

Report for W.K. McClure Scholarship for the Study of World Affairs

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My research aims to better understand the interests and perspectives of the stakeholders involved in international student migration to Norway, with an emphasis on students from developing countries and the Quota Scheme. In my preliminary research, I learned that the Quota Scheme plays an important role as a means for international students from developing countries to study in Norway. This program seeks to bring foreign students in--at no cost of their own--to educate them but *send them back home* when they graduate. Ultimately, I hope to be able to place the Quota Scheme within a broader framework of the internationalization of higher education in Norway through development assistance. In doing so, I would like to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of Quota Scheme by investigating the perspectives of the various stakeholders involved in the process of student migration in Norway, broadly, and the Quota Scheme, specifically. I am particularly interested in how this program has impacted the lives of the student migrants themselves.

In order to accomplish this, during my four-week stay in Oslo I have conducted 23 interviews with 29 people. Roughly half of the interviews were with Quota Scheme students that represented a diverse range of countries, with an even gender balance among participants. About half of the remaining interviews were conducted with university administrative staff, as well as faculty that have taught Quota Scheme students. Other interviews were conducted with Quota Scheme representatives at the Center for International Cooperation in Education (SIU)—the organization in charge of managing the Quota Scheme—a representative of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, politicians representing the three parties with the largest number of seats in the Storting, and the president of the International Students' Union of Norway.

I have created a questionnaire for international students—regardless of country of origin or method of financing—that gauges, broadly, their reasoning for studying abroad, expectations before arriving, experiences in Norway and level of satisfaction. I will synthesize the results of the questionnaire with the student interviews. This will help me better understand the nuances of the experience for different international students. The questionnaire is distributed to students via the International Students' Union of Norway. I will write a report of the survey results, which they will use to guide their future activities.

In order to assess the intentions of the non-student stakeholders, I have compiled documents from each of the institutions whose representatives I have interviewed, which I will use to conduct a textual discourse analysis. Materials include orientation presentations for international students, political party platforms regarding education, government white papers on the internationalization of higher education, and websites promoting the activities of various groups. These texts will be read and

analyzed to consider the content, both in terms of what is included and excluded, and they serve to supplement to the responses of interview participants.

This month I have conducted more than one interview per working day. That experience has helped me improve my time management. I have also learned to ask more precise questions and to listen with a more keen ear. Most importantly, though, it has taught me how to communicate with people in a professional yet personal manner, and thus to feel more confident in my ability to schedule and conduct interviews. In terms of my professional goals as a researcher, this experience has therefore been invaluable.

Having the opportunity to work at FAFO has enabled me to corral my resources in a way that has been essential to my success over the past month. Had it not been for the encouraging work environment and helpful suggestions of colleagues here, I would not have been able to schedule as many interviews with an appropriate range of participants. Furthermore, without access to the resources and having the facility as a “home base,” it would have been very difficult to organize my materials and coordinate my interviews in an efficient and professional manner. Being here, I have also been able to learn from other students who have recently carried out similar research projects, and their support and assistance has been reassuring and helpful.

Given all of the above, I would like to take this chance to give my most heartfelt thanks to FAFO for allowing me to take advantage of the wonderful resources—human, first and foremost—that have given so much to me and my project. I also want to thank the W. K. McClure Scholarship Program at the University of Tennessee for funding my research and giving me the opportunity to conduct this study. As much as I hope my investigation is able to shed light on an interesting and important aspect of student migration, the experience of traveling to Norway and carrying out my fieldwork has been rewarding for me. Once more, to everyone who has helped me achieve what I have to this date already accomplished—and also what will be realized in the future—thank you.

With my sincerest regards,

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