bias, assumptions and pre-conceptions through such experiences. In addition to fully acknowledging his personal bias, the researcher takes every effort to maintain awareness of the bias throughout the research process and critically reflect on the potential impact of such bias in order to enhance the objectivity and scientific rigor of this study.

4.6. Validity and reliability

While the quality of quantitative research could be established and assessed based on validity and reliability, there are different stances when it comes to whether and how this could be adapted to qualitative research, mainly due to possible existence of the multiple accounts of social reality (Bryman, 2012). Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested a new set of criteria that could be used to evaluate the scientific quality and rigor of qualitative research, including transferability, dependability and confirmability. The criterion of transferability is highly relevant in the present study, which involves a close and intensive examination of a small number of cases (i.e. two). The researcher deliberately provides rich accounts of the details of the two case universities' institutional websites as well as the different political, economic,

social and cultural contexts that they are situated in, thereby allowing other researchers to make more informed judgements about the transferability of the findings. In order to enhance the dependability of the present study, the researcher keeps records of the different stages of the research process, including literature review, the formulation of research questions, the development of research methodology, the adoption of an appropriate analytical framework, the collection and analysis of data as well as the writing of the thesis. With regard to confirmability, while recognizing that it is impossible to achieve absolute objectivity in the study, the researcher is well aware of his bias and pre-conceptions that have resulted from personal and professional experiences. In addition to adopting a reflective approach to explicitly investigate the implication of his personal bias on the present study, the researcher consults with an expert reviewer (i.e. his master's thesis supervisor) on a regular and frequent basis throughout the research process in order to ensure that proper procedures are being followed and that research is being carried out in an objective manner.

In addition, the use of case study in social research, including comparative case design as adopted in this study, has drawn a great deal of discussion centred around the issue of external validity, or generalizability (Bryman, 2012). It should be stressed that the primary objective of this study is not to generalize or extrapolate its findings to other universities in other political, economic, social, cultural or institutional contexts, but rather to achieve a better understanding of the two case universities in question, to test out the analytical framework as well as institutional website analysis as an effective research method, and to lay the foundation for a potential larger and more comprehensive study in the future.

5. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents and discusses the primary findings from the qualitative content and discourse analysis of the two case universities' institutional websites, which was guided by the three research questions (see Chapter 1) and the analytical framework (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2). It is organized into six sections. The first section (5.1) examines the features and characteristics of the university-level webpages of "Home", "About Us", "International Admissions" and "Student Life" on Lund's and UiO's institutional websites. Attempts are made to address the first research question on how Lund and UiO employ their respective institutional websites for international student recruitment at the institutional level, with a focus on how they construct a distinctive institutional identity and promote an idealized identity of prospective international students. Section 5.2 and Section 5.3 examine the webpages of four individual degree programs at Lund and UiO, namely the master's programs in Economics, Mathematics, Physics and Social Anthropology, and focus on the similarities and differences not only among these webpages but also between these webpages and the university-level webpages of "Home", "About Us", "International Admissions" and "Student Life". This investigation addresses the second research question and allows for an in-depth discussion of the issues of autonomy and institutional governance later on. The next two sections (5.4 and 5.5) discuss the use of language as well as textual and audio-visual elements on Lund's and UiO's institutional websites. The sixth and final section (5.6) closes the chapter with a brief summary of the primary findings and a discussion about the institutional website, international student recruitment and the modes of institutional governance at Lund and UiO.

5.1. University-level webpages

5.1.1. The "Home" webpage

The "Home" webpage of Lund's institutional website (see Figure 5.1) exhibits a clear and strong service orientation towards prospective international students (and staff), with the main menu structured in terms of "International Admissions", "Student Life", "Research and Innovation" and "About", while the list of faculties, schools, centres and other institutional units have been pushed down to the bottom of the webpage. A large and picturesque image of the Lund's main administrative building *Universitetshuset* is featured prominently in the top centre of the webpage with the caption "A world top 100 university". In addition, the "Home"

webpage includes a professionally made introductory video about the university as well as links to different subpages that are catered to the needs of its user groups such as prospective international students who are considering pursuing higher education at Lund, international students who have been accepted into Lund, international students who are currently studying at Lund, as well as prospective international staff and researchers. Considering the deliberate customization based on different user groups and their needs, the "Home" webpage of Lund's institutional website is clearly aligned with that of The Corporate University model.
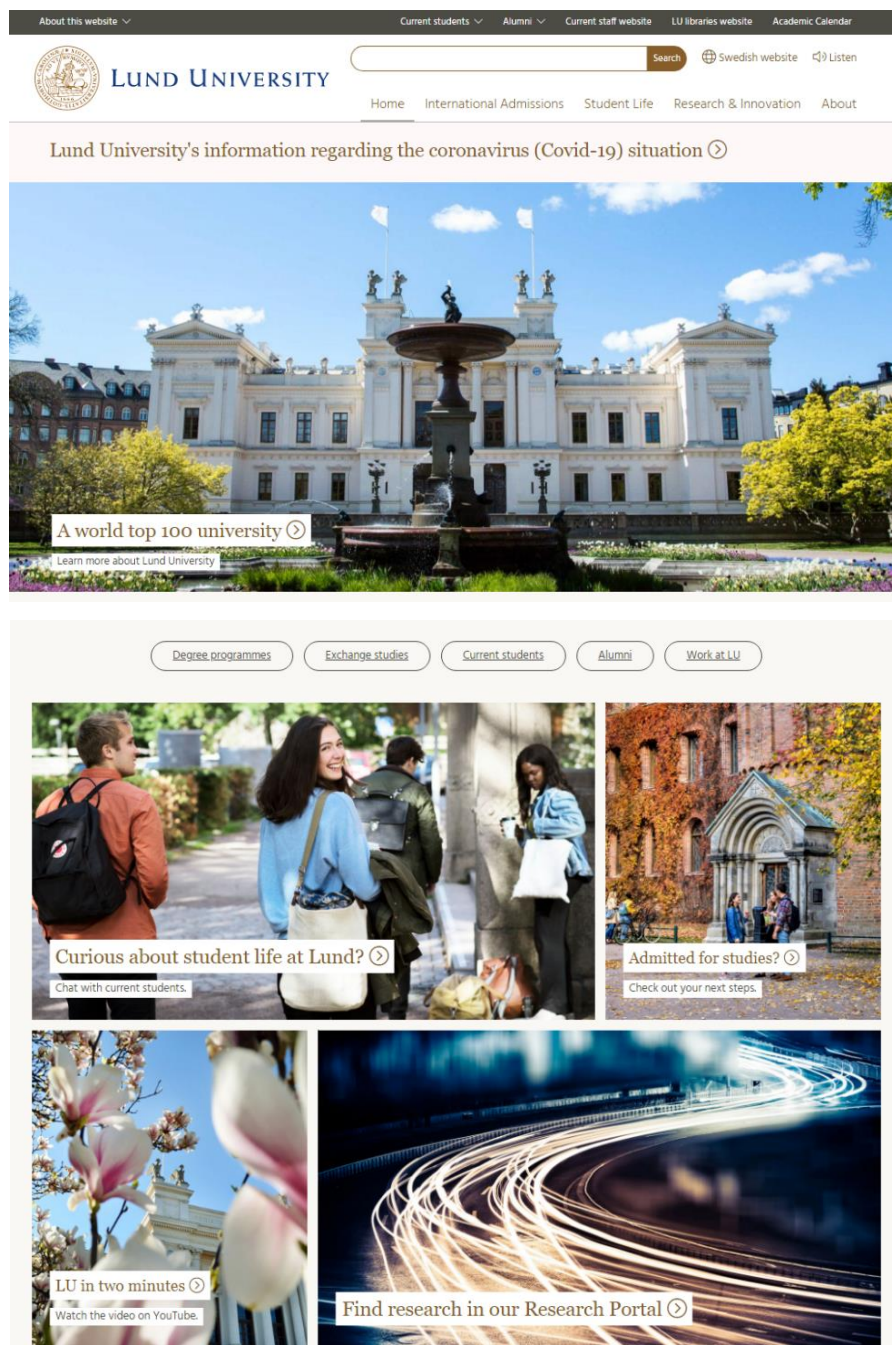
Figure 5.1: Screenshot of the "Home" webpage (Lund)

