The Norwegian Quota scheme: Change and continuity

A case study of a policy instrument for development assistance through higher education

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UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
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Abstract

This thesis has been written as part of the M.Phil. programme in Higher Education at the University of Oslo. It investigates the changes and developments in the objectives and criteria of the Norwegian Quota scheme, a national scholarship scheme that has provided funding for higher education for students from developing countries, and countries in central and eastern Europe.

The research questions that has led the inquiry asks what the overall objectives and criteria of the Quota scheme were from the beginning, and how and why these have changed from the introduction in 1994 up until the decision to phase out the scheme from the 2015-16 academic year.

One of the main findings is that changes in the objectives, from primarily focusing on effects on development towards incorporating a broader rationale for internationalisation of the Norwegian higher education system, could be based in the larger national developments and processes in recent years.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>EHEA</td>
<td>European Higher Education Area</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>KUF</td>
<td>Committee for Education, Research and Church Affairs (Kirke-, utdannings- og forskningskomiteen)</td>
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<td>MFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
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<td>NFP</td>
<td>Norad Fellowship Programme</td>
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<td>NORAD</td>
<td>Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSELF</td>
<td>Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUFFIC</td>
<td>Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIU</td>
<td>Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>UIB</td>
<td>University of Bergen</td>
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<td>UIO</td>
<td>University of Oslo</td>
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1. Introduction

Higher education is becoming increasingly important on the international, as well as national agendas all over the world. There is widespread recognition that higher education is an important driver of economic growth and competitiveness in the global economy (Pillay 2011:1). However, despite the increasing international acknowledgement that higher education is fundamental to economic growth and societal development, access to higher education is still limited in many parts of the world. “Despite strong enrolment growth most African tertiary institutions are not generating enough graduates and many of them lack the skills needed to support national economic development in the 21st century” (Pillay 2011:4). As part of efforts to build capacity and to assist developing countries with their higher education education systems, many industrialised countries have funded development cooperation programmes and provided scholarships for students from developing countries to complete studies in their own or in other host countries (Boeren 2012).

For over two decades scholarships to students from developing countries have played an important role in Norwegian development assistance policy. The students are given the opportunity to complete study programmes in Norwegian higher education institutions. Since the 1990s the attention and instruments for Norwegian academic development cooperation has included higher education and research collaboration and support, as well as competence and capacity-building, in developing countries (White Paper 14 2009:23).

The case examined in this study, the Quota scheme, is a funding scheme offered by the Norwegian government to students from developing countries and countries in central and eastern Europe and central Asia. It was introduced in 1994 with the objective of providing relevant education that would benefit the students home countries when they would return. Later, as we will see, the programme was regulated and implemented based on a two-fold objective; to provide capacity by educating students from developing countries who would then return home, but also to promote the internationalisation of higher education in Norway.
In this thesis I will attempt to analyse the changes that have occurred in the over 20 years that the Quota scheme has been in operation, and also try to say something about where these changes came from.

1.1. Research problem and relevance

There appears to be relatively little that has been written about the history and evolution of scholarship programmes aimed at students from developing countries. This thesis will attempt to contribute to the knowledge on such programmes. By accounting for the developments and changes, and where these came from, we can better understand the drivers and motives behind such programmes. Examining the Quota scheme will tell us something about the Norwegian context, and the environment that this scheme has been part of and operated under.

In its proposed state budget for 2016, the Norwegian conservative government proposed to phase out the Quota scheme, one of the largest and many would say most important scholarship programmes in Norwegian history. The programme had been operating since 1994 with a large number of Norwegian higher education institutions participating, and thousands of students graduated with funding from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (NSELF).

The decision in the proposed state budget for 2016 to phase out the Quota scheme, and to replace it with another programme aimed at a different sort of cooperation between Norwegian higher education institutions and institutions in developing countries, was met with some scepticism and expectancy from the institutions. Especially, with the then newly agreed upon UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fresh in mind, which specifically mentions higher education scholarships for students from developing countries. Goal 4 of the SDGs aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. One of the targets aimed reached by 2020, is to substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries for enrolment in higher education, in developed countries and other developing countries” (UN 2015)
In the next section the research questions that forms the basis for the inquiries pursued in this thesis will be presented.

1.2. Presentation of research questions

The recent national and international environment and developments concerning scholarship programmes aimed at contributing to development in developing countries calls for increased knowledge of and understanding about such programmes, as well as knowledge regarding the objectives that they are meant to meet. This thesis will attempt to place the Norwegian Quota scheme into this picture by investigating the changes and developments in the scheme from the introduction in 1994 and up until it was proposed phased out in 2015. The research questions that this thesis will attempt to answer are the following:

1. What were the overall objectives and criteria of the Quota scheme from the beginning?
2. How have these objectives and criteria changed since the introduction in 1994?
3. Why did the changes in the objectives and criteria occur?

As indicated by the research questions, this study is based on the assumption that change has occurred in the Quota scheme since the introduction in 1994.

1.3. Limitations of the thesis

This is not an evaluation of the Quota scheme. Thus, the goal is not to attempt to determine whether or not the Quota scheme has been successful or effective in meeting its objectives, as an instrument for Norwegian development policy. Rather, this study will examine the changes in the course of the scheme, and attempt to say something about how these came about. This inquiry will perhaps lead to a better understanding of how the developments are linked to Norwegian policy towards development assistance through higher education.
Regarding the level of analysis, even if the Quota Scheme arguably has had impact on the institutional policies and strategies of the Norwegian higher education institutions that have participated. This study will mainly focus on the national policies and processes for which the Quota scheme was used as an instrument.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 will set the historical and empirical background for the analysis to follow. By introducing some of the main concepts such as development and capacity-building, and by referring to available empirical work regarding scholarship programmes, I wish to show how this study can fit into the bigger picture of research on higher education and development cooperation. Chapter 3 will lay the theoretical and conceptual framework for the thesis by defining policy and policy change, and by introducing Halls (1993) theory of social learning in policy processes, and the orders of policy change. The research design and methodological choices and scope will be treated in chapter 5, as well as some important ethical considerations. Chapter 6 will contain the main analysis according to the theoretical and contextual frameworks, and then some concluding remarks and reflections will be drawn up in chapter 7.
2. Empirical and contextual background

This section aims to set a brief historical and empirical background for the thesis, to put it into context. The themes covered in this section are: Higher education and development, scholarship programmes, Norwegian higher education development policy, and internationalisation of Norwegian higher education. As development has been expressed as a main objective of the Quota scheme, it has been important to account for what this entails, in addition to some national and international historical developments. Internationalisation in Norwegian higher education was not an expressed objective from the beginning, but it soon became an important element in the Quota scheme.

2.1. Higher education and development

Today, higher education institutions and their role in society is considered essential for economic growth and competitiveness. As Castells shared with his audience, in a special lecture at the University of Cape Town in 2009:

“We live in a global knowledge economy and in societies based on processing information, which is a primary university function. This implies that the quality, effectiveness and relevance of the university system will be directly relevant to the ability of people, society, institutions to develop. [Universities] become the critical source of equalisation of chances and democratisation of society by making possible equal opportunities for people - it is not only a contribution to economic growth, it’s a contribution to social equality or, at least lesser inequality” (Castells in Cloete et al. 2015:1-2)

Castells quote above represent a view that is now much accepted regarding the importance of higher education in knowledge societies. However, international and national acknowledgement of higher education as an important contributor to development has been far from consistent over the last 50 years (Buchert & King 1995, Pillay 2011). After a period of widespread recognition of the positive effects of higher education on development in the 1950s and 1960s, funding gradually decreased and it took many years before higher
education was back high on the agenda. For a long period of time higher education was neglected by actors in the international development sphere, such as the World Bank, because it was believed that it produced lower social returns relative to investments in e.g. primary and secondary education (Ibid.). “Investment in higher education was often considered regressive, as it contributed to existing social and economic inequalities” (Pillay 2011:1). Even when the concept of human capital begun to attract attention in the 1990s, the focus was still on those factors that was seen to directly affect the human capital of the poor, namely primary education and health (Kapur and Crowley 2008).

Bloom et al. (2005) were amongst the ones who challenged the established assumption of the international development community that higher education had little or no role in promoting economic growth. Their paper reviewed evidence about the impact that higher education can have on economic growth and poverty reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa, where enrolment rates for higher education are by far the lowest in the world at around an average of 5%. They suggested that because of a long standing belief that lower level schooling is more important than higher education for economic development, the international development community has encouraged African governments’ neglect of higher education. The reductions in spending on higher education in Africa has led to many countries struggling to maintain even low enrolment levels (Bloom et al. 2005).

Since the turn of the millennium, key donor organisations and national governments have increasingly come back to the realisation that higher education, in combination with a focus on lower levels of education, may have a positive impact on development after all (Kapur and Crowley 2008). In its report from 2000, Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise, the World Bank argued that higher education is essential to developing countries if they are to prosper in a global economy where knowledge has become a vital area of advantage (World Bank 2000). A broader rationale for higher education, than the solely economic, has also been acknowledged in developing countries, e.g. related to the effects of higher education producing new national elites (Kapur and Crowley 2008)

Substantial reforms have been taking place in higher education systems to make them more responsive to the needs of the societies that they operate within. In this regard, it has become
more common for higher education institutions to provide services to industry and society, and to contribute to national and regional economic and social development, as well as performing their primary activities of teaching and research (OECD 2008a). Recently it is suggested that the conventional estimates of returns from investments in education does not give a complete picture with regards to the added social value of higher education. This added value may include creation of employment opportunities, good political and economic governance, increased entrepreneurship, increased equality and possibilities for social mobility (Bloom et al. 2006, Pillay 2011:19)

Thus, higher education as an instrument and driver for development, and in the construction of knowledge economies, has regained its momentum. Still, many developing countries continue to struggle with challenges relating to expanding the scope of higher education in a sustainable way, with inequalities of access and outcomes, with educational quality and relevance, and with rigid governance management structures and practices. (Pillay 2011:5)

