

Chapter 3

The Norwegian Framework for Educational Cooperation with Russia: Educational Policy with a Hint of Foreign Affairs

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3.1 Introduction

During the past few decades, a Norwegian policy on internationalization of higher education has developed. From being something that “just happened”, primarily initiated by individuals, internationalization has become more institutionalized and an integrated part of higher education policy at the government level, in addition to its inclusion in the strategies of higher education institutions (HEIs). This development has not taken place in a vacuum. Norwegian policy on internationalization is highly influenced by trends from abroad, of which globalisation and EU policy for higher education are of particular significance. In this chapter, we will look at the framework within which higher education cooperation and student mobility between Russia and Norway is taking place. We will look at the drivers of internationalization and student mobility, in general, and see how these influence developments in Norwegian policy and practice. We will also look at how institutions have responded to this, with a particular focus on the Barents region, educational collaboration with Russian HEIs, and programs targeting Russian students.

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3.2 International Student Mobility – Drivers and Rationales

The number of internationally mobile students in tertiary education around the world has doubled from 2000 to 2012, and has passed 4,500,000 in 2012, according to statistics from OECD (2014). The biggest exporters of students are Asian countries, China, India and Korea, in particular, and the largest importers are Western, English-speaking countries, in particular the USA, the UK, Australia, and Canada), while France, Germany and the Russian Federation also rank high on the list (OECD 2014).

There are several reasons why international student mobility is expanding. Firstly, the number of students in higher education in general is on the rise, and a growth in international students is part of this development. Secondly, certain aspects of globalisation and internationalization have facilitated mobility. Globalisation and internationalization are concepts that are interrelated, while being applied and defined in different ways. Both phenomena describe increased communication and interconnectedness across borders and the exchange of services, knowledge and ideas. It has been argued that internationalization in higher education is a *response* to globalisation (van der Wende 1997), but internationalization can also be seen as a strategy or process that has an order of its own. Knight (2003) defines internationalization in higher education as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education”. While globalisation is usually seen as spontaneous and economically driven, and facilitated by communication and communication technology, internationalization processes are generally more deliberate and politically driven.

The eduscape concept (Luke 2006; Forstorp and Mellström 2013) refers to the contemporary transnational flow of ideas, images, finances and peoples related to higher education. This flow is patterned by certain resource and power structures that make some regions, countries and universities more popular and relevant than others, which again creates visible, spatial or geographical patterns (Robertson and Keeling 2008). These geographical movement patterns can be seen as the aggregated results of “spontaneous” and rather unmanageable globalisation processes and deliberate, more or less strategic internationalization policies. Most commonly, studies on such geographical movements focus on the movement from exporting countries in the South and East to the importing countries in the North or West (Forstorp and Mellström 2013), but may also be meaningfully applied to movements in the Barents region.

Internationalization of higher education is high on the political agenda in many countries, and student mobility is a very visible form of internationalization that has been facilitated and encouraged. This development is particularly noticeable in Europe. The establishment of the ERASMUS program in 1987, the Lisbon convention and the Bologna process, including harmonisation of degree structures, establishment of exchange programs and a common credit point system (ECTS) and the aim to establish a common European higher education area (EHEA) are among the most important achievements. However, in other parts of the world as well, there is an increased awareness of the importance of internationalization in higher education.

The Barents region is no exception to this. Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia have all joined the Bologna process and embarked on various internationalization processes and strategies.

A core political rationale for encouraging student mobility rests on the assumption that the skills provided by studies abroad correspond to the needs of the modern labour market and a knowledge-based economy. The driving forces and policy rationales for student mobility overlap with drivers and rationales for internationalization of higher education in general. Research literature in this field often distinguishes between four types of rationales; academic/educational, cultural, economic and political (Blumenthal et al. 1996; van der Wende 1997; De Wit 2002; Quiang 2003; Knight 2004; Wiers-Jenssen 2008). These categories partially overlap and often have different significance at the national vs. institutional level. A brief outline of the different rationales is found below:

- **Educational/academic rationales.** Adding an international dimension to teaching and research is often seen as a means of quality enhancement in higher education. Student exchange encourages the exchange of ideas and the extension of the academic horizon, and may serve as a tool to prevent academic inbreeding. For small or less-developed countries, the export of students is a strategy used to compensate for deficits in domestic provision of higher education. Educational rationales are often closely linked to economic competitiveness.
- **Economic rationales.** Internationalization is believed to have a positive effect on technological development and economic growth, and this is perhaps the most important justification of policy efforts to promote studying abroad (Knight and de Wit 1995). Student exchange is seen as an investment in future economic relations and economic competitiveness. In addition, student exchange can be related to more direct economic benefits. Some countries see full-fee-paying students as an important source of revenue, while others prioritize the stimulation of student export over investments in expanding domestic enrolment capacity. Economic rationales are definitely important for fee-charging institutions, however, HEIs that do not charge fees may have economic benefits from recruiting international students as well; e.g. through performance-based funding from the government.
- **Cultural (and social) rationales.** In a globalized world, the need for developing individuals' intercultural skills is acknowledged. Understanding culture and language can generate economic and political returns in the long run. Exporting cultural values may be another objective of promoting student exchange, overlapping with political rationales.
- **Political rationales.** Education may also be seen as a dimension of foreign policy; i.e. as a way of making strategic alliances. Student mobility can advance mutual understanding, peace and regional identity, and mobile students may well become important decision-makers in their home countries upon return. Student exchange may be considered a means of maintaining or improving the image of a country, overlapping with cultural rationales.

National and institutional policies for internationalization are usually based on a mixture of various rationales and are the result of an interplay of various

international and national drivers and actors (Qiang 2003), and the weight between them may change over time. In the decades just after the Second World War, the internationalization policy of many countries was focused on improving mutual human understanding and promoting solidarity with developing countries. More recently, there has been a development towards increased emphasis on economic rationales. Students are increasingly considered a revenue source (Kälvermark and van der Wende 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004; Frølich 2006; Robertson and Keeling 2008; Stensaker et al. 2008). Higher education is increasingly becoming a commodity in a global educational market, and it has been argued that the internationalization of higher education has gone from “aid” to “trade” (De Wit 2013).

It has been observed that internationalization and student mobility is increasingly becoming a vital part of the strategies of higher education institutions in many countries. Recruiting from a larger pool of students increases the likelihood of attracting the most talented students. Having students from other parts of the world on campus may also contribute to quality enhancement and bring in different perspectives. The latter aspect is related to the concept of internationalization at home (Knight 2003). This term is a current buzzword in the discourse on internationalization and is used to describe the goal that non-mobile students may also be exposed to international impulses. Political rationales are less obvious at the institutional level, though regional ties and international solidarity may be mentioned.

Internationally, there is also an increased tendency to focus on interregional mobility, where the emphasis is that many students are not necessarily travelling very far on their sojourn and that student mobility may also be seen as part of a region-building process. This makes it relevant to study inter-regional processes (Knight 2013), such as what is currently taking place in the Barents region (Sundet 2016).

3.3 Norwegian Policy for Internationalization

The four main types of rationales for internationalization and student mobility described above are also found in Norwegian policy for internationalization of higher education. The perspectives and policy on student mobility have changed over time. Norway has a long tradition of research cooperation with other countries and outgoing student mobility, while incoming mobility is a more recent development. Important features of the Norwegian policy for internationalization, and how these have developed are described below.

3.3.1 Capacity Building Through Student Export

The first university in Norway was established as late as 1811; until then it was necessary to go abroad to obtain higher education. Even after the establishment of higher education institutions in Norway, the tradition of studying abroad continued,

particularly in fields like business, medicine, engineering and architecture (Bie 1974). After the Second World War, Norway was particularly short on academics, leading to a stage of heightened outgoing mobility. Due to insufficient domestic enrolment capacity, many Norwegian students were “pushed” abroad and, in the 1950s, as much as 30% of Norwegian students went abroad (Bie 1974). Seen from the government’s perspective, providing public financial support for higher education abroad was a means of compensating for the shortages in professional segments of the labour market (NOU 1989; Kälvemark and van der Wende 1997). Activities that are labelled today as internationalization were more or less synonymous with outgoing mobility. The State Educational Loan Fund (established in 1947) has been – and still is – a prerequisite for the fact that a large proportion of Norway’s total student body has been abroad as compared to most other western countries. For a high-cost country like Norway, studies abroad are not necessarily more expensive than studies at home, regardless of the perspective – national or individual.