The "Home" webpage of UiO's institutional website (see Figure 5.2), in comparison, is more or less structured based on the different functions, activities and services of the university, with "Research", "Studies", "Student Life", "Services and Tools", "About UiO" and "People" as the categories under the main menu. However, there is no explicit mention of the university's contributions to the economy, nation-building or the society at large. While there is a link to "Admission for international students" under the category "Studies", it is in a far less prominent position as compared to the case of Lund. That said, the list of faculties, departments, centres and other institutional units are also presented towards the bottom of the webpage, as is the case of Lund, and in a smaller font size. It could be argued that although not entirely aligned with The Autonomous University model, the "Home" webpage of UiO's institutional website does exhibit some of its important characteristics and features.
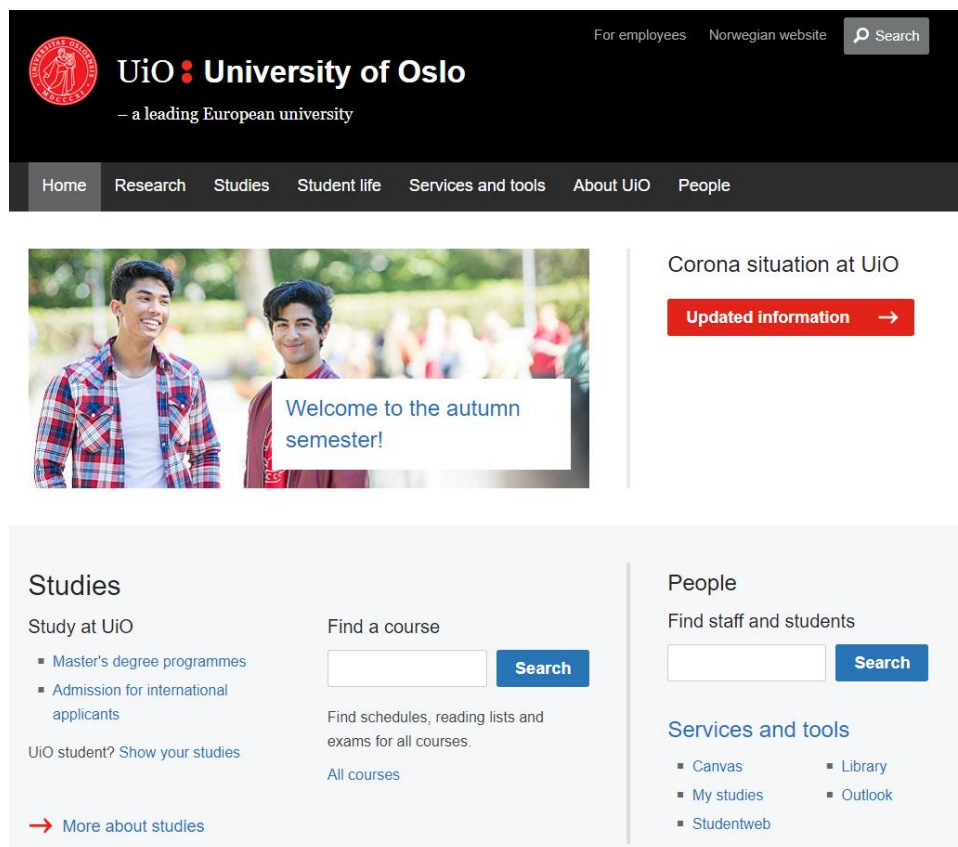
Figure 5.2: Screenshot of the "Home" webpage (UiO)

5.1.2. The "About Us" webpage

On the "About Us" webpage of Lund's institutional website (see Figure 5.3), the university's "Mission, vision and values" are featured prominently as a sub-section, along with "A brief

history", "Facts and Figures", "University world rankings", "Academic traditions", "Corporate publications" and "Role of Swedish higher education". At the centre of the webpage is a professionally made two-minute video that introduces Lund to prospective international students using first person pronouns, for example "I have been around for 350 years", "I am Lund University, and there is no one in the world like me", "Every year, tens of thousands of students from all over the world see me, hear me, explore me, challenge and enlighten me. They become me". Furthermore, there is a direct link to a downloadable PDF version of Lund's corporate brochure "Strategic Plan", as well as contact information in case prospective international students have any questions. The main text narrative on the "About Us" webpage focuses on Lund's prestige as "a world top 100 university" and "the most popular study location in Sweden", the broad range of study programs and courses available, as well as the university's world-leading research facilities. The sub-section "Corporate publications" directs to a new webpage which features a wide range of downloadable brochures including "Presentation on Lund University", "Strategic Plan 2017-2026", "Annual Report", "International Student Prospectus" and "Exchange studies at Lund University". The subpage "University world rankings" highlights Lund's strong performance in major world university rankings such as QS World University Rankings, Times Higher Education World University Rankings, US News Best Global Universities Rankings and Academic Ranking of World Universities. In addition to overall rankings, this webpage also features lists of the university's subjects that have been ranked among the Top 50, Top 100, Top 150 and Top 200 in the world. Furthermore, on the same webpage Lund emphasizes its 82nd position in "Times Higher Education Global University Employability Ranking 2018" and claims to be "the most popular Swedish university for international students" and "the most popular higher education institute in Sweden". This strong emphasis on mission, vision and values, corporate publications and world university rankings shows Lund's deliberate efforts to construct a distinctive institutional identity and to place itself in a favourable position against its competitors in the markets of higher education, thereby corresponding to characteristics and features of The Corporate University model.

That said, the sub-page "Academic traditions" highlights two of Lund's most important academic ceremonies, namely the doctoral degree conferment in May and the inauguration of new professors every autumn and spring. Furthermore, on the sub-page "Role of Swedish Higher Education", Lund states that it seeks to "provide education and conduct research, and to cooperate with the surrounding community and work to ensure that research results come to

good use, for example by collaborating with companies and government agencies". Taken at face value, the emphases on academic traditions and on the university's role in the society at large are also aligned with characteristics and features of The Autonomous University model and The State University model, respectively.
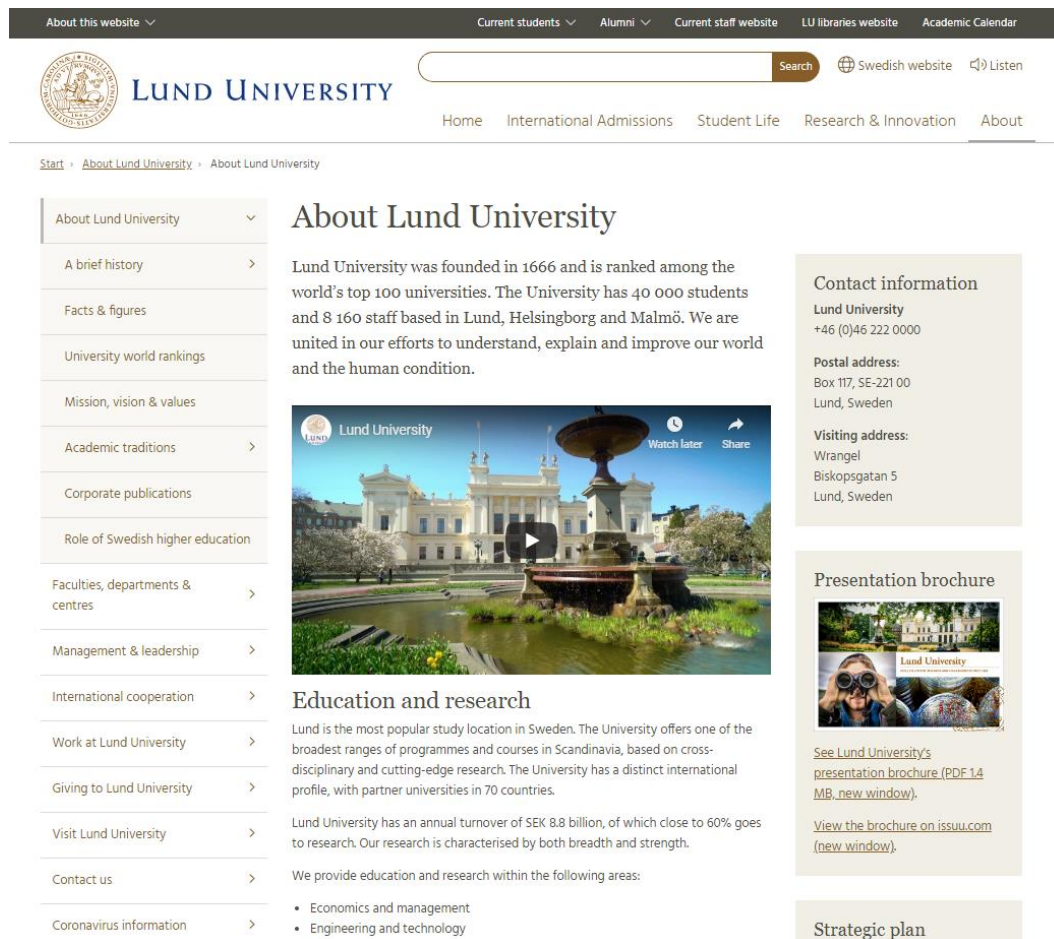
Figure 5.3: Screenshot of the "About Us" webpage (Lund)

The "About Us" webpage of UiO's institutional website (see Figure 5.4) is a simple webpage presented in plain text and no authentic pictures of people, building or landscape are to be found. There is a clear emphasis on the institutional history, the organization of the university, facts and figures, distinguished staff, researchers and alumni (e.g. Nobel Prize Laureates). However, no specific mention of the university's performance in world university rankings is spotted on the "About Us" webpage, nor is there any explicit comparison with other universities. This is a good indication of how UiO constructs its institutional identity as a primarily academic institution dedicated to education and scientific research, thereby corresponding to the characteristics and features of The Autonomous University model. However, UiO also states