2.2. Scholarship programmes and higher education cooperation

In a response to the increasing demand for higher education a variety of scholarship programmes have been implemented by donor agencies and governments to fund students from developing countries completing education either in their home countries, or in more developed countries (Boeren 2012). A scholarship programme can be defined as a programme to financially aid individual students for the purpose of completing studies (Medica 2010:1). According to Medica (2010:3), different factors and objectives can be identified that motivate provision of scholarship programmes, either they are bilateral, multilateral or philanthropic. These objectives can for example include poverty reduction and capacity development. However, national interest and foreign policy interests must often also be taken into account, both in the countries providing the programmes and in the countries benefiting from them. International development assistance has become an important part of international relations and is often closely linked to national policy agendas. - This also includes funding support for higher education (Ibid). Historically, development support has been used as an instrument of foreign policy and often as a mean for strengthening diplomatic
relations. For example during the Cold War, the US saw education as imperative in spreading western capitalist models and democracy, and to build mutual understanding with developing countries to prevent or hinder communist expansion (Kapur & Crowley 2008)

Capacity building is a broad concept, but it has commonly been understood as a human resource issue of assisting in training of institutional personnel to an adequate level (CHET 2002) In other words, focused investment in a particular area, with the aim of enhancing skills, competence and knowledge in the receiving institution or organisation (McDonnell & Elmore 1987:141). There are many examples of international cooperation programmes in higher education and research that are aimed at capacity building in developing countries, and many have operated for decades. Some of these programmes were initiated during the period of decolonisation in many parts of the world, after the Second World War. Generally, the objective of these programmes was to contribute to the education of what was considered necessary trained professionals for the new countries, either by providing individuals with scholarships to complete training in donor countries or by contributing to building higher education institutions in the developing countries through projects with higher education institutions in donor countries. (Boeren 2013:5­6)

In recent years, scholarship programmes have often been built around the rationale that developing countries acknowledge the benefit from sending students abroad, through aid scholarship programmes, to gain competence and experience (Medica 2010). From the 1960 there were concerns regarding the role of for instance higher education scholarship programmes in the migration of well qualified citizens, that would cause a “brain drain” from developing countries. The term brain drain refers to “the international transfer of resources in the form of human capital, and mainly applies to the migration of relatively highly educated individuals from developing to developed countries (Beine et al. 2008:631). However, more recently it is recognised by many governments of developing countries that it may be of great benefit to have an overseas diaspora of international students, e.g. in terms of foreign currency remittances, potential lobbyists, and international networks and facilitators (Medica 2010:3).
As mentioned in the introduction, the empirical research done on scholarship programmes and related higher education development cooperation programmes seems limited. What generally seems to have been done is conducted in connection with evaluations of specific programmes, or by agencies that administers such programmes. One such agency is the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education (NUFFIC), that published a report in 2012 describing issues and trends in development cooperation programmes (Boeren 2012). The report mentions a selection of scholarship and fellowship programmes owned and operated by donor agencies and governments, and it proposes that most of the programmes have been subject to change in recent years (Ibid.). As we will see, this also seems to be the case with the Norwegian Quota scheme.

2.3. Internationalisation of Norwegian higher education

During the last decades, internationalisation has been one of the most powerful forces shaping higher education across the world. It has become a core issue of concern for national governments and higher education institutions everywhere, and is considered central to strategies set by policymakers and institutional leaders (Rumbley et al. 2012:3).

Internationalisation of higher education is not the primary topic of this thesis. However, it is important to introduce this concept as it has been an important cause of developments in the Norwegian higher education system in recent years. It is especially relevant to briefly describe some of developments related to internationalisation in this regard because, as we will see, it became an expressed objective of the Quota scheme after some years.

Internationalisation is often defined as part of globalisation and can be viewed as a “process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension in the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight 2004:11) Since the 1980s the number and variations of internationalisation measures taken by governments and higher education institutions has developed from a focus on student exchange and international studies towards a broader attempt to integrate international perspectives into, for example, teaching and learning processes and programme mobility (Knight 2012:3). New sectorial actors are increasingly becoming involved in internationalisation of higher education and activities are
often supported by formal mechanisms. An example is mobility of students and staff in higher education that is increasingly prioritised, encouraged and organised by national governments, intergovernmental and international organisations (Gornitzka et al. 2008:174).

Internationalisation is not a new phenomenon in Norwegian higher education. However, as argued by Gornitzka et al. (2008), internationalisation in Norwegian higher education is becoming more routinised, institutionalised and systematic than before, when internationalisation was steered largely by interests and activities of individual students and academics. The present tendency is to “centralise, and partly professionalise decision-making and responsibility concerning internationalisation” (Gornitzka et al. 2008:174). A similar trend can be observed at the national level, e.g. with the establishment of a government internationalisation agency, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU). With regards to the Quota scheme, and to understand the shift towards this more systematic and national focus on internationalisation, the Quality reform implemented in 2003 is perhaps of particular relevance.

The name of the reform reflected the overall purpose of “making Norway a nation of world-renowned research and higher education” (Maassen et al. 2004:96) Three main goals were expressed; Increased quality of Norwegian higher education and research, increased intensity of higher education, and increased internationalisation (MOER 2002). Norway’s obligation to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), through the Bologna agreement, was also a large part of the extensive Quality reform. These international obligations included introduction of the three-tier degree structure and ECTS-credit and grading scale, and the establishment of the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - NOKUT (Ibid.) The reform also emphasised the need to actively facilitate student exchange, where increased participation in institutionally anchored exchange programmes was encouraged (Gornitzka et al. 2008:174). Through the Quality reform a legal right was introduced for students at Norwegian higher education institutions to go on exchange (MOER 2008/2009:12). Furthermore, the Quality reform emphasised that internationalisation should be part of an overall institutional strategy at the universities and university colleges. One of the main arguments was to make sure that student and staff who chose not to go abroad should also receive international impulses and be offered internationally oriented education.
In a report to parliament the concept “internationalisation at home” was used about this international orientation of education within Norway. As we will see, the Quota scheme was first described in a Green Paper from 1989 on the internationalisation in higher education in Norway however, despite this fact, it took some time before internationalisation of Norwegian higher education institutions became a clearly defined and expressed objective of the scheme, and was only explicitly mentioned in the regulating circulars after the scheme had been in operation for over 10 years.

2.4. Norwegian higher education development policy

In the first half of the 20th century Norway’s development assistance was limited. It can be seen as to largely having been based on and focused around missionary work, and up until after the Second World War Norway had no government policy apparatus for development assistance (van der Veen 2000:468). However, it was after this that Norway manifested its position as an advocate for development assistance, and by the 1980s it had become one of the most consistent donor nations in the world (Weinrib 2012:118-130). Norway’s increased engagement in official development assistance programmes made them a top donor country in the OECD, and one of few countries to consistently meet, and even surpass, the UN recommended contribution of 0,7% of the GDP (OECD 2008b:13).

As development increasingly became an issue on the international, as well as the national agenda, efforts to increase assistance eventually resulted in the establishment of a national centralized agency, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) in 1968. And despite changes in policies over the years basic motivations and justifications for Norwegian engagement in international development assistance have been relatively stable (Stokke 1989, Pharo 2003, Weinrib 2012). The fairly constant motivations and justifications are characterised by for example “humanitarianism” based in, amongst other things, the strong welfare-model of Norway. Development assistance policy and activities towards structures within developing countries with an emphasis on improving basic human needs and rights, as well as social services (e.g. related to health and education) have been central (Stokke 1989:161). Other motivations and justifications that have been mentioned in studies
on Norwegian development assistance is (e.g. economic) self-interest, and international
reputation-building and branding of Norway as promoter of human rights and as a contributor
had a dedicated ministry for development assistance from 1983 until 1990. At this point the
work portfolio of the Ministry for Development Assistance was transferred to the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs (MFA), but there was still a designated cabinet minister for development
assistance, in charge of development cooperation within the MFA, until 2007 (SNL 2013).

Already in the 1960s Norwegian awareness regarding the role of education in the
development of economies and societies grew. Since the beginning, the importance and value
of higher education had a large impact on the development of instruments in Norwegian
development and foreign aid policy. Already in the recommendations of the committee who
presented White Paper number 23 to the Norwegian Parliament, the Storting, there was
mention of a scholarship scheme for individuals from developing countries (White Paper 23
1962:23). Thus, Norway was one of the countries that early emphasised the role of higher
education in development assistance through a variety of initiatives and instruments, from
multilateral programmes to institutional cooperation programmes and scholarship
programmes. For a long period of time, from 1962, most international students in Norway
came from developing countries and were funded through the Norad Fellowship Programme -
NFP (White paper. 14 2009:23)

In the Green Paper from 1989, that formed the basis of the Quota scheme it was stated that:
“The intention of committing to education as an instrument for [Norwegian] development
assistance has broad support. In a range of [official reports] it is emphasised that it is a goal to
receive students from developing countries, and that this should be part of our development
assistance strategy”(Green Paper 1989:8). It did not seem that it was the personal interests
and objectives of the individual students that should justify support for education in Norway,
but rather the needs of their home societies (Ibid.).

Another national policy document that is of special interest is the “Strategy for strengthening
research and higher education in the context of Norway's relations with developing countries”
which was launched by the Norwegian government in March of 1999. Among other things,
the strategy defined the objectives for the various support schemes aimed at strengthening research and higher education in developing countries (Regjeringen 1999).

Norway’s development policy was also the theme of the White Paper No. 35 (2003-2004) titled “Fighting poverty together - A comprehensive development policy”. It contained a chapter on cooperation in education which highlighted Norway’s role in helping raise the standard of education and research in developing countries by promoting greater integration of educational and research institutions into the global knowledge network (MFA 2004:72). It further established that Norwegian development assistance policy aimed to empower individuals and societies to pursue their own future, and to build partnerships to pursue their development goals. The paper emphasises that Norwegian development policy should strive to reflect the needs of the partner countries (Ibid). This can be seen as building on the policies in the government strategy from 1999.

In 2008, a new Green Paper on development was published, which was called “How can a holistic Norwegian policy contribute to development in poor countries”. The report maintained the Norwegian development cooperation policy to contribute to lasting improvements in economic, social and political conditions in developing countries, and proposed knowledge-building as a prerequisite for development. With regards to higher education specifically it said that “Norway contributes to initiatives on higher education as to contribute to rebuilding the knowledge base in the cooperation countries, however this cooperation is not currently high on the agenda” (Green Paper 2008:106)
3. Theoretical framework: Policy instruments and implementation

According to Gornitzka (1999) there are normally two issues that are raised when implementation and policy analysis are on the agenda. First, what is a policy, and second, when does a process go from being policy formation to policy implementation?

