



UiO  **University of Oslo**

A Scandinavian Tale

Marianne Høva Rustberggard, LL.M.

Ombudsperson for students at UiO



A Scandinavian Tale

1. Higher education
2. Ombud schemes
3. Ombud for students
 1. How it works
 2. A Scandinavian Comparison
4. The recent expansion in Norway
 1. How/challenges
 2. Comparing students and employees
 3. Turning points
5. The Nordic Network



Higher Education in Scandinavia

- ❖ The Bologna process
- ❖ Majority of state-run universities
- ❖ No tuition fees
- ❖ Educational loan funds
- ❖ Student parliaments/councils/unions
- ❖ Student representation



Norsk studentorganisasjon



Sveriges förenade studentkårer



Ombuds in Scandinavia

“umbod” is from the Norse language, but what does it mean in 2015?

- ❖ A variety of ombuds: consumer, patient, children, equality and anti-discrimination etc.



Sweden

- ❖ Parliamentary ombudsman since 1713
- ❖ "Studentombud" in higher education since at least 1985
- ❖ The majority of institutions have "studentombud"
- ❖ For students (and PhD.-candidates)
- ❖ Hired by the student unions (two exceptions)

*Also student safety representatives
("arbeidsmiljoeombud") required by law*

Norway

- ❖ Ombudsman since 1952 (Parliamentary since 1962)
- ❖ "Studentombud" established in 2013 at the University of Oslo
- ❖ Election platform of the President (request from the students)
- ❖ Only for students
- ❖ Hired by, and from outside the university

"Studentombud" proposed in 1958

Universitas 22nd of February 2012:



TÅLMODIG: Når man venter på noe godt, venter man ikke forgjeves. 54 år etter at det først ble foreslått blir kanskje endelig Gunvald Gussgards forslag en realitet.

Ventetiden er over, Gunvald!

I 1958 foreslo han å opprette et studentombud. 54 år senere blir Gunvalds ønske trolig realisert.

Foto: Aurora Hannisdal

Mandate for the ombudsperson for students at UiO

Be an independent support person whose task is to give students advice and assistance in cases where students have taken up or wish to/are considering taking up issues connected to their studies.

See to it that their cases are dealt with appropriately and correctly, and that the students' rights are safeguarded

Assist in ensuring that cases are resolved as close as possible to their point of origin.

How it works

- Advise students – *the student choose the format*
- Offer to assist in solving a case if the ombudsperson finds potential – *the student can decline, the ombudsperson does not represent the student*
- Whistleblowing – *anonymous channel or on own initiative*
- Point out errors or weaknesses in the system – *on own initiative*
- Address matters regarding the legal protection of students – *on own initiative*

Denmark

- ❖ The Parliamentary Ombudsman in 1954
- ❖ "Stuenterambassadoer" since 2013 at the University of Copenhagen
- ❖ The Penkowa-case
- ❖ For students, applicants, PhD.-candidates and student employees
- ❖ Hired by, and from outside the university

Can buy mediation from outside in a specific case

A Scandinavian Comparison



Mutual

- *Public reports*
- *Not required by law*
- *Only for students and phd.-candidates*
- *Both single cases and on own initiative*
- *No authority to make decisions*

Different

- ✧ *For how long we have been around*
- ✧ *Number of ombuds*
- ✧ *Where we are organizationally placed*
- ✧ *Resources available*
- ✧ *How we handle disciplinary cases*

The recent expansion in Norway

- ✧ 2013: 1 "studentombud"
- ✧ 2014: 1 "studentombud", 4 decisions were made
- ✧ 2015: 3 "studentombud", 1 decision made, 2 in process
- ✧ Right now: 3 "studentombud", 3 decisions and 2 in the process = 8 by the end of 2015?