Student export is a form of capacity building that may be seen as an economic rationale. It takes time to build up a sufficiently high-quality supply of higher education; furthermore, it is also expensive and some form of international division of labour in higher education may be beneficial. This is one of the reasons why a high proportion of Norwegian medical doctors are still educated abroad.

3.3.2 *International Solidarity*

A central feature of Norwegian internationalization policy has been a focus on international solidarity and capacity building in developing countries. International solidarity and development were arguments for attracting international students, in addition to the promotion of Norwegian international contact and cultural understanding (NOU 1989, p. 13; White paper No. 66 1984–1985; Frølich 2005). However, in their study on strategies of Norwegian universities, document that the former strong focus on international solidarity, peace and “Bildung” is hardly present anymore. The same study finds that institutional strategies largely reflect national educational aims. Higher education and foreign aid policy have been closely intertwined, even though there has also been tensions between the two.

In the 1990s internationalization policy was quite focused on quantity. Increasing outgoing as well as incoming mobility seemed to have become a goal in itself (White paper No. 19 1996–1997). All Norwegian students were supposed to be offered the opportunity for a sojourn abroad (White paper No. 27 2000–2001). Shorter international sojourns abroad through exchange programs were particularly encouraged. Despite not being an EU member, Norway joined the EU mobility program ERASMUS¹ at an early stage, and higher education institutions established bi- and multilateral exchange agreements with numerous foreign counterparts.

¹European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students was adopted by the European Commission in 1987.

3.3.3 The Added Value of International Education

As studying abroad became increasingly common, the potential cultural and social advantages of education abroad were also acknowledged. However, according to Rotevatn (1998, p. 97), it was not until the 1970s that students and the government became fully aware that studying abroad had a value of its own. It was “discovered” that language skills, cultural skills and networks were added values that may be useful, not only for a career abroad but also for the Norwegian labour market.

Most restrictions on the type of study program and the range of destination countries to be covered by public student support were gradually removed in the 1980s and 1990s. Until then, students could only get public support if they studied in the USA or Europe. A wider geographical distribution of students became an added objective and a wider range of study programs were eligible for support. However, the incentives for regulating the outgoing student flow in accordance with policy goals may be seen as insufficient (Wiers-Jenssen 2008).

An increased awareness of the potential for incoming students emerged in the 1980s and the establishment of study programs in English was encouraged (NOU 1989, p. 13). Despite the fact that, growing incoming mobility was cited as an important goal already in the 1980s, it took almost two decades before a substantial increase in incoming mobility was seen. Establishing more programs in English was a prerequisite for attracting students from countries outside Scandinavia. Providing courses in English, with the idea of targeting Norwegian students as well, has not been without controversy and has taken some time to implement at the institutional level. In recent years, a policy goal of improving the balance between outgoing and incoming students has been reached. The number of outgoing students has continued to grow, however, the number of incoming students has grown at a more rapid pace.

3.3.4 Quality and Relevance

In recent years, there has been an unambiguous development towards more focus on quality and relevance in policy for internationalization of higher education. This is expressed in the most recent white paper on internationalization (White paper No. 14 2008–2009). Internationalization policy is linked to knowledge policy, and internationalization and student mobility are meant to enhance the quality of Norwegian higher education institutions.

The government thereby suggests giving increased internationalization of Norwegian education a better rooting in the national knowledge policy. This means that internationalization of education is not only defined as a goal in itself but also as a tool to further increased quality and relevance in higher education. (Authors’ translation) (White paper No. 14 2008–2009)

It is believed that internationalization will strengthen global competitiveness, and that mobility will enhance quality in Norwegian higher education institutions. In a

report on internationalization strategies at Norwegian universities, SIU (2013) find that quality is the most common justification for internationalization; and the mechanism through which it occurs is believed to be international recognition and quality enhancement by means of comparison and competitive power. Internationalization is also seen as a necessary response and adaptation to an increasingly international labour market. Strategies also reflect that internationalization is required to approach the research front in most fields.