Most often it is clear what the term policy entails: The formation of policy and the decision-making process leading up to a parliamentary decision to pursue a certain goal or direction. “A policy is a public statement of an objective and the kind of instruments that will be used to achieve it” (Gornitzka 1999:14). Policies bring together the resources of government, i.e. authority, regulation and funding, with the operationalisation of political objectives to influence actions of institutions and individuals (McDonnell and Elmore 1987:133)

The term policy instrument refers to the instruments that governments have at their disposal to perform the operationalisation of the political objectives: “If government wants to ‘produce’ certain outcomes, it employs certain tools. Without such tools governmental policies would be no more than abstract ideals or fantasies.” (van Vught 1995:11)

Regarding the second issue, of the lack of a clear distinction between policy formation and policy implementation, Gornitzka (1999:14) says, “if we assume that adjustments of policies take place continuously, it is difficult to distinguish empirically between formulating policies and carrying them out”, it would therefore be a radical position to assume that the implementation of a policy does not affect the policy itself. In this way the policy and the policy instruments are inextricably linked in that policy seems to be shaped by and during the implementation process (Gornitzka et. al 2005:36).

Below one framework for studying some of the evolutionary aspect of policymaking will be introduced. Learning from previous experience can be one of the key contributors to change
in policy itself, as well as to change in the instruments that are introduced to promote it. It is this last point, of change of and within policy instruments, which is most relevant for this study of the Norwegian Quota scheme.

3.1. Change in policy instruments - “Policymaking as social learning”

Social learning in policy making, according to the political economist Peter A. Hall (1993), can be viewed as deliberate attempts to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in response to past experience and new available information: “Learning is indicated when policy changes as the result of such a process” (Hall 1993:278). Depending on the role of the state in the policymaking process, social learning can take place within the state itself, or in conjunction with societal actors. State-centric theory emphasises that the state can be considered autonomous from societal pressure, and that public officials operate with a considerable degree of independence from actors that relay demands from society, such as for example political parties or interest groups and organisations. The state-structural theory, on the other hand, gives these societal actors a rather important role in policymaking and decision processes. Generally, social learning has been treated as policymaking that largely takes place within the state, but it may well be a process that is linked to societal pressures and development (Hall 1993:276).

In addition to the level of state-society involvement, the policymaking learning process may take different forms, depending on the type of change in policy that is occurring. According to Hall (1993:278) policymaking processes can be viewed as a processes that usually involve three central elements: (1) the overarching goals that guide a policy within a specific field, (2) the techniques or instruments that are used to reach the goals decided upon, and (3) the precise setting, or tuning, of these instruments. Thus, different learning processes can be associated with simple changes or adjustments in the settings of policy instruments and that of more radical transformations in instruments themselves or in the political objectives behind them (Hall 1993:278).
By identifying and categorising types of changes in policymaking, we can distinguish the policy learning processes that involve simple adjustments from that of more radical shifts in policy instruments or their underlying aims and objectives (Hall 1993:278). Based on this presumption, three distinct categories, or orders of changes in policy, can be identified:

1. **First order change**: Policy instruments settings are changed in the light of experience and new knowledge, while the overall goals and instruments of policy remains the same.

2. **Second order change**: Instruments of policy as well as their settings are altered in response to past experience even if the underlying aims of the policy remains the same. A source of this kind of change might be dissatisfaction with previous experience.

3. **Third order change**: Radical paradigmatic shifts. Simultaneous change in all three components of policy: The instrument settings, the instruments themselves, and the objectives behind the policy.

Hall regards the first and second order changes as “normal policymaking”, which is a process of adjusting policy without challenging the overall terms and ideas of a policy paradigm. I will get back to the concept of policy paradigms in the following section. Hall characterised first order policy change as incremental and routinized decision-making, while second order change includes the development of new policy instruments and is a step further in the direction of a strategic response (Hall 1993:280).

Third order change, reflects a very different process. Paradigmatic, overall change in the terms of the policy discourse, which are often associated for example with discontinuities in policy (Hall 1993:279). Understanding why and how social learning takes place in connection with paradigmatic developments in policy, or third order changes, is closely linked to the role in which ideas play in policymaking processes. Most policymaking takes place within a context of certain ideas that are associated with a framework of policies (Hall 1993:292). According to Hall (1993:279): “Policymakers customarily work within a
framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only the goals of policy and the kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems that they are meant to be addressing” (Hall 1993:279). The ideological framework is part of the terminology that policymakers use to communicate with each other and with society, “and it is influential precisely because so much of it is taken for granted” (Hall 1993:279) - This is what can be termed a “policy paradigm”. Some policy paradigms are associated with more elaborate and forceful policymaking, such as within macroeconomics. However, in other policy fields the ideas that influence the direction of policy is subject to more frequent variations (Hall 1993:291).

For the purpose of this study, I will attempt to show some aspects of social learning in connection with policy change in regards to a Norwegian policy instrument for development assistance in higher education; The Norwegian Quota scheme. By applying some of the elements from Hall’s framework I will examine the changes and developments in the Quota scheme, and also which actors that have been involved in promoting these changes. The goal is to use Hall’s framework to categorise the changes in the Quota scheme, and investigate if it is possible to track changes in the objectives as well as the in the criteria of the scheme. I will not be testing Hall’s theory per se, as this thesis examines a policy instrument rather than a policy field in itself. I will rather apply the framework as a theoretical basis to describe and attempt to explain the changes in the Quota scheme.

The latter part of this thesis will attempt to show how the regulation and implementation of the Quota scheme over time supports the claims in this chapter about evolutionary aspects, that policy is shaped by its implementation, and learning from previous policy. But first, to have a foundation for examining the changes and developments in the Quota scheme, we need to understand the processes and policies from which it begun. In the following section the Quota scheme will be introduced.
4. The Norwegian Quota scheme

The Norwegian Quota scheme is a scholarship scheme for students from developing countries and countries in eastern Europe to complete degree programmes at Norwegian higher education institutions. The support scheme in the State Educational Loan Fund for students from developing countries and eastern Europe, the Quota scheme for short, was introduced in 1994, and was decided phased out from the 2015-16 academic year. The name “Quota scheme” stems from the allocation of quotas of students from the eligible countries to the higher education institutions in Norway. Since the academic year of 1999-00 there have been 1100 quota places per year, and in the period spanning 1994-2013 5844 individuals received Quota scholarships (Damvad 2014:101).

4.1. Historical background: The Section on developing countries

As previously mentioned, Norwegian secondary schools and higher education institutions had been accepting foreign students from developing countries since the mid-1960s. However, the educational institutions that accepted these students experienced that many of them struggled financially during their stay, and on initiative from the board of the loan fund, this in turn led to the introduction of “the Section on developing countries” (“U-landsparagrafen”) in the regulations of the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (NSELF). This new rule applied to students that were already enrolled in education in Norway, and there was no limit with regards to how many students that could be funded under this section.

The Section on developing countries from 1978 made it possible for students from developing countries to receive funding from the loan fund, in the same way and with the same rights as Norwegian students. Originally, this funding would be available to candidates that were already in Norway, and the reason for opening up the national student funding scheme to this group of students was based on national development assistance policy. Norway was to accept students from developing countries, “in solidarity with the sending country” (Green paper 13 1989:28).
The officially appointed committee that delivered their Green Paper called “Borderless learning” ("Grenseløs læring") on international students, student exchange and internationalisation in 1989, the Flatin committee, recommended that the admission of students from developing countries should be shifted from Bachelor’s level education, towards education at Master’s and PhD level. The committee argued that this change, seen from a development assistance standpoint, would prove for a better utilization of resources (Green paper 13 1989:8). They found that almost 90% of the students from developing countries that had received funding under the Section on developing countries in the loan fund regulations, had stayed in Norway after the completion of their education and that this contributed to brain drain from developing countries. Based on their findings regarding the old Section on developing countries, the committee further proposed to establish a national scholarship scheme that would better ensure that the students education would benefit their home countries (Ibid.)

One of the main changes in the new scholarship scheme, compared to the previous arrangement, would be the terms of repayment of the loan to the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund. Under the section on developing countries, and the other regulations of the loan fund, there were no special repayment terms for the students from developing countries. While for the new scholarship programme the loan was to be waived when the students returned to take residence in their home countries. Students who chose to stay in Norway, or left to take up residency in another country than their home country, would have to repay the loan within the regular loan fund rules (MOER 2001a:15).

In White Paper no. 40 it was decided that students from eastern Europe were to receive funding for studies in Norway under the same conditions as students from developing countries (MOER 1990-91). Therefore, funding of these students were also part of the Quota scheme and thereby regulated in the circulars from the Ministry of Education and Research. In the following, I will only refer to the quotas for eastern Europe where it is considered relevant.
In summary, the goal of the restructuring was to ensure that students were able to complete their studies, and to promote development effects by formalising the requirement that students returned to their home countries upon completion of their studies. The Quota scheme was approved by the Norwegian Parliament, the Storting, in the spring of 1991, and was introduced in 1994 by the first circular and call for applications in the fall of 1993.

4.2. Funding and administration

Since the introduction in 1994, the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (NSELF) has administered the Quota scheme scholarships on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Research (MOER). The funding is given according to the same funding model as for Norwegian students as part loan - part scholarship, and correspond with the rates for Norwegian students. The Quota funding covers student housing and basic living expenses for the student during the study period, and after completing the programme and returning home the loan part of the funding is converted to a scholarship. The cancellation of the loans are funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). If the Quota students move back to Norway within ten years after terminating their studies, the scholarship is converted back to a loan and must be repaid according to the NSELF terms and regulations (NSELF 2015).

Since 2005, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) has coordinated the Quota scheme, on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Research, and has been responsible for allocating the student quotas based on applications from the institutions and according to the current rules and guidelines. Before 2005, the ministry administered the scheme, and the distribution of the quotas themselves. The institutions are in charge of admitting the students and following up on academic matters, and also reports to SIU annually on the use of the allocated quotas and the status of students.

Regulation of the Quota scheme and the allocated places is enforced by NSELF, SIU and the institutions according to circulars distributed by the Ministry of Education and Research, and according to the NSELF regulations, section six. The circulars serves both as calls for applications for quotas, as well as contained information about implementation and
requirements. In the beginning the circulars were distributed each year, but after a while they came for three years at the time. This change, and others will be described and discussed further later in this thesis.