 **50 % coverage**

The recent expansion in Norway

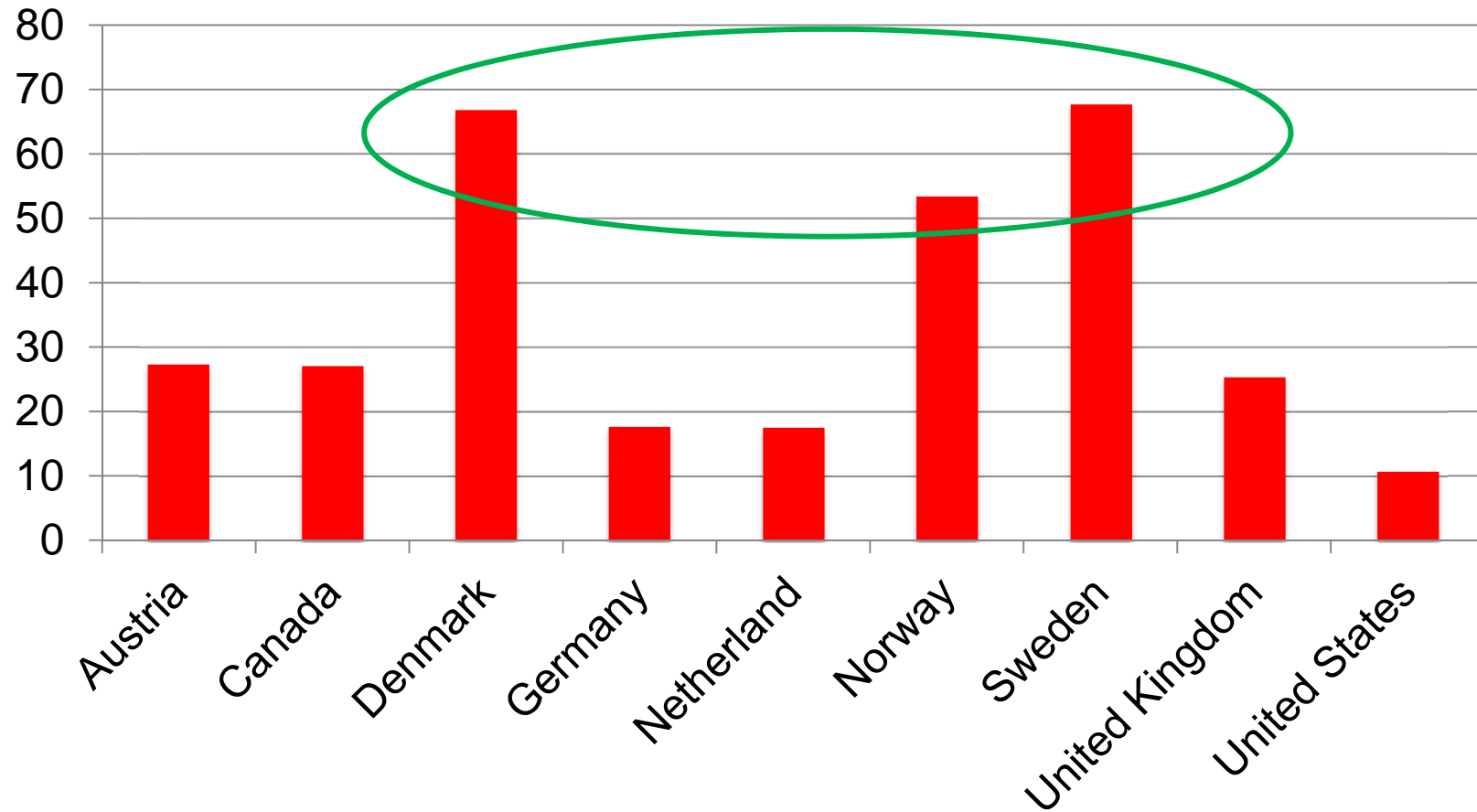
How

- ❖ Student representatives as advisors
- ❖ Communicate that it is a supplement
- ❖ Transparency on method
- ❖ Comparing employees to students

Challenges

- Duty of guidance – where to draw the line?
- Evaluate, not overrule
- Focus on systems

of employees in unions/workers' organisations (OECD)



Majority of state-run universities

- Norway: 55 % - 80% *in the public sector**
- Sweden 68 % - 84% *in the public sector**
- Denmark 69 % - 83% *in the public sector**

*The Norwegian Institute for labour and social research

Ombud for employees

How many ombudspersons for employees at the University of Oslo?

210

Turning points



- ❖ Presentation the concept of an ombudsperson for students to the Norwegian Student Organisation

All students should have access to an ombudsperson

- ❖ ...and also at a seminar for all the Learning Environment Committees in Norway
- ❖ Establishing a Scandinavian (Nordic) Network i 2013

Nordisk nettverk for studentombud





UiO • **University of Oslo**

The end

twitter.com/Studentombudet

facebook.com/Studentombudet

www.studentombudet.no

