Internationalization in a Lagom Culture

A Case Study of a Swedish University

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Abstract

This comparative case study examines the timely issue of internationalization of the Swedish higher education system in the context of lagom, a Swedish word which means “not too much, not too little, just the right amount.” This study presents a comprehensive overview of internationalization policies at the international and national levels, and examines their application at the institutional level within a higher education institution in Sweden to determine gaps between policy and practice. The data was gathered through qualitative interviews with students and international university administrators, which provided their perspectives of the current internationalization efforts, as well as a summary of the current internationalization policies at the institution. The interviews pointed to the organizational culture of the university as a factor affecting internationalization, taking Swedish lagom culture into consideration. This discovery is followed by the application of Sporn’s Organizational Culture Typology (1996) to the institution to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the university, and how to harness the strategic management style to better facilitate internationalization and thus increase the number of students pursuing studies abroad. The results suggest that a more centralized organizational university culture is a more effective way to facilitate internationalization. Additionally, the Swedish lagom culture presents a uniquely challenging paradigm for fostering the innovative internationalization agenda in HEIs.

Keywords: Internationalization, globalization, policy, higher education, organizational culture, lagom, mobility, Sweden.
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BFUG – Bologna Follow Up Group
CSN – Centrala studiestödsnämnden
EAIE – European Association for International Education
EACEA – Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EC – European Commission
ECTS - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEA – European Economic Area
EES – European Employment Strategy
EHEA – European Higher Education Area
ESN – Erasmus Student Network
EU – European Union
FEA – Forum on Education Abroad
HEI – Higher Education Institution
HsV - Högskoleverket
ICE – International and Comparative Education
IIE – Institute of International Education
LLL – Lifelong Learning
NAFSA – National Association of Foreign Student Advisers
NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement
OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UHR – Universitets- och Högskolerådet
UKÄ - Universitetskanslersämbetet
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Chapter One

1. Introduction

The internationalization of higher education has become a major prerogative worldwide, which has manifested itself in research undertaken by international educators all over the globe (i.e. see Hellstén & Reid, 2008; Hudzik, 2011; Lewin, 2009; Ninnes & Hellstén, 2005). Universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) across the world are looking to prepare their graduates to enter the global market with relevant competences and fresh ideas so they can succeed and prosper. The effects of globalization are palpable, and have become a driving force of innovation and modernization within higher education (Altbach & Knight, 2007). As a result, “the development of effective strategies for internationalization is now an essential element within university management,” (Taylor, 2004, p.168). With the exponential growth of the internationalization paradigm, the existing body of literature concerning both internationalization of higher education and study abroad has become extensive and comprehensive. Journals and research databases like the IDP Database of Research on International Education, Frontiers Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, and Research in Comparative and International Education Journal host hundreds of articles and publications on the topic of internationalization.

The positive impacts of internationalization and study abroad are published with great pride, and the agenda of internationalization is incontestably reinforced by the formation of new scholarship programs, such as Fulbright and the Peace Corps (Fulbright, 2017; Peace Corps, 2017); international educational commissions, such as the Institute for International Education and European Higher Education Area (IIE, 2017; EHEA, 2017); and study abroad initiatives like Erasmus+ and Erasmus Mundus (European Commission, 2017). Additionally, higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world have begun to expand their offerings of international programs and internationalize their curricula (Lewin, 2009, p.xviii). The quantity of students participating in study abroad programs worldwide has been continually increasing since the 1970’s, shifting dramatically from less than 1 million to more than 4.5 million in the 2010s (OECD, 2016, p.343).

In recent years, the topic of internationalization has been a high priority in Sweden. “Data indicates that the top priority for several university presidents/vice-chancellors is
internationalization of education,” (Pohl, 2012, p.29). STINT, the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education, has published various studies and reports with the topic of the internationalization of higher education in Sweden (e.g. Pohl, 2012; Pohl, 2017; STINT, 2017). “From its inception and until 2015, STINT has invested 1,700 MSEK in scholarships and grants related to internationalization of Swedish higher education and research,” (Pohl, 2017, p.4). In addition to reports by STINT, the Swedish government has also been clear in its attempts to address the issue by passing various bills and directives on the topic, for example a new directive by the Ministry of Education to increase internationalization published in February 2017 (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2017). Callan (1998) argues that Sweden is a perfect example of a nation in Europe where,

“Internationalization of education takes place under the influence of explicit, historically layered national goals which are themselves the outcome of well-understood political processes and traditions,” (Callan, 1998, p.49).

Since the history of the internationalization of higher education in Sweden has shown dedication and prioritization of the issue, both the EU and the Swedish government have set various internationalization targets (European Commission, 2017). Considering this fact, it is important to determine if the desired targets are in fact being met. Research agencies such as STINT attempt to analyze the ability of these policies and objectives to accomplish their desired results, otherwise referred to as the efficacy of the policies (STINT, 2017). How successful are internationalization policies and practices in meeting internationalization targets? At first glance, it is possible to infer that Sweden has been rather successful with internationalization in the last twenty years, just by examining the number of policies passed at the national level surrounding the topic (Sveriges Riksdag, 2017). However, just because a policy exists does not necessarily mean that it is being enforced, nor that its targets are being reached. For this reason, it is simultaneously imperative to study these policies, and to keep a critical eye when examining policy documents.

Considering Sweden’s history of internationalization, it was deemed both relevant and timely to conduct a study in this context. While Sweden is often praised for its education system on a global scale, there is always room for improvement, innovation and adaptation. As such, this thesis highlights internationalization in the context of higher education in Sweden, and takes a closer look with a case study at one university. A comprehensive overview of the internationalization policies at the supranational level attempts to analyze how these policies are articulated at the national and institutional levels in Swedish HEIs. Establishing a clear
picture of the current internationalization policies makes it possible to examine the intersection of these policies with prevailing practice.

Additionally, there is a unique cultural paradigm in Sweden which plays a role in the implementation of internationalization policy, which is *lagom*. The Swedish term *lagom* has no direct translation to English, but can be understood as “not too much, not too little, just the right amount,” (Barinaga, 1999, p.7). Lagom is understood as a lifestyle in Sweden, and thus has relevant impacts on the implementation of internationalization policy, which will be further discussed in Chapter Two.

### 1.1 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this study is to examine the efficiency of international and national policies in meeting internationalization targets at the institutional level within the culture of *lagom*. Essentially, the goal is to determine how the international policies governing internationalization are articulated at the national and institutional levels, and whether these policies are effectively doing what they set out to accomplish (efficacy), which is, in this case, to improve internationalization and increase enrollment in study abroad programs. This comparative research takes a tripartite approach to understanding the current situation from three different perspectives – national, institutional, and student – with the following main objectives:

1. To highlight the case of one large, public higher education institution in Sweden.

2. To identify the current international policies governing internationalization and higher education, and how these policies are articulated at the national and institutional levels in Sweden.

3. To understand the role of international coordinators or administrators in the study abroad and internationalization process.

4. To understand the student perspective of the barriers to study abroad, the study abroad process, and satisfaction with the current system.

5. To provide suggestions for how to integrate international and national policies, as well as the administrator and student perspectives, into the internationalization strategy at the institutional level.
1.2 Research Questions

The guiding research questions that helped shape the present study revolved around the aim of understanding the efficacy of national and institutional policies concerning internationalization in Swedish universities. The main objectives were formulated into the working questions. These questions were:

1. What are the international policies governing internationalization and study abroad, and how are they articulated at the national and institutional levels in Sweden?

2. What are barriers to internationalization and study abroad?

3. Do certain policies and/or processes have an impact on internationalization efforts and enrollment rates in study abroad programs? If so, how?

4. How can institutions in Sweden facilitate the process for students to improve enrollment rates in study abroad, and increase overall internationalization efforts?

These research questions helped guide the analysis of the policy documents, as well as the structure of the interviews conducted as part of this research project. The methodology utilized will be further outlined in Chapter Three.

1.3 Limitations and Delimitations

One major limitation of this study was the lack of bilingual documentation of policy and other written documents. While the Swedish national and institutional policies regarding higher education and internationalization are all publicly available, they are all only available in Swedish. This caused a delay in the analyses of policy documents, as it took additional time to carefully read and translate all materials from Swedish to English. This was a challenge for the researcher, whose level of Swedish is only intermediate. It forced the use of a translator for some of the documents, and imposed on the time to process data. To avoid misinterpretations, a native Swedish speaker was consulted to verify translations as correct. This added another time dimension to the study.

A further limitation of this study is that it was undertaken at only one Swedish university. As qualitative research does not seek to generalize the results to a larger population, this study sought to analyze for quality of the patterns identified, which are thus limited to the context of the case presented. The small population interviewed could also be considered a limitation. The researcher chose to speak with international coordinators in many departments,
however it was not always possible to speak with students from each of those same departments. While the variety in the departments of the international coordinators was an asset to the study, the departments of the students did not always match up. Additionally, while eight administrators were interviewed, only four students could be interviewed. This limited sample size does not allow for generalization among all students at the university in question, however it does give some insight into the student perspective.

A final limitation is that the concept of lagom is subjective. The researcher is from the United States, where lagom culture is not prevalent. Therefore, her perception of the concept of lagom is culturally comprehensive, encompassing all aspects of life in Sweden, including policy. However, as study participants hailed from a variety of different cultural backgrounds, it is possible that participants engendered different conceptualizations and perspectives of lagom and its implications in the context of internationalization.

1.4 Significance to International and Comparative Education (ICE)

This master’s thesis explores aspects that are centrally located within the field of international and comparative education. The topic concerns the impact of the global educational phenomenon on the internationalization of higher education in a localized case example. This concept has been widely addressed in the academic field of ICE, and has become increasingly prevalent across many countries and contexts. Researching the internationalization of higher education has become a major focus among international educators worldwide (e.g. Ninnes & Hellstén, 2005; Hellstén & Reid, 2008), and study abroad has been touted as a very crucial component of the internationalization process (Hudzik, 2011; Williams, de Rassenfosse, Jensen & Marginson, 2013). The amount of research published on the topic of study abroad alone in the last ten years has increased exponentially (see section 2.1.4), and is likely to remain a relevant area of interest for educational researchers in the foreseeable future.

In addition to the topic being international in focus, this study was also guided by the established comparative education analytical research framework of the Bray and Thomas cube (shown below). The purpose of using the Bray and Thomas framework for “multilevel analyses in comparative studies [is] to achieve multifaceted and holistic analyses of educational phenomena,” (Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007, p.8).
The research questions lend themselves to a comparative design using locational, societal, and demographic dimensions as illustrated by the three-dimensional cube. To gain a thorough understanding of the context of this study, internationalization is compared at the:

- World (1) and country (2) levels by investigating laws and policies at the intersection of the labor market and political enactment aspects of education and society, and by providing a historical comparison of internationalization policies at the EU and Swedish state levels;

- Institutional (5) level by comparing units across professional groups, made up of international HE coordinators and staff involved in the administration, management and implementation processes;

- Local institutional level (5) through a critical analysis of institutional policies, and at the individual (7) level by comparing interview data obtained from students.

This approach makes the research inherently comparative across different dimensions of the Bray and Thomas Cube. Additionally, this study lends itself to replication across a variety of different contexts in any number of countries, for example in other universities in Sweden to determine the relative success of different Swedish HEIs in their internationalization processes. Considering that this study targets one university in one country, the methodology and background knowledge of study abroad and internationalization could be replicated at other universities and in other countries.
1.5 Structure of the Study

This study is arranged into six chapters. The first chapter opens with a brief introduction on the topic of internationalization in the context of the Swedish higher education system. It is followed by the aims and limitations of the study, as well as the significance of the topic to International and Comparative Education (ICE). The second chapter explores the theoretical frameworks and the relevant concepts utilized in this research. These concepts include ‘globalization,’ ‘internationalization,’ ‘study abroad’ and ‘lagom.’ Chapter Three goes on to explain the methodology, research design, and data analysis methods.

The fourth chapter introduces and justifies the contextual setting of the study, which is a university in a major metropolitan area in Sweden, henceforth referred to as Novania University. It provides a historical comparison of internationalization policies in Europe and in Sweden, as well as accounting for the history of the internationalization policies at the HEI in question, Novania University. Chapter Five presents the results and analyzes the findings of the study, both from the interviews and the policy review. This chapter accounts for the comparative units of analyses across and within policy documents and interviews, and examines the common threads among them. The sixth and final chapter discusses the relationship between the theories (which will be explained in Chapter Two) and the findings of the study. The thesis concludes with an overall summary of the study and conclusions drawn by discussing some suggestions for the implementation of the findings in the local context of the university in question, and identifies implications and directions for future research.
Chapter Two

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This chapter includes a review of relevant concepts and theories which frame the present study. The first part of the chapter discusses the important terminology used in the study to ensure clear and consistent definitions. The terms that are most key to define are ‘globalization,’ ‘internationalization,’ ‘study abroad,’ and ‘lagom.’ Additionally, globalization and internationalization in the context of higher education will also be examined. The latter half of the chapter explores the theoretical frameworks and perspectives which contribute to and underpin this research. The key framework analyzed is Sporn’s Organizational Culture Typology Theory, which is employed to understand the role of the organizational culture of Novania University in the internationalization process. Additionally, Stier’s critical perspective of the ethics of internationalization is also discussed, which plays devil’s advocate to the large range of positive conceptualizations of internationalization provided in section 2.1.2.

2.1 Review of Relevant Concepts

It is important to define all the key terms used in this research, as there are many synonymous words that have been used in previous and related research. Conceptualizations of globalization from Beerkens (2004), Giddens (1990), Robertson (1992), Appadurai (1996), and Altbach and Knight (2007) are examined, as well as definitions of internationalization by Kälvemark and van der Wende (1997), Knight and de Wit (1995), and Ellingboe (1998). Later, these concepts are analyzed in the context of higher education, largely explained through Knight (1999) and Bartell (2003). Next, an explanation of the uniquely Swedish word ‘lagom’ is provided and analyzed in the context of higher education, with a definition provided by Barinaga (1999). Finally, a clear definition of study abroad is discussed, including perspectives from the Forum on Education Abroad (FEA) and Bhandari and Blumenthal (2010). Each of these concepts has a complex history and a variety of understandings that depend on the context, thus necessitating the importance of providing clear definitions, and warranting the explanatory approach of this chapter. This section delineates the way these concepts relate to, and can be understood, in the context of this study, as well as framing the perspective of the researcher.
2.1.1 Globalization

It is very important to note that there is not one singular definition of globalization that is considered universal (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006). Instead, the understanding of globalization differs widely based on the context. To fully understand how globalization relates to higher education, the elusive concept must be defined in a clear and coherent manner, and true comprehension of the term demands an interdisciplinary understanding and perspective, considering economic, political, and cultural aspects (Burbules & Torres, 2000).

Beerkens (2004) explores different perspectives of globalization which constitute the general majority of the definitions provided by various other scholars. He posits that there are four different conceptualizations of globalization, each with a distinctive point of reference. However, the one shared characteristic of these four reference points is that each understands globalization as a process. This denotes the idea that there was something of a ‘past reality’ which has been impacted by this process, and therefore a ‘new reality’ where globalization is moving towards (2004, p.8). Beerkens explores these past and new realities in the chart below for each of the four vantage points of globalization.

Table 1. Different Perspectives on Globalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualisation</th>
<th>Past Reality</th>
<th>New Reality</th>
<th>Globalisation Equals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical</td>
<td>Unconnected localities</td>
<td>The world-system that came into existence around 1900</td>
<td>Increasing interconnectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>State sovereignty over clearly defined territories</td>
<td>Authority transferred upward, downward, and sideways</td>
<td>Deterritorialisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Mosaic of cultures without significant routes for cross-cultural exchange</td>
<td>Melange of cultures</td>
<td>Either uniformity or friction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Nation as the institutional container of society; identity, solidarity, and</td>
<td>Social organisation and identity structured around aspatial systems</td>
<td>Cosmopolitanisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>citizenship based on nationality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Beerkens, 2004, p.12
One form of globalization is a geographical or geopolitical shift, the physical expansion from the local to the global (Beerkens, 2004, p.8). Anthony Giddens provides a definition of globalization in this vein as “the intensification of worldwide social relationships which link distinct localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events, occurring miles and miles away and vice versa,” (Giddens, 1990, p.64). In this definition, the past reality of unconnected localities dissolves through the increased capacity of transportation and communication, an intensification of this interconnectedness (Beerkens, 2004; Giddens, 1990). Giddens’ definition of globalization is widely recognized among scholars in many fields, including education. Globalization can also be understood in terms of authority and power, in a sense of deterritorialization. This approach focuses on the transfer of governance and political influence, either downward (decentralization), upward (centralization) or side-to-side (to similar actors) (Beerkens, 2004, p.9).