As mentioned above, the direct costs related to the Quota student scholarship funding is covered by both the Ministry of Education and Research (MOER), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), but the payments to the students are administered by the Norwegian State Educational Loan fund. In 2011 NSELF had appx. 63 711 000 NOK in expenses related to Quota students (Damvad 2014:78). However, there are also other costs related to receiving students under the Quota scheme. Early in the implementation of the scheme it was made clear from the Ministry of Education and Research, through the circulars, that “the study programmes [offered to Quota students] are to be funded within the regular institutional operating budgets.” (MOER 1993:2) Thus, the total annual cost of the Quota scheme encompasses the funding provided through NSELF, and the cancellation of loans after students return to their home countries, in addition to the cost of a study place and administration of the scheme at the Norwegian institutions.

4.3. Evaluations

The Quota Scheme has been evaluated two times, once in 2001 and then again in 2014. The goal of both of the evaluations was to explore how well the Quota scheme met its intended overall objective of having effects on development. As will be discussed further in chapter 6, it also became an emphasis in the evaluation mandates provided by the Ministry of Education and Research to assess the effects that the scheme had on internationalising Norwegian higher education (MOER 2001a, Damvad 2014).
5. Methodology

5.1. Research design

“A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data.” (Bryman 2012:46)

A qualitative longitudinal single case study design has been applied to investigate the changes in the Norwegian Quota scheme, according to the research questions. The research questions ask how the Quota scheme has changed, and why the changes happened, and there are these questions of how and why, the open-ended inquiry, that has formed the basis for choosing how to proceed in an attempt to find answers. According to Patton (2002:227) qualitative data tell a story, and qualitative methods allow for in-depth inquiry into selected issues where attention to detail, context and nuance is necessary. “Regardless of the unit of analysis, a qualitative case study seeks to describe that unit in depth and detail, holistically, and in context” (Patton 2002:55). Robert Yin (2009: 14) defines the case study as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. As with Patton’s description of qualitative research, Yin’s definition accounts for the uniqueness of case studies in their intention to provide a level of detail and understanding, similar to what the ethnographer Clifford Geertz’s (1973) labelled “thick description”. This understanding and detailed description is necessary for the thorough analysis of complex and particularistic cases. In this study it is not my aim to test hypotheses across cases, nor to be able to generalise beyond my case, but rather to show the particularities of the Norwegian Quota scheme, and the changes that have occurred from the introduction in 1994 and until the proposed phasing out of the scheme in 2015.
5.2. Instruments of data collection

5.2.1. Document analysis

The main source of written data that have been analysed in this study are the Quota scheme circulars (“Rundskriv” in Norwegian). A two-step thematic content analysis has been conducted to identify and attempt to explain the changes that have occurred. In the first step, information from the circulars was sorted into two main categories: Objectives and criteria. The objectives can be defined as the expressed overall aims of the Quota scheme, while the criteria can be categorised with regards to the specific requirements and implementation measures that formed the basis for allocation and distribution of quota places. For the purpose of the content analysis, the objectives category was further split into “development objectives” and “internationalisation objectives”, while the criteria category was made up of the following sub-themes: Approved education, teaching language, funding for students, administrative matters, institutional cooperation, and eligible countries. As further described below, these criteria are closely related to the relevant sections of the Quota scheme circulars.

After examining and extracting the information about objectives and criteria for the Quota scheme from the circulars, the second step of the analysis entailed using the information from the first step to determine whether or not there has been any changes to the relevant information in the circulars over time. Some of the circulars also included the information that there were changes compared to previously issued information. Changes were further identified by adding the information extracted from each circular into a schematic form, listing the circulars chronologically. Also, an assessment of the perceived magnitude of identified changes was implied by categorising them as minor, significant, or more radical changes. The term minor changes refer to slight changes in wording, or specifications and other small adjustments. Significant changes are changes that can be associated with Hall’s (1993) concept of “normal policy-making”, and have meant larger adjustments and/or have had a considerable impact on the implementation of the scheme. While lastly radical changes

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1 A chronological list of the circulars analysed is attached in the appendix.
are identified as shifts in objectives and criteria signifying for example change in national policy or focus.

5.2.2. The Quota scheme circulars

The circulars were issued by the Ministry of Education and Research (MOER) each year (and later for three-year periods), and served as calls for applications for quota places, as well as information about the regulation of the scheme. They were only available in Norwegian language and included information and guidelines regarding how the Quota scholarship places were to be used at the participating Norwegian institutions. As such one can argue that the circulars serve as documentation of how the ministry intended the scheme to be implemented.

The Quota scheme did not have a programme document or a programme board, as most of these types of programmes had. Therefore, the circulars have been chosen for this study due to their official status and regulating function, in addition to representing an interesting historical and longitudinal aspect. Thus, these official documents are relevant to gain insight into the change in regulation and implementation of the Quota Scheme from the introduction in 1994 to the proposed end of the scheme in 2015.

As mentioned, from the beginning the circulars were sent out for one academic year at the time to inform the participating institutions about eventual changes in Quota scheme regulations, and about how to apply for student quotas for the following academic year. In addition to information about applicable regulations, lists of eligible countries were attached.

The format of the circulars has changed little over the years, and most of them included chapters with the following titles:

1. Introduction
2. Applications for Quotas for the following year
3. Which students are eligible under the scheme

For example the Norad Fellowship Programme - NFP, or other education and research capacity-building programmes coordinated by SIU or Norad.
4. Education that can be approved
5. Teaching language - offer of Norwegian language course
6. Funding for studies
7. Award of quotas/Administrative matters
8. Countries that are covered by the scheme

There were only slight variations in the names of the designated chapters between 1994 and 2014, and on a couple of occasions the order of the chapters changed. In the third circular, for the 1996/97 academic year, a separate section on travel support was introduced, but for the following circular information regarding travel support had been incorporated under the headline “Education funding”. Also, in the circular for the first three year period, that came in September 2004, there was a section named “Administrative matters” that had previously not been part of the circulars. However, arguably, the chapters of the circulars were very stable during the 20 years that the Quota Scheme was operational. Despite the fact that the chapter headings did not change much, we will learn that the information within the sections has been subject to change.

In addition to the circulars, some of the policy documents that are relevant for the Quota scheme have been reviewed, such as Green Paper no.13 from 1989, and White Paper no. 40 from 1990-91. Another important source of information has been reports from the two evaluations conducted in 2001 and 2014.

5.2.3. Interviews with key informants

The research questions that form the basis for this study concern the changes and developments in the objectives and criteria of Quota scheme, over time. And as explained above I wish to use the circulars as a main source for this information. However, as I am also interested in the extent of the changes and where they came from, and as the source for much of the comments that have led to changes at the national level remains fractionated and undocumented, it has been important to interview people that have worked directly with the scheme.
As Patton (2002:294) points out: “..documents prove valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing”. By adding interview data to my study I hope to be able to cross-validate the information about changes drawn from the document analysis of the circulars.

Thus, based on the findings from the document analysis I have conducted semi-structured interviews with four key informants. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the key informants were informed about the topic of the thesis and were able to ask questions before the interview started. One of the interviews was conducted in English, while the three others in Norwegian language. All interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. They were taped and transcribed afterwards, and amounted to close to 40 pages of written material. By transcribing the information provided by the key informants it has also been useful to look to notes that were made during the interviews. The reason for transcribing the interviews in full was to be able to apply the same analytical framework and thematic content analysis as with the analysis of the circulars. In the interviews the key informants were asked to comment on and reflect upon the process(es) leading up to or following changes in policy or the Quota scheme. If they did not comment on it, they were asked to say something about the extent of the changes that occurred. To make better sense of the findings from the thematic analysis of the Quota scheme circulars, and to clarify and get a better understanding of how the scheme changed, the informants have been invaluable in offering perspectives that are not necessarily readily available in the examined circulars or background documents. This has also given me, as a researcher, a deeper understanding of the processes that formed the Quota scheme.

“Document analysis.. provides a behind-the-scenes look at the program that may not be directly observable and about which the interviewer might not ask appropriate questions without the leads provided through documents” (Patton 2002:307). Conducting the document analysis before the interviews was a strategic choice, which assumably made it possible to ask more in-depth questions with regards to some of the issues that were not clear from

3 Interview guide in Norwegian and English is available in the appendix.
analysing the circulars (e.g. the relationship between the main objectives: development and internationalisation). In addition, it is likely that the preparation for and conducting the document analysis made me better equipped to ask probing questions than I would have been if the interviews were conducted before or during the document analysis.

Selection of key informants

The chosen key informants were approached due to their long experience with the Quota Scheme, but also based on their availability to participate, and the author’s professional network. They currently work, or have previously worked, with issues related to the Quota scheme at the national and institutional levels, i.e. in the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Norad, University of Bergen (UIB) and at the University of Oslo (UIO). They all have considerable experience with the Quota scheme, spanning from the early days to the present, and in addition represent perspectives from different periods in the scheme, from the beginning to the end. Below is a table (table 1) with information about the key informants and their affiliation with the Quota scheme.

Table 1: Key informants and their affiliation with the Quota scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Affiliation with Quota scheme</th>
<th>Time period working with the Quota scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 - Senior adviser</td>
<td>Norad</td>
<td>Quota scheme coordinator at UiO, and later senior adviser in Norad</td>
<td>2004 - 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 - Senior adviser</td>
<td>SIU</td>
<td>Manager working with Quota scheme at UiB and later SIU. Also did some reporting work for Norwegian University Council around the introduction of the Quota scheme.</td>
<td>1990 - 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 - Senior adviser</td>
<td>University of Oslo</td>
<td>Quota scheme coordinator at UiO</td>
<td>1994 - 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 - Assistant Director General</td>
<td>Ministry of foreign affairs (MFA)</td>
<td>Was part of the group that evaluated the Quota scheme in 2001 and worked with the Quota scheme related issues in MFA.</td>
<td>1993/94 and again 2001-2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5. Reliability and validity

According to Yin (2009), exploratory case study designs must maximize their quality on three critical methodological conditions, or criteria: Construct validity, internal validity and reliability. Construct validity is associated with identifying and applying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied, while internal validity concerns the attempt to establish causal relationships, whereby some conditions are believed to lead to other conditions (Yin 2009:40). The criteria of reliability requires that the researcher demonstrates the operations conducted in a study. For a study to be repeated with the same results, it is vital that the researcher explains which methodological steps that have been taken in, so as to minimize errors and biases (Yin 2009:45) As this study is not aimed at generalising more broadly, but rather to show the particularities of the Quota scheme, concerns regarding external validity will not be discussed.