on the same webpage that it "shall strengthen the dialogue with the outside world and contribute to the use of knowledge". The university's "Strategy 2030" is featured, along with its annual report and commitment to the "Sustainable Development Goals". In addition, there is an entire sub-section "How UiO changed Norway" that highlights UiO's significant contributions to nation-building and to the society at large, thereby corresponding to website features and characteristics of The State University model.
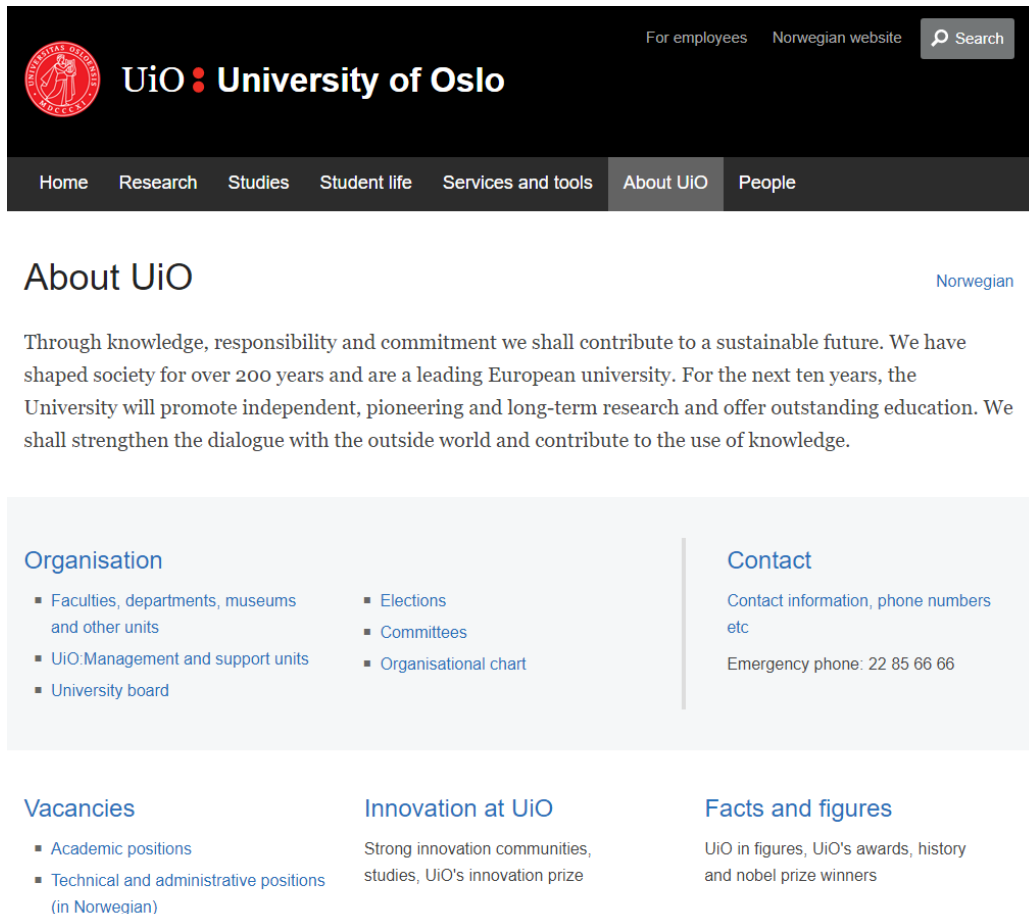
Figure 5.4: Screenshot of the "About Us" webpage (UiO)

5.1.3. The "International Admissions" webpage

The "International Admissions" webpage on Lund's institutional website (see Figure 5.5) is colourful, aesthetically appealing and filled with images showing smiling international students engaged in a range of academic and leisure activities on campus. The first of the sub-sections, "Why study at LU?" directs to a fresh new webpage featuring professionally made video clips and well-written texts highlighting the top reasons for pursuing higher education in Sweden, in the City of Lund and more specifically at Lund University. There is even an option to watch

the video clips on www.youku.com for prospective international students who are based in China, where YouTube is banned by the government. Furthermore, the webpage features useful information regarding webinars and Facebook live sessions organized by Lund and includes the link to an interactive platform "unibuddy", where prospective international students could chat with current student ambassadors and find out more about study programs and student life at Lund. It is evident that Lund has adopted a strong promotional discourse that emphasizes the university itself as a corporate brand and focuses on the reasons why international students should choose Lund (over other universities) as the destination of higher education. This corresponds closely to characteristics of The Corporate University model and could be linked directly to New Public Management (NPM) practices where prospective international students are viewed as rational consumers in the markets of higher education who have the power of choice when it comes to not only what to study but also where to study (Lažetić, 2019).
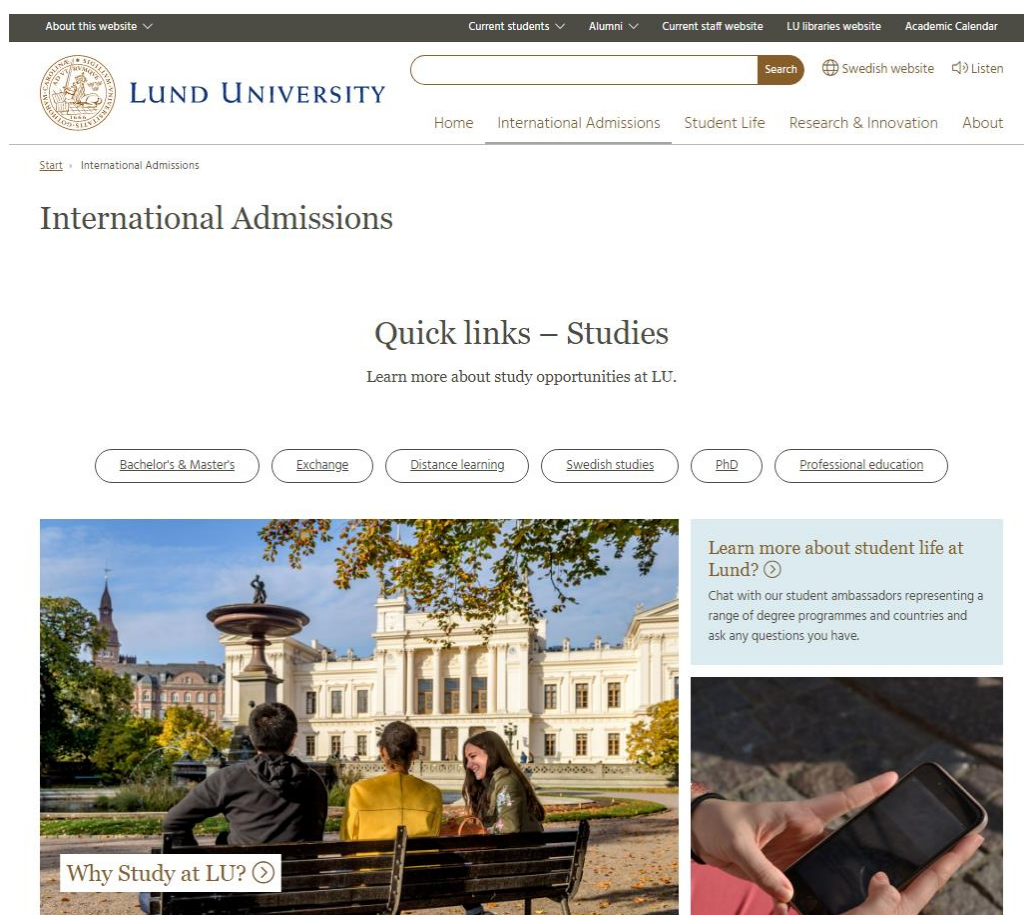
Figure 5.5: Screenshot of the "International Admissions" webpage (Lund)

In comparison, the "International Admissions" webpage on UiO's institutional website (see Figure 5.6) is a simple, text-only webpage with several links to further subpages on the range

of study programs (e.g. bachelor's, master's, PhD, exchange programs and summer school) and the courses available, the application process, the academic system, the academic calendar, and how to finance the studies. It could be argued that UiO sees itself as a primarily academic institution dedicated to education and scientific research (i.e. corresponding to The Autonomous University model) and therefore focuses on the rules and instructions that prospective international students are expected to follow in order to be successfully integrated into their respective academic and disciplinary communities. That said, on the admissions webpages for the different types of study programs there is also a clear emphasis on the admission requirements, administrative procedures and application deadlines, which reveals that UiO also sees prospective students as recipients of the public service to be admitted into the university (by following certain procedures and instructions), thereby corresponding to website features of The State University model.
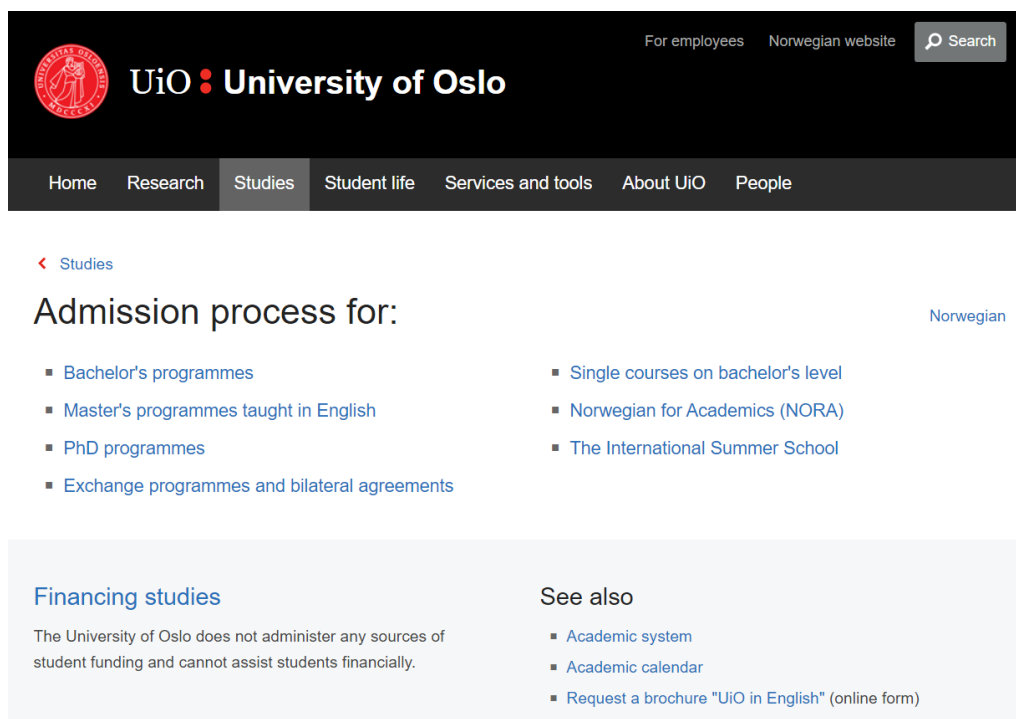
Figure 5.6: Screenshot of the "International Admissions" webpage (UiO)

5.1.4. The "Student Life" webpage

Lund's institutional website features a dedicated webpage on "Student Life" (see Figure 5.7), which is structured into sub-sections including "Lund as a student city", "Before you arrive", "Housing", "Student organizations", "Sport and exercise", "Cultural activities", "Faith and

spirituality" and "Student services". The webpage is filled with attention-grabbing pictures of happy students engaged in social, cultural and sports activities on campus, and each of these pictures directs to a fresh new webpage on a certain aspect of student life: for example, an "Admitted to studies?" webpage with loads of useful information that could help new international students prepare for their higher education studies at Lund; a "Cultural activities" webpage featuring university cultural centres, student associations as well as a wide range of cultural activities in art, music, dance and drama; a "Sports and exercise" webpage showcasing *Gerdahallen*, one of the largest sports centres in northern Europe, sports competitions and student clubs; a "Faith and spirituality" webpage with useful information about the university's multifaith chaplaincy, religious bodies and student associations; and a "Student services" webpage informing students about the wide range of services provided by Lund such as student advisors, international desk, academic support, disability support, health services, IT services and career services. Once again, there are links to the interactive platform "unibuddy" where prospective international students could chat with current student ambassadors and find out more about student life at Lund.