A third conceptualization in terms of the convergence of culture can be seen over history, for example, with the spread of different religions and migration patterns (Beerkens, 2004). Roland Robertson provides a more philosophical definition of globalization in this vein, explaining it as “a concept [that] refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole…both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century,” (Robertson, 1992, p.8). This viewpoint is more optimistic, while others will argue that the mélange of cultures could lead to homogenization, hybridization or a loss of traditional values (Beerkens, 2004; Appadurai, 1996). Appadurai (1996) coins the words *ethnoscapes* and *ideoscapes*, referring to the abstract conceptualizations of the global cultural flows of people and ideas respectively, and uses them to argue the tension between cultural homogenization and heterogenization. He posits that the globalization of culture is not the same as homogenization, though many of the mechanisms of homogenization (such as media, technology, language and clothing styles) are often absorbed into the local cultural and political climate (Appadurai, 1996, p.42).

A final construction of globalization is a more holistic, cosmopolitan view. Cosmopolitanism, being the “principle of universality…[with] implied acknowledgment of difference, a commitment to pluralism, and to the principle of respect for diversity,” (Tawil, 2013, p.2-3), insinuates that social cohesion becomes disembedded from national institutions and instead replaced by a cosmopolitan unity (Beerkens, 2004, p.10). This holistic view is increasingly prevalent today, as it addresses the global economic, political, and societal forces which are increasingly pushing and pulling everyone closer together to be more internationally involved (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p.290).
2.1.2 Internationalization

Like globalization, the term internationalization has several conceptualizations in the context of higher education. Kälvemark and Van der Wende (1997) explain that internationalization emphasizes a *response* of higher education to the changes brought forth by globalization, proclaiming that it is a “systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies, economy and labor markets,” (p.19). Knight & De Wit (1995) assert that internationalization integrates an international/intercultural perspective into all aspects of a higher education institution, including research, teaching, and service functions (p.17). Furthermore, Ellingboe (1998) adds:

“It is an ongoing, future-oriented, multidimensional, interdisciplinary, leadership-driven vision that involves many stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused, ever-changing external environment,” (p.199).

The important piece to remember is that while globalization is the effect – the inevitable and unavoidable outcome – internationalization is the action, a strategy to respond to globalization (Rocklin, 2016). With more complete definitions of globalization and internationalization in mind, now these concepts can be examined in the context of higher education.

2.1.3 Globalization, Internationalization and Higher Education

Recalling Beerkens’ cosmopolitan explanation, he expresses globalization in relation to higher education as “*a process in which basic social arrangements within and around the university become disembedded from their national context due to the intensification of transnational flows of people, information and resources,*” (Beerkens, 2004, p.24). Williams, de Rassenfosse, Jensen & Marginson (2013) contend that higher education must be viewed as a global commodity, thus certain efforts must be taken to ensure global competitiveness. “In a globalized world, a quality higher education system that is well connected internationally facilitates the introduction of new ideas and fosters trade and other links with foreign countries through the movement of students and researchers across national frontiers,” (Williams et al, 2013, p.599).

Internationalization implies a plethora applications, conceptualizations, and understandings. Consistent with Ellingboe’s definition, the interpretation of
internationalization as a “complex, all-encompassing and policy-driven process, integral to and permeating the life, culture, curriculum and instruction as well as research activities of the university and its members,” (Bartell, 2003, p.46) implies these numerous applications. A NAFSA publication further expresses that globalization has significantly impacted education by means of “the growing flow of students and faculty globally and the formation of cross-border inter-institutional collaborations and partnerships. The development of a global higher education system is recognition of a paradigm shift underway in that higher education institutions are not only a local, regional, or national resource but also are global resources—globally connected.” (Hovland, 2011, p.9).

“A variety of indicators may be employed in attempting to operationalize and measure the extent or level of the process of internationalization of universities, such as the number of foreign recruits and exchange students on a given campus; the number and magnitude of international research grants; cooperative international research projects; international partnerships involving assistance to foreign universities and other institutions; university- private sector partnerships with international goals; international cooperation and collaboration among schools, colleges and faculties in a given university; the extent of international infusion in curriculum content,” (Bartell, 2003, p.57).

These indicators broached by Bartell are accomplished with the following approaches at the institutional level, as explained by Knight (1999): activity, competency, ethos, or process.

Table 2. Approaches to Internationalization at the Institutional Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Categories or types of activities used to describe internationalisation: such as curriculum, student/faculty exchanges, technical assistance, international students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Development of new skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in students, faculty and staff. As the emphasis on outcomes of education grows there is increasing interest in identifying and defining global/international competencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Emphasis is on creating a culture or climate on campus which promotes and supports international/intercultural initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Integration or infusion of an international or intercultural dimension into teaching, research and service through a combination of a wide range of activities, policies and procedures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Knight, 1999, p.15
The activity approach, which is often the most prevalent, describes specific activities or programs designed to improve internationalization, such as student exchange. The competency approach focuses more on the skills and intercultural competencies of the staff and faculty. The ethos approach centers more on the development of a university culture which supports internationalization – an idea which constitutes the major theoretical framework of this study, which will be discussed later (Knight, 1999, p. 15-16; also see Sporn, 1996). The ethos approach also entails an examination of the prevailing lagom culture. The last approach can be understood as ‘internationalization at home,’ which focuses mostly on including an international dimension in the pedagogy, research, and curricula at the home university (Knight, 1999, p.16; see also Bartell, 2003, EAIE, 2017). But it is not just limited to these components. In fact, EAIE defines internationalization at home as “everything – from the academic curriculum, to the interactions between local students and international students and faculty, to the cultivation of internationally-focused research topics, to innovative uses for digital technology. Most importantly, it focuses on all students reaping the benefits of international higher education, not just those who are mobile,” (EAIE, 2017).

2.1.4 Study Abroad

One key concept that must be defined very clearly as well is study abroad. This is the main terminology that will be used in the context of this paper. The Forum on Education Abroad (FEA) classifies study abroad as an education enrollment option that occurs away from the participant’s home country which is designed to result in academic credit (FEA, 2017). Aside from this term, some other terms that also refer to the same concept are: exchange program, international student mobility, global student mobility, education abroad, overseas study program, international study program, foreign study program, or global education program (see FEA, 2017; Rocklin, 2017, p.5), many of which can be used interchangeably. For example, Bhandari and Blumenthal (2010) define global student mobility as “the migration of students across borders for a higher education,” (p.1), which focuses more on the aspect of the movement of students, but for all intents and purposes, is synonymous with study abroad.

But why study abroad, and how does it contribute to internationalization? “The movement of students and faculty across borders for periods of learning and discovery is by its nature the primary experience and active-learning component of internationalization,” (Hudzik, 2011, p.9). Comprehensive research has shown numerous benefits of study abroad and internationalization at all levels of the Bray and Thomas cube. At the individual level, the
students benefit from increased language proficiency (e.g. Watson & Wolfel, 2015), intercultural competence (e.g. Heinzmann, Künzle, Schallhart & Müller, 2015), and global engagement/citizenship (e.g. Paige, Fry, Stallman, & Jon, 2009; Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009), among other things. The movement of students also gives the teachers an internationalized experience, both in teaching students of multicultural backgrounds, and in incorporating an international dimension into their work (Knight, 1999). The institutions grow and prosper from this movement of students, both from sending and receiving students and teachers, and it increases their visibility and contributes to their reputation worldwide (Bartell, 2003).

In addition to study abroad, there are several other international mobility programs that higher education institutions are beginning to include in their internationalization efforts. “Universities are now promoting various transnational experiential teaching/learning practices ranging from study abroad, student exchanges, international internships and overseas field studies,” (Singh, 2005, p.18). For example, the Erasmus+ Program offers student exchange, traineeships, teacher exchange and training, international internships, international volunteer work, and even job shadowing (European Commission, 2017).

2.1.5 Lagom

Lagom is a hegemonic cultural feature in Sweden, which suggests general conformity and ordinariness, and does not encourage deviation from the norm. With no direct translation to English, lagom is a term that can be best understood as ‘just the same as everyone else,’ or ‘not too much, not too little.’ A common expression in Swedish is lagom är bäst, meaning lagom is best, which can be applied to relationships, work, and style of dress just as easily as it can be applied to styles of management and politics (Barinaga, 1999). Lagom is a very important word in the Swedish context, as it not only defines the culture, but also the people. It is not lagom for people to step too far outside their comfort zones, and it is not lagom to be too different from the norm. It is imperative to understand the implications of lagom to fully understand the nature of Swedish organizational culture, which will be discussed in section 2.2.1. In the context of higher education, lagom can be identified as factor which impacts innovation and internationalization, as it lends itself to a reluctance to change and the fear of the unknown, which has been cited in previous research as a main obstacle for students to pursue study abroad (e.g. see Engle and Engle, 2003).
2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

The concepts described in section 2.1 contribute to the construction of the theoretical orientation of the present study. Now that these key terminologies have been clearly defined, the theories which framed this study can also be discussed. The normative statement that internationalization is inherently good has been backed up by research in the field of international education (e.g. see Paige et al, 2009; Hellstén and Reid, 2005; Hudzik, 2011; Williams et al, 2013), and can be assumed in the context of this paper. Assuming internationalization is good, the main framework employed in this study was Barbara Sporn’s (1996) Organizational Culture Typology Theory, which analyzes and interprets a university’s culture through a matrix typology method, and then relates the culture to management approaches. This framework guides the understanding of the implications of university culture for effective management. Furthermore, this framework is used to understand the process of internationalization. Employing this framework, Bartell (2003) stressed the importance of “assess[ing] empirically the relevant dimensions of organizational culture linked to organizational effectiveness which need to be changed to improve effectiveness.”

However, although this paper assumes the view that internationalization is good, it is also important to consider the perspective which argues otherwise. Stier (2004) provides a critical view of the ethics of internationalization in higher education institutions, and offers some suggestions for how to avoid this unethical side of the argument.

2.2.1 Organizational Typology Theory

Barbara Sporn’s Organizational Cultural Theory (1996) exists under the pretext that organizational culture has a definitive influence on academic institutions (p.41). She asserts this normative statement, which has been backed up by significant research in the field of higher education and organizational culture (e.g. see Bartell, 2003; Taylor, 2004; Tierney, 1988). Tierney explains that studying the cultural dynamics of an educational institution should equip the researcher or administrator to understand the aspects causing friction, and to recognize the goals and successes for the institution to thrive (1988, p.5). The definition of university culture employed here highlights the values and beliefs of university affiliates - which influence the decision-making at HEIs significantly - and assumes that an ‘ideal’ culture should embody the following characteristics and answer the following questions (Sporn, 1996, p.45):
A. Identification – who are we?  
B. Motivation, legitimization – why do we do the work?  
C. Communication – to whom do we talk?  
D. Coordination – with whom do we work?  
E. Development – what are the perspectives?  

If the university’s culture exemplifies these characteristics, the easier it will be to better adapt to both external and internal changes. Since universities are constantly changing and developing, new strategies must be developed to guide how to handle these changes, which must be based on an analysis of the culture, (Sporn, 1996, p.45).  

“Universities present an inherently unique cultural paradox which requires the ongoing reconciliation of the ‘accumulated heritage,’ on one hand, and that of the ‘modern imperatives’ on the other,” (Bartell, 2003, p.52). Considering that many storied universities often have many decades of history of functioning in a certain way, a delicate balance between traditions and new directives must be carefully constructed and maintained. When examining the organizational culture of a university, it is essential to understand its complexity and distinct characteristics:  

“Their aims are often unclear; stakeholders are varied and numerous. Traditional values of autonomy and academic freedom do not lend themselves to integrated planning; institutions are staffed by diverse professionals, both academic and managerial, with varied and different aims and objectives; and universities face a rapidly changing external operating environment with many conflicting pressures and no clearly agreed-upon priorities. Such an environment does not lend itself to effective planning,” (Taylor, 2004, p.151).  

Additionally, it is crucial to recognize that organizational culture provides a holistic perspective, focusing on the “deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs or ideologies that members have about their organization or its work,” (Bartell, 2003, p.44-45). Organizational culture cannot simply change overnight, but it can be examined to determine the weak links and shortcomings, to see where changes can and should be made. The organizational culture typology framework attempts to do exactly this: to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a public university in Sweden regarding the policies on internationalization and their impact on enrollment in study abroad programs.
The above figure explores the feedback process between a university’s culture and strategic management. Both the internal university structure and the external environment play into the university’s culture, which then feeds directly into every other aspect of the university. University culture filters down into strategic management, which then comes back around to feed into the university culture again. This feedback process is dialectical and cyclical, with an overarching challenge of “minimizing the occurrence and consequences of cultural conflict and to help foster the development of shared goals,” (Tierney, 1988, p.5).

Sporn contends that universities gain influence in two ways: strength and orientation.

**2.2.1.1 Strength**

“Strength implies the degree of fit between cultural values, structural arrangements, and strategic plans,” (Sporn, 1996, p.46). Strong university cultures demonstrate the alignment of the aims and beliefs of university members, the hierarchical integration, and the strategies put forth by the institution. On the other hand, weak university cultures are usually comprised of minimally connected subunits or subcultures that often directly contradict one
another (Sporn, 1996, p.46). While the strength of an organization’s culture can be measured in a variety of ways, the indicator used by Sporn was the intensity of communication between the university members (1996, p.48). Though the strength of a university culture undoubtedly depends on various factors, the consensus is that strong cultures are often more successful than weak ones (Sporn, 1996, p.55; Bartell, 2003).

2.2.1.2 Orientation

“Orientation refers to the focus of the values, attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of behavior of the university members,” (Sporn, 1996, p.46). Cultures with an internal orientation emphasize the internal dynamics of the organization, for example that the involvement of university members in bureaucratic processes will usually overshadow the priority of external challenges (Sporn, 1996, p.46). Conversely, externally focused cultures tend to emphasize the external development of the organization. Orientation relies on both adaptation and organizational development. Adaptation refers to changes responding to the external environment, whereas organizational development refers to changes motivated internally within the organization (Bartell, 2003, p.44). While both internal and external orientations have their merit, it can be concluded that externally oriented cultures are often more capable of adapting to environmental changes (Sporn, 1996, p.55; Bartell, 2003).

Figure 3. Strength and Orientation of a University Culture

Source: Bartell, 2003, p.57
The four typologies shown in the above figure show the different types of university culture according to Sporn’s organizational culture typology theory. She posits that any university can be positioned within this model, and that through it, suggestions for the most effective strategic management style can be generated.

Bartell adapts this comprehensive framework for analyzing and understanding the internationalization process for universities. He explains that a variety of indicators must be considered to operationalize and measure the process of internationalization. By considering and measuring these indicators, the typology above can be used to plot the organizational culture of any university, which can then be used to enhance the understanding of the circumstances likely to facilitate internationalization and its outcomes (Bartell, 2003, p.59).

**Figure 4. Spectrum of Internationalization Strategies**

Bartell further posits that internationalization exists on a spectrum, which is demonstrated in the figure above. At one end, internationalization is limited and essentially symbolic. An example of limited internationalization might be that a university has small group of students from different countries represented on campus. At the other end of the spectrum, internationalization is understood as a holistic and largely transformative process, encompassing the curriculum, pedagogical practices, and the research programs. This synergistic process influences the responsibilities and activities of all university members, including administrators, students, faculty members and the surrounding community (Bartell, 2003, p.51-52).

2.2.2 A Critical View of Internationalization Ethics

An additional framework which must be considered is that of Professor of Sociology, Jonas Stier, who takes a critical viewpoint of the ethics of internationalization. As previously discussed, many scholars agree to the normative statement that internationalization is inherently good. However, Stier argues that internationalization becomes “entangled with commercial,
pragmatic and ideological motives of educational actors,” (2004, p.86). Due to the commercialization of higher education, and the desperate obsession with international university rankings, internationalization may not always be considered completely ethical, and several critiques are discussed. Stier explicates,

“University education has become a global commodity…[and] wealthy nations attempt to attract academic staff and fee-paying students from the ‘poor’ world, not only for short-term financial gains, but with an intent to keep their competence in the country, thus risking to ‘brain drain’ their home countries,” (2004, p.91).

Marginson and van der Wende (2006) explain that ‘brain drain’ is a common problem addressed by many countries, as the loss of talented researchers and long-term academic capacity from weaker to stronger nations is unfair and unequal (p.38). Other criticisms of internationalization include cultural imperialism, arrogance, victimization, exploitation, increased global disparity, and academicentrism (Stier, 2004, p.94). Stier clarifies that academicentrism can be understood as higher education’s version of ethnocentrism. It is defined as the “conviction that ‘our’ methods of teaching, research and degrees are better than those of other countries...it may be expressed as a lack of understanding or rejection of the rules, routines or grading principles of foreign systems,” (2004, p.93).