This thesis is based on a qualitative longitudinal single case research design that combines two different sources of data; primary documents and data from semi-structured interviews. The combination of data from different sources makes it possible to cross-validate findings across the data sources, and thus contributes to strengthening the construct validity. The main source of data analysed in this study are official publicly available documents, the Quota scheme circulars, and the grounds for selecting these has been explained previously in this chapter. Many of the processes surrounding the Quota scheme remains undocumented, something that was also confirmed by the key informants. However, the Quota scheme circulars represent a continuous regulating and implementing function, which assumably make them a trustworthy source of information regarding the Quota scheme, and a viable subject for analysis.

The second source of data were the key informant interviews. The respondents were chosen because they have a long history of working with the Norwegian Quota scheme. In addition to being resources and experts on the Quota scheme, the selected individuals represent some
key stakeholders in the scheme; SIU, MFA, Norad, the institutions. Three out of four of the informants have experience from a Norwegian higher education institution, and two out of these three also have experience from a national level agency. It would be fair to assume that this has added to their perspectives regarding the organisation of the Quota scheme. Still, it is important to be aware of the subjectivity and potential biases of the key informants. If time had allowed, it would have been appropriate to get the perspectives of a direct representative of the Ministry of Education and Research. However, this was not possible. It is plausible that the representative from SIU was able to provide some of the perspectives relayed from the ministry through communication around the scheme. The identity of the key informants is not revealed in this thesis, but their titles, affiliation, and time period worked with the Quota scheme are listed in table 2.

One of the research questions sought answered in this study implies identification of causal links in how the changes in the Quota scheme happened, and where these changes came from. It is very difficult to assume causality and determine with certainty where the developments and changes the Quota scheme stemmed from. National policy regarding development policy for higher education is a complex phenomena with many stakeholders. Therefore this study only suggests possible sources of some of the identified changes, but it does not in any way exclude the possibility that other factors than the ones discussed may have had an impact.

5.6. Ethical issues

“The quality of qualitative data depends to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher” (Patton 2002:5)

There are especially two ethical considerations that need to be accounted for in this thesis. Firstly, the professional as well as academic interest of the researcher. And secondly, the potential controversy and political nature of recent development in the Quota scheme.
The issue of professional interest and engagement, and thus the inherent bias of the researcher, is based on current employment as the Quota scheme contact person at the University of Oslo. As posed by Patton (2002:299): “Reflexivity calls for self-reflection, indeed, critical self-reflection and self-knowledge, and willingness to consider how who one is affects what one is able to observe, hear, and understand in the field and as an observer and analyst”. The professional background of the researcher has potential consequences for the reliability of the study and the interpretation of the findings. However, previous knowledge and experience may also contribute to the depth and understanding of this specific case. Attempts of neutrality are difficult, therefore it is important to be conscious of one's own perspective and the origins of this perspective when collecting and analysing data (Patton 2002:299)

With regards to the second issue, of there having been some controversy surrounding the Quota scheme due to recent political processes, and the decision to phase out from the 2015-16 academic year. Therefore, it has been important to keep this in mind especially in preparing for and conducting the key informant interviews. However, it was not experienced that the key informants were reluctant to answer any of the questions asked due to the potential controversial political nature of the topic.
6. Findings and discussion

The national policy that made up the foundation for the Quota scheme was expressed in the Green Paper of the Flatin committee, and was followed up on by White Paper No. 40 to the Storting in 1991. Based on these documents, as well as the government strategy from 1999, and the two White Papers on development published in the 2000s, it seems that the ideas that underlie the Quota scheme can be tied to the justifications of the Norwegian focus on higher education in development policy accounted for in chapter 2.4.

Grounded in primary document content analysis and key informant interviews, this chapter examines the implementation of the Quota scheme as an instrument for Norwegian policy towards development assistance through higher education, and in what way the scheme has changed over time.

This chapter will begin with a descriptive overview and analysis of the circulars, and account for the two evaluation reports from 2001 and 2014, which will give a chronological perspective of the implementation of the Quota scheme and the changes that have occurred. It will then serve as the foundation for the second part, where some of the changes in the objectives and selected criteria will be discussed more in depth, on the basis of the content analysis and data from the key informant interviews.

6.1. Three periods of change in the Quota scheme

6.1.1. The outset and the first years (1993-2002)

In the first circular and call for applications for quotas of students, F-101-93 from October 1993, there was no explicit mention of the overall objectives of the scheme. There was only reference to White Paper no. 40, as well as information that in the proposed state budget for 1994 there was a recommendation of 750 quota places, 600 for students for developing countries and 150 for students from countries in eastern Europe. Certain criteria and requirements were listed: Students were to be admitted to special short programmes at
Master’s and PhD level. Also, as a main rule the programmes were to be conducted in English. Funding was to be given as part loan and part scholarship from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund, and students who would return to their home country upon completion would get the loan-part of their funding waived. It was further stated in the first circular that the ministry aimed to keep the scheme limited to a relatively small number of institutions and programmes: “The ministry assumes that 10-15 study programmes, distributed among 8-10 institutions, may be suitable”. (MOER 1993:2). As can be drawn from Table 2 below, this did not end up being the case. The table gives an overview of the development in distributed quotas, and the number of participating Norwegian higher education institutions.

Table 2: Quota places and participating institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/ period</th>
<th>Number of Quota places</th>
<th>Number of participating institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/96</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2011</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2014</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: SIU)

The second circular, F-24-95 from February 1995, included an introductory chapter that was absent in the first iteration. In this the ministry stated that the objective of the funding scheme was to: “...in a better way than previously, supply students with relevant competence that could benefit their home countries when they went home upon completion of their studies” (MOER 1995a:1). As had been the case in the first circular, the second circular stated that the main rule was English-taught programmes. However, it also included information that higher level professional degrees in Norwegian language was an exemption from this rule. Another main rule was that students should have completed at least two years of higher education in their home country or neighboring countries before admission (Ibid). This second circular also included an attached list of eligible developing countries and countries in eastern Europe.
The list of developing countries was based on OECDs Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients, referred to previously in this thesis. This list, that came updated every third year, was used almost during the whole lifetime of the scheme.

In the third circular, F-124/95 from December 1995, there was an increase in the number of available quota places to 900. However, this only implied a doubling of places for students from eastern Europe, from 150 to 300. The number of places for students from developing countries remained at 600. Table 3 below gives an overview of the developments in the number of Quota places from 1994 until 2005. After 2005 there were no changes in the number of places. It seems clear from the third circular that the main rule was no longer that English should be the language of instruction in programmes with Quota students. It is stated in the circular that the education offered can be in both English and Norwegian. The third circular was also the first time when eligible countries were mentioned in the main text of the circular. Here, the ministry explained the basis for the list of eligible developing countries, the DAC-list, and commented in this instance for example that Nigeria had been taken out of the list due to lack of transparency and human rights issues (MOER 1995b:3)

Table 3: The development in number of Quota places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of places available</th>
<th>Places for developing countries</th>
<th>Places for central and eastern Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999/00</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Quota scheme circulars)

In the following circular F-10-97, the fourth from January 1997, the ministry asked the institutions in Norway specifically to improve their contact and cooperation with the institutions in the home countries of the students. It is stated that: “This will assist in improving the students ties to their home countries, and to direct the education towards the needs there” (MOER 1997a:1). However, the recruitment through formal cooperation
agreements did not become a requirement until later. There were also other minor changes and specifications in criteria for funding, such as a specification of the 18 year lower age limit for students, and a reference to the applicable section in the regulations of the loan fund. The institutions were asked to prioritise students from developing countries, due to the fact that there was an underuse of the places for this group in the previous years, and also to prioritise female students where possible. Palestinian students were from eligible for funding from the 1997-98 academic year, and a list of eligible institutions in the Palestinian territories was attached to the circular (Ibid).

Except for some specifications regarding field work in the students home countries, the next circular F-129-97, for the 1998-99 academic year was almost identical to the previous. Here, no changes have been detected in the overall objectives or criteria featured.

The next three Quota scheme circulars, for the academic years 1999-2002 (F-95-98, F-76-99 and F-48-00), were also very similar to the preceding with regards to objectives and criteria. There is, although, a proposed increase in the number of places by 200, to 700 for developing countries and 400 for eastern Europe for the 1999-00 academic year, making the total number of Quota places 1100 (MOER 1998a:1). All three circulars state that it is expected that the number of places applied for by the institutions will exceed the number of available scholarships for the following academic year. Therefore, active students would be prioritised, then places would go to study programmes that were part of cooperation with the institutions in the students home countries. Thus, here the ministry goes further than previously in stating institutional cooperation as a criteria for the distribution of Quota places. Also it is stated in all of them that priority may be given to study programmes that have facilitated especially well to receive international students (MOER 1998, 1999, 2000).

In November 2000 the ministry announced a committee to conduct an evaluation of the Quota scheme. The mandate of the committee was to evaluate the scheme based on the intentions and foundations, as described in White Paper 40. The scheme was to be evaluated “from a development assistance perspective” (MOER 2000:1), but also with regards to its role in internationalisation at the Norwegian institutions. The management and administration was to be assessed, as well as the study programme arrangements (MOER 2000).
6.1.2. The first evaluation and an increased focus on internationalisation and institutional cooperation (2002-2012)

The first evaluation of the Quota scheme was conducted by a working group led by Kjetil Flatin, who we know also headed the work with Green Paper no. 13 from 1989 that recommended the establishment of the scholarship programme. The mandate given to the evaluation working group from the Ministry of Education and Research was to: “evaluate the scheme from a development perspective... and in addition emphasise the role the Quota Scheme had played in the internationalisation of Norwegian higher education institutions” (MOER 2000:1)

The evaluation working group touched upon many issues with the Quota scheme, but one of their main findings was that overall the Quota scheme had had considerable impact on the internationalisation of Norwegian higher education institutions, e.g. with the establishment of English study programmes. However, they found that it was hard to determine the effect that the Quota scheme had had on development in the eligible countries (MOER 2001a:5). They recommended, amongst other things, that the Norwegian institutions would continue to build on their cooperation with institutions in developing countries through formalised agreements, and that Quota places should be used as part of this cooperation (MOER 2001a:29). They also suggested that the allocation of places would be for more than one year the time, based on the argument of predictability for the institutions and for the scheme as a systematic measure towards sector development in the developing countries (Ibid.) Further development of Master’s programmes in English, and their anchoring in institutional internationalisation strategies is mentioned as a recommended continued focus. Further recommendations regarded that the coordination and administration of the Quota scheme should be delegated to SIU, that the institutions receive extra funding per students, and that the total number of scholarships should be raised to 1400 students from developing countries and 800 from eastern Europe (MOER 2001a:37).