The concept of internationalization at home has become a central part of the internationalization vocabulary and quality concerns; it is regarded as being equally important as internationalization abroad (Michelsen and Aamodt 2007). Norwegian students who are not mobile are supposed to gain exposure to internationalization; some ways of achieving this include additional courses and programs taught in English, internationalised curricula and incoming foreign students that contribute to an international environment on campus.

A stronger emphasis on economic rationales has also been observed. An educational market has developed globally, of which the recruitment of tuition-paying students forms the backbone (SIU 2013). This is generally not the situation in Norway, with its highly held tuition-free policy; however, the Norwegian funding system still makes internationalization economically relevant, as the higher education institutions receive lump sums for each foreign student as well as for each exam and degree in line with Norwegian students. Foreign students may thus provide the higher education institutions with additional income as a result of the performance-based funding system, even though they may not constitute an economic basis on their own.

3.3.5 Priorities of Different Regions and Countries

Internationalization of Norwegian higher education involves a wide geographical scope and many different regions have been prioritized. There are economic and academic rationales attached to this; however, different forms of political rationales are definitely present as well, including geopolitical interests and international solidarity. Cooperation in education may, therefore, also be seen as a form of educational or “soft” diplomacy (cf. Goes, Chap. 5 and Sandersen, Chap. 6 in this volume).

There is a long and extensive tradition of cooperation between Nordic countries. The establishment of a Nordic agreement on higher education was established 1971. Additionally, the Nordic mobility program, Nordplus, inaugurated in 1988, are tools aimed at strengthening collaboration and mobility between Nordic countries. Cooperation with the EU has also been highly prioritized for decades, and Norway joined the ERASMUS program at an early stage. Thus, even though Norway is not a member of the European Union, there has been a very strong commitment to the Bologna process and cooperation with EU institutions. In recent years, there has been a revival of cooperation with North America. Strategies and partnership

programs have been launched in order to increase research collaboration as well as student and staff mobility.

Traditionally, Norway has had substantial cooperation with developing countries. Foreign aid policy and internationalization policy are heavily interwoven in this field. An important tool has been The Quota Scheme, a program providing financial support for students from developing countries in the South and countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe (including Russia) and in Central Asia to study in Norway. The objective of the scheme was to provide relevant education that would benefit the students' home countries when they return. The Norwegian government, however, in its proposed budget for 2016, decided to phase out the Norwegian Quota Scheme. They suggest replacing it with more direct and bilateral exchange agreements and partnerships. Other cooperation programs, such as NOMA (Norads's program for master's students from developing countries) and NUFU (Norwegian Program for Development, Research and Education) have also been important.

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on cooperation with the so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) (Panorama 2015). However, cooperation with Russia had been on the agenda before the invention of the term "BRICS" and has been strongly accentuated since the demise of the Soviet Union. The older and larger universities in Norway tend to state their mission in relation to global aims and concerns, whereas the smaller and newer ones have more sub-national mission statements regarding their internationalization efforts. The universities in the northern part of the country generally have mission statements related to their location in the High North, circumpolar or Arctic neighbourhood, which is also their main or only geographic priority (SIU 2013).

The political invention of the Barents region has had important effects on educational collaboration as well. The Barents region and the so-called Barents cooperation is a political construct (Tunander 1994) founded on 11 January 1993, related to the signing of the Kirkenes Declaration, where the foreign ministers of the four countries established the forum for cooperation. The aims were sustainable development, long-term, secure political stability (cf. above), and possible reduction of tensions in addition to fostering a sense of unity among the people of a region previously marked by Cold War military confrontation. The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) is a two-tier cooperative platform. One level is intergovernmental (Barents Euro-Arctic Council, BEAC) and the other is interregional (Barents Regional Council, BRC). The members of the BEAC are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission, whereas 13 counties or similar sub-national entities form the BRC. Through the Norwegian funded Barents Secretariat, BEAR has encouraged, facilitated, and supported educational cooperation since the very beginning of 1993.