He concludes with some suggestions for avoiding these unethical side effects of internationalization. Namely, a constant scrutiny and self-critique of the motives for internationalization, as well as finding a realistic balance between an optimistic and idealistic outlook on education. He also expresses the belief that internationalization does not have to simply become a consequence of globalization, but can instead be a “powerful tool to grasp and debate its effects,” (p.96). Overall, when it comes to internationalization of higher education, even Stier will concede that it can be a good thing, acknowledging that the “turf is no longer local or regional, but global,” (p.96). However, “the jury is still out on whether altruism or commercialization will prevail in internationalization,” (Taylor, 2004, p.156).
Chapter Three

3. Methodology

The following chapter explores the methodological framework employed in this study. First, the research strategy and design is deconstructed and rationalized, the researcher’s epistemological considerations are revealed, and the sampling method is defined. Next, the data collection and data analysis methods are explained in detail, including a rationale for the selection of the methods chosen. For a more thorough understanding of the context, multiple research methods were employed in both data collection and analysis, allowing the findings to be triangulated for maximum reliability. This leads into a discussion of the trustworthiness of the study, as well as the authenticity. The chapter concludes with a look at the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Strategy

The strategy utilized in this study was largely inductive in nature, meaning that theory was generated through the results and findings of the study (Bryman, 2012, p. 24). The theories discussed in Chapter Two gave the researcher a solid basis for the justification of the study. However, Bryman also notes that oftentimes inductive research approaches also entail some aspect of deduction as well, considering that some researchers will then take the theory they have generated and test it again to assure it holds true (2012, p.26). Given the inductive nature of this study, a qualitative research strategy was deemed to be most appropriate. Qualitative research is often undertaken in social sciences to contribute to a richer, deeper understanding of the context. Bryman emphasizes that qualitative research usually focuses on the content and understanding, aiming to construct and contextualize meaning and theory from the data collected (2012, p. 408).

Two different qualitative research methods were utilized in this study: interviews and policy document analysis. Interviews, being the most widely used method in qualitative research, were chosen for this study, considering that they allow for flexibility and the possibility to probe for deeper answers (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, Rui (2007) explains that policy analysis should rely on qualitative research, as it helps to understand and highlight the diverse social and political contexts in which policies are formed (adapted from Bray, Adamson...
This study aimed to analyze the intersection of the policy and the perspectives of participants, thus a qualitative approach was most suitable.

3.2 Research Design

The main research design utilized was a single case study of one Swedish university. Bryman explains that a case study includes a meticulous and concentrated analysis of a single case, stating that “case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question,” (2012, p.66). In the context of this study, the case examined was a large public university located in a major metropolitan area in Sweden, chosen for its international demographics of both the surrounding city and the university community. To gain a thorough understanding of the context of the case, data was examined at the international, national, institutional and individual levels, as understood in terms of the Bray and Thomas Cube (Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007). Interviews were conducted with two groups of participants, administrators and students, while the concurrent policy document thematic analysis was completed. International HE coordinators were chosen as the primary source of interviews so that the institutional policies and the nature of internationalization at Novania University could be thoroughly examined. Students were also interviewed to understand their perspective as the primary group affected by the policies. Including multiple levels of analysis allowed for a more complete picture of the case to be compiled, and various perspectives from different stakeholders could be considered. An intensive research strategy utilizing multiple research methods lends itself to this multi-level analysis.

This research is considered comparative and international, thereby constituting inherent relevance to ICE research. The study aims at comparing perspectives from two different groups – students and university administrators, and subsequently analyzing the intersection of these perspectives with policies from an international, national, and institutional level regarding internationalization and study abroad enrollment. The topic itself is international, and the juxtaposition of perspectives from the different stakeholders makes the research comparative. The nature of this type of analysis is complex and multifaceted, and as such, it provides a framework for a better understanding of internationalization at Novania University.
3.3 Epistemological Considerations

Epistemology refers to “the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline,” (Bryman, 2012, p.27). Epistemology considers the nature of knowledge and how it relates to truth and belief. It is important to understand the epistemological position employed in this research to draw the connection between the theories (presented in Chapter Two) and the findings of the study. As such, the interpretivist epistemology dominates the field of qualitative research.

“An interpretivist approach allows the focus of the research to be on understanding what is happening in a given context. It includes consideration of multiple realities, different actors’ perspectives, researcher involvement, taking account of the contexts of the phenomena under study, and the contextual understanding and interpretation of data,” (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2001, p.5).

This means that the researcher interpreted the results and findings of the study in a way that contributes to the beliefs and knowledge about the subject of internationalization. Additionally, descriptive and complex case examination provides the researcher with a solid foundation for interpretation (Lor, 2011, p.10). This research is positioned in the interpretivist epistemology for these reasons. It would be impossible to draw conclusions about the intersections of perceptions and policies without the researcher’s interpretation of the findings. “The stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants,” (Bryman, 2012, p.380).

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

Considering the depth of detail required by the research design and strategy, it was also necessary for the methods of data collection to be comprehensive. The data in this study was collected using two different qualitative research methods: semi-structured interviews, and thematic document analysis. A tripartite approach was used, which entailed two rounds of interviews with different stakeholders, and a concurrent policy document analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for their flexibility, and for the depth of responses provided (Bryman, 2012, p. 471). The interviews took place over the course of a two-month period, each lasting approximately 30 minutes, and were conducted on the campus of Novania University. A research guide was prepared prior to the interviews, which included
a list of questions which revolved around the research questions discussed previously (Bryman, 2012, p.473). Different but related questions were asked to the administrators and to the students. Copies of the research guides are included as Appendices A and B at the end of this paper. The questions needed to be altered between student and administrator interviews because there were two different perspectives to be considered, and keeping the same questions would not make sense in both contexts. The nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for some flexibility with these questions, and afforded the liberty of follow-up questions and tangential anecdotes. The types of questions included some introductory, open-ended, vignette, and interpretive questions (Bryman, 2012, p.478). All the interviews were recorded using the iPhone application Smart Record, which were later transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Copies of the interview transcripts were kept password protected and available only to the researcher, and the audio recordings of the interviews were kept only on the iPhone of the researcher.

Additionally, a cursory review of internationalization policies at an international, national, and institutional level was conducted. “Document analysis involves skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation. This iterative process combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis,” (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). Bowen here notes the iterative nature of document analysis, thus lending to the inductive approach used for the generation of theory in this study. The process began by searching through the EU policies, the Swedish Parliament laws and policies, as well as the policies published by Novania University. All this data is publicly available online, thus facilitating the research significantly. The initial search returned a vast number of policies at the international and national levels, using search terms such as ‘internationalization,’ ‘higher education,’ and ‘mobility’ (and their Swedish equivalents). These policies were skimmed and scanned for relevance and relative importance to the study, with a goal of narrowing down the policies to be examined deeper and interpreted. This resulted in the compilation of a manageable total number of the most relevant and important policy documents at each level to be analyzed. The policies were then read thoroughly and dissected to identify the prominent and recurring themes present.

Utilizing a mixed methods approach offers the researcher possibility of triangulating the results, which means that the different data may be mutually corroborated, lending itself to greater internal validity of the study. It also provides completeness, or a more comprehensive account of the context in question (Bryman, 2012, p.633).
3.5 Selection of Participants

The participants in this study were recruited through two distinct methods. First, a list of international administrators at Novania University was compiled from the website, as well as their email contact information. It was deemed the most relevant to interview international coordinators due to the nature of their work within the sphere of internationalization. The university lists thirty different international coordinators on the website, all of whom were contacted, resulting in eight participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with these eight administrators, who were either departmental or faculty international coordinators, or from the central international office. An additional six coordinators responded saying that they would like to participate, however had only been working in the position for a short time, therefore would not be able to contribute to the study. These omitted responses will be discussed further in section 5.2.3.

It was also relevant to interview students who had gone through the process to study abroad to understand their perspective of internationalization at Novania University. The second method for participant selection was by means of an online public forum. Using two Facebook groups and the researcher’s personal Facebook page, an announcement was posted with the specifications of the study, who would fulfill the criteria to participate in the study, and how to participate. This method returned four student participants, of whom two were Swedish, and two were international students. But all were full-time students who completed either bachelor or master (or both) programs at Novania University, and had also completed a study abroad program through the university.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

This research used a multilevel comparative analysis to gain a holistic and multifaceted understanding of the current context of internationalization policies, and the perceptions of these policies by the stakeholders involved at the institutional and individual levels. To achieve this, two different methods of interpretive data analysis were utilized in conjunction with the two research methods employed in this study. An inductive, interpretive approach allows the researcher to deconstruct the data and make sense of it in the context of the social reality examined, and not simply recount what was found. First, the international, national, and institutional policies regarding internationalization of higher education were analyzed and interpreted through a document analysis. While document analysis was deemed the most
appropriate method for analyzing the policies, it was important to remember to maintain a critical viewpoint of the texts, and not to take everything at face value.

“Documents should not be treated as necessarily precise, accurate, or complete recordings of events that have occurred. Researchers should not simply ‘lift’ words...rather, they should establish the meaning of the document and its contribution to the issues being explored,” (Bowen, 2009, p.33).

The key here is that while policies are often good indications of intent, they may not always accurately reflect the real situation. Thus, the importance of a critical interpretivist and multifaceted approach. Corbin and Strauss explain that “document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge,” (as cited in Bowen, 2009, p.27).

“The analytic procedure entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents,” (Bowen, 2009, p.28).

The policies were skimmed, and narrowed down in order to find the most relevant to the study at each level. The policies were compiled by the researcher and, where necessary, translated to English. The policies at the international level were all available in English, but many policies at the national level provided by the Swedish government were only available in Swedish. This was challenging due to the researcher’s level of Swedish, which was only intermediate. However, the use of Google Translate facilitated the process, as well as assistance from a native Swedish speaker where necessary. Once all the policies were compiled in English, they were read through carefully and color coded with several different themes in order to perform a thematic analysis. “Thematic analysis is a form of pattern recognition within the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis,” (Bowen, 2009, p.32). Similar themes across the policies at all three levels were discovered and marked accordingly, which will be discussed at length in Chapter Four. Once the policies were coded and thematized accordingly, it was possible to draw conclusions and make connections to the theories discussed in Chapter Two.

In addition to the policy document analysis, the interviews conducted were also analyzed using a thematic content analysis. Bryman expresses that while ‘thematic analysis’ is a bit fuzzy to define, the Framework methodology developed by the National Centre for Social Research in the United Kingdom is often what many researchers liken to thematic analysis (2012, p.579). This Framework also consisted of the use of excel spreadsheets to classify the
themes and subthemes present in each of the interviews. Each interview had been recorded and later transcribed, so the transcripts were pored over repeatedly to identify excerpts and blurbs which supported the themes, which were placed in the Framework matrix. This allowed the researcher to easily sort through all the themes and find examples of each discussed by the different interviewees.

The utilization of two different qualitative research analysis methods allowed for the triangulation of the results. Bryman explains that triangulation enlists the use of two or more sources or methods of data collection and analysis in social science research in order to verify and crosscheck the findings, (2012, p.392).

“Document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation. The qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence...to convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods,” (Bowen, 2009, p.28).

3.7 Trustworthiness and Authenticity

As Bryman explains, while it is imperative for any research conducted to fulfill criteria of reliability and validity, these measures of strict rigor are not always the most relevant in qualitative research. Therefore, researchers have adapted the terms *Trustworthiness* and *Authenticity* instead, which mirror concepts from quantitative research (Bryman, 2012, p.390).

3.7.1 Trustworthiness

The concept of trustworthiness is composed of four components, each analogous to a quantitative component:

1. Credibility
2. Transferability
3. Dependability
4. Confirmability

Credibility, which parallels internal validity, entails ensuring that the research was done in good practice with methodological rigor and strictness, as well as validated by the respondents. This study was completed in a systematic way, as described explicitly in this methodology chapter. Additionally, all the findings of the study were submitted to one of the respondents, S3, who read through them to ensure responses were captured in a correct
Another measure of credibility mentioned by Bryman is triangulation, which entails the use of more than one research method to corroborate the study findings. The use of both policy document analysis and semi-structured interviews allowed for a more detailed account of the case to be analyzed, and the data to be mutually corroborated (see section 3.2 for more detail on research design).

Transferability, analogous to external validity, concerns whether the study could be transferred to, and replicated in another context (Bryman, 2012, p.329). The main measure of transferability is the use of thick description, which was present in this study. The single case study design requires detailed description so that every aspect of the case can be examined. Additionally, coupled with thick and detailed descriptions, the use of both Sporn’s Organizational Culture Typology matrix and the Framework methodology for thematic analysis allow for replicability of this type of study.

Dependability, which mirrors reliability, involves ensuring that thorough and detailed records are kept during the research process (Bryman, 2012, p.392). This includes the formation of the problem, selection of participants, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions, and so on, in a transparent and clear manner. The researcher recorded and transcribed every interview, and every transcript kept in a password-protected Google drive folder, in addition to a copy of each policy reviewed. Furthermore, all the analysis decisions were made using the thematic Framework methodology spreadsheets.

Lastly, confirmability is concerned with ensuring that, “the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith; in other words, it should be apparent that he or she has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of the research and the findings deriving from it,” (Bryman, 2012, p.392). To ensure objectivity, the strict framework and typology methods were applied to the data, and the conclusions were drawn accordingly. Additionally, the interview guides were reviewed by peers in the field to check for leading questions and wordings that could potentially sway the responses.

3.7.2 Authenticity

In addition to these characteristics which lend to the trustworthiness of the study, there were additional measures to ensure for authenticity, which concern the wider political impacts of the research. These include fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. This research attempted to fairly represent all parties involved by taking the perspectives from both students and administrators, and cross-
referencing their views with written policy documents. The study pursued ontological and educative authenticity in that attempted to both help members arrive at a better understanding of the current situation in their institution, as well as appreciate the perspectives of other members. By considering the perspectives of both students and administrators, in addition to comparing them with the policy documents, this gives all stakeholders involved a better understanding of the current situation, and helps to share knowledge about how to potentially ameliorate the situation. Lastly, catalytic and tactical authenticity entails that the study encourages the participants to want to take action and change the situation. This is certainly the case of the administrators and students interviewed, as well as the perspective gleaned from the policies. All parties involved in this study were in favor of the increase of internationalization efforts, and that they hoped that this study would, in fact, create some buzz around the topic in this context, and generate more interest from external stakeholders.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

To ensure the anonymity of all research participants, codes were used in place of names. A guide for the codes can be found in Appendix F at the end of this thesis. In addition to anonymizing the interview participants, the identity of the university was also kept secret, and referred to as Novania University throughout this text. The researcher elected to keep the identity of the university obscured to protect the identities of the participants interviewed, as they might otherwise be able to be identified due to the description of their roles. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, each participant was required to sign a consent form prior to being interviewed. A copy of the consent form used can be found in Appendix E. The researcher kept one copy of each consent form, and gave one signed copy to each study participant.
Chapter Four

4. Historical Context and Setting of the Study

Before the results of the internationalization policy analysis can be examined, first the context of the study, and exactly what was examined, must be defined. This chapter provides a cursory overview of the political context of this study at the international (EU), national (Swedish state), and institutional (university) levels. Here, a summary of the history of the internationalization policies at each level will be provided, which will explain the status of internationalization policies in Sweden. This will be followed by a more in-depth analysis of the themes of these policies in the next chapter of study findings and analysis. This chapter will conclude with the context of Novania University.

4.1 What is a Policy?

“Policy is both product and process, making it ongoing and dynamic...complex, interactive and multilayered. Policy processes accrue both prior to the production of a policy text and afterwards, through the stages of implementation and reinterpretation.” (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997 in Rui, 2007 in Bray, Adamson & Mason, p.248)

It is crucial to understand that the concept of a ‘policy’ is elusive and hard to define. Rui describes ‘policy’ using a metaphor to an elephant: once you see it, you recognize what it is, but it is rather challenging to define (2007, p.243-244). He further explains that “in the context of influence, policy can be understood as intentions, ideas, aims, purposes, objectives or plans; in the context of policy text production, policy can be written texts, products, documents and articles; and in the context of practice, policy can be actions, performances and activities,” (Rui, 2007, in Bray et al, p.248). For simplicity’s sake, the policies examined in this study were the actual written documents regarding higher education and internationalization – laws, bills, decisions, proposals, directives, and strategies – though this did qualify many policies to consider. This study examined policies at the international, national, and institutional level regarding higher education and internationalization.

With a better understanding of policy in general, the context of higher education policy regarding internationalization can be elaborated. Higher education policy is formed as the “result of interplay between various forces, interests, or actors,” (Goedegebure, Kaiser, Maassen & de Weert, 1994, p.4). The typology below provided by Clark (1983) distinguishes
the key ‘push and pull factors’ that “constitute the coordination paradigm of a particular higher education system” (Goedegebuure et al, 1994, p.5). According to Clark, the three factors which determine how higher education policy is made in a country are state authority, the market economy, and academic oligarchy. Clark plotted a few different countries (including Sweden) on this typology, which he called the ‘Triangle of Coordination.’

Figure 5. Selected Countries in Clark's Triangle of Coordination

![Image of Clark's Triangle of Coordination]

*Source: Clark, 1983, in Goedegebuure et al, 1994, p.5*

Granted, this was printed in 1994, so it is quite outdated. Generally, Sweden falls somewhere between state authority and academic oligarchy with very little market influence. However, based on the researcher’s analysis of Sweden’s education policies, this has changed since 2011, when they introduced tuition fees to non-EU/EEA citizens, pushing Sweden a bit further towards the center of this typology (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013). Overall, Sweden remains quite centrist in its higher education policies.

4.2 The Supranational Level

As a member state of the European Union, Sweden follows the international laws as set forth by the European Commission. There are several policies at this level which have been passed over the years that dictate how the member states should address issues of higher education and internationalization in their country. It is then up to the state to decide what they will focus on within these overarching guidelines. The main policies examined in this study were the Bologna Declaration (1999) and its numerous successors, the Lisbon Strategy (2000),

4.2.1 The Bologna Declaration and its Successors

The first major international policy which tackled the issue of internationalization head on was the Bologna Declaration in 1999. Technically, its predecessor was the Sorbonne Declaration the year before in 1998, but the Sorbonne Declaration had only four signatory countries – France, Germany, Italy, and the UK (European Commission, EACEA & Eurydice, 2015). The following year, in Bologna, Italy, the Joint Ministers of Education met and confirmed their support to further enhance the competitiveness of higher education institutions in Europe through the publication of the Bologna Declaration, with 29 signatory countries, including Sweden (European Commission et al, 2015). There are currently 48 European Higher Education Area (EHEA) signatory countries, including the European Commission as a full member (EHEA, 2017).

Following the publication of the Bologna Process, the Ministers of Education met every few years to follow-up on its progress in the different countries. Each time they met, they published a Communiqué with newly set goals for the next period, and what the strategies of the countries should utilize regarding the improvement of higher education. Following the meeting of the Ministers in Prague just two years after Bologna was established, the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) was also established (European Commission et al, 2015).

“Ministers decided that a new follow-up meeting will take place in the second half of 2003 in Berlin to review progress and set directions and priorities for the next stages of the process towards the European Higher Education Area...The follow-up group should be composed of representatives of all signatories, new participants and the European Commission, and should be chaired by the EU Presidency at the time,” (Prague Communiqué, 2001).

Following Prague, the Ministers convened in Berlin, Germany; Bergen, Norway; London, UK; Leuven, Belgium; Bucharest, Romania; and most recently in Yerevan, Armenia in 2015. The next scheduled meeting of the BFUG will be in Paris, France in 2018 (European Commission et al, 2015).
4.2.2 The EU Cohesion Policies: Then and Now

Following the publication of the Bologna Process, which was a huge step forward for higher education regarding the challenges of globalization, the Lisbon Strategy (or Lisbon Process) was also published in 2000. This policy was designed as a general and cohesive ‘EU strategy for growth and jobs,’ with the overarching goals of making Europe “the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment” (Lisbon Strategy, 2000). In 2005, the Lisbon Strategy was relaunched with new, more specific goals and targets, including ‘investing more in knowledge and innovation,’ which would focus largely on education, higher education, and specifically mobility (European Commission, 2005).

Since the relaunch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005, a few other European cohesion strategies have been established. Two years later in 2007, The EU Cohesion Policy for 2007-2013 (European Commission, 2007) supporting research and innovation was established, followed by Europe2020, a strategy for “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, mutually reinforcing the economic, social and territorial cohesion” (Europe2020, 2010). These included projects like the “Seventh Framework Program for Research” and “Framework Program for Competitiveness and Innovation” (European Commission, 2014). These predecessors led the way to Horizon 2020, the Framework Program for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020, 2014), and the current EU Cohesion Strategy 2014-2020 (European Commission, 2014).¹

4.3 Policies at the National Level

"HEIs should furthermore in their activities promote understanding of other countries and of international conditions," (Högskolelag, 1992).

Sweden is a constitutional parliamentary democracy, meaning that its power comes from the people. At the national level, the people are represented by Sveriges Riksdagen (the Swedish Parliament) which has legislative power (Sveriges Riksdag, 2017), and Sveriges Regeringen (the Swedish Government), which is the executive branch (Sveriges Regering, 2017). Together, the Riksdag and the Regering decide on the regulations that apply to the higher education sector. Their responsibilities regarding higher education are as follows: 1)
granting university status; 2) enacting legislation regulating the higher education sector; 3) funding higher education courses and study programs; 4) funding a high proportion of research; 5) appointing vice-chancellors of higher education institutions; and 6) regulating the agencies involved in the higher education sector (UKÄ, 2017b).

The Swedish higher education system consists of approximately 50 public universities, colleges, and independent HEIs, as well as several agencies which govern higher education (UKÄ, 2017b). Each of the agencies has a different purpose regarding the management, maintenance, and upkeep of Swedish HEIs, as well as have, in at least some way, a connection to internationalization. The agencies involved are:

1. Universitetskanslersämbetet (UKÄ) - Swedish Higher Education Authority
2. Universitets- och högskolerådet (UHR) - The Swedish Council for Higher Education
3. Centrala studiestödsnämnden (CSN) - Swedish Student Aid
4. Högskolans avskiljandenämnd (HAN) - Higher Education Expulsions Board
5. Svenska institutet (SI) - Swedish Institute
6. Vetenskapsrådet (VR) - Swedish Research Council
7. Överklagandenämnden för studiestöd (ÖKS) - National Board of Appeal for Student Aid

Internationalization has been considered a priority in Sweden since the 1970s, and many laws and ordinances at the national level reflect this (Kälvemark & van der Wende, 1997). In addition to international mobility worldwide, there has also been a push for Nordic mobility and enhanced cooperation between the Nordic countries (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2015). Taking a contrary perspective, Nordic mobility can be considered as an intra-regional activity and not international per sé, as Nordic cooperation is internally focused and excludes (discourages) mobility to the other EU countries. “Even though it has been linked to and seen as a part of national internationalization policies, still, from a national policy perspective Nordic cooperation represents ‘a world of its own,’” (Maassen and Uppstrøm, 2004, p.23). This can be seen through the establishment of Nordic networks like Nordforsk for Nordic research, and Nordplus for Nordic exchange studies (Norden, 2017).

4.3.1 National Policies pre-2004

The Riksdag and the Regering have put forth several policies and legislations which govern higher education in Sweden, which constituted the policy document analysis of this
thesis. The earliest hints of internationalization policies came from the Swedish Commission on Internationalization, which produced its final results in 1974 (Kälvemark & van der Wende, 1997, p.175). During the 1970s and 80s, the Swedish higher education system expanded and became increasingly more decentralized, while mindfully considering increasing internationalization efforts. In 1989, as an attempt to increase student participation in international mobility, the Riksdag decided that Swedish students would be allowed to use their study grants from CSN towards studies abroad (Kälvemark & van der Wende, 1997, p.179). This measure was very successful in increasing Swedish participation in study abroad.

Three years later, the Högskolelag (Higher Education Act) was passed (Högskolelag, 1992), which became one of the major governing documents of higher education institutions in Sweden (UHR, 2015). This act paved the way for the Högskolförordning (Higher Education Ordinance) passed the following year (Högskolförordning, 1993), which complements and further clarifies the Higher Education Act (UHR, 2015). With the renewed interest in the expansion of higher education in the 90s came the Förordning med instruktion för Högskoleverket, or the Ordinance with instruction for the creation of the Higher Education Agency (Förordning 945, 1995), which created HsV, the new National Agency for Higher Education. Högskoleverket was the main higher education agency from 1995 until 2012, when it was completely restructured and rebranded to become Universitets- och Högskolerådet (UHR), which it is now called (Förordning 811, 2012).

4.3.2 National Policies post-2004

Though internationalization was considered a priority in Sweden, it wasn’t until 2004 that the country finally attempted to establish a cohesive national strategy. The government bill Ny värld – ny högskola (2004), or New world - new university, presented a proposal with the goal of making the Swedish higher education system more international and attractive to international students and researchers (Ny värld – ny högskola, 2004). Following this bill was a proposal by the Regering called Gränslös kunskap – högskolan i globaliseringsens tid, or Limitless knowledge - universities in the time of globalization (Gränslös kunskap, 2008). This proposal was created under the premise that although the New world - new university bill still constituted a good foundation for internationalization, “the strategy may need to be developed to better respond to the challenges that globalization implies for Swedish higher education, in terms of, for example, increased global student mobility” (Gränslös kunskap, 2008).
In addition to these two initiatives, several other government policies were published regarding internationalization of higher education in the last two decades. A Green Paper published by the Swedish Committee for Education (Utbildningsutskottet) entitled *Att främja ungdomars rörlighet i utbildningssystem*, or *To promote youth mobility for educational purposes* (Utbildningsutskottet, 2009), continued the active dialogue among lawmakers and higher education stakeholders regarding internationalization. Another report by the Committee for Education called *Kvalitetssäkring av högre utbildning*, or *Quality assurance of higher education*, pushed for the monitoring and improvement of the quality of HEIs in Sweden (Utbildningsutskottet, 2015), for which UKÄ would be responsible. Most recently, a new Committee Directive was just published by the Ministry of Education (Utbildningsdepartementet) in February 2017 called *Ökad internationalisering av universitet och högskolor*, or *Increased internationalization of universities and colleges*, with three goals: creating a new national strategy for internationalization, increasing internationalization and home, and increasing Sweden’s attractiveness for incoming international students (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2017). These core themes will be further discussed in Chapter Five with the study findings and analysis.

Despite the largely internationalization-positive legislation that has been passed in the last twenty years, there have also been some steps backwards. One example is the lack of courses taught at the bachelor level in English in many disciplines at Swedish universities (Study in Sweden, 2017). According to Study in Sweden, the official online portal for international students coming to study in Sweden, which is run by the Swedish Institute, at Novania University for the upcoming 2017-2018 academic year, there will be only 9 bachelor programs taught entirely in English, out of a total number of 215 bachelor programs offered at the university (Study in Sweden, 2017; Novania University, 2017).

Another example of this is that prior to 2011, there was no requirement of tuition fees for higher education in Sweden, which included for non-EU/EEA (European Economic Area) residents. However, in 2011, the Riksdag implemented tuition fees for non-EU/EEA international students, which brought a sharp decrease in incoming international students from outside Europe (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013). The graph below shows the severe decline in the number of incoming students in Sweden since the introduction of tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students. Note that while tuition fees were also established in neighboring Denmark in 2006, yet they saw no decline of incoming international students (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013).
Overall at the national policy level, Sweden has consistently been dedicated to internationalization. A recent poll by STINT showed that three universities in Sweden were ranked in the top category of internationalization based on the STINT Internationalization Index (STINT, 2017).

4.4 The Institutional Level

“Analyze internationalization from an organizational perspective. Instead of treating internationalization as a phenomenon requiring special theoretical development... processes of internationalization also can [be] understood by studying how the institutions of higher education perceive and adapt to initiatives, developments and policies in this area,” (Stensaker, Frølich, Gornitzka, & Maassen, 2008, p.2).

There are three common and closely related trends of how institutions in Sweden are handling internationalization in organizational terms: increased formalization, increased centralization, and increased professionalization (Stensaker et al, 2008, p.7). While two of these trends discussed by Stensaker et al ring true in the case of the university in question, the trend of increased centralization is not the case. The issue of decentralization will be discussed at length in Chapter Six, but it should be recognized that the decentralized organizational structure of the university in question plays a large role in the creation of internal institutional policies, especially in the formulation of an ‘overarching’ university-wide internationalization strategy. The Higher Education Act explicitly says that HEIs decide their own internal
organization (Högkolelag, 1992), so the decentralized nature makes it difficult to implement such a policy.

As the university in question in this thesis will remain anonymous, any information regarding the institutional policies can be inferred to have been retrieved directly from the university’s website, referred to as Novania University. This being established, there are two institutional policies that were examined in this thesis. The first was called Övergripande strategi samt riktlinjer för internationellt samarbete vid Novania universitet, or Overall strategy and guidelines for international cooperation with Novania university, and was published in 2011. This document was written by the head of the international office, and highlighted the promotion of mobility among students, teachers, staff, and researchers (Novania University, 2011). The other university policy that was examined was the overall long-term university strategy, called Strategies for Novania University 2015-2018, which will be reevaluated after the final year and updated. This strategy covers all aspects of the university, and includes a two-page section on international cooperation and internationalization (Novania University, 2015).

### 4.5 The Context of Novania University

The university in question in this thesis, Novania University, is a public research university in a large metropolitan area of Sweden. It is governed in a decentralized manner, as shown in the chart below (Novania University, 2017). The highest level of administration is the university board and the vice chancellor, who is the head of the board. The board and the vice chancellor are responsible for both the academic staff and the university administration (split green and light blue, respectively).
The academic side of the university is divided into two subject areas: human science and science, which is divided into several faculties and departments. The departments are each led by their own department head and board, and boast nearly total autonomy regarding policy. Each department has their own coordinator who is responsible for the departmental international exchange agreements and administration. Novania University has both departmental and centrally administered exchange agreements, so the departments manage their own agreements, and the central international office manages the university-wide agreements.

The University Administration side includes the department of student services, containing the international office, which is responsible for managing the central university exchange agreements. The difference between the university-wide and the departmental agreements is that any student in the university can participate in the central agreements, whereas only students from that same department are eligible to participate on the departmental exchanges.

The number of students in each department going out on exchange, as reported by the different international coordinators, remains low compared to the total number of students in the department. Looking at the charts below, the number of incoming exchange/international students overall in Sweden has begun to level off again, after a severe decline following the
2011 implementation of tuition fees (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013; UKÄ, 2017a). However, year after year, the number of incoming international students is higher than the number of outgoing students, both in Sweden overall and at Novania University specifically, (UKÄ, 2017a).

Figure 8. Number of Incoming vs. Outgoing International Students in Sweden

![Figure 8](image8.png)

Source: UKÄ, 2017a

Figure 9. Incoming vs. Outgoing Students at Novania University

![Figure 9](image9.png)

Source: UKÄ, 2017a
Additionally, both students and administrators noted that there was a distinct lack of interactions between the local and international students at Novania University. While many student associations exist with the mission of connecting international and local students, they struggle at Novania University due to its geographic location in a large metropolitan area in Sweden, and the tendency of local students to stick to their own groups of friends.

4.6 Summary of Policies

It is evident through the vast number of policies at the international and national levels that internationalization has become a hot button issue in the higher education research community worldwide. The first research question of this study seeks to understand the application of the international and national policies at the institutional level. The dedication of Sweden to internationalization over the years is overt at the state policy level, however the pragmatic application at the local/institutional levels still leaves something to be desired. While the European Commission has set specific targets to be reached by each country by 2020, for Sweden to achieve these targets, several factors must be considered. The findings in the next chapter will provide a clearer vision of the status of Sweden’s capability to reach these targets, as well as provide the perspectives of university members of the current internationalization efforts.
Chapter Five

5. Study Findings and Analysis

“I still meet students that [say] ‘oh I didn’t know that you could go abroad,’ and ‘what is Erasmus?’ – I thought EVERYONE knew about Erasmus!” (A7)

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the policy and interview data, which is broken up into two main sections. The first section summarizes the findings from the document analysis of the policies examined in the previous chapter, which also includes a discussion of common themes across the policies. This section is followed by an analysis of the findings from the interviews, both with administrators and students, and presents the common themes discovered. The main themes found in the data were aligned with the research questions. To recapitulate, the research questions were:

1. What are the international policies governing internationalization and study abroad, and how are they articulated at the national and institutional levels in Sweden?

2. What are barriers to internationalization and study abroad?

3. Do certain policies and/or processes have an impact on internationalization efforts and enrollment rates in study abroad programs? If so, how?

4. How can institutions facilitate the process for students to improve enrollment rates in study abroad, and increase overall internationalization efforts?

The variety of the interviews, as well as the use of a second research method, policy document analysis, allowed for a comprehensive picture of the situation at the university in question to be understood.

5.1 Policy Document Analysis

Chapter Four outlined all the key policies at the international, national, and institutional levels regarding the internationalization of higher education in Sweden. A total of 14 policies at the international level, 12 policies at the national level, and two policies at the institutional level were analyzed, plus a cursory review of additional policies (i.e. mission and vision
This section summarizes and analyzes the major themes discussed in these policies. There were several themes within all the policies examined at the international, national, and institutional levels, which were in accordance with the research questions. These themes were:

1. Quality assurance and accreditation
2. Recognition issues and system of credits (ECTS)
3. Development of joint degrees
4. Degree and qualification structure
5. Addition of social and European dimensions
6. Lifelong Learning (LLL) and employability
7. General promotion of mobility
8. Internationalization at home
9. Elimination of barriers and increased access to funding
10. Creating a unified strategy for internationalization
11. Increasing Sweden’s attractiveness to internationals*

All these themes were universal across the policy levels (international, national, and institutional), except the last one, increasing Sweden’s attractiveness to internationals, which was only present at the national and institutional levels. The following sections will break down the themes present at these different policy levels.