It is worth pointing out that the academic and essential aspects of student life, namely teaching and learning, are nowhere to be found on this webpage dedicated to "Student life", neither in the sub-menus nor in the videos or pictures. Like The Corporate University model and universities in Australia (Gottschall & Saltmarsh, 2017), Denmark (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2018) and the United States (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014), Lund is observed to, through its institutional website, portray higher education as an exciting and fun social experience coupled with a friendly atmosphere, superb facilities and beautiful surroundings, in order to appeal to the perceived desires of consumers (i.e. prospective international students). The academic aspects of student life as a scholarly pursuit of knowledge and a process of intellectual and spiritual development have been de-emphasized or neglected, and the university is reduced from an academic institution dedicated to holistic education and scientific research to a physical campus where students come and engage in fun and exciting social experiences.

The "Student Life" webpage (see Figure 5.8) on UiO's institutional website is presented in plain text and features some information on "Sports", "Student societies", "Housing", "Budget and cost of living" and "Health services". While there is not a strong promotional discourse aimed at portraying higher education as a fun and exciting social experience, no explicit mention of teaching, learning or other academic aspects of life as a student were observed on

the webpage either. It could be argued that as far as the "Student Life" webpage is concerned, UiO does not correspond clearly to any of the three idealized university models.
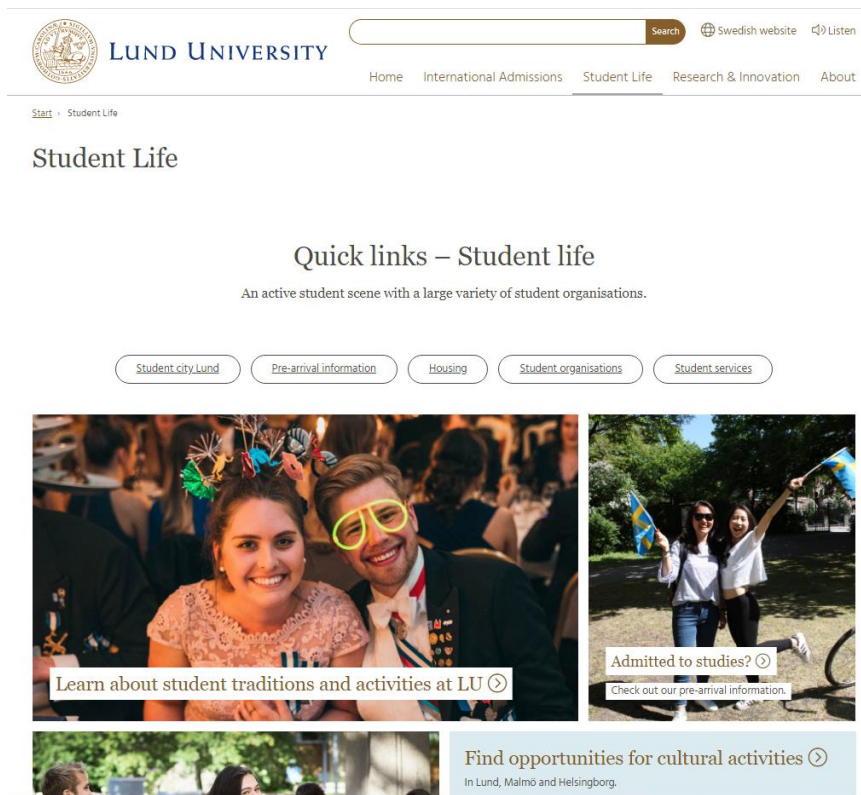
Figure 5.7: Screenshot of the "Student Life" webpage (Lund)
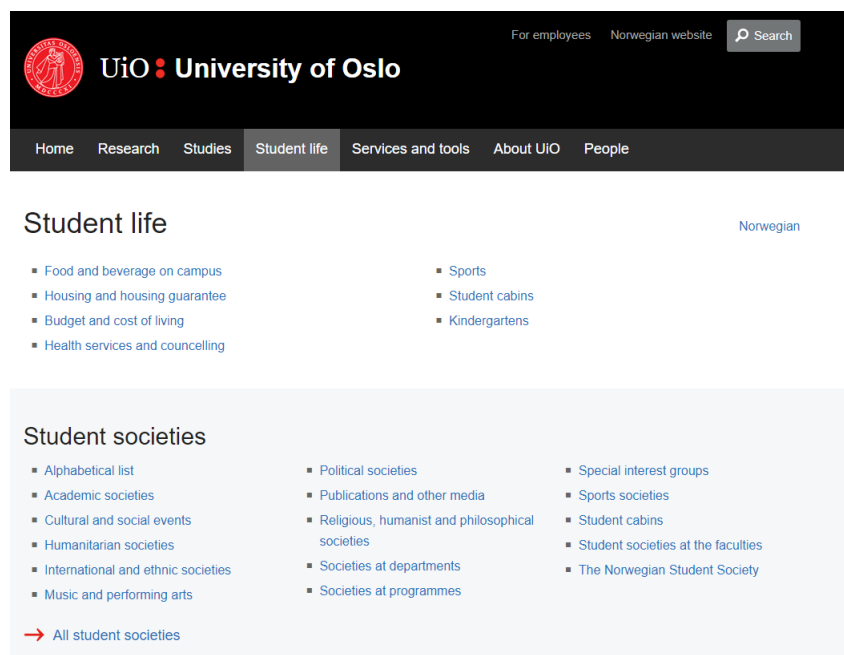
Figure 5.8: Screenshot of the "Student Life" webpage (UiO)

5.2.   Individual program webpages (Lund)

It is important to point out that two distinct sets of webpages exist concurrently for the master's programs at Lund: the first set comprises university-level webpages directly linked to the list of master's programs on the "Home" webpage and on the "International Admissions" webpage (hereafter referred to as "university-level webpages", see Figures 5.9, 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12), while the second set includes faculty-level webpages that are published under the webpages of the faculties and schools that offer these four master's programs (hereafter referred to as "faculty-level webpages", see Figures 5.13, 5.14, 5.15 and 5.16).

5.2.1.   Individual program webpages (Lund: university-level)

The university-level webpages of the four master's programs at Lund were observed to share the same layout, structure, colours, fonts, and contain exactly the same sections, namely, "Overview", "Requirements and selection", "Apply", "Tuition fees", "Scholarships" and "Testimonials for this master's program". There is relatively little information about the academic aspects of higher education, but instead the emphasis is placed on the more practical matters related to application, finance and career prospects. In fact, the information presented under all these sections (except "Overview" and "Testimonials") are nearly identical among the webpages of the four master's programs, with very similar entry requirements, a standardized application process, and the same write-ups on tuition fees and scholarships. In addition, each of these four webpages features a large image at the top centre, a generic video on "How to apply for a master's programme at Lund" as well as contact information of the program coordinator. This large degree of visual homogeneity across the (university-level) webpages of the four master's programs at Lund indicates that the university has adopted modern corporate branding and marketing techniques in order to generate a consistent corporate image and create a distinctive institutional identity through the institutional website. The focus of the webpages of the four master's programs is not on introducing prospective international students to the program or the academic field, but rather on promoting the university itself as a unique corporate brand and a destination for higher education. This and the emphasis on application, tuition fees, scholarships, career prospects and testimonials (contrasted by the limited information about the academic aspects of higher education) reveal Lund's close alignment with the characteristics and features of The Corporate University model.

LUND UNIVERSITY

Search   Swedish website   Listen

Home   International Admissions   Student Life   Research & Innovation   About

Start › Courses and programmes › Mathematics - Master Programme

Mathematics - Master Programme

MASTER'S PROGRAMME · 2 YEARS · 120 CREDITS

On this page:

Overview

Requirements and selection

Apply

Tuition fees

Scholarships

Testimonials about this Master's

Programme overview

The purpose of the Master's programme in Mathematics is to give students advanced theoretical knowledge of mathematics together with practical skills to apply this knowledge both to mathematical problems and in applications of mathematics. A highly flexible structure that allows for individual adaptation, diversified curriculum, a high theoretical level, and an active research-oriented environment are some of the strongest features of the programme.

The programme has two specialisations - Mathematics and Numerical Analysis. A vast variety of courses in all mathematical disciplines - pure and applied mathematics, numerical analysis and mathematical statistics - are available within the programme.

The programme was recently evaluated by a panel of mathematicians appointed by *The Swedish Higher Education Authority* (*Universitetskanslersämbetet*) and was ranked '*Of highest quality*'. (http://english.uk-ambetet.se/).