3.3.6 The Quality Reform and Internationalization at the Institutional Level

The success of national policy on internationalization is heavily dependent upon implementation at the institutional level. Slowly, the national aims have drizzled down to institutional strategies and practice. A report investigating strategic plans for internationalization at Norwegian higher education institutions (SIU 2013), shows academic rationales (quality, knowledge policy) are high on the agenda in most institutions, but that rationales related to economy/resources and “social mission” are also frequently mentioned. Some see internationalization as a response to political signals. Cultural aspects and international solidarity is now less frequently mentioned than before. Hence, national policy is also reflected in institutional strategies (Frølich 2005; SIU 2013).

Many of the changes at the institutional level are closely linked to a reform in Norwegian higher education introduced in 2003, called *The Quality Reform* (White paper No. 27 2000–2001). In part, this reform was a response to the Bologna process (Gornitzka 2006) and formed a watershed in Norwegian policy on internationalization as well. As the name of the reform suggests, the idea was that the quality of Norwegian higher education was to be improved, and internationalization was one of the means by which to achieve that. Internationalization would now permeate the higher education institutions and most of their activities. While student exchange had previously been characterized by uncoordinated and occasional measures, and more or less left up to the student, internationalization was now supposed to be integrated into the study programs; additionally, studying abroad for a semester or two should be encouraged and facilitated.

A new degree system, in accordance with the Bologna principles (bachelor’s and master’s degrees, 3 + 2 model), was introduced. This was supposed to facilitate recognition and mobility. Further, elements of performance-based funding were introduced. Institutions received a proportion of their funding according to the number of credit points students “produced” (cf. above). As a consequence, competition between higher education institutions increased. It became more important to attract students, nationally as well as internationally. This became an incentive to establish more programs in English (Frølich 2005). Attracting international students can be a means to internationalise the institution and attract the most talented students (academic rationale). However, it may also be a strategy to compensate for limited domestic enrolments (economic rationale). Some institutions are struggling to recruit local and national students and, therefore, look for opportunities abroad (cf. Wiers-Jenssen, Chap. 10 in this volume).

In connection with the reform, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) and the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) were established. The first was established to support the institutions’ work on internationalization, while the second was an independent body that would control and develop the quality of Norwegian HEIs.

3.3.7 *A Distinct Norwegian Model of Internationalization?*

The aims of the Norwegian internationalization policy has been more clearly defined, and the rhetoric has shifted towards greater emphasis on quality and relevance while also linking internationalization more closely to the general knowledge policy (White Paper No. 19 2008–2009). However, policy documents are vaguer regarding *the ways in which* internationalization is supposed to enhance quality and *which forms of* quality it is meant to improve. Quality in higher education can be defined in many ways, e.g. as exception, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money and as transformative potential (Harvey and Green 1993). An increase in the number of English-taught programs and international students is observed; however, such quantitative measures cannot indicate to what extent student mobility contributes, *de facto*, to enhancing quality and increasing relevance.

Economic rationales for internationalization are still less obvious in Norwegian policy than in the policies of many other countries. Institutional autonomy is limited and is highly dependent on government funding and legislation. University funding is partly based on grants – with funding on a “per student” basis – and supplemented by a performance-based (number of credit points awarded) system. As tuition fees are not charged in public institutions (in which 90% of all students are enrolled), the direct economic benefits for attracting international students are small, if not negligible. Universities are paid by the state for each finished/passed exam, regardless of the results, nationality and geographic location of the student. In addition, universities receive extra money for each enrolled foreign student. Both of these factors create an economic incentive to enrol foreign students.