5.1.1 International Policies

The main international policies discussed in the previous chapter were the Bologna Process and its many successors, and the EU Cohesion Strategies (Bologna Declaration, 1999; European Commission, 2007). The chart below, provided by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission, shows the progression of the Bologna Process from when it was first published in Sorbonne (1998) to the most recent developments from Bucharest (2012). It was published in 2015, before the results from the most recent conference of the ministers in Yerevan, Armenia, could be added.
Table 3. The Bologna Process: from Sorbonne to Bucharest, 1998-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobility of students and teachers</th>
<th>Mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff</th>
<th>Social dimension of mobility</th>
<th>Portability of loans and grants</th>
<th>Improvement of mobility data</th>
<th>Attention to visa and work permits</th>
<th>Challenges of visa and work permits, pension systems and recognition</th>
<th>Challenges of visa and work permits, pension systems and recognition</th>
<th>Challenges of visa and work permits, pension systems and recognition</th>
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<th>Challenges of visa and work permits, pension systems and recognition</th>
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<td>A common two-cycle degree system</td>
<td>Easily readable and comparable degrees</td>
<td>Fair recognition Development of recognised Joint degrees</td>
<td>Inclusion of doctoral level as third cycle</td>
<td>QF-EHEA adopted National Qualifications Frameworks launched</td>
<td>National Qualifications Frameworks by 2010</td>
<td>National Qualifications Frameworks by 2012</td>
<td>New roadmaps for countries that have not established a national qualifications framework</td>
<td>New roadmaps for countries that have not established a national qualifications framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social dimension</td>
<td>Equal access</td>
<td>Reinforcement of the social dimension</td>
<td>Commitment to produce national action plans with effective monitoring</td>
<td>National targets for the social dimension to be measured by 2020</td>
<td>National targets for the social dimension to be measured by 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifelong learning (LLL)</td>
<td>Alignment of national LLL policies Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</td>
<td>Flexible learning paths in higher education</td>
<td>Role of higher education in LLL Partnerships to improve employability</td>
<td>LLL as a public responsibility requiring strong partnerships Call to work on employability</td>
<td>LLL as a public responsibility requiring strong partnerships Call to work on employability</td>
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<td>Use of credits</td>
<td>A system of credits (ECTS)</td>
<td>ECTS and Diploma Supplement (DS)</td>
<td>ECTS for credit accumulation</td>
<td>Need for coherent use of tools and recognition practices</td>
<td>Continuing implementation of Bologna tools</td>
<td>Ensure that Bologna tools are based on learning outcomes</td>
<td>Ensure that Bologna tools are based on learning outcomes</td>
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<td>European cooperation in quality assurance</td>
<td>Cooperation between quality assurance and recognition professionals</td>
<td>Quality assurance at institutional, national and European level</td>
<td>European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance adopted</td>
<td>Creation of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)</td>
<td>Quality as an overarching focus for EHEA</td>
<td>Allow EQAR registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA</td>
<td>Allow EQAR registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe of Knowledge</td>
<td>European dimensions in higher education</td>
<td>Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area</td>
<td>Links between higher education and research areas</td>
<td>International cooperation on the basis of values and sustainable development</td>
<td>Strategy to improve the global dimension of the Bologna process adopted</td>
<td>Enhance global policy dialogue through Bologna Policy Fora</td>
<td>Evaluate implementation of 2007 global dimension strategy with aim to provide guidelines for further developments</td>
<td>Evaluate implementation of 2007 global dimension strategy with aim to provide guidelines for further developments</td>
<td>Evaluate implementation of 2007 global dimension strategy with aim to provide guidelines for further developments</td>
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Source: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015

As can be seen in Table 3, a few major themes are universally present in all the Bologna Process documents over the years. Within Bologna, seven major thematic ‘clusters’ are prioritized, which are highlighted on the left-hand side of the table: promoting mobility, common degree system and recognition, social dimension, LLL, use of ECTS, quality assurance, and a European dimension. The chart also shows how the progression of these themes has changed over time in the different Bologna documents. The promotion of mobility now includes students, teachers, researchers, and staff members. The structure of the degree system has changed, so now it is a three-cycle system with bachelor, master, and doctoral levels, which all use the ECTS credit system, which are the same across the EHEA, thus facilitating mobility. With increased migration and the integration of refugees comes the push for social inclusion and equal access, which has been a huge priority of the European Commission, especially in the last 5 years. Lastly, the inclusion of a ‘European dimension’ is present all
throughout Bologna, promoting Europe as an attractive place to live, work and study, showing the values of sustainable development within Europe, promoting mobility within Europe, and promoting the overall ‘European identity’ (Yerevan Communiqué, 2015).

In addition to these themes in Bologna and the other international policies, the themes of eliminating barriers and increasing access to funding, as well as creating a unified strategy for internationalization were also prominent. "Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement" was of primary relevance for the establishment of the EHEA, and for building upon and strengthening the intellectual, cultural, and social capital of Europe (Bologna Declaration, 1999, p.3). Additionally, the themes present in the Lisbon Strategy continue to align with the themes mentioned above, specifically the promotion of mobility.

Furthermore, the themes in both Europe2020 and Horizon2020 of promotion of mobility and creating a unified strategy for internationalization shine through, as well as LLL and increasing employability. Europe2020, created as a strategy shared among the European member states with a vision for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth (Europe2020, 2010, p.5), catalyzed action under these priorities by the EC’s establishment of several flagship initiatives, including one called "Youth on the move." This initiative was designed to enhance the performance of education systems, to increase youth employability, and promote mobility (Europe2020, 2010, p.5). From Europe2020, Horizon2020 was born, consisting of 7 proposals which would further elaborate on the innovation targets of Europe2020 (Horizon2020, 2014). An impact assessment report of Horizon2020 explained that EU-level policies add value by encouraging and stimulating international collaboration and mobility.

“Cross-border mobility and training actions are of critical importance for providing access to complementary knowledge, attracting young people into research, encouraging top researchers to come to Europe, ensuring excellent skills for future generations of scientists, and improving career prospects for researchers in both public and private sectors,” (Horizon2020 Impact Assessment Report, 2011, p.13)²

The EU Cohesion Strategies from 2007-2013, and 2014-2020 also emphasize the importance of mobility, as well as innovation and employability. The current strategy aims to concentrate funding on research and innovation by:

² Note: As Horizon2020 was first published in 2011, the impact assessment report was published in the same year as a Staff Working Paper, despite that Horizon2020 was not adopted until 2014.
“Facilitating the cooperation, networking activities and partnerships among different innovation actors working in the same field – universities, research and technological centers, SMEs and large firms – to achieve synergies and technology transfers,” (European Commission, 2014, p.2).

5.1.2 National Policies

"Internationalization of HEIs is very important for other parts of society" (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2017)

At a national level, Sweden has established comprehensive policies regarding internationalization over the last twenty years. As mentioned in the previous chapter, several policies have been passed over the years which address the issues of internationalization and global student mobility. The Högskolelag set the internationalization precedent early on, arguing that

"HEIs should furthermore in their activities promote understanding of other countries and of international conditions" (Högskolelag, 1992, Ch.1, Art. 5).

This trend continued in the Högskoleförordning (1993), and with the establishment of the Högskoleverket (HsV), or the Higher Education Agency (Förordning 945, 1995). HsV was established under the premise to "encourage and monitor universities’ internationalization of education and research" (Förordning 945, 1995, Task 3). Not only would HsV monitor national and international trends, they would provide grants for studies abroad in collaboration with CSN, assess foreign credits and qualifications, assist with EC directives for mutual recognition of diplomas, and promote and monitor the internationalization of university research and education (Förordning 945, 1995). These are the same themes found in the supranational policies mentioned previously.

Since 2004, the proposals and bills passed at the national level also demonstrated the noted themes. The bill New world - new university was Sweden’s first attempt at a national strategy for internationalization (Ny värld – ny högskola, 2004). This bill also shared some important statistics regarding low numbers of Swedish student participation in mobility programs.

“The academic year 1998/99, over 26,200 students traveled, and since then the number has been between 26,500 and 27,300. The last academic year 2003/04, however, it decreased to 25,900 outgoing students...The number of outgoing
Erasmus students has stagnated...[and] the proportion of outgoing Erasmus students thus declined from 1.0 percent of the total number of enrolled students,” (Ny värld – ny högskola, 2004, p. 48-50).

However, the objective of creating a national strategy proved complicated for a few reasons, one of which could be attributed to the decentralized nature of the higher education system in Sweden, a main issue which was corroborated by the interviews with international coordinators (see section 5.2). It was noted in this policy that Sweden would need to continue to increase their internationalization efforts to keep up with the overarching goals of the European Commission, which would be hard without a unified strategy across the country.

“The European Commission has proposed that a target for future education programs be that 3 million students will have traveled within Erasmus 2007-2013. In order for Sweden to achieve its share of this, the number of outgoing students in Erasmus must more than double over the current level,” (Ny värld – ny högskola, 2004, p.50)

With the goals of increasing Sweden’s attractiveness for incoming international students, eliminating obstacles to mobility, and establishing a clearer degree structure with fairer, simpler admission rules, New world – new university was Sweden’s first real attempt to set clear goals for how to improve internationalization efforts across HEIs across the country (Ny värld – ny högskola, 2004).

Following this bill came Limitless knowledge - universities in the time of globalization (2008), which aimed to further support the goals and objectives previously set out in New world - new university. In this bill, the Riksdag claims that current laws are missing clearly defined goals, the regulations are incompatible with EU law, that there is a lack of a uniform definition of what constitutes ‘study abroad,’ and that grant/loan amounts are severely and arbitrarily administered (Gränslös kunskap, 2008). These concerns follow the trend of the themes of this paper, specifically eliminating barriers, promoting mobility, and having a unified strategy for internationalization. The bill Promoting youth mobility for educational purposes (Utbildningsutskottet, 2009) also highlighted lifelong learning and employability in addition to promoting mobility by stating:

"Sweden's competitiveness and Swedish students' employability in international companies and organizations increases through increased international mobility," (Utbildningsutskottet, 2009, p.10)
The most recent national policy by the Ministry of Education, *Increased internationalization of universities and colleges*, was also created as a national strategy for the internationalization of higher education in Sweden (Utbildningsdepartemenget, 2017). This new policy has the overall objectives of increasing the attractiveness of Swedish universities for incoming international students, eliminating obstacles to internationalization, promoting internationalization at home through the introduction of an international perspective in the home university education (Utbildningsdepartemenget, 2017). It also acknowledges the common EU targets for 2020 of having 20% of graduates with experience abroad, and aims to strengthen international education, research and innovation partnerships between academia, research institutes and industry (Utbildningsdepartemenget, 2017).

“It is necessary to create a national and cohesive direction of the effort to increase the internationalization of higher education, in the form of a new strategy...Such a new strategy needs to be concrete and followable to provide support...[and] should be a guide to the development of the internationalization efforts by higher education institutions and facilitate them to make strategic choices. Furthermore, it should serve as a support for gathering universities, other authorities and organizations around common goals. In this way, more efficient resource utilization can be achieved” (Utbildningsdepartemenget, 2017).

Considering the timely publication of the *Ökad internationalisering* Committee Directive (16 February 2017), it has not yet had a chance to be implemented at the university examined in this thesis.

“There is therefore a need to consider a clearer division of responsibilities and greater coordination of efforts to provide information about Sweden as a study destination and increase knowledge about Sweden as a knowledge nation, and coordinate business intelligence” (Utbildningsdepartemenget, 2017)

The decentralized nature of the university makes it difficult for university-wide decisions regarding policy to be made quickly, and thus any new top-down policies coming from the Riksdag will take some time to implement. However, it will be very interesting to continue to monitor its progress over the next year, to determine its efficacy and whether it has any impact on study abroad enrollment.
5.1.3. Institutional Policies

There were only two policies at the institutional level that were analyzed in this thesis, as they were the only two which existed. This is surprising considering the large number of international students attending Novania University every year, and its location in a large metropolitan area in Sweden with culturally diverse demographics. Regardless, the two policies in question both expressed many of the same themes constant throughout this investigation. The first policy, *Overall strategy and guidelines for international cooperation with Novania university*, was written by the Head of the International Office, and therefore knowledgeably explained the goals of the university regarding internationalization. The main themes covered in this document were to increase attractiveness of Swedish universities for international students and researchers; to enhance the quality of education by providing an international perspective and experiences from teachers and students; to promote student, teacher, staff, and researcher mobility; increased cooperation and collaboration with foreign universities and international actors; promoting Lifelong Learning (LLL) through Erasmus+, Nordplus, Linnaeus-Palme mobility programs; finding appropriate partner universities with good matches for related and complementary studies to Novania University programs; and to strengthen the quality of research and education, development, democratization, and modernization processes (Novania University, 2011).

The other institutional policy is the general overall strategy for Novania University for 2015-2018. This strategy spends two pages discussing the goals for international cooperation and expansion, explaining that

"Internationalization should be seen as a means to increase the long-term quality, competitiveness, and attractiveness of the University. Students should be encouraged to seek international experience early in their studies," (Novania University, 2015, p.15).

The strategy mentions the following topics as priorities, though lacks actual detailed plans for implementation (Novania University, 2015):

- International collaboration within education, research, and investigations
- Programs taught in English at the bachelor level should be provided
- Internally, Novania University should further develop its methods and procedures for internationalization efforts
- Lifelong Learning (LLL)
- Promote student, teacher, staff, and researcher mobility
• Develop internationalization efforts in doctoral programs, and provide international perspectives
• Increase the attractiveness of Novania University to international students
• Review central agreements, and support and supplement departmental agreements

Overall, it is evident that the EU and Sweden have shown dedication to internationalization through the various initiatives and themes found within their higher education policies and legislations. The institutional level however still requires some attention, as the Strategies for Novania University policy document states that the university “should further develop its methods and procedures for internationalization efforts,” (Novania University, 2015). The establishment of this point proves that the vice-chancellor and other board members responsible for this strategy have noticed this gap, and do intent on furthering the current internationalization efforts and initiatives. It is, however, relevant to maintain a critical eye regarding the policies, as they are not facts, simply words on a page with goals of the university. But their existence directly reflects research question number one in discussing the articulations of the international and national policies at the institutional level. By examining these policies, it is possible to then broach the other research questions.

5.2 Interview Findings and Analysis

This section reports on the key findings of the interviews conducted with administrators and students at Novania University. In addition to the themes examined in the policy document analysis, the major themes that emerged through the content analysis of data are presented in the table below for each research question. The themes were separated based on the research questions, and were divided into three major and recurring categories throughout the data: policies/organizational culture, barriers, and suggestions for improvement. The major themes that appeared for each category are presented in Table 4, as shown below.

Table 4. Themes Presented in the Qualitative Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies/Organizational Culture</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Suggestions for Improvement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Communication &amp; Marketing</td>
</tr>
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</table>
For research question 1 regarding policies and organizational culture (as shown in column 1), the interview data indicated the existence of institutional policies at various departments, as well as at the central level, which was discussed in section 5.1. Additionally, the organizational culture of Novania University was discussed in the interviews. The second research question concerned the identification of any barriers to internationalization and study abroad (shown in column 2), which were either university-wide barriers, or barriers for students. Four major themes appeared throughout the interviews: administrative burdens, academic concerns, personal reasons, and decentralization. The topic of decentralization will be covered in depth later, but it is relevant to understand that the decentralized organizational structure of Novania University was the most prominent theme classified as a barrier which emerged in all the interviews.

Research question number three (not shown in the table) wanted to know if certain policies and/or processes had an impact on internationalization efforts and study abroad enrollment rates. Based on the data from the interviews, the emerging theme of decentralization was seen not only as a barrier, but also as a key factor to understanding the organizational culture of Novania University. The decentralized structure had decisive impacts on the internationalization efforts and study abroad enrollment rates. The fourth and final research question (shown in column 3) sought suggestions for improvement of internationalization, and how to increase the number of students abroad, for which several themes emerged. The most prevalent were: communication and marketing, internationalization at home, to evaluate existing agreements for value to the institution and sign new ones where necessary, having a unified strategy for internationalization across the university, and to streamline the whole process. The last piece that will be evaluated are the omitted responses, and their significance to this study. This section discusses each of these themes from the perspective of the

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<th>National/State</th>
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<th>Internationalization at Home</th>
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<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Evaluate existing agreements for value to institution, and sign new agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Central</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unified strategy for internationalization</td>
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<td>-Departmental</td>
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<td>Streamline process</td>
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administrators, followed by an examination of the same themes from the perspective of the students.

5.2 Administrator Interviews

Eight, semi-structured interviews were conducted with university administrators, which were either departmental or faculty international coordinators, or from the central international office. The data obtained from the departmental coordinators shared an understanding about the function of policies at the departmental level, whereas at the central level, the comments reflected more on the overall institutional policy functions. The following section is split into four parts, presenting the responses from the interview data regarding each research question. The first part will address the first research question of what policies Novania University has regarding internationalization. The second part will examine barriers to internationalization and study abroad. Next, we will examine which policies and/or processes impact internationalization, and finally some suggestions for improving internationalization will be presented.

5.2.1 Policies and Organizational Culture

The departmental coordinators explained the policies for their respective departments regarding internationalization. Mostly, this entailed the selection and application processes for studying abroad, which types of international programs were administered, and how exchange was handled at that department. One of the key issues raised by the interviewees was the fact that many departments do not have a person who works full time with international programs. Out of a total of 46 departments and several other research centers and institutes at Novania University, two departments have full-time international coordinators.

“There are, I think, two departments where they have persons working full time with exchanges…Then at the other departments, they have one person, a study advisor, who also works with the exchange agreements, or they have a PhD student who’s got 10% of the position to work with the exchange agreements,” (A7).

When it came to departmental policies regarding who can participate in exchange, one coordinator explained that “most of the decisions regarding, at least the own agreements, are at the departmental level,” (A6). This statement was corroborated by five others, stating they had essentially total autonomy to decide who would be accepted to their departmental exchange
programs. Furthermore, some departmental coordinators said they had little to no contact whatsoever with the central international office, nor the other departmental international coordinators.

As far as other internationalization policies go, most departments did not present written policy documents, but instead functioned under the precept of fostering internationalization. One departmental coordinator elaborated,

“There's the vision of [Novania] university that doesn't say very much, and then there's the faculty and the område verksamhetsplan (area action plan). We do incorporate those in our own verksamhetsplan, so I mean, that way the policies kind of seeps down,” (A8).

This was further corroborated by another coordinator, who explained:

“There is a written policy on the central level, but as we have this decentralized system, we [don’t] have very elaborated policies here. But we try to, in real life, in practice, we try to work for an increase in the number of students going out. That’s the main goal,” (A1).

5.2.1.2 Barriers

The interview data revealed several factors that the administrators considered to be barriers to internationalization. Among these barriers, the most common themes addressed by the coordinators were administrative burdens, academic concerns, personal reasons, and decentralization. The barrier of administrative burdens revolved around being understaffed or underfunded to manage the internationalization efforts of the department. As mentioned in the previous section, many departments do not have a full-time person who deals with international programs. This was noted as one of the key barriers that the departments face to recruiting students to participate in study abroad programs. One coordinator articulated,

“We don’t have the resources, like people working with this enough...I don’t have the time to do all the different things. That’s an obstacle, we have to have resources, staff working with this,” (A1).

Without sufficient staff to manage and promote the exchange possibilities, the number of students enrolled in study abroad will not be able to increase.
It was also addressed that an administrative burden surrounding internationalization was the complicated nature of study abroad applications, which some administrators cited as a possible reason why students may opt not to pursue study abroad.

“They find it a bit complicated, because there are several applications, that first they have to apply to us, they have to get selected by us, then nominated, then apply to the partner university, and then get accepted to the partner university. So, once they come here, once they read it on our website, they’re just like ‘Hm, oh this is very complicated, lots of documents need to be attached...and difficult questions.’ So, some...they just decide not to go through with it because it’s complicated,” (A7).

The second most common barrier to internationalization discussed was academic concerns of students. While the Bologna Process does significantly facilitate the process of conversion of foreign credits, a perceived barrier to internationalization was the concern of finding appropriate courses while abroad that would enable students to finish their degree in the intended period. Five different administrative coordinators agreed that the challenge of finding appropriate courses that would transfer back to the home university so as not to fall behind in the study plan was a major concern of the students.

“It’s very strict, you know, with courses, specifically in sciences, what you need to take to finish the program. If we can’t guarantee that a student can take very specific courses at our partner universities, then they’re gonna be risking having to prolong their studies, which seems to be a very big issue with our students, they don’t want to waste any time,” (A3).

Additionally, the issue of taking courses taught in another language was deemed a key cause of apprehension for students.

“Many of them have said that they are a little bit uncertain or afraid of speaking English. Yeah, that’s interesting because in a country like Sweden, everyone speaks English. Yeah, but they feel very insecure about the language,” (A5).

Some of the departmental coordinators also mentioned feeling that some of the agreements were not very effective because of this language factor. For example, one coordinator explicated,

“Different departments have several agreements with Italy, but they don’t have ANY English-speaking courses, and there is like NOBODY here at our faculty who speaks Italian. And you’re wondering, ‘why do we have that agreement?’” (A3).
A common theme across the interview responses indicated that it is very difficult to send students to countries where they do not speak the language. In addition to the concern of studying in English, studying in a second or third language was viewed as a major barrier.

The third theme addressed was personal barriers. The issue of personal barriers alludes to the concept of lagom in the Swedish context. Some of the personal reasons addressed were the aversion of stepping outside the comfort zone, the fear of the unknown, reluctance to relinquish control of life and the desire to micromanage everything in their lives, all of which revolve around maintaining lagom.

“They are leaving very familiar and secure everyday life here and that means something very new. You have to step out of your comfort zone to go,” (A4).

This fear of the unknown has also been addressed as a barrier to study abroad by other prominent international education researchers previously, as well (i.e. see Engle and Engle, 2003). Of all study participants, both student and administrator, this was the reason most commonly cited as the main barrier which Swedish students face to going abroad.

The final overarching theme across the interviews with all the administrators was the topic of decentralization, which simultaneously encompassed both a barrier and a policy/practice which impacted internationalization, thus addressing research questions two and three. The current structure of the university was touched on by every international coordinator as a crucial piece of the puzzle of how to get more students abroad and improve overall internationalization efforts. It was brought to the attention of the researcher that not only was there limited communication between the departments, but in fact, there was a distinct sense of animosity between the departments and the central administration. One coordinator addressed this issue head on, stating

“There has always been sort of a conflict between the academic staff and the administration...it’s always been very clear that [the] academic side wants to keep the central administration very small...it’s power politics,” (A3).

The same coordinator further added their perspective on the nature of the conflict between the departments and the central university administration, noting the reluctance of the departments to give up any power and ‘waste’ money on administration:

“I think the departments, from the beginning, they were founded as very independent, self-sufficient units, and I think there’s a very big resistance towards
central management of the university. Which means that the central administration has been the enemy, you know, from the beginning...I think people think that they don’t want to waste money on administration. You know, do you want all the money to go to the academic side? Well, the problem is that you can’t just wish away administration,” (A3).

These comments alluded to the grand overarching theme in the policies at Novania University of decentralization. One coordinator explained clearly that the collegial way of governing which is associated with a decentralized structure makes it very difficult for unified strategies and university-wide policies to be implemented.

“It’s a BIG university, it’s a very big organization, and it’s very decentralized, so there are so many factors involved. I’m not saying it would be better if we had a central organization, but maybe if a few things were more central,” (A7).

5.2.1.3 Policies and/or Processes Impacting Internationalization

The topic of decentralization came up repeatedly in the interview data, with each coordinator sharing their views on the organizational structure and management style. The interview data showed that the administrators felt the decentralized structure had a direct impact on innovation and the implementation of comprehensive policies, such as internationalization.

I think the problem at Novania University is a lot that it’s a VERY decentralized organization, it’s called a collegial way of governing the university, which also means that it’s very hard to have sort of, policies, like top-down policies. So, it’s both an organizational issue, the fact that it’s very hard to sort of implement something in the entire organization, but it’s also a matter of that there’s so many areas where you make decisions which are not made by experts, it’s made by different organs that are made up of staff in general, mostly professors,” (A3).

The discussion about the decentralized structure of the university was a principle focus of the interviews, and it became clear to the researcher that it was the most significant factor impacting the internationalization efforts of Novania University.

5.2.1.4 Suggestions for Improvement

The data findings that were perhaps of the most interest to the research objectives were suggestions for improvement of ways for the institution to improve internationalization and increase study abroad enrollment. Though many suggestions were posed in the interviews, there were five core themes which cropped up repeatedly. These were 1) communication and
marketing, 2) internationalization at home, 3) to evaluate existing agreements and sign new ones where necessary, 4) a unified strategy for internationalization, and 5) to streamline the process. The first theme, better communication and marketing, was addressed by four different departmental coordinators as a vital measure for improvement. In the interviews, each coordinator was asked to describe the current marketing and communication strategies, which were different across the departments. Effectively communicating and marketing international programs does not require approval from very far up the bureaucratic chain of command, and is therefore a suggestion for improvement that can be relatively easily implemented.

“We’re also working with marketing to change students’ attitudes towards studying abroad. We do think it’s kind of a culture thing, the more people you can get to go abroad, the more people, you know, it will become more a regular part of the student culture, that you do it. So, we do think that the more people we can get to go, the easier it will be to get more people to go,” (A3).

The second theme was internationalization at home, which was defined previously by Knight (1999) as the inclusion of an “international dimension in the pedagogy, research, and curricula at the home university” (p.16). This includes receiving international students from different countries, offering courses in English, integrating international and local students, the Erasmus teaching exchange program, and internationalizing the content of the curricula at home. Two coordinators also mentioned the importance of good study counselling and planning, so that at an early stage in their studies, students should begin to think about study abroad.

The third subtheme discussed as a suggestion for improvement was to evaluate existing agreements, and to sign new agreements where necessary. A few coordinators acknowledged that some of their departmental agreements were unpopular or inactive due to language constraints, or bad information on the websites, even administrative difficulties. In expressing the importance of signing good agreements, one coordinator suggested,

“Put some effort in finding partners that, we have similar student groups, and that is easier to say that ‘oh we have this to offer, and we would like to have this from you.’ This is the biggest problem that we have with our outgoing students, to find relevant courses,” (A4).

By evaluating the existing exchange programs for suitability for the institution’s population, and signing new agreements where they are needed will help alleviate the problem of not
finding appropriate courses while abroad. If quality study abroad can be assured, this will assuage the fears of the students of not finding relevant courses.

Subtheme number four, the development of a unified strategy regarding internationalization across the university, was also a key topic broached by five different administrators. Considering the decentralized nature of the university, many felt that there was a lack of a cohesive strategy which encompassed all the departments equally regarding study abroad and internationalization.

“First we waited to see if anything would happen centrally. Nothing happened centrally…The hope is that something will happen centrally. And this is what the university probably needs, it needs to have sort of a united front, and a common international work.” (A3).

Directly related to this topic of a unified strategy is the publication of the new national directive from the Swedish Parliament which was issued in February 2017, discussed in the previous chapter, Increased internationalization of universities and colleges (Sveriges Riksdag, 2017). Considering this directive from the government was passed within one month of the completion of this study, it had not yet had time to filter down into the system. However, some of the coordinators were aware of the new directive, and showed hopes for its implementation.

“I’ve read about it, and I know it’s happening, so we are very happy here, like hooray! (*laughs*) Finally! But I haven’t heard anything on how we’re gonna work with that decision…It’s gonna, like filter down, so eventually it’s gonna get to us, what we’re gonna do and if we get extended means to work with it,” (A7).

The final common suggestion was to streamline the process for applying for study abroad. This was addressed by four coordinators as a very straightforward pragmatic change that could be made without having to go through so many bureaucratic channels.

“I would like to streamline it a little bit, because now it’s so…since all the departments, they work in different ways, they’ve got different deadlines. So if we can streamline it, and have like one deadline for the fall semester, and one for the spring semester, and you, if you’ve got questions about this country, you go to that person.” (A7).

Considering the decentralized nature of the university, the process for applying for study abroad is inconsistent across departments. This inconsistency ties in directly with having a unified strategy for internationalization across the university. To facilitate the process for students, as well as for the administrators, it would be prudent to streamline the process and
make the whole procedure a bit more ‘centralized.’ In addition to alleviating pressures on the students, this would also make things more efficient for the departments. One coordinator articulated that by relieving the departments of the responsibility of managing the exchanges and instead giving it to the faculty level would be the best way to make things more efficient. However, the same coordinator further explained there is a distinct resistance to push functions to the faculty level.

“You need to put some of the functions that we have on the department level, you have to put them together and make a few people do it on maybe faculty level. Because it’s the only way we can develop this area. But then, it becomes just a matter of, ‘the departments don’t want to give anything away, you know, any of their power, any, anything, decisions about anything.’ Because it’s you know, it’s a conflict, you don’t want to give things away, you’re not going to get anything back. It doesn’t really matter if what’s the most efficient way of doing things, it’s just become an idea,” (A3).

5.2.1.5 Summary of findings from administrator interviews

The interviews with the administrators illuminated the most glaring issues with internationalization at Novania University. While policies regarding internationalization exist at the department and central levels, the disjointed organizational culture at the university due to the decentralized structure causes a fragmented approach, which hinders internationalization. Several other barriers to internationalization were discussed, including personal concerns, alluding to the aversion to deviate from the Swedish lagom lifestyle. Additionally, several suggestions for improvement were proposed in the interview data, including promoting internationalization at home and streamlining (centralizing) the process for study abroad.

5.2.2 Student Interviews

In addition to the interviews with administrators at Novania University, four interviews were also conducted with students, each from different departments. The students shared their perspectives and experiences with applying for and going abroad, as well as the attitude of their departments towards internationalization. There were many common threads between the student and administrator interviews, and this section will elaborate on these same themes.
5.2.2.1 Policies and Organizational Culture

Regarding policies, none of the students interviewed knew much about the actual policies that the university or their specific departments had which govern study abroad. Of the students interviewed, two went on departmental exchanges, one went on the departmental exchange of another department (not their own department, but instead a different one), and the fourth went on a central agreement. They expressed that they knew the difference between the two types of agreements, and that generally the application process for both central and departmental exchanges were quite similar. The main difference expressed was the length of the application procedure and how far in advance it was required to apply. Students on departmental programs applied one semester in advance, whereas students on the central exchange programs were required to begin applying one full year in advance. This was viewed as a burden, as well as a barrier to studying abroad.

5.2.2.2 Barriers

The main to internationalization and study abroad expressed by the students also fell under the same categories: administrative burdens, academic concerns, personal reasons, and decentralization. One of the main administrative burdens faced by the students revolved around the complicated nature of the applications, and the length of the application procedure. Additionally, the overall administrative aspect of paperwork, applications, visas, and other legal documents was viewed as a challenge. One student explained,

“I think this whole administrative thing can be a little bit daunting. I know some people who didn’t apply just because ‘Oh I don’t want to deal with all that! I mean it’s probably awesome but I don’t wanna deal with it!’ Because I mean, if you...when you get all this done with this school and with the other school and everything, you still have to apply for visas...” (S2).

The same student shared their experience with getting courses approved before departure, which was expressed with a general frustration with the procedure. The student explained that because their study program was interdisciplinary and spread across departments, it was required to have each different department sign off on the courses that were to be taken abroad. This resulted in having to run around to the different departments, present all the proposed courses, and have that coordinator sign off on the learning agreement. This story also relates directly to having a more streamlined, centralized process to facilitate the general
procedure for the students. The issue of decentralization was noted by the student as an institutional barrier to internationalization in relation to ease of the process for applicants.

Academic concerns were also perceived as a major barrier, both regarding finding appropriate courses, and to taking classes in English (or a third language). The students interviewed agreed that many students do not know that their courses can be transferred back, and that they would not lose time in their studies. Additionally, negative stories from some extreme cases have discouraged some students from applying. For example, one student shared the story of a friend who encountered major issues with their courses while abroad.

“I heard other students that had been abroad, one went to Shanghai I think…and he was like, ‘yeah when I got there, I didn’t apply to the right courses, and I had to end up having nothing that I was supposed to have,’ so actually he couldn’t validate it, and he studied art for a semester. He was fine with that…but you never know,” (S3).

These stories infuse a negative connotation into study abroad, and actively discourage students from considering it, because if it happened to their friend, the same scenario could happen to them. The same student also cited the trepidation of Swedish students to study in another language as a major barrier for studying abroad.

“One main reason was that you will be studying in your second language. And I know a lot of my classmates, they were struggling with English literature already like, on a basic level. We only had a couple of articles per course that were in English, but they still thought that ‘well this is too much, and I don’t like it.’ So, I think that that can be a thing as well, you need to study in English, or your third language, but there is no way you can study in Swedish anywhere else except in Sweden!” (S3).

But the most oft-cited barrier by the students was personal reasons, which was addressed by all four interviewees. One posited that it might be due to the nature of Swedish culture, explaining that Swedes are a ‘group people,’ and that they tend to do what their friends do.

“In Sweden, or in [city], people are kind of comfortable in their situation, and they are dependent on their friends, and they are very Swedish, because they really like Sweden and they really like their city. So, they just feel, I think, scared of going anywhere else. They are like, 'oh but I'm happy here with my friends, I don't want to leave anywhere, I don't have the urge to do that,’” (S4).
5.2.2.3 Policies and/or Processes Impacting Internationalization

One topic addressed by the students, but not by the coordinators, was the tradition of the departments of sending students abroad, and the attitude towards internationalization. One student mentioned that it was not encouraged by their department to go abroad, but in fact it was actively discouraged.

“In my institution, the feeling we got, at least we who went abroad, is that they don't really want you to go abroad either. They kind of, they don't encourage it, and they also like, actually make us feel like it's gonna be a lot of work, even though it's not a lot of work. Especially with the internship thing, they were trying to convince us to stay, because it's 'better' to do an internship in Sweden for future job possibilities. So, I would say, the problem in my institution is that they don't really have an international perspective at all, and you can also see that in the courses we have, like we don't have any international [courses] at all,” (S4).

Furthermore, even in departments where it makes the most sense to study abroad, it was not encouraged. For example, one interviewee expressed that it was not remotely encouraged within her department, one which requires fluency in another language, a benefit often associated with study abroad.

Dana: So, would you say it was encouraged?
S2: Encouraged to go abroad?
D: Within your department, or within your program?
S2: Not at all
D: Even for bilingual studies? What?
S2: Yeah, I know, I know, but I mean, we are 8 people in my master’s course, so (*laughs*) you don’t wanna lose one!

5.2.2.4 Suggestions for Improvement

As discussed in the data findings from the interviews with administrators, the most prevalent themes present in the student interview data regarding suggestions for improvement were: communication and marketing, internationalization at home, and to streamline the whole process. The most common theme that appeared in the interview data was the communication and marketing, with all four students noting it as something that must be improved. One student wished for both more communication and better communication, stating that she had only found out about study abroad options through friends, and saw this as an easy growth opportunity for
departments. Collectively, the students interviewed came up with some suggestions for improving marketing, including using Instagram for small daily reminders, posters, events with international speakers, and really pushing internationalization during the orientation welcome days at the beginning of every year.

The second main theme is internationalization at home. One student suggested to let ESN (The Erasmus Student Network, a student association funded by the European Commission which organizes events for international students) take over the orientation day for new incoming Swedish students. This would give the new students a chance to learn about the possibilities to go abroad from day one, and get them started thinking about it early, as well as integrate them with international students a little better. Another student mentioned the importance of connecting Swedish and international students on the local level, as the Swedes tended to stick together, and the international students sometimes felt isolated and not integrated into Swedish society. By changing the status quo and helping to integrate international students, this would hopefully encourage more Swedes to think outside the box, move away from lagom culture, and consider studying abroad.

The last main suggestion for improvement was to streamline the whole process. The issues of decentralization at the administrative level filtered down to the student level and posed issues for the students as well. As discussed in the section on barriers, some students felt that the application procedure was unnecessarily complicated and convoluted, requiring many signatures from different people and various documents. While they understood that there would always be paperwork involved in the application procedure, one student suggested for the coordinators to provide everything the students would need to know for studying abroad in one cohesive package, to eliminate confusion.

“I think it would have been easier to have some kind of package, so you get the information about the actual exchange…like the contacts of those [past] students…and maybe just ‘oh and if you need to talk about grants, or if you need to apply for a visa, here are the links, or here are the people you can go to.’ I felt like I was working to different paths at the same time, so maybe make that more coherent, provide information that is easy to understand,” (S3).

5.2.3 Omitted Responses

In addition to the responses from the interview data, there is one other factor to consider. The researcher solicited the participation from approximately 30 international coordinators at the central, faculty, and departmental levels, however only 8 participated. While
a number did not respond entirely, there was an additional 6 international coordinators who did respond, but said they would not help. For all six cases, this was due to this coordinator being brand new in the responsibility, and having no knowledge of the departmental policies regarding study abroad. This omission of responses is also a key piece of this study. As discussed by the administrators interviewed, many felt that the departments were understaffed or underfunded with regards to internationalization. The lack of human resources directly supports their argument, considering that many departments did not have a consistent person dealing with all the study abroad programs, which leaves internationalization vulnerable to be lost in the shuffle. As mentioned by one administrator,

“Since departments decide how much, how many people or hours they're going to put into creating opportunities for their students, it's very much down to the departments to decide, and that's the problem, they're not interested in this area,” (A8).

5.3 Summary of Findings

Overall, this study provided a comprehensive picture of the current internationalization strategies at Novania University. It is evident that the policies start from the international level, and filter down to the national and institutional levels slowly. The policies at the EU level are explicit and thorough, giving the member-states a solid foundation for setting individual state goals for reaching the overall EU targets. The Swedish response has been significant at the state policy level, yet the institutional level still requires some assistance. The policies of Swedish HEIs are varied and non-uniform due to the decentralized nature of the education system, which leaves internationalization vulnerable to whomever is in charge at that institution. It is important to note that at the national level in Sweden, internationalization has been established as a high priority task, so while it should hypothetically be reflected at the institutional level as well, it still falls lower on the immediate list of priorities.

The interview data also provided a clear picture of both the faculty and student perceptions of internationalization at Novania University. The various administrators shared a common frustration with the overall attitude of the university regarding internationalization, specifically the lack of a cohesive and inclusive strategy for all the departments. They also expressed relative disappointment regarding the numbers of outgoing exchange students from their respective departments, demonstrating clear concern for increasing the enrollments but an uncertainty of how to do so. The most predominant finding of the interviews was the belief
that the decentralized nature of the organizational structure created an impetus to internationalization, and the lack of both interest and resources, capital and human, at the faculty level directly hindered the internationalization efforts. The student interviews corroborated these findings, stating that they did not feel encouraged in their departments to study abroad, and that were not even aware of international students taking classes side-by-side in their own institutions. They saw little interaction between international and local students on the campus, and expressed their perceptions of a general disinterest by many Swedes to study abroad, which might be attributed to lagom culture.

The most important finding of both the policy analysis and the interviews were the suggestions for improvement. Both policies and administrators alike called for a unified strategy, and a more centralized and streamlined process to facilitate everything for the students, which was one of the most crucial factors to improving internationalization efforts, and therefore increasing the number of students abroad. The focus on internationalization at home was also one of the most key recommendations by administrators and students, and was indicated in the policies at all levels, to encourage the integration of an international dimension at the home university within the classes and in everyday life.
Chapter Six

Discussion

This chapter bridges the findings from the previous chapter to the theories identified in Chapter Two. The characteristics of Novania University will be discussed in relation to the concepts and theories provided by Bartell (2003), Sporn (1996), and Stier (2004). Sporn’s Organizational Culture Typology Theory will be applied to the data gathered from the interviews and the policy document analysis. Additionally, the issue of the questionable ethics of internationalization will also be examined utilizing Stier’s critical viewpoint. This chapter will end with an overall summary, some conclusions drawn from the research, as well as suggestions for future research.

6.1 Novania University’s Organizational Culture

Comparing the data from this study, both the interviews and the policy data, a few conclusions about the context of Novania University’s organizational culture can be drawn. Firstly, as Sporn mentioned, there are certain characteristics of all universities, which can hinder abstract processes like internationalization. This is the case at Novania University, especially due to the decentralized nature of the university’s administration.

6.1.1 Characteristics of Novania University

We recall that there were five attributes which characterize most universities, as discussed in Chapter Two by Taylor (2004), which play a role in understanding Novania University’s organizational culture, and thus its approach to internationalization:

1. Goals of universities are ambivalent, differentiated, unclear and difficult to measure
2. Internal and external stakeholders are numerous and varied
3. The complicated organizational structure makes the achievement of goals challenging due to the variety of standards set regarding different tasks and services
4. Inherent conflict between academics and administration over power and autonomy
5. HEIs are vulnerable to the external environment, including political, economic, technological, and social conditions
At Novania University, there was general disagreement on how to achieve the set goals and objectives, which created an ambiguous decision-making procedure. No department felt responsible for making central decisions, nor did individual departments even have the mandate to do so. A lack of empowerment can cause apathy (and inability) towards reaching the goals set by the European Commission and the Swedish state regarding internationalization, despite policies at the international and national levels which encourage clear goal setting, and hopefully eventual attainment of said goals. Additionally, Sporn noted that universities can be defined as bureaucratic, collegial, and political organizations, and could be viewed as “organized anarchies” or “expertocracies” (a term coined by Mintzberg, 1982, adapted from Sporn, 1996). As such, it is inevitable that Novania University’s internal and external stakeholders vary considerably, creating many different perspectives. As there are many decision-makers involved at different levels, it is difficult for any major changes to be made and implemented. Despite the new Ökad internationalisering Committee Directive (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2017) passed in February this year, the administrators noted that it would probably take up to two years for the top-down policy to make its way through the system and filter down to the departments.

Furthermore, the administrators interviewed also discussed a distinct animosity and conflict between the academics and the administration, noting that the relationship was one of power politics. Neither side, academics nor administration, wanted to give up any power, such as who should oversee the exchange agreements and internationalization efforts. Even if the departments didn’t care about, or have time to manage the exchanges, they didn’t want to give up their power to do so. This conflict plays a role in the effectiveness of the management for implementing a strategy regarding internationalization. The lack of a cohesive effort across the university to reaching internationalization targets, as well as the lack of interest in doing so becomes a major barrier to internationalization. If the departments cannot work together with the central administration about anything, how can they come together to implement a functioning and effective strategy for increasing internationalization? Moreover, the decentralized structure of the university which necessitates having an international coordinator at each department is a factor that plays into the dedication of the departments to internationalization. The departments become vulnerable to whomever is managing the exchange agreements at the time, and if this person is not dedicated to cultivating internationalization, it simply will not happen.

Lastly, Novania University is vulnerable to its external environment. One example of an external factor which has, in recent years, played a role in the internationalization of Novania
University, is the implementation of tuition fees for non-EU/EEA international students. This change in the political arena was not something that Novania University could control as it hit at the national level, however it had a direct impact on the internationalization efforts at Swedish HEIs. By receiving less international students due to the high tuition fees, the concept of internationalization at home is compromised, and fewer local students will have the international context infused into their home university experience. Not having as many international students in the classes diminishes the possibility of having different perspectives and multicultural ideas contributing to the classroom discussions.

6.1.2 Applying Sporn’s Organizational Cultural Typology

Looking back at the model that Sporn (1996) provided regarding the relationship between university culture and strategic management, it is clear that Novania University’s organizational culture and the values/beliefs of its members play a cogent role in the formulation of policy and management, which therefore also has obvious and direct impacts on internationalization. We recall that an organizational culture gains influence through strength and orientation, with the strength implying how well the institution can adapt to change (i.e. societal pressures to internationalize), and that the ability to implement strategies successfully (i.e. holistic internationalization strategies) is contingent upon on its orientation (Sporn, 1996, p.45). Bartell explains that there is “a need to identify and assess empirically the relevant dimensions of organizational culture linked to organizational effectiveness which need to be changed to improve effectiveness,” (Bartell, 2003, p.54). To be able to effectively assess the institutional culture, and then integrate the findings into the organization’s management can strengthen the possibility of change. Plotting Novania University on Sporn’s typology and examining the strength and orientation of the organizational culture helps to clarify these strengths and weaknesses, and thereby highlights where changes should be made in order to facilitate internationalization and likewise increase participation in study abroad programs. Through a comparison of the findings of this study, between the statements made by the administrators and students, as well as the current internationalization policies at the institutional level which were examined, the conclusion of the researcher is to plot Novania University firmly in quadrant number 1: a weak, internally oriented culture.
6.1.2.1 **Strength**

“A university with very strong subcultures can - once realized - be developed into a more unified institution by initiatives that trigger a higher degree of identification,” (Sporn, 1996, p.47).

As Sporn explained, a weak culture is characterized by loosely connected subunits or subcultures which can sometimes work directly against one another. The nature of the relationship between these subcultures can dictate how well a university can develop and implement a unified strategy (e.g. internationalization). In the case of Novania University, the severe decentralization of the departments (subcultures) constitutes a weak internal organizational culture. Most of the departmental coordinators discussed having minimal connection with the central administration regarding internationalization, and did not indicate working together with other departments much either. All the administrators participating in this study alluded to the issues associated with the decentralized nature of the university for the creation of a unified policy or strategy regarding internationalization. Although the current international and national policies call for a unified strategy for internationalization, the practicality of this at the institutional level is impeded by the decentralized organizational structure.
While the attitude of the international coordinators was quite internationalization-positive, they also insinuated that not everyone within the university faculty shared their vision for internationalization and the encouragement of study and research mobility. The disconnect between the different departments, as well as the different members of the Board of each department, has created a dichotomy about the importance and priority of issues of internationalization. As mentioned by some of the coordinators in this study, it can be difficult to get the rest of the faculty on board with the initiatives of internationalization considering that each department’s Board is made up of academics (i.e. professors and deans), who will most likely opt to channel their funding directly into research or other academic purposes. As each Departmental Board has the autonomy to decide where the department’s time and funding will go, the more abstract and less immediate priorities, such as internationalization, get put on the back burner to other more pressing academic concerns.

This fact relates directly to Sporn’s conceptualization of a university’s organizational strength. If the degree of congruence between the members of the university is inconsistent, then this constitutes a very weak organizational culture, which has not been shown to be the most effective path to innovation and adaptation. The weak connection between the subcultures, and the incongruent beliefs of the members of said subcultures, does not lend itself to the implementation of a cohesive, comprehensive internationalization strategy or the increase of participants in study and research mobility.

6.1.2.2 Orientation

Based on the findings of the study, Novania University has an internally oriented culture. The decentralized organizational structure of Novania University demonstrates that the orientation emphasizes achieving extrinsic, lower-level goals at the different departments, which are usually largely academic, such as research and teaching. This is instead of focusing on more comprehensive and integrative intrinsic university-wide goals, like internationalization, which will fall as a back-burner priority to academic ones. Based on the information gleaned from the interviews with administrators, it became very evident that the culture was internally oriented, and therefore did not display significant ability to implement cohesive strategies successfully. The focus within the university administration was more on the internal structures and bureaucratic processes than on external factors and challenges. Responding to internationalization is an external challenge, and the internal orientation of the university demonstrated a reluctance and inability to respond to that sort of challenge.
“The internal orientation is consistent with the hierarchy culture which emphasizes control, order, rules and regulations, policy and procedures, uniformity and stability, both reflecting mechanistic processes,” (Bartell, 2003, p.55).

This quote by Bartell exemplifies not only the underlying core of Swedish HEIs, but also the Swedish way of life. Swedes love rules and bureaucracy, uniformity and equality in all aspects of life: lagom. The concept of lagom lends itself to the order, uniformity, stability, and the ‘mechanistic processes’ which Bartell describes as characteristics of the internally oriented culture. Both Swedish life in general, and Swedish HEIs, tend to embody lagom, which in and of itself may not encourage internationalization.

6.2 Questionable Ethics of Internationalization

We must, however, also recall Stier’s critique of the ethics of internationalization. To what extent is the push for internationalization ethical in the context of Novania University? The inclination towards the market economy side of education with the implementation of tuition fees solely for non-EU/EEA international students takes advantage of the burgeoning ‘marketization’ of higher education (Marginson, 2006). This practice teeters on the brink of the questionable side, considering that it is still free to attend Novania University for national and EU students. Additionally, it was noted in the student interviews that the departments did not have the tradition of encouraging students to study abroad. Taking this into consideration, a possible reason for not encouraging students to go abroad could be because having less students on campus would mean less funding for the department. Considering that the departments receive funding for the number of students enrolled, losing students to exchange could decrease the amount of funding they receive. This idea was not discussed in the interviews; however, it is a possible conclusion drawn based on the knowledge of the functionality of the Swedish higher education system, established in the Högskolelag (1992) and Högskoleförordning (1993). The inclination towards the market side of education here is indeed a questionable motive for internationalization. Furthermore, as some administrators mentioned in their interviews, some of the university agreements are only being used as political/diplomatic tool, instead of for actual internationalization efforts. This is also a questionable measure, as using these agreements as a diplomatic tool falls on the ‘symbolic’ side of Bartell’s internationalization spectrum (2003) presented in Chapter Two. These
ineffective and useless agreements are merely symbolic and imagined ‘solutions’ to the question of internationalization.

Supporting this argument, additional related research by Hellstén (in review) has been conducted on the relationship between the ‘global HE imaginary’ and the actual reality of internationalization policies. The research exposes an incongruence between the way internationalization is imagined and hypothetically posed in the policies, and the actual reality, the way things are actually happening. Hellstén argues that while internationalization has become a highly-prioritized issue at the policy level, the practical applications are still lacking, creating a discrepancy between the imagined and the actual reality. This is particularly evident at Novania University, as the significant internationalization policies at the international and national levels exist and are plentiful, however, at the institutional level, as this study also confirms, these policies are not reflected in the day-to-day aspects at the departments, and the numbers of students participating in study abroad remains comparatively low.

The current results relate directly back to the four different institutional approaches to internationalization discussed by Knight (1999) in Chapter Two - activity, competency, ethos, and process. The present study identifies the internationalization approaches most used at Novania University, thus constituting the actual reality of the internationalization efforts, which can then be juxtaposed with the imagined hypothetical posed in the policies at the national and international levels. Knight explained that the activity approach was the most common, as it was easiest to implement, mostly through exchange programs and receiving international students, which is demonstrated at Novania University.

The competency approach was discussed by one international coordinator, who expressed interest in sending teacher education students abroad more, to encourage the development of new skills and competences for future educators. However, the coordinator also commented that it was not a very popular program, thus representing a gap here. The ethos approach was also mentioned by a few coordinators, who spoke about changing the attitude of students and staff regarding internationalization and studying abroad. They also commented that it could be very difficult to accomplish this objective, however, due to the satisfaction with the culture of lagom in Sweden. Here is a perfect example of where the expression ‘lagom is best’ applies, highlighting that Swedes might not feel inclined to step outside their comfort zone and deviate from the norm by studying abroad, or engaging in internationalization at home. Finally, the process approach, analogous to internationalization at home, was discussed by many of the coordinators as a primary objective for increasing internationalization, yet something that Novania University decidedly lacks. Though there are many international
students present, they seem to study parallel to the local students instead of being integrated into the local student culture. These are perfect examples of disparities between the imagined and actual realities of internationalization policies (Hellstén, in review) as exemplified in this comparative case study at Novania University.

6.3 Conclusions

Returning to the guiding research objectives and questions, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the case of Novania University and the effectiveness of the internationalization strategies applied here. The policy document analysis completed in this thesis provided the answer to research question number one, which sought to identify and understand the international policies governing internationalization of higher education and study abroad, and their articulation at the national and institutional levels in Sweden. A thorough examination of the Bologna Process, Lisbon Strategy, and various EU cohesion policies has shown a clear dedication to the topic of internationalization at a higher, European level. Additionally, the policies at the state level in Sweden show interest and dedication to the process of internationalizing higher education. However, this case study indicates that gaps still exist between policy and practice at the institutional level. The newest policy passed in February 2017 shows that while dedication exists at the national level, there is still a need to implement a more cohesive internationalization strategy at the institutional level, which this directive hopes to accomplish. Though the international administrators at Novania University were positive about this new policy, they were still unsure if the rest of the faculty would concur, considering that prioritizing spending money and time on internationalization would detract from the academic priorities which the departments are more prone to emphasize. The decentralized nature of Novania University’s organizational culture plays a decisive role in the creation of policy at the institutional level. As such, it is cumbersome to implement a university-wide internationalization strategy, as each department has the autonomy to formulate their own policies. This creates confusion, and makes it a challenge to mandate internationalization and therefore increase participation in study abroad.

Research question number two was regarding the barriers to internationalization, and this study narrowed them down to four categories: administrative burdens, academic concerns, personal reasons, and decentralization. It can be reasoned based on the responses of both the administrators and the students that the decentralized organization of the university was the most overarching cause of the barrier, as the complex organizational structure made the
administrative processes for implementing internationalization and applying for studying abroad complicated. Additionally, the barrier of personal reasons can be linked to the prevailing culture of ‘lagom is best,’ in that the deviation from the norm, going to study abroad, would not be lagom, and is therefore not the ‘best way.’

Looking at research question number three, whether certain policies and/or processes have an impact on enrollment rates in study abroad programs, we can conclude based on the current case study results that, in fact, they do. As it has been discussed repeatedly throughout this thesis, the decentralized nature of the university and the existing organizational culture are direct hindrances to the implementation of internationalization strategies and increasing outward mobility, as indicated by the interview data. So now we turn to question number four and discuss the implications for internationalizing at local levels and how institutions can facilitate this process, and overall increase the internationalization efforts and number of students abroad.

Considering the current decentralized structure of the university and the weak, internally oriented organizational culture, the question becomes: should internationalization remain primarily a function of the departments, being relegated to second or third priority tasks, simply so the departments don’t lose any organizational power? Or should all the mandate and responsibility regarding international exchange be transferred to the central administrative levels, and coordinated with a cohesive and unified university policy/strategy? It is difficult to definitively say, as both can have their merits in different contexts. However, seeing as how the current structure is not convincingly effective in coordinating the current internationalization efforts, it is possible that a paradigm shift to a more centralized approach would be more appropriate and more effective.

On the other hand, it could remain a function of the departments, however it would still need to entail a slightly more centralized and cohesive approach regarding the strategy. Having a unified strategy across the university for how each of the departments should tackle internationalization would hold the departments accountable for their own policies and practices, and hopefully necessitate a deeper dedication and engagement to internationalization. Not simply a university policy that says, ‘we will be committed to internationalization’ (as the Strategies for Novania University 2015-2018 policy document states), but instead a comprehensive standard of how the departments should administer and manage exchanges; encourage and promote student, teacher, and researcher mobility; integrate international aspects into the curricula; encourage incoming international students to study in their departments; and promote and communicate opportunities. For example, a newsletter to all students provided by
the central administration could provide students with all the relevant deadlines, contact information at the departments, and include a spotlight on different programs or countries to encourage more students to go abroad. As summarized by Sporn (1996) and Bartell (2003), a stronger and externally oriented culture is more successful in, and more capable of adaptation, as opposed to the weak, internal orientation of Novania University.

It is also important to critically question the current internationalization efforts which do exist regarding their relevance and significance, as well as functionality. As Stier and other researchers (see Hellstén, in review) point out, universities are often quick to write international vision statements or strategies, yet the practical applications remain ineffective and unaccomplished. Why continue to have exchange agreements with a country that offers no courses in English, if none of your students speak that language? Is it ethical to maintain ‘strategic initiatives’ that make no sense to administrators or students, but serve as political tools? Why keep the administration of the exchanges out at the departments if it is a university-wide goal to increase internationalization? These questions are important to ask to ensure the most effective internationalization strategies at the institutional level.

Overall, based on the conclusions drawn from this research, it is the suggestion of the researcher for Novania University to make a shift towards a slightly more centralized structure with a stronger and more externally-oriented culture. While a change overnight is impossible and to restructure the university entirely would be a daunting task, in order to facilitate innovation and adaptation to external challenges such as internationalization, it would be prudent to consider modifying the current organizational culture to a model more associated with the success of the implementation of cohesive strategies for internationalization. A more centralized approach would tackle not only a cohesive strategy, but could also address the issues associated with lagom culture, and how to work around this hegemonic lifestyle. The possibilities for internationalization are great for Novania University, and a few changes can help to solidify internationalization as a priority for the future.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research

It would be very interesting to complete this same study across other universities in Sweden. Considering that the policy study has already been completed at the international and national level in Sweden, it would be feasible and straightforward to extend the comparison with other HEIs in Sweden. This would allow for further generalizable value of the results to a greater, country-wide level. Remembering the study recently published by STINT on the
most internationalized universities, it would be very interesting to replicate the present study at the top countries on that index to compare the organizational cultures. This would help to determine what type of organizational culture is the most effective for internationalizing the university, and show concrete comparative examples.

Additionally, the same study could also be administered at the international comparative level to different country contexts in Europe, as the international policies would remain consistent across the board, allowing for comparison across national borders and jurisdictions. The comparative methodology provided in Chapter Three of this thesis would allow for further research to be conducted within and across countries. It would be interesting to be able to compare case studies from different countries to the responses found in this study to determine the relative efficacy of the policies at Novania University. Other further research also needs to be conducted regarding how to increase the effectiveness of existing internationalization policies to reach the European targets set for 2020, both at the national and institutional level.

This study provided a glimpse into the timely issue of internationalization of higher education in Sweden, which is clearly a prioritized issue. Future research also would be further able to evaluate the intersection of the hegemonic cultural paradigm of lagom with internationalization policies, which proves to be an interesting angle for research. It would be relevant to continue to study the effects of other unique cultural paradigms in other contexts, such as the collectivist culture in China, to examine their impacts on the educational phenomenon of internationalization of higher education. It would be very interesting to study the intersection of other sociological, anthropological, or psychological factors with internationalization to examine their implications and impacts on adaptation and innovation within higher education.
References


Horizon2020, European Commission. (2014)


Appendix A

Interview Guide (Administrators - Departmental)

1. Could you give me a little bit of background information about yourself? Let’s start with your name, the name of your department, your official role or title. Is this your full-time role? Or is this just a part of your responsibilities?

Follow up questions: what did you study previously to prepare you for this job? Have you had a job in this field before?

2. How long have you been working in this position?

Follow up questions: do you know the person who was doing this job before you? If so, do you know how long this person worked there before you? What is the job turnover rate like in your department?

3. What is your connection to the central university administration? Do you ever report to them? How much influence do they have over the work that you do, the decisions you make?

4. Can you go into a bit of detail about the procedure for studying abroad?

Follow up questions: how do students apply for the programs, for financial aid, for housing? Are there separate applications? How long does the whole procedure take? How do the credits get transferred? What are the different types of programs? How are the applications different/similar for different types of programs? How many programs/universities do you work with?

5. What policies does the department have regarding study abroad?

Follow up questions: do you have written policy documents which govern your department/position? What are the policies regarding student participation in programs? Can you point me to any official policy documents? Are they publicly available?

6. What are some of the biggest problems/barriers students encounter when going through the process? (applications, financial aid, finding courses, transferring courses, other?) Are the problems universal to all the programs you facilitate? Or specific to one country? University?

7. What would be your suggestion for making the process easier for students? In your mind, how would you adjust the procedure to make it better? Do you think students generally find the process fairly simple/complex? What could make it smoother?

8. What are some ways that you market programs to students? What recruitment tactics do you use for promotion?
Follow up questions: what are the most effective methods for recruiting students? What could be changed in your recruitment tactics? Do most students know about the opportunity to study abroad?

9. What do you think are the biggest challenges to enrollment in study abroad programs? How can the administration address these issues?

Follow up questions: Are some of these challenges department specific? Or are these universal across the departments?

10. What are some ways you suggest for improving enrollment in study abroad programs? How can we make it more accessible for all students?

11. How many students do you send abroad every semester/year (including exchange, internships, and other international programs)? How many students are in your department in total? Why do you think there is such a disparity between these two numbers?

**Interview Guide (Administrator - Central)**

1. Could you give me a little bit of background information about yourself? Let’s start with your name, your official role or title, and what you take care of in the office?

   Follow up questions: what did you study previously to prepare you for this job? Have you had a job in this field before?

2. How long have you been working in this position?

   Follow up questions: do you know the person who was doing this job before you? If so, do you know how long this person worked there before you? What is the job turnover rate like in your department?

3. What is your connection to the different departmental international coordinators? Do they report to you? How much influence do you have over the work that they do?

4. Can you go into a bit of detail about the procedure for studying abroad?

   Follow up questions: how do students apply for the programs, for financial aid, for housing? How long does the whole procedure take? How do the credits get transferred? What are the different types of programs? How are the applications different/similar for different types of programs? How many programs/universities do you work with?

5. What policies does the university have regarding study abroad?

   Follow up questions: Other than internationalization efforts at the Riksdag level, do you have written policy documents which govern your office? What are the policies regarding student participation in programs? Regarding the new kommittédirektiv
ökad internationalisering av universitet och högskolor from Feb 2016, what is the university doing to try and implement this policy? How can the university respond?

6. What are some of the biggest problems/barriers students encounter when going through the process? (applications, financial aid, finding courses, transferring courses, other?) Are the problems universal to all the programs you facilitate? Or specific to one country? University?

7. What would be your suggestion for making the process easier for students? In your mind, how would you adjust the procedure to make it better? Do you think students generally find the process fairly simple/complex? What could make it smoother?

8. What are some ways that you market programs to students? What recruitment tactics do you use for promotion? Do these tactics reach all the students?

Follow up questions: what are the most effective methods for recruiting students? What could be changed in your recruitment tactics? Do most students know about the opportunity to study abroad?

9. What do you think are the biggest challenges to enrollment in study abroad programs? How can the administration address these issues?

Follow up questions: Are some of these challenges department specific? Or are these universal across the departments?

10. What are some ways you suggest for improving enrollment in study abroad programs? How can we make it more accessible for all students?

11. How many students do you send abroad every semester/year (including exchange, internships, and other international programs)? How many students are at the university in total? Why do you think there is such a disparity between these two numbers?
Appendix B

Interview Guide (Students)

1. Could you give me a little bit of background information about yourself? Let’s start with your name, what you study, what semester of your studies are you in now, and where you’re from?

   Follow up questions: did you move here to study in this city from another part of Sweden/Europe/the world? How long have you been living in this city and attending Novania University?

2. Did you study abroad through Novania university during your bachelor or master program? Or both?

   Follow up questions: Where did you go? For how long? What type of program was it? (Erasmus, study abroad with a provider, internship, service-learning, etc…?)

3. Did you go on a study abroad program through your department or through the central university-wide agreements? Do you know the difference? Did you have to deal with both your department’s international coordinator and the central international office at any point?

   Follow up questions: What did the department international coordinator help you with, and what did the central international office help you with?

4. Can you go into a bit of detail about the procedure for studying abroad?

   Follow up questions: What did you need to submit, how long did it take you to get all the documents prepared, how far in advance did you apply? Was it easy/hard? What was easy, what was complicated?

5. Did you feel that you had support from your international coordinator/the international office? Could you go to them if you had any questions or needed help?

   Follow up questions: Were they helpful? Did they have resources available for you if you had specific questions (i.e. returnee contact info, pre-departure info, housing, etc…)? Did you feel the international coordinator/office made the whole process smooth?

6. What would be your suggestion for making the process easier? In your mind, how would you adjust the procedure to make it better?

   Follow up questions: Do you think other students generally find the process fairly simple/complex?
7. What are some of the biggest problems/barriers students encounter when going through the process? (applications, financial aid, finding courses, transferring courses, other?) Do you think these problems are universal for students in other departments? Or specific to one country?

8. How did you find out about the study abroad options? Did you have to go searching for the info, or was it presented to you? Were there presentations in your classes?

   Follow up questions: Which recruitment and marketing tactics worked best? Did you know you wanted to study abroad before you started university?

9. How many students (if you know) in your major/department/program went abroad? Was it encouraged?

10. How do you think we can encourage more Swedes to go abroad? What can students do, what can the university do, what can the departments do, what can the central international office do?

Appendix C

Email to administrators seeking participation in study

Hej!

My name is Dana Rocklin, and I am a master student in the Department of Education at Stockholm University. I am conducting research for my thesis on the efficacy of university policies governing study abroad, and I am looking to interview some international office coordinators at Novania University for my study.

The aim of the study is to understand the efficiency of university policies governing education abroad, in order to see how they affect student satisfaction and subsequent enrollment in study abroad programs. Your experience as an international office administrator will help me to understand the procedure for studying abroad, and the institutional policies in place regarding this process.

I would really appreciate your participation in my research. If you agree to help, the interview will be audio recorded and will last approximately 30 minutes. Your identity and
all information gained from this research will be kept entirely anonymous, and codes will be used in place of names.

If you are able to participate, please contact me before February 26, 2017. I am flexible with interview times, and will be happy to work around your schedule. If you have any further questions regarding my research, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you in advance, I hope to hear from you soon!

Mvh,

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Dana Rocklin
MA International and Comparative Education
Stockholm University
Dana.rocklin@gmail.com
+46 (0)72-585-6695

Appendix D

Facebook post to recruit student participants to study

Hej allihopa!

I’m conducting research for my master thesis on the Novania university policies about study abroad, and I am looking to interview some full-degree seeking Novania University students who have studied abroad previously. The aim of the study is to understand the university policies about study abroad to see how they affect student satisfaction and enrollment in study abroad programs. Your experience will help contribute to understanding the student perception of the procedure.

If you are available to be interviewed, it would only take 30 minutes, maximum. I’m very flexible with interview times, and happy to work around your schedule. Your identity and all information gained from this research will be completely anonymous. Please contact me as soon as possible if you’re interested. Some fika will be provided! Any Qs? Let me know!

Tack på förhand!
Cheers,

Dana Rocklin
MA International and Comparative Education
Dana.rocklin@gmail.com
Appendix E

Consent form for participation in study

Department of Education

- I, the undersigned, have read and understood the study Information Sheet provided prior to participating in this research project.

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

- I understand that taking part in the study will include being interviewed and audio recorded.

- I have been given adequate time to consider my decision and I agree to take part in the study.

- I understand that my personal details such as name, university, and department will not be revealed to people outside the project.

- I understand that my words may be quoted in the master thesis and other research outputs, but my name, university, and department will not be used.

- I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any material related to this project to Dana Rocklin, the researcher in this study.

- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part.

- I will receive a copy of this signed consent form for future reference.

Participant Signature: _______________________________  Date:

Researcher Signature: _______________________________  Date:
Appendix F

Codes used for anonymizing data

A1 - Administrator interviewee #1
A2 - Administrator interviewee #2
A3 - Administrator interviewee #3
A4 - Administrator interviewee #4
A5 - Administrator interviewee #5
A6 - Administrator interviewee #6
A7 - Administrator interviewee #7

S1 - Student interviewee #1
S2 - Student interviewee #2
S3 - Student interviewee #3
S4 - Student interviewee #4

To keep the university name anonymous, it is referred to throughout this thesis as Novania University. All references from the university’s website and policies have been altered as such to maintain anonymity of the university.