Career prospects

After graduating from this programme you are qualified to enter a PhD programme in

Closed for applications

Application opportunities

Closed for applications ⊘

Learn more about our application periods and when to apply for studies at Lund University.

Contact

Figure 5.9: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Mathematics (Lund, university-level)

LUND UNIVERSITY

Search   Swedish website   Listen

Home   International Admissions   Student Life   Research & Innovation   About

Start › Courses and programmes › Physics, General - Master Programme

Physics, General - Master Programme

MASTER'S PROGRAMME · 2 YEARS · 120 CREDITS
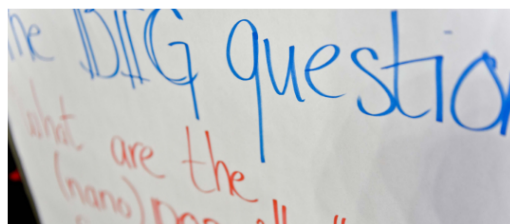
On this page:

Overview

Requirements and selection

Apply

Tuition fees

Scholarships

More information about this Master's

What if satisfying your curiosity could become your job? At the Department of Physics in Lund, you can be curious and creative, and at the same time make a strategic choice for your career. Physicists in Lund study subjects including the smallest parts of matter, the interface between living cells and electronics, how to create a cleaner environment and how to cure cancer. At the same time, they are satisfying their curiosity.

As a Master's student you will become part of a vibrant research community engaged in experiments at major international research facilities and in state-of-the-art laboratories on site. Cutting-edge theoretical studies are also undertaken.

You begin your studies by taking a number of courses, some of them general, some more specialised. The programme concludes with a Master's project, for which you spend a full year in a research group or outside the University – there are many exciting possibilities within the high-tech industry in the Lund region.

You have a lot of freedom to tailor your own education, but we have also put together some strong specialisations: Analytical Physics, Combustion Physics, Mathematical Physics, Theoretical Physics, Nanophysics, Photonics and Lasers,

Closed for applications

Application opportunities

Closed for applications ⊘

Learn more about our application periods and when to apply for studies at Lund University.

Contact

Figure 5.10: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Physics (Lund, university-level)

LUND UNIVERSITY

Search   Swedish website   Listen

Home   International Admissions   Student Life   Research & Innovation   About

Start › Courses and programmes › Economics - Master's Programme (Two Years)

Economics - Master's Programme (Two Years)

MASTER'S PROGRAMME · 2 YEARS · 120 CREDITS

On this page:

Overview

Requirements and selection

Apply

Tuition fees

Scholarships

Testimonials about this Master's

Description

The Master's programme in Economics brings you the quantitative skills and analytical mindset that are essential for a successful career in governmental organizations, international institutions, and private sector firms such as banks and economic consultancies.

The programme provides you with deep and thorough knowledge of modern economic theories, concepts, techniques, and their applications. You will acquire the necessary skills to undertake advanced economic analysis and become familiar with state-of-the-art research.

The rigorous and research-based education will enable you to undertake advanced economic analysis by applying modern economic theory and state-of-the-art tools for handling data and conducting econometric analysis (using, for example, STATA and MATLAB).

Closed for applications

Application opportunities

Closed for applications ›

Learn more about our application periods and when to apply for studies at Lund University.

Figure 5.11: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Economics (Lund, university-level)

LUND UNIVERSITY

Search   Swedish website   Listen

Home   International Admissions   Student Life   Research & Innovation   About

Start › Courses and programmes › Social Anthropology - Master of Science programme

Social Anthropology - Master of Science programme

MASTER'S PROGRAMME · 2 YEARS · 120 CREDITS

On this page:

Overview

Requirements and selection

Apply

Tuition fees

Scholarships

Testimonials about the Master's in Social Anthropology

Description

The MSc in Social Anthropology applies deep and broad perspectives to an understanding of social communities and culture. The programme provides specialisation in the scholarly approach that is fundamental to students aiming to pursue PhD studies but which is also of considerable value for advanced work as a policy or operational officer in organisations and activities at different levels.

Programme overview

The Master of Science in Social Anthropology provides students with a strongly research-based Master's degree. The programme combines deep subject knowledge with broadened perspectives and links with wider society. The MSc in Social Anthropology applies deep and broad perspectives to an understanding of social

Closed for applications

Application opportunities

Closed for applications ›

Learn more about our application periods and when to apply for studies at Lund University.

Contact

Figure 5.12: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Social Anthropology (Lund, university-level)

When it comes to the faculty-level webpages of the four master's programs at Lund, however, a large degree of heterogeneity is observed. The faculty-level webpages of three of the four master's programs (i.e. Mathematics, Physics and Social Anthropology) contain some similar design features, but there are also significant differences in the structure, the sections as well as the content of the webpages. For example, all three webpages feature the institutional logo of Lund on the top-right corner but emphasizes their respective sub-identities with printed texts "Centre for Mathematical Sciences", "Physics in Lund" and "Department of Sociology" on the top-left corner. The faculty-level webpage of the master's program in Mathematics (see Figure 5.13) is presented in plain text and is structured into eight sections, namely "Program structure", "Courses", "Degree project", "Information board", "Schedule", "Written examinations", "Exchange studies" and "Mathematics students council". The faculty-level webpage of the master's program in Physics (see Figure 5.14), in comparison, highlights the wide range of orientations and specializations that international students could choose from and features an aesthetically appealing picture of happy students on campus. There is also some practical information about scholarships, housing and student life. The faculty-level webpage of the master's program in Social Anthropology (see Figure 5.15), however, is organized into two sections, namely "Program overview" and "Structure of the program", and features, at the bottom centre of the webpage, the picture and textual testimonial of an international student who is currently enrolled in the program.

In comparison, the faculty-level webpage of the master's program in Economics (see Figure 5.16) adopts a set of design features that are distinct from those adopted by the webpages of the other three master's programs. A specially designed logo is featured on the top-left corner of the webpage with the texts "Lund University" and "School of Economics and Management" printed. The menu tabs are presented horizontally (as opposed to vertical menus tabs on the webpages of the other three master's programs) and include "Overview", "Course content", "Electives", "Career opportunities", "Requirements" and "Contact us". The webpage features textual testimonials from two international students at the centre of the webpage, as well as information on the class profile towards the bottom of the webpage. The primary image featured on this faculty-level webpage is also identical to the one found on the university-level webpage of the same master's program (see Figure 5.11).

That being said, despite notable differences in the structure, content and design features, a common emphasis on the academic aspects of higher education could be observed across the faculty-level webpages of all four master's programs. For example, each of the four webpages includes a program overview section, which introduces prospective international students to not only the master's program itself but also to the academic discipline in general. Furthermore, the program structure is presented in great detail (albeit in different ways), with the list of compulsory courses required for graduation as well as the range of elective courses that students could choose from. The webpage of the master's program in Mathematics also includes information about its "Degree project", "Information board", academic schedule, written examinations, student rights and guidelines as well as the "Mathematics students council", while the webpage of the master's program in Social Anthropology includes detailed information about the syllabus, entry requirements and learning outcomes of the program.

Figure 5.13: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Mathematics (Lund, faculty-level)

Figure 5.14: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Physics (Lund, faculty-level)

Figure 5.15: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Social Anthropology (Lund, faculty-level)
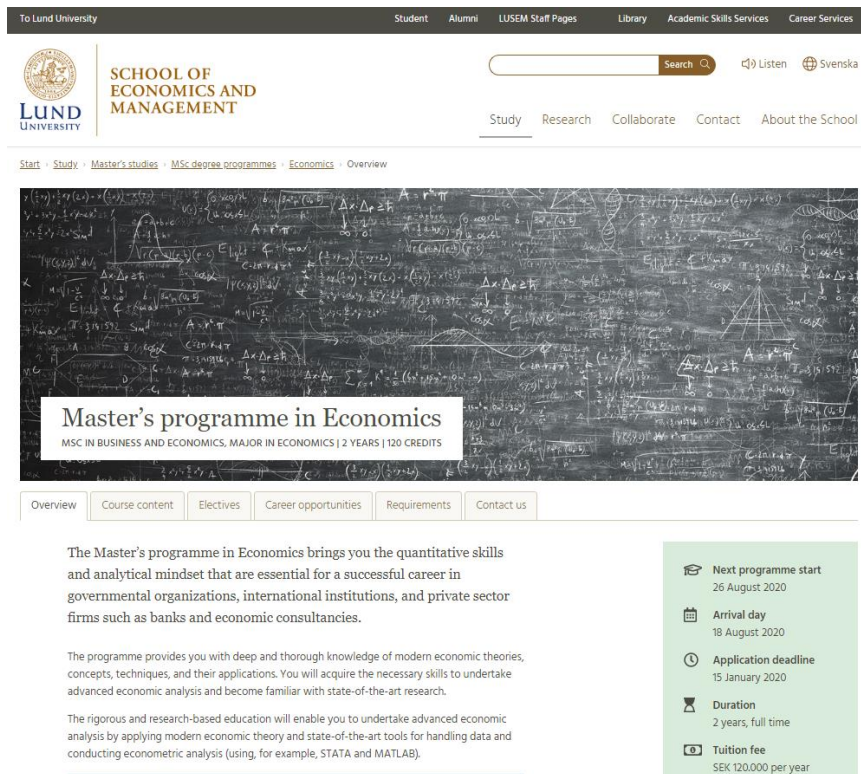
Figure 5.16: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Economics (Lund, faculty-level)

5.2.3. Individual program webpages (Lund: summary)

The analysis of the two distinct sets of the webpages of the four master's programs at Lund has revealed an interesting aspect of the university's mode of institutional organization and governance. Firstly, the large degree of visual homogeneity observed across the university-level webpages of the four master's programs is in close alignment with the website features of The Corporate University model, which systematically adopts practices from modern corporate marketing and communication in order to construct a distinctive and memorable institutional identity through its institutional website. A possible explanation could be that over the years Lund has established a strong central administration with a team of dedicated full-time professionals who are responsible for corporate marketing and communication efforts at the institutional level. There is in fact a dedicated Corporate Communication Section within the university's central administration, which includes Web Communications Department charged with the coordination, quality assurance and continuous improvement of the institutional website, as well as a Media and Branding Department that works closely with national and international press to enhance Lund's visibility and attractiveness (Lund University, 2020b).