From the government’s perspective, it seems that there are primarily costs attached to international students, because the education is provided for free. Introducing tuition fees for students from outside the EU has been proposed, in particular after neighbouring countries like Sweden and Denmark introduced such fees. The proposition has not obtained sufficient support in the parliament as of now, however, this may change in the future. Absence of tuition fees is reported to be one of the most important reasons among international students for choosing to undertake a full degree in Norway (Wiers-Jenssen 2015). Hence, at the institutional level, this may be seen as a national and structural “comparative advantage” for student mobility and internationalization. Though an explicit policy of skilled migration is absent, substantial proportions of international students find work in Norway upon graduation. Hence, attracting international students may be beneficial for the national economy in the long run.

Political rationales are still clearly important in Norwegian policy for internationalization of higher education. Norway is a small country, dependent on strategic economic and political alliances. Links to other Nordic countries, the European Union and North America are strong. In the last couple of decades we have seen a substantial commitment to cooperation in higher education and research in the High North, with a particular emphasis on Northwest Russia. Norway is also a country with strong traditions of public commitment to developing countries.

Providing higher education for students from the developing world – in Norway – is an important part of this policy.

3.4 Educational Cooperation with Russia

Cooperation with Northwest Russia has a special focus in Norway. Maintaining good relations with Russia is an aim for Nordic and Baltic countries, and cooperation in higher education is seen as an important tool to strengthen the economic, cultural and political ties across this border region (Korteniemi 2011). Russia and Norway share a common border of almost 200 km, and historically there has been considerable contact between the two countries. The relations were subdued during the Cold War and throughout the 70 years with the USSR, but they have been revived since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Regional cooperation with Russia is thus an important part of several policy areas in Norway. Norway has largely seen the Barents cooperation and bilateral educational agreements in the context of geopolitics and region-building, where exchange and cooperation are regarded as a way to further improve and stabilize relations with Russia and to create a shared “Barents identity”. For Norwegian universities the economic potential related to incoming Russian students is relevant, however, student exchange is mainly founded in mission statements, institutional strategies and normative pressure towards internationalization as well as funding opportunities related to Barents region building. Additionally, national educational strategies and the High North Strategy have introduced a range of relevant topics and drivers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007), which are reflected in the institutions’ strategies (Frølich 2005; SIU 2013).

Of particular importance is The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU), a Norwegian public sector agency that promotes international cooperation in education and research. SIU is funded through assignments from various ministries and international bodies and invites Norwegian HEIs to apply for funds for projects related to higher education collaboration with institutions in other countries. The Norwegian Cooperation Program in Higher Education with Russia supports collaboration between universities and university colleges in Russia and Norway (Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education [SIU]).

There are several exchange programs targeting Russians students and faculty and there is a substantial number of cooperation programs relevant for or deliberately targeting higher education institutions in northern Norway and northwest Russia. The above-mentioned Norwegian Quota Scheme, which is discontinued from 2017, included courses and programs at the master’s and doctoral levels in addition to certain professional/bachelor’s degrees. Here, each student received the same amount of money as a Norwegian student in an equivalent educational program would, however, the loan portion was waived when the student returns to his/her home country after completing the course of study. As a rule the scheme only enrolled students from institutions that had collaboration agreements with Norwegian universities or university colleges. A frequently raised criticism was that

the majority of the students who received support from this program stayed in Norway following their education (cf. Karlsen, Chap. 13 in this volume).

After the establishment of the Barents regional cooperation in 1993, regional cooperation was high on the agenda and the Barents Plus program was the first to be established. Barents Plus is a regional (bilateral) scholarship program supporting cooperation between higher education institutions in Norwegian and Russian parts of the Barents region.² North2North is a mobility program provided by the University of the Arctic. Students can apply for a North2North scholarship and/or a travel grant³ to attend another circumpolar institution for a period of 3–12 months. Both Barents Plus and North2North are administered by University of Tromsø, Finnmark campus.

In an effort to motivate Norwegians to study in Russia, the Norwegian government has established a trial program with support for students attending Russian language training in Russia, and the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund provides loans to students for their first year at selected Russian universities (White paper No. 18 2012–2013). In order to strengthen cooperation between the countries, a position has been established at the Norwegian Embassy in Moscow dedicated to dealing with research, innovation and higher educational cooperation (White paper No. 18 2012–2013).

