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My choice of going to Sweden was a result of the decision of going to a Scandinavian country because of the large choice of courses taught in English that are offered in all Scandinavian countries. Finally I decided to go to Lund, a little town in Southern Sweden, which sometimes is not even mapped. But it meant something to me as a student of European Ethnology, since the department of European Ethnology in Lund with its heads Orvar Löfgren and Jonas Frykman is often compared with the department of Empirische Kulturwissenschaft in Tübingen concerning its importance in the development of the discipline formerly named Volkskunde in Germany respectively xxx in Sweden since the 1960s.

I remember my first confrontation with the department, which is situated just next to the Folk Life Archives, quite well; my surprise about, how little, but also cosy it was; the surprise that also in Lund no one knew about the subject though Löfgren's and Frykman's "Culture Builders" was often used as a basic literature among students of Humanities in general ...

However, let's start at the beginning: When I arrived in Lund one week before the official arrival day I experienced the city as a little and silent place, occupied by families, without many young people or possibilities to go out. But this picture changed totally when the official arrival day arrived. The mentors of Lund University picked up all the international students from the train station, brought us to the AFbuilding, a place, where we were welcome, where we got our welcome packages the keys to our student homes and the most important information about the orientation programme. The orientation programme implied a language course that lasted for two weeks, six hours day, accompanied by a supporting programme (international welcome parties, excursions...). You could also join a "mentorgroup" that organised separate meetings during the term, though this was actually not used that much.

Most students live in student corridors. There are those Swedish ones, where one exchange student lives together with just Swedish students and those international ones, where I lived, where just international students lived together in one corridor.

Lund is a city where half of inhabitants are students and a high percentage of internationals. This causes the situation that student life is organised in so called "student nations", where you should join one, if you want to participate in student's (night-)life. There are 23 student nations, but they do not really differ from each other, except of a socialist one. The others are all non political, they organise clubs, activities, lunches and so on.

After two weeks of orientation programme normal university life started. In Lund you can choose among large choice of courses taught in English that are free for students of all universities and that are attended predominantly by international students. These courses are structured in a different way than the one I knew from the Institute in Vienna. If you attend to a course, it means a mix of all types of courses (like lectures, seminars, exercises) and it means mostly a "full time" course.

So you concentrate in one course for four to eight weeks intensively and then you start again with the next one. It is also possible to do two courses at the same time, but this is not the same like courses with certain hours per week at an Austrian university. You have to participate and work constantly and also have to write the papers while your course is still running. This means that, when the course is finished all your papers (often in a form of an essay) have to be finished. So you can always enjoy your holidays without papers to be finished and causing remorse.

There is also the possibility of take-home-exams as an examination. You get your questions and then you have time to answer them during a few days.

The third aspect of the Swedish examination system is the presentation of group work results. I never did so much group work like in these five months. "They are obsessed with it!!" was often the complaint of other exchange students. I made very positive experiences, though it was not always easy. We were mixed together mostly arbitrarily and then had to work out certain questions or whole papers (also fieldwork).

Another particularity concerning the way the courses were arranged was that at the end of a course all of the produced papers were discussed among the students. Each student or each group had to discuss and "oppose" the work of another group as well as we had to argue our own work and answer open questions. The teachers contained themselves in these situations and made just a few comments.

I chose one course called “Swedish Society and Everyday Life” at the Department of European Ethnology. This course was organized in three subcourses: In the first subcourse we did observations in little groups about a phenomenon that we considered as something specifically Swedish. The second subcourse was more theoretical: lectures on Swedish culture. The third one required writing an essay about one specific phenomenon that we observed in Lund in connection with the theoretical approaches that we got to know in the second subcourse. I wrote the essay on the meanings of personal stereo devices for the creation of an own hearing environment in the context of a Swedish understanding of privacy.

The other course was organised by the department of sociology and was on Cultural Studies. The first part consisted in the discussion about theories and methods, while the second part meant doing a fieldwork (interviews and participant observation) in little groups (My group chose researching the only political student nation “Smalands”.)

The relationship between teachers and students were rather relaxed. I called all my teachers by the first name and as a Swedish student you use the Swedish “du”, when you address your teacher (though there exists something like the German “Sie”).

The courses taught in English were held by many different teachers, just one or two of them were responsible for the whole offer in English. But this was specific for the English courses. I attended to a few Swedish courses and there you mostly have one teacher the whole time.

All in all I have to say that on the part of the department and the whole university they tried hard to make it as easy as possible for all the exchange students to settle down – the latter being a process not so long in a little student city like Lund, so that I really can recommend to everyone to choose Lund as a town for an exchange.