That said, the faculty-level webpages of the same four individual programs show a significant degree of diversity in terms of the logo, the structure, the design features and the content of the webpages, through which individual faculties and disciplines are able to construct and communicate their respective sub-identities. Furthermore, the common emphasis on the academic aspects of higher education on the four faculty-level webpages corresponds to the characteristics and features of The Autonomous University model, which is in clear contrast with the university-level webpages of the same four master's programs. This exposes the limited extent to which corporate marketing and communication practices have been successfully implemented or adopted across the different academic units at Lund. It is therefore reasonable to argue that despite a strong and professional central administration, individual faculties and disciplines at Lund still enjoy a certain degree of autonomy when it comes to constructing and promoting their own sub-identities through their respective webpages, thereby retaining some of the basic characteristics of The Autonomous University model.

5.3. Individual program webpages (UiO)

At first glance, the webpages of the four master's programs at UiO (see Figures 5.17, 5.18, 5.19 and 5.20) seem to be a little more colourful and contain relatively more audio-visual elements as compared to the "About Us", "International Admissions" and "Student Life" webpages, which are presented in plain text. It is worth pointing out that the four webpages share the same basic layout, structure, colours and fonts, as well as a number of common sections such as "Why choose this program?", "Program structure" "Learning outcomes", "Semester abroad", "Admission" and "Career prospects". The section "Program structure" outlines the courses that students are required to take during each semester and includes such detailed information as course description, syllabus, teaching activities, learning outcomes and assessment, while the section "Admission" stipulates the academic requirements, application deadlines as well as the procedures and instructions to be followed. When it comes to the section "Why choose this program?", all four master's programs emphasize the importance of their respective disciplines, albeit in different ways. For example, the master's program in Mathematics adopts a simple and yet powerful statement: "Mathematics is useful. Math is fun. Maths sharpen the brain. Mathematics is part of our cultural heritage. Mathematics is beautiful."; the master's program in Physics highlights the discipline's role as the foundation of technological advancement and presents the broad range of disciplinary specializations that

prospective international students could choose from; the master's program in Economics emphasizes the opportunity to take courses "taught by some of Norway's leading economists" and to be part of "an academic environment that prides itself on being on the forefront of economic research"; and the master's program in Social Anthropology attempts to entice prospective international students with such questions as "Are you interested in the causes of burning issues such as climate change, financial crises, migration, social activism and how they influence people's lives?". This clear emphasis on the academic and essential aspects of higher education (i.e. instead of the fun and exciting social aspects) across the webpages of the four master's programs at UiO is a good indication of the university's close alignment with The Autonomous University model.

While a certain degree of visual homogeneity could be observed on UiO's institutional website, where the university name, the institutional logo and a consistent set of layouts, colours and fonts are used in an extensive manner, a closer examination reveals rather significant differences among the webpages of the four master's programs. For example, the webpages of the master's programs in Mathematics and Physics contain only one large image accompanied by a simple one-paragraph text, while the webpages of the master's programs in Economics and Social Anthropology both feature professionally made video clips, aesthetically appealing pictures of happy students engaged in academic and non-academic activities, upcoming events, as well as career stories of former students who have graduated from the program. In addition, the webpage of the master's program in Social Anthropology features some of its ongoing projects and testimonials from current and former students, while the webpage of the master's program in Economics includes some additional sections such as "Teaching and examinations", "Scholarships" and "Quality assurance", and even a snapshot of its Facebook page.

The analysis of the webpages of the four master's programs at UiO has shown that individual faculties and disciplines place significant emphasis on the academic and essential aspects of higher education in their communication with prospective international students (through their respective faculty-level webpages). Furthermore, they are believed to enjoy a large degree of individual autonomy, as demonstrated by the ability to construct a distinctive sub-identity and to promote it to prospective international students through their respective webpages. It could therefore be argued that despite the adoption of a common website layout across its institutional website (The Corporate University model), UiO by and large has retained the basic characteristics and features of The Autonomous University model.

Figure 5.17: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Mathematics (UiO)

Figure 5.18: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Physics (UiO)

Figure 5.19: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Economics (UiO)
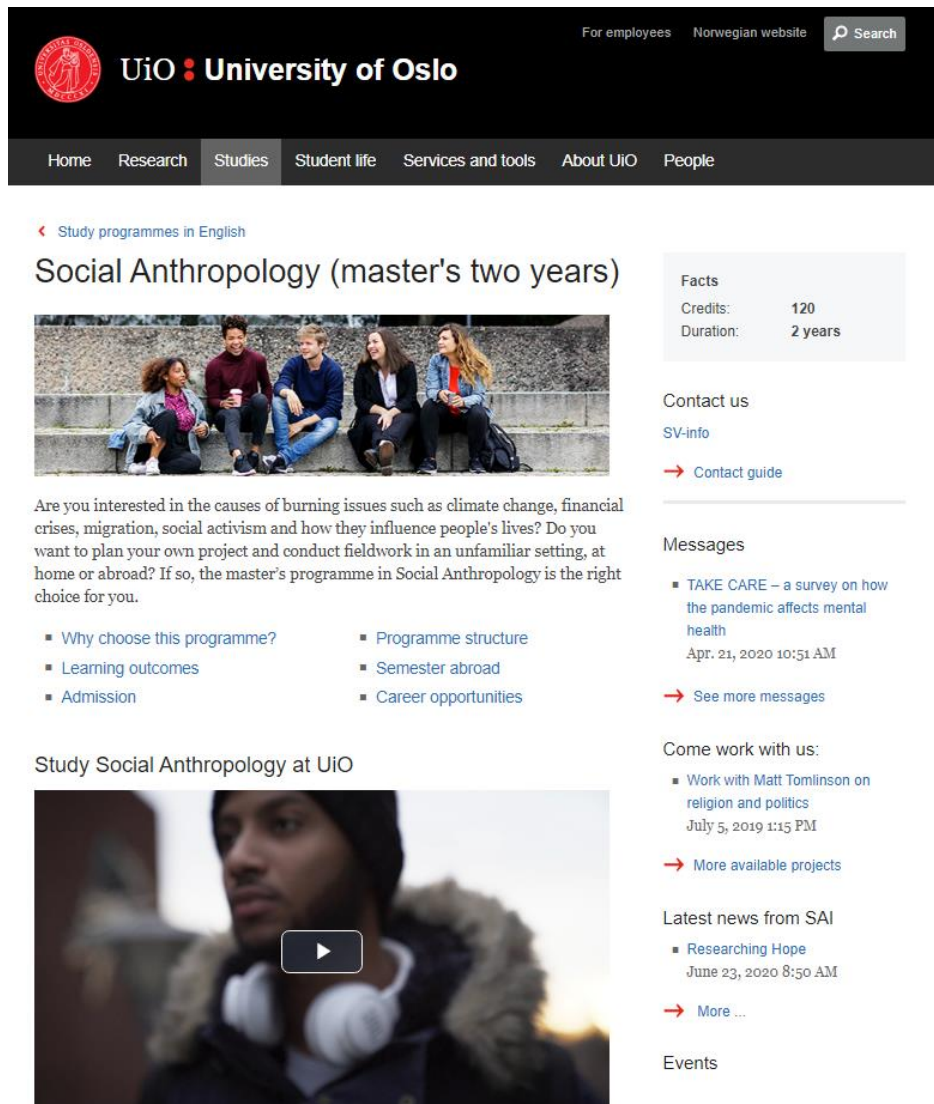
Figure 5.20: Screenshot of the webpage of master's program in Social Anthropology (UiO)

5.4. Textual and audio-visual elements

On the "Home", "About Us", "International Admissions" and "Student Life" webpages, it is evident that Lund employs a wide range of textual and audio-visual elements as well as special design features in a rather consistent and systematic manner in order to communicate with prospective international students in an effective and convincing manner. In alignment with The Corporate University model, Lund's website features aesthetically appealing pictures of students, staff, researchers and the campus, professionally made corporate videos, testimonials from current and former students (with pictures), digitalized and downloadable corporate brochures, and even an interactive platform (powered by unibuddy) that allows prospective international students to chat with current student ambassadors and find out more about study

programs, the admission process and student life at Lund. However, there are some notable exceptions, such as the faculty-level webpages of the master's programs in Mathematics and Physics, both of which are presented in plain text with no images or videos, thereby corresponding to features of The Autonomous University and The State University models.

Interestingly, the opposite pattern was observed on UiO's institutional website, where the "About Us", "International Admissions" and "Student Life" webpages are presented in plain text, while the "Home" webpage contains only a small number of images. The webpages of the four master's programs, on the other hand, were found to be relatively more colourful, with two of them (Economics and Social Anthropology) featuring professionally made videos, images and screenshots of the programs' social media pages. A possible explanation could be that while at the institutional level UiO has retained the characteristics and features of The Autonomous University model, some individual faculties and disciplines have decided to participate more actively in the global competition for international students. Thanks to a large degree of individual autonomy, they are able to adopt modern marketing and communication techniques from The Corporate University model and establish a distinctive sub-identity that is more memorable and appeals to the perceived desires of prospective international students.