The Norwegian aim is to build a stronger integration of research cooperation and cooperation in higher education (White paper No. 14 2008–2009). Research cooperation with Russia is encouraged and facilitated through several programs of The Norwegian Research Council. The NORRUSS program (The Research Council of Norway 2012) – the research from which forms the basis of this book – aims to “broaden, reinforce and renew the wide-range research being conducted by Norway on a large number of issues related to Russia and the High North – in a period where the attention of research communities and governments in a growing number of countries moves in the direction of the Arctic”. The program introduces new resources for research on Russia and its national challenges and opportunities, in addition to mainstream issues on Russian society. The policy framework for the program is “The High North – Visions and Strategies” (White paper No. 7 2011–2012), and the Norwegian Research Council’s Research Strategy for the Arctic and Northern Areas 2011–2016. Additionally, a number of other programs have been established that include research cooperation between Norway and Russia on certain strategic areas. Petromaks I and II aimed at developing knowledge related to a number of petroleum related issues and encouraged Norwegian-Russian collaboration.

Furthermore, the University of the Arctic (UArctic) has proved to be an effective platform for educational cooperation between Norway and Russia at the bachelor level. UArctic is a Pan-Arctic cooperative network of universities, colleges, research

²The objects of the program is to further internationalization of HE in the North through bilateral academic and student exchange as well as improving cultural understanding and development of a mutual regional identity.

³Students participating in a North2North exchange in the North American region can apply for North2North tuition waivers.

institutes and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the North. The university also includes a number of non-Arctic member institutions – established to promote collaboration in higher education and research in the Arctic region in order to develop a strong and sustainable circumpolar region. Eight countries in the Arctic have joined UArctic and Norway has ten university and university college members. Particularly, Nord University⁴ and the Finnmark branch campus of University of Tromsø have been actively involved in UArctic educational activities, whereas University of Tromsø has been most involved in the thematic research networks.

Several projects have also received direct support from ministries, particularly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Two projects that have received such support are described by Sandersen (Chap. 6 in this volume).

3.4.1 Cooperation Between Russian and Norwegian Higher Education Institutions

In northern Norway higher education institutions have been active in internationalization work and educational cooperation with Russian universities. For many years, *Nord University* has emphasized internationalization and currently has more than 90 collaboration agreements with foreign universities and network organizations. More than 50 nations are represented at the university, and foreign students account for about 10% of the students. Over a third of the international students come from Russia and Ukraine. The Faculty of Social Science has the highest number of Russian students, through the Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies program, where Northern (Arctic) Federal (NArFU) in Archangelsk is the main counterpart. The Faculty of Professional Studies runs a joint Master's Degree in Borderology in collaboration with Murmansk State Humanities University (MSHU) in Murmansk. The Business School runs a joint Master's Degree in Energy Management in collaboration with MGIMO University in Moscow and a joint Master of Science in sustainable management in cooperation with four partner institutions in Russia, where the most important is Baltic State Technical University (BSTU). There is also a joint Master in Business and Engineering through Nord University, Bodø, and Baltic State Technical University, St. Petersburg.

University of Tromsø (UiT) has about 100 cooperation projects annually with Russian partners. UiT and NArFU in Arkhangelsk are the leaders of the joint working group on education and research in the Barents Region (BEARWGER). UiT is the northernmost university in the world and, with the 2013 merger, added Arctic University of Norway to its name, reflecting a national responsibility regarding Arctic areas and issues. The most successful educational cooperation with Russia has been the Public Health Program in cooperation with Northern State Medical

⁴As a result of a merger Nordland University changed name to Nord University in January 2016.

University, Archangelsk. UiT is the university with by far the highest number of educational and research collaborative programs with Russia. Recently three university colleges have been merged with UiT and are now branch campuses.

UiT's Finnmark Branch Campus (Finnmark University College until 2013) in Alta is the Norwegian institution located closest to the Russian border, with a branch campus in the border town of Kirkenes, located about 200 km from Murmansk. The main cooperation is related to the Bachelor of Northern Studies (BNS) that operates primarily with Murmansk State Humanities University, although other Russian HEIs take part in the program. This branch campus also provides English-taught bachelor programs in arctic adventure tourism and cultural and creative entrepreneurship as well as a Master of Tourism Studies, which also recruit Russian students.