In the circular F-41-01 for the 2002-03 academic year there is a small change in the formulation of the overall objective. “..in a better way” from the previous circulars is taken
out, so that the objective reads: “The objective of the scheme is to supply students with relevant competence that could benefit their home countries when they went home upon completion of their studies” (MOER 2001b:1).

With regards to the call for applications for Quota places for the following academic year, circular F-41-01 stated that as a follow up to recommendations from the evaluation report, the ministry will distribute quota places for three years periods rather than for one year at the time as had been done previously. It is further stated that this change would locate more responsibility on the individual institutions in making sure that they efficiently used the places allocated to them, and that the allocation of places for three years would make the admission of quota students more predictable for the institutions. The key informants were asked in the interviews whether this change, from shorter to longer scheme allocation periods, signaled a shift toward a more long-term and perhaps strategic perspective from the ministry’s side, but three out of the four commented that it presumable had more to do with practical matters, than with signaling a shift in priorities from the ministry’s side. It was demanding for the ministry to evaluate applications each year, and is was also demanding for the institutions to apply so often. According to the informants, this change was assumably pushed forward by the institutions. This is not to conclude that there was not an aim of the ministry to be more strategic, neither an attempt from the ministry to make the institutions be more strategic in their use of Quota places, as this is not clear from the circular analysis nor is the information from the key informants conclusive in this regard.

The circular for the 2002-03 academic year further stated that “due to an increased focus on internationalisation in the Norwegian education system the ministry will now put more emphasis than previously on cooperation between Norwegian and foreign higher education institutions when distributing the Quota places” (MOER 2001b:2). It is likely that this specification was linked to the ongoing national processes surrounding the implementation of the Quality reform. This increased emphasis on internationalisation and links to the Quality reform will be further addressed below.

In the circular from three years later, F-10-04 from September 2004, it is pointed out in the introductory chapter that there are significant changes compared to the previous circular. The
overall objective can be seen as widened from supplying students with relevant education for their home countries to include the “scheme’s contribution to strengthening Norwegian higher education institutions participation in the global knowledge cooperation.” (MOER 2004:1) The total number of Quota places remains the same, at 1100, but there is a change in the allocation of places to developing countries and countries in eastern Europe to 800 and 300, respectively (Ibid).

There are also some new criteria introduced; It is from the 2005-06 academic year a condition that potential Quota students apply for admission from their home countries, and that they can documents residence there at least one year prior to admission to the Norwegian institutions (MOER 2004). There is also a new chapter called “Recruitment of students under the Quota scheme”. Quota students are to be recruited through established cooperation between Norwegian institutions and institutions in the home countries of the students, “preferably through open calls” (MOER 2004:2). It is stated that formalised cooperation will be given considerable priority in the distribution of places, and the institutions may be asked to present the formal cooperation agreements on request. There is room for recruitment of individual students, or “free-movers”, but only under special terms and due to special conditions in the home countries of the students. As examples of special conditions they mention political repression, gender discrimination or difficult conditions for the disabled.

Under the chapter on what type of education that the students can participate in, it is again referred to the objective of the Quota scheme to provide the students with education that can benefit their home countries. There are also specifications related to types and level of education that can be offered to funded students, e.g. that education should primarily be full degrees at the Master’s and PhD level.

As we have learnt from previous circulars it is encouraged by the ministry that institutions improve their contact and further build on the cooperation with institutions in the home countries of the students to improve the students links and contact, and to align the education offered to the students with the needs in these countries. However, in the circular from 2004 this request is more pressing, formulated more like a requirement: “The institutions shall, in consultation with the cooperation institution, ensure that education offered to Quota students
are aligned with the objectives of the Quota scheme, and that it provides relevant competencies for the students home countries” (MOER 2004:3). Also, there is a paragraph where the ministry encourages the institutions to develop joint programmes and degrees with the cooperating institutions, i.e. what they call “sandwich-programmes”. It was further specified that the education that was provided to Quota students should also be part of the regular education portfolio at the Norwegian institutions, and it should be open to other student groups as well as to the Quota students. The ministry also referred to the Quality reform and encouraged the institutions to continue to develop English-taught programmes (MOER 2004:3).

Regarding the administration of the Quota scheme the ministry informs that from 1st January 2005 the administration of the Quota Scheme is transferred to the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU), but the loan fund would still be responsible for administering the scholarship payments to the students. The institutions should be prepared to report to SIU on which grounds Quota students were recruited, and which study programmes that were offered to these students. Regarding countries included, the then new EU-countries in eastern Europe had been removed from the list of eligible countries.

Three years later, in July 2007, the ministry issued circular F-10-07. In the introduction it said that the objectives of the Quota scheme was “to contribute to competence-building in recipient countries. Through student mobility to Norwegian universities and university colleges the scheme shall provide students competence, and at the same time contribute to tie institutions and business i recipient countries to the global knowledge society”, also it should “contribute to strengthening the international cooperation of Norwegian institutions.. be linked to institutional strategies, and be applied together with other research and education cooperation” (MOER 2007:1)

Where the previous circular encouraged cooperation in joint programmes and degrees, the document from 2007 stated explicitly that students recruited under this kind of cooperation would be prioritised in the distribution of Quota places to the institutions. SIU were going to evaluate applications for Quota places based on the following listed criteria: 1) Students link to ongoing education and research cooperation and participation in networks, 2) link to
institutional strategies at the Norwegian institutions 3) integration in regular education with participation from Norwegian and other international students 4) contact with the home country through e.g. field work. I addition they asked that copies of cooperation agreement that students were recruited through be sent together with the application for places (MOER 2007:4).

An estimated maximum number of places that could be allocated to each institution was introduced, so that no institution could be awarded more than one quota place per one hundred students enrolled. However, it was made clear that the limit was not absolute, and that quality would be prioritised. One of the key informants said that this limit had to do with some of the smaller university colleges having too many Quota students compared to their overall student numbers, and that the cooperation was based on historical ties with certain partner institutions in a small number of countries. With reference to this, one of the other key informants said that “some institutions in Norway had to admit large numbers of Quota students to survive, so to speak.. It was necessary for whole academic fields to survive. So you can say that the politics towards the districts was very important”. This view will be discussed further in the next chapter, also in light of some of the changes that occurred in the first years with opening up to lower level professional programmes, in Norwegian language.

In 2007, for the first time in a circular, there was information that annual reporting to SIU would be required, with regards to completed degrees and titles of theses. Reporting had not been mentioned in the circulars before. Also, it opened for Quota students to go on exchange through their study programmes at Norwegian institutions. With regards to eligible countries, more recently incorporated EU-countries in eastern Europe were taken out of the list of eligible countries.

The following circular F-12-10 from 2010 does not add on the objectives or criteria compared to the circular from 2007, with the exception of the specification that it would be possible for the Quota students to do a combination of Master’s and PhD with Quota funding (MOER 2010).
The Quota scheme was only briefly mentioned in White Paper that was published in 2009 named “Internationalisation of education in Norway”, except from noting that political and administrative framework conditions had changed since the 2001 evaluation, and that it recommended considering a new evaluation of the scheme in light of these changing conditions. It further suggested that the evaluation was done in cooperation with Norad, with the view to find a good balance between policy objectives for education and development assistance (White Paper no.14 2009).

6.1.3. The final years and the proposal to phase out the scheme (2013-2015)

The goal of the second evaluation of the Quota scheme conducted by the consulting firm Damvad analytics, that delivered their report to the Ministry of Education and Research in April 2014, was to: “assess relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Quota scheme.. [between] 2001 and 2012” (Damvad 2014:17) The assessment was further based on the objectives of the Quota scheme, according to the mandate provided by the ministry. One of the main findings of this second evaluation was that the Quota scheme was directed towards relevant needs, both with regards to development and internationalisation, however that there were conceivable limitations to the relevance caused by the design and implementation of the scheme (Damvad 2014). The evaluation report concluded that the Quota scheme had had significant effects on development, whilst only limited effects on internationalisation. It further proposed that there was a “mismatch between responsibility and influence” in coordination and administration that in turn affected the efficiency of the scheme in meeting its objectives (Damvad 2014:14), e.g. it was questioned whether NSELF was well enough equipped to deal with the Quota students. Among the recommendations of Damvad were a stronger and more strategic role for SIU in administering the scheme, and to concentrate the scheme to more strategically selected countries to better ensure relevance for the recipient countries. Also that, if the scheme was to have an effect on internationalisation, there would have to be clearly defined “parameters of internationalisation it seeks to influence” (Damvad 2014:16)

The circular that was distributed in May 2013, the year before the second evaluation was completed, was only valid for the 2014-15 academic year. Here, the Ministry of Education
and Research referred to the ongoing evaluation and said that eventual changes were pending the conclusions in the evaluation report. All distributed Quota places were continued and there was no call for applications for new Quota places (MOER 2013). Other than these specifications, no changes were detected compared to the circular from 2010.

In July of 2014 the Ministry of Higher Education and Research requested the higher education institutions and relevant national agencies to comment on the findings and recommendations of the Damvad evaluation report. They also wanted input with regards to some specific questions related to the organisation of the scheme as an instrument for development assistance policy, and as an instrument for internationalising Norwegian higher education (MOER 2014a).