5.5. Language

The language used on Lund's institutional website, across all webpages examined in this study (that is, not only the "Home", "About Us", "International Admissions" and "Student Life" pages, but also the university-level and faculty-level webpages of the four master's programs) is characterized by a rather informal and friendly tone whereby students are directly addressed as "you". This could be illustrated by formulations such as "On these pages we have collected information that is useful for you when you are preparing for your studies at Lund University.", "Don't miss the arrival and orientation pages with important information on your first weeks in Lund.", and "Check out your next steps.". It is interesting to point out that the first-person pronoun "I" is also used, and in two distinctive contexts. In the first instance, "I" refers to prospective international students, as in "Where can I study at Lund University", while in the second instance, "I" refers to Lund, as in the introductory video on the "Home" and "About Us" webpages ("I have been around for 350 years", "I am Lund University, and there is no one in the world like me"). This is in line with modern corporate marketing practices of The Corporate University model, where the higher education provider addresses prospective

student customers directly as "you" and attempts to cultivate good rapport and affiliation with them through an informal and friendly conversation style.

In comparison, UiO is observed to mostly adopt third person pronouns on its "Home", "About Us", "International Admissions" and "Student Life" webpages, as in "The University of Oslo has played a pivotal role in many of the major changes in Norway over the last 200 years.", "UiO has 8 faculties, 2 museums and several centres", and "For the next ten years, the University will promote independent, pioneering and long-term research and offer outstanding education.", although there are a few instances where the pronoun "we" is used, such as "We have shaped society for over 200 years and are a leading European university." and "We shall strengthen the dialogue with the outside world and contribute to the use of knowledge". The adoption of this formal, passive, instructive and sometimes authoritative voice is a good indication of how UiO addresses prospective international students as recipients of public service (The State University model) and academic novices to be integrated into their respective disciplinary communities (The Autonomous University model). Once again, the webpages of the master's programs in Economics and Social Anthropology stand out from the crowd, as they adopt a generally more friendly tone and frequently address prospective international students directly as you, as "By choosing this programme you will get the opportunity to take courses taught by some of Norway's leading economists and be part of an academic environment that prides itself on being on the forefront of economic research."; "Are you interested in the causes of burning issues such as climate change, financial crises, migration, social activism and how they influence people's lives?" and "Do you want to plan your own project and conduct fieldwork in an unfamiliar setting, at home or abroad?". A similar conclusion could be drawn as in the case of textual and audio-visual elements: despite its close alignment with The Autonomous University model at the institutional level, some individual faculties and disciplines at UiO have moved further towards The Corporate University model and adopted techniques from modern corporate marketing and communication in order to cultivate good rapport and affiliation with prospective international students.

5.6.   Discussion

A brief summary of the main findings of this study is presented in Table 5.1. It could be argued that Lund's institutional website is closely aligned with that of The Corporate University model when it comes to the "Home", "About Us", "International Admissions", "Student Life"

webpages as well as the university-level webpages of the four master's programs. The university employs a variety of modern corporate marketing and communication techniques on its institutional website in order to meet the perceived needs and requirements of prospective international students. While constructing its institutional identity as a service enterprise embedded in the competitive markets of higher education, Lund also addresses prospective international students as rational and calculative consumers with the power of choice. That being said, a close examination of the faculty-level webpages of the four master's programs at Lund revealed the limited extent to which corporate marketing and communication techniques have been successfully implemented across the university's different academic units. The fact that individual faculties and disciplines still have the ability to construct and promote their own sub-identities through their respective faculty-level webpages indicates that despite the university's close alignment with The Corporate University model at the institutional level, Lund has retained some of the basic characteristics of The Autonomous University model.

Table 5.1: Summary of findings

	Lund	UiO
"Home"	The Corporate University	The Autonomous University
"About Us"	The Corporate University, but also The Autonomous University and The State University	The Autonomous University and The State University
"International Admissions"	The Corporate University	The Autonomous University and The State University
"Student Life"	The Corporate University	None of the three idealized models
Individual program webpages	(university-level webpages) The Corporate University	The Autonomous University, but also The Corporate University
	(faculty-level webpages) The Autonomous University	
Textual and audio-visual elements	(university-level webpages) The Corporate University	The Autonomous University, but also The Corporate University (Economics and Social Anthropology)
	(faculty-level webpages) The Autonomous University and The State University	
Language	The Corporate University	The Autonomous University and The State University, but also The Corporate University (Economics and Social Anthropology)

When it comes to UiO, while its institutional website does exhibit some features of The Corporate University model, such as the presence of the institutional logo and the adoption of a consistent website layout, colours and fonts across different webpages, it could be argued that

the university by and large corresponds to a hybrid of The Autonomous University and The State University models. The institutional identity is constructed as a primarily academic institution dedicated to education and scholarly research but also to a certain extent a rational instrument for the implementation of national political agendas. Prospective international students are in turn viewed as academic novices to be integrated into their respective disciplinary communities and recipients of public service (Lažetić, 2019). The examination of the webpages of the four individual degree programs at UiO revealed significant heterogeneity and therefore a considerable degree of individual autonomy whereby faculties and disciplines are able to construct and promote their respective sub-identities.

That said, despite their distinct orientations towards The Autonomous University model (for UiO) and The Corporate University model (for Lund), both Lund's and UiO's institutional websites exhibit some characteristics and features of The State University model, albeit to different extents. Through the recruitment of international students, both universities serve as a rational instrument for the implementation of political agendas (Olsen, 2007) and actively contribute to their respective national governments' plans for the internationalization of higher education. Concurrent with the accelerating processes of globalization and the world transitioning into an interconnected knowledge economy, higher education has undoubtedly emerged as an important tool for social and economic development, and therefore a policy sector of strategic importance for countries around the world, including Norway and Sweden.

Over the past few decades, a series of higher education reforms have taken place across Europe, including Norway and Sweden, with the objective of "strengthening the executive capacity of public universities" (Gornitzka et al., 2017, p. 274). The reform agendas include for example the introduction of performance-based funding schemes, the professionalization of institutional leadership and administration as well as the adoption of other New Public Management practices across Norwegian and Swedish universities. Internationalization is featured as an integral part of Lund's and UiO's institutional strategy and both universities have developed dedicated English language webpages on their respective institutional websites in order to meet the perceived needs of prospective and current international students. It is evident that both Lund and UiO have adopted some modern corporate marketing techniques, albeit to different extents, in their communication with prospective international students. This is demonstrated by, for example, the prominent presence of the institutional logo as well as the extensive use of a consistent set of layout, font, colour and design features across the different webpages of

the institutional website. However, due to a combination of factors related to national filters (Gornitzka et al., 2017), the higher education sector-specific filter (Gornitzka et al., 2017; March & Olsen, 1989) as well as historical development and path dependencies (Krücken, 2003), distinct modes of institutional governance have emerged at Lund and UiO. This has had a significant impact on how important decisions (such as those related to international student recruitment) are made, on the involvement of internal and external actors in the decision-making process as well as on the degree of centralization (or decentralization) within the university.

Both Lund and UiO have established a University Board which is executive in nature and serves as the highest decision-making body within the university. The University Board at UiO comprises a total of eleven members, seven of whom are internal members, and is chaired by the Rector, who is internally and democratically elected by the university's staff and students. It could therefore be argued that UiO enjoys a considerable degree of institutional autonomy from both the state and other external forces, at least on paper (It should be noted, however, that in practice UiO remains a public university that receives a significant proportion of its annual budget from the state, and consequently has limited room to manoeuvre especially when it comes to budget and personnel policies). Viewing knowledge as a public good, UiO constructs its institutional identity as a primarily academic university dedicated to teaching, research and democratic equality (Labaree, 1997), and therefore offers tuition-free education to all students that meet the academic requirements, regardless of their nationality or social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The rationales behind international student recruitment at UiO are pre-dominantly academic, i.e. the presence of international students enhances the quality of both education and research at the host university and helps achieve international academic standards. This is demonstrated by the design, structure and content of UiO's institutional website, which has retained important website features of The Autonomous University model and portrays prospective students as academic novices to be integrated into their respective disciplinary communities (Lažetić, 2019).

The University Board at Lund, in comparison, is marked by a substantial representation of external members (eight out of 15, that is to say, more than 50%) as well the fact that the role of the Chairperson is assumed by an external member appointed by the state. It is therefore reasonable to argue that the institutional governance at Lund is subject to stronger influence by the state and other external forces. Following the Swedish government's introduction of tuition

fees for students from non-EU/EEA countries in 2011, there has been an important economic rationale for Lund to recruit and retain international students in the competitive market of higher education. Consequently, the university's institutional website is structured based on the perceived needs and requirements of its primary user groups (such as prospective international students), and higher education is portrayed as an exciting and fun social experience rather than a scholarly pursuit of knowledge (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2018) or a journey of intellectual and spiritual development (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). Prospective international students are viewed as rational consumers with the power of choice when it comes to not only what to study but also where to study (Lažetić, 2019).

While the University Board oversees the strategic development of the university's educational and research activities and ensures that it operates within the legal framework set by the national government, both Lund and UiO have established a professional central administration that is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the university (Lund University, 2020b; University of Oslo, 2019). For example, there is a dedicated Corporate Communication Section at Lund which assumes the responsibility for corporate communication and marketing efforts at the university level. Within the section there is a Web Communications Department charged with the coordination, quality assurance and continuous improvement of the institutional website, as well as a Media and Branding Department that works closely with national and international press to enhance Lund's visibility and attractiveness (Lund University, 2020b). This could be demonstrated by the university's institutional website, which exhibits a large degree of visual homogeneity across the "Home", "About Us", "International Admissions", "Student Life" webpages as well as the university-level webpages of the four master's programs. A variety of modern corporate marketing and communication techniques are systematically employed in order to construct a distinctive and memorable institutional identity and place itself in a favourable position against the other players in the global competition for international students.