UiT's Narvik Branch Campus (Narvik University College until 2016) has five different English-taught master's programs in science. UiT has via this campus bilateral agreement with Murmansk and Archangelsk State Technical Universities, but the master's programs do not target Russian students in particular. The campus also runs a 1-year program in Norwegian for foreigners to prepare them for studies in Norwegian. The campus has some 250 foreign students from more than 40 countries, many of them from Russia. The Russian students are currently largely self-financed.

UiT's Harstad Branch Campus (Harstad University College until 2016) has a 1-year full-time specialization program in advanced marketing, and some of the students come from various Russian universities. The Russian students have generally been financed through the Quota program and North2North fellowships. This branch campus also offers a 1-year online program in travel and tourism management based on a cooperation with Northern Arctic Federal University, Arkhangelsk and Lapland University of Applied Sciences (Rovaniemi, Finland).

3.5 Conclusion

From existing solely through more or less spontaneous and uncoordinated processes, internationalization has become a central part of strategies on both the national and institutional level in Norway. Norway has eagerly adapted to a range of EU initiatives, such as the Lisbon convention and the Bologna process,⁵ and has been at the head of the line in the EHEA when it comes to implementing measures. Over the years a large institutional toolbox has been developed in order to facilitate educational cooperation. However, Norwegian internationalization strategies have focused minimally on direct economic gains and commercialization, in contrast to many other western countries. Nonetheless, the Norwegian funding system

⁵As stated by Robertson and Keeling (2008, p. 223) region-building and development of "European culture and values" was the initial motives for EU's educational exchange policy.

provides an incentive structure that encourages higher education institutions to receive foreign students in order to receive additional income or compensate for the costs related to internationalization.

De Wit and Hunter define internationalization in higher education as the “intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society” (De Wit and Hunter 2015, p. 2). This definition underlines an awareness that the internationalization process should become more inclusive and less elitist, and that it should focus more on curriculum and learning outcomes rather than mobility exclusively. The Norwegian institutions studied here still seem to be oriented mainly towards mobility and cooperation agreements; and less towards curriculum, learning outcomes and internationalization at home.

Norwegian higher education institutions seek educational cooperation with a number of regions and countries for different reasons, but the previous focus on international solidarity has lost some of its importance. Although a shift towards more academic and economic rationales has been observed, policy rationales related to foreign aid as well as regional cooperation are still essential parts of Norwegian policy on internationalization of higher education.

During the last 25 years, Russia has arisen as a target for Norwegian educational cooperation, particularly among small universities and university colleges in northern Norway. In recent years, however, these universities and colleges have been subject to merger processes and are becoming larger units, which may lead to changes in their strategies and focus. On one hand, cooperation in higher education and student mobility between Norway and Russia is part of a larger pattern, where globalisation and internationalization are increasingly influencing higher education.

On the other hand, educational cooperation with Russia is also framed by a context of foreign and/or security policy. Institutions in northern Norway have been very actively seeking partners in northwest Russia, resulting in the encouragement, support and establishment of research cooperation and student exchange programs. The Barents region is of high geopolitical significance to Norway. Hence, cooperation with Russia may be seen as more than just institutional educational cooperation; it is also part of the Norwegian Barents policy and national soft security policy as a whole.

There is a conflict of interest between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding certain issues of Norway’s internationalization policy. The Ministry of Education is rather sceptical to programs that are basically funding Russian bachelor students (scholarships) and Norwegian universities (lump sums for exams and degrees, and per-student sums for foreign students enrolled) without really contributing much to internationalization or knowledge-building. The focus of these concerns is mainly directed at online bachelor programs where the bulk of students never cross the border into Norway. In contrast, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sees these programs as part of the people-to-people cooperation and soft security policy surrounding the border regions of the Barents. From this perspective student and knowledge exchange

performs other functions beyond the strictly academic ones. Thus, there is reason to interpret the rather generous educational cooperation with Russia as a distinct policy field in the intersection between educational and security policy.⁶

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