The following circular F-04-14 is a one-year extension for the 2015-16 academic year. It is stated that there are few changes compared to the previous circular, and that the ministry did not wish to change the scheme until the work with assessing conclusions in the evaluation report is completed. All distributed Quota places are continued, and it is not possible to apply for new ones. However, there were significant changes in the list of eligible countries. This change is based in the government’s work to make Norwegian development assistance more effective and concentrated (MOER 2014b). This work entails that support for some countries is phased out, and not all countries on the OECD DAC-list are eligible. Only countries in the three lowest categories are eligible, in addition to South-Africa, Brazil and China. By this geographic concentration, there were from the 2015-16 academic year 36 countries that were no longer eligible under the Quota scheme (MOER 2014b).

In its state budget proposal for 2016, released in October 2015, the government proposed to phase out the Quota scheme and to eventually replace it with a different instrument, a partnership programme aimed at broader cooperation with higher education institutions in developing countries.
6.2. Further discussion of selected changes

White Paper 40 laid the grounds for the introduction of the Quota Scheme, however the circulars were the continuous regulating factor that included information regarding how the Quota scholarship places were to be used at the participating Norwegian higher education institutions.

As mentioned in chapter 6.1., the two evaluations conducted of the Quota scheme, in 2001 and 2014, came to somewhat different conclusions with regards the effectiveness of the scheme in meeting its objectives. This may have had to do with e.g. the recommendations from the first evaluation committee and the follow up by the Ministry of Education and Research, but it also seems likely that there were important developments in the Norwegian higher education system as a whole that were contributing to some of the change that occurred.

Some of the changes identified in the Quota scheme circulars discussed in the above chapter can be categorised as mere specifications of information and criteria in that they do not necessarily represent actual change in the implementation of the scheme. On the other side there is also evidence of other more significant changes that suggest that there may have been adjustments in the national policy or focus. Four of the more significant changes will be further discussed in this chapter. The first of these significant changes is the developments in the overall objectives, from primarily focusing on development effects towards a broader rationale and emphasis on the internationalisation of Norwegian higher education institutions. Second are the changes in criteria that happened in the first years after the introduction of the Quota scheme, where the intentions and goals of the Flatin committee to offer only Master and PhD level education in English were departed, likely due to pressure from the Storting and the higher education institutions. A third significant change is the increasing emphasis on institutional cooperation that came with the 2002-03 circular, that eventually resulted in a requirement of formal cooperation agreements with institutions in developing countries as the basis to recruit Quota students. The fourth change in criteria that will be addressed
specifically in this chapter, is the change in eligible countries that occurred in the circular for the 2015-16 academic year.

6.2.1. Changes in overall objectives

Development policy objectives

The thematic content analysis of the circulars above has shown that there is relatively little evidence of change in the objective of the Quota scheme to provide students with education that would benefit the students home countries. Already in the Green Paper from 1989 there was an expressed desire to continue to give access to students from developing countries, also to balance for Norwegian students going abroad. This is supported by findings in the key informant interviews, who collaborated that this was also a desire at the Norwegian higher education institutions.

It is perhaps also interesting with regard to the development objective to highlight the change that happened in the transition from the old Section on developing countries to the Quota scheme. By several of the key informants, the Section on developing countries was labeled as an ad-hoc solution to a problem of students from developing countries not being able to provide for themselves and their studies in Norway. It was characterised by random and unstructured decisions by institutions to grant admission to students from the third world, and was not sufficiently linked to national policy and an overall aim of development. Whereas the Quota scheme, on the other hand, that built on this old arrangement was much more systematic and policy-driven. In this regard, the introduction of the Quota scheme seems largely to have been based on the experiences from the Section on developing countries. The introduction of the Quota scheme in 1994 seemed to be an attempt to formalise, in a way, the funding of students from developing countries that had happened under the NSELF Section on developing countries. It was also a purposeful attempt to link the instrument better to overall objectives in Norwegian development assistance policy.

In the first 10 years of the Quota scheme there was only slight change in wording of the overall objective expressed in the circulars. From when the overall objective was put into the
circular for the 1995-96 academic year and up until the circular for the academic years 2002-05, the sole expressed objective was to educate students that would return and contribute to their home countries after completion of their studies. However, in the circular for 2005-2008 it was added a sentence about how the Quota scheme also contributed to strengthening the participation of Norwegian institutions in the “global knowledge cooperation” (MOER 2004:1).

In the following circular from 2007 the development objective was even more elaborate. Student mobility from developing countries to Norway should contribute to competence-building in recipient countries. This change may be interpreted as a reformulation and specification that in turn did not really affect the implementation of the Quota scheme. However, it is likely that this reformulation was linked to the current national agenda on capacity-building and development cooperation in higher education and research.

Internationalisation objectives

The Green Paper from 1989 was called “Borderless learning” (“Grenseløs læring”), and was a report on internationalisation in Norwegian higher education. However, from what we have learnt from the analysis of the Quota scheme circulars, it does not seem that it recommended a change in the section on developing countries and the establishment of a new scholarship scheme, with internationalisation as a main objective (Green Paper 1989). The Flatin committee’s approach was more that of establishing a scholarship programme to support, and for the benefit of, developing countries, rather than as an instrument to internationalise Norwegian higher education institutions. One of the key informants supports this when commenting that internationalisation, specifically for the benefit of Norwegian higher education, became more important and thus more concretely expressed later. In the beginning it was more considered a positive, but unintentional, consequence. However, as several also said, it was natural that the objective for development and for internationalisation was seen in conjunction in this early phase, because up until that point there had not been many international students coming to Norway except for the students from developing countries.
Following the Green Paper, the White Paper that legally introduced the Quota scheme did not either express that the scheme was to have internationalisation of Norwegian institutions as an objective. However, what it does say is that: “A primary objective for the measures aimed at development has to be to establish a strategy where the the aims of the development assistance policy, and the consideration for internationalisation of Norwegian higher education and research mutually support each other” (MOER 1990-91:77)

If internationalisation was not an articulated objective from the beginning, when did it come into the scheme? And why has the scheme been evaluated two times with a growing emphasis on internationalisation. The evaluation report from 2001 states that: “The Quota scheme, after a decision in Parliament, has developed more and more into a measure for internationalisation of Norwegian higher education, but with objectives for development policy” (MOE 2001:4) After pressure from the Norwegian Council for Universities, the scheme was organised more in the direction of a measure of internationalisation, with cultural exchange and understanding as important elements (ibid). Thus, according to the evaluation, the internationalisation objective of the Quota scheme was present almost from the beginning, based on pressure from the institutions. However, as we have seen, this objective was not mentioned explicitly in the circulars until the one issued for 2002-03 where the increased national focus on internationalisation is referred to. Here it is also worth mentioning that the evaluation found that the Quota scheme had had considerable effects on internationalisation at Norwegian higher education institutions, while the development effects were difficult to measure as it had only been three years since the first students graduated.

The White Paper on internationalisation of education in Norway from 2009 only mentions the Quota scheme, and here the scheme is characterised as a development assistance policy instrument. Internationalisation had been on the national agenda since the Flatin committee Green Paper, but it was not expressed as an objective in the Quota Scheme circulars. As one of the key informants put it: “Internationalisation had only just started becoming a concept [in 1989], and even though it was not thought of as a main objective it was an important part of the whole picture”.

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Summary - changes in objectives

Over time, the objectives of the Quota scheme were expanded and this may have been affected by ongoing national processes, such as the implementation of the Quality reform. In addition to the development objective, there was the added aim to contribute to internationalisation at institutions in Norway, and that this international cooperation were to be based in institutional strategies. Thus, from in the beginning having the objective of providing students with education that could benefit the home countries upon their return, the objective became two-fold; Capacity-building in developing countries and internationalisation of Norwegian higher education.

One perhaps important finding from the key informants interviews is the proposed explanation that the changes in the Quota scheme objectives were affected by which rationale, development or internationalisation, that figured highest on the national agenda at a certain point.

6.2.2. Changes in criteria

Approved education and teaching language

Between the first and the third circulars quite a few more significant changes are apparent. It seemed that the ministry had received, and had taken into account, comments and suggestions from the higher education sector. Two of the key informants mentioned specifically that the higher education institutions, and the Norwegian University Council on their behalf, had been active in writing and engaging the ministry in discussions regarding what the scheme should look like. However, it also seemed that there was political influence on the processes that followed after the distribution of the first circular.

One of the main changes that have be identified between the first and third circulars is the retraction of the main rule that study programmes should be at Master’s level, and that they were to be taught in English language. It is likely that these changes in the criteria of the Quota scheme were proposed after deliberations in the Committee for Education, Research
and Church affairs in the Storting, in spring of 1995 (KUF 1995-1995:7), and they could also have been influenced by comments from the Norwegian Council of Universities (NCU 1996).

The conclusions from the discussion in the Committee for Education, Research and Church Affairs possibly contributed to the opening up for professional programmes more generally, in Norwegian language (KUF 1995-96). As one of the key informants put it: “That came from the institutions!.. More specifically the university colleges”. One of the other interviews revealed that there had been much regional pressure from the smaller institutions in the first phase of the Quota scheme: “They were the ones that pushed for Bachelor’s level programmes in Norwegian”.

In a letter to the Ministry of Education and Research in April 1996 the Norwegian Council for Universities commented that the Quota scheme had “..not become a complete programme, as the intention was, but rather student funding for single study programmes based on rules made for Norwegian students” (NCU 1996:1). They referred to a report sent to the ministry in 1995 called “The Quota scheme - Development assistance without direction” (“Kvoteordningen - hodeløs bistand”), and said that the first two years that the scheme had been operational was characterised by “unclear and changing guidelines, and a cumbersome and weak central administration” and “low predictability in award of quotas” (Ibid.). Based on this, they said, the consequence was neither sufficient transfer of competence to developing countries, nor did the scheme lead to internationalisation of the Norwegian higher education institutions. In the letter, that was partly based on a comment round with all the member institutions and the national and international student unions, the NCU recommends the establishment of a (new) national scheme administered by SIU (that was then organised under the NCU). Their recommendation was further that the programme would have a programme board or a steering committee, that would assist in coordinating the programme at the national level. This, they said would also lead to better synergies with other programmes aimed at development. In the Quota scheme no additional funding had been made available for administration, or to pay for the development of suitable programmes in English language at the Norwegian institutions. Part of the suggestion was also to set aside funds for these purposes (NCU 1996:5).
In the state budget deliberations for 1997 the Committee for Education, Research and Church Affairs directed several comments regarding the Quota scheme to the Ministry of Education and Research. The majority in the committee meant that it was necessary to conduct changes in the scheme for it to work according to the original intentions. Amongst other things, they requested the ministry for an evaluation in the course of 1997. In the proposed state budget for the following year the ministry referred to the comments from the Parliament, and stated that it was a prerequisite for the establishment of the Quota scheme that the competence built by the students under the scheme would benefit their home countries. However, they go on to say that “as the scheme has only been operational for four years, and it will take some time for the students to leave Norway and get their loans cancelled... It will not be possible to say anything for certain regarding to what extent the return requirement has been met.” The ministry would conduct an evaluation as soon as they had better statistics (MOER 1998b:5).

In the same document as referred to in the above paragraph, the comments to the proposed state budget for 1997, the Ministry of Education and Research refers to the critique and suggestions from the institutions and the Norwegian University Council, and say that several of the challenges put forth had already been addressed. Regarding the organisation of the Quota scheme they said that the management of the scheme would remain in the ministry until the conclusions of an evaluation had been undergone (MOER 1998b).

Institutional Cooperation

Already in the circular F-10-97 for the 1998-99 academic year the ministry requested the Norwegian higher education institutions to better the contact and cooperation with the institutions in the Quota students home countries. In the years to follow this cooperation would be prioritised in the distribution of Quota places to the institutions. In the first circular for a three-year period, from 2001, more emphasis was put on cooperation due to the increased national focus on internationalisation. However, it was only from the 2005-06 academic year that institutional cooperation became a requirement under the Quota scheme, and had to be documented by the institutions. Despite the fact that it had become a requirement to recruit Quota students through formal cooperation, it seemed that it was not clear at the institutions what this actually meant. One of the key informants with experience
from a university stated that: “You had to document that there was cooperation between the institutions, but you did not have to document how the students that you selected were linked... often the students were more lucky that their institution was involved, rather than there actually being a tight cooperation...”. The informant from SIU, confirmed that not much was done to verify the extent of the documented cooperation, but that “there at least should be a written trace”.

All the key informants mentioned the larger development assistance agenda and discourse in Norway as a potential source of some of the change in the Quota scheme, at the national level, especially with regards to the increased focus on institutional cooperation. One strategy in particular was mentioned by three of the informants as a potential contributor, this was the *Strategy for strengthening research and higher education in the context of Norway's relations with developing countries*. Even though it did not mention the Quota scheme specifically, it can be seen as a part of the promotion of Norwegian policy on how and why cooperation in higher education and research was considered important. In this way it may have contributed to changes in the objectives and criteria of the Quota scheme.

One of the key informants also commented that the criteria of cooperation, and link to institutional strategies, were presumably based, at least in part, on comments from the Norwegian institutions. Most of the institutions had already started using the Quota scheme in synergy with other development cooperation programmes, according to their institutional strategies. However, she also said that: “..it also had to do with the general view of development assistance at the time, about how to do development assistance.. The main principle was that the money should not be spent in Norway, but rather in countries in the south”. This statement can be linked to the restructuring that happened in two Norwegian higher education and research capacity-building programmes, the NUFU and the NOMA-programmes. However, perhaps despite the introduction of the formal cooperation requirement, it seems that the change in policy did not affect the Quota scheme to a significant extent. At least, there is little evidence of that found in this study.

One of the key informants linked the institutional cooperation requirement to the the overall development objective of providing education that would benefit the home countries of the
students when they returned, and said that: “It was important that there was institutional cooperation and contact, so that the students that travelled the long way to Norway could return to their home countries and contribute to development there”.

There were also several of the key informants that linked the cooperation requirement that came with the 2005-08 circular to the encouragement of Ministry of Education and Research to admit Quota students to joint and sandwich programmes with the partner institution. One key informant said that: “This was something that they wanted, but there was not really anything in the programme that would make that possible.. It had been a one-way [arrangement] since the beginning, and there was not funding for that”.

Eligible countries

The evaluation report from 2001 commented, when showing statistic for where the Quota students came from that: “..with a couple of exceptions, there does not seem to be any connection between the home countries of students and the countries prioritised for Norwegian development assistance” (MOER 2001a:19). Several of the key informants confirmed that there had not been strategic discussions on which countries to include, and one said: “.. it was left quite open for the Norwegian institutions to decide, as long as the countries was on the [DAC-] list”.

As previously explained, a list of eligible countries under the Quota scheme has followed the circulars since the second one issued for the 1995-96 academic year. Up until circular F-04-14 for the 2015-16 academic year, the list of eligible developing countries was based on the DAC-list of the OECD of ODA recipients, and a list of countries in central and eastern Europe. Until this point the total number of eligible countries had been around 130.

Examining the changes in the list of eligible countries over time it seems that some countries considered especially important from a foreign policy perspective were added, and sometimes highlighted or redefined. By redefined, I here refer to the observation that China and South-Africa that had been part of the scheme since the beginning, and Brazil that was added in the circular from July 2007, had been eligible for some time before they were referred to specifically in the circular text. This also applies to Russia, that was eligible under the
funding for students from eastern Europe and central-Asia. This geographic focus might be explained by trade and foreign policy significance, and corresponded with the BRICS countries move to the top of the global agenda (Damvad 2014:47). In the circular from July 2014 the list of eligible countries was significantly shortened, and 35 countries were taken out. The argument was, as we have seen, the intent to concentrate Norwegian development assistance, and to make it more effective.

The interview with the representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) revealed that there had been negotiations on the ODA-list in the ministry with regards to the Quota scheme. In the end he said, the decision on which countries to include in the Quota scheme had to do with which students could be covered by the development assistance budget post.
7. Concluding remarks

Based on the findings from this study it is not possible to be conclusive as to why the changes in the Quota scheme happened, and where they stemmed from. However, the findings may fit into a larger picture of why the changes occurred.

It is difficult to determine with accuracy where the changes in the Quota scheme came from, as most likely many of the changes had many sources. However, it seems that, especially in the beginning, the source for much of the changes identified in this study came from the institutions. Either directly to the Ministry of Education and Research, and later to SIU, or through the NCU. It is also likely that the implementation of the Quality reform in 2003 affected the changes in the Quota scheme circulars, especially with regards to the change in objective to include internationalisation at the Norwegian higher education institutions as an expressed aim.

It seems that first order minor changes and adjustments happened almost every year based on experience with the implementation of the scheme, and based on information from the key informants interviews it seems that much of the adjustments came from suggestions and comments from the Norwegian higher education institutions and the Norwegian University Council (NUC). Changes have thus happened in the Quota scheme, as well as the national focus and policy, from the beginning with the replacement of the Section on developing countries with a scheme more structured towards meeting national policy objectives. Then there were more significant changes following the first evaluation, and in the end with the second evaluation and the decision to phase out the programme.

As mentioned previously the Quota scheme did not have an overarching programme document or a programme board. With regards to this is worth noting that circulars can perhaps have been considered less binding and rigid than a programme document would have been, and this could have meant that the process of making changes from year to year was less complicated than it would have been with changes in a programme document.
There are periods in the Quota scheme where much change occurred, but it is difficult to determine causal links, the causes for the change. The potential contributing causes discussed in this study, may only be part of the picture. It is likely that some of the processes and events discussed has contributed to change, however, further steps investigation would be needed to with more certainty determine causal links.

There are many interesting aspects of the Quota scheme as a policy instrument that have not been part of this thesis. For example there is the institutional level and perspectives, or the experiences seen from institutions in developing countries. Also, it has not been possible to go into detail on the complex funding and organisational model of the scheme, which includes several ministries and national agencies, in addition to institutions in Norway and in developing countries. These are all issues that would have been interesting to go further into.
8. Literature


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## 9. Appendices

### 9.1 Document list

Circulars/calls - overview

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9.3. Interview guide

Interview guide - English

Introduction of the theme of the study and the researcher.

Background
1. How (and how well) do you know the Norwegian Quota Scheme?

Policy basis and objectives
2. Do you know the what is the policy basis for the Quota Scheme? What was the motivation behind the Quota Scheme?
3. Do you know what the objectives were of the Quota Scheme from the beginning?
   a. the overall aim was twofold.

Changes
4. In your experience, did these goals change over time, or the formulation/emphasis of them?
   a. if yes, how did this happen?
5. Where did the changes come from? (national level, institutions, organizations, other?)
6. Do you know of other (small or bigger) changes that were introduced? Examples of changes:
   a. Geographic
   b. individual to institutional capacity-building
   c. Change in number of scholarships available
7. Can you recall a public debate concerning changes in the Quota Scheme?
8. Where does the Quota Scheme fit in amongst other higher education programmes aimed at development (and/or internationalisation)?
9. Who are the key actors and main stakeholders in the Quota Scheme
10. Evaluations
11. Funding
12. Regulations
13. Anything else?
Interview guide - Norwegian

Introduksjon

Bakgrunn
1. Hvordan (og hvor godt) kjenner du Kvoteordningen?

Policygrunnlag og mål
2. Vet du noe om hva som var politikkgrunnlaget for Kvoteordningen? Hva var målene/motivasjonen?
   a. Flatinutvalget
3. Vet du hva målene for Kvoteordningen var fra begynnelsen i 1994?
   a. Todelt overordnet mål?
   b. Fra bistand i begynnelsen og mer internasjonalisering etterhvert? (fra evalueringen 2001)
   c. En formalisering av eksisterende praksis?

Endringer
4. Fra ditt ståsted, endret disse målene seg over tid? Hvordan skjedde dette?
   a. formulering/vektning
   b. aktører (virker som om Universitetsrådet (nå UHR) var en viktig aktør?)
5. Hvor kom endringene i mål fra? (nasjonalt, institusjoner, organisasjoner, annet)
6. Vet du om bakgrunnen for andre (mindre eller større) endringer i Kvoteordningen?
   a. Geografske
   b. Tidsperspektiv (fra ett- til treårige programperioder)
   c. Individuell til institusjonell kapasitetsbygging
   d. Antall plasser/stipender
   e. Institusjonelle strategier
7. Når tok endringene til?
   a. I begynnelsen?
   b. Rundt evalueringene?
8. Kan du huske noen offentlig debatt om Kvoteordningen?
9. Hvem er hovedaktørene (stakeholders) i Kvoteordningen?
10. Evalueringene
11. Finansiering av Kvoteordningen?
12. Regulering av Kvoteordningen?
13. Noe annet?