That being said, a significant proportion of duties have been delegated to individual faculties and disciplines for both Lund and UiO, whereby the Faculty Boards assume responsibility for the academic and administrative activities of their respective faculties (Gornitzka et al., 2017; Lund University, 2020b). This decentralization of authority could be demonstrated by the diversity observed on the faculty-level webpages of the four master's programs at both Lund and UiO. Despite Lund's move towards The Corporate University model at the institutional

level, it could be argued that individual faculties and disciplines have retained a certain level of autonomy in terms of constructing and promoting their respective sub-identities. The webpages of the master's programs in Economics and Social Anthropology at UiO stood out in the analysis as they have apparently adopted some modern corporate marketing techniques in their communication with prospective international students, and this has twofold implications. First, individual faculties and disciplines at UiO enjoy a large degree of autonomy from the central administration when it comes to constructing and promoting their respective sub-identities through the institutional website. Second, despite UiO's close alignment with The Autonomous University model at the institutional level, some faculties and disciplines have moved further towards constructing their (faculty/disciplinary) identity as a service enterprise embedded in the competitive markets of higher education (Olsen, 2007), and are actively participating in the global competition for international students.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

This final chapter concludes the thesis with a brief summary of the study, where the three research questions are re-introduced and discussed based on the findings from the data analysis. Thereafter, it reflects on the contributions and limitations of this study and makes several recommendations for future research. The primary objective of this study was to explore the ways in which Lund and UiO employ their respective institutional websites for international student recruitment, both at the institutional level and at the level of individual degree programs, and how it relates to the modes of institutional governance at these two universities. Upon a comprehensive review of literature on relevant topics, an analytical framework was developed by drawing on some well-established theories in the fields of higher education governance and international student recruitment. Thereafter, a qualitative content and discourse analysis was carried out on selected English language webpages on Lund's and UiO's institutional websites, guided by the three research questions and the analytical framework. The findings of this study revealed both similarities and differences between the two universities' institutional websites, as well as some interesting aspects regarding institutional governance and international student recruitment.

6.2. Addressing the research questions

1. *How do Lund and UiO employ their respective institutional websites for international student recruitment at the institutional level?*

The first research question revolves around the ways in which Lund and UiO employ their respective institutional websites for international student recruitment at the institutional level. It is evident from the content and discourse analysis that Lund, in line with The Corporate University model, employs a wide range of modern corporate marketing and communication techniques in a systematic way in order to meet the perceived needs and requirements of prospective international students, promote a distinctive and memorable corporate image and place itself in a favorable position against its competitors (i.e. other universities). While constructing its institutional identity as a service enterprise embedded in the competitive markets of higher education (Olsen, 2007), Lund also addresses prospective international

students as rational and calculative consumers with the power of choice (Lažetić, 2019). UiO, in comparison, was observed to have retained many of the website features that are aligned with The Autonomous University model and constructs its institutional identity as a primarily academic institution dedicated to education and scholarly research. Prospective international students are in turn viewed as academic novices to be integrated into their respective disciplinary communities (Lažetić, 2019).

2. *How do individual faculties and disciplines at Lund and UiO employ the institutional website for international student recruitment at the program level?*

The second research question focuses on the ways in which individual faculties and disciplines at Lund and UiO employ the institutional website for international student recruitment at the level of individual degree programs. In the case of both universities, a considerable degree of diversity was observed on the faculty-level webpages of the four master's programs that were examined, and there are notable differences between the university-level and faculty-level webpages. Individual faculties and disciplines at both Lund and UiO were observed to have retained a certain degree of individual autonomy in terms of constructing and promoting their own sub-identities through their respective faculty-level webpages, thereby corresponding (to a certain extent) to the characteristics of The Autonomous University model.

3. *How does Lund's and UiO's use of the institutional website for international student recruitment relate to their respective modes of institutional governance?*

The third research question relates the ways in which Lund and UiO employ the institutional website for international student recruitment with their respective modes of institutional governance. The University Board at UiO is chaired by an internally and democratically elected Rector and only four of its eleven members are external. Consequently, the university enjoys a large degree of institutional autonomy from both the state and other external forces (at least on paper). Viewing knowledge as a public good, UiO offers tuition-free education to all students regardless of their nationality, and consequently the rationales behind international student recruitment at UiO are pre-dominantly academic. This is demonstrated by the design, structure and content of UiO's institutional website, which has retained important features of The Autonomous University model. In comparison, eight of the 15 members on Lund's University Board, including the Chairperson, are external members appointed by the state, and as a result

the university's institutional governance is subject to stronger influence by external forces. Following the Swedish government's introduction of tuition fees for students from non-EU/EEA countries in 2011, there has been a stronger economic rationale for Lund to recruit and retain international students in the competitive market of higher education. The institutional website is structured based on the needs and requirements of its primary user groups (such as prospective and current international students), and higher education is portrayed as an exciting and fun social experience rather than a scholarly pursuit of knowledge (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2018). However, despite the professionalization of institutional leadership and central administration, there is a certain degree of decentralization of authority at both Lund and UiO, where a considerable amount of duties is delegated to the individual faculties and disciplines. The Faculty Boards, comprising both internal and external members, assume responsibility for the strategic development of their respective faculties (such as the construction and promotion of sub-identities) while the deanship is responsible for the day-to-date operations (such as creating and updating the content of the faculty-level webpages). Once again, this corresponded well to findings from the institutional website analysis for both Lund and UiO, where considerable differences were observed not only among the faculty-level webpages of the four master's programs, but also between the faculty-level webpages and university-level webpages.

6.3.   Limitations and future research

In line with the findings of Lažetić (2019), this study revealed significant differences (between Lund and UiO) in the portrayal of both the university and prospective international students on the institutional website. In addition, this study shed light on some rather interesting aspects of institutional governance in the context of international student recruitment. First, for universities that have adopted a more market-oriented approach at the institutional level (as is the case of Lund), the implementation of modern corporate marketing and communication techniques could be limited at the faculty and disciplinary level. However, the nature of the research design adopted in this study limits the scope of interpretation and further research would be required in order to find out the reasons behind this phenomenon (i.e. limited extent of implementation). For example, is it due to active or passive resistance from the academic community, or could it be a simple distribution of responsibilities where the central administration takes charge of student recruitment at the institutional level while the faculties and disciplines are responsible for student integration into the academic community? The next

question to ask would then be: how will this develop and evolve with time? Second, when it comes to universities that have remained committed to the Humboldtian principle of freedom of teaching and learning at the institutional level (as is to a large extent the case of UiO), some faculties and disciplines (e.g. Economics and Social Anthropology) could take advantage of their individual autonomy to adopt modern corporate marketing and communication techniques and participate more actively in the competitive markets of higher education. However, UiO remains a public university which receives a large percentage of its annual budget from the state (in the form of basic grants) and is not allowed to charge tuition fees, not even to non-EU/EEA students. Then the question that arises here is whether this observed marketization development at the faculty and disciplinary level is primarily administrative, or has it spread to the academic aspects of higher education? If so, to what extent? And if not, could it happen in the foreseeable future and therefore cast doubt on the fate of the university as a primarily academic institution dedicated to teaching and scholarly research? These questions are highly relevant and timely for future research in view of the recent and ongoing international crisis associated with the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which threatens to have a potentially devastating impact on universities that have adopted a strong market approach and become overly dependent on the revenues generated from international student recruitment.

The literature review carried out in this study contributed to a better understanding of the role of the institutional website in international student recruitment, and especially in the promotion of a distinctive institutional identity and an idealized identity of prospective international students. Furthermore, relevant literature on recent higher education reforms and developments in Norway and Sweden provided valuable contextual background information for this study and aided in the interpretation of findings and the discussion. In addition, this study confirmed the potential of institutional website analysis as a viable research method in the study of higher education institutions and presented a sound analytical framework that could be used to guide the empirical investigation process. However, there are several limitations regarding this study, as identified in Chapter 1. First, the content, language and design features of the institutional website represent only a relatively isolated snapshot of the university (e.g. Lund or UiO) at a particular point in time and therefore limits the possibility of any interpretation in terms of how changes in the mode of institutional governance influence the university's use of the institutional website for international student recruitment. Future studies could consider conducting a longitudinal analysis of a larger number of case universities (e.g. of different types, sizes and rankings) in order to study the evolution of the institutional websites over time

and relate it to developments in international student recruitment and institutional governance during the same period. Second, universities around the world, including both Lund and UiO, have established relevant central administrative units with dedicated marketing and communication professionals that are responsible for the design and maintenance of the institutional website. As a result, the use of institutional website analysis alone, despite its potential in comparative higher education research, does not allow for the interpretation of any correlation between institutional governance and international student recruitment in simple causal terms. It would therefore be useful in future research to combine institutional website analysis with some other research methods such as surveys, focus-group discussions and semi-structured interviews with relevant personnel from the central administration as well as individual faculties and disciplines so as to achieve a better understanding of the relationship between the institutional website, international student recruitment and the mode of institutional governance. Furthermore, future research could focus on the perspective of international students (and their parents) and investigate how they make use of the institutional website to access information and choose the destination for higher education. After all, the institutional website facilitates a dynamic two-way interaction between the university and prospective international students and the perspectives from both parties are required in order to achieve a better understanding of international student recruitment. In addition, further studies could examine the institutional website in its original language (i.e. the Swedish language webpages for Lund and the Norwegian language webpages for UiO) and explore how different modes of institutional governance could potentially impact the recruitment of national